

Reinvigorating Europe's Mediterranean Partnership: Priorities and Policies.

I. Introduction

Development cooperation policies are not as well known as the European Union's other common policies such as the common agricultural policy or common commercial policy. Even compared to development policies such as the Lome' Convention, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is relatively obscure. The concept that the EU has special relations with the non-member Mediterranean countries like Algeria and Morocco -and that these relations are of great importance -is not commonly understood by European citizens. In the UK, for instance, even political scientists widely interpret the phrase 'southern Mediterranean' to refer only to the southernmost members of the European Union (EU) such as France, Italy or Greece, rather than extending to the developing countries bordering on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. This anonymity demonstrates one aspect of the EU's failure up to the present to shake off the image of 'foreign policy dwarf' (Lister 1997).

Despite the disadvantage of its relative obscurity, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership offers both shores of the Mediterranean Sea an unprecedented opportunity for sustained, mutually beneficial cooperation. The potential advantages of the Mediterranean partnership are extensive, including peace, stability, economic development, improved governance and communication, technical, social, cultural and environmental cooperation. But this article argues that such cooperation is not automatic. The advantages of the partnership have to be grasped by informed policy-makers and attentive civil society or the current level of problems and stagnation of the partnership will make it just one more ineffective EU initiative - like the Global Mediterranean Policy of the 1970s or the Renovated Mediterranean Policy of the early 1990s.

Pessimistic analyses of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership abound. Barbe' and Izquierdo argued that the Euro-Mediterranean had little potential for joint actions, demonstrating instead the EU members' lack of unity and lack of political will towards the region. The year 1995, which featured the Cannes European Council meeting in June and the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference in November, could indeed be called the 'year of the Mediterranean'(Barbe' and Izquierdo, 1997). But unfortunately the rest of the years in the decade could not. Pinar Tank's assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was similarly gloomy. He located the underlying basis of the partnership in Europe's desire to stem inward migration. Both shores lacked a common purpose, and the relationship primarily rested on fear. For Europe, there was the fear of terrorism, weapons proliferation and migration from North Africa; whilst the southern partners feared Europe's closing its doors to trade and returning migrants (Pinar Tank 1998).

Joffe' agreed that the 'unspoken primary purpose' of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership was to stem migration (Joffe' 2000) by fostering economic development in the southern countries, from Morocco to Turkey. Moreover, the prospect of Nato using force in the Mediterranean basin as it had in Kosovo, or of the EU employing its nascent military forces in the region, including the planned rapid deployment force, meant this was a partnership the southern countries could not easily refuse (Joffe' 2000).

However, the literature of international relations suggests that a relationship or alliance based on fears could be relatively stable (Holsti 1995). The EU's ongoing problems of political commitment and policy implementation (Nair 2001)

discussed below give greater cause for concern. The next section assesses the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the years since its inception. The many meanings of 'partnership' in an international context are then analysed. Subsequently, the article examines the changing priorities of EU development policy, particularly in regard to the Mediterranean basin. The following section investigates the problems of EU policy-making, notably the tendency to produce more 'hot air' than concrete results.

The worrying failure in July 2000 of the US-brokered Middle East peace talks at Camp David (Macintyre 2000) and subsequent violence in the region further highlight the need for a significant EU role in the Mediterranean basin¹.

II. The Barcelona Process

Barcelona Declaration of November 1995 set in motion a process designed to create a new zone of peace and prosperity around the borders of the Mediterranean Sea².

27 signatory polities in a framework of 'comprehensive cooperation and solidarity' (Barcelona Declaration 1997) in three issue areas: politics and security; economics and financial relations; and social, cultural and human affairs (including immigration). Among these areas, plans for the second one, including a proposed free trade area in industrial goods by 2010, are most developed (Aghrout and Alexander 1997).

In June 2000 the European Commission argued that after its first five years the Barcelona process was basically correct in its conception and policies, but needed 'reinvigorating'(European Commission 2000). The Commission refrained from criticising the fundamentals of the partnership, based on bilateral association agreements, or the EU's political will to implement the partnership and focused instead specific areas of difficulty encountered in the first five years of the process.

