

Euro-Mediterranean relations and their heading. On the way to a differentiated multilateralism?

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Abstract: The European Union pays a primary attention to the development of neighbouring relations; it means the relations with countries in the immediate vicinity of its external borders. This is done for the sake of prosperity, stability and the spread of democratic values in the world. In this sense, a kind of the privileged region have always created the states of the Southern and Eastern or eventually Northern Mediterranean with which the European Economic Community began to develop cooperation immediately after its formation. Then since the mid-1990s, the EU set out a goal to create a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area and thus to move closer to the interlacing of the two entities in the form of integration. The outline of the process of development of Euro-Mediterranean relationships (including the changes of bilateral approaches and the conditioning factors) is the objective of this article. It is divided into three sections, which cover different stages of the development of these relationships over time and escalate in terms of two-way approaches to a new quality of cooperation (including the three stated research questions). The result of these relationships could become a Euro-Mediterranean Alliance that is outlined as a differentiated form of multilateralism in the conclusions of the paper.

Key words: good governance, European Neighbourhood Policy, European Union, Euro-Mediterranean Alliance, Mediterranean, partnership, regionalism, strategic partnership

Since the end of the 1950s, the European Economic Community (EEC) paid a great attention to building close relationships with the countries in the Mediterranean, which evolved into a long-term partnership that currently takes the form of two different but complementary concepts. This is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership extended by the European Neighbourhood Policy into the Union for the Mediterranean and the European Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East countries. The hyphen of both is the peace-making process in the Middle East. For a further exploration of the Euro-Mediterranean relations and its heading, there are important those states that represent the intersection of the two sets of countries. These are the states bordering the Mediterranean Sea, which are known as the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya) and the Mashreq (Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Autonomous Territories (Pau), Jordan, Lebanon and Syria). For historical reasons, there was defined also the Northern Mediterranean, where there were originally the countries like Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and Yugoslavia. When the first three countries started in the 1970th

a preparation for the accession to the European Communities (EC) and the EEC started to implement the so-called global Mediterranean policy to the remaining Mediterranean countries, there belonged to the group only Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. The term “Northern” Mediterranean continued to be used rather from the methodology point of view as it actually did not reflect the geographic location of the countries classified in this group. At present, this group is more or less empty, since Cyprus and Malta joined the European Union in 2004 and Turkey has been negotiating its accession to the European Union (EU) since October 2005.

The Mediterranean countries are currently the smallest group of developing countries in terms of the landscape and population, and the second smallest (besides the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) in terms of the production capacity as well as in terms of linking to the international division of labour. From the, historical point of view (with the exception of Turkey) these are the countries under the domination of European powers, from today’s perspective the countries sharing with the EU the common external border. In the region, there

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are rich deposits of raw materials (oil, natural gas, phosphates, iron ore, manganese, lead etc.). A high natural population growth and the social situation in these countries is a cause of the growing emigration in European countries; frequent conflicts and national tensions, the political non-freedom and religious radicalism (associated with the expressions of open terrorism) destabilize the region politically and in the terms of economics, and along with an underdeveloped regional integration and many other the realities they represent a retarding factor of its development.

Given these factors, the Mediterranean countries belong in the long term, as mainly the neighbouring states, between the privileged countries and now strategic partners of the EU. Yet, it is the Mediterranean countries, whose relations with the EU are strongly influenced not only by their geographic proximity, but also by the cultural and historical ties, the tradition of economic interdependence and by the change in the balance of powers in the world. The Euro-Mediterranean relations (as opposed to the relations between the EU and the Middle East) are shaping gradually and are substantially more structured and developed. The aim of this paper is to examine the direction of these relationships from about 1970s up to the present and to answer three main research questions accompanying this heading: (i) Do the origins of the Euro-Mediterranean relations relate to the implementation of a consistent approach to the Mediterranean region or to the differentiated approach to the individual Mediterranean countries? (ii) Does the potential of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership promote both the development of the cooperation of the EU and the Mediterranean countries as well as the expectations of these partners? (iii) Will the Strategic Partnership create a uniform basis for the

scattered activities and mechanisms of the cooperation between the EU and Mediterranean countries? The general question then is, in what form will the Euro-Mediterranean relations result in following the events from the Arab Spring in the future.

THE BILATERAL EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION – THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMON APPROACH TO THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION OR A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH TO THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES?

After establishing the EEC and obtaining political independence of developing entities, the persisting mutual economic dependence underpinned the efforts of both the countries in Europe and in the Mediterranean to develop bilateral relations and a mutually beneficial division of labour. This effort was the reason why soon after its formation began, the EEC and its Member States cooperate on the basis of Article 227 (2) of the Treaty establishing the EEC (the EEC Treaty) with the still politically dependent Algeria (EEC 1993: 148). It was a strange association system – the constitutional association.¹

Since the beginning of 1960s, the EEC began to cooperate with other, already independent countries of the Mediterranean on the basis of concluding bilateral agreements. These were either unlimited or limited association agreements. The association agreements unlimited in time with the countries of the Northern Mediterranean², with which the EEC in the years 1961–1972 developed the closest relations, were built on the assumption of the possible future membership in the EC. Very important were also the limited association agreements with Morocco and

¹The constitutional association was created in an effort of the founding EEC countries to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas countries and territories with a desire to ensure the development of their prosperity, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They were dependent non-European entities, which at the time maintained a special relationship to Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands. These countries and territories gradually changed in the context of national liberation process, especially in the 1960s and further expansion of the EEC (the UK and Denmark). Overseas countries and territories became, without being signatories to the EEC themselves, subject to specific and general provisions stated in Part IV of the contract, which were further specified by the Protocol IV of the Implementing Agreement on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the Community annexed to the EEC Treaty (hence the name “constitutional association”, which arises on the basis of agreements with dependent entities, but arises from the unilateral extension of the measures of the memorandum [constitution] of the integration group at the overseas countries and territories). The purpose of the association was “to promote economic and social development of the countries and territories and to establish close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole” (EEC 1993: 123–125).

²Indefinite association agreements were signed with Greece (1961), Turkey (1963), Malta (1970) and Cyprus (1972).

Tunisia concluded in 1969, which were among the most important partners of the Southern Mediterranean countries. However, these agreements did not count on their entry into the EC. With other Mediterranean countries, the EEC concluded during that period the non-preferential and preferential trade agreements.³ Trade agreements with Spain and Portugal were, for a lack of democracy of those regimes, a basis of the cooperation until the mid-1970s. They enabled a free access of the Spanish and Portuguese industrial goods to the Community market, for the entry of certain agricultural products of the two countries, there were specific reliefs.

Throughout this period of the so-called beginnings of the development of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, there were sought answers to the question *whether the EEC shall apply a consistent, common approach to the Mediterranean region or a differentiated approach to the individual countries of the Mediterranean*, which differed from each other not only in the terms of ethnics, religion, fundamental political and economic indicators, but also in the terms of the access to the mutual cooperation and future strategies. The debate on the unified or differentiated approach culminated in 1978, when the EEC Member States agreed on the adoption of the strategy to the whole Mediterranean region. This idea was contained in the Rossi Report (EP 1972).

