

Europe and the Mediterranean in the long 1980s

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Until the late 1960s, the Six held different views concerning the Community's role in the Mediterranean, but none supported bold initiatives still less a regional approach. True, protocols had been added to the Rome Treaty envisaging association agreements for Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Somalia. Then, in late 1958, the Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Wigny, thinking about a Community foreign policy, imagined a "Mediterranean circle" among other regional "circles" where the Community would stand as the point of intersection. When in summer 1959 Greece and Turkey applied for association, these applications were welcomed. But, whatever the intentions of the Guy Mollet government in 1957 were, between 1958 and 1969 Charles de Gaulle discouraged relations between the EEC and the Maghreb countries. He pushed a national policy in that area, epitomized by the withdrawal of French naval forces from NATO, and discouraged common EEC external enterprises.

The second Mediterranean member, Italy, held a rather schizophrenic position. It kept its European and Mediterranean policies strictly separate, and refused the opening of the EEC market to agricultural products (olive oil, citrus fruits, wine, tomatoes, etc.) of Mediterranean neighbours, even if, in 1964, a free trade area was proposed for industrial products. Therefore, the early Community fell back on a selective approach. The 1961 and 1963 association agreements with Greece and Turkey marked the Community's acceptance of the responsibility for stabilizing the South-Eastern periphery of the Atlantic Alliance, through development assistance, the bait of accession and inclusion in the Community political sphere. But there was no equal concern in the Southern Mediterranean saves, of course, for Israel. In spite, or maybe because of Walter Hallstein and Jean Rey's efforts, the Commission was not able to take the lead in external relations: after the troubles over Greece's association, the member states imposed a strict control even on exploratory talks and the Luxembourg compromise confirmed that foreign policy initiatives would remain under special scrutiny. External relations remained subject to national inputs and vetoes and mutual sniping vetoes and meagre achievements resulted. On their side, the Southern Mediterranean countries disliked structured and/or political bonds with the Community and only asked for trade concessions, financial aid and social rights for migrant workers. Malta, Cyprus and Libya fell within British or US defence structures and did not approach the Community until the late 1960s.

During the late 1960s however, economic, political and strategic reasons fired up a new EEC activism with the Mediterranean being identified as a special EEC concern. The late 1960s saw the signature of trade agreements with almost all Mediterranean countries, but also the gradual emergence of the conceptual bases for a new phase. The Mediterranean grew into an East-West security problem and this opened the way to a change in EC policy. The Soviet naval build-up, troubles in NATO due to France's withdrawal and US disengagement, anti-Western feelings in the Arab

world, local conflicts and the emerging politicisation of oil affected the bipolar balance and meant Mediterranean volatility. These agreements made the Six (then Nine) try and pull together their fragmented approach, and launch two foreign policy initiatives, the communitarian Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) and the intergovernmental Euro-Arab Dialogue. Together with the Lomé Convention and the CSCE, they signalled the adaptation of the Community to British membership and the Nine's attempt to sculpt an external profile and shape a new West-South relationship: this was, after all, the period when the Third World emerged with an inevitable redistribution of international power. Both the GMP and the Euro-Arab Dialogue, however, were intergovernmental in their genesis and logic.

The GMP was spelt out as a comprehensive, developmental approach to the region, including both the European and the Southern shores of the Mediterranean. It was agreed that a policy including preferential trade, financial aid and technical and cultural cooperation, would counter US criticism of the Community's preferential agreements and allay fears about EEC regional initiative motivated by oil. However, the "Global Mediterranean Policy" had other motives: namely, a double French reaction against the EPC's involvement in Mediterranean security discussions, demanded by Italy, and against a global EEC development policy, supported by Germany, the Netherlands and Britain. The result of this choice was that the EC broadened its reach; but it also demonstrated that a political role in the region was too difficult to agree upon. Predictably enough, the GMP remained entangled in pre-existing bonds of members and was restrained by Britain's determined opposition. Between 1975 and 1978, the GMP succeeded in linking to the EC eight countries of the North African and Near Eastern area, while the return of democracy in Greece and Spain opened the path to their accession to the Community. A North-South political divide began to take shape in the Mediterranean.

