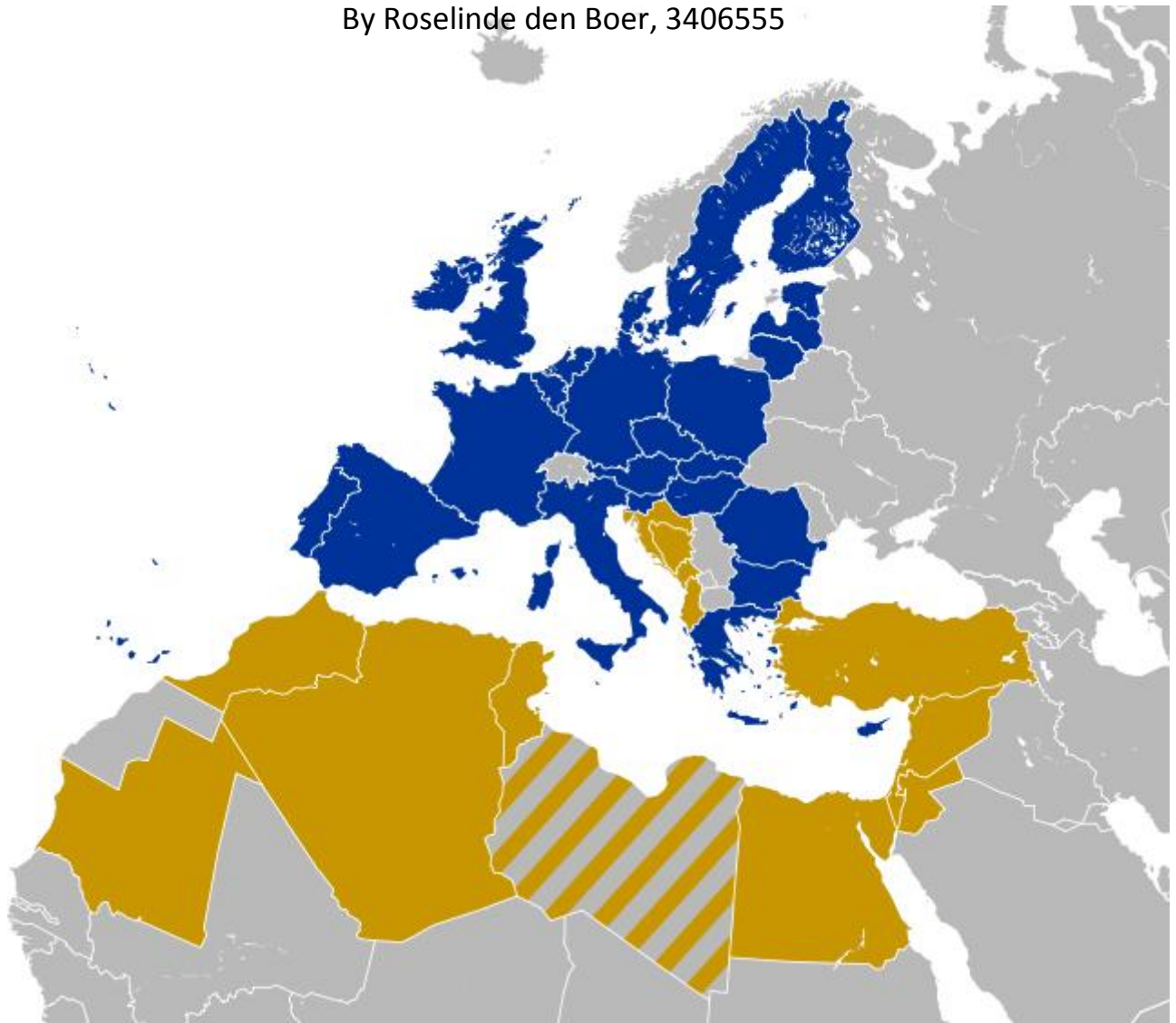


The Union for the Mediterranean

Will Sarkozy's initiative move out of the deadlock?

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Gloassary

List of acronyms

ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMEP	Euro-Mediterranean Energy Partnership
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EMPA	Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
IR	International Relations
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
MP	Mediterranean Partner
MPC	Mediterranean Partner Country
MS	Member state of the EU
MSP	Mediterranean Solar Plan
MU	Mediterranean Union
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
SMC	Southern Mediterranean Country
SWM	Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean
WEG	Water Expert Group
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean

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Introduction

The launch of a new partnership

Launched at a summit in Paris on 13 July 2008, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was created 'to transform the Mediterranean region, including the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity' (Paris Declaration 2008, 8). The UfM is a continuation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) – better known as the Barcelona Process – as it builds on the Barcelona Declaration (1995) and its objectives of achieving peace, stability and security. It is a multilateral partnership with a view to increase the potential for regional integration and cohesion (Paris Declaration 2008, 8).

However, soon after its launch, the UfM had to deal with some serious obstacles. Firstly, Israel responded to the institutional framework with great concerns, fearing that the Arab League, due to its insistence on a seat, would be accorded a bigger role in the plan than it had been given in the Barcelona Process. In other words, 'Israel feared spill over from the conflict into the proceedings of the UfM' (Hollis 2011, 101). According to Rosemary Hollis, a professor of Middle East Policy Studies, Israeli concerns were justified, as the Arab states would use every opportunity, including the UfM, 'to voice their frustrations with regard to Israel's continued occupation of the Arab lands captured in 1967' (Ibidem). As a compromise, the Arab League was given permanent observer status. Secondly, during the winter of 2008-2009, all meetings – except those of the joint permanent committee – were cancelled due to the crisis in Gaza (Kauch and Youngs 2009, 965). Israel's assault on Gaza, followed by the new, more hard-line Israeli government, enhanced Arab resistance of 'normalizing' relations with Israel (Hollis 2011, 101).

Two years later, in 2010, Israeli-Palestinian tensions again resulted in the postponement of UfM meetings. Its second summit, scheduled in June, was postponed to November. The Egyptian and French co-presidency, together with hosting country Spain, decided to postpone the summit because they wanted to provide the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) with the opportunity to gain momentum. Unofficially, however, Arab leaders had threatened to boycott the summit if Israeli minister of foreign affairs Avigdor Lieberman would attend the meeting (EU-MED 2010). Earlier that year, the new foreign minister dismissed Hilary Clinton's call to bring an end to Israel's settlement expansion in Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). Shortly before the rescheduled summit was supposed to take place, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his approval of 1,300 new settlement homes in occupied East Jerusalem. Top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat stated that the settlement announcement had 'shut down all doors to negotiations' (Ditz 2010). Egyptian co-president Hosni Mubarak felt he had to bow to Egyptian and Arab public opinion, and together with France and Spain he decided to suspend the summit sine die (EU-MED 2010).

The election of Avigdor Lieberman as minister of foreign affairs also led to the postponement of the planned UfM meeting at foreign ministers level in Istanbul in November 2009. In a document of the European Parliament, it was stated that

The meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers which was to have been held in Istanbul on November 24-25, 2009 has had to be postponed owing to a boycott by the Arab States, protesting against the Israeli position in the Middle East peace process (European Parliament 2009, 3).

Unofficially, however, the postponement was explained by the fact that an Egypt official failed to invite the Israeli minister because of Lieberman's insulting remarks made earlier against the Egyptian co-president. Lieberman told Mubarak to 'go to hell,' because Mubarak had refused to visit Israel: "Mubarak never agreed to come here as president. He wants to talk to us? Let him come here. He doesn't want to talk to

us? He can go to hell” (Ilan et al. 2009). The incident escalated, so that former Israeli president Shimon Peres and former foreign minister Ehud Olmert issued an official apology.

As noted, the Union for the Mediterranean had a rather rough start, seemingly attributable to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hollis states that ‘in all respects the UfM is entangled in the institutional arrangements that frame the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP)’ (Hollis 2011, 100). She explains that whenever the MEPP is experiencing difficulties, this will be felt in the UfM (Ibidem). However, the question remains why the UfM is being held ‘hostage by the Arab-Israeli conflict’ (Seeberg 2010, 296).

In this thesis, analysis is focused on the latest Euro-Mediterranean initiative. Earlier attempts to increase Euro-Mediterranean cooperation were embedded in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the parallel institutions of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Within the framework of the UfM, Euro-Mediterranean relations were upgraded to a more equal partnership, visible in the readjustments of the institutional set-up. Also novel to the UfM is its focus on technical development, compared to political reform and market convergence. According to this new ‘functionalist’ approach, development precedes political integration.

This thesis conducts research on the effectiveness and prospects of the Union for the Mediterranean. In order to do so, it analyses both novelties of the initiative i.e. its institutional set-up and approach, and examines to what extent they are being sensitive to the Middle East conflict. The first chapter provides background information, explaining how the Union for the Mediterranean was created. The second chapter explores the three main institutional novelties of the UfM, assessing to what extent they contribute to increased Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. The third chapter deals with the novel functionalist approach of the UfM, assessing the prospect of technical cooperation in the short term, and political integration in the long run of the initiative. Two policy areas are assessed. Firstly, research is conducted on ‘water management,’ one of the least successful fields of cooperation of the UfM. Secondly, this thesis analyses the ‘Mediterranean Solar Plan’ (MSP), the ‘flagship’ of the UfM. Indeed, until now, the UfM is not making the progress it envisions in its official text documents. The question remains however, why not? This thesis examines why the UfM has reached an impasse at the political as well as the technical level, providing prospects for the days to come of this latest Euro-Mediterranean initiative.

Some scholars (Aliboni and Ammor 2009, Johansson-Nogués 2011, Schlumberger 2011) attribute this lack of progress to the institutional set-up of the UfM. They argue that the institutional novelties of the initiative, compared to the Barcelona Process limit its activities to issues that are considered non-sensitive to both sides of the Mediterranean, excluding the prospect for profound political reform. Others (Khatib 2010, Hollis 2011), however, claim that the UfM is also unable to deal with non-sensitive issues, as the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict has also ‘politicized the UfM at the expense of the functionalist aspirations of its architects’ (Hollis 2011, 99). Accordingly, they claim that unless ‘high politics’ is dealt with first, ‘low politics’ can hardly proceed (Khatib 2010, 43).

The remainder of this introduction assesses the existing body of literature on the Union for the Mediterranean. Firstly, it examines the literature on the added value of the UfM institutional novelties. Secondly, it assesses the literature that focuses on the functionalist approach of the UfM.

Upgrading Euro-Mediterranean relations

Before assessing the literature on the added value of the UfM institutional novelties, it is worth noting that the initiator of the UfM, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, in the first place wanted to create a new institutional framework to deal with Mediterranean issues, instead of building on the Barcelona Process. Membership of this new body would have been limited to the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. German Chancellor Angela Merkel strongly opposed this proposal, and after some inter-European haggling,

it was decided that the initiative would build on the *acquis* of the Barcelona Process and that it would include the EU as a whole to prevent internal fraction (Emerson 2008, 2).

