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The European Origins of Euro-Mediterranean Practices

by

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Abstract

Federica Bicchi compares the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with previous efforts of the EU to address the southern Mediterranean. The paper focuses on the main practices by which the EC/EU has pursued its aim of region building in the Mediterranean. First, by examining the making of the Global Mediterranean Policy the paper analyses how the concept of a "Mediterranean region" came to be enshrined in European external relations. Second, it describes the multilateral institutional setting created by the EMP. Third, the paper shows how the agenda of the EMP has changed since 1995. Bicchi then analyzes the origins of these practices, as well as their pros and cons , arguing that EMP practices strictly relate to EC/EU internal practices, more so than to OSCE core principles. She warns that 'downloading' from EU cooperation history with little adaptation might miss the point in diversified and fragmented Southern Mediterranean societies.

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THE EUROPEAN ORIGINS OF EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PRACTICES

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Introduction
The debate about the EU promotion of values has recently acquired new momentum. For long, scholars have primarily aimed at demonstrating the existence of a European foreign policy, with only a minority of contributions focusing on the nature of European foreign policy (Duchêne 1973; Bull 1982). Recently, the latter perspective has been enriched by more authors joining the debate (e.g. Hill 1990; Whitman 1998; Manners and Whitman 1998; K.Smith 2000; Manners 2002; K.Smith 2003). Authors have explored the specificity of the EU's identity, often referred to as a 'civilian power' or, recently, as a 'normative power' (Manners 2002). Some authors have analysed how the EU has promoted a particular value, such as democracy (Youngs 2001; Gillespie and Youngs 2002). What these studies have in common is the analysis of European foreign policy's content in terms of norms and values, rather than material interests. The EU's strength would lie, according to this perspective, in the ethical reach of its foreign policy.

The approch suggested by Adler and Crawford (Chap.1) elaborates on this line. It suggests that the EU is a normative power with a specific aim in the Mediterranean, namely building a region in an area of the world where several conflicts persist. This argument not only relies on the traditional 'civilian power' Europe, which stressed the non-security based response to security challenges. It also develops on the idea that Europe is projecting its influence mainly by affecting the way normality is defined, as Manners put it (2002, 239). The normality that Adler and Crawford see as in the making in the Mediterranean is a region and, potentially, a security community.They suggest that through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the EU is reshaping its Southern neighbourhood.

In this chapter, my aim is to test two of the claims put forward by Adler and Crawford. First, I explore the ways in which the EU promotes the construction of a region in the Mediterranean. As Adler and Crawford put it, the EU is using normative power to stabilise its near abroad, and the EMP is the instrument through which the EU is wielding its normative power in the Mediterranean. But what exactly are the practices that the EU

has been supporting in Euro-Mediterranean relations, which point in the direction of region building? What are the levers the EU has been pulling to reach such an objective? I will argue that the EU has been contributing to region building by making use of three means: conceptualisation, institution engineering and agenda setting. The conceptual side of the process, which is rooted in the way the EC/EU has come to classify neighbouring countries together, dates back to the early 1970s. The institutional engineering and agenda setting means have undergone a qualitative leap with the EMP, which is based on multilateral practices and a cooperative philosophy.

Second, this chapter traces the origins of the set of practices expressed by these three instruments. Having highlighted the main elements of the EU's region building efforts, I will ask what model do they add up to. To where does the EU look for inspiration about Euro-Mediterranean relations? What example in history does it deem to be relevant for a Mediterranean region? What kind of a region are EU policy makers implicitely or explicitely referring to, when they address the Mediterranean? According to Adler and Crawford, the origin of region building practices enshrined in the EMP lies in the process of European integration and in the OSCE process. What I will explore in this chapter is the European component, which I will argue is extensive. Not only the broad lines of conceptual, institutional and agenda setting means are drawn from the European experience of integration, but also the European documents addressing the Mediterranean refer overtly or covertly to the European path to region building.

Therefore, this chapter explores how the region building process described by Adler and Crawford works, and how the EU refers to its own experience to make it work. In other terms, it focuses on the tight link between the EU's internal politics and its foreign policy.

Inventing the Mediterranean
The first way in which the EC/EU has aimed at region building in the Mediterranean is conceptual, namely by "classifying neighbouring countries together under regional strategies" (Smith 2003, 69). The EC/EU has crafted concepts defining the scope of the Mediterranean and the commonalities that grouped riverain countries together. Although the process unfolded through time, it is possible to identify a crucial period in which the idea of a Mediterranean region took hold. For long, the EEC maintained highly differentiated bilateral relations with most of the countries bordering the Mediterranean. Agreements varied under all respects, ranging from the generous provisions granted to Greece and Turkey, in 1961 and 1963 respectively, to the limited trade agreements concluded with Egypt and Lebanon in 1972. However, in the early 1970s, the EC gradually came to adopt a more stringent definition of Mediterranean. It was codified in the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP), which for the first time addressed all riverain countries as belonging to a single region, the Mediterranean. On the basis of the GMP, the EC negotiated a new generation of agreements including the same core provisions. From then onwards, in Eurospeak the Mediterranean was no longer a generic geographical expression. It indicated instead a specific group of countries, deemed to be roughly homogeneous among themselves and with which the EC had legally binding agreements. From the perspective of the EC/EU, a new region was born.

The process by which the EEC came to codify its Southern neighbouring region as the 'Mediterranean' unfolded at the beginning of the 1970s. The international environment had already seen several experiments at forming regional groupings, but they had generally retained a loose character. Moreover, the planned enlargement of the EEC to include the UK had already put the issue of relations with third countries on the EEC agenda. As the UK maintained a liberal policy in terms of imports, its accession entailed a sharp increase in duties levied on several products originating from Mediterranean non member countries. Thus, since an early date, member states and the Commission were debating how to adjust existant agreements with Mediterranean countries to take enlargement into account. Still, it was far from obvious that the solution to the issue of adjustments was to be a regional policy directed to the Mediterranean.

If we look at the documents that were produced at the time by EEC institutions, the first articulated intervention in favour of a unitary approach, addressing the Mediterranean as a single region, came from the European Parliament (EP), in the form of the Rossi Report. Presented in February 1971,[1] it addressed the EEC's trade policy towards the Mediterranean basin. The Report argued against the approach of 'agreements à la carte' that had prevailed, because it did not create among Mediterranean peoples "this certainty of belonging to one and the same region of the world, having its own personality, its brand image."[2] The idea of a "regional promotion policy" was, according to the Rapporteur, "a reasonable possibility,"[3] which was to be based on the definition of a global approach to the region and a development policy to support its economic progress.