In particular, the Commission argued, problems of the Middle East peace process had held back progress in regional cooperation. The negotiation and ratification of the framework bilateral agreements between the EU and the Mediterranean partners was too slow. Southern Mediterranean governments had not always supported EU perspectives on human rights and civil society. Economic reforms in the partner countries to modernise and open their economies needed acceleration. Poor disbursement rates in the MEDA aid programme (down to just 26%) were caused by complicated procedures in both the EU and Mediterranean partners, and failure of the southern partner countries to make appropriate social and economic reforms, including joining the World Trade Organization. The reforms envisioned by the Commission to address these problems included making aid disbursements more conditional upon economic reforms in the partner countries and retreating from regional programmes to sub-regional and country-based aid (European Commission 2000).

The economic effects of the free trade area in industrial goods between the EU and each non-member Mediterranean country (NMMC) which the Barcelona Process aims to establish by 2010 are far from certain. The centre and periphery (or hub and spoke) configuration (Tovias 1999) of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements between each Mediterranean country and the EU might have the effect of increasing the NMMCs' dependence on the EU. The oft-cited prediction that through the introduction of free trade in the Mediterranean basin one-third of NMMCs' industry will be lost; one-third damaged and one-third thrive

seems to be a ball-park guess rather than a careful projection (cf Lister 1997; Joffe' 1999). The EU's refusal to include agriculture or services in the free trade area, but to treat them only as subjects for gradual 'liberalisation' also suggests that the balance of benefits in the partnership is more heavily weighted in favour of the European side. Discussions on agricultural trade began in January 2000, but results are not expected until 2005 (Joffe' 2000).

The Nair Report to the European Parliament, adopted in 2001, noted the continuing attachment of the signatories to the Barcelona process, while seriously criticizing the lack of progress in almost all aspects of its performance and implementation, from strategic vision to aid management and the environment. The Report objected to the priority given to northern, central and eastern European candidate members of the EU and called for comparable technical assistance to be given to the Mediterranean NMMCs in reducing external debt and harmonizing investment laws. In institutional terms, the Nair Report proposed future development of the partnership and the political dialogue, including implementing the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum, adopting the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability and moving towards a new, more integrated association of Euro-Mediterranean states. In economic terms the Report decried the budget of 5.35 bn euros for 2000-2006 as inadequate, called for harmonizing the rules of origin, increasing South-South trade and monitoring the implementation of the proposed Euro-Mediterranean free trade area with regard to its social and environmental consequences.

The issue of migration was specifically highlighted, with the objective of moving towards joint management of migration in both host and sending countries (Nair 2001). The Report further argued that public awareness of the Partnership should be raised, and the small programmes for decentralised cooperation with civil society which the EU suspended in 1995 -Med-Urbs, Med-Campus and Med-Media - should not be discontinued but revived. Despite the substantial sums of aid invested by the EU,,434.5 m euros for 1995-99 in grants and 3,900 m in loans, the implementation and effectiveness of the Mediterranean aid programme (MEDA) has been widely criticised. The vast number of budget lines and aid instruments - from humanitarian aid to loans and risk capital - means that coordination is a problem. Aid management resided in different directorates of the Commission and in the semi-independent Common Service for External Relations. The backlog of unspent funds from allocations dating back to 1978 also complicated the situation (COWI 1998, x).

Reforms of the European aid programme in 2000 included geographical consolidation, with the Mediterranean region listed under Section B of the new Europe Aid Cooperation Office.

In per capita terms in 1996, EU aid to the Mediterranean at 1.4 US dollars is far more generous than the 0.7 dollars allocated to the low income and least developed countries, but substantially less than the 4.5 dollars accorded to Central and Eastern Europe and the former USSR (DFID 1998, 11). Recent changes link the disbursement of aid funds more closely to project performance. Lack of aid evaluation reports, lack of public information activities in the EU, and over centralised management of aid contributed to the perception in many quarters that MEDA aid had serious problems.