The Euro-Arab Dialogue, initiated after the "oil shock" following the Yom Kippur War and convened in 1975-1979, saw a third potential actor in the developmental relations between the EC and the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, namely the Arab oil producing countries. This reflected the change in perceptions and perspectives in a crisis-ridden Europe, and the willingness of the Nine to establish structured bonds with the countries that enjoyed not only energy resources but also capitals, and markets for European products. European producers hoped that oil wealth would finance industrialisation, infrastructure building and modernisation, both in oil-producing countries and among their non-producing cousins in the Mediterranean and in Africa, and that structured Euro-Arab relations might steer the process to the advantage of the European economy.

General narratives of European integration, however, pay little attention to these disappointing low-key regional enterprises and, rather, look at the systemic and "high politics" impact of European Mediterranean-Middle Eastern policies. The clash with the United States in connection with the Yom Kippur War, and the ensuing internecine quarrels: undermined European Political Cooperation; frustrated European ambitions for unity and a political role in the Cold War; and demonstrated that there was no

room for EC foreign policy in the bipolar age. This systemic constraint overwhelmed European attempts to define an autonomous regional role.

The negative balance of the Nine's initial attempts in the Mediterranean was apparently confirmed by a stagnation in Euro-Mediterranean relations after the signature of the modest association agreements by eight Mediterranean countries and the interruption of the Euro-Arab Dialogue. The 1980 Venice Declaration and a new declaration on Palestine adopted in 1987 were empty policy statements. The Mediterranean-Middle East disappeared from "the front page" of Community policy for almost fifteen years.

There are a number of explanations for the relegation of the Mediterranean in Community policy for over a decade. The disappointing outcomes of the aforementioned Global Mediterranean Policy and Euro-Arab Dialogue, and the upsetting effect of the Euro-American row had done nothing to create a firm basis for EC initiatives. One might also note that, while in the 1970s a variety of conditions had motivated a regional approach, in the next decade re-fragmentation and volatility in the region discouraged multilateral initiatives. Internal EC dynamics took priority in a period that began under the gloom of Eurosclerosis and ended in the build-up to the Single Market that, once again, rescued the European states from the challenges of globalization. Looking at the international setting, the renewal of East-West tensions in the first half of the 1980s and the extraordinary evolution of the Cold War in the second half of that decade created a fast changing international environment. This environment was not suited to new initiatives in a secondary theatre such as the Mediterranean, whose strategic relevance arguably declined with the East-West conflict.

However, at the Barcelona conference in November 1995, the EU launched a comprehensive set of political, economic, social and cultural measures under the ambitious and inspiring title of "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" (EMP). Its importance was threefold: it merged the Community and ECSP aims, competences and instruments; it relaunched a regional approach, while it affirmed the interdependence of the EU and the Mediterranean countries and acknowledged them as equal partners; and it had the ambition of giving the EU a visible role in global security through support of the Middle East Peace Process.

Realist interpretations of European integration have stressed that the EMP was designed to counterbalance the opening of the accession process in East-Central Europe. This, of course, shifted the centre of gravity of the Union to the East. The EMP would save the "Club Med" countries from peripheralization. By creating a new institutional and political multilateral framework and offering financial assistance and free trade, the EU was also reacting to its exclusion from the Middle East Peace Process. The civil war in Algeria in 1991 was another local conflict to be contained and defused. In other words, the reasons for the new EU initiative would be short-term and almost opportunistic and they were designed to contain the spread of political instability.