The ensuing debate in the EP was revealing in that it showed that the idea was in the air, but it did not yet receive a unanimous support. Among the detractors, there was Commissioner Dahrendorf, in charge of External Relations and Trade. In his reply to Rossi, he states that "(n)o doubt it is too soon to seek now to develop a consistent concept of the Communities' Mediterranean policy."[4] A "mosaic" approach seemed more appropriate to the different needs of the riverain countries. Other parts of the Commission, however, were more keen to see a conceptual change in Euro-Mediterranean relations. In particular, Deniau, Commissioner for Developing Countries, was more favourable.[5] In his view, it was necessary to rethink Euro-Maghrebi and Euro-Mediterranean relations, as they had to focus on development as main objective (Pierros et al. 1999, 84). The EEC member states had historical responsibilities towards this area, which could not be addressed by simply adapting commercial agreements.

The debate became more substantial with the intervention of a member state, France. Its action was crucial to codify the concept of a single Mediterranean region. Elaborating on the issue of adjustments to enlargement, France begun and then led a debate about a new

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[1] Doc. de séance 246/70, presented on 1.II.71.

[2] *Report on the commercial policy of the Community in the Mediterranean basin*, EC Bulletin 4-1971, 35.

[3] *Report on the commercial policy of the Community in the Mediterranean basin*, EC Bulletin 4-1971, 32.

[4] *Report on the commercial policy of the Community in the Mediterranean basin*, EC Bulletin 4-1971, 38.

[5] See for instance the *Memorandum on a Community Policy on Development Cooperation* presented in July 1971by the Commission in Supplement to the EC Bull. 5/1971, summarized also in EC Bull. 9-10/1971. See also the speech given in May 1972 by Deniau, reported in EC Bull. 7/1972.

approach, which stressed the communalities and the existant linkages among Mediterranean non members. At the beginning of May 1972, at a Council meeting, France argued in favour of addressing in the same way both Spain and Israel, which were the two countries most liable to suffer from the enlargement. The Spanish case was complicated by its authoritarian regime. France suggested that the same formula of 'free trade' adopted for Portugal could be applied to Spain and Israel.[6] If Portugal, which was a clear case of an authoritarian regime, could establish privileged trade relations with the EEC, then the same could be possible for Spain too, France argued. The Israeli case was made more difficult by the fact that any concession to Israel raised the political issue of parallel concession to Arab countries.

"From that moment on the situation developed very quickly." (Tovias 1977, 70). Following a hint by the Netherlands, France was soon to present a full-fledged approach envisaging a free trade area between the EEC and *all* the Mediterranean countries. In COREPER on 19 June 1972, the French delegation specified that its proposed free trade area for industrial goods should not necessarily be limited to Spain, Israel or the Maghreb countries, but could well be applied to Egypt, Lebanon, and all the other Mediterranean countries as well. In fact, France's proposal suggested "une approche globale avec un orientation commune." On that principle, all the delegations of national representatives agreed.[7] The idea of a developmental approach, which was supported by part of the Commission and of the EP, was coupled with the idea of a free trade area, thus leading to the definition of several forms of economic, technical and financial cooperation.

It was a sort of a revolution, which replaced the 'patchwork' of agreements with a proper 'framework' (Gomez 1998). While it was not possible beforehand to differentiate between Mediterranean countries and other countries with which the EEC had trade agreements, after the debate in the Council, the EEC singled out the Mediterranean countries for a completely different project: the construction of a region with which to establish privileged trade relations and towards which a responsibility for development was acknowledged. In the following months, several aspects of these relations were discussed (geographical scope, issues to be included, timetable), several of which were divisive for member states.[8] Since then, however, a principle was acquired: the EEC was going to formulate a global policy towards the Mediterranean, which was considered to be homogenous enough to be addressed as a region. In due time, the EEC adopted new trade agreements and financial protocols with all the countries ranging from Spain to Syria, as Greece and Turkey profited already the concessions foreseen by the GMP.

How coherent was this project? In the short term (1972-1978), two visions coexisted. While the issue of adjustment was solved with *ad hoc* negotiations, the discussion about the new approach continued until new agreements were signed. In the longer term, without going down to evaluate the practical impact of the GMP on the Mediterranean non members, it is fair to say that if the generic idea of a Mediterranean region was going

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[6] *Agence Europe*, (1.VI.72). Having negotiated within the framework of the EFTA agreements, Portugal and the EC signed a preferential trade agreement based on free trade of industrial goods.
[7] *Agence Europe* (19-20.VI.72).
[8] *Agence Europe* (17.VI.72; 20-21.VII.72; 20.X.72; 11.XI.72).

to stick, the content of the formula was more loosely defined. In fact, it was not long before the scope of the Mediterranean was downsized and the links between the EC and the Mediterranean loosened, with the EC Southern enlargement. The fall of autocratic regimes in Greece, Portugal, and Spain opened the door for their accession to the EC, entailing in the case of Greece and Spain their redefinition as 'European.' All the three countries eagerly sought EC membership as a stabilising factor in the processes of democratisation and economic modernisation. The EC soon realised the importance of the anchor that membership would offer to transition processes. It thus engaged constructively in the accession talks (Pridham 1991).

The Southern enlargement being a very positive development for both the EC and the countries involved, it led to the *de facto* partition of the Mediterranean. It broadened the cleavage between EC members and Mediterranean non members in several ways. First, it provoked a loss in trade revenues due to trade diversion (Grilli 1993, 199).[9] Similarities in economies existed not only in the agricultural sector, but also in several industrial sectors (Ginsberg 1983, 160; Swinbank and Ritson 1988). Moreover, Mediterranean non members were disadvantaged vis à vis the new 'Southern European' members because of the positive measures enacted by the EC to increase the level of development of the new members and cushion the effects of new intra-EC competition (Tovias 1996, 19; Commission 1984, 53-54). More broadly, during the 1980s, the member states accomplished their conversion towards an *active* redistributive policy towards least-favoured regions. This process led by 1988 to the establishment of structural funds, mostly to the benefit of the Southern European countries.

Therefore, while the Southern enlargement did most to stabilise and prompt the development of Greece, Spain and Portugal, it also meant that the meaning of the 'regional promotion policy' and of 'Mediterranean' conceptualised in the GMP was deeply questioned. More specifically, the Southern enlargement highlighted a basic contradiction of the EC Mediterranean policy, namely the fact that the Northern border of the region it intended to create was left unspecified. Was the EC trying to create a region *together* with the Mediterranean, i.e. a Euro-Mediterranean region with increasingly tight relations between the EC member and all Mediterranean non members? Or was it to promote the constitution of a Mediterranean region which was in fact *separated from* the EC? The Southern enlargement showed that the tension between the two approaches persisted.

