

**Democratization in the Southern Neighbourhood: Noble Declarations, Unavoidable Dilemmas?**

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## **Abstract**

RACHEL BEERMAN: Democratization in the Southern Neighbourhood: Noble  
Declarations, Unavoidable Dilemmas?

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Much of the literature describes the EU's policy towards its southern Neighbouring region, in particular its reluctance to promote democracy more assertively, to be driven by a quest for stability and a preference for the status quo. While this is true to a certain degree, it does not account for the EU's persistent attempts to improve the effectiveness and influence of its democracy promotion policies. Rather, this thesis understands the status quo orientation of EU's Mediterranean policies to be concomitant to the stability-democratization dilemma in a region where opening up the political space is seen to present a crucial challenge to European short-term stability interests. The Union's reluctance to promote democracy more seriously in its southern Neighbourhood is therefore explained in relation to the incompatibility of the EU to reconcile its long-term security strategy with its short-term security interests.

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## **Introduction**

During the past two decades, the European Union (EU) has established itself as an agent of international democracy promotion in its neighbourhood. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which the EU designed as an institutional framework for developing 'privileged relations' and managing cooperation with the non-candidate neighbouring countries of the enlarged EU in Eastern Europe, North Africa the Middle East and the Southern Caucasus, is the primary framework through which European democracy promotion in these regions currently occurs. The ENP proclaims shared values to be the basis of neighbourhood cooperation ENP strategy documents and national action plans tie both participation in the ENP in itself and the intensity of and level of cooperation to the ENP partners' commitment and adherence to these shared values (Commission, 2004). On paper, at least, the ENP places far more emphasis on democracy, human rights and sustainable development promotion as compared with previous initiative such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). In practice, however, it is up to the partner countries to determine whether, and to what extent they will cooperate with the EU on promoting democracy, human rights or the rule of law. Moreover, non-cooperation does not preclude intense cooperation in other sectoral policy areas, such as the environment, trade or migration (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011, p. 887).

There is broad agreement in the literature not only on the overall inconsistency of EU strategy, but also on the overall low impact of the EU on democracy and human rights in non-candidate third countries (Schimmelfennig 2005; Del Sarto & Schumacher, 2011).

Indeed, the EU has been criticized for prioritizing security concerns and Union interests at the expense of democracy and its promotion in its relations with ENP Mediterranean partner states. The revolts in the Arab world that swept across the Middle East and North Africa in early 2011 confirmed this overall assessment. As recognized by EU leaders themselves, the ‘Arab Spring’ calls into fundamental question EU policy towards the region (Tocci, 2011). As put by Stefan Füle (2011), European Commissioner for Enlargement and the ENP:

We must show humility about the past. Europe was not vocal enough in defending human rights and local democratic forces in the region. Too many of us fell prey to the assumption that authoritarian regimes were a guarantee of stability in the region. This was not even Realpolitik. It was, at best, short-termism – and the kind of short-termism that makes the long-term ever more difficult to build.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past year, the shortcomings within the EU’s security policy towards its southern Neighbourhood have dramatically come to light. The popular uprisings that swept across the EU’s southern Neighbourhood in early 2011 certainly gave greater impetus to the then-ongoing internal review of the ENP, prompting a serious re-think of the EU’s hierarchy of policy priorities and of the manner in which such policies have been carried out (Tocci & Cassarino, 2011) – namely, through a very gradual, soft top-down approach to democratization based on processes of socialization through partnership-building and the limited use of positive conditionality (Andrés Viñas, 2009).

This paper asks two central questions: What drives EU policy? And do the recent reforms proposed in light of the May 2011 policy review change this scenario? The mainstream view holds that the EU’s Mediterranean policies, and the ENP in particular, are premised on the democratic peace theory (Menendez Gonzalez, 2005, p.15). Advocates of this perspective argue that democracy was – and may still be – seen by policy-makers as a

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<sup>1</sup> S. Füle, 2011, Speech on the recent events in North Africa, 11/130, 28 February 2011.

means of guaranteeing long-term security of the EU's citizens. Indeed, the EU routinely and even ritually claims that it sees firm support for democratization as part of its geostrategic calculus. Notwithstanding the Union's normative rhetoric that points to such a nexus, in practice, there has been substantial unwillingness to exert his kind of influence (Eder, 2011, p. 442). Much of the literature describes the EU's policy towards its southern Neighbouring region – in particular, its unwillingness to promote democracy more assertively – to be driven by a quest for stability and a preference for the status quo (Holm, 2008; Powel, 2009). While this is true to a certain degree (Eder, 2011), it does not account for the EU's persistent attempts to improve the effectiveness of its democracy and human rights promotion policies. Rather, this thesis understands the status quo orientation of EU's Mediterranean policies to be concomitant to the stability-democratization dilemma in a region that is seen to present direct security threats to European interests, and opening up the political process would be tantamount to destabilization. This thesis argues that the logic is not quite one of 'security through democracy'. Rather, it might best be captured by what Youngs (2010) describes: 'security alongside democracy, when other conditions are fulfilled' (p.2). When these two objectives conflict, the EU systematically prioritizes short-term stability over the longer-term goal of democratization.

This thesis draws on country case studies from Morocco and Tunisia in order to analyze the specific dynamics of the stability-democracy dilemma across three priority areas of ENP security cooperation. Both of the countries analyzed are considered an important partner for the EU with respect to its security agenda; yet they differ in terms of the particular area(s) of security cooperation that are prioritized. In addition they differ in the degree of authoritarianism, with Morocco being partly free and Tunisia being unfree, according to the

two most influential international indices.<sup>2</sup> The different-case-comparison can be further justified with the relative importance of the EU in the two countries' foreign policy agenda and, thus, with the different types of interdependence with the EU. Finally, the two countries have had distinct 'Arab Spring' experiences, with Tunisia having experience a revolution and Morocco having at least rhetorically, stepped up commitment to reform.

The thesis is structured as follows. Based on a brief analysis of the democratic peace theory, the first section develops the 'stability-democratization dilemma' concept and offers several interpretations on how the conflict between democracy promotion and stability interact. It will be argued that contradictory security concerns, conceptualized as a stability-democracy dilemma, are the key factor explaining the EU's ambiguous approach to democracy promotion in the Mediterranean. Section two identifies the various geostrategic interests that may be expected to cut across democracy support in each of the three country case studies. The third section considers security-democracy nexus across three areas of security concern – interstate relations, soft security, counter-terrorism.<sup>3</sup> For each area of security concern, it examines the EU's strategic logic and approach to the security-democracy link in three separate policies – Political reform (democracy promotion itself), Migration and Counter-Terrorism – and how these competing interests interact to produce a 'stability-democratization dilemma' in European policy. Section four then assesses the extent to which these dynamics have been changed since the Arab Spring and subsequent ENP rethink.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/16.0.html?&L=1> and <http://www.freedomhouse.org>;

<sup>3</sup> There is a fourth strategic logic in the area of 'Conflict Prevention/Regional stability', however this security concern is not considered here for reasons of space and relevance to the cases.



## **I. Theoretical Framework: Why Democracy?**

The purpose of this section is to introduce and examine alternate theories about what drives EU democracy and security policies towards its Mediterranean partner countries in the ENP. Based on a brief analysis of the democratic peace theory, the section considers the link between democracy and security in the EU's Mediterranean policy. It then introduces the 'stability-democratization dilemma' concept and offers several interpretations on how the conflict between democracy promotion and stability interact to produce the dilemma.