Global and Renewed Mediterranean Policy

The Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) was the expression of the EEC efforts to strengthen its economic and political involvement in the region (CEC 1972). The reason for intensifying the economic cooperation was especially an appropriate economic development of the Community in the first half of the 1970s in the respect of which came to the forefront in the French proposal to create a Mediterranean free trade area. The reason for the increased political involvement in the region for the EEC was primarily a pursuit of the European countries of a better controlled access to the mineral wealth in this part of the world, especially to oil, as well as to the local

traditional sea routes, which were often distorted in connection with the expansion of the Soviet influence in the region. A unified EEC approach in the economic sphere was focused primarily on the countries that did not have the opportunity to join the Community as the members.

The basis of the GMP formed a nearly identical cooperative agreement concluded by the EEC with the individual Mediterranean countries. The agreements were concluded with Israel in 1975, with the Maghreb countries in 1976, with the Mashreq in 1977⁴ and with Yugoslavia in 1980. Their goal was to fully open the EEC market for the industrial goods from the Mediterranean, with the exception of certain sensitive items (textiles), and to greatly improve the system imports of agricultural products; in the agreements, there were also provided conditions for the progressive liberalization of trade in services and the movement of capital. It was not a reciprocal approach, but the approach unilaterally advantageous to the Mediterranean countries based on the use of the enabling clause meaning the exceptions to the GATT rules. That approach was deemed to lead, in the long run, to the creation of the foundations of an integrative cooperation based on free trade and the integration and interdependence of the European and Mediterranean regions. The preferential access to the EC market was accompanied by the financial and technical cooperation. The adoption of cooperation agreements was supported by the creation of common institutions i.e. the Council of Ministers and the Committee of Ambassadors and the establishment of the European Commission Delegation in seven Mediterranean countries. In 1970, the EEC paid a greater attention also to Greece, Spain and Portugal, as they were the potential candidates for membership. When in 1974 Greece overthrew the dictatorship of the military junta and started democratization processes of the society and Spain and Portugal in 1975 and 1976 deviated from authoritarian regimes prevailing for decades to the democratic forms of government, there was fulfilled a basic premise of the first and second Southern extension of the EC, which should ensure a more stable political development of the given countries.

³Non-preferential trade agreements concluded the EEC with Israel (1964), Lebanon (1965) and Yugoslavia (1970); preferential trade agreements concluded the EEC with Spain (1970), Portugal and Israel (1972), Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon (1972). Preferential trade agreements with Israel and Lebanon replaced the previously received non-preferential trade agreements. However, the agreement with Lebanon did not come in force.

⁴These agreements were published in the Official Journal of 28. 5. 1975 – L 136 (Israel) and of 27.9.1978 – L 263 (Algeria), L 264 (Morocco), L 265 (Tunisia), L 267 (Lebanon), L 268 (Jordan), L 269 (Syria).

The newly acceding countries, along with other Southern Mediterranean states, shaped at the end of the 1980s and in early 1990th one of the main directions of the EC foreign policy. It happened at the background of the renewal of the civil war in Algeria, the unsolved problem of the Western Sahara sharpening the dispute between Algeria and Morocco, the negative attitude of Libya to a terrorist act in the Lockerbie in Scotland and the subsequently imposed economic sanctions by the United Nations, Egypt's non-participation in the Dialogue 5 + 5 and also a revolutionary transformation in the Central and Eastern Europe. These changes together with the reunification of Germany began to deepen the Mediterranean concern that the new global situation in the world diverts the attention of the EC from the Mediterranean towards the transforming part of Europe and that the financial resources that were hitherto provided to the Mediterranean countries would be redistributed in favour of that area. Therefore, the end of the Cold War reactivated a part of the EC Member States to reassess the approach towards their Eastern and Southern partners.

Based on the Commission communication (EC 1989), the Council adopted in 1991 the so-called Renewed Mediterranean Policy (RMP). This policy related to a short period of the first half of the 1990th. Its aim was to develop a comprehensive approach to the collaboration that goes beyond the trade and the traditional financial and technical assistance (EC 1991). Under this approach, an increased attention should be given to the promotion of economic reforms, including the external opening of the Mediterranean countries. The emphasis was placed on the private sector as an element that should play a primary role in the process of the economic growth and development. The main policy instruments should become the decentralized cooperation programs. In addition to the European Community Investment Partners (ECIP), financial instrument created in 1988, there were programs, which began in 1992: the MED-Avicenna; MED-Campus; MED-Invest; MED-Media; MED-Migration; MED-Techno; MED-Urbs. They were focused on the key actors in each country and should attract the interest of local companies and academic institutions. The financial assistance should cover not only the traditional cooperation in the priority areas (education, rural development etc.), but it was supplemented by the so-called structural

support accelerating economic reforms. Additional funds were prepared to finance the import programs and social care.

A common bilateral approach without a transitional multilateral framework

Should we answer the first question, whether the origins of the Euro-Mediterranean relations related to the application of a uniform approach to the Mediterranean region or to the differentiated approach to individual Mediterranean countries, we can summarize that the EC since the early 1970s to mid-1990s established the relations with the Mediterranean countries on the basis of bilateral agreements, which, however, reflected a consistent approach of the Community to the Mediterranean resulting from the platform of the Global and Renewed Mediterranean Policy.

The results of the implementation of cooperation agreements, however, did not lead to any significant increase in the mutual trade or the mutual economic dependence of the regions as offered by the GMP, because of the difference of the economies of scale in the production achieved and the application of the import substitution policy in the Mediterranean countries. On the contrary, they led to the economic independence of the Mediterranean countries (namely Arabic countries), which they sought via their strategies of the promotion of economic growth. The end of the 1970 significantly changed the economic situation in the EEC and the implementation of cooperation agreements was displaced. The current model of cooperation with the Maghreb and Mashreq was thus in 1978 only complemented by the financial and technical assistance from the EEC. Greece's entry into the EC in 1981 and negotiating over the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986⁵ put an end to a period of the active EC approach to the Mediterranean and the interests of the non-Mediterranean countries (mainly Maghreb countries), that suffered large losses due to the Southern extension, were rather neglected. The economies of the new states of the EEC and the Mediterranean neighbours resembled each other both in the agricultural and industrial sectors, which resulted in the trade diversion in favour of the new members of the EEC. The Community became self-sufficient in

⁵In 1987 also Morocco tried to get the benefits of membership in the EC. Its request for accession was, however, denied because it was not a European country.

a number of products (olive oil, tomatoes etc.), the products formerly imported from the Mediterranean. Some compensation for these countries ought to be represented by the preferential commodity agreements, which entered into force in 1988 and related to the reduction of the restrictions on imports of agricultural products and a complete abolition of the restrictions on textile imports and the increase in the financial and technical assistance.

Not even the Renewed Mediterranean Policy brought about a noticeable change, which was expected to cause a more significant economic development via the introduction of more advanced reforms in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries contributing to narrowing the structural gap between the European Union, created on the basis of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, and the neighbouring Mediterranean countries.