To examine the case of gender in a little more detail, non-discrimination on the basis of sex is included as a part of human in the political and security basket and "the key role of women in development" is briefly mentioned under "Economic cooperation" (and just above fish). But within the social, cultural and human

affairs section references to gender are conspicuously lacking (Barcelona 1997). Neither the Commission's 'Reinvigorating the Barcelona Process' document nor the Nair Report give more than the sketchiest reference to improving women's conditions or other gender-related objectives. This suggests that gender -along with other social issues - has not achieved mainstream importance in the two sides' conceptualisation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The Euro-Mediterranean project, the most ambitious in the modern history of the Mediterranean region, is based on an uneasy between the northern and southern EU member states; and between the EU and the NMMCs (Calabrese 1997). Another for the weakness of the Euro-Mediterranean links is the absence of a defined, credible, mutual threat (Lister 1988, Calabrese 1997). Without a definite external threat to both shores of the Mediterranean, Euro-Mediterranean solidarity won't take its place at the very top of EU concerns. Fears of immigration into the EU from the NMMCs, fears of the Islamic terrorism which rocked France in 1994 or of the Arab-Israeli conflict have not risen to the status of the perceived threat of the Soviet Union during the Cold War period, although the September 2001 attack on New York could change this.

Regardless of its potential, the vitality of the Barcelona pact remains in doubt. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership's high profile in 1995 may have raised expectations of its accomplishments to unsustainable heights. One of the reasons for the longevity of the EU's relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries through successive Yaounde' and Lome' Conventions dating back to 1963 was their low political profile and appearance of political neutrality. This has led the EU-ACP relationship to be described as 'the discreet entente' (Lister 1988). By contrast, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has suffered from high-level political problems such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Algerian civil war. The nature of the integrated Barcelona package meant that conflicts over an area like human rights or arms proliferation might spill over into others like trade or aid (COWI 1998).

On the political level, the well known frailty of the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP) contributed to the weakness of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. A former Greek minister summarised the problem: "The Barcelona process is based on the CFSP, but experience thus far has not shown that there is a CFSP." (Philip Morris Institute 1998, 9). Brauch, Marquina and Bihad (2000) argued that the re-emergence of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the late 1990s eclipsed all the regional Mediterranean negotiations in the context of the Barcelona process. Other inter-regional dialogues between the southern Mediterranean states and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO and the Western European Union have not fulfilled all regional political needs (Brauch, Marquina, Bihad 2000). The failure to integrate the southern Mediterranean countries as full members of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or to create a parallel Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean still leaves an institutional deficit.

But at least part of the reason for the indifferent performance of the Barcelona process (including the follow-up ministerial meetings in Malta in 1997, Palermo in 1998, Stuttgart in 1999 and Lisbon in 2000) lies in the EU's lack of a vigorous commitment to it. Returning to the theme of declaratory policy-making discussed earlier, the European Council of Development Ministers from 1981-95 approved some 66 separate resolutions covering issue areas such as relations with non-governmental organizations (ngos), poverty, gender, and environment. However, these were never prioritised or codified into an accomplishable package. (COWI 1998, ix).

III. Partnership: an elusive goal

The meaning of partnerships between sovereign states has recently been an academic subject of discussion (Lister 1988; Maxwell and Riddell 1998)). In the case of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, investigating the idea of partnership evokes a number of conceptual issues relating to participation and equality. Despite the difficulty of pinning down a precise political meaning of 'partnership', the usage of this terminology is widespread. 'Partnership' has flourished in EU jargon ever since it replaced "Association" as the EU's epithet for its relations with developing countries in the first Lome' Convention of 1975.

In the Euro-Mediterranean agreement, it is not surprising that 'partnership' emerges as a term which is vague rather than precisely defined. On one hand, the Commission found that 'a new spirit of partnership has been built between the EU and its Mediterranean partners" (European Commission 2000). But on the other hand this spirit of partnership was insufficiently frank in political dialogue on human rights, terrorism and migration. Furthermore, as noted above, the southern partners were insufficiently rapid in their negotiations and ratification of the foundational agreements, and insufficiently fast in their economic reforms. Moreover, the Barcelona process was little known to society at large (a partnership thus limited to state and supranational levels of actors). Nevertheless, the EU wanted to have a partnership where all of the signatories would participate in the process at some level, and work towards common goals. The EU wanted to offer the Mediterranean countries more than the a take it or leave it package of previous EU-Mediterranean policies (European Commission 2000).

At present the word 'partnership' can be (and often is) applied to almost any interstate relations - from the close links between EU partner states, the relations between Europe and the US in NATO, to the US plans for partnerships with poor countries. In fact, offering aid on a 'take it or leave it' basis was a charge more often associated with the Lome' Conventions than with the EU's Mediterranean policies.