However, the Barcelona Process was often criticized for not being a partnership at all, as the non-European partners did not have an equal voice within the initiative (Bechev and Nicolaidis 2008, Schmid 2002). Therefore, the architects of the UfM tried to upgrade Euro-Mediterranean relation by increasing the sense of co-ownership among the UfM Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs). To do so, they readjusted the institutional structure of the UfM (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 21).

According to Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués (2011), a member of the Observatory of European Foreign Policy, however, these institutional changes did not increase the sense of co-ownership in the southern Mediterranean. On the contrary, she concludes that 'a host of obstacles stand in the way of making inroads into co-ownership in Euro-Mediterranean relations' (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 21).

Three institutional novelties were designed to increase the sense of co-ownership among the non-European members. Firstly, instead of meeting at the ministerial level, top level meetings within the UfM are to be attended by the heads of state and government. They are to meet biennially, with the objective to provide political guidance for the UfM and establishing a two-year work program consisting of prioritized areas of cooperation (Paris Declaration 2008, 13). However, summits of this kind are usually the first thing to be cancelled in situations of interstate tension, as occurred twice in 2010 with the postponement of the second summit of heads of state and government.

Another institutional novelty that was launched at the Paris summit is the UfM co-presidency composed of one EU co-president and one non-European co-president. However, as Schlumberger (2011, 142) notes, both co-presidents are in the position to be potential veto-players with respect to any suggestion made by the other co-president. The UfM cannot become a vehicle for any sort of meaningful political reform, as Arab authoritarian leaders would always try to boycott any proposed political reform that could threaten their position. Accordingly, Schlumberger states that the 'institutional reform has created an instrument for Arab regimes that make it yet easier to avoid any reform of domestic autocratic governance' (Ibidem).

The secretariat, launched in July 2010 and based in Barcelona, is yet another institutional novelty. As the Union for the Mediterranean can be seen as a 'project of projects' (Schlumberger 2011, 144), the secretariat works on identifying concrete projects that can be launched in the framework of the UfM, as well as to find the money to sponsor such projects (Paris Declaration 2008, 15). There are six priority areas identified by the Paris Declaration: de-pollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land highways, civil protection, the development of alternative energies (especially solar energy), higher education, research and the Euro-Mediterranean University, and the Mediterranean Business development initiative (Paris Declaration 2008, 19-20). However, the secretariat statutes are vague, it has no firm budget and with highly complex thematic briefs requiring expertise and manpower much beyond the limited human resources currently pledged to the Barcelona-based body, it is unclear how the secretariat can acquire more centrality (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 29).

'Development first, politics later'

As explained in the previous section, the Union for the Mediterranean is considered as a 'project of projects' in which technical cooperation precedes political integration. Until now, few scholars have analysed the effectiveness of this approach. Kauch and Youngs (2009, 964) assert that 'the initiative is widely hailed by Mediterranean officials as ushering in a welcome focus on pragmatic and technical cooperation, unencumbered by sensitive political issues'. Khatib (2010, 43), on the contrary, argues that politics is actually of great concern. He specifies this claim by stating that the UfM is political 'to the extent that it risks falling hostage to politics' (Khatib 2010, 43). Khatib concludes that the UfM is embedded in

such 'a highly politicized context that the 'development first, politics later' approach is seriously stuck' (Khatib 2010, 43). Obviously, Khatib refers with his claim to the Arab-Israeli conflict that has been a major obstacle to the UfM.

Stephen C. Calleya of the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies also states that this functionalist approach cannot be successful. According to him, efforts by the countries of the Mediterranean to integrate into viable international system have met with limited success because the countries bordering the Mediterranean do not prioritize Mediterranean issues(Calleya 2009, 49-50). More specifically, the Mediterranean countries lack the political will to cooperate on a technical level, as they all have strategic commitments outside the Mediterranean. Schlumberger argues that also 'the EU has its own policy priorities (preventing terrorism, combating illegal migration and transnational organized crime, etc.)'(Schlumberger 2011, 149).

Before turning to the analytical chapters of this thesis, it is useful to understand how the Union for the Mediterranean was created. The next chapter explains how Sarkozy's initial proposal eventually led to the Union for the Mediterranean it is today.

Chapter One

How the Union for the Mediterranean was created

A French initiative

The proposal for a Mediterranean Union came from French President Nicolas Sarkozy. According to Sarah Wolff, a research fellow at the Clingendael institute, there were three elements that led to the creation of the UfM. Firstly, disappointment played an important role, as it turned out that the Barcelona Process proved to be unable to accomplish its pre-set goals. Secondly, as 'high politics,' i.e. the Arab-Israeli conflict, stood in the way to reach these goals, the architects of the UfM drew up a plan with the intention to avoid these issues from obstructing the initiative. Thirdly, France aimed to 'increase European influence in the region as part of a strategic plan to curb illegal immigration and terrorism in Europe' (Wolff 2011).

Initially, Sarkozy proposed a replacement for the, in his eyes, failed Barcelona Process rather than a continuation. What happened? This chapter explains how the Union for the Mediterranean was created to what it is today. It examines the intentions behind French President Nicolas Sarkozy's initial proposal, it explains European reactions to the initiative and it analyses some of its strong and weak points compared to the final result: a continuation of the Barcelona Process.

Sarkozy pronounced his idea for a Mediterranean Union (MU) during his electoral campaign speech in Toulon, on the 7th of February 2007. He asserted that 'Barcelona was good, because the North helped the South, but.. [it] was not a partnership between the people. Barcelona was a mistake because the North-South dialogue was just as it had been after decolonization' (France 24 2008). Yet, the initiative went largely unnoticed, until the newly elected president repeated his idea for a Mediterranean Union in his first speech after his electoral victory (Bennhold 2007). Sarkozy declared that 'the time has come to build together a Mediterranean Union that will form a link between Europe and Africa (...) What was done for the Union for Europe sixty years ago, we are going to do today for the Union of the Mediterranean' (BBC News 2007). Originally, Sarkozy envisioned the project as a substitute for the failing Barcelona Process, strictly limited to the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, including Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain.

Following the example of the European Coals and Steel Community, the Mediterranean Union would focus on concrete areas such as sustainable development, energy, transport and water supply (Cianciara 2009: 10). The plan was drawn up by Henri Guaino, an advisor and speech writer of Sarkozy with strong neo-Gaullist aspirations. He envisaged an association of sovereign states led by France, operating independently from the Brussels-based institutions (Bechev and Nicolaidis 2008, 15). The main political objective of the UfM was to build a privileged partnership between France and the countries of the Southern bank of the Mediterranean (Ibidem).

According to Christian Lequesne and Olivier Rozenberg (2008) of the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, there were probably different concerns behind Henri Guaino's idea. Firstly, the initiative was supposed to balance the so-called political influence of Germany in Central and Eastern Europe after the enlargements of 2004 to 2007. Secondly, it had to contribute to a normalization of relations between Israel and some moderate Arab countries, and finally, it was meant to find an alternative solution to the full EU membership of Turkey, which was strongly opposed by President Sarkozy (Lequesne and Rozenberg, 2008, 21).

Timo Berh and Ruth Hanau Santini (2007) of the School of Advanced International Studies also assess Sarkozy's intentions behind his proposal for yet another multilateral organization in the Mediterranean, especially with regard to the implications of this decision for the Barcelona Process.

According to them, there are three mutually non-exclusive reasons why Sarkozy may have proposed a Mediterranean Union. Firstly, the MU might have been intended to re-establish France's position in the region. In this case, his aim would have been to advance Gaullist notions of grandeur and international rank, rather than contributing to a solution of region problems. The MU and the EMP would have become overlapping and competing institutions, enabling southern members to play on these institutional rivalries to escape unpopular EU policies. Also, it would have risked a vertical split between the Union's Mediterranean countries and the rest of Europe, as expressed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Berh and Santini 2007).

Secondly, if economic consideration prevailed in Sarkozy's plan, the MU would have undermined the liberalizing drive of the EMP. At the same time, however, an economic union could also have stimulated the much needed investment in the southern Mediterranean. Economic considerations, therefore, would have had a mixed impact on the southern Mediterranean, while the capacity and legitimacy of the EMP would have been diminished (Ibidem).

Thirdly, if national security would have been France's primary concern, curbing immigration and greater police and counterterrorism cooperation with the autocratic regimes of the southern Mediterranean would have been the result. This would have implied a duplication of policies of the European Commission and the Justice and Home Affairs pillar. Also, it would have diminished Europe's claim to defence democracy and human rights in the southern Mediterranean, and therefore it would have had a negative impact for both EU competences and democratization of southern Mediterranean states (Ibidem).

In short, Berh and Hanau Santini conclude that any reason for the creation of a Mediterranean Union according to Sarkozy's initial plan would have undermined EU competences, without delivering visible improvements on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

The Europeanization of the initiative

Unsurprisingly, Sarkozy's initial proposal faced major criticism from many European capitals. Policy analysts have pointed out that Sarkozy's proposal 'would have implied marginalizing the EU's major policy investments in the region (Barcelona Process and the European Neighborhood policy), while 'privatizing' the essential initiative for this sphere of EU policy for a sub-set of member states' (Emerson 2008, 1).

When the proposal for a Mediterranean Union was launched by the Elysée Palace in the spring of 2008, it was rapidly stopped by the opposition of Angela Merkel. The German Chancellor contested a project which was clearly competing with the existing Barcelona Process and did not include all EU member states (Lequesne and Rozenberg, 2008, 21). According to Merkel, Sarkozy's plan could threaten the "core" of the European Union (Mahony 2007). At a conference in Berlin on 5 December 2007, she argued that 'this could create a situation I would qualify as dangerous. A situation could be created where Germany would be drawn to Central and Eastern Europe and France to the Mediterranean. This would create tension I would not like' (Emerson 2008, 2).

Several other member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament supported German reluctance. The European Commission feared that the Mediterranean Union would undermine the twelve-year-old Barcelona Process, aimed at promoting dialogue between the EU and ten countries on in North Africa and the Middle East (Mahony 2007). According to Dimitar Bechev and Kalypso Nicolaidis of the European Studies Centre 'it was not reasonable to exclude member states, given that they would have to bear the consequences of the French diplomacy's choices' (Bechev and Nicolaidis 2008, 15). The initiative would depend on resources from the EU budget rather than independently generated funding. Also, cooperation in various technical fields would entail harmonization with the EU *acquis*, an agenda already implemented by the European Commission through the Association Agreements and the network of bilateral Action Plans underpinning the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Finally, as the Mediterranean

Union would be an alternative to the Barcelona Process, France had to put a lot of effort into convincing Spain, the original promoter of the Barcelona Process (Bechev and Nicolaidis 2008: 15).

German persistence eventually led to a compromise agreed upon by the heads of states and government at the European Council spring meeting on 13 March 2008. The compromise solution was to acknowledge the French desire to form a Union for the Mediterranean, while at the same time ensuring that the non-Mediterranean EU members would also fully participate in the initiative (Geiger 2008, 1). The initiative was renamed "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" in order to emphasize the aspects of its continuity and EU framework-basis.