### **The Democracy-Security Link**

The conviction is well-established among policy-makers that a more democratic world would in general terms be a more peaceable and prosperous one, as peaceable relations and security objectives are more likely to be achieved with states whose governments are open, accountable, predictable and transparent (Youngs, 2010, p. 2). This is the essence of the democratic peace theory. The argument is that, by promoting democracy in the Mediterranean, "the EU is able to address the root causes of the 'soft' security threats emanating from the region, and thereby enhance the EU's own security in the long run" (Andrés Viñas, 2010, p. 8). According to this logic, democratization is not itself an objective, but rather is a means through which the EU promotes its own security. Hence, Andrés Viñas concludes, "where democracy and security appear as conflicting interests, security will take precedence" (ibid.).

Despite the democracy's alleged role as a means for achieving Europe's long-term security objectives, the promotion of democracy is increasingly seen by EU policy-makers as a destabilizing factor that endanger European security interests in short-term (Eder, 2011). As such, the problems of instability associated with democratic transition are perceived to crucially challenge European short-term interests (Andrés Viñas, p. 8). This conflict between the promotion of democracy and short-term stability is the prevailing interpretation amongst scholars of the inconsistencies in the EU's Mediterranean policy.

### **Thesis Statement: Democratization-Stability Dilemma**

Indeed, much of the literature describes the EU's policy in the southern Neighbouring region as being “driven by a quest for stability and a desire to maintain the status quo” (Eder, 2011, p. 432). According to Franz Eder (2011), however, the status quo orientation so often associated with the EU's Mediterranean policies is “not only the result of this ‘stability syndrome’ but also a consequence of economic and energy interests on the domestic and international level” together with a “fear of regional destabilisation” (p. 432). This view supported by Andrés Viñas who further suggests that scholars advocating the ‘stability-democratization dilemma’ approach “seem to implicitly conceptualize the dilemma in terms of a static conflict between realist notions of security cooperation and normative democratization goals” (2009, p. 10).

This is true to a certain degree. However this thesis takes the view proposed by Andrés Viñas, which understands the dilemma in to be “a balancing act between two conflicting security logics, with a simultaneous presence and intermingling of the two logics at a discursive level (Malmvig, 2004), but with a clear prioritization at a policy level” (2009, p. 10). Specifically, democracy is, indeed, understood as the best way of ensuring long-term

security for EU's citizens. However, considering the perceived risks associated with a rapid transition to democracy, foremost of which include domestic and/or regional destabilization or the coming to power of regimes hostile to European interests, democratization is portrayed as a gradual, long-term project (ibid). Stability, therefore, is to be preserved as the best means to achieve short-term security. From this perspective, security cooperation with incumbent regimes on matters of immigration and counter-terrorism policy is necessary and practical (ibid, p. 10).

In the ENP framework in particular, it is argued that these two notions of security are in constant competition and at times highly incompatible with one another. This stability-democracy dilemma is identified as the main factor explaining the EU's ambiguous and often inconsistent policies of democracy promotion in the Mediterranean ENP states (Viñas, 2010), as well as the resulting focus on short-term, status-quo oriented security strategies.

## II. Intervening Factors and Conflicting Interests

A number of geopolitical factors increasingly work against democracy support more than they have encouraged the EU to focus on democracy more diligently. This section considers the impact of geopolitics and identifies the particular geostrategic interests that have undermined the focus on support for democracy – or that alternatively have enhanced its promotion – in the two country case studies. First, the state of democracy and the main legislative and political barriers to reform in each respective state is briefly summarized.

### State of Democracy

In respect of the state of democracy, overall trends have been disappointing in both cases.<sup>4</sup> In Morocco, political life is characterized by a ‘constant double reality’, whereby “[f]ormally democratic structures and institutions mask an informal shadow governance structure” (Kausch, 2008, p. 10). Liberalism of Moroccan society has been quite considerable in a regional perspective, yet the palace and *Makhzen*<sup>5</sup> remain gatekeepers of the reform process. Thus a process of modernizing and partly liberalizing has not entailed democratization. In Tunisia, on the other hand, despite the country’s impressive socio-economic development and achievement, especially when compared with the regional as a whole, this has not been accompanied by any meaningful progress in the political sphere -

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the discussion of democratization and the state of reform throughout this section refers only to the pre-Arab Spring time period (i.e, up until January 2011).

<sup>5</sup> The *Makhzen* is the network of the palace and its clients that dictates the main lines of policy and acts as a gatekeeper for any kind of political reform.

what is often described as the ‘Tunisian Paradox’ (Kausch, 2009, p.2-3). Rather, for years the country has been characterized by one party rule<sup>6</sup> and a total repression of the opposition (ibid.). Finally, opposition parties are not permitted and the popular Islamist party remains outlawed.

## **Geopolitical Factors**

"While the democratization agenda gained greater momentum and support as part of the anti-terrorism agenda security strategy in the MENA region following 9/11, it is now losing force as a driver of EU security policy (Kausch, 2008; Youngs, 2010). In the case of EU-Morocco relations, for reasons of geographical proximity and common interests, issues of migration, free trade and regional security are of considerable European interest (Kausch, 2008). With the Moroccan coast visible over the Straits of Gibraltar, migration in particular has become a top priority in EU-Moroccan cooperation. For Europe, and Spain and France in particular<sup>7</sup>, the most pressing interests in this regard include management of border controls and the speedy finalization of negotiations on a readmission agreement (ibid. p. 13). On the Moroccan side, and due to increasing strain as a transit country for migrants from the South, policy-makers call for greater European assistance for border controls and a lowering of the barrier for legal work migration. Notably, however, as Kausch points out, given the higher stakes involved, “the two EU states most influential in Morocco are also the two least inclined to promote democratic reform” (ibid.).

Regional security is another pressing issue of European interest, which also frequently clashes with democracy policies (ibid.) Against the background of an increasingly

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<sup>6</sup> Tunisia is led by President Zine ben Ali of the ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) party (1985-2011).

<sup>7</sup> Due to stronger ties and common interests stemming from geographical proximity, France and Spain generally take the lead when it comes to steering Europe’s agenda towards Morocco.

unstable regional environment – most notably entailing regional conflict, transnational terrorist networks, trafficking of human beings and organized crime – the Moroccan government is supported as a stabilizing ally in the region and a key partner in the fight against terrorism. For these reasons, among others, Europeans “are disinclined to jeopardize this for the sake of ‘optimising’ Moroccan democratic standard” (ibid. 13).

Turning to Tunisia, it has been argued that, at least on paper, the country appears to be the best potential for democratization in the MENA in which case one would assume that the impact of external forces in pressuring the leadership to democratize would make a considerable difference in pressuring the authoritarian regime to democratize and promoting plurality (Durac et al., 2009, p.13). A number of advantages in particular are worth mentioning. First, compared to the other countries in the region, Tunisia has no significant radical Islamist opposition; enjoys a rather significant degree of economic success; lacks any significant natural resources (which serves to decrease its strategic value); is integrated in the global economy and has strong trade links with the EU.<sup>8</sup> For these reasons, it is argued, Tunisia would be the perfect ‘target country’ on which to attempt to export democracy and apply pressure for change (ibid, p. 14).

Such favorable conditions notwithstanding, Europeans have been reluctant to exercise any of its massive economic leverage in Tunisia and jeopardize the cooperative stance of the Tunisian regime towards European efforts in other areas of EU (security) interest – in particular, trade and economic relations. In addition, the EU supports Tunisia as a valuable ally in the fight against terrorism and an “island of stability in the troubled waters of the Southern Mediterranean” (Kausch, 2009, p. 3). As in Morocco, it is not considered in

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<sup>8</sup> The EU is Tunisia's principal trading partner, accounting for 74% of both Tunisia's exports and imports, or €18.4 billion in monetary terms (Commission, 2007. Bilateral trade relations: Tunisia), providing the Union with potentially considerable leverage over Tunis (Powel, 2009b, p.65).