In Africa under the US Trade and Development Act 2000. Nato's Partnership for Peace with formerly socialist central and eastern European countries has two opposing interpretations: one, that the scheme is a stepping stone or halfway house for full Nato membership; the other that it is an alternative or substitute for full Nato membership (Hoffmann 1998). The term 'asymmetrical' has rightly sometimes been added to partnership to indicate its unequal nature (Ravenhill 1981). Even more graphic is the description of partnership as stemming from the model the 'partnership' of the horse and its rider (Lister 1988). In any case, relations of equality seem much rarer in the contemporary interstate partnership arena than those of inequality. Politics has even been defined, not only as the science of government or the authoritative allocation of values in a political system, but as the permanent redistribution of inequalities among and within states (Hoffmann 1998). While the EU's system of development policies - including the Lome' Convention (now Cotonou Agreement) and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership- aim at reducing rather than just managing or redistributing inequalities, they have had limited success so far in this goal (Lister 1997; European Commission 1997b).

In spite of the vagueness of the term 'partnership' and the difficulty of defining it exactly (Maxwell and Riddell 1998), it does express for many people an ideal of

equality, equity, and harmonious cooperation. This ideal, for example in the case of the Lomé Convention, is "known by everybody never to have existed but to be necessary to create" (Sebegnou 1999). To borrow marketing's terminology, partnership could be called 'aspirational'.

In the case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the rhetoric and the ideal of partnership can be juxtaposed against the problems of inequality between the wealthy and powerful EU states and the poor countries of the southern Mediterranean littoral. Instead of partnership, the basic power configuration in the region is one of European domination or hegemony with Europe at the centre or hub of the system and the outlying Mediterranean countries as the periphery or spokes (Joffe 1997; Joffe 1999).

Francis Fukuyama emphasised the importance of trust in building social capital and promoting economic development (Fukuyama 1995). Such an argument could be future extended beyond national societies and to international relationships as regimes of trust or at least regimes based on predictable and consistent patterns of state behaviour (Lister 1997), for example between the EU and USA or between EU member states. To expand Fukuyama's model beyond its domestic basis, under conditions of international trust, for instance around the Mediterranean basin, economic prosperity would be a more likely outcome.

Another possible alternative to the over-used and underdefined term 'partnership', which incorporates the importance of a sense of trust was expressed by the Czech Republic's President Havel. He employed 'solidarity' rather than 'partnership' in his description of the reasons for NATO's fifty years of success. For Havel the key to NATO's longevity was not just the self-interest of the states concerned, not a mere market or trade relationship, but a special type of human culture and civilisation. Nato was "a commonwealth-in-solidarity of those sharing common values, with its principles of openness and solidarity being implied by the very nature of these values." (Havel 1999) Although NATO expanded its membership in 1999 to accept Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, it is not yet a commonwealth-in-solidarity of every country that wishes to join.

It would be hard to find a better case than the two shores of the Mediterranean to illustrate thousands of years of shared culture and civilisation (Braudel 1972). But so far the realisation of the Euro-Mediterranean region as a commonwealth-in-solidarity, or a partnership in more than name, is still in process.

IV. The Developing Countries - up and down on Europe's agenda

The EU's Forward Studies Unit's strategy paper on the future of North-South relations recognized the EU's long-term problem of inward orientation or self-absorption. But among its external priorities, the EU's two main areas of interest were Central and Eastern Europe, followed and North Africa and the Middle East. Along with these regional interests, global level political and economic concerns were also important (European Commission 1998). The same document mentioned the Lomé Convention with sub-Saharan Africa the Caribbean and Pacific very critically, citing a need for fundamental reforms. It referred to the lack of new ideas in development thinking and the problems of poor governance in developing countries, but was less forthcoming regarding the EU's responsibility towards developing countries or the changeability of its interests (Commission 1998). Faber and Roelfsema argued that there were three main reasons for the EU's declining interest in the Lomé agreements with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. These were: the shift of interest

towards eastern Europe and North Africa along with the fading of Europeans' sense of colonial responsibility; the downward pressure on the member states' aid budgets; and doubts about the effectiveness of the Lomé Convention in achieving development objectives (Faber and Roelfsema 1997).