The broad idea, however, of a Mediterranean region survived and was to be taken up again, with a new momentum, in the early 1990s. At the time, a new coalition of actors slowly emerged, promoting the idea of a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Marks 1996; Barbé 1996). At first, it seemed like the global approach had lost its appeal. At the Lisbon summit, in June 1992, the EU displayed a degree of active concern limited to the Maghreb countries. In the following years, however, thanks to the activism of several countries and players, the focus was once again enlarged to encompass the whole area. By 1994, the debate was once again addressing relations with the Mediterranean non

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[9] For a thorough analysis of the impact of Southern enlargement on Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia, see Rosenthal (1982).

member countries, this time ranging from Morocco to Turkey. The Barcelona Conference in 1995 gave an enormous new political momentum to the old notion of a Mediterranean region.[10]

Thus, the conceptual work done within the EEC in the early 1970s on the idea of a Mediterranean region has survived the test of time. It can be questioned how deep the concept has sunk in the mind of Brussels policy makers, and how many resources it can mobilise. It would be difficult to draw such a conclusion, as it would differ from one policy making community to another. There is no doubt, however, that it has come to indicate a precise group of countries. The EU enlargement in 2004 to include Cyprus and Malta will not replicate the experience of the first Southern enlargement,[11] although Turkey remains an unsolved issue.

From a conceptual point of view, the real challenge nowadays comes from the "Wider Europe – New Neighbourhood" policy.[12] In it, the EU groups together all the countries with which it will share a border (with the usual exception of Jordan) once the Central and Eastern European countries have completed their accession process in May 2004. In other terms, the new approach puts together the Mediterranean partners with Russia and the Western NIS (Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus). The initiative does not attempt to forge a new region out of this group. It rather aims at diluting the meaning of its future external border, by stretching the four freedoms on which the EU is based (free movement of goods, capital, services, and persons) as far as possible without compromising EU's internal equilibria.

Even in this format, the initiative encountered a cold reception on the part of Russia. Russia forcefully emphasised a point that is central to Euro-Mediterranean relations too, namely the ownership of the process. Russia's aim is to acquire a stake in the decision making process by which the EU adopts initiatives that affect Russian politics, instead of being a passive recipient. While the future of the "Wider Europe – New Neighbourhood" initiative is still to be written, especially in the face of Russia's opposition, it might lead to interesting developments in Euro-Mediterranean relations, as the 'not-so-new' Southern neighbours undergo another European attempt to shape its periphery.

Setting the institutions, shaping the agenda
Apart from conceptualising the Mediterranean, there are two other main ways in which the EU have fostered the creation of a Mediterranean region. The first way is through the construction of multilateral institutions in which all partner countries participate. The second is by setting the agenda so as to establish a diplomatic dialogue among all participants. Both ways were introduced in 1995 with the launching of the EMP, as beforehand not only the dialogue was solely bilateral, but also the agenda was limited to specific trade issues. In this respect, the EMP represented a true breakthrough with previous practices. Whereas the GMP was based on the implicit premise that a Mediterranean region just needed to be acknowledged, the EMP set out to actively build

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[10] For a more in depth of current discourses about the Mediterranean 'region,' see Pace (2001).
[11] On the potential impact of Cyprus' and Malta's accession, see Prosperini (2003).
[12] COM 2003 104 final, 11.III.03.

that region. The GMP put all the Mediterranean non members on the same ground, set the same limited agenda with all of them, but then it pursued a policy of 'hub and spoke' in terms of institutions. The EMP, on the contrary, started from the implicit premise that severe cleavages existed in the area and thus put as its objective to create an area of peace and prosperity.[13] To that aim, it institutionalised several types of meetings, as well as a very articulated agenda.

The EMP's institutions develop around three dimensions (Philippart 2003b; Edwards and Philippart 1997) (see Figure 1). The first is the multilateral one, in which all participant countries have a seat around the table, including the Palestinian Authority in representation of Palestine. The EU is generally represented by both member states and the European Commission. The second dimension follows up on the traditional pattern of bilateral relations established with the GMP. The EU tends to be represented by either the Presidency or the Commission or both, and meets with a single Mediterranean partner at the time. The third dimension of the EMP is purely unilateral, centred on the EU as the only decision-maker. All the three of them state region building as their purpose, and they all address the multifaceted EMP agenda. The multilateral and the bilateral dimension are articulated at various levels of the diplomatic hierarchy, ranging from the highest, ministerial level to the level of working groups.

FIGURE 1. CONTENT AND FORMAT OF THE EMP

Type of relations	**Content**	Political aspects	Economic aspects	Social Aspects
Multilateral dimension	EMP	Political and security partnership Stability Chart	Economic and financial partnership	Soc., cult., and human affairs partnership
Bilateral dimension	Euro-Med Association Agreements	Political dialogue	Free trade area Economic dialogue	Social dialogue
Unilateral (EU) dimension	MEDA	Regional/Country Strategy Paper Regional/National Indicative Programme MEDA Regional share (10%) / Country share (90%) (MEDA Democracy/EIDHR)		

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[13] See Barcelona Declaration, p.1.

The multilateral framework of the EMP represents a true novelty and a crucial step in the direction of creating a Mediterranean region. Relations take place at all levels apart from meetings of heads of state and government. The idea of such a high profile gathering has been in the air for quite a while. The French Presidency in 2000 was particularly keen in organising one, but the deteriorating conditions of the Middle East peace process have always prevented its occurrence. But this is the only type of meeting that tensions in the Middle East have made impossible. Below this level, meetings have taken place quite regularly, with Arab-Israeli tensions at times disrupting the pace but not the substance of the meetings. The main institutional effects of Middle East problems have been limited to the boycott that Syria and Lebanon carried out of ministerial conferences (but this has petered out, in spite of continuous violence in the region) and the recurrent accusatory statements that tend to open meetings. In fact, bringing all Mediterranean countries around the same table and having them talk business despite unresolved grievances is probably one of the main successes of the EU in its attempt to create a region in the Mediterranean. Institutional provisions are in place, in case conditions were to allow more steam to be put into them.

Moreover, meetings between officials, in different configurations, have addressed a broad range of topics, adapting the organisational profile along the way. Issues include water, energy, terrorism (already before 9/11), as well as migration, tourism and trade. Some issues are addressed in a more substantial manner than others, economic topics generally being easier than security matters to develop in a multilateral framework. A case in point was for instance the discussions held before the beginning of the Doha round of the WTO, when partners addressed the upcoming agenda and tried to define a strategy to support each other.

The multilateral structure is flexible and the process of adding new fora for discussion has proven to be smooth. For instance, a "gap" existed between the Euro-Mediterranean Conferences and the Euro-Mediterranean Committee, in the sense of limited institutional flexibility in creating opportunities for high-level dialogue not involving the Foreign Ministries. Accordingly, in the Action Plan approved in Valencia in 2002 it was decided to hold ad hoc meetings among Directors-General of the Foreign Ministries competent for the questions on the agenda, with participation by the Commission.