Europe's interest to put this status quo in danger for sake of 'optimising' Tunisia's democratic standards In many ways, it is argued, Tunisia illustrates the contradictions that are at the heart of the foreign and security policies of both actors in the region (Durac et al., 2009).

### **III. Democracy-Security Nexus in the ENP Framework**

Using Richard Youngs' (2010) classification of the EU's approach to the security-democracy link in its relations with third countries', the security-democracy nexus can be broken down into four separate strategic logics. In each area of security concern – interstate relations, soft security, counter-terrorism and conflict resolution – democracy's value is a hotly debated topic. The case studies below present first the strategic logic linking democracy and security in the three areas of security concern analyzed in this thesis<sup>9</sup>. In all three, is shown that, in its Southern Neighbourhood, the EU is driven by what Richard Youngs describes to be “a security agenda that is judged to be best served by a stabilizing liberalization of still-autocratic regimes, in a context in which conditionality is judged neither feasible nor desirable” (Youngs, 2009, p. 913). It then assesses how the two goals interact to produce a stability-democracy dilemma in which short-term stability is systematically prioritized in such a way that reinforces the status quo to the detriment of genuine long-term democratization.

#### **Integrative vs. democratic dynamics in inter-state relations**

The first proposition essentially restates the democratic peace theory. It holds that the EU is likely to be able to establish more peaceable relations with democratic than with autocratic regimes, and thus security aims are more likely to be achieved with states whose governments are open, accountable, predictable and transparent (Youngs, 2010, p. 2). While

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<sup>9</sup> The strategic logic for conflict prevention and peace-building is not discussed in this thesis for reasons of space and relevance to the case studies.



it may be true that the EU prefers that democracy prevail in its relations with third countries – especially in those states presenting Europe with its ‘thorniest strategic challenges’, Youngs argues “democracy is not prioritized as the means of improving relations with other powers. Rather, policy focuses on other means of addressing those challenges, with democracy an apparently marginally-contributing long-term goal” (p. 2). While not completely absent, “democracy is supported as and when security aims in inter-state relations allow it” (ibid). When it comes to ‘states of concern,’ as Youngs describes them, the objective is to “integrate non-democratic regimes into interlocking dependent processes and structures that constrain their behavior. Interdependence is seen as a more potent security driver than democratization” (ibid.). It is about ‘locking them in’ rather than pressing democratic reform. This can be seen in the case of the ENP framework more generally, as well as the specific cases of Tunisia and Morocco.

### **ENP Procedures: Built-In dilemma**

To the extent that democracy is promoted in the European Neighbourhood, the EU’s approach is said to consist in the promotion of democratic governance.<sup>10</sup> As such, the EU has chosen to pursue a very gradual, soft top-down approach to democracy promotion in the southern Mediterranean partner states based on processes of socialization through partnership-building and the limited use of positive (Andrés Viñas, 2009). Thus democracy is “supported through technocratic, functional cooperation because this is compatible with short-term, collective problem-solving on security matters.” (Youngs, 2010, p. 13). Such a

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<sup>10</sup> The term democratic governance as defined by Freyburg *et al.*, (2007) refers to an understanding of democracy defined according to its underlying principles rather than specific institutions embodying them. This approach to democratization “consists in the promotion of democratic governance norms through third countries’ approximation to EU sectoral policies, i.e., functional cooperation.” (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig 2011, p.888). The principles are transparency, accountability, and participation. Democratic sectoral governance is achieved by incorporating these into administrative rules and practices within a non-democratic polity (Freyburg *et al.*, 2009: 917).

strategy is coherent with the democratization-stability dilemma as it envisions a gradual process of political reforms eventually leading to democratization in the long-term, without jeopardizing short-term stability and hence, security. Quite problematic, however, as argued by Lavenex and Schimmelfennig (2011), is that such an approach “does not necessarily address civil society actors, nor does it directly affect the overarching institutional arrangements of the polity” (p. 896). Therefore, “even if it is successful, democratic governance promotion may still occur within a generally semi-autocratic political system” (ibid), as in the case of Morocco. This will be examined in the following sections.

### **Negotiating & Devising the Action Plans**

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the individual AP provisions one by one, but suffice it to say that it is well documented in the literature that the APs with the southern Neighbours are poorly conceived, guided by ‘soft’ priorities that fail to address the most important political issues, and characterized by vague and elusive formulations of the AP provisions in general (Del Sarto et al., 2006; Del Sarto et al., 2011). What is of interest here is the clear predominance of geopolitical interests within and throughout these Action Plans, and how this impacts on the democratization agenda more generally.

Comparing the APs negotiated with the two partners reveals an incoherent democracy promotion policy and the overriding importance of the EU’s geostrategic and partner countries’ political interests (Lavenex et al., 2011, p.899). The EU-Morocco Action Plan is a case in point. For one, the AP identifies a number of ambitious but selective reforms, which as Kausch (2008) argues, “indirectly follow the Moroccan ruling elite’s course of modernisation and selective political reforms in carefully chosen areas that do not touch on the distribution of powers” (p.9). Significantly, the systemic-level reforms that are a

precondition for a representative democracy with a balance of power and the rule of law are omitted entirely.<sup>11</sup> The ‘remaining collection of piecemeal political reform measures’ is not likely to contribute to a genuine democratization, as most of the preconditions for many of the measures to take practical effect are missing (ibid, p.17). This leads to the problematic fact that the EU’s assumption of socialization via gradual reform applies only to a certain extent in Morocco. As Kausch rightly posits, “...the accumulation of more or less connected ad hoc reforms is not automatically a process, let alone a transition to democracy” (ibid.). Even more problematic is that “by focusing on a collection of selective modernisation measures, rather than on a coherent strategy that includes the more delicate aspects of systemic level change previously identified as crucial by the Commission’s own assessment,” the AP priorities themselves indirectly support this flawed logic (ibid.). This structural gap is generally defended with reference to the “need for a “gradual” process and the “accumulative” effect selective reforms will have in the long run.” (ibid.). However, instead of being the ‘gradual’ steps in a consistent, overarching process towards democracy, the proposed (and subsequently implemented) political reforms have tended to be ad hoc, selective and rather superficial (Del Sarto et al., 2006; Del Sarto et al., 2011; Kausch, 2008).

As for the EU-Tunisia Action Plan, on the other hand, the document is not based on any domestically generated document of good intentions, and as a result, the section on ‘Democracy and the Rule of Law’ is particularly superficial. It states the ‘strengthening [of] institutions and the judiciary’ as its objective. The AP is even more vague on matters of democracy, as Del Sarto et.al., (2006) note “the documents does not give evidence of a clear

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<sup>11</sup> Measures identified under the chapters “democracy and the rule of law” and “human rights and fundamental freedoms” include capacity building in public administration, decentralisation, access to justice, modernisation of courts, prisons and legal procedures, support to implement the IER recommendations, adherence to and compliance with international conventions, combating corruption, strengthening dialogue on human rights, freedom of association and expression, women and children’s rights, and cultural and linguistic rights.

conceptualization of democracy and its key elements” (p. 34). Also noteworthy, and in line with the previous observation, is the fact that, not only does the Action Plan “keep silent about the nature of the political system,” it does “not even address the any of the most relevant issues” (Del Sarto et al., 2011, p. 941).