A similar downward slide in EU interest in the southern Mediterranean was noted by a former director for the Mediterranean, Near and Middle East division in the European Commission. Eberhard Rhein argued that the EU had never given the Middle East its due importance. Furthermore, it was only shortly after the signing of the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 that the EU's priorities were already shifting away from the Mediterranean basin and towards other issues such as economic and monetary union, internal Community reform, Nato's eastern enlargement, and unemployment within the EU (Rhein 1997). The Mediterranean issue was 'off the boil' for Europe almost as soon as it was on.

Moreover, the backdrop of the end of the Cold War meant that the countries of the South lost much of their strategic importance. Increasing Eurocentrism caused the EU to devote less interest in the Mediterranean region. Indeed, regional crises the Mediterranean had become so insignificant that they 'may not demand immediate attention' (Pinar Tank 1998).

The Finnish Presidency of the EU in the latter half of 1999 made the renegotiation of the Lomé Convention, grandly styled by Finland's Minister for Development Cooperation as 'one of the finest and most extensive instruments of North-South cooperation in the world' (Hassi 1999) one of its top priorities - but did not give comparable importance to the Mediterranean region. In the rapidly changing field of European development interests, the Mediterranean region, in the second half of the 1990s, lost out.

The renegotiation of the Lomé Convention, begun in late 1998, and signed in June 2000 as the Cotonou Agreement, shifted the Union's interest more towards its traditional sphere of influence in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific. The Cotonou Agreement has been remade to a large extent in Europe's desired mould, creating free trade areas, eliminating or reducing the Convention's special commodity protocols and its STABEX export support scheme, while increasing conditionality on aid funds. This process rekindled EU development interest in the ACP, at least for the negotiations period.

Furthermore, in the 1990s, Europe has been heavily challenged by the ongoing civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa, and is addressing this issue through 'development track' diplomacy. That is, traditional development aid is being increasingly conceptualised in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, civil-military cooperation and overall sustainable peace-building (Lister 1999a). Whether the new emphasis on peace-building in aid relationships like the EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement will have significant results, is not yet clear.

It might appear that parts of northern Europe, occupied by other concerns, are almost experiencing a period of Euro-Mediterranean amnesia. It is worth noting that in late 1999 as Europe grappled increasingly with conflict issues in its post-Lomé policy, some of the longstanding conflicts of North Africa - between the West and Libya, and in the Algerian civil war - were gradually being settled, making the region a more fruitful area for EU cooperation or at least for a happier coexistence (Wright 1992; Khalaf and Huband 1999).

For the developing world, the EU's inward orientation and its waxing and waning of interest in different regions have had a destabilizing impact. Combined with concerns over the effectiveness problems of its development aid and trade regimes (Lister 1997), this has created uncertainty among its developing partners about the seriousness of the EU's commitment to them. And, as the next section shows, the EU's policy-making process has contributed to uncertain or unpredictable outcomes in development policy.

V. EU Development Policies and Hot Air

The EU has often been called a political dwarf or even a 'semi-power' (Hoffmann 1998) and its policies towards developing countries seem like ineffective semi-policies. Many studies of EU policy-making have focused on intra-European issues rather than international policies (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita and Organski 1994). The main point of agreement among analysts of EU policy-making is that the intricacy of EU institutions, the difficulty of assessing extra-institutional factors, (Bueno de Mesquita 1994) and even the secrecy of EU processes make policy analysis and prediction extremely difficult.

The EU's inbuilt tensions between national sovereignty and common policy, the complexity and diversity of its policy-making processes (W. Wallace 1995; Cram 1997), the problems of its institutional structure militate against clear and stable policies. William Wallace's description of how national policies have been coordinated and common EU policies "have emerged over extended periods from successive partial bargains, compromises, incremental drift, and responses to external demand over extended periods" (W. Wallace 1996, 440) implies that less than clear and coherent policies will normally emerge. Theorists of EU policy-making vie in their attempts to depict the 'unpredictable and multi-level policy-making environment' (Richardson 1996a, 4) of the EU, with its complex of Community, Union and 'negotiated order' policy-making systems (Smith 1996), and the need for not one, but a portfolio of linked theoretical models (Peterson and Bomberg 1999) to deal with the EU case.