Up to 1995, the financial cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean developed in two stages: the first covered the years between 1958 and 1975, the second related to the period from 1976 to 1995. In the first phase, the financial assistance was greatly limited and was based mainly on financial loans. In the second stage, in which the EC signed cooperation agreements with the Mediterranean countries, there were, in addition to loans, also promoted other forms of the financial (development) assistance. Significant financial instruments became the so-called financial protocols. These were concluded for a five-year period on the condition that the amounts would always be fully withdrawn. There was no special fund created to cover the financial protocols, but there was created a specific budget line B7-4050 for the financial protocols concluded in 1976–1980 and 1981–1985, and B7-4051 for the financial protocols valid in the period from 1986 to 1990 and from 1991 to 1995. The beneficiaries of that assistance were only seven countries in the Maghreb and the Mashreq.⁶ For the second phase, the objectives of the development aid did not change. Nevertheless, up to 1985 the EEC focused on investments in the manufacturing infrastructure and economic and technical cooperation in the framework of investment projects in the education sector. After 1986, the priority areas of the development assistance were the following: the development and diversification of the industrial and agricultural production and reducing the dependence on food imports; the cooperation in the sector

of education, research, technology, trade, and the regional and multilateral cooperation. After 1991, in addition to strengthening those mentioned economic ties in various sectors, also the environment and the political dimension of cooperation (democratization and human rights) and the campaign against poverty started to be promoted (Cihelková 2003: 351).

While in the economic field the GMP did not appear to be so significant, it had a great impact in the political field. There was a shift in the European approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict (see Knoops 2011: 5) after the conclusion of the first agreement between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed in 1993 in Oslo and confirming the right of the Palestinians to their own state and governance, as well as the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in various peace-making initiatives. The RMP thus contributed to the fact that in the time of a great international transformation and under the rapid changes taking place in the Central and Eastern Europe, it made the proposed Euro-Mediterranean partnerships an external part of the EU agenda.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP – WILL THE POTENTIAL OF THE BARCELONA PROCESS PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUTUAL COOPERATION AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARTNERS?

In response to the changing global climate, after the collapse of the bipolar world, a certain optimism that had been prevailing in the Euro-Mediterranean relations after the adoption of the Oslo agreement and also having been based on the experience of the development in bilateral relations, the European Council adopted in 1994 the Strategy Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (CEC 1994). It regards the relationships that developed into the form of an equivalent (equal) and mutually beneficial cooperation, which includes not only the various forms of the trade cooperation, but also a number of other economic and non-economic areas, and that cooperation has been institutionalized. The partnership was to establish a new dimension of the relations between Europe and its major neighbours based on the principle of solidarity, dialogue and cooperation, and to provide a permanent framework

⁶Turkey, Cyprus and Malta signed specific protocols in the framework of the association agreements and Protocols of Israel did not include the right for grants from the EC as was the case with other partners.

for sharing the problems of the Mediterranean region. The strategy included two dimensions: a multilateral one, developed in the form of a dialogue between the two regions (the EU and the Mediterranean) on the non-contractual basis, and a bilateral one realized between the EU and the individual Mediterranean countries on the basis of the agreements of various types. The multilateral setting of relations does not compete with the bilateral relations, as it does not replace them but rather complements them with the solutions for those issues, the communication of which at the bilateral level would be very difficult.

The concept of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership raised the question of *whether the potential of the Barcelona process and the new association agreements is to promote the development of a mutual cooperation and the expectations of the partners*. The answer to this question must take into account a new financial instrument of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the MEDA program.⁷ The program offered a financial and technical support for the measures that are to accompany the reform of the economic and social structures of the Mediterranean partner countries and thus goes beyond the traditional development assistance. Drawing funds from this program to the Mediterranean countries was enabled only under four conditions: a successful use of the previous assistance; starting a process of economic liberalization; the democratization of political life and the respect for human rights.

Multilateral and bilateral dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The multilateral dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership was formalized as the Barcelona Process at the first conference of foreign ministers of the EU-15 and the twelve countries (entities) of the Mediterranean basin⁸ held on 27–28 November, 1995 in Barcelona. The Conference adopted the “Barcelona Declaration” (EU 1995), in which it established a multilateral setting of the relations, the regional development forum that meets in general every two years. In addition, it established meetings of the ministers with the responsibility for various industries/

sectors (sector conferences) and meetings of the government experts (civil servants conferences). It also created a permanent body, the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process, consisting of the representatives of the EU and the individual Mediterranean countries. Later the institutional structure of the Barcelona process was completed by the Euro-Mediterranean Forum, a platform guaranteeing the democratization of the Mediterranean countries, and the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum, on which platform the representatives of non-governmental organizations whose goal is the development of civil society in the Mediterranean etc.⁹ are meeting.

The Barcelona process had three main objectives including a number of sub-themes (EU 1995):

- to define a common area of peace and stability through the reinforcement of the political and security dialogue (e.g. establishment of the rule of law in Mediterranean countries; the formulation of the common safety principles; combating racism and xenophobia);
- to create an area of shared prosperity through an economic and financial dialogue (accelerating the pace of sustainable development and improving the living conditions of the population; the development of regional cooperation and integration, which will lead to the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area);
- to develop relationships between people based on the social, cultural and humanitarian dialogue aimed at the promotion of understanding between cultures and the exchange between civil societies (support training and mobility; strengthening the role of women and the role of the media; civil society development and the fight against corruption).

The bilateral dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership began to rely on a new type of association agreements that the EU negotiated with all the countries of the Maghreb and Mashreq, with the exception of Syria, during the approximately seven-year period (1995–2002). These association agreements of the third generation replaced the cooperative agreements related to the era of the Global Mediterranean Policy and the Renewed Mediterranean Policy. The cooperation agreement persists only in the relation to

⁷MEDA – an acronym derived from the French term “*Mesures D’Accompagnement*”, it means additional measures. The tool began to be implemented in 1996 (MEDA I) and completed in 2000 (MEDA II).

⁸These are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

⁹This structure will be adapted to the needs of the next evolution.

Syria, with which an association agreement was indeed negotiated but not yet signed. Libya did not become a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership primarily due to the UN sanctions imposed on this country (supporting terrorism) in 1992. In 1999, when those sanctions were suspended, Libya was accepted as an observer to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; since 2003, when the sanctions were lifted, the EU began to develop with the country an informal dialogue and provided financial assistance.¹⁰

The Euro-Mediterranean agreements have the same character as the association agreements of the first generation, but unlike them, they do not involve an explicit or implicit target of a direct entry into the EU. They do not emphasize the requirement to create a market economy but a special emphasis is put on the compliance with the principles of democracy, fundamental freedoms and human rights. Although they are a kind of the association agreements with the aim of the economic and social development, which means that the countries of the Mediterranean area are trying to get specific advantages from the cooperation with the EU and to catch up with the EU, they assume a development of reciprocal relationships between the partners. This means that due to their content, they belong among preferential agreements as they liberalize the trade between the partners, but the WTO most favoured nation clause does not cover the reciprocally granted benefits. Unlike the cooperative agreements from the 1970s, they include cooperation in the political and cultural areas, as the political stability and cultural understanding are important for the prevention of conflicts. The association agreements are typical for a kind of asymmetry, which refers both to the content of the obligations arising from the agreement, as well as to the conditions of the application of these obligations. They were concluded for an indefinite period and may be terminated within six months. An integral part of the association agreements are the protocols and annexes and, if necessary, also the declarations to which their provisions refer. Given the fact that the association agreements share a common framework (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership), they have many

features in common. Among other things, the content of an agreement reflects the basic principles of the Barcelona Declaration and thus generally determines the three main areas of cooperation: the cooperation on the political and security areas; the cooperation in the field of the economic and financial assistance, and the cooperation in cultural and social affairs.¹¹