### **ENP APs and Implementation**

The practical effect of including the competing logics embodied by the partnership and socialization principles is that the democratic governance model itself has been designed in way that is ‘relatively unthreatening to autocratic regimes’ (Young 2009, p. 910). This means that governments that have been resistant to embracing democratic norms – even at the rhetorical level – have continued to benefit from a range of European co-operation efforts. For example, Youngs states:

Even in Morocco, the supposedly star reformer of the Middle East, on closer inspection most ‘reform’ projects carried out under the label of supporting EU-style regulatory and governance modernization in fact take the form of funds for equipment, new computers and buildings, and the exchange of experience in how to make decision-making more effective not necessarily more accountable (Kausch, 2008; Khakee, 2008, as cited in Youngs 2009, p. 910).

For the time being, as Kausch concludes “both discourse and action suggest that European policies towards Morocco do not aspire to back full political freedom and genuine democratization” (2008, p. 17). For instance, the 2006, 2008 and 2009 Morocco Progress Reports repeatedly mentioned persistent shortcomings and areas for improvement with respect to the Moroccan judicial and political systems. However, the absence of references to the need for the independence of the judiciary and legal accountability in EU documents suggests the reforms are expected to take place “within the boundaries of [the] current constitution and distribution of powers and very little else” (Kausch 2008, p.5). Such an approach to reform is reminiscent of what Youngs calls a strategy of “depressurizing

liberalization” (2009, p. 911) of the Moroccan regime which serves to stabilize the government while still ‘promoting’ the long-term goal of democratization through gradual political liberalization.

By contrast, Tunisia under Ben Ali consistently denies the need for change and reform leading to more political liberalization (van Hullen, 2011, p.13). This was made clear in the very first Association Council meeting in 1998 with Tunisia threatening to discontinue talks altogether if the domestic human rights situation was to be discussed (Del Sarto et al., 2011, p. 942). According to Del Sarto and Schumacher (2011), this attitude was an enduring feature of the attitude characterizing Tunisia’s position under Ben Ali, which also helps to explain the particularly empty political provisions in the EU-Tunisia AP (ibid.). Consequently, the democratization-stability dilemma in Tunisia manifests itself in a different way than in Morocco. Here, as Powel (2007) argues the importance placed on security and stability is the principle point of convergence between the policies of EU and Tunisia (p.207). It is precisely through this convergence that the interaction of stability and democratization plays out.

For one, the impact of this convergence on the mechanisms and prospects of conditionality instruments is evidenced by the fact that the EU has not pushed for cooperation or attempted to apply some ‘leverage’ over Tunisia. Rather, it is said to limit its cooperation to non-political areas in order to avoid confrontation Kausch et al., p. 973). Moreover, since the early 2000s, European aid to Tunisia has increased from around €70 million a year to €100 million a year under the ENPI CSP 2010-2013<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, any ‘reform’ effort here entails support for the regime’s economic programmes (Kausch et al.,

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<sup>12</sup> See NIP 2007-2010 [http://www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/tunisia%20csp\\_nip\\_2007-2013\\_en.pdf](http://www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/tunisia%20csp_nip_2007-2013_en.pdf); and NIP 2005-2006 [http://www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/CSP/tunisie\\_nip05\\_06\\_en.pdf](http://www.enpi-programming.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/CSP/tunisie_nip05_06_en.pdf)

2009, p. 973). Again, despite favorable conditions as a target for greater pressure for political liberalization, “EU diplomats define their goal as seeking to ‘construct an overall atmosphere of trust and confidence’” (ibid.). While the reasons are immediately clear, Powel (2007) argues that its discourse suggests a “deep-seated fear of anything that might challenge stability/encourage instability in its near neighbours. Security has slowly come to overwhelm its relations with Mediterranean neighbours” (p.210). From this perspective, it is not surprising that the Commission limits itself to praising the ‘impressive achievements’ of the Tunisian government in non-political areas such as health, education and gender equality. As a result, Kausch and Youngs believe the disconnect between the comparatively good and stable levels of economic and social development on the one hand, and the repressive political conditions on the other, “has led the Commission to greater passivity in the political field” (2009, p.973).

In terms of socialization, the impact of this convergence on democratization is evident in the development of EU policy documents on Tunisia in recent years (Powel, 2007, p.207-208). More concretely, this refers to the pattern of leaving references to ‘democracy’ out of documents and off the meeting agendas, which over time puts into question the very mechanism by which democratization is supposed to engendered: i.e., socialization (ibid). In the Commission Communication on Strengthening the ENP (2006), for instance, the term ‘democracy’ was dropped entirely, calling instead for better governance in the Union’s neighbourhood (Commission, 2006b). However as Powel (2007) continues, the very same document, however, “continues to stress the need for economic reform and security cooperation. Thus, the language used in the political and economic parts of the policy blur into one: ‘governance’ is used in both arts” (ibid, p. 209). In fact, this practice of leaving

references to democracy out of policy documents has also become the norm in the meetings between EU and Tunisian officials as well (ibid., p.210). This was confirmed by a Commission official who admitted that non-security related political issues tend instead to be addressed only in informal settings, such as ‘post-meeting dinners’, and are generally kept off of the official meeting agenda.<sup>13</sup> Thus, with democracy not only increasingly omitted from policy documents related to Tunisia, but also disappearing from the ENP socialization frameworks, it becomes difficult to imagine the actual practical effect of socialization. That is, considering that socialization is a “method that relies upon repeated referencing of the values and norms intended to be diffused,” how can it be expected to promote democracy when all references to it cease to exist entirely (ibid).

The cases illustrate the priority given to the EU’s geostrategic and partner countries’ political interests; and a preference for what Youngs calls ‘reform support with caveats’ (2006b). The structure of the APs points to a notoriously superficial use of the concepts of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, fundamental freedoms, and reforms; all of which are used seemingly interchangeably (Del Sarto et al., 2011, p.935, 940). While the inclusion of partners in the negotiating process enhances co-ownership, the obvious implication is a downgrade of the democratization agenda and a dilution of the political content in the bilaterally negotiated ENP APs. Where references remain, they tend to be vague and selective, undermining any such efforts at promoting democracy. Ultimately, the evidence suggests that the partnership-building approach seems not to have succeeded in ‘socialising’ the Moroccan and Tunisian counterparts through persuasion; rather it is characterized by indulgence or, some would say, ‘connivance with a non-democratic regime’ (Balfour & Missiroli 2007, as cited in Echangüe 2008).

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<sup>13</sup> Author’s interview, Brussels, July 2006. As cited in Powel 2007, p. 210.

### **Soft Security: The ‘Single Issue’ Syndrome**

As for the EU’s approach to more specific policy issues, the strategic logic holds that “democracy should help maintain and perpetuate diplomatic gains made in relation to particular short-term security objectives” (Youngs, 2010, p. 5). In practice, however, “in dealing with individual issues of concern, the EU’s policy is to negotiate trade-offs and deals on the particular matter in question in a way that deliberately keeps the democracy agenda separate” (ibid.). This is what Youngs refers to as the EU’s ‘single-issue syndrome’. Illustrative examples include energy security, climate change, and the management of migration. The following case study analyzes the EU’s external migration policy and examines implementation dynamics of EU-Moroccan cooperation in this regard.

#### ***EU External Migration Policy in Morocco***

Since the 9/11, Madrid and London terrorist attacks, immigration has come to be explicitly linked to global terrorism. Illegal immigration from the South is now a top priority on the EU security agenda, particularly in Morocco. According to Young (2010) most European politicians would rank the management of migration, especially illegal or irregular migration flows into Europe, as representing a more immediate ‘security threat’ than traditional, ‘hard’ strategic questions (p. 6). The priority attributed to irregular migration is confirmed in the *European Security Strategy*, which lists ‘illegal migrants’ among the ‘key threats’ facing the Union (Council, 2003, p. 4) based on the perception that they could also be the ‘transmission trains of violent ideologies of conflict’ from the MENA region into Europe (Joffé, 2008, p. 159).