In fact, other arguments suggest that 1980-1995 was a period of important changes, serious challenges and interlocking transformations in the Community and

in the Mediterranean neighbourhood. A study of this period is necessary, then, to understand the aims, features and limits of the new attempt, in 1995, to shape and govern Euro-Mediterranean relations. Dramatic political events and momentous changes in the region – from the Islamic revolution in Iran to civil war in Lebanon, to the spread of terrorist attacks with Libyan and Syrian connections, to continuing Arab-Israeli attrition – affected European security beyond Cold War concerns. The accession of Greece and Spain and Italy's recovery as a stable and dynamic Community member increased the Mediterranean dimension of the EC and meant new actors and a new balance in Community policy. The diversification of Community policies, from the environment to research to the Single Market and EMU increased the external impact of the Community. Also, global and local economic and social phenomena shifted the crux of Euro-Mediterranean relations from oil and hard security to soft security and social and cultural issues. Even before the Maastricht Treaty, the Single European Act, meanwhile, reaffirmed and legitimized Community ambitions to play an international role.

In this special issue of the *Journal of European Integration History* seven articles, presented originally at a conference held at the University of Padua in November 2013, take up the challenge of elucidating this crucial period. They all investigate European approaches to the Mediterranean or Euro-Mediterranean relations from different perspectives and using different methodologies to compute the Euro-Mediterranean equation with its many variables.

A first group of articles deals with the representation of the Mediterranean. Evanthis Hatzivassiliou's article analyzes the evolution of European perceptions of the Mediterranean through NATO's International Staff's reports. The author stresses that, in the mid-1960s, the Mediterranean became, for the first time, a source of concern for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, not least because of Greco-Turkish tensions over Cyprus, Maltese independence and the appearance of Soviet warships in Mediterranean waters. Shortly afterwards, in the late 1960s, the emergence of a Soviet naval squadron in the Mediterranean contributed to NATO's growing interest in the region; despite Islamic opposition to Communism, the Arab-Israeli conflict, memories of Western imperialism and the traditional structure of Arab societies were all expected to facilitate Soviet penetration. Between the early and the late-1970s, the preoccupation with the Soviet naval presence was paralleled by a concern over the repercussions of the Libyan Revolution, tensions in Western Sahara and Lebanon and, last but not least, the economic and political consequences of the Yom Kippur War. The Cold War remained the prism through which NATO viewed the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The North-South cleavage, however, began to be taken into account as well. Moreover, NATO and, more generally, the Western bloc began to lose its own internal cohesion, with the European Community searching for an autonomous role in the region. In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent war with Iraq, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the assassination of Anwar Sadat and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon all contributed to a significant redefinition of NATO's perceptions of the Mediterranean. This redefinition, in turn, was important in explaining the subsequent Western approach to the

region. According to the author it was, in fact, in this period that the Mediterranean became of paramount political-military relevance for NATO and that the focus of attention shifted definitively from the Maghreb to the Middle East. This was also the period in which the gulf between the Northern and the Southern shores of the Mediterranean became virtually unbridgeable. More importantly, it was the time that Islamic fundamentalism was, for the first time, perceived as an important political phenomenon albeit only a regional one.

Karin Liebhart's article starts from the same implicit assumption, that is to say the importance of perceptions in international relations, and Euro-Mediterranean relations in particular. While Hatzivassiliou's article is based on NATO reports, Liebhart's contribution focuses on the visual and discursive representations of the Mediterranean in the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* and the German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s. Liebhart discovers that, during the Cold War, both these high-quality magazines looked at the Mediterranean as a "crisis region". Unsurprisingly, emphasis was put on the Soviet challenge to Western European security, with the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea receiving most coverage. That being said, from the mid-1970s, growing attention was also devoted to Southern European countries, especially Greece, Spain and Portugal. Generally speaking, all were viewed with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion; more than the Southern Mediterranean states, the Northern Mediterranean countries were also perceived as a menace to both the stability and security of Western Europe. In addition, from the mid-1980s, while the Soviet Union continued to be seen as the most dangerous challenge to the West, Islamic fundamentalism began to attract attention. According to Liebhart, the end of the Cold War did not radically change representations of the Mediterranean in the German media. The Mediterranean continued to be seen as part of a security paradigm, with the wars in the Middle East, the Maghreb and Western Balkans in the forefront. Russia, meanwhile, continued to be portrayed as an enemy. Both during and after the Cold War German magazines contributed to the building up of a disquieting image of the Mediterranean: a fragile, highly contaminated, ecosystem.