The political and security cooperation is based on the provision that it supports the respect for the basic values on which the EU was founded and developed. Political stability is important for the prevention of mutual conflicts and therefore the association agreements also include a new cooperation tool – the institutionalized political dialogue. The agreements establish the Council for Associations (consisting of the ministers of foreign affairs), the Joint Committee (appointed at the civil servant level) and an arbitration procedure. Decisions or recommendations that the authorities accept represent the sources of legal rights and thus the associated countries are, in the relevant issues, directly engaged in the creation of the (secondary) EU law. The cooperation in this field assumes mainly the promotion of political and subsequently economic reforms of the Mediterranean countries, which are required by the total reconstruction of the mutual relationships. Their goal should be to strengthen the democratization of the local conditions and to build civil society. The partnership in the field of security began to rely only on the so-called soft security, which includes organized crime, drugs and terrorism.

Among the most important provisions in the economic and financial field within the agreements in general, there belongs the free trade of goods, where the parties committed to progressively introduce the free movement of industrial products and to create, up to 2010, the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area as well as to gradually liberalize the trade in agricultural products and services. Like the liberalization within the European countries, they ought to implement the liberalization of trade between the Mediterranean countries themselves. Economic measures include maintaining a high level of the protection of intellectual property rights; a gradual liberalization of the public

¹⁰The integration of Turkey into the EU is based on the association agreement of the first generation, signed in 1963 and in force since 1, December, 1964. The additional protocol to the agreement was negotiated in 1970. The same agreement was in force since 1, April, 1971 with Malta and from 1, June, 1973 with Cyprus. These agreements were fulfilled when both countries joined the EU on 1, May, 2004 and replaced by the Treaty of Accession to the EU.

¹¹Euro-Mediterranean Agreements were published in the Official Journal: L 187 on 16. 7. 1997 (Occupied Palestinian Territories) L 97 of 30. 3. 1998 (Tunisia), L 070 of 18. 3. 2000 (Morocco), L 147 of 21. 6. 2000 (Israel), L 129 of 15. 5. 2002 (Jordan), L 304 of 30. 9. 2004 (Egypt), L 265 of 10. 10. 2005 (Algeria), L 143 of 30. 5. 2006 (Lebanon).

procurement; the treatment of the regulations relating to competition, state aid and monopolies; the legislation on the liberalization of the movement of capital and economic cooperation in a number of sectors. Further, they outline the areas for the cooperation like the modernization of infrastructure, the promotion of private investment and restructuring of the industry. Among the tools of the economic cooperation, there belong the regular dialogue, the information exchange, joint ventures, the assistance in technical and administrative matters and the use of experts. The agreements include the financial assistance to the Mediterranean countries to support reforms, but without specifying the amounts concerned. From the above mentioned, it is already apparent that the method of financing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the first phase became mainly the MEDA.

The aim of the cultural cooperation is the implementation of plans and programs that aim to enhance the tolerance and to improve the mutual knowledge of cultures and to eliminate discrimination. At the social area, the agreements contain provisions on the rights of employees and their family members as well as the arrangements concerning social security. They also regulate the readmission of citizens who come illegally into the territory of one party from the territory of the other party, although the details in relation to the individual countries differ. The agreements mention legal employment, but they do not set the conditions for granting work permits or the legalization of labour relations in the territory of a Member State, respectively. They do not provide for the non-discriminatory access to the profession and therefore do not equalize the citizens of the Mediterranean countries with those from the EU. Unlike other freedoms, such as the free movement of goods, the labour mobility scheme is based on the symmetry with minimum deviations. The parties undertake to intensify the cooperation in the status of women, programs related to family planning and the protection of mothers and children, the improvement of social protection and living conditions in slum areas and ultimately the creation of new job opportunities in order to reduce the emigration pressures on the EU countries.

The general provisions in the association agreements are complemented by specific provisions that shall take into account different problems and needs of the Mediterranean partners. For example, as for the agreement with Israel, it establishes a free trade regime for industrial products, which exists in the mutual relations since 1989, and for the additional reciprocal concessions for agricultural products dat-

ing to 1995. It deepens the economic partnership, especially in the scientific field, and it adds a political dimension to the relations with the EU. The highly developed Israeli industry reflects the fact that Israel is the only country that does not receive the financial assistance from the EU budget. And we should add that a distinctive feature of the other association agreement – the agreement with Morocco – represents the attention paid to agriculture, mainly the exports of agricultural products to the EU. For this country, there was expanded the list of agricultural commodities and increased quotas for some products by up to 12%, respectively, and after lengthy negotiations, the country was granted the preferential access to the EU internal market for tomatoes and oranges. However, there are some limitations (Cihelková 2003: 376–383).

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the light of the escalated European Neighbourhood Policy

The development and implementation of the Eastern enlargement of the EU in 2003 and 2004 (CEC 2003, 2004) contributed to the establishment of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which was created to prevent a new division of Europe between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and, at the same time, to strengthen these neighbours. The ENP was, therefore, initially focused on dealing with the Eastern countries. However, under the influence of the Southern states of the EU, the ENP was extended to its Southern neighbours. In addition to six states of the former Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus, the policy also covered ten countries from the Mediterranean region. While some of the Eastern countries could in the future become candidate countries for the membership in the EU, the Mediterranean countries are not generally perceived as potential candidates.

According to Knoops (2011: 9), the ENP differs from the Barcelona Process in two ways. First, the ENP is only a bilateral and also differentiated EU policy towards the individual countries (including the Mediterranean countries), while the partnership includes the Barcelona Process, which is its versatile and uniform dimension. The differentiation of the ENP means that the relations with each neighbouring country have a different intensity and quality depending on the extent to which the country meets the priorities and requirements of the policy and catches up with the EU (what degree of integration with the EU it represents). The ENP is, therefore, associated with bilateral agreements, which are to-

wards its Eastern and Southern neighbours based on similar grounds (the agreement on partnership and cooperation, the Euro-Mediterranean association agreement). Therefore, it creates an opportunity for the individual Mediterranean countries to strengthen their relations with the EU and to take use of the positive aspects of this bilateral approach. For the EU, the bilateral agreements represent an opportunity to expand its political and economic influence in the Mediterranean. Some developing Arab states have never really adopted the role applied within a single group of countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, although in fact they become part of the Barcelona process. The stated reason was, for example, the inclusion of Israel in the process. Secondly, the ENP introduces conditionality, i.e. the assumption of achieving political conditions for granting loans, the development aid, trade preferences or the membership in the EU. The use of conditionality is very successful for the group of countries that are interested in joining the EU. However, this fact does not affect the Mediterranean countries. Where this incentive is missing, the loans conditioning, the preconditioned development aid or trade agreements subject to the fulfilment of the reforms leading to democracy, human rights and good governance are ineffective.