The overall aim of EU migration policy towards Mediterranean partners is to enforce stronger control measures and to reduce migratory pressure on EU borders (Wunderlich



2010, p. 254).<sup>14</sup> The dominant EU approaches are restrictive policy and control measures, capacity-building and alignment to international conventions with tentative cooperation on the side regarding legal migration and the ‘migration-development nexus’ (Wunderlich, 2010, p. 255). In Morocco, policy-makers designate priority status to the aim of stemming illegal immigration from and through Morocco. In the ENP AP with Morocco, the priority action referring to the issue of migration is:

[...] effective management of migration flows, including the signing of a readmission agreement with the European Community (EC), and facilitating the movement of persons in accordance with the *acquis*, particularly by examining the possibilities for relaxing the formalities for certain jointly agreed categories of persons to obtain short-stay visas. (EU/Morocco AP, p. 4).

It is widely agreed by academics that the content of these measures is consistently security-oriented, supported by the fact that, despite the emphasis placed on the synergies between migration and development, EU expenditure is overwhelmingly focused on control measures<sup>15</sup> (Paoletti, 2011). Furthermore, the EU has been rather proactive in the application of ‘migration conditionality’. Franz Eder (2011) argues, “the linkage of migration and border security with economic conditionality has been particularly striking.” (p. 441). This entails the application of its massive economic leverage to pressure the countries of the Maghreb to better control their borders and manage migration flows (ibid). This tendency is all the more noteworthy when one considers the Union’s ‘substantial unwillingness’ to exert the same kind of pressure in the name of democratization (ibid, 441-442).

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<sup>14</sup> Policies normally regarded as central to the EU’s external dimension include: migration missions to develop a dialogue on migration with third-country authorities; circular migration; readmission agreements; and collaboration between police authorities on both sides of the Mediterranean. See also E. Paoletti, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> For an in-depth list of projects funded under the AENAS Programme in Morocco, see Appendix, Table 8 in A. Kirchner. 2010. ‘The external dimension of the EU’s immigration policy.’ Available [http://essay.utwente.nl/60300/1/BSc\\_A\\_Kirchner.pdf](http://essay.utwente.nl/60300/1/BSc_A_Kirchner.pdf).

On the other hand, European policy documents insist that support for more open politics in developing states is a central pillar of EU's immigration-reducing strategy, while expanding projects on border control migration have been presented as 'democracy promotion' (Youngs, 2009, p.911). The claim is that this cuts across democracy support, although as Youngs points out, "invariably without a clear notion of why a less authoritarian system would contradict this objective." (Youngs, 2009, p. 911). Regardless of these claims, Youngs contends that democratization is, if anything, feared as a possible trigger of greater, not reduced, illegal migration. Furthermore, "Southern European states frequently make the case for exercising greater caution in pushing political reform in North Africa because they receive more migrants from this region than do northern EU member states." (2010, p. 6). However, if they were truly committed to the democratic rhetoric, Youngs continues, "their geographical proximity to North Africa should give them greater, not lesser, reason to see democracy prevail in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt" (ibid).

In a study of the differentiation and convergence dynamics of cooperation initiatives in the area of migration policy, D. Wunderlich (2010) uses examples from implementation of EU policy in Morocco to demonstrate the importance of bilateral relations between individual member and non-member states. Spanish-Moroccan relations are particularly crucial in this regard. The first plans on an EU border management project with Morocco were initiated in the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2002-2004 with a MEDA budget of €40 million. The project was finally agreed with the Moroccan authorities in 2004 with the aim to provide new equipment and training for the Interior Ministry. The project was halted due to disagreements over monitoring and control over the project (Wunderlich, p. 264). The project only regained momentum in the wake of the 2005 crisis at Ceuta and Melilla, and as a

result of growing Moroccan concerns about immigration. However, Wunderlich shows that cooperation with the EU “was not unconditional and require substantial EU incentives.” (p.265). The revised MEDA project entailed an additional €27 million and employed a sector approach which enable the Moroccan Interior Ministry to use the overall budget of € 67 million according “to its own priorities, on any border section and apparently without Commission monitoring on the use of the money.

Two important implications to this cooperation: First, the considerable funding allocated to the Moroccan Interior Ministry strengthened this position and re-emphasized its securitized vision of migration in the policy field (Wunderlich, 2010, p. 265). Moreover, in the face of stern opposition, European actors were quick to concede in order to achieve cooperate at all: Most notably, “the EU stepped back from its monitoring requirements...and its ideas about an integrated perspective on migration issues in order to achieve cooperation.” (ibid). Furthermore, while the broad focus on migration remained unchanged, “Moroccan actors engaged with the EU agenda largely following their own conditions to respond to externalities of European integration that turn transit migration into immigration to Morocco.” (ibid). Finally, the criticism is frequently launched that European concession and the loosening of control entails “adverse effects on policy convergence by undermining those parts of the EU external migration package that focus on human rights and international commitments such as the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.” (Ibid, 268).

This example illustrative of the EU’s willingness to concede to the demands of its partner states, and abandon the promotion of democratic governance (principles) whenever they threatened to interfere with the prosecution of the migration security agenda – or if overall cooperation more broadly.

## Counter-terrorism and de-radicalization

The third logic linking democracy and security strategies relates to the notion that “democratic reform is the best means of tempering the radicalization that underpins international terrorism” (Youngs 2010, p. 7). Following the September 11<sup>th</sup>, Madrid (2004) and London (2005) terrorist attacks, more and more European voices drew a direct link between terrorism and political repressive regimes. Moreover, given the geographical proximity and the transnational nature of Islamic terrorism, the EU became increasingly aware of the importance of international cooperation with third countries, as stated in the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy (EUCTS) adopted in 2005:

Given that the current international terrorist threat affects and has roots in many parts of the world beyond the EU, co-operation with and the provision of assistance to priority third countries – including North Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia – will be vital. Finally, working to resolve conflicts and promote good governance and democracy will be essential elements of the Strategy, as part of the dialogue and alliance between cultures, faiths and civilizations, in order to address the motivational and structural factors underpinning radicalization.<sup>16</sup>

As part and parcel of this new overall strategy, the European Council simultaneously adopted the *Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism*<sup>17</sup> (SCRRT), thus confirming that radicalization had become one of the central threads in Europe’s counter-terrorism approach. A consensus of experts believes that the emergence of Maghrebi terrorism was caused by a lack of democracy and economic stagnation. This view is supported by Franz Eder who divides the factors responsible for transforming the Maghreb region into a ‘breeding ground’ for radicalization and recruitment into frustration with political participation – specifically political participation of Islamist parties – on the one

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<sup>16</sup> Presidency and CT Coordinator (2005) *The EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. Doc 14469/4/05 REV , Brussels 30 November, p. 7. As cited in Durac & Cavatorta, 2009, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Council of the European Union (2005) *The European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism*, 14781/1/05 REV1, Brussels, 24 November 2005.

side, and socio-economic stagnation on the other (2011, p. 437-438). To tackle these causes, EU counter-terrorism cooperation is said to focus its activities around two main axis: “to build counter-terrorism capacity building in third countries so as to deepen the international commitment to the fight against terrorism and to address the factors that contribute to the support and recruitment of terrorists” (Martins, 2010, p. 25). At least at the discursive level, democracy is considered an essential element in the fight against the root causes of terrorism and radicalization.

Notwithstanding official recognition of the causal role played by the region’s authoritarian ally regions in creating and reinforcing the conditions which give rise to radicalization, there is a growing feeling that the EU has remained reluctant to push for substantive structural political reform throughout this region (Youngs, 2010). Rather, Eder argues, instead of tackling the root causes of terrorist activity and radicalization in the region, cooperation has tended to be focused on a short-term status-quo oriented containment strategy: “Such a strategy, in the eyes of the EU, reduces the threat to Europe to an acceptable level. At the same time, this strategy does not imperil its economic and energy interests in states such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya” (2011, p. 432).