Eduard Soler i Leche (2008) analyses to what extent the French-German compromise led to an improvement of the Union for the Mediterranean. Firstly, he explains what were the benefits of the MU in its original form. He names three. Firstly, as Sarkozy proposed a 'Union of Projects', members could become involved in projects that mostly interested them or those in which they were most competent. This flexibility would have facilitated working at a multilateral level without having to wait for the agreement of all members. Secondly, the proposal tried to mobilize the funds of large companies for the execution of these projects. The public-private partnership was an interesting way of implementing general interests projects in which companies could obtain legitimate and reasonable profits. Thirdly, the model proposed by Sarkozy prioritized areas of cooperation in which issues of geographical proximity were a fundamental element.

However, Solar i Lecha also identifies four major weak points of the initial proposal. Firstly, the fact that it was a French proposal gave rise to suspicion among both France's European partners and in some countries of the southern Mediterranean. They perceived the initiative as an instrument to advance French grandeur and its international rank. Also, the proposal was inconsistent with European foreign policy, as human rights issues were of minor concern. This would only serve the interests of authoritarian states, and not its people. Another weak point of the initial proposal was that it would have led to unnecessary overlapping institutions. Finally, it could have promoted "imperialist" whims. If France would have claimed that the Mediterranean is for the Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Europe could have said the same about that area.

As said earlier, inter-European haggling resulted in a watered-down Union for the Mediterranean, correcting some of the mentioned negative points. The exclusion of the Central, Eastern and Northern European countries, the overlapping institutions, and the inconsistency with the principles and action of the European foreign policy have been corrected. However, according to Soler i Lecha, there was still considerable ambiguity with regard to how the projects would be executed and evaluated. Firstly, due to a lack of time, a certain haste and a lack of transparency may arise when it comes to gathering, evaluating and approving cooperation projects for the coming years.

Also, for the southern and eastern Mediterranean, the proposed Union for the Mediterranean may have lost some of its appeal by the compromise (Soler i Leche 2008, 33-36). According to Gillespie (2008), 'one problem for France, following its inevitable compromises with other EU member states, is that its credibility may suffer in the eyes of North African countries'. In Sarkozy's speech in Constantine on 5 December 2007, he promised Algeria a uniquely privileged status: 'As in the recent past when France offered to Germany to build the Union or Europe on Franco-German friendship, France is coming today to propose to Algeria to build the Union of the Mediterranean on the basis of Franco-Algerian friendship' (Gillespie 2008, 285). Ever since, Sarkozy suffered a loss of face in the eyes of his southern neighbours. The New York Times quoted a senior official from a southern country saying that 'Sarkozy's original plan was nice, but there's not much left of it' (Erlanger and Benn 2008 in Seeberg 2010, 295). Also Libyan leader Moammar Mohammed al-Qadhafi stated at a press conference in Tripoli on 11 June 2008, that the 'Union

was imposed on us and it would not represent the interests of the Arab or African people' (The Tripoli Post 2008).

A paralyzed Union for the Mediterranean

As said earlier, the Barcelona was a failure in the eyes of Sarkozy. The tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process indeed marked a dark page in the history of the initiative, as only two out of fourteen leaders of the southern Mediterranean showed up at the meeting, largely attributable to the Middle East conflict.

Five years later, the upgraded version of the Barcelona Process is facing similar problems. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a source of disagreement within the UfM. The second summit of the initiative, scheduled on 7 June 2010 in Barcelona, was postponed to November the same year. Officially, it was stated that more time was needed for the peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians – that had started that month – to be successful. Unofficially, however, the Spanish media repeatedly stated that many Arab governments had threatened to boycott the summit if Israel's minister of foreign affairs Avigdor Liebermann would attend the meeting (EU-MED 2010). On 15 November, the two co-presidencies and Spain decided to postpone the second summit sine die, as the stagnation of the Middle East Peace Process would make it impossible for the summit scheduled for 21 November in Barcelona to enjoy 'satisfactory participation' (La Moncloa 2010).

The direct peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians came to a halt when Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the construction of 1,300 new settlements in East Jerusalem (Bell 2010) Even though Egypt was at peace with Israel at that time, the Egyptian co-presidency under Housni Mubarak called for a freeze of all meetings of the UfM. Mubarak clearly felt that he had no option but to bow to Egyptian and Arab public opinion, enraged by Israel's destructive war (Europafrica 2009).

It is clear that the initiative is highly receptive to the Arab-Israeli conflict. As said in the introduction, some scholars attribute this to the institutional set-up of the UfM. Therefore, the next chapter analyses to what extent the institutional set-up of the Union for the Mediterranean is decisive for this vulnerability. Compared to the Barcelona Process, the architects of the UfM created some institutional novelties to deal with power asymmetries between the north and the south. However, the question remains whether political equality in fact increases cooperation.

Chapter Two

An institutional deadlock?

Institutional novelties

The most common complaint about previous Euro-Mediterranean relations voiced by the southern partners was about the power asymmetry between the EU and its partners and its disadvantageous consequences on co-operation (Soler i Lecha, 2008). In particular, they complained that they were not sufficiently or timely enough informed with regard to the agenda of the Euro-Med Committee. Also, the 'joint statement' issued after ministerial conferences was authored by the EU presidency and often included 'items which were not truly shared by all members' (Aliboni 2009, 1). According to critics from both sides of the Mediterranean, the institutional set-up was not representative enough of southern Mediterranean partner concerns (Schmid 2002). This chapter analyses how the architects of the UfM dealt with this complaint and how their readjustments of the initiative led to its vulnerability to politics.

To resolve the issue of inequality, some institutional readjustments were introduced into Sarkozy's Union for the Mediterranean to increase the sense of co-ownership and the political status of the partnership. However, what was actually meant by co-ownership remained rather vague (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 23). Sarkozy wanted to increase co-ownership by laying the foundation of a political, economic and cultural Union founded on the principles of *strict equality* between the EU-27 and its Mediterranean partners (Goldirova 2007, emphasis added). Thus, 'co-ownership' quickly emerged as a distinctive feature of the new initiative, as it would 'embrace functional parity on agenda-setting and decision making for all partners and at all levels of the UfM in the most classic sense of intergovernmental co-operation based on consensus' (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 23).

Instead of meeting at the ministerial level, at the Paris summit in 2008 it was decided that the heads of state and government were to meet biennially with the objective to provide political guidance for the UfM and to establish a two-year work programme consisting of prioritized areas of cooperation (Paris Declaration 2008, 13). Also, the UfM co-presidency was launched at the summit, that would be responsible for calling and chairing all summits and other meetings. Finally, there was agreed upon the establishment of a joint secretariat working on the identification of concrete projects, as well as to find the money to sponsor such projects (Ibidem, 15). This chapter analyses to what extent this new institutional structure (see Figure. 1) can bring about the desired reform on a technical level as well as on the political level.

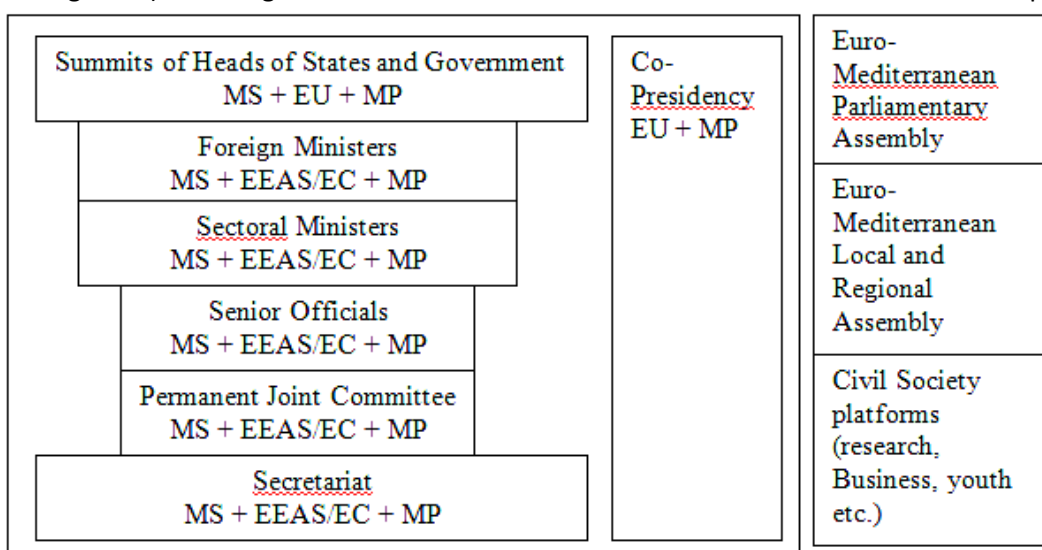


Figure 1. Institutional set-up (Johansson-Nogués 2011)

Novelty # 1: Summits of Heads of State and Government

At the Paris summit in July 2008, all 43 heads of state and government agreed upon upgrading relations and co-operation structures in the renewed Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. New institutional structures were established which would contribute to achieving the political goals of the initiative. Firstly, the Paris summit launched the practice of high-level meetings among the heads of state and government from the 43 partner countries and relevant representatives from the European institutions. This novelty was designed to enhance the visibility of the partnership and to create a forum for sharper strategic determination in comparison with the EMP (Gillespie 2008, 281).

The heads of state and governments are to meet once in two years with the aim to provide political guidance for the UfM and to establish a two-year work programme consisting of six key areas of co-operation (Paris Declaration 2008, 13). Ministers of foreign affairs are to meet every year to review the progress in the implementation of the summit conclusions and prepare the next summit meetings and, if necessary, approve new projects (Ibidem).

The decision to meet at the highest level of state and government gives the EU's Mediterranean partners more political importance, creating a sense of co-ownership among the MPCs. Also, in most partner countries political initiative lies not in the hands of its ministers, but in those of the heads of state and government. As explained by Johansson-Nogués, 'their personal involvement may facilitate cooperation by the postulation of the commitment from the highest level of state authority to support the implementation' (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 25).

However, due to this institutional adaptation, the UfM is rather representing the *governments* instead of the *societies* of its members (Schlumberger 2011, 140). In the majority of the Arab cases this means that the UfM is representing the interests of the heads of state, instead of representing the will of their populations. Indeed, many Arab governments and heads of state are ruling over populations who are deeply disenchanted with their autocratic leaderships, as has become clear during the Arab Spring of 2011. Rather than focusing on democracy and human rights, the UfM emphasizes on joint technical cooperation. As Oliver Schlumberger of the Institute of Political Science points out, 'Arab decision makers increasingly realize that the practical exclusion of societal forces as autonomous actors from the UfM framework is in their best interest.' So, while their stance towards the Arab-Israeli conflict remains unchanged (normalizing of Arab-Israeli relations only *with peace*), at least some Arab regimes have become strong supporters of the initiative (Schlumberger 2011, 141).