In the framework of the evaluation of both approaches, Koops adds that from the current view, the ENP is therefore, for the internal logical reasons, rather more beneficial for the EU than for the developing countries, as it does not sufficiently affect the reality of the Mediterranean region, neither the short-term effects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In comparison with the Euro-Mediterranean, it is only applied to those Mediterranean countries that develop a bilateral cooperation with the EU based mainly on economic and technical issues. The issues such as political reforms, democratization, the application of the human rights etc. are not actively enforced.

The transitional multilateral framework and the gradually promoted differentiated approach to the Mediterranean countries

In answering the question whether the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership supported the development of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

and the expectations of partners, it is necessary to state that already the conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conferences, often referred to as Barcelona I, Barcelona II etc., which took place after 1995, proved the fact supported by many leading analysts that the relations between the EU and the Mediterranean partners do not progress sufficiently. The last (exceptional) conference, held to mark the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process in 2005, concluded that although much was made in the decade, the potential of especially the Barcelona process was, however, far from recovered (EC 2005).

As a positive element, there could be perceived the establishment of a comprehensive legal and institutional structure of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Among the major institutions that were created to support the development of democracy and intercultural dialogue we can find the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)¹², the Joint Permanent Committee¹³ and the Anna Lindh Foundation (2005). In 2005, a fourth key area of dialogue and cooperation was introduced, called the Migration, Social Integration, Justice and Security. Its main themes are seeking the solution of migration flows and social integration of migrants as well as cooperation between judicial authorities. In this pillar were included some issues of social, cultural and humanitarian dialogue (fight against terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking). There were negotiated association agreements with practically all Mediterranean countries (except Syria) and many of them were also ratified. It came to the renewal of the cooperation with Libya, which sought to open the negotiations of the Framework Agreement on Trade and Cooperation, which should support its application for the WTO membership.¹⁴ There was implemented the European Council Directive of 1996, which led to the creation of the financial instrument MEDA (EC 1996). The MEDA I allocated in favour of the Mediterranean countries 4422 billion ECU/EUR, and the MEDA II further 5350 billion EUR (EMWIS 1996). Other financial instruments were developed such as the Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership Facility (FEMIP), the MEDA Democracy etc. Due to these sources, a number of programs based on the horizontal cooperation could continue or be implemented.

¹²EMPA was created in 2003 by renaming the previously formed Euro-Mediterranean Forum.

¹³Joint Permanent Committee was established in 2005 by renaming the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process.

¹⁴Negotiations on Framework Agreement were initiated only in November 2008.

The structure of institutions, contractual instruments and funds could not, however, guarantee the fulfilment of the objectives of the pillars of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, nor the effectiveness of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. For instance, in the field of the political and security dialogue, the Barcelona process has created a platform where the Mediterranean countries can meet, including Israel and Palestine, in order to strengthen the mutual trust. The complexity of conflicts between the Arab states and Israel hinders the process of political cooperation, though. On the contrary, increasing tensions in the Israeli-Arab relations resulting from breaching the Oslo Agreement, the events of September 2001 and the expansion of terrorism, they all resulted in strengthening of the extremist sentiment in Europe. These obviously do not contribute to the strengthening of the partnership, but the main brakes here were the authoritarian regimes in the Mediterranean countries, that suppressed any conditionality that the EU called for during the implementation of the offered programs of cooperation (Knoops 2011: 8).

In the course of 1990s, the Mediterranean countries gradually receded from the political reforms as a result of the increasing Islamism and violence in some of them, and the efforts of the EU to promote them was regarded as a form of interference and the so-called cultural imperialism. The Mediterranean countries were afraid of a possible use of the humanitarian interventions in order to limit their national sovereignty for the sake of the protection of common values (democracy, human rights, ecology etc.). For this reason, the EU began to avoid also the specific military cooperation, so as not to hinder the cooperation in other areas. The partnership was limited to the cooperation primarily just in the field of terrorism (Bureš 2000: 4). The Security dialogue was also limited due to the lack of existing security architecture in the Mediterranean and the position of the two regions, e.g. with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the terrorist attack of 11th September 2001. Political elites of both parties agreed that the international terrorism is a new phenomenon that can be stopped only by strict measures contained in the Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism.

In the area of the economic and financial dialogue, there was also a failure in terms of a full promotion of reforms in the economic sphere (achieving macroeconomic stability, reducing the independence of the customs revenues, reducing external debt, increasing the openness of the country, introducing

more liberal regulatory framework as well as effective networks of social protection). Some countries (Libya, Syria) were totally out of this process, despite the fact that the economic transformation was accepted as a part of the reforms necessary for the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, which is one of the expected benefits of the development agenda. However, this zone increases the risk of the uneven and uncertain results from the integration between the economically unequal partners. Furthermore, as expected, it does not include the trade in agricultural products, in which the Mediterranean countries at least partially maintain comparative advantages in comparison with the EU. Free trade will accelerate the selection of competitive and uncompetitive firms being at the risk of the subsequent bankruptcies of some of them, which will be accompanied by negative social impacts. The removal of the tariff protection for imports from the EU will lead to a decrease of the budget incomes of the Mediterranean countries (which will have to be compensated by the increase of the value added tax to the detriment of consumers, or by reducing the public spending with political risks). Economic inequality between the Mediterranean states contributes, together with the political reasons, to the varying intensity of relations within the region and that weakens the possibility of the regional integration, which is critical to the Euro-Mediterranean zone if it were to be created. Thus, it was more than obvious that the creation of a free trade area by 2010 was a mere utopia.

The concerns about international terrorism led the EU to prioritize the political stability of the Mediterranean region to the political liberalization of the country and its democratic reforms. This contributed namely to the fact that the EU focused primarily on policies related to the immigration, asylum and border controls, and preferred them to the activities fostering the underdeveloped civil society, especially in the countries with the Islamic background. After the events of September 11, 2001, the migration began to be perceived as a threat to the European economies and in that area, there began discussions about the agreements with the Islam. The migration was associated not only with the safety aspects, but also with the public order, the cultural identity and the stability of labour markets (Knoops 2011: 7). In connection to a possible mass emigration, there was discussed the asymmetry of the population growth, which was confronted with the lack of the economic growth and job creation in the Mediterranean.

Let us summarize, that already at this stage of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, it was clear that both sides emphasize different aspects of the partnership and have different expectations. While the EU stressed primarily the political and security aspects of the partnership, the Mediterranean countries emphasized the economic and financial cooperation. The EU took as its priority a stabilization of the European-Mediterranean region, based on the adoption of the values and models on which the EU itself relies. The Mediterranean countries focused mainly on ensuring a better access to the European markets and the increased development assistance, which is confirmed by Knoops in his conclusions (Knoops 2011: 7).

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – A STEP TOWARDS A SINGLE BASIS FOR THE SCATTERED ACTIVITIES AND MECHANISMS OF THE COOPERATION OF THE EU AND THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES?