The democratization-stability dilemma in counter-terrorism policy and its impact on democracy promotion can be explained by two factors: pre-existing stability in a potentially unstable environment; and the fear of ‘Islamisation’ and the Algerian experience (Eder, 2011). As regards the former, the strategic logic sees the countries in the Maghreb in particular – including Tunisia and Morocco – as doing “a ‘good’ job when it comes to tackling the excesses of transnational terrorism: “They are effective and provide a sufficient level of stability for the needs of the EU” (ibid, 444). Second, the fear of ‘Islamisation’ and

the Algerian experience have had a massive influence on the strategic thinking of the Union. In this regard, two dynamics should be distinguished. The first relates to the fear that the transition of regimes from autocracies to Western-styled democracies involves the risk of destabilization, which in turn may jeopardize other European interests in the region (ibid). Thus, quick transition poses a real threat to short-term stability. The second dimension relates to the fear that “free elections and an open political could contribute to the rise of anti-Western groups and endanger EU’s security and economic interests. Such a result would not only challenge regional stability but also Western interests in the region” (ibid). From this perspective, it is therefore seen to be reasonable for the Union to balance this potential threat by forming alliances with the current regimes and helping them consolidate their power (ibid).

The following case studies illustrate the way in which democracy and security objectives interact with short-term stability interests in the context of EU counter-terrorism policies to produce a logic that favors strategic containment over proactive efforts to attack the underlying political causes of instability.

### ***Why rock the boat? The Tunisian experience***

The various incarnations of political Islam in Tunisia have regularly been suppressed by the authorities to the point that Islamists in Tunisia have virtually disappeared as a coherent political force following government clampdowns in the 1990s<sup>18</sup> (Powel, 2007). Cooperation between the EU and Tunisia in this domain was initiated following the 9/11 attacks within the framework of the ENP AP. The main thrust of EU-Tunisia counter-

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<sup>18</sup> Tunisia is notable for the exclusion of its Islamists as a means of containing radicalism. Despite a brief respite following Bin Ali’s takeover of the Tunisian presidency in 1987, the Nahda party was hounded with such vigour by the security forces in the 1980s and 1990s that its leadership is now either in exile, in prison, or executed.

terrorism cooperation, as in most southern Neighbourhood states, has focused more on technical capacity building exercises, such as modernization of policing, and increasing international cooperation in the domain of law enforcement and border surveillance (Watanabe 2011). Lisa Watanabe insists that while these measures are certainly valuable in terms of supporting the efforts of Maghreb countries to reduce the operational space of terrorist organizations within their territories and to meet international legal obligations in relation to tackling terrorism, “there has been little effort to address the root causes of terrorism and to develop a more holistic approach to counter-terrorism cooperation within the context of the ENP” (p. 5). Rather, Tunisian officials are keen to emphasize how Tunisia and the EU share a common threat in political Islam and a responsibility to ‘fight terror’ (Powel 2007, p. 205). Thus both actors have displayed a willingness to securitize their policies, establishing security and stability as their primary policy goals (Powel 2007, p. 211).

The case of EU-Tunisia counter-terrorism cooperation supports the claim that, in the broader context of European foreign policy, democracy policy represents at best a secondary goal after the more pressing objective of security of European citizens (Powel, 2009b). In addition, democratization is not pursued more seriously due to the status quo orientation resulting out of the democratization-stability dilemma in relation to counter-terrorism. Two factors explain this. For one, Tunisia generally does a ‘good’ job when it comes to tackling the excesses of transnational terrorism. From the perspective of European needs and interests, the regime is effective and provides a sufficient level of stability (Eder, 2011; Powel, 2009b). Secondly, “with no obvious signs that the current system in Tunisia provides the space for anti-western extremism to flourish, there is no pressing need for a review of policies that might change this environment” (Powel, 2009b, 70-71). Thus, while democracy may be seen

to be an effective weapon against terrorism, “existing authoritarian governments offer an equally effective, immediate and proven short-term response” (ibid). Moreover, it is not seen to be worth opening up the political space and risking the threat to European interests that would accompany the coming to power of a less cooperative regime. The existence of security in the area of counter-terrorism in Tunisia, therefore “appears to have pushed democracy off the agenda for the foreseeable future: Bin Ali's government has achieved a level of stability and security sufficient for the EU without the need for democracy” (ibid). In response then to calls for greater engagement with the democratization process in Tunisia, both the EU might ask: why rock the boat? (Powel 2009b).

***Security and the Anti-Islamist Bias: The case of Moderate Islam in Morocco***

As argued by Viñas (2009), the EU's relationship with moderate Islamism presents one of the most striking examples of its contradictions and dilemmas (p,16). One aspect of this is the problem of policy ambiguity, which, according to Joffé (2008) “relates to the question of European support for democratic governance and the difficulty that the Union...has had in developing a meaningful and appropriate policy towards the phenomenon of political Islam” (p. 161). This stems from the fact that the EU continues to see these movements as having equivocal relations with terrorism and democratic values, and to pose a threat to current stability (Emerson & Youngs, 2007). Meanwhile, European rhetoric increasingly and routinely insists that Islamists must play a full political role if real democratic transitions are to happen in the region (Youngs, 2010, p. 8). Thus, “a progressive securitization of political Islam as part of the EU's counter-terrorism strategies has coincided with the EU's first attempts to reach out to moderate Islamists (Bicchi & Marti 2006). Moderate Islamism is thus caught in the middle of the two extremes of the democracy-stability dilemma” (Andrés Viñas, 2009, p. 16).



European engagement, in particular direct engagement with Islamist opposition parties and movements in the region vary significantly depending on the context of the national setting. In Morocco, for instance, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) is a legal, recognized political actor with parliamentary representation and fairly regular and unproblematic contact with European diplomats (Kausch et al., 2009, p. 968). Because of the relatively liberal environment in Morocco, European embassies have also been able to establish occasional contact with illegal, yet non-violent Islamist movements, foremost of which foremost of which is the widely-supported Justice and Charity (JC) organization. Yet according Kausch and Youngs, “expressions of displeasure from the regime have led to greater diffidence on the part of European governments” (2009, p. 968).

EU ambiguity is also frequently evident in its relations with the PJD: With the PJD having been predicted to form part of the government after the September 2007 elections, many European governments embarked on some cautious but constant engagement. Following the elections, numerous observers “raised suspicions about electoral engineering in the face of the surprisingly weak results of the PJD, which did not gain the place in government that polls had universally predicted it was well on course to attain.” (Kausch et al., p. 970). Meanwhile, European reactions to the elections were highly positive. The low voter turnout reflecting popular dissatisfaction was disregarded and the EU praised the Moroccan government for the election’s transparency and for admitting the first ever delegation of international election observers. In the end, the “PJD’s failure to get into government provoked an almost audible sigh of relief on the northern shores of the Mediterranean” (ibid.).

## **IV. The Arab Spring**

Seven years after its creation, the ENP is reviewed. European Commission's (EC) services undertook the process in late 2010, but as the unemployed graduate Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire, sparking a latent revolt against poor socioeconomic conditions across the region, what was supposed to be a treadmill exercised turned into a very challenging one: that of quickly devising a policy response towards a Neighbourhood undergoing sudden, rapid and profound transformations. (Ayadi & Gadi, 2012, pp. 1)

Over the past year, the shortcomings within the EU's security policy towards its Neighbouring south have dramatically come to the fore, thus challenging many of the assumptions upon which international policies towards the region were based (Balfour, 2012). For instance, the logic of equating political stability in North Africa and the Middle East and the subsequent containment of security risks, such as terrorism and the radicalization of political Islam, emigration and socio-economic upheaval was discredited. Likewise, the assumption the belief that pursuing economic liberalization would lead to a degree of political reform within the framework provided by authoritarian style regimes was also shattered by the mobilization of protesters "demanding not just bread and butter but also dignity and freedom of expression" (Balfour, 2012, p. 28).