According to Gillespie (2008), the problem of these summits relate to their size and geometry. With the inclusion of all 27 member states of the EU, a great number of countries (not to mention egos) and a broad range of national agendas are involved. He explains that 'having large numbers of people around the table, on a regular basis, would not be conducive to more strategic decision making (a concern often expressed by Sarkozy himself when faced with requests that he broaden his original plan). Greater dynamism would demand fewer participants' (Gillespie 2008, 282). Therefore, Gillespie suggests an 'open troika' (consisting of the EU presidency, the European Commission and only those member states that decided to attend) to be used in some fields of policy deliberations where the issues are more technical or of real interest only to a limited number of countries (Gillespie 2008, 282).

Another flaw in the institutional adjustment is the fact that the heads of state and government are much more vulnerable to interstate tensions compared to ministers of foreign affairs, especially considered that summits of this kind are usually the first thing to call off when there are interstate tensions. Hollis notes that the 'elevation of north-south dialogue to state level increases the likelihood that the initiative will become hostage to the conflict' (Hollis 2011, 100). This became apparent in 2010, when the second summit of heads of states and government was postponed from June to November, and eventually got

cancelled due to the revived Arab-Israeli conflict. Initially, the Arab nations had threatened not to attend the meeting if Israeli minister of foreign affairs Avigdor Lieberman would show up. Later, Egyptian co-president Housni Mubarak decided to cancel the November meeting out of solidarity with the Palestinians (EU-MED 2010).

As the Arab-Israeli dispute is unlikely to settle any time soon, the architects of the UfM mistakenly placed the heads of state and government at the top of the initiative. As stated by Wolff, the UfM is depending too much on this inter-governmental level. 'Instead, transnational actors should be accorded a bigger role to avoid these inter-state tensions' (Wolff 2011). Compared to the Barcelona Process, the UfM seems even more vulnerable to the shifting winds of the MPCs.

Novelty # 2: Co-Presidency

Another novelty that was launched at the Paris summit is the UfM co-presidency. During the Barcelona Process, the EU presidency and the European Commission presided over Euro-Mediterranean meetings. At the launch of the UfM, the co-presidency, composed of one EU co-president and one southern partner co-president, was charged with the task of calling and chairing all summits, all ministerial meetings, senior official's meetings, and when possible, other experts or ad hoc meetings within the initiative (Paris Declaration 2008, 14).

The UfM co-presidency was presented as the remedy for power asymmetry between the European and non-European countries bordering the Mediterranean. France and Egypt assumed the first term of the UfM co-presidency. According to the Marseille Declaration (2008, 4), the EU part of the co-presidency 'must be compatible with the external representation of the European Union in accordance with the Treaty provisions in force'. Aliboni and Ammor explain that 'before the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on the first of December 2009, this meant that the EU president was appointed by rotation, while the non EU-president is selected by consensus. The EU rotation system was embedded within a consolidated institution, whereas the rotation rule could be easily disrupted on the southern shore of the Mediterranean by Arab refusal to have an Israeli president, or other forms of opposition present within the non-EU grouping' (Aliboni and Ammor 2009, 6). With the Lisbon Treaty in force, the EU president is elected. Despite this change, the source of legitimacy between the EU co-president and the non-EU co-president remains different. The presidency on the EU side will correspond to the president of the European Council and the president of the European Commission, whereas the non-EU co-president will remain the same (Ibidem).

Another asymmetry between the two co-presidents is related to the duration of the presidencies. The Paris Declaration and the Marseille Statement envisage a two-year (non-renewable) term for the non-EU co-president, whereas all it says about the term of the EU co-president is that is 'must be compatible with external representation of the European Union in accordance with the Treaty provisions in force' (Marseille Declaration 2008, 4), as said earlier, before the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, this meant that the duration of the term for the EU co-president was only six months, while its counterpart would be in force for two years. The Lisbon Treaty changed the term of the EU president from six months to two-and-a-half-years, which means that there is still an asymmetry between the duration of both co-Presidencies. As Aliboni and Ammor (2009, 6) point out, 'over time, the mandates of the two co-Presidencies will hardly be simultaneous'. The first co-presidency, however, was an exception as the ministers in Marseille accepted president Sarkozy's plea for a two-year mandate, in parallel with the Egyptian co-President Housni Mubarak.

Aliboni and Ammor (2009, 7) conclude that 'the differing duration of the two co-presidents' term, coupled with differences in their source of legitimacy, may fail to foster a concrete political synergy between the two presidents, and thus, ultimately prevent an effective coordination of the UfM activities'. It is too early to prove their argument, but the fact that France and Egypt have not been able to transfer their

power to the next co-presidency yet, due to the postponed summits, is pointing at serious difficulties within the institutional structure of the UfM.

Another point about the co-Presidency of UfM is made by Schlumberger. He notes that 'according to the rules of the 'UfM game', decisions have to be taken in consensus between the two co-Presidents and within the Secretariat, effective policies will only be devised (and more importantly, implemented!) in field where political commonalities exist and views on both sides of the Mediterranean converge' (Schlumberger 2011, 142). For this reason, activities are limited to issues that are considered non-sensitive to both sides. However, as will be pointed out later, also issues that were considered non-sensitive at the start later turned out to be vulnerable to politics, i.e. water management in the Middle East. With respect to political reform, Schlumberger points at the fact that the key priority of many Arab regimes is the maintenance of power. 'From an Arab perspective, this means that any measure that could threaten Arab ruler's firm grip on autocratic power will certainly not find the consent of at least one co-President' (Schlumberger 2011, 142).

As both sides have to agree, both co-presidents are in the position of potential veto-players, effectively blocking any policy proposal by the other that may negatively impact one's self-interests. Accordingly, Schlumberger states that this institutional novelty has created 'an instrument for Arab regimes that makes it yet easier to avoid any reform of domestic autocratic governance' (Ibidem). Driss (2008) also notes that 'a co-presidency un-backed by any power of decision or conduct would be useless, senseless and would affect no influence over the contents of the Partnership' (Driss in Aliboni et al. 2008, 23).

In short, the increased sense of co-ownership created by the principle of a co-presidency is not leading to any developments or increased cooperation. On the contrary, it is blocking any progress, especially with regard to the political reform envisioned in the Barcelona Declaration.

Novelty # 3: the UfM Secretariat

The Secretariat, launched in July 2010 and based in Barcelona, is to work on identifying concrete projects as well as to find funds and sponsors for such projects. All inputs of the UfM stem from the secretariat and/or the EU Commission and will be considered and eventually endorsed by the senior officials. Annually, they will submit these to the ministers of foreign affairs in the form of a Work Programme. Every two years, the Ministers shall submit a proposed biennial Work Programme to the Heads of State and Government resulting from the interactions just mentioned. The joint permanent committee performs the day to day jobs of the initiative. The secretariat's mandate is of a technical nature, while the political mandate remains the responsibility to the ministers and the senior officials.

The secretariat is a new institution compared to the Barcelona Process. Its officials are drawn from both the North and the South. This way, the UfM initiative aims to increase co-ownership among both shores of the Mediterranean. However, the secretary-general needs to be drawn from the non-European members. Therefore, the first secretary-general was Jordanian diplomat Ahmed Masadeh. He was appointed in January 2010. The Secretariat also counts on the presence of six deputy secretary-generals, each linked to one of the six key areas identified by the Paris Declaration, i.e. de-pollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land highways, civil protection, the development of alternative energies (especially solar energy), higher education, research and the Euro-Mediterranean University, and the Mediterranean business development initiative (Paris Declaration).

As stated by Isabel Schäfer, with regard to the secretariat, 'there was debate about the location of this new entity, than about the statutes, the competences, the financing and the staff' (Schäfer 2009, 196)

Initially, the Secretariat was planned to have only one deputy secretary-general, but at the foreign minister meeting in Marseille in 2008, it was proposed to appoint five deputy secretary-generals: Israel, the Palestinian National Authority, Greece, Italy and Malta. Another controversy arose when the Turkish

request for a deputy, as Cyprus opposed it for reasons related to the difficult relations between the two countries (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 29). For this reason, the senior officials were unable to make a decision on the UfM secretariat's statutes on their February 2010 meeting. The secretariat's starting date, originally planned for early 2009, was thus inevitably delayed.

Another reason for the secretariat's delay stems from the Gaza crisis in December 2008 and January 2009 and poor relation between the new Israeli government and many Arab states. The Gaza conflict put a hold on all meetings at the ministerial level of the UfM, severely disrupting the high-politics dimension of cooperation (Holden 2011, 166). Despite the claim of the Secretariat to be 'a purely technical – and hence apolitical – body, it has nonetheless become first a victim and later the focus of intense political and strategic bargaining' (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 28).

Johansson-Nogués points at another factor impeding the secretariat's rapid and successful consolidation. Originally, the annual budget of the Secretariat was proposed to amount €10bn provided by partner countries. However, due to the economic crisis, the financial situation of the secretariat remains unclear (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 29). Also, with a staff of only 20-25 people, the secretariat will be far too small to manage projects in the sense an aid agency does (Holden 2011, 166).

Together with the issues mentioned earlier, the limitations imposed on the secretariat make it difficult to envision how it could boost cooperation among the 43 Euro-Mediterranean partners. In order to prove itself effective, the secretariat will have to establish itself fairly quickly as the central point of reference for cooperation in the Mediterranean area. However, with vague statutes and no firm budget, it remains unclear if the Secretariat can acquire such centrality (Johansson-Nogués 2011, 29).

The added value

There are two changes within Euro-Mediterranean relations that were expected to provide added value to the UfM with respect to the EMP. Firstly, the UfM aims at creating equality between the European and non-European members by its joint decision-making mechanism. Secondly, it aims at adding political value by top level political participation in biennial summits of heads of states and governments. Both factors would promote non-EU partners' involvement and the sense of co-ownership – something which did not emerge in the EMP experience.

However, because all member states of the EU were included in the initiative, the European Commission became involved to coordinate the UfM with the political interests of these countries. Therefore, despite initial ambitions of a strong ownership dimension for both the European and non-European partners, Seeberg claims that 'the UfM has been dominated by the European side' (Seeberg 2010, 289). Also, according to an Egyptian source, the UfM is just another layer of changes in the EU policy which just adds vagueness and complexity to Euro-Mediterranean relations. He states that

the advantage of the new institutional set-up could have been easily included in the existing functioning set up of the Barcelona Process (through enforcing the existing provisions by setting joint programmes for implementation, and specific deadlines), without a new agreement that remains vague in terms of objectives, means of implementation and funding (Ghoneim 2009 in Holden 2011, 165).

Also, the questions remains whether any added value of the UfM will generate the desired political cooperation and common action. As Aliboni and Ammor note, 'nothing can assure a correlation between policy cooperation and institutional equality' (Aliboni and Ammor 2009, 14). Rather, they argue that cooperation is the result of policy convergence instead of institutional parity (Ibidem). Political cooperation thus highly depends on the convergence between the agenda of both the North and the southern Mediterranean. According to Schlumberger (2011, 142), policy convergence will be 'limited to issues that are considered non-sensitive to both sides'.