A second group of articles concerns the political dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Sofia Papastamkou's article gives an insight into a relevant issue: the Mediterranean enlargement of the European Community and its implications for European Political Cooperation. In particular, it focuses on the Greek case from the early to the mid-1980s. The victory of the Panhellenik Socialist Movement (PASOK) in the 1981 elections brought the Centre-Left into power for the first time in Greece's post-war history. This event and the consequent appointment of PASOK's charismatic leader, Andreas Papandreu, as Greek Prime Minister made a strong impact on the country's foreign policy. His aim was to place Greece at the centre of three circles: Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The underlying idea was that the North-South confrontation was eclipsing the West-East conflict and that Greece, together with the European Community as a whole, should assume a new international role. The EC had to become, according to Papandreu, more autonomous from the United States and more sympathetic towards de-

veloping countries. As shown by Greek attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the relationship with Libya, Papandreou was initially true to his convictions. He in fact staunchly supported the Palestinian Liberation Organization, violently condemned the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon, and was conciliatory to Gaddafi's regime in Libya. That said, as noted by Papastamkou, the Greek government was barely able to influence the foreign policies of the EC and its members; from the mid-1980s, in addition, the pressure from the United States and, to a certain extent, the European Community and the rising challenge of terrorism contributed to the normalization of Greek foreign policy.

European Political Cooperation is also at the heart of Claudia Castiglioni's article, which analyses the policy pursued by the European Community and its members towards Iran, from the 1979 Islamic Revolution to the Critical Dialogue of 1992. Although Iran is not geographically part of the Mediterranean region, the events that occurred in that country, in the long 1980s, exerted a strong impact on the dynamics of cultural and political change in the Middle East and Northern Africa and on European perceptions of the Mediterranean. Castiglioni sets out the positive political and economic relations between Iran and Western European countries, on the one hand, and between Iran and the European Community, on the other, from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. After that, the author focuses on the consequences of the Islamic Revolution, showing how badly this event affected political and economic relations between Iran and Western Europe. Castiglioni, however, also points out that the EC was able to give a coordinated response, somewhat autonomous from that of the US, on crucial issues, including the hostage crisis and sanctions against Ruhollah Khomeini's regime. Significantly, according to the author, this was due to the "hidden diplomacy" of the Ambassadors of the Nine in Teheran, rather than to the formal procedures of European Political Cooperation. The Iran-Iraq war was, in this respect, even more relevant than the Revolution. Given the conflicting interests that linked Western European countries and the belligerents and the political-economic rivalries that divided Western European countries it became, in fact, impossible for member states to keep a coherent position. As a result, the European Community was hardly able to play a role in the conflict and its members became insignificant. Only after the end of the war and the death of Khomeini in the late 1980s, did the main Western European countries re-establish positive diplomatic and economic relations with Iran, thereby paving the way for the launch of the Critical Dialogue and "normalization" in relations between the European Union and the Islamic Republic.

The prevalence of commercially-driven interests in the relations between the European Community and the Mediterranean Arab countries is emphasized in Massimiliano Trentin's article. Trentin shows that oil prices were at the roots of the crisis in Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa between the early 1980s and the early 1990s. The decrease in oil prices, in particular, reduced the resources at disposal for agro-industrial development programmes, as well as social welfare systems throughout the region; this reduction, in turn, limited any Arab hopes of addressing the challenges of the demographic transition and integration into the world economy. At the same time, the diminution of oil prices in the early 1980s and the

fall of oil prices in the mid-1980s, combined with the failure to manage its implications, exacerbated the economic divergence between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean. As Trentin argues, the European Community was unable or more accurately unwilling to fill this widening gap. As a matter of fact, all the economic policies adopted by the European Community in the Mediterranean “depended on what policy would guarantee the prominence of the EC in the region at a given period”. In the 1970s, when Arab countries enjoyed the advantage of high oil prices, the EC had to hide liberalism behind development cooperation policies. In the 1980s, when Arab countries were weakened by political fragmentation and a decrease in oil prices, the EC did not need to simulate. It promoted a strong form of capitalism in the region which, in turn, increased imbalances between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