After waffling between first supporting the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt and then the uprising against Qaddafi, the EU has officially acknowledged that its status quo policies were, quite simply, wrong (ibid). As stated by High Representative/Vice President Catherine Ashton (2011), the EU ought to promote instead "sustainable stability", i.e., stability achieved through change, rather than immobilism, towards sustainable political, social and

economic development.<sup>19</sup> The Arab Spring thus highlighted the need for the EU to pressure more for domestic reform in the south, a commitment that was made but never heeded by the ENP (Tocci, 2011).

In March and May the Commission produced two Communications that outlined the EU's approach in dealing with the Arab Spring as well as the main points for a renewal of Euro-Mediterranean relations based largely on a review of the ENP. The first one, *A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean* (Commission & HR, 2011a), outlines a series of emergency measures to cope with the exceptional events in the region; while the second one, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood. A Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy* (Commission & HR, 2011b), unveils a broad medium and long-term approach to Euro-Mediterranean relations.

According to these documents, the EU has built its revised policies towards the MENA countries around four pillars: refined conditionality, greater differentiation among countries, new tools to support democracy-building, and a stronger focus on sustainable socio-economic development (Balfour, 2012). From these two Communications a number of new or revised positive features of a revamped ENP can be identified (Tocci et al., 2011). It is argued that, while many of the initiatives proposed are certainly welcome and can potentially bring benefits for the Southern Neighbours, most of them remain ill-conceived at present, too shy, short-term without a long-term strategic vision of the EU's future position in the region. As a result, the reform of the ENP does not appear to represent a qualitative change in approach or way of thinking toward towards the southern Neighbouring region (Echangüe, 2012).

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<sup>19</sup> C. Ashton, "A world built on cooperation, sovereignty, democracy and stability", speech 11/126 of 25 February 2011.

## **Steps forward in the Review**

On paper external actor support seems adequate for the immediate challenges facing the region, but much will hinge on how this support is targeted and delivered (Echangüe, 2012).

### ***More Aid: ‘3 Ms’***

First, the EU recognizes the need to offer more benefits to the neighbours (Tocci 2011). The incentives on offer boil down to what the EU calls the ‘three Ms’ – ‘more money, more market access, more mobility’.<sup>20</sup> As for the ‘more money’ component, aid in the current financial cycle (2011-2013) is expected to rise by €1.2 billion on top of the €5.2 billion already budgeted for grant support for the period, in support for economic and social development, by improving business environments, and conducting private projects on agriculture and rural development<sup>21</sup> (Tocci 2011, p.9). Greater resources are also to be committed to political reform through the Governance Facility, the Comprehensive Institution Building (CIBs) programme, and the new Civil Society Facility within the ENPI (ibid.).

On 26 September, the European Commission adopted a new package of grant support for the region.<sup>22</sup> It includes: A new programme, ‘SPRING’ (Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth), was put in place to organize additional financial resources of €350

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<sup>20</sup> European Commission – Press Release. EU response to the Arab Spring: new package of support for North Africa and Middle East. IP/2011/1083, Brussels 27 September 2011.

<sup>21</sup> These figures are in addition to the first and immediate financial response to provide humanitarian aid: as of the date of this press release, €80.5 million to support the refugee crisis in North Africa. In its budget proposals for the period 2014-2020 (announced on 7 December) the Commission proposed to allocate more than €18.1 bn to support the 16 partner countries of the ENP. This would represent a substantial increase (by approximately 40%) compared to the financial support of the period 2007-2013. The new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) will enable to provide this assistance in a faster and more flexible way, allowing for increased differentiation and incentives for best performers in line with the principle of "more for more". See, Commission - Press Release. EU Response to the ‘Arab Spring’. MEMO/11/918, Brussels, 16 December 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Commission - Press Release. EU Response to the Arab Spring: the SPRING Programme. MEMO/2011/636, Brussels 27 September 2011.

million for 2011- 2012; the creation of a Civil Society Facility (CSF), with an overall budget of €26.4 million for 2011; an allocation of nearly €30 million for 2011-2012 academic cycle specifically for the Southern Neighbourhood.<sup>23</sup>

The second component, ‘more market access’, includes the offer to the south of “Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements” (DCFTAs), which reportedly pave the way to delivering on the ENPs never kept promise of a “stake in the single market” for the neighbours.<sup>24</sup> On 14 December 2011, the Commission announced the decision to open trade negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, as soon as the necessary preparatory process is completed.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, in addition to the aforementioned increase in aid allocated to financing scholarships under the Erasmus programme, more benefits also include mobility partnerships and visa liberalization. Mobility partnerships anticipate the circular migration of semi-skilled workers to one or more EU member states, in return for the third countries’ commitment to respect EU conditions related both to domestic reform and, more importantly, readmission agreements and border controls. In return, the EU would offer visa facilitation for students, researchers and business people beginning with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (Tocci, 2011). “Mobility Partnerships” have been initiated with Tunisia and Morocco already in October 2011. There are over 740 additional Erasmus Mundus mobility grants for academic exchange with Southern Mediterranean countries this academic year. And a further 80 million euros has been allocated for ENP countries in 2012 and 2013 for these scholarships.

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<sup>23</sup> This represents a doubling of the allocation originally foreseen for the Southern Neighbourhood. See Commission Press Release. Erasmus Mundus: funding boost for Arab Spring, IP/11/1558, Brussels, 16 December 2011.

<sup>24</sup> MEMO/11/918.

<sup>25</sup> Commission – Press Release. EU agrees to start trade negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. IP/11/1545, Brussels, 14 December 2011.

### ***“More for More”***

Branded with ‘more for more’, the EU acknowledges the imperative engaging in conditionality. The ‘more for more’ slogan means precisely this: “the EU is willing to offer more benefits in return for more progress on reform by the neighbours” (Tocci, 2011, p. 9). In recognition of the policy’s misplaced and disproven assumption, the EU has also shifted its attention to identifying ways to promote ‘deep democracy’ and focusing efforts towards giving civil society a stronger role in national and international politics (Balfour 2012, p.31). The Commission explicitly states that funding and aid allocations is to be conditioned to the reform performance of the partners. To that end, reform is interpreted in terms of ‘deep democracy’,

meaning the kind of democracy that lasts because alongside elections, it foresees the protection of rights and freedoms, functioning institutions, good governance, rule of law, checks and balances, the fight against corruption, effective law enforcement and security sector reform” Reform is also interpreted in economic and social terms: promoting inclusive economic development, tackling inequalities, creating jobs and ensuring higher living standards. Finally, the Commission has not limited itself to asserting the need for positive conditionality. It has also accepted that a logical corollary of ‘more for more’ is ‘less for less’, i.e. negative conditionality. (Tocci, 2011, p. 9).