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as the cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with Iraq, Iran and Yemen are the frameworks in which the already developed activities and means of the cooperation with the EU regions were dispersed. Since the beginning of the third millennium, the European Union and its development partners were confronted with new challenges of the increasing interdependence in the world and the need to reflect these new realities and to ensure the continued sustainable development. These new challenges, stemming out from the regional conflicts in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organized crime, required, however, a uniform approach by all the partners. Since different countries faced different challenges, it was necessary to identify those of them that connect most of the countries and that will not be overcome by the support of the status quo in mutual relations, but via the preparation and implementation of such political, social and economic reforms that separate the well-governed countries from the others and create conditions for their close and cooperative relations not only with the EU, but the international community as such.

In order to create a single framework for the promotion of political, economic and social reforms and

the socio-economic development of the countries of the two regions, the European Council approved in June 2004 a new strategy for the whole Mediterranean region and the Middle East (European Council 2004). It was the concept of the Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and Middle East, representing a new stage of partnership. The fundamental challenge is to address the Arab-Israeli conflict, without which it is not possible to create a common area of peace, stability and prosperity. Given that the EU will strive for a peaceful stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, the strategic partnership includes not only the Mediterranean countries and the GCC countries, but also Yemen, Iraq and Iran. The strategic partnership is to create a consistent basis for the EU external policy respecting the partner approach leading to the differentiation of the attitudes to the individual partners, specifying mutual interests in a particular political agenda under which both sides will address the challenges that the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries present. The priority issues for the EU become the values such as the good governance, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, the respect for the rights of minorities, the cooperation to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, the conflict prevention and the economic development, as well as the increase in the education of youth, strengthening the role of women in the society, building a knowledge community or a mutual respect for different cultures. Important factors in the relations represent the people living in EU countries and originating from the partner countries. The basic means of fulfilling the targets are the consultations, which include the medium term ministerial meetings (European Council 2004).

A strategic partnership is an advantageous cooperation between the partners, which should be able to jointly address not only the challenges presented by the changing conditions in terms of the global and bilateral dimensions and to go beyond traditional cooperation, but become a part of the global governance, from which in the appropriate (balanced and sustainable) manner there should benefit all other countries in the international system. Saying this, another question arises, namely *whether the strategic partnership creates a uniform basis for the scattered activities and the cooperation mechanism of the EU and the Mediterranean*. It stems from the fact that a more dynamic partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East will build on the existing activities and their requirements will be reflected in the existing mechanisms, tools and resources. However,

the relations with the Middle East are less developed and more differentiated relations. The economic and social characteristics of these countries, therefore, require mechanisms different from those used in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. However, they will still remain beyond our attention.

The Union for Mediterranean as a further stage of the Barcelona Process

The Union for the Mediterranean, with some ups and downs, became a reality on the summit of the Euro-Mediterranean region held on 13 July 2008 in Paris. In the negotiations on the Paris Declaration (EU 2008), there participated, besides the representatives of 27 EU Member States (plus the President and the Secretary General of the Council, President of the European Parliament and the President of the Commission) and 10 Mediterranean countries, also the representatives of the Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia), Monaco and Mauritania.¹⁵ Thus, a regional group consisting of 43 countries (entities) emerged and its main aim is to revitalize the efforts to transform the Mediterranean into the area of security, stability and prosperity. Since it was established as a new phase of the Barcelona process (originally called Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean), it accepts, adopts and upgrades the Barcelona Process acquis. In particular, it brings up three new dimensions: building-up new institutions with the intention of strengthening the visibility and agility; strengthened co-sharing of the governance of the multilateral process; specified relationships through the additional regional and sub-regional projects relevant for the residents of the given regions.

The biggest innovation of the Barcelona Process is its new institutional architecture, which means strengthening of the governance of the mutual relationship. Barcelona conferences will continue to be held not at the level of foreign ministers, but at the level of the heads of state and governments (every 2 years); the meetings at the ministerial level will be convened in the meantime (usually once a year).¹⁶ Newly, it also establishes a Secretariat in Barcelona,

which is also considered as the seat of the Union for the Mediterranean area and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM). There is also a stronger position of both the Joint Permanent Committee based in Brussels and the parliamentary cooperation on the basis of the EMPA. In order to guarantee the mutual participation in the governance of the Union for the Mediterranean, there was introduced a co-presidency of two countries, one country of the European Union and one of the Mediterranean regions. The EU agreed that its representation must be compatible with the external representation within the meaning of the founding treaty. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU presidency corresponds with the President of the European Council (at the level of the Heads of State and Government) and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President (at the level of Foreign Ministers). Building on four pillars of the Barcelona Process, the foreign ministers at the conference in Marseilles in November 2008 specified six priority projects that reflect the needs of the whole Euro-Mediterranean region and which focus on the mutual cooperation. These are namely: environment (cleaning up of the Mediterranean Sea and the associated assurance of access to drinking water, water supply and the management of the Mediterranean biodiversity); transport (construction of the marine and land routes); the protection the civilians against natural disasters and man-made disasters (a mechanism similar to the European civil protection); alternative energy: the Mediterranean solar energy plan (promotion of production and use of renewable energy); higher education and research: the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia (establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean area of higher education, science and research); the development of the Mediterranean business (initiatives to support small and medium-sized enterprises) (CEC (2008) and the EU (2008)).

After 2007, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership began to be funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) a new instrument of the financial framework 2007–2013. Within the support of the cross-border cooperation, there are covered programs of the regions of the EU Member

¹⁵Furthermore the negotiations were attended by the presidents of the institutions of the Barcelona process, the observers and special guests and representatives of a number of international organizations – the UN, the World Bank, the EIB and the African Development Bank.

¹⁶Professional conferences (at the level of Ministers of Economy, Finance, etc.) and meetings at expert level retain their original appearance.

States and the regions of partner countries sharing a common border. Another source is the FEMIP. Since 2008, due to the decision of the Euro-Mediterranean ministers of finance, the FEMIP is designed to support three project areas: environment, transport and alternative energy. In June 2010, the EIB and four companies¹⁷ established a new Infrastructure Fund (InfraMed). The funds for energy projects were also provided for by the World Bank.

Weakening of the multilateral framework and the introduction of the “more for more” principle

The emphasis of the EU on the multilateral dimension of its external actions led to the fact that the ENP related not only to the bilateral aspect of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, but it also linked itself with the multilateral initiative – the Union for the Mediterranean. However, being the second phase of the Barcelona process, it suffers from an institutional point of view in the same way as its first phase, by a broad and diversified membership and other elements that, instead of strengthening its partnerships, tend to weaken it. The large number of members of the Union for the Mediterranean and the differences between them reflected in the complexity of consensus-building and in strong efforts to unify various national interests. The joint execution of the presidency in the institutions that meet at the highest and ministerial levels is a symbol of equal partnership and makes each partner more responsible and proactive, but at the same time, it presents an option of using the right of veto for any other proposal. In this situation, controversial issues and the criticism of autocratic forces in the Mediterranean countries barely reach the agenda of meetings at the appropriate levels. The Union for the Mediterranean region is, therefore, hard to develop a kind of political dialogue that would promote a political reform.