Multilateral meetings are not confined to the kingdom of diplomats. In December 2003, a Euro-Med Parliamentary Assembly was created out of the existant Forum, which in turn was constituted in 1998. It will be composed of MPs from all participant countries, including new Central and Eastern European ones, as well as from a substantial number of MEPs. The hope is that it will contribute, in its consultative status, to increase the transparency of the EMP and to bring it closer to people across the area.[14] Civil society initiatives, springing in a more or less directed manner out of the official part of the EMP, are gathering momentum (Jünemann 2002; Stavridis 2002; Soler i Lecha 2004), although they still have to make an impact on the EMP agenda. They do however contribute to the

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[14] Moroever, meetings between EP delegations and MPs of single Mediterranean partners have also taken place.

overall EMP aims by providing an external legitimation of civil society in Arab countries (Gränzer 1999; Rahmani and Bellouche 1995).

Whereas the bilateral dimension has been strengthened but not fundamentally altered in its institutional design by the EMP, the way financial aid is distributed constitutes a break with the past towards a purely unilateral approach. Under the Financial Protocols regime, which spanned roughly from the mid 1970s until the mid 1990s, governments of the Mediterranean countries not only were legal partners to the agreement, but also put forward a list of preferences towards which the EC money was directed. Aid was "demand driven" (Holden 2003, 350), thus creating a sense of ownership amid Mediterranean partners' governments.[15] On the contrary, the regime established by MEDA, and reinforced by MEDA II, rests primarily in EU hands, despite informal influences. The procedure from adoption of the regulation to disbursement of aid is quite complicated, but a couple of points are extremely clear (Bicchi 2002). Mediterranean Partners are no longer consulted after the phase of developing indicative guidelines for formulating programmes and strategies. After a general discussion of political and economic aspects, the process of formulating Strategy Papers, Indicative Programmes and Annual Financial Plans is concluded between the Commission and member states. After that stage, the Commission is the only actor in charge. Moreover, there is a mention of conditonality in funds' allocation, which has never been acted upon, as well as the need to show 'progress towards structural reform' in order to benefit from the funds.

Therefore, the EMP has established an institutional network that has thickened across time and formats. As present, it spans across several levels and fields and it has expanded from the purely diplomatic arena to less official domains, to include so-called civil society. If institution building alone can not create a region, at least the instituional framework defined by the EMP offers a basis for working on common principles.

The third EU instrument of region building I am going to examine refers to the agenda addressed in such an institutional framework. The main activity within the EMP is talking, and the topics of the debate are varied, as the Barcelona Declaration lends direct or indirect support to any issue participants might decide to address. The agenda, which formally is to be agreed upon by unanimity, is affected by a number of factors. The international context and the situation in the Middle East suggest and prevent, respectively, the topics that can or can not be addressed. The fragmentation of the Arab countries greatly diminishes their capacity to impress a clear direction to the EMP's agenda. Northern European countries have, at times, manifested a remarkable interest for the Mediterranean, although they have only seldom turned that interest into specific discussion points.[16] In comparison, the interest of Southern Europeans has been deeper and more consistent, while at the same time not necessarily affecting the agenda.

While these factors shed light on the veto points by which issues do not reach the EMP's agenda, the main positive mechanism of agenda setting is in fact the Presidency of the EU, especially when it is held by a Southern European country determined to give new

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[15] Interview, Commission of the EC, Brussels, June 2001.
[16] For the Swedish case, see Schumacher (2001).

momentum to the process.[17] The Presidency is well placed to define specific objectives at the beginning of its semester, and, together with the Commission and the General Secretariat, to network so as to achieve them. Also, the Presidency takes the full responsibility for the final declarations issued at the end of ministerial meetings, which in turn affect the agenda for the period thereafter. In other terms, the Presidency undertakes the job to 'build a consensus' by negotiating with other member states and with Mediterranean non members. As a consequence, the agenda tends to be fixed by the European participants. All parties involveld are well aware of this unbalance, as testified by the recurrent calls for 'co-ownership' of the process. However, there is little evidence of such a development.

The EU-(Presidency-)led activity of agenda setting has aimed at ensuring that topics on agenda foster cooperation among partners, on substantial matters whenever possible. It has taken two main forms: 1) mediation on contentious agenda items; 2) prioritising of items on the agenda.

The EU's mediation was present from the start, as the preparatory documents of the Barcelona Declaration show. The inclusion or the suggestion of certain topics linked to Arab-Israeli relations was already a European success in mediating between Israel and radical Arabs, especially Syria. While Israel had first tried to exclude any mention to UN Security Council resolutions, it had to accept, for the first time, the reference to the "relevant" ones (but managed to exclude the explicit mention of Resolutions 242, 338 and 425) and to the principle of "land for peace, with all that this implies."[18] A second contentious issue consisted in the Palestinian intention to mention the right to self-determination. The Spanish attempt to adopt the Helsinki formula encountered opposition from the Palestinians, Israelis, Syrians and British.[19] The final compromise was striken by specifying that the right was to be intended "as reflected in agreements between relevant parties."

The third point of the Barcelona Declaration on which the EU managed to achieve a compromise focused on the definition of terrorism. It was the most contentious. The Syrians were adamant in inserting in the relevant paragraph the formula "without prejudice to the legitimate right of people to resist foreign occupation," while the Israeli were equally adamant in resisting any definition, and thus limitation, of the concept of terrorism.[20] The agreement was reached at the eleventh hour: the Spanish presidency forced the Syrians to drop their formula in favour of a more general "right to fully exercise sovereignty by legitimate means," thus paving the way also to the Israeli acceptance of the previous two points. The last bone of contention hinged on arms

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[17] For a reconstruction of the Spanish Presidency in 2002, and an analysis of how it affected the agenda of the EMP, see Gillespie (2004).

[18] This allowed the Israeli to draw, in case, an extensive interpretation vis à vis Syria, in the sense of "full withdrawal-full peace," i.e. peace meaning complete normalisation of relations, including open borders and exchange of ambassadors.

[19] The British were worried about the consequences the statement would have had on Gibraltar.

[20] Moreover, the Israelis advanced the proposal to insert the text: "The partners urge the Syrian government to desist from providing support and shelt to an array of terrorist groups operating within its national territory in accordance with its national law." The proposal was flatly rejected.

control, which found a solution in a long list of activities which included, "inter alia," regional "and/or" international arrangements "such as" the Non Proliferation Treaty and the conventions on chemical and biological weapons.

Moreover, the EU exerts its influence in prioritising among the topics listed in the Barcelona Declaration on which cooperation can develop. The 'constitutional chart' of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and the attached Work Programme, include a long list of potential activities, ranging from security to culture, from economy to education. Since its early days, the Barcelona process has been in need of 'prioritising' among various issues, namely in the form of choosing where to direct the efforts. The EU has been very well placed to do so, for a number of reasons ranging from the fragmentation of other actors to their lack of resources. The Presidency and the Commission have been, in comparison, the two best players to impress momentum and direction to the EMP.