Development policies are further complicated by the uneven mixture of donor interests and recipient needs in the policy process (Olsen 1998; Hughes 1999). Richardson identified a common perception that EU policies often seemed to come from nowhere (Richardson 1996a, 17). In the case of development policy this is almost inconceivable: policies come inter alia from the member states' longstanding interests, the policies of the international donor community (nowadays led by the so-called Washington Consensus of the World Bank and IMF), other international development institutions such as UNCTAD or UNICEF, national governments and non-governmental organizations (ngos). In the Mediterranean region, contemporary EU policies emerge not only from the immediate regional policy vacuum left by the end of the Cold War, but also from thousands of years' of contact, and sometimes conflict, between the northern and southern shores. Another assumption which has little to offer an analysis of development policy is the idea that we should try to understand the EU 'as a policy-making state' (Richardson 1996a, 11). This rather odd conception seems to ignore all the previously-mentioned complexity of the EU decision-making system. In harking back to a simpler (nation state) model, the intention is to emphasise the low politics or technical nature of much EU activity and de-emphasise its 'high politics' content. Such a view has little to offer an analysis of EU development policy in the Mediterranean basin- where the national interests and foreign policies of the southern European member countries, such as France,

Italy, Greece and Spain, and the foreign policy actor image of the EU play a central role. As Braudel's classic study of the Mediterranean region observed, Mediterranean influence travelled north on a few limited routes. The zone of Mediterranean culture and influence was concentrated near the shores of the sea (Braudel 1972). The Nair Report (2001) went as far as to argue that Euro-Mediterranean relations should be restructured to take account of the greater commitment of some EU members to the relationship than others; with some Mediterranean projects involving only the more committed EU states (Nair 2001).

Today, the complexity of contemporary EU policy-making extends further into the sub-national level. For instance, in the Mediterranean region the interests of the southern member states mentioned above in supporting an active EU policy may directly conflict with the lobbying of their own farmers against free trade in Mediterranean agricultural products (Hakura 1999).

EU policy-making can be classified into 4 broad types (Lowi 1972, W. Wallace 1996). The first, involving constituent policies, concerns what could be called basic or constitutional issues about the rules of the game. The second type are redistributive issues in which broad political coalitions, or parties, dispute the allocation of benefits. In the third type, distributive issues involve smaller sectoral interests and their interactions with policy-makers. Finally, regulatory issues focus on legal or semi-legal processes. Lowi noted the surprising complexity and variation of the US cases of policy-making he examined, and the difficulty of making meaningful generalizations (Lowi 1972). He was especially concerned about the category of distributive policies - an area where EU policies have been particularly important - because 'nothing open and democratic can come of them' (Lowi 1972, 308).

In the EU example, constituent issues involve the treaties or core priorities; redistributive issues pit governments against each other in important matters; distributive issues affect particular sectors such as the Common Agricultural Policy; and regulatory issues concern expert committees, epistemic communities or even the European Court of Justice (W. Wallace 1996). However, the common foreign and security policy of the EU, and its associated development policy (Lister 1997) fail to fit neatly into any of these categories.

When France made the association of its colonies to the European Community a *sine qua non* of Community membership, development policy was a constituent issue. In other cases, such as the negotiation of the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 or successive renegotiations of the Lomé Conventions, development policy might be characterised as a redistributive or even distributive issue. The subject of the EU's special banana import regime for the ACP countries or the execution of its aid programme might be categorised as regulatory. The desire of the EU to promote democracy in developing countries (Commission 1997a) would be better described as an ideological policy (cf. Van Den Bos 1994a). In another example, the Union's wish to be more present and visible globally (European Commission 1997a) doesn't fall clearly into any of Lowi's four categories. One of the main aims of the EU in the Mediterranean region, through the Barcelona process, is to upgrade the role of the EU throughout the region to the status of a major actor (Calabrese 1997) - even an equal of the United States.

As discussed below, the EU has another category of policy-making, the category of declaratory policies - or hot air.

The EU shares some of the characteristics of large corporations which develop ambitious mission statements, high social and cultural aspirations, and then fail

to implement them. International conferences which set development targets on reducing hunger or illiteracy, ban discrimination against women or protect the environment also often fail to have their decisions fully implemented (Lister 1999b, 1).