From the review of the specific activities of the Union for the Mediterranean, it stems out that the Union focuses primarily on the smooth, functioning areas of the cooperation and within its scope, there

were suppressed the efforts of the EU to strengthen the rule of law and the respect of human rights and freedoms in partner countries. While in the Paris Declaration, the EU expressed its political will to transform the Mediterranean region (in the area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity), in reality, the EU sought, for the safety reasons, rather a region with the established governance. Knoops (2011: 11) assesses this fact as disappearing of a very important principle of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which the ENP tried to bring in, the political conditionality. Also the progress reports on the ENP for Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco (EC 2010), for example, showed that the EU missed the opportunity to use the conditionality for the support of political reforms in those countries. The EU was raising the aid to them despite the fact that there was not a noticeable progress in the respect of human rights. There is a view (e.g. Youngs 2006) that mitigating the conditionality of aid to the countries of Northern Africa by the EU was directly recommended by France, Italy and Spain, because the conditionality was distorting their commercial activities and destabilizing the regimes that protect their investments. Neither were the EU institutions aggressive in the terms of promoting political reforms and strengthening democracy, when they silently tolerated the rigged elections in Egypt in 2009. Despite the drawbacks occurred during the elections, the EU offered the modernization of the association agreement to Tunisia, or knowing the prevailing situation in Libya, the EU still offered this country to start negotiating a framework agreement on trade and cooperation, respectively.¹⁸ Knoops (2011: 13) states that the EU cooperated with the authoritarian regimes for three reasons: to ensure the political security and to eliminate the growth of the political extremism; to enhance the energy security (securing supplies of oil mainly) and to maintain the options to manage the migration between regions.

The Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, which should have been built by 2010 and which should have resulted into the abolition of barriers to trade and capital movements not only between the EU and its partners, but also between Mediterranean countries themselves, has not been created. While in relation

¹⁷Caisse des Dépôts (France), Caisse des Dépôts et de Bestiin (Maroko), EFG Hermes (Egypt), Causa Depositi e Prestiti (Itálie). Caisse des Dépôts (France), Caisse des Dépôts et de Bestiin (Morocco), EFG Hermes (Egypt), Causa Depositi e Prestiti (Italy).

¹⁸The EU started to negotiate the framework agreement for trade and cooperation in November 2008. This agreement should not only support the country's preparations for full membership in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership but also its application for membership in the WTO. The negotiations were interrupted by the events of the Arab Spring.

to the EU, despite the differences of the development in both regions, the liberalization of trade and investment proceeds on the basis of the concluded Euro-Mediterranean association agreements, within the countries of the Mediterranean the liberalization is interfered by the insufficient intra-regional integration as well as by political and economic problems. This is reflected in the fact that the Mediterranean is very dependent, in terms of trade (about 50%), on the EU, while the trade between the Mediterranean countries represents less than one tenth of the total volume of trade and ranks among the lowest valued intra-regional trade worldwide

The combination of the political and economic stagnation with a rampant corruption, human rights abuses and a growing inequality, the lack of employment opportunities for the rapidly growing and emancipating population became a common cause of the rebellion and protests that took place in the Northern Africa and the Middle East after October 18, 2010. Despite the differences in the individual countries, the protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and other countries (including some GCC) had two main aims – overthrowing of the old authoritarian regimes and improving the economic opportunities (Knoops 2011: 12). These events, known in the media as the Arab Spring, turned in many countries into armed conflicts and a bloody destruction and degradation of society. At first the EU responded similarly like the members of the UN Security Council: in addition to adopting a common resolution, the EU took a number of restrictive measures against certain Mediterranean countries, such as freezing the assets, the embargo on arms, financial restrictions, the boycott of commodities and services, a visa ban on senior officials etc. The EU did so (according to some opinions), instead of taking quickly an active leadership role in the region, which is its neighbour.

Already in 2011 the EU, in the light of the Arab Spring, reconsidered its considerations about the transformation of the region via strategic partnerships. The first real step was taken within the ENP in March, when the EU adopted the document “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean” (EC 2011a). It was meant to support the transformation in Tunisia and to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Libya. The document also outlined a new approach of the EU to the implementation of the political, economic and social reforms in the countries of the region, and for responsible governance, it outlined three main priorities: democratic transformation and institution-building; enhanced

partnerships between people; sustainable and balanced economic growth. The following communication “New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood” (EC 2011b) of May 2011 analysed the status of the implementation of the ENP and outlined a new future EU approaches not only to the Union for the Mediterranean, but also the Eastern Partnership countries – the so-called enhanced partnership. Its aim is to promote a sustainable transition of the partners towards democracy and the development of civil societies in those countries. This approach adds a new principle into the mutual cooperation, namely “more for more”, meaning more support (especially financial) for more political reforms and democracy. The communication provided not only additional information on the changed conditions and the further development of the ENP, but also the development of the concepts for the future relationships and proposals for the additional financial measures.

To provide the financial support for the Mediterranean, in September 2011, there was launched a new financial program – the support for partnership, reforms and inclusive growth, which is referred in the abbreviated form as the SPRING program (Support for Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth). The support from the SPRING is tailored to the needs of the individual countries. The European Commission and the EEAS will, however, consider whether the democratization criteria were met and then it will be decided whether the given country actually receives the financial support. These criteria are: free and fair elections; freedom of speech, gathering and the press; the role of law; the independence of the judiciary and the right for a fair trial; the fight against corruption; the reform of the security forces; the assurance of democratic control of the safety and armed forces (EC 2011c). At the same time, the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility was established to support the involvement of civil society in the democratization of the regions covered by the ENP. The aim of the tool is to consolidate civil society in different countries, so that they can become more involved in the shaping, implementation and monitoring of reforms and become stronger partners for the cooperation with the EU.

With the advent of the Arab Spring, the Mediterranean countries found themselves at the beginning of a new stage of relations with the European Union. If the current scenario continues, the Mediterranean would advance towards their future stagnation and instability (Ayadi and Sessa 2011: 1). This happened also in the situation where the ENP interlinked with

the Union for the Mediterranean via the multilateral dimension of the strategic partnership, which, however, did not create the uniform basis for the diffused activities and mechanisms of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

CONCLUSIONS: ON THE WAY TO A DIFFERENTIATED MULTILATERALISM?

Since 1950s, the Euro-Mediterranean relations have undergone essentially three stages during which there was a change in both the strategic approaches and the expectations of the EEC/EC/EU, as well as the specific goals and ways of promoting them. In fact, they moved from a bilateral co-operation without using a transitional multilateral framework (GMP and RMP) through multilateral and bilateral dimensions of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership with the self-enforced differentiating elements of the Mediterranean countries to a strategic partnership in which on one hand, there was a clear effort to create a single basis for the scattered activities and mechanisms, on the other hand, weakening of the multilateral framework by introducing the principle of “more for more”.