The result of the EU prioritising action has been that the economy has stayed on top of the agenda, with different types of security issues coming second. The predominance of the economy within the EMP does not need a long description. Two points will suffice. First, the creation of a free trade area in the Mediterranean is the cornerstone on which the whole EU policy relies. It sits at the core of the Common Strategy adopted in 2000, the aim of which was to indicate the key objectives of the EU member states in the area.[21] It is the first priority mentioned in the Regional Strategy Paper 2002-2006 that guides the multilateral expenses under MEDA. Not only are the economic aspects of the Euro-Med Partnership developed in the multilateral framework addressed in the Declaration, but they also monopolise bilateral relations between the EU and the single Mediterranean countries, via the negotiations for and the management of the new generation of Euro-Mediterranean Agreements. The conclusion of these agreements is meant to lead to the abolition of the main tariff and non tariff barriers sheltering Mediterranean partners' markets. Therefore, the whole framework represents a project of gigantic reform of Mediterranean economies and, as a consequences, societies. However, the debate about social aspects of the free trade area has remained marginal, with economic aspects monopolising the attention both within the EU and in Mediterranean partners.

Second, the EU's prioritising action emerges from the way the MEDA programme, which the EU unilaterally designs, is targeted to the economic aspects of the expected transitions in Mediterranean countries. Funds for structural adjustment, economic transition and development of the private sector consume around 45% of the overall amount.[22] The rest is spent in technical cooperation and classical development projects, half of which again is related to improvement of services and support for the shift from agricultural to industrial economy. The 'Eurowording' (such as 'environmental projects') should not conceal this fact.

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[21] Common Strategy of the European Council of 19 June 2000 on the Mediterranean Region, 2000/458/CFSP.
[22] See Commission of the EC, "Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Annual report of the Meda programme 2000," Brussels, COM(2001).

In comparison, the role of the security 'volet' has been limited, though increasing. The Review undertaken by the Commission for 2001 was particularly grim. It listed the actions falling in the domain of the first 'volet:' EuroMeSCo (the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission), training and information for diplomats carried out in Malta, civil protection and a human rights programme.[23] In fact, there is more to it than tends to be acknowledged. Since the early days of the EMP, the EU has tried to promote a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability, listing a series of topics which would facilitate cooperation and/or represent items to be debated and developed. In fact, the Charter would resemble, albeit in a lower-key, the Stability Pact in Europe established by the EU within the OSCE (Aliboni 1999, 137-38). However, the progress on the Charter grounded to a halt, in spite of the French interest in it, because of the *Intifada* in 2000, as well as the reluctances of several partners to pursue it. The original plan was to launch the document at the Marseille Conference in November 2000, but progress on the Charter stopped at this very meeting. Were the Arab-Israeli problem to be solved, the project would be taken up again. However, other problems would remain, as the CBMs that the Charter would imply would go for instance to the heart of the pending border disputes between Mediterranean partners.[24]

Since the disappointment of the Charter, EU Presidencies have been emphasising a different approach. The security approach that is now prevailing covers the issues that have long been labelled in Eurospeak as 'justice and home affairs.' This trend started to emerge in October 1999, after the Tampere European Council, but it gathered momentum after 2000 when progress on the Charter reached a *cul de sac*, and after the terroristic attacks of 9/11. The first relevant mention of a development in this direction came in the Common Strategy for the Mediterranean. While largely reflecting the Barcelona Declaration, the Strategy also 'caught up' with areas in which the EU had developed common competences not enshrined in the Barcelona document. A first area mentioned was the European policy on security and defence. A second, more substantial mention referred to justice and home affairs, listing as specific initiatives the promotion of transparency and correspondences of legal systems, the fight against organised crime and drug trafficking, migration (both from the point of view of just treatement and social integration of legal migrants, the fight against human trafficking and illegal immigration) and the fight against terrorism. The issue was taken up again in the Conclusions of the Marseilles Conference, in November 2000, which recommended the concerted preparation of a regional programme in the field of Justice and Home Affairs.

These inputs led to two developments. First, since the beginning of 2001, the meetings of Senior Officials on Political and Security Questions developed a new format, tackling good governance practices and human rights on the basis of voluntary presentations by both European member states and Mediterranean partner countries. This trend has relented, if not completely dried up since 9/11. Second, their work has been paralleled by the meetings of Senior Officials on Justice and Home Affairs, whose agenda began to

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[23] European Commission, "The Barcelona Process. The Europe-Mediterranean partnership. 2001 Review," 2001, p.13-14. The human rights programme is in fact the EIDHR initiative of the EU, which goes well beyond the Mediterranean geographical scope.

[24] For alternative measures, such as Partnership building measures, see CHAP IN THIS BOOK????

affect the agenda also of Senior Officials on Political and Security Questions. Since April-May 2001, the field of Justice and Home Affairs has become one of the main domains of activities of the EMP. Since 9/11, its relevance has been greatly increased, as EMP partners chose to address the fight against terrorism mainly as a matter of judicial cooperation, fight against money laundring, etc.. In Valencia, in April 2002, EMP partners approved a Framework Document which, in spite of falling short of a Programme, codifies this shift from an approach based on 'hard' security, such as the Charter represented, to a more 'soft' interpretation of security challenges. The Document embodies the topics raised in the Mediterranean strategy, under a cumbersome title avoiding the words 'home affairs' due to Southern sensitivities.[25]

The EU has thus promoted through the EMP a set of practices, linked to the institutional setting and to the agenda for debate, that foster multilateralism and region building. The institutional framework is articulated at various levels and in various formats. According to the need, it can accomodate the dialogue among partners in potentially all possible ways. The agenda is multifaceted, in spite of a clear emphasis on the economic aspects and, to a lesser extent, on security (first 'hard' and now 'soft'). To keep a momentum to the endeavour and a clear direction towards cooperation and multilateralism, the EU has spent resources to mediate and to prioritise issues on the agenda.[26] In this sense, the EMP shows an unprecedented degree of commitment of the EU to the Mediterranean.

Downloading from the European model
The focus on the way the EU promotes region building in the Mediterranean raises the issue of what is the model the EU is supporting. There are two main possibilities, and according to Adler and Crawford (Chap.1) they both affect the EMP. The first is the OSCE model, namely the establishment of a security community based on shared understandings and practices. EC/EU member states were involved in such an endeavour together with their Eastern neighbours, and the outcome was a success (cf. Adler 1998). The second success story is the EC/EU itself. Integration of previous enemies, which begun over coal and steel, now reaches out to welfare states, defence and constitutional competences. The two models are similar in the sense that they aim at confidence and security building, but they differ in the way to get there. It is my contention here that the EU with the EMP is rather aiming at replicating itself than following the OSCE track. The EMP is 'downloaded' from the EU model more than from the OSCE one.

