

***Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs (eds.):
The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Assessing the
First Decade***

Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano, FRIDE, 2005, 164 pages.

Expectations were high at the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Policy in 1995. Yet, when the European Union and its southern neighbours celebrated the EMP's Tenth Anniversary in 2005, partners on both sides of the Mediterranean woke up with a hangover. During the lead up to the celebrations, there was much discussion and writing on the merits and shortcomings of the partnership. Of particular interest on this topic is the book *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Assessing the First Decade*. It is the outcome of a workshop held in Madrid in May 2005. Its editors, Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs, who are researchers on the region at the Real Instituto Elcano des Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos and the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), were able to assemble contributions by experts on the Euro-Med partnership from various member states.

The objective of the volume, according to its introduction, is „to inform debate (...) by shedding a critical light on what has and has not been achieved in key thematic areas of the EMP, as well as on the different perspectives that persist in relation to such debates“.¹ As compared to other publications on the issue, the focus on these two aspects is the distinctive feature of this book.

To place these issues in context, the introduction draws a rough picture of the general trends in the decade from 1995 to 2005 that had an impact on the EMP. Development in the Arab World is characterised by deepening tensions in the Middle East, persistent human development deficits and ongoing – and, after 9/11, worsened – authoritarian governance structures. The most relevant changes that occurred in the EU are its growing international presence, the stagnation of the institutional reform process, enlargement and, most importantly, the new European Neighbourhood Policy. With the ENP offering closer integration and basing itself on „everything except the institutions“ logic, it is unclear how it will affect the EMP.

Against this background, single chapters provide an overview of the measures taken and the general stances towards the EMP by various partner countries. All authors voice severe disappointment with the EMP's ten-year record; not only do they agree that too little is done but that the structures of the cooperation need revision also. They conclude with some recommendations for policy amendments

The first section covers the main topics of the EMP. In the first chapter, Eberhard Kienle highlights that „historically, economic liberalisation only had an impact on political liberalisation when and where it favoured or prompted the emergence of new power centres able and willing to challenge

the respective ruling regime“.² He deduces that economic reform and liberalisation alone are not sufficient to generate political liberalisation in the Arab world but that the EU has to support economic *and* political reform simultaneously. Georg Joffé outlines the EU’s desire to foster economic development on the Southern brink of the Mediterranean through increased foreign investment and discusses the current lack of investment, with insufficient physical and human infrastructure, that renders the region unattractive beyond the oil and gas sector. Thus, he recommends that the EU create the right conditions for investment, which the private sector will not do.

Concerning the unsatisfactory progress of human rights and democracy in the Mediterranean, Roberto Aliboni argues that European states focus too exclusively on human rights without taking into consideration that their realisation depends upon a democratic environment. Furthermore, Europeans reluctantly apply negative conditionality to Arab states, distribute the little money they provide for democracy and human rights related projects inappropriately and prefer indirect policies where both indirect *and* direct measures are needed. According to Aliboni, democracy and human rights records can only be improved through a long-term indirect strategy embedded in a broad foreign policy approach, which effectively pressures Arab states to adjust their governance systems.

Michelle Pace presents a variety of cultural initiatives introduced to develop human resources and promote mutual understanding such as Euro-Med Heritage, the Anna Lindh Foundation or the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Society Forum. According to her, more efforts „are needed to highlight the multi-faceted nature of cultural programmes and their interconnectedness with almost every aspect of the first and second baskets of the EMP. The cultural dimension of the EMP could be one way of regulating power relations within Mediterranean countries by maximising the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live.“³

Fred Tanner analyses how the EU’s increasing focus on terrorism, organised crime, drug and human trafficking has shifted the security agenda towards cooperation in the justice and home affairs framework at the cost of neglecting operational cooperation and broader reforms of security forces and institutions in the Southern Mediterranean countries. To improve the EU’s approach to security, cooperation measures should be taken to strengthen democratic governance in the security sector, human rights protection and human security at all levels of cooperation.

According to Bichara Khader, criminalisation and the prioritisation of European security characterises the EU’s basic attitude towards migration. In stark contrast to ageing Europe’s real need for immigrants, the EMP aims for ever-stricter immigration control. Considering this, Khader argues that immigration policies are not only a question of obligation (to protect all people) but that it is also in the EU’s self-interest to realise the positive impact that migration can have in Europe.

Following this overview of the main policy areas, the volume’s second section is devoted to national perspectives.

Dorothee Schmid observes that since colonial times, France has constantly tried to uphold close political and cultural relations with the Arab world, mostly through bilateral channels. Only in the 1990s did the French adopt a regional notion of the Mediterranean as a counterstrategy to the feared loss of regional power and became an important contributor to the Barcelona process. But even today, France maintains strong bilateral relations in the region. Schmid interprets this ambiguous course as the former great power's attempt to both maintain a strong influence and adapt to a changing international environment. Unfortunately, the chapter's section about French policy priorities in the EMP is printed only partly.