In the terms of content, the model that emerged as a result of this heading, was called by Ayadi and Sessa (2011) the “Business as Usual” (BAU) scenario, which is characterized by “the rule of the unsustainable regional cooperation developed in parallel with intergovernmental relations, from which a political and security aspect (pillar) gradually disappeared”. This scenario, which culminated in the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean, led to a further expansion of the economic stagnation and poverty, which contributed to the growing dissatisfaction on the side of the inhabitants of the Mediterranean region (and the Middle East). Even in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, that went through a period of economic growth due to the market-oriented reforms, the standard of living declined because of the lack of political and social reforms and the reforms of the tertiary sector, which could cope with the rapid

changes in the local society, especially a high youth unemployment, even of well-educated people. As a deficit of good governance, there is perceived the fact that many governments were unable to implement a policy that would ensure the use of the potential of human resources in their countries. Owing to the economic stagnation in the Mediterranean, there grew the economic gap between the EU and its Mediterranean partners, despite the ambitious economic goals of the cooperation, the increasing development aid and the repeated Eastern enlargement of the EU by the countries with mostly a lower middle income. The economic stagnation was retroactively reflected not only in the political stagnation. The authoritarian regimes used to bribe anyone who were inclined to the opposition and strived for the economic and social development of wider layers of the population. Thus the economic prosperity and welfare in the Mediterranean concentrated to a small group of political elites and their fellows.

Ayadi and Sessa (2011: 1) further claim that if the BAU scenario continues, the Mediterranean would advance towards its future of stagnation and instability. Therefore, this model of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation was virtually eliminated and the EU policy towards the Mediterranean countries began to be generally perceived, with regard to radical domestic changes, as unsustainable. In this situation, other scenarios¹⁹ emerged as the strategic tools that, depending on the interaction of the relevant political and socio-economic development, should lead to a sustainable future of this developing region. It means on the one hand that they would determine the “healthy” development of the Mediterranean countries and, on the other hand, the role of the EU as a historical, political and economic partner for the Mediterranean region. These scenarios of the Euro-Mediterranean relations, most of which were defined in Ayadi and Sessa (2011) or in Ayadi and Gadi (2013), include only two of them, which are an alternative to a long-term growth and sustainability²⁰: the “Euro-Mediterranean Union” and the “Euro-Mediterranean Alliance”.

¹⁹These scenarios were formulated within the “Mediterranean Prospects” (MEDPRO) consortium consisting of 17 well-known institutions from the Mediterranean countries, funded from the 7th Framework Programme and coordinated by the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels. For details, see <<http://www.medpro-foresight.eu>>.

²⁰Another commonly mentioned scenario, “The Euro-Mediterranean Area under Threat”, is regarded as even more retarding than the BAU, where the Mediterranean Sea in effect would represent a dividing line between two antagonizing civilizations. The sporadic conflicts would become long ones and would spread from one country to another and would lead to deepening of the political uncertainty and the intensification of economic and social problems. Neglecting the conflicts in the Middle East and Western Sahara would increase tensions throughout the Maghreb and

The Euro-Mediterranean Union scenario builds on a shared past, but it foresees the creation of not only an integrated region but also of the common market. The given integration theme is based on the model of the European Economic Area, which creates deep economic relations between the two parties (including the participation of the EFTA countries). The current tensions and conflicts between countries would be settled then, but since not all Mediterranean partners would achieve the same level of a political, economic and social development, the EU would reinforce a differentiated approach to the countries, some of which would meet its requirements faster, the others more slowly. However, their common goal would be deepening of the economic integration among all countries in the region. At the moment, when the Mediterranean countries will be part of the EU internal market, there would emerge a strong Euro-Mediterranean community, which would be by 2030 reflected by a shift in tri-polar world that would, according to some estimates, dominate along with the USA and China.

Political tensions in the region, a number of unsolved problems and treading water in the terms of implementing political and economic reforms, the difficulty in creating free trade zones and others make us believe that at present, although with some reserves, a rather realistic scenario is the Euro-Mediterranean Alliance working on the idea of two separate regions: the EU that will or will not be extended to the Balkans and Turkey and the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, which may or may not include other African and Middle Eastern countries. A common area is then a heterogeneous region – the association, in which there are very different but interdependent states. They will seek to fulfil the same goal – the sustainability in an increasingly interdependent world. In this scenario, the EU and the Mediterranean countries will, through the mutual contractual relationships, develop trade, economic cooperation, will share the development policy and a safety dialogue as well as develop further specific initiatives to support youth education and to create job opportunities, migration schemes, research, science, technology, innovation and infrastructure, agriculture, food, water, security and prevention

and adaptation to climate change. The Arab-Israeli conflict should be neutralized (in the enlarged EU or the EEA ensured for instance by Turkey) as well as the conflict between Algeria and Morocco for the Western Sahara (which should become a matter of the regional cooperation scheme of the UMA or the Arab Mediterranean Union). It is based on common policies, the proactive approach of people, civil societies and politicians and it wants to eliminate the dominant partners. In the terms of mechanisms of the functioning of the bilateral EU policies such as the ENP, they will lose its “expansion” approach, while the multilateral policies, such as the Union for the Mediterranean, will need to be reviewed with regard to the more heterogeneous Mediterranean and the increasing economic partnerships with other regions (e.g. the Persian Gulf). The EU will have to respect their own forms of integration (the Union of Maghreb Arabia – UMA etc.) and organizations (the League of Arab States). It is therefore a differentiated multilateralism scenario where the regional cooperation schemes are applied far more sensitively with regard to the participating entities (sub-regions), each of which has its own specific problems, opportunities and challenges. It is coherent with the multi-polar world, only the EU and the Southern Mediterranean will play an independent role in the global order and promote a joint development of the preferential relations in the same key areas of the common interest Ayadi and Sessa (2011: 3–4) .

Whether the Euro-Mediterranean partners embark on the Euro-Mediterranean Union or the Euro-Mediterranean Alliance is not clear yet. However, the mentioned authors point at a fact that the states have been, for the third year since the outbreak of the events in North Africa, facing open conflicts and political uncertainty. Since they still follow unclear objectives and directions, they balance between the pressure to continue the current unsustainable model of the cooperation with the EU and the hopes that would lead them to sustainability and dealing with the reality and its dynamics. The Commission Communications of March and May 2011 regarding the Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity and a new response to the changing neighbourhood are in general short-term documents without any

the Mashreq. These uncertainties and tensions would offer new opportunities for the terrorist organizations and a shift to radical violence. The practical absence of co-operating authorities would eliminate the efforts of the EU and other geopolitical actors to achieve the necessary cooperation in the key sectors, such as the migration programs, research, science, technology and education, agriculture and energy security. As a result, in 2030 the Mediterranean would be a border zone with serious conflicts that began to penetrate via its Northern border.

visions regarding the altering relations in the region. The EU has confirmed the need for more assistance to the neighbours, for more efforts in the development of democratic political parties and civil society. The EU also confirmed the need to immediately start the negotiating process over the agreements on creating a deep and comprehensive free trade area, from which a better access to the European single market can be expected. They also promise a better management of the migration flows between the EU and developing countries and particularly in the fight against illegal migration. In other words, they promise more differentiation and conditionality within the framework of the emerging partnerships.

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