According to Adler and Crawford (Chap.1), there is a strong component of OSCE in the EMP, especially in the understanding of security and in the practices that foster community building. This is certainly supported by the empirical evidence reviewed above. The division of the EMP structure into three 'volets' is derived from the original proposal by Spain and Italy of a CSCM, while several of the EMP characteristics that contribute to commmunity building are also similar to those of OSCE (cf. Adler 1998, 132 ff.). The EMP's approach to security is cooperative, and the prevailing understanding

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[25] For the time being, the exact title is "Regional cooperation programme in the field of justice, in combating drugs, organised crime and terrorism as well as cooperation in the treatment of issues relating to the social integration of migrants, migration and movement of people".
[26] For an evaluation of progress in specific sectors, see Philippart (2003b).

of security embraces a broad definition of matters at stake. Moreover, the EMP does set standards of practices in several sectors, while establishing mechanisms for accountability and thus for expectations of accountability.

While the OSCE itself relied in part on the European experience, the project pursued by the EU in the Mediterranean reflects European integration more than anything else. Not only "progress is strongly correlated with areas where the EU has a significant competence, weight and expertise" (Philippart 2003a, 216), but also this entails a projection of the European model over the Mediterranean. The EU has adapted its 'integration toolbox' to the Mediterranean so as to use its own conceptual tools whenever they do not openly clash with specific national interests.

I will show this by emphasising the EC/EU origins of the practices described in the previous sections. In particular, I will focus on 1) agency in the EMP, 2) European origins of conceptualising the Mediterranean as a region, 3) parallelism in EU's and EMP's philosophy, institutions and agendas, and 4) European imprinting of the Common Strategy and of MEDA. Whereas the parallelism in philosophy, institutions and agendas refers directly to the the three EU instruments of region building examined above (conceptualisation, institutional engineering and agenda setting), the other three issues highlight the context in which these three instruments are used. The main goal is thus to put region building in the Mediterranean in the perspective in which the EU conceives it.

The first way the EMP does not reflect the OSCE experience stems from the fact that the EU is the stronger supporter of the EMP, while Mediterranean partners are more passive players. The OSCE model hinges on active socialisation and the international teaching of norms (Adler 1998, 133). As Adler himself recognises, while the OSCE embraces a wide range of members in order to imagine community where there is not yet one, the EU has adopted a different approach. It has established a partnership as a more limited form of relationship with Mediterranean non members. Therefore, the OSCE model would be at work if the EMP was *the* institutional framework promoting community building. Instead, it is the EU which maintains the agency in the case of the EMP. Instead of having socialisation to we-feeling within the main agential institution, socialisation is meant to occur outside it. A consequence of this is the concrete possibility that a logic of 'us/them' remains at work.

Second, the idea of promoting region building is definitely a European idea. "If there is one objective (...) which clearly derives from the nature of the EU itself, it is the promotion of regional cooperation." (Smith 2003, 70). The attempt at conceptualising the Mediterranean as a region flows from member states having conceptualised themselves as a region within the EU. The EU is the first and main supporter of regionalism across the world, as it is testified by its practices towards ACP countries, ASEAN and Latin America. While there has often been a demand for such an EU intervention on the part of third countries, the EU has been keen not only to respond, but also to raise the issue even when third countries were less interested. The process goes back to the 1960s, in the early days of developmental policy. The early 1990s, when the debate about post-Cold war world was going on, were a particularly favourable period in this respect. At the Lisbon

European Council in 1992, member states stressed the importance of policies in support of regional integration across the world, and they indicated potential regions towards which to direct European efforts.[27] Shortly afterwards, the Commission presented ideas about regional economic integration among developing countries,[28] stressing the success story of Western Europe. The process by which the EU displays a "propensity to reproduce itself" (Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 249) was notably evident at the time the EMP was launched.

The third way through which the predominance of an EU model can be gathered flows from a series of parallelism between the EMP and the EU. These include the broad approach to integration and security, as well as the prioritising in the agenda and in the number of meetings organised to meet it.

The philosophy of the EMP can be summarised as follows.[29] Economic liberalisation in Mediterranean non members will spark a process of development that not only will address most of European security concerns linked to migration, but also will trigger in turn a diversification of Mediterranean (Arab) societies and a process of political liberalisation. Israel's participation to this process will highlight the political benefits deriving from economic cooperation. In a nutshell, the opening of markets will cement political integration and security. This resembles the history of European integration, a key component of which has been the solution of a security problem via economic relations. Within OSCE, on the contrary, security was and is conceived in a comprehensive way, but the focus remained on security practices, both 'hard' and 'soft'. While recent developments about Justice and Home Affairs might broaden the range of instruments traditionally discussed in the EMP, economic instruments are for the time being the central element of the whole framework.

This parallelism is reinforced by the way in which economic ideas developed within the EC/EU have spilled into Euro-Med relations. We can argue about the degree of liberalism embraced by the EMP (Tovias, this volume; Philippart 2003a; Kienle 1998) but the shift in the trade agreements between the EC/EU and Mediterranean non members is undeniable. Agreements concluded after the launching of the GMP mirrored the (Keynesian) approach prevailing in Europe at the time, by which economies of scale and public subsidies to the economy were the main road to development. Accordingly, agreements granted free access to the Common Market for Mediterranean industrial goods (which did not really compete with European goods), while Financial Protocols supported governments' activities. In the new generation of agreements, on the contrary, Mediterranean partners are expected to open their market to the (fierce) competition of European produce. While the EU has managed so far to shelter its own weak points (namely agriculture) from Mediterranean non members' competition, it has indeed negotiated with Mediterranean partners a form of economic liberalism, the aim of which

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[27] At the time, the possibility of a partnership was ventilated between the EU and Maghreb countries, the Machrek countries not yet having entered the picture of an overall Mediterranean region. See above.
[28] European Commission, "Communication on European Community support for regional economic integration efforts among developing countries," COM (95) 219 final, Brussels, 16.VI.95.
[29] For a similar analysis, see Youngs (2001, 64 ff.).

is to prod them into a managed economic transition. While the EU in fact buys into the 'Washington consensus,' it has poured a specific set of economic ideas into the EMP.[30]

The economic parallelism continues, as the EU has successfully managed to put its own rules at the centre of the trade regime to be adopted by Mediterranean members. This is evident for instance in competition policy (Geradin and Petit 2003). Competition rules are partially included in the Agreements and partially they rely on the potential for spontaneous convergence of Partner countries towards the European set of rules. According to the letter of the Agreements, the interpretation of competition rules has to be in conformity with EC secondary legislation. Although so far competition rules have not played a big role in Euro-Mediterranean relations, they are an indicator of the general trend. The inclusion of competition policy after the dismantling of tariff and non tariff barriers to trade follows once again the path of European integration in the achievement of the Single Market. Similar considerations can be drawn for rules of origin (Karray 2003).

If we turn to the way the agenda is managed across the EMP institutional framework, it is possible to appraise another aspect of the EU-EMP parallelism, namely the similarity in the pattern of ministerial meetings. Here it is most evident the European origin of the two of the three region building instruments the EU has put at use in the Mediterranean, namely institutional engineering and agenda setting.