Spain, as emphasised by Núñez Villaverde, is the European country that is the most sensitive to developments in the Southern Mediterranean due to various political, economic, geographical, historical and cultural relations. Owing to its inability to handle the region's development and security problems alone, Spain became one of the driving forces behind the EMP. In the last ten years, however, two changes of government resulted in priorities being diverted away from the EMP and towards other policy issues or bilateral relations. Such developments can also partly be explained by the overall standstill of the EMP. Núñez Villaverde sees the necessary revival of the process as Spain's task. Yet, the underlying rationale of this demand remains unclear. As he stated earlier, the „[r]e-launching of the EMP does not depend on the determination of one or more European governments“.⁴

Annette Jünemann explains that the struggle for security is Germany's main motivation for contributing to the EMP framework. Even its strong interest in free trade with the Arab countries is seen as a means to an end, contributing to security by socio economic development processes. The Germans have only very reluctantly accepted cultural cooperation as a valuable „bottom up“ instrument for democratisation and stabilisation.

Italy naturally pursues interests in the Mediterranean, which range from securing energy supplies to reducing illegal migration, and official statements emphasise the importance of the EMP. But in practice – and this is probably the most astonishing thesis put forward by Rosa Balfour – it has focused on continental Europe and, in the 1990s, on the Balkans, casting doubt on the overall effectiveness of the EMP. Additionally, Italy's initiatives in the region have been increasingly dominated by its strong alignment with the US and a focus on bilateral activities outside the EMP framework.

In Egypt, political reforms are taking place slowly and gradually, and even though restrictions on democratic freedoms prevail, a new quality of the pluralistic moment can be observed. Amr Hamzawy recommends that Europeans address the Egyptian government to allow for more political liberties, to strengthen opposition parties in low-profile policy areas where government intervention is not expected right away and finally to train moderate Islamists on matters such as human rights in order to include them in the policy process.

Abu-Dalbouh outlines economic and financial development as the most important aspect of the EMP Association Agreement with Jordan. Yet, in some key respects, Jordan performs worse today than when the EMP was launched. Indeed, even though the country has received large sums from the

EU for modernising its economy, liberalisation has largely favoured the EU to the detriment of the Jordanian enterprises. Political reform has received only a minor fraction of the attention devoted to economic reform, and after 9/11, the EU has largely ignored decreasing democratic standards in the kingdom. Abu-Dalbouh concludes that Jordan's political and economic development will not benefit from the Barcelona process as long as its founders are not prepared to revisit its basic principles.

In Morocco, according to Fouad Ammor, the EMP is broadly appreciated due to its important contribution to socio-economic reforms. In contrast to American initiatives in the region, Europe's engagement is perceived by international law and Moroccan culture as more respectful. On the other hand, the EMP is also understood as an intervention in Morocco's internal affairs. The economic situation in Morocco is still bad, and unemployment rates are high. Finally, European migration policies are security centred, and the fight against terrorism after 9/11 tends to neglect human rights, civil liberties and good governance. In order for the EMP to be more fruitful, Ammor demands more cooperation in general and emphasises wide-ranging reforms in the promotion of human rights and the positioning of highly qualified people in well-managed and transparent state institutions in particular.

The conclusion of the book draws together the main challenges that have been identified by its authors and the basic solutions they suggest. Altogether, it turns out that the agenda lying ahead of the Union at the EMP's 10th anniversary is challenging. But the „EU is currently in a good position to encourage Arab countries to reaffirm their commitment to the Barcelona principles, which are viewed by many as less interventionist and more respectful to national sovereignty than the policies of the Bush administration“.⁵ Thus, if the EU is ready to seize the moment and to invest in this innovative endeavour, it is not yet too late. If, however, it is not willing to take action, prospects look grim.

Taking this into account, although it is two years after the anniversary summit for which it was originally written, the book is still worth reading. Besides providing a concise overview of different thematic aspects and the development of seven countries in the Euro-Med framework, the volume (as well as its single chapters) draws attention to the many sore spots that still need improvement today.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Amirah Fernández, Haizam and Youngs, Richards (2005), „Introduction“. In: Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs (eds.): *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Assessing the First Decade*. Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano, FRIDE, p. 14 (www.realinstitutoelcano.org/publicaciones/libros/Barcelona10_eng.pdf).

² Kienle, Eberhard (2005), „Political Reform through Economic Reform? The Southern Mediterranean States Ten Years after Barcelona“. In: Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs, op. cit., p. 32.

³ Pace, Michelle (2005), „EMP Cultural Initiatives: What Political Relevance“. In: Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs, op. cit., p. 65.

- ⁴ Núñez Villaverde, Jesús A. (2005), „Spanish Policy towards the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership“. In: Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs, op. cit., p. 108.
- ⁵ Amirah Fernández, Haizam and Youngs, Richards (2005), „Conclusions“. In: Haizam Amirah Fernández and Richard Youngs, op. cit., p. 163.