A fourth group of articles deals with migration in Euro-Mediterranean relations. Emmanuel Comte’s article analyses the role played by the migration factor in relations between the Southern members of the European Community and the third Mediterranean countries from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s. Comte starts with an account of the increase in trans-Mediterranean migration flows in the 1980s. This, according to the author, was due to a combination of growing socio-economic and demographic imbalances between the two shores of the Mediterranean, the active migration policies developed by emigration countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East and armed conflicts in the Western Balkans and the Maghreb. Migration movements from the South, in the author’s opinion, were not without costs for the Northern Mediterranean countries. Local unskilled workers saw deterioration in wage levels and working conditions. Governments meanwhile experienced a diminution in tax revenues. Societies generally were also affected. They saw an upsurge in crime and sometimes in violence. As a response to the troublesome interdependence created by increasing migration flows across the Mediterranean, the Southern members of the European Community adopted policies for curtailing immigration from third Mediterranean countries. First, the Southern members supported the Northern members of the EC in their violation of the 1963 agreement on the free movement of workers between the European Community and Turkey. Second, in the context of their accession to the Schengen Agreements, EC countries were pushed into strengthening border controls and imposing visas on all emigration or potential emigration countries from the South. The Mediterranean members of the EC, however, were well aware that mere closure was not enough to eliminate the costs associated with mass immigration from the South. As a consequence, they tried to persuade the Northern members of the EC to complement immigration closure with cooperation to reduce emigration pressure in origin countries. According to Comte, this plan was at the core of the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean. At the same time, the Northern European countries’ lack of interest in the Mediterranean and their consequent reluctance to provide the EC and later EU Mediterranean policy with considerable financial resources led to the failure of both the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Simone Paoli's contribution develops these ideas, by examining a relevant case study. In particular, the article analyses the process leading to Italy's entry into the Schengen agreements, with an emphasis on its implications for Italian-Maghreb relations between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s. Paoli argues that the Schengen agreements were largely motivated by a desire to protect the geopolitical core of Europe from unwanted mass immigration, especially from Southern Mediterranean countries. Accordingly, the Southern members of the European Community, including Italy, were initially excluded from the accords. Before externalizing border controls to transit countries on the geopolitical periphery of the European Community, the Northern members, especially France, wanted to ensure that the Southern flank of the EC was well patrolled. According to the founding members of Schengen, effective border controls implied restrictive immigration policies and the imposition of visas on all emigration or potential emigration countries from the South, including the Maghreb. These requests, however, were long considered as unacceptable by both the government and the Parliament in Rome. In their view, in fact, they jeopardized Italy's relationship with the Maghreb countries in a period in which such a relationship was regarded as vital for the political and economic interests of the country. In place of Schengen rules, the Italian authorities proposed a liberal immigration policy for the EC; this was functional to both the requirements of the Italian economic system and the Mediterranean ambitions of the Italian government. A reversal occurred only in the late 1980s at the conclusion of a dramatic national debate, which was significantly affected by foreign policy considerations. The Italian Parliament enacted a law which introduced, for the first time, restrictive measures against illegal immigration and the commitment to impose visas for those coming from Turkey, the Maghreb and sub-Saharan African countries. Shortly afterwards, a representative from the Italian government signed the Schengen agreements. The desire to enter the Schengen agreements took priority over the ambition to cultivate a special relationship with Maghreb countries. At the same time, at the European level, the aim of defending borders against immigration from the South mattered more than the idea of a multilateral, negotiated, approach to migration in the Mediterranean region; this was to have, naturally enough, consequences for Euro-Mediterranean relations.