The EU Council of ministers meets under different denominations and configurations in a very similar way to the type of meetings organised in the EMP framework (Table 1). The composition is roughly the same, with ministers of participating countries flanked by representatives of the Commission and other EU bodies if the case be. Meetings organised in the EMP include the presence of a number of observers, while the Council of the EU tends to be a more secretive gathering. The headings of the meetings can also be compared. While the EU Council has a very broad agenda for each denomination, the Euro-Med ministerial meetings are organised around a specific theme, with the notable exceptions of 'Barcelona conferences' among ministers of Foreign Affairs. Still, the topics addressed in the EMP follow faithfully the main and original issues on the Council's agenda. The only issue that stands out is water, for which there is no current equivalent in the EU agenda (but coal and steel could provide a comparison across time).

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[30] For an analysis of Euro-Mediterranean Agreements in comparative perspective, see Hoekman and Djankov (1996) and Galal and Hoekman (1997).

TABLE 1 – MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, EMP AND EU, 1996-2003

Euro-Med Conferences	1996-2003	Council of the European Union	1996-2003
Agriculture	1	Agriculture and fisheries	100
Trade	3	Competitiveness (internal market, industry and research)	69
Industry	4	Economic and financial affairs	104
Culture	2	Education, youth and culture	36
Environment	2	Environment	33
Foreign Affairs	8	General Affairs	114
"Justice and Home Affairs"	0	Justice and Home Affairs	44
Health / Information society	2	Employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs (incl. tourism)	66
Energy	4	Transport, telecommunications, energy	68
Water	2	TOTAL	634
TOTAL	28		

Source: Press Reports, Council of the EU[31]

The frequency of meetings, when put in proportion, also reveals an interesting similarity. Since the launching of the EMP in late 1995, ministers within the EU have met much more frequently than ministers within the EMP, as shown in the above table. This raises several methodological questions about comparing the two sets. However, if we use the comparison for euristic reasons only and we put these numbers in percentage of the total, as in Figure 2, an intriguing pattern emerges. There is a strong similarity in the attention devoted to trade and economic affairs, infrastructure, and, to a lesser extent, social and environmental issues. This perspective thus confirms that the agenda of the EMP is largely similar to the agenda of the EU, based on economic matters but with a social flavour.

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[31] Meetings of EU Council lasting two days have been counted as one.

FIGURE 2 – MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, % ON THE TOTAL, EMP AND EU,
1996-2003
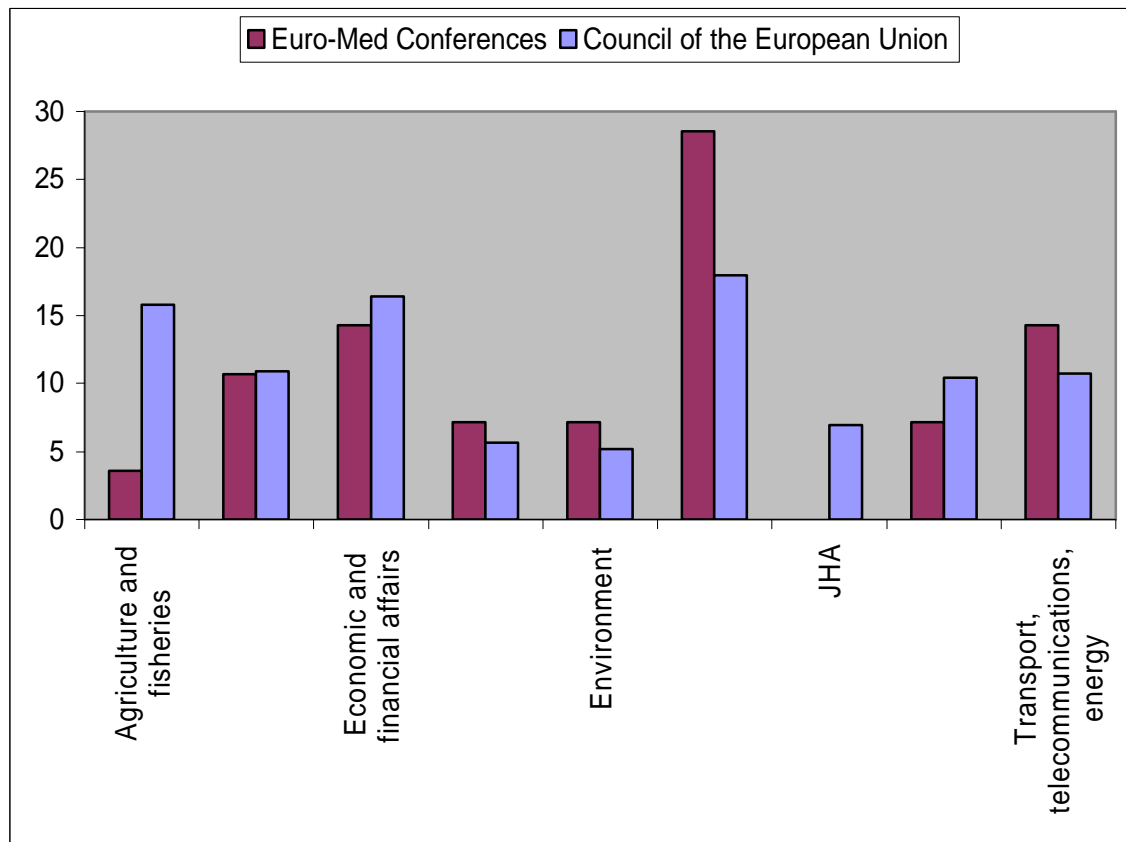
Source: as above.[32]

The issues that stand out are agriculture and fisheries, justice and home affairs and
foreign affairs. Agriculture is a topic that the Mediterranean partners would be more than
happy to discuss with European countries, but there is a staunch resistence on the part of
the latters. Discussion on the topic are taking place, but the pace is determined by the
reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. On the topic of justice and home affairs, the
reluctance is mutual. A compromise, however, might be found in the near future, as the
range of topics falling under this chapter allows some room for manoeuvring. Finally, it
can be argued that the predominance of meetings devoted to Foreign Affairs in the EMP
framework is an indicator that the core of the EMP remain grounded in international
cooperation, more than domestic politics.

The final element supporting the argument of the EMP model being adapted from the EU
consists of the the similarities between the Common Strategy and MEDA, on the one
hand, and EU policies and institutional developments, on the other. While these two
means do not directly represent the attempt to promote practices, they shed light on the
way the EU conceives region building in the Mediterranean.

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[32] The meetings devoted to water have not been taken into account.