The institutional novelties mentioned earlier create the chance for Arab countries to become potential veto-players on an official level. According to Wolff (2011), one of the main problems with the UfM institutional set-up is that there is no trust among members of the UfM. 'They don't travel to partner countries, they don't visit their colleague representatives. Therefore, they don't understand each other's cultures and attitudes. The co-presidency and the secretariat can't change that' (Wolff 2011). Schlumberger concludes that 'therefore, the UfM cannot become a vehicle for any sort of meaningful political reform. By contrast, institutional reform has created an instrument for Arab regimes that make it yet easier to avoid any reform or domestic autocratic governance'(Ibidem). Thus, as Seeberg claims, 'maintaining the status quo seems to be the goals for the institutional development' (Seeberg 2010, 291).

It seems that the UfM will be unable to bring about political reform in the Arab authoritarian regimes. However, as the Union for the Mediterranean is known for, it builds on technical projects, as stated in the Paris Declaration. The idea behind this approach is that technical development will create the conditions under which political changes can proceed. Therefore, the focus of the UfM is not on the promotion of human rights or democratization, but on development.

The next chapter analyzes this approach by examining two key areas of the UfM: water management and the Mediterranean Solar Plan. It concludes that the 'development first, politics later' approach is seriously stuck due to political rather than technical issues.

Chapter Three

‘Development first, politics later’

A de-politicized Union

Before this chapter will analyse the effectiveness of the de-politicization of the UfM, it is important to note that two important Euro-Mediterranean initiatives preceded the UfM. In November 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), better known as the Barcelona Process, was launched by the ministers of foreign affairs. Guided by the agreements of the Barcelona Declaration, it served as a framework to manage both bilateral and region relation in the Mediterranean.ⁱ The partnership, based on the principles of joint ownership, dialogue and cooperation, was seeking to create a Mediterranean region of peace, security and shared prosperity. However, where the Barcelona Process focused on the economic chapter, the UfM focuses on technical aspects of the Mediterranean.

Yet, this pragmatic approach to cooperation in the Mediterranean is not as new as it appears to be. In 2004, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed to offer ‘our neighbours a privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development).’ⁱⁱ According to Young, the ENP has ‘gradually developed in a more pragmatic direction’ (Youngs 2006 in Seeberg 2010, 290). Like the UfM, the ENP primarily focuses on a number of rather uncontroversial issues like water, energy and infrastructure. The EU, thus, chooses not to challenge the authoritarian Arab regimes, leaving political controversies unresolved. ‘Rather than the normative “we should be,” attached to the Barcelona Process and its embedded ambitions of democracy promotion, the policy became a “what could be,” i.e., an expression of recognition of certain limits for what is possible in a region difficult to deal with’ (Brasset and Higgot 2003 in Seeberg 2010, 290).

Contrary to the Barcelona Process, both the ENP and the UfM are not to be understood as an attempt to change (a part of) the world, but as a way ahead towards local, pragmatic solutions. Thus ‘this overall pragmatic tendency in EU foreign policy towards the Middle East [and North Africa], as it is expressed through bilateral channels of the ENP, in many ways can be said to continue in the UfM, but here in a multilateral setting’ (Seeberg 2010, 293). The idea behind this pragmatic approach is to prevent sensitive political issues from entering into the relationship.

In the context of the UfM, the sole focus on uncontroversial, technical fields of cooperation instead of on ‘high politics,’ such as conflict resolution of democracy assistance, was part of a French strategy: ‘the UfM and its activities were meant to be more immune from the Middle Eastern context in that they were assumed to be less prone to politically induced failures originating from a deterioration in Arab-Israeli relations’ (Schlumberger 2011, 142).

According to Asseburg and Salem (2009), the Arab-Israeli conflict has been ‘one of the main stumbling blocks to progress towards regional cooperation, stability, and economic and political reform in the Mediterranean’ (Asseburg and Salem 2009, 13). As Bechev and Nicolaidis (2008) and Kauch and Youngs (2009) have suggested, the UfM in its approach was conceived as way to forge closer economic ties and security cooperation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean *notwithstanding* the conflict. Although being sceptical about the prospects, these authors detect a perception, among some of the original architects of the scheme, that the conflict could be side-lined or ‘parked’ as a separate concern, to be dealt with primarily within the framework of the MEPP (Hollis 2011, 100).

However, as becomes clear, from the view of the southern members of the UfM, the political dimension of the initiative is actually of paramount importance. Surprisingly, the Egyptian reaction to co-president Mubarak has not been positive towards his participation in the UfM. Egyptian newspaper Al-

Ahram frequently delivered critique on the prospects of the UfM, as it noticed that the financing of projects has so far not been convincing (Ezzat 2008). Also, like Al-Ahram, several Arab media emphasized the political dimension of the initiative, *especially* the Arab-Israeli conflict (Seeberg 2010, 296, emphasis added). Syrian president Bashar al-Assad took part in the Paris meeting and pointed in one of his official comment to the need for promoting peace in the region: 'We insisted that the political aspect should be one of the basic factors in the Union for the Mediterranean. The priority for us is peace; no real economic cooperation is to be achieved without peace (Al-Assad 2008). When covering on the UfM, the Arab media rarely, if at all, mentioned the technical projects of the UfM, instead stressing the political aspects of the relation between the EU and the non-EU members.

A breakthrough or continuation?

As the course of events have pointed out, the UfM could not avoid entanglement with the conflict. According to Wolff (2011), this points at a continuation of the Barcelona Process. 'The same issues prevail in the UfM, despite its different approach, as those obstructing the Barcelona Process'. Hollis enforces this statement by acknowledging that 'the failure of the EMP [Barcelona Process] was due more to flaws in the design of the Middle East Peace Process in the 1990 than to the weakness of the EMP' (Hollis 2011, 99). Thus, to ignore the existence of this conflict, and to exclude it from the agenda of the UfM seems impossible, as 'the UfM to some degree is being held hostage by the Arab-Israeli conflict' (Seeberg 2010, 296). Frustrated by the de-politicization of the partnership, a Palestinian official called the UfM an 'anti-Arab peace initiative' because it entails normalization *without* peace (Khatib 2010, 45). Israel responded to these claims by stressing that it cares about peace, but also that it did not 'join to make peace' (Khatib 2011, 45). According to the Israeli's, the UfM is not the right forum in which to solve political problems. An Israeli official stated that Israel does not seek to affect the peace process directly with its participation in the UfM, but it might do so indirectly if 'they [Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular] realize that we have similar concerns' (Khatib 2010, 45).

According to Seeberg, the kind of thinking behind the UfM can be said to bear resemblance to neo-functional arguments in integration theory (Seeberg 2010, 288). Balfour and Schmid (2008, 3-4) point out that according to the French, the 'union of projects' approach is inspired by the EU founding father Jean Monnet and his functionalist method resulting in the Schuman Plan. In short, this logic holds that the modest creation of functional links will over time result in deeper integration. Cooperation in a few areas of truly shared interests will lead to increased levels of interaction followed by a widening of areas of cooperation. Deeper Euro-Mediterranean integration will, in turn, lead to the convergence of political systems in the northern and southern Mediterranean creating an overall positive political climate. In this scenario, the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab countries, as well as democratization, are long term effects of the UfM that need not be addressed in its early existence (Schlumberger 2011, 145). Also Aliboni and Ammor explain that the UfM was built on a two-stage strategy in which the first stage is devoted to assuring development after which political cooperation would become feasible (Aliboni and Ammor 2009, 15).

However, according to Patrick Holden of the University of Plymouth, it is rather far-fetched to compare the UfM with the European Coal and Steel Community, as the ECSC, unlike the UfM, had clear objectives in the sectors in question, and strong institutions. In this regard, 'the UfM has inspired many hopes that are frankly unrealistic' (Holden 2011, 165). Also, Cini holds that the neo-functional way of thinking about integration is rather out-dated, as it is unable to explain how the European Community became the European Union (Cini 2010, 75).

According to Holden, it is hard to see why someone would not favour a-political cooperation. However, he states that 'at the Marseille Conference some partner states insisted on articulating their right

to oppose transnational projects (paragraph 9) which implies that some considered that these projects have a broader socio-political significance' (Holden 2011, 165).

According to Schlumberger, there is a more plausible 'realist scenario' for the future of the UfM – opposing the 'Schuman-Sarkozy scenario'. For both the authoritarian Arab states and the nations of the EU it seems in their interest not to insist on political goals such as reform. For example, it might lead to ruptures in Europe's transatlantic relations (because of strategic US support to key Arab regimes). Also, political reform often comes along with increased levels of instability which negatively affects European energy security (Schlumberger 2011, 147). Concluding, it seems unlikely that technical development, if successful at all, will ultimately lead to political cooperation, the overarching objective of the UfM. However, since Arab-Israeli tensions revived, not only meetings between the heads of state and government got cancelled, also foreign ministerial meetings as well as some sectorial ministerial meetings were called off. Some sectors, like those of water, sustainable development, economy and finance, women, trade, employment and health, are still active, though (Martín 2010).

The next sections addresses two key areas of the UfM secretariat: water management and the Mediterranean Solar Plan. It is opted to examine these particular areas for two reasons. Firstly, water management proved to be one of the most problematic areas to cooperate. The MSP, on the contrary, is often seen as the flagship of the UfM, as it has made the most progress since July 2008. Secondly, these areas are facing very divergent difficulties. Whereas water management is mainly obstructed by the Arab-Israeli conflict, the main problem the MSP is facing is the regulatory-gap between both sides of the Mediterranean. It is examined to what extent these key areas are meeting the UfM's short-term objective i.e. technical development.

Key area # 1: water

Cooperation in the water sector is among the six priorities areas of the UfM secretariat with the objective to manage water resources and promote common initiatives in the region. The Mediterranean faces major challenges with regard to water scarcity and droughts on the one hand, and floods and fires on the other.ⁱⁱⁱ According to the United Nations, some 290 million people in the region could lack water by 2025 due to the combined effects of population growth, rising needs of agriculture, industry and tourism and global warming. Experts of the UfM stated that 180 million people in the region already lack water and over 60 million people face chronic shortages. As was decided at the Paris summit, water management is an important field of cooperation for the Mediterranean, as it is a water scarce region affected by climate change and high population growths.

This chapter discusses the progress the UfM has made with regard to water management. It argues that political disagreement in regard to water management needs to be solved before the UfM can proceed with a unified strategy. Firstly, this chapter explores what progress has been made so far in this field of cooperation. Secondly, it focuses on what went wrong during the failed fourth ministerial conference on water in April 2010. Lastly, it explores the political dimension of water management in the Middle East region.

Towards a strategy

The first ministerial conference on water on 22 December 2008 was hosted by Jordan and co-chaired by France and Egypt. At the conference, the ministers adopted the guidelines for a strategy on water in the Mediterranean to tackle the challenges and impacts of climate change. Also, the ministers drew the attention of the governments included in the Union for the Mediterranean to the need to implement new infrastructural projects in the domain of water as soon as possible.