The problem of policy implementation is not new. Pressman and Wildavsky argued in 1973 that it wasn't a surprise when public policies didn't work; it was a surprise when they did (Richardson 1996b, 279). But leaving aside such caveats, it is true that the EU suffers more than many European national governments from the perception that its policies are largely mere rhetoric. Richardson identified the issue areas of the environment and women's rights as being among those where policy implementation is particularly ineffective (Richardson 1996b). In the development field, including the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, implementing the often vague objectives of the Commission and Member States, without excessive bureaucratic procedures and delays, is a major problem. Chris Patten, former UK minister for overseas development, and now European Commissioner for external relations, testified to the European Parliament's Committee on external relations in September 1999. He promised to stop the EU's tendency to produce unfulfilled initiatives and 'hot air', and to try to make the common foreign and security policy a reality. In a slightly outdated phrase for the post-BSE era, Mr. Patten argued the Commission should 'deliver the beef' rather than devising grandiose projects which were never implemented. He condemned the 'cynical' backlog of E18bn of unspent funds covering 14,500 projects. Nearly one-third of these poorly performing projects were over five years old (Norman 1999).

In summary, traditional studies of EU policy-making have largely focused on internal issues. They have uncovered complexity and diversity in domestic EU policy processes, but development policy's additional political and historical dimensions, make it difficult to fit into categories such as those designed by Lowi. The implementation of development policy, ideally incorporating inputs from developing countries, represents a still greater level of complexity or challenge for the EU's policymaking process.

VI Conclusion

This article has investigated the Euro-Mediterranean partnership established in Barcelona in 1995 and found a policy largely sidelined by events beyond its control. By 2000 the European Commission recognized the need to reinvigorate a faltering process. Although Kwarteng's (1997) assessment that the EU had never undertaken any initiative to address the underlying concerns and vulnerability of Africa seems over-harsh in the Euro-Mediterranean context, the implementation of the partnership has attracted numerous criticisms. The European Parliament's Nair Report of 2001 condemned many aspects of an unconvincing partnership based on narrow European self-interest. It declared: "The grand vision of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which was inaugurated in Barcelona in November 1995 has now given way to a negotiating process which lacks any genuine strategic perspective. It as though Europe is interested in the Mediterranean solely for security reasons.... and conceives its economic involvement solely as a means of opening up the markets of the countries of the South." (Nair 2001)

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership's political dialogue was overshadowed by the Middle East peace process, its economic reforms and aid disbursements were slow and controversial, and its impact on civil society was minimal. The imbalance of power in the relationship, with the EU setting the standards and limits, meant

that the ambitious process of cooperation among 27 signatories begun in Barcelona in 1995 could be termed a partnership in name only.

The EU's tendency to prioritize internal over external events, its lack of a credible foreign policy and its tendency to lose interest in its development policies also adversely affected the first five years of the Euro-Mediterranean relationship. The complexity of policy-making in the European Union has provided a rich source of material for academic analysts. But most of their analysis is based on internal EU policies. Even the complexity and uncertainties found by policy analysts like Van den Bos and Richardson in internal EU policymaking are dwarfed by the additional complexity of development policy. In the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, for instance, policymaking incorporates the international norms of the Washington consensus on development, the contemporary needs and the historical linkages of the signatory states, and the limitations of the European Union's political process.

In conclusion, it is hard to avoid seeing the considerable potential of Barcelona process as still unfulfilled. From an historical perspective, as Pierros, Meunier and Abrams (1999) observed, although the past forty years of EU efforts to develop an effective Mediterranean policy have not yet succeeded, in the longer term results may be more positive. Much remains to be done to establish the credibility of the partnership and fulfil the ambitions of the signatories to establish a stable zone of peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean region. As the European Commission's □Agenda 2000□ document argued "Active measures will have to be taken to reinforce links between the Union and its Mediterranean Partners. The stable development of the southern Mediterranean rim is a challenge of ever increasing proportions" (European Commission, 1997a, 35). There is no doubt that the European Commission and the southern EU member states recognize the challenge of the Mediterranean region: the doubt remains about whether the challenge can be met.

Footnotes

1. The EU has partly stepped into this gap with anti-terrorist aid to the Palestinian Authority under the common foreign and security policy (Council Joint Action, 13 April 2000) and by joining the US, Japan and Norway in propping up the Palestinian Authority after the withdrawal of Israeli funding (Taylor, S. (2001) "EU ministers to tackle Palestinian funding" *European Voice*, vol. 7 , no. 7, 15-21 February).

2. The signatory countries of the Barcelona Declaration are: Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Spain, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, the Netherlands, the UK, Syria, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, the Palestinian Authority - also the EU Council of Ministers and Commission.

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