The Common Strategy followed quite closely the Barcelona Declaration, while at the same time emphasising the European vision of the EMP. It thus includes issues less openly discussed in the EMP, such as human rights and Arab-Israeli relations. Moreover, it aimed at bringing "the EU's contribution to the Barcelona process in line with the developments within the EU itself since 1995" (Spencer 2001, 44; also Gillespie 2004, 27). The Strategy refers to developments of the European Security and Defence Policy, which begun to acquire a profile in 1998. It envisages a role for the High Representative/Secretary General of the Council, a role that became operational in June 1999. It also and more consistently referred to the need to promote actions in the area of justice and home affairs, making explicitly reference to the European Council that took place in Tampere in October 1999. These innovations would have been even more explicit if the sectorial approach originally proposed by the General Secretariat of the Council had prevailed over the global approach, grouping all issues within a single frame, which the Portuguese Presidency eventually adopted.[33]

The MEDA approach, especially in the second regulation approved in 2000,[34] is characterised by an increased centralisation of powers in the hands of the Commission and by a decentralisation of the work within the Commission structure. It reflects three general trends within the EU that have little to do with the Mediterranean and much to do with the institutional developments of the EU and of governance in Western countries in general. First, the new powers can be linked to the increasing use of delegation to the European Commission, as the number of regulations to be implemented increase (Pollack 2003) and as the Commission acquires more and more competence in the area of developmental aid (Dogan 1997). Moreover, the attempt to create a 'third party' for management and supervision of funds follows the trend across Europe and the US towards the creation of agencies, which guarantee the neutrality and in case the scientificity of the process. Finally, the decentralisation of work towards the new EuropeAid body and towards the Delegation of the European Commission in the Mediterranean countries is part of the general process of reorganisation of the Commission's services, which has become operational under the Prodi Commission.[35] The Directorate-Generals (DGs) devoted to external relations and development have been reformed so as to divide planning from managing, and the revision of MEDA's profile has been part of this process.

Therefore, in different ways, the process of European integration has affected the way the EU deals with the Mediterranean non members. It has affected it from a conceptual perspective, the EU being the biggest exporter of regionalism. It has influenced the approach that the EU has taken to region building in the Mediterranean, which is rooted in a functional understanding of how economic integration affects security issues. It has also informed the institutional setting of the EMP and the basic structure of EU documents addressing the Mediterranean. Finally, it has contributed to agenda setting. In other terms, rather than negotiating a new order and a new regional environment in the

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[33] Interview, General Secretariat, Council of the EU, Brussels, June 2001.
[34] Council Regulation (EC) No. 2698/2000 of 27 November 2000, OJ No. L 311, 12 December 2000.
[35] For the Commission's background thinking on decentralisation, see European Commission, "Decentralised cooperation," COM(96)70, Brussels, 1.III.96.

Mediterranean, the EU has 'downloaded' from its own history, it has adapted its own model so as to avoid clashes with well established national interests, and it has considered the resulting template as the guide to its relations with its Southern Mediterranean neighbours.

Conclusion: how legitimate?
This chapter aimed to look closer at Adler and Crawford's argument (Chap.1) that the EU is supporting the adoption in the Mediterranean of a set of practices aimed at region building. In particular, I focused on three specific instruments the EU is using to that aim, namely conceptualising the Mediterranean as a region, engineering a set of institutions conducive to multilateral cooperation, and setting a specific agenda. The chapter also aimed at pushing the debate about these practices a step further, by analysing the origins of these instruments. It covered evidence in favour of the argument by Adler and Crawford, by which the EMP draws both on the OSCE and the EU experiences. It also highlighted evidence which partly challenges their approach. According to the analysis above, the EU imprinting of the EMP is particularly strong, explaining the origins of the EU's approach to region building in the Mediterranean. These findings suggest a couple of more general considerations, as well as raising a few questions.

The first of these general considerations is that the thesis of 'normative power Europe' is particularly well suited to the analysis of Euro-Mediterranean relations. There is probably no other area towards which the EC/EU has poured its own understanding of 'what normal is' to such an extent. The EC/EU has pursued the objective of region building since the early 1970s, when it first came to address the area as being composed of countries homogeneous enough to be treated as a single region. More recently, the EMP has shown a renewed and expanded effort on the part of the EU to create a region. The institutional engineering, the management of the agenda and the prioritising of issues on it have all been used as means to foster cooperation and integration in the area.

Following from this, the intention of EU policy makers is to develop the EMP as a 'wrapper' around Mediterranean countries, embracing and involving them in a particular frame of mind. The three region building instruments specified above are meant to institutionalise a set of practices, the ability of which to transform Euro-Mediterranean relations would depend on the taken-for-granted and collective character of the governance system they would create. In other terms, the finality of EU instruments is to stop using them, as they have acquired enough momentum to develop a life of their own. While up to now the energy for the transformation of the Mediterranean has largely come from its Northern shore, the rationale of the Europeans' activities consists of offering to Southern Mediterranean policy makers an alternative behavioural model, capable of shaking deep-rooted behaviours and attitudes in the Mediterranean. The repetition of multilateral, cooperative actions would then cristallise in a more solid framework through the progressive 'stickiness' of practices, which would encourage path dependency on the new behavioural track.

A crucial element, however, for this process to unfold is the legitimacy of the practices put forward by the EU in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean non members display a

wide range of characteristics that do not fit with the conditions on which European integration has been based. Ongoing conflicts and border disputes plague the area. The level of economic development is terribly low in certain parts of Mediterranean countries. Societies tend to be fragmented. As opposed to Central and Eastern Europe, several countries in the Mediterranean tend to be split between a Westernised élite, which however eschews Western forms of democratic contracts, a vocal minority resenting Western values, and a mass of people whose main challenge is living standards that continue to diminish.

The adoption of European practices, especially in the form of rule of law, could certainly bring more political accountability and a better economic environment. However, the 'downloading' of EU cooperation history with little adaptation might be a step too far. When adaptation of EU principles has occurred, it has not been in the direction of taking into account conditions in the Mediterranean. Rather, it has created exceptions in favour of well established national interests of member states in relation to issues such as agriculture, which unfortunately hinder the final goal of region building. The credibility of the overall endeavour is jeopardised by the lack of negotiated principles and the one-way approach the EU has in fact embraced.[36]

From an empirical point of view, the issue of practices will remain a priority in the Mediterranean. Next to the EMP, the US has been developing a distinctive perspective on the Middle East, which is based more directly on the OSCE experience. The 'Greater Middle East Initiative,' which has been taking shape in the first half of 2004, is aimed at involving a plurality of actors, ranging from the G8 to NATO to the EU, under the common goal of giving democracy a chance in the Middle East. While the initiative marks (yet another) change in the US approach towards the region, it has been criticised for still being an expression of unilateralism more than of cooperation. Nevertheless, it helps maintain a lively debate about political change in the area. It can be argued that the discussion around these themes within the Arab League, as well as within single Arab countries, is acquiring a new flavour. If new practices have not yet taken hold in the Mediterranean, the international debate is increasingly questioning old ones.

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[36] For a more articulated criticism of the EU's attitude towards the EMP, see Kienle (1998) and also Williams (2001).

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