The Water Expert Group (WEG) focused on the elaboration of the new Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM). Its members submitted the new strategy to the ministers at the fourth ministerial conference on water in Barcelona on 13 April 2010 to sign the document. However, despite the fact that the ministers agreed on almost every aspect of the strategy, no agreement was signed. Israel did not agree with the term 'Occupied Territories' appearing twice in the text to name the Palestinian territories. The Arab nations and Israel were unable to settle the disagreement, so the signing of the document was off. At the second summit for heads of state and government in 2010, the ministers were supposed to submit the SWM to the heads of state. However, without a signed agreement and a cancelled summit, it was not possible to adopt a new strategy in the two-year work plan of the UfM.

Recent developments

Most recently, the Water Expert Group (WEG) of the UfM met for the fourth time for a technical workshop on 17 and 18 May 2011 in Palau de Pedralbes, headquarters of the Union for the Mediterranean's secretariat in Barcelona. The meeting was attended by 60 experts officially representing 22 countries, the European Commission, the League of Arab States and representatives of 23 international inter- and non-governmental organizations. They discussed the way forward, especially with regard to the identification and development of joint Mediterranean water projects.

Unanimously, it was decided that the lack of water in Gaza should be addressed as a pressing humanitarian issue.^{iv} Therefore, the construction of a desalination plant for the Palestinian population in Gaza was proposed. Also, the participants agreed to draft a work plan for the WEG for the rest of 2011 and 2012 in accordance with the Jordan Ministerial Declaration on Water (December 2008). Furthermore, they decided to support the UfM secretariat in the attainment of its technical mandate.

However, it was also recognized that at the ministerial level there is still not agreed upon a strategy.^v The Water Expert group thus remains actively involved despite a lacking strategy. However, without a unified strategy, the UfM is unlikely to make any significant progress in the water sector. The next section explores what happened during the fourth ministerial meeting, and why the participants could not agree upon a strategy.

What's in a name?

The fourth Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference about water-management in the Mediterranean was held on 13 April 2010 in Barcelona, bringing together 43 countries of the UfM, in order to declare the joint ambitions of lowering the consumption of water between then and the year 2025 to levels 25% below those of 2005 (EU-MED 2010). The conference aimed to reach an agreement on a strategy for managing fresh water in the Mediterranean to ensure equal access to the non-renewable resource and prevent the issue from becoming a source of conflict in the future (EUbusiness 2010).

The Water sector of the UfM was seen as a rather uncomplicated field of cooperation. However, instead of signing the document, the conference ended without any feasible result. The conference failed because of a nuance of terminology when Israel and Arab countries disagreed on how to name the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OCP) (EU-MED 2010). Israel's representatives objected to the term "occupied territories" appearing twice in the document and proposed instead the term "territories under occupation," which in turn was not accepted by the Arab bloc. In the end, the meeting failed to approve a joint strategy for guaranteeing the water resources of the whole Mediterranean basin, even though delegates were in agreement on 99 percent of the technical issues they discussed (EUbusiness). This time, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not only block high-level meetings, it also obstructed one of the short-term objectives of the Mediterranean i.e. development in the water sector.

The stalemate was seen as a strong blow against the Union for the Mediterranean (EU business 2010). French secretary of state for European affairs, Pierre Lellouche, expressed his sincere

disappointment about the failure at the end of the conference. Also Jordan's Ahmad Masa'deh, head of the UfM secretariat, said he was saddened by the failure to reach an agreement, because it 'casts doubt on the future of the Mediterranean Union' (Eubusiness 2010). Israeli infrastructure minister Uzi Landau rejected responsibility for the failure of the conference, and instead blamed the Arab nations. 'We wanted to concentrate solely on the problems of water and avoid entering into political themes. But Arab league nations lapsed into pure propaganda and made political declarations against the state of Israel. They decided to obstruct the meeting' (Eubusiness 2010). What happened? Why did politics interfere in this technical meeting?

In an attempt by the author to interview representatives of the European Commission who attended the failed ministerial meeting, they responded to the request by stating that what happened during the meeting is confidential. As the file is still open, they preferred not to answer any questions related to the SWM. Both Israeli and Palestinian representatives did not respond at all.

However, by logic reasoning, some answers can be found. Regarding the term to refer to the OPT, the resemblance is omnipresent. Both terms describe territories that are occupied. Thus, there seems to be more at stake than just semantics. Firstly, Arab reluctance to revise 'occupied territories' to 'territories under occupation' may stem from the fact that the Arab states, with in particular Palestine, are against normalizing relations with Israel (Khatib 2010, 45). From the start, the Arab nations found the French initiative suspicious, as technical cooperation could eventually lead to political cooperation and thus the normalization of relations with Israel. Therefore, they insisted on the participation of the Arab League in the UfM, which was granted permanent observer status after some haggling. To explain the severity of their suspicion, a Palestine official called the UfM an "anti-Arab peace initiative" as it would entail normalization without peace, emptying the peace initiative of its content (Khabtib 2010, 45). Also the official stated that "the Arab initiative and not the UfM is the channel through which to achieve peace *with* normalization (Ibidem).

In the case of the fourth ministerial conference, Arab states may have refused the revision of the document as it touched on Palestine's political integrity. Accepting Israel's proposal would have been the first step to increase normalization. Also, the Arab countries may have used the opportunity to bring back the Middle East Peace Process on the agenda. As Rosemary Hollis, a professor of Middle East Policy Studies, suggests, 'for the Arab states the need to keep conflict resolution on the political agenda, including through the UfM, is a matter of survival' (Hollis 2011, 113). She continues: 'The Arabs have refused to take any steps towards 'normalization' with Israel unless and until it withdraws from the Occupied Territories. This resistance to normalization is now being played out in the UfM' (ibidem).

Second, the architects of the UfM overlooked the fact that water management is not as uncomplicated as they assumed. Indeed, water in the Middle East has an important political dimension. Not only is there little water to distribute, the water is distributed unequally. Israel largely controls joint water resources and supplies for most of the water consumed in the West Bank (EMPA 2010a).

At an earlier meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of the EMPA in March 2010, the discussion about the Mediterranean water management already caused tension between Israel and Palestine. Palestinian representative Mr. Abu Ayyash stated that Israel was using water as a weapon against the Palestinians who have less than one third of the amount of water that is available to the Israeli population' (EMPA 2010a). International organizations state that Israel's water supplies fall short of Palestinian needs, but also that the Palestinians have failed to set up the infrastructure and institutions needed in the water sector (Eubusiness 2010).

The next section conducts in-depth analysis about the political dynamics of water management in the Middle East.

The Jordan Valley

According to the 2006 United Nations Human Development Report, 'there is more than enough water in the world for domestic purposes, for agriculture and for industry. ...Scarcity is manufactured through political processes and institutions that disadvantage the poor' (UN 2006 in EMPA 2009). This is especially true in the Middle East, where the main problem with water is that its existing resources are unequally distributed. Virtually all countries use more than their renewable water supply making it one of the most burning problems of the region. Especially the countries bordering the Jordan Valley – Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the OPT – face difficulties, as the Jordan River is the principal water reservoir for all the riparian states (EMPA 2009, 10). For Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian Territories it has been the most important source of drinking water. However, since Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, it has denied its Palestinian inhabitants access to the water resources of the Jordan River. Their only remaining source of water is the Mountain Aquifer, but Israel limits the amount of water annually available to Palestinians to no more than 20 percent, while over-extracting water for its own usage is far in excess of the aquifer's yearly sustainable yield (Amnesty International 2009, 12).

In 1995, the Oslo II Agreement was signed, stating that Israel would recognize Palestinian water rights in the West Bank and returning some water resources and services responsible for the Palestinian Authority (PA). In addition, it was determined that the Palestinians would receive defined quantities of water based on their existing usage (EMPA 2009, 15). However, contrary to what the Palestinians expected, the Oslo Accords did not result in greater access for Palestinians to water resources. Israel continued to control water resources and the PA was given no authority to make decisions relating to drilling of new wells, upgrading existing ones or implementing other water-related projects (Amnesty International 2009, 21).

Under the agreement, the roughly 1,5 million Palestinians in West Bank Territories were accorded an annual amount of drinking water of merely 75 cubic meters per capita, whilst each of the 280,000 Israeli settlers in the OPT is entitled to 264 cubic meters. According to the World Health Organization, the minimum requirement of water is 100 cubic meters per capita, which obviously is a lot more than the average of water available to Palestinians.

Now, more than fifteen years later, not much has changed. Bassom Wawalhi of the Palestinian Water Authority explains that the amount of water which Israel must supply to Palestinians was determined back in 1994: "ever since, this quantity has remained unchanged, while our population has increased by several hundred thousand" (EMPA 2009, 17). Indeed, since 1995, the Palestinian population in the West Bank has risen to over 2.2 million inhabitants creating a situation in which less than 50 cubic meters water is available per person per year. Palestinians are therefore forced to buy the remainder of the water they need from private suppliers which is at least six times more expensive than the water supplied by the Israeli controlled water company Mekorot, who is responsible for the distribution of water for the Palestinians (Ibidem).

In addition, some people (approximately 13 percent of the population) in the West Bank lack complete access to drinking water. The main reason for this is 'the wall' that is separation the Palestinians in the West Bank from Israel. The wall cuts off numerous Palestinians from their most abundant sources of water. At least 29 wells and 32 springs are inaccessible for the Palestinians in the West Bank (EMPA 2009, 15-18).

Thus, besides the effects of population growth and climate change on the availability of water, Palestinian water scarcity is a result of Israeli reluctance to share water resources. Also Israel's over-extraction of non-renewable water resources exacerbates the problem. Water, therefore, is not as uncomplicated at the architects of the Union for the Mediterranean assumed it to be. Especially in the case

of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, one should keep in mind that water is in fact a very sensitive political issue.

Today, there is general agreement among many Israeli ecosystem experts that the Palestinians need more water and that a part of the water currently used by Israel must go to the Palestinians. Currently, the issue of water is not only central to the livelihood of the people in the region, but also to the underlying causes of the persisting Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The continuation of current policies will probably turn the water problem into a point of contention between the parties to the conflict in the years to come. However, according to the EMPA, 'the issue of water distribution cannot be an insurmountable obstacle to peace' (EMPA 2009, 20). In order to solve the water problem by cooperation it is necessary to implement plans for joint administration, decision-making on equal footing, and the joint management of these resources (Ibidem).

General critique against the UfM in the Middle East point to the projects as an ambitious waste of time, 'as it is not approaching the most important issues: Europe has been passive in dealing seriously with the problems in the region and there is need for a more active role of the EU. First of all the Arab-Israeli conflict should be dealt with' (Seeberg 2010, 298). Concluding, the UfM needs to address regional issues before implementing ambitious projects. The Israelis and Palestinians need to settle their water issues before they can participate in regional cooperation in this sector.

The next section analyses the second key area of the Union for the Mediterranean: the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP). Unlike water management, this project is far less politically sensitive. However, as the most ambitious project of the UfM, the MSP has made little progress. The next section explores what obstructs the MSP from flourishing.