In this regard, several elements are advanced to support the emergence of deep democracies in the EU’s Neighbourhood. Together with a reinforcement of human rights dialogues, two new cooperation instruments will be created: a European Endowment for Democracy (EED) and a Civil Society Facility (CSF)<sup>26</sup>. The EED is to be created as an independent body with the capacity to respond to funding requests more flexibly and rapidly than existing EU instruments, and would allow the EU to support political parties, non-registered NGOs and actors including, at least in theory, faith-based groups. As Balfour (2012) notes, if the EED lives up to these commitments, “it would represent a significant

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<sup>26</sup> EU Response to the Arab Spring: the Civil Society Facility. MEMO/11/638,

departure from the EU's traditional non-partisanship in relating to political dynamics in third countries" (p. 31). This is certainly a step in the right direction because it implies the inclusion of hitherto excluded political parties and movements. In this regard, the recent sweeping electoral victories of the Islamist parties – Tunisia's Ennahda and Morocco's Justice and Development Party (PJD) – have become the first Islamist parties ever to form governments in their countries, and will be the first test for reportedly new mentality towards political Islamism (Kausch, 2012). These changes, and the EU's response to them, will be crucially decisive for determining the future trajectory and role for the EU in the post-Arab Spring context.

All in all, this emphasis on engagement does not represent a significant departure from previous EU policy, which as Balfour (2012) points out, has increasingly favored finding paths of cooperation with partner governments (p. 30). The difference, at least on paper, is that democratic commitments appear stronger conditions participating in the framework, and in particular for receiving the benefits on offer (ibid.). Nevertheless, and despite public shows of repentance by the EU for its prior support for the ruling autocrats, Echangüe (2012) argues that actual changes in terms of policy and instruments do not reflect a qualitative change of paradigm: "There is still a tendency to ignore the root causes in favour of treating symptoms and to adopt functionalist approaches to aid" (Echangüe 2012).

### **Limitations and Continuities**

More benefits coupled with more conditionality and differentiation represents a positive step in the right direction. However, several preliminary shortcomings can also be identified. In the early days of the Arab Spring there were many calls from member states for 'Marshall Plans' (Balfour, 2012, p. 31; Echangüe, 2012) for North Africa and the Middle East entailing breaking down trade protectionism. No such proposals have yet materialized.

As a result, Balfour argues, the problems ahead are likely to face the same obstacles that have constrained previous policies: “delivery on the part of the member states” (ibid).

### ***Ambiguous Formulations, Elusive Aims***

The prospects of effective conditionality remain hindered by the continued vagueness of the ENP conditions: While proclaiming the principles of conditionality and ‘more for more’, Tocci is skeptical of the fact that very little guidance has been provided regarding how to make these concepts operational. For instance, Tocci asks: “How precisely is the EU to benchmark and monitor its conditions? How will new instruments, such as the Endowment for Democracy, provide added value rather than duplicate existing EU instruments such as the Governance Facility and the EIDHR?” (2011, p. 10). So far, there has been little clarification or guidance to answer these questions.

The EED in particular can be criticized on the grounds that there are no indications on how the endowment would specifically function, which institution would be responsible for its management, and on the specific initiatives it would undertake, beyond the broadly defined ones outlined in the Communication (Ayadi & Gadi, 2011, p. 9). Ayadi and Gadi (2012), the CSF’s mandate is even blurrier (ibid.). Describing its activities, the Communication *A New Response to a changing Neighbourhood* identifies the objective of ‘helping CSOs to develop their advocacy capacity’, as well as ‘their ability to monitor reform and their role in implementing and evaluating EU programmes’ (Commission, 2011b, p. 4). These activities, they argue, are already undertaken by the EIDHR, thus raising the concern about a possible duplication of actions between the two instruments (Ayadi et al., p. 9-10). Furthermore, they highlight the fact that the only indication given by the Communication is that ‘inter-country delegations will seek to bring countries’ governments and civil society together in a structured dialogue on key areas of [...] cooperation” (p. 4). It is argued that if



such a framework might work for the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, "it neglects the fact that in the Arab Mediterranean an important number of CSOs have been co-opted by local regimes, which in the current situation raises questions about their independence and degree of commitment towards genuine democratization" (Ayadi et al, p. 10). Furthermore, and perhaps most crucially, the functioning of this facility as outlined in the Communication "point[s] at a reinforcement of the EU's cooperative approach towards democracy promotion, whereby emphasis is put on institutionalizing relations between CSOs, local governments and EU structures (ibid p. 11). In the absence of an emerging and functioning civil society, the act of institutionalizing relations points to the probability that governments will continue to co-opt civil society, effectively ensuring that cooperation in this domain does not alter the status quo in any significant way.

### ***Migration and mobility: Security-oriented***

A second limitation relates to the continuance of a security-driven logic in certain policy areas, which could hinder the practical value of the benefits being offered (Tocci, 2011). For one, the EU has proposed mobility partnerships as one of its benefits on offer to the neighbours. Despite traditional member state reluctance, the EU is demonstrating much greater readiness to negotiate on trade and mobility issues. The importance assigned to the EU's objectives of managing population movements and demographic change in its migration programmes is reiterated in the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM).<sup>27</sup> While the renewed global approach is broader than the previous one in different fields, Pascouau (2012) similarly questions "whether this new framework will reach the objective in terms of enhanced mobility for people living in the Arab Region" (p. 58).

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<sup>27</sup> The Communication takes stock of what has been achieved so far and adapts it in order to respond to forthcoming challenges in a changing environment.

While certainly welcome, Tocci argues the logic of the proposed mobility partnerships remains highly security driven, thus putting into question its overall value (p. 10). In line with the Pascouau's reservations above, the neighbours are offered limited mobility<sup>28</sup> only if they comply with a host of strict security requirements regarding readmission and border controls. Nathalie Tocci (2011) argues:

On the one hand, as and when the third countries acquire the capability to enforce such requirements, their level of internal development and stability is often such that their potential for emigration has been largely depleted.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the cost of implementing the EU's requirements is such that the reward of temporary mobility for a limited category of citizens is often not worth the bargain. This is all the more true in a country like Tunisia, which may be tentatively moving towards greater sustainability and therefore in which authorities will become more accountable to citizens and less willing to play along with the EU's securitised migration policy tune. (Tocci, 2011, p. 10).

It is too early to judge whether external actors will suffer from short-termism or commit for the long haul. Certainly the funds committed are not substantial enough to constitute a 'Marshall plan' type of approach as was suggested by some actors at the beginning of the transitions (Echangue 2012). On the other hand, offering more 'money, markets and mobility' is only part of the equation. As Youngs (2011) put it: "it does not constitute a geostrategic response to such potentially momentous events...the EU must move beyond its 'bureaucratic mindset' to develop a geostrategic vision of where it wants to be in the 2030" (p. 3).

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<sup>28</sup> Tocci notes that the bulk of circular migration takes place spontaneously and not through regulated schemes of mobility partnerships. Remarks by Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute, 22 June 2011, referenced in N. Tocci, 'State (un)Sustainability,' (2012), p. 10, note 8.

<sup>29</sup> Remarks by Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute, 22 June 2011, referenced in *ibid.*, p. 10, note 9.

## **V. Conclusion**

This thesis argued that the EU's approach to achieving security of European interests is crucially determined by the specific interaction dynamics between democracy and the threat this objective has on short-term stability interests with respect to the specific security concerns involved. These are seen to vary across the different areas of security concern – with democracy seen to be a destabilizing force – either directly or indirectly – to European security interests, and as such, is systematically relegated to the backseat when the two conflict. In the ENP framework, these interests are shown to be in constant conflict, crucially hindering the democratization agenda in the southern Neighbourhood. The EU's tendency toward a status-quo oriented strategy is a result of the democratization-stability dilemma and the specific domestic contexts within which the EU is engaged. As a result, and notwithstanding all the normative rhetoric, the EU's democratization agenda takes a back seat in the EU's relations with the region even when there exists good logic for promoting political reform as a means of ensuring long-term security. This, again, is explained by the irreconcilable conflict between the dual pursuit of long- and short-term security objectives by means of conflicting security logics.

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