Key area # 2: the Mediterranean Solar Plan

Launched at the Paris Conference in 2008, The Union for the Mediterranean established the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP) as one of its six key initiatives. According to data of the European Commission of the year 2005, 76 percent of the EU's total primary energy demand was covered by fossil fuels – that is, climate unfriendly energy sources (European Commission 2008, 65). 68 percent of these fossil fuels was imported from non-EU countries (Ibidem). Given that EU energy demand increases every year, the Union responded to these concerns in 2007 by adopting an integrated energy and climate policy approach with the objective to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 20 percent below 1990 levels, reduce energy consumption by 20 percent through increased energy efficiency, and raise the share of renewable energy in the EU's energy mix to 20 percent by 2020.

The MSP is a continuation of this approach, adding another '20-objective'. Its two-fold scope is to develop 20 Gig watts of installed renewable energy capacity in the Mediterranean region by 2020 along with the necessary electricity transmission capacity and cross-border interconnections and, to promote energy efficiency policies in this region (European Commission 2010).

According to Diana Hunt, an independent researcher and consultant, the identification of renewable energy as a key component of one of the six key UfM projects themes represents one of the most innovative initiatives of the UfM. Other key areas largely represent a continuation of the Barcelona Process without having the potential to further develop (Hunt 2011, 185). Therefore, The MSP is often seen as the 'flagship' of the UfM, as it, of all other aspects of the new framework's agenda, has made the most progress since the summer of 2008. Between 2008 and 2009, three official and many unofficial meetings took place to define the strategy of the plan and to work towards implementation. Unlike key area 'water management', a clear roadmap has been put in place for the MSP for the period between 2009 and 2020.

This section analyses the prospects of the MSP. As the EMPA (2010,5) emphasizes, the Mediterranean Solar Plan is one of the major projects 'on which much of the credibility and effectiveness of the newly instituted Union for the Mediterranean will depend.' Is the MSP meeting these high expectations? Firstly, this chapter will examine the context in which the MSP evolved. Secondly the joint strategy is assessed. Lastly, it will be analyzed to what extent the regulatory gap between both sides of the Mediterranean is obstructing the project. It concludes that the UfM is unable to tackle the regulatory gap-problem.

Euro-Med energy cooperation in context

As noted in the introduction of this chapter, Europe's growing energy demand, coupled with its external dependence on energy resources, set the context for the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP). According to Hakim Darbouche of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 'Europe's sense of energy vulnerability exacerbated in recent years by the assertive course of action adopted by its single most important supplier of oil and gas, Russia' (Darbouche 2011, 194). Russian energy supplier Gazprom decided to cut gas supplies in January 2006, 2007, 2009 and again in 2009 because of transit and pricing disputes (Ibidem). As it disrupted the flow of gas to EU consumers, EU policy makers unsurprisingly pointed at the danger of the increased dependence on imports from unstable regions and, accordingly, identified the need to diversify supply as a key component of a more 'coherent external energy policy' (Ibidem).

In this context, the strategic importance of North African fossil fuels supplies to Europe's growing demand and anxiety became increasingly evident. North African energy exporters Algeria, Libya and Egypt had hitherto played an important role in the development of European energy markets, but especially after Russia's cuts, North Africa's potential regional role in energy security became pivotal in EU strategic policy deliberations.

Besides this geopolitical thinking, Ferrero-Waldner (2009) identifies an altruistic contribution of the EU through the MSP for socio-economic development of the southern Mediterranean countries i.e. employments generation, technology transfer and satisfaction of growing domestic energy requirements as well as the welfare of our planet, making the MSP a 'win-win-win' venture.

Yet, as Darbouche points out, despite the complementary and interdependence underpinning Euro-Mediterranean energy relations, efforts to institutionalize regional market structures have remained subdued (Darbouche 2011, 194). From the 1970s, in response to the first oil crisis, European initiatives have focused on energy cooperation with the Mediterranean. Both the Euro-Arab Dialogue and the Global Mediterranean, however, failed to meet their objectives as a result of the EC's institutional shortcomings. But also the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Partnership (EMEP) under the EMP, as well as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) have had difficulties in their attempts to establish an institutionalized energy dialogue between both sides of the Mediterranean (Darbouche 194-195).

The MSP is only the latest attempt in securing energy supply in the EU. Energy cooperation appeared to be the driving force behind Sarkozy's original design for a 'Mediterranean Union' as he often referred to a reinforced Franco-Algerian cooperation, compared to the Franco-German friendship in the early days of a European community (Darbouche 2011, 203). The French president envisioned a strategic 'alliance between state-owned Gaz de France (GDF) on the one hand and Algeria's national oil and gas company Sonatrach on the other. French nuclear energy expertise would be exchanged for Algerian natural gas reserves. However, as the Mediterranean Union was diluted to the Union for the Mediterranean, the Sonatrach-GDF partnership was limited to the extension and reworking of the pre-existing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) supply contract (Ibidem).

The question thus remains to what extent the MSP will be able to succeed in serving as an impetus for regional energy cooperation.

Towards a strategy

The Mediterranean Solar Plan has been designed to be implemented in three stages. Firstly, the objectives of the initiative needed to be defined and followed by a plan. As planned, this stage was completed at the ministerial meeting in Paris on 22 November 2008. The MSP poses two complementary targets. Firstly, it aims at developing 20 GW of new renewable energy production capacities, and secondly, it aims at achieving significant energy savings around the Mediterranean by 2020, thus addressing both supply and the demand (European Commission 2010, 3). The second stage, also called the pilot phase, includes the implementation of an “immediate Plan of Action” with pilot projects in order to test the regulatory, financial and institutional mechanisms to be put in place. This stage was planned to be completed under the Franco-Egyptian co-presidency by the end of 2010 (EMPA 2010b, 5). Ideally, the final stage of the implementation of the Mediterranean Solar plan is completed by 2020, including the large-scale development of renewable energy projects. The declared objective is to achieve a 20 GigaWatt level of clean energy production through a mix of photovoltaic, solar concentration and wind power technologies and the establishment of a Mediterranean Energy Ring (Ibidem).

An important feature of the MSP identified by Hunt is the strong private sector support for investment in concentrated solar energy productions coming from the D11 consortium – 14 large corporations from the Euro-Mediterranean region plus DESERTEC (a non-profit foundation concerned with the promotion of solar power generation) (Hunt 2011, 182). Also from the perspective of the EU an important motivating factor is the anticipation that renewable energy imports from partner countries could help in meeting its own green energy targets. Therefore, the MSP seems rather uncomplicated and successful.

According to Holden (2011, 166), ‘the unequivocal focus on promoting development and welfare (as opposed to reform) is justified by necessity and may prove useful’. Especially for the Mediterranean Solar Plan substantial resources have been raised, but Holden argues that in reality this could have been done anyway without being linked to a regional partnership. Accordingly, Darbouche argues that the advances realized by the MSP so far owe little to the attributes of the UfM. Rather, ‘they seem to have benefited from the shifting energy interests of energy producers and consumers alike, pertaining more specifically to issues of climate change, energy security and growing energy requirements’ (Darbourche 2011, 206). In other words, the favorable market context in which the MSP emerged has allowed the MSP to gain unprecedented support for Euro-Mediterranean energy cooperation – ‘its functionalism only playing an intervening role’ (Ibidem, 208).

Still, Hunt questions to what extent the MSP will be successfully taken over by the UfM secretariat, despite its initial success. Also, she claims that it remains to be seen whether the Plan will receive equally strong organizational support from the next co-presidency (Hunt 2011, 182).

As stated by Hunt, investment in renewable energy generation are in the first place national rather than regional projects. The MSP represents an exception to this. According to Hunt, this has two implications. Firstly, ‘national investment in expanded generating capacity for export presupposes either the existence of, or, as is needed in the UfM context a prior commitment to create, the necessary grid connections’ (Hunt 2011, 182). Secondly, ‘regulatory reform and coordination are needed, for several reasons: to facilitate approval for trans-national projects and to synchronize both technical standards and national incentive structures’ (Ibidem). Also Darbouche states that ‘the regulatory framework north and south of the Mediterranean remain far from convergent on important issues such as liberalization’ (Darbouche 2011, 195). According to DESERTEC, regulatory coordination is the key role for the UfM in facilitating the D11 project.

The next section elaborates on the regulatory gap-problem by examining policy convergence of both sides of the Mediterranean and by analyzing to what extent the UfM will be able to deal with the current regulatory gap.

The regulatory gap-problem

In December 2008, only a couple of months after the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean, the initiative stalled due to the outbreak of the Gaza War. High-level ministerial meetings were postponed and important decisions on the UfM's structure were put on hold. For this reason the UfM's joint secretariat in Barcelona, responsible for the implementation of its technical projects, was established only two years after the Paris Conference in 2008. Technical projects, such as the Mediterranean Solar Plan, could not be implemented and therefore, they were immediately behind schedule.

Like Hunt, Matthias Ruchser of the German Development Institute states that 'it is not the task of an intergovernmental process to take on entrepreneurial initiatives and install power plants – especially when it takes two years to set up a secretariat. The Plan's focus should therefore be on speeding up the process of creating the regulatory framework that will enable private-sector initiatives and investments in the UfM's member countries' (Ruchser 2010). Also Darbouche states that 'an adequate legal, regulatory, institutional and organizational framework will need to be set up in the target SMCs [Southern Mediterranean Countries] and synchronized to the extent possible with European rules to allow the development of solar-based power generation capacity on the desired scale' (Darbouche 2011, 204).

At the ministerial meeting on sustainable development projects held in Paris on 25 June 2009, the majority acknowledged the lack of a regulatory and institutional framework consistent with the commitment required. Therefore, the programme 'Paving the way for the Mediterranean Solar Plan' was established in 2010 with a budget of €4,6 million to promote EU-MPCs regulatory convergence. However, little enthusiasm has been shown by a number of MPCs for the EU proposed model of extending its own market regulatory norms as the basis for energy cooperation. Darbouche reckons that the reason for this lack of interests on the part of the southern Mediterranean partners is two-fold. Firstly, they perceive the EU approach as 'prosaically narrow and obsessed with rules and regulations, whereas their expectation is of a cooperation model that is explicitly more strategic' (Darbouche 2011, 205). The model proposed by the EU adds little value to the pre-existing bilateral deals that EU member states are prepared to conclude on the basis of more strategic dividends of the MPCs. In short, the EU proposed regulatory framework is against national interests of the southern Mediterranean countries.

Secondly, the divergence of interests with regard to energy cooperation coupled with 'the commonly held view that, while the principles of the EU's market-based external and internal energy policies are well articulated, in practice a uniform degree of commitment from member states and institution to these enunciated policies remains elusive' (Darbouche 2011, 205-206). Indeed, a number of member states, including those with the bigger energy market, 'have still to become reconciled with the Commission's belief that a consolidated and liberalized internal European energy market is in their national interests' (Ibidem).

According to Luigi Carafa (2011) of the University of Toulouse, the regulatory gap-problem can be attributed to early choices of key member states (France and Germany) within the making of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Germany, during its EU presidency semester (January-July 2007), promoted the use of energy from renewable sources and developed the well-known DESERTEC concept, i.e. the vision of a European Union-Middle East and North African (EU-MENA) community of shared clean energy and water resources. When President Nicolas Sarkozy announced the idea of a Mediterranean Union, German opposition did not only achieve to include the entire European Union in the initiative, German Chancellor Angela Merkel also paved the way for the Mediterranean Solar Plan (Mason 2009, 3). Initially, the MSP was

designed to play a pivotal role in promoting regulatory convergence between the two sides of the Mediterranean. However, France disagreed with this German objective and was rather oriented towards a more pragmatic approach (Carafa 2011, 18). This approach includes, like explained above, the establishment of pilot projects before developing large-scale renewable energy projects. Theoretically, this strategy makes sense, however, Frans Berkhout (2008) of the Institute for Environmental Studies questions its empirical validity.

Therefore, the next section examines two case studies: Algeria and Morocco, as they provide a clear example of the dynamics in the Mediterranean. Algeria almost quitted the MSP, while Morocco can be seen as a forerunner in the development of solar energy.

Case study: Algeria and Morocco

One of the major problems with the MSP is that until now, Germany has been the only interlocutor with individual MPC's on renewable energy. This became especially clear when in June 2010, Algeria's newly appointed minister of energy and mines Youcef Yousfi declared that Algeria would potentially give up the European solar project evaluating the possibility of constructing a solar project on its own by collaborating with the Chinese clean energy industry (Hunter 2010). However, when Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika visited Berlin last December, Germany and Algeria expressed their political intention to cooperate more closely on fossil fuels and renewable energy (New Europe 2010). It seems that without Germany's devotion to the MSP, the project would be doomed to fail. During the meeting, German Chancellor Angela Merkel promised President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to share skills with Algeria and to transfer technology (Ibidem). Only this way Germany was able to keep Algeria in.

Carafa claims that the 'solar plan emerges as a very loosely institutionalized form of market governance in which conflicts of interests are mainly solved at interstate level. Political interaction and outcomes are the result of inter-MPCs competition over external funding' (Carafa 2011, 19). At best, this competitive pressure is able to bring about partial regulatory and institutional reform, but it is far from able to provoke region-wide renewable energy transition (Carafa 2011, 1).

Morocco provided an example, as it appears to be making the most progress towards conditions in which the use of renewable energy seems fit (Ruchser 2010). According to Carafa, there are two reasons for Morocco's regulatory and institutional reform pattern. Firstly, Morocco build on a highly positive past experience, when the country was able to obtain international cooperation and financial support for the 'General Programma for Rural Electrification (1994-2010) even though it lacked substantial financial resources. This pointed the national elites and technocrats to the fact that only with sufficient regulatory and technical capacity, the donor community may fund projects and help leveraging private investment' (Carafa 2011, 21). Secondly, unlike its neighbours, Morocco is lacking hydrocarbons reserves and imports therefore 94,6 percent of its energy. Demand is expected to nearly quadruplicate by 2030, creating the urgent need to develop renewable energy (Carafa 2011, 22).

As becomes clear, competition over external funding among MPCs is able to bring about small-scale regulatory and institutional reform. However, for the Mediterranean Solar Plan to succeed, reform in the entire Mediterranean region is needed. For that reason, another incentive than the competition over external funding of projects is needed. Also, in its current form, the MSP is too loosely institutionalized to bring about reform.

Unlike water management, the Mediterranean Solar Plan is not complicated by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Only during the Gaza crisis, when the entire Union for the Mediterranean was paralyzed, the MSP was affected by the conflict. Ever since, the conflict did not cause any trouble. The question remains why

tensions only affect one area of cooperation, and not the other? The answer is simple: unlike the MSP, water management is of crucial importance in the Middle East region. Water, as a basic human need, is scarce in the region, and on top of that, Palestinians are not allowed to control their own resources. No wonder the Arab nations would use the opportunity to bring the issue back on the agenda. Energy, let alone clean energy, is only of secondary importance. If the UfM is able to create a regulatory framework, the MSP is more likely to succeed. However, it is not possible – yet – to make claims about the effectiveness of the MSP because of the too recent inception of the Plan.

Conclusion

Moving out of the deadlock?

This thesis has conducted research on the question why the Union for the Mediterranean, the latest attempt to increase Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, fails to make any visible progress towards regional integration. Soon, the Arab-Israeli conflict emerged as an important factor impeding the initiative been analysed. To understand why this conflict is of such an obstructive force, two elements of the UfM have been assessed. Firstly, it was analysed to what extent its institutional set-up is responsible for its vulnerability to high politics. Secondly, in-depth analysis has been conducted on its pragmatic approach. Both elements of the initiative are novel compared to its predecessor the 'Barcelona Process' on which this partnership builds. Despite these novelties, however, the UfM rather seems to be a continuation of the Barcelona Process than a genuine breakthrough, as both initiatives are facing the same issues and difficulties.

As stated earlier in this thesis by Seeberg, the kind of thinking behind the UfM 'can be said to bear resemblance to neo-functional arguments in integration theory' (Seeberg 2010, 288). The neo-functional approach, which holds that the modest creation of functional links will over time result in deeper integration (Schlumberger 2011, 145). It builds on a two-stage strategy in which the first stage is devoted to assuring technical development, after which political cooperation would become feasible (Aliboni and Ammor 2009, 15).

However, as has been concluded in the second chapter of this thesis, policy convergence between both shores of the Mediterranean, irrespectively of technical development, is unlikely to result from the UfM. The institutional set-up of the initiative makes it yet easier for authoritarian Arab leaders to avoid any political reform that is against their self-interests, as they have been accorded a bigger role in the decision-making process (Schlumberger 2011, 142). The UfM co-presidency provides both the EU co-president as well as the non-EU co-president with an equal voice to veto any suggestions made by the other.

Another reason why the functionalist approach of the UfM is unlikely to be effective in the Mediterranean region is provided by Calleya, who has argued in the introduction that 'the countries bordering the Mediterranean do not prioritize Mediterranean issues' (Calleya 2009, 49-50). This statement is in accordance with the view of the southern members expressed through the Arab media. They highlight the political aspects of the cooperation instead of its technical dimensions (Seeberg 2010, 296). Especially the Arab-Israeli conflict is high on their agenda. Clearly, Arab interests do not converge with the European approach.

To understand the outcomes of, -and the behaviour within the UfM, it is important to turn to the theories of International Relations (IR) explaining regional integration. From the 1950s, 'neo-functionalism' became the most influential theory to explain the process of (European) integration. Its main concept is that of 'spill-over,' referring 'to a process where political cooperation conducted with a specific goal in mind leads to the formulation of new goals in order to assure the achievement of the original goal' (Lindberg 1963 in Cini 2010, 75). However, from the 1970s, neo-functionalism no longer fitted the reality of the European integration process. Now, more than thirty years later, again neo-functionalism is unable to explain the outcomes of the integration process – or the lack thereof – in the MENA region. In contrast to what the architects of the UfM envisioned, their idea behind the initiative does not fit reality.

Newer theories of IR include 'intergovernmentalism,' a theory influenced by realist and neo-realist assumptions that privilege the role of the state and national interests in explaining (European) integration or cooperation (Cini 2010, 90). By upgrading the UfM to the level of heads of state and government, the

initiative became largely controlled by processes at the inter-state level. Thus, a more dominant role within the UfM was accorded to the state. As stated by Wolff (2011), this only makes it more difficult for the initiative to make any visible progress. It politicized the UfM to the extent that now it risks falling hostage to politics (Khatib 2010, 43).

From the very start of the UfM, national interests of the states involved prevailed over the initiative. Firstly, as several times stated, the French proposal for the Mediterranean Union might have been intended to re-establish France's position in the MENA region and advance Gaullist notion of grandeur and international rank, rather than to contribute to a solution of regional problems (Berh and Santini 2007). Secondly, when Turkey as a response to Sarkozy's proposal wanted to be assured that the UfM would not serve as a substitute for official membership to the EU, it acted in its national interests. Also German reluctance was put forward by the proposals negative influence on Germany and the rest of Europe.

More importantly, however, it is to explain the differences between European and Arab interests and preferences in the wake of the Paris summit meeting on 13 July 2008. The European side of the Mediterranean preferred to focus on technical development, instead of political reform, in order to prevent the initiative from falling hostage to the Arab-Israeli conflict, like the Barcelona Process did. Normalization of Arab-Israeli relations was one of its aims. The Arabs, on the contrary firmly opposed normalization with Israel. Therefore, they insisted on a seat for the Arab League, which in turn was opposed by Israel. Clearly they thought of membership of the Arab League as a 'zero-sum' game, in which ones gain would be the other's loss. In addition, as there is no global authority in the Mediterranean to secure order, member states perceive other states as untrustworthy. This points at a certain degree of 'realism,' a classical theory of IR.

By shifting the focus of Euro-Mediterranean relations from democratization and human rights to a-political, technical development, the architects of the UfM tried to avoid the negative effects of political reform i.e. increased levels of instability, which in turn negatively affects European energy security (Schlumberger 2011, 147). On the contrary, Europe provides many authoritarian leaders with support, including by giving them the opportunity to be potential veto-players.

However, within three years of the existence of the UfM, the MENA region has become one of the most instable regions in the world. Tunisia, followed by Egypt were indeed able to topple their authoritarian leaders, including Mubarak of Egypt, the first co-president of the UfM. Apparently, the societies of these and all other countries that are challenging their regimes did want the political reform that the UfM was eschewing. Like stated in chapter two of this thesis, by upgrading the UfM to the level of the heads of state and government, the initiative is not representing the interests of its societies in any way. Instead, authoritarian leaders, unlikely representing their populations, are the only ones having a voice in the initiative. Again, this points at the national self-interests of both the EU as well as the non-EU members of the UfM. However, not knowing that the people of the authoritarian regimes would revolt, their objective of stability and the maintenance of the political status quo were not achieved.

Concluding, is the UfM moving out of its deadlock? This remains to be seen. When stability recurs to the revolting MENA region, steps should be taken to rebuild the region and to consolidate peace and stability. The UfM will probably have a minor role to play in this process as it insists on technical development. The UfM will thus become irrelevant in its current form. The future for Euro-Mediterranean relations is yet unclear.

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- ⁱ See homepage of the European External Action Service. Viewed on 11 April 2011, available at http://www.eeas.europa.eu/index_en.htm
- ⁱⁱ See the homepage of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Viewed on 17 June 2011, available at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See homepage of the UfM Secretariat. Viewed on 2 June 201, available at <http://www.ufmsecretariat.org/en/>
- ^{iv} Ibidem.
- ^v See homepage of UfM-Water. Viewed on 1 June 2011, available at <http://www.ufm-water.net/meetings/weg4>.

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