Conceptualizing Stability within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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ABSTRACT

When scrutinizing the specific characteristics of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Association Agreements which governs the nature of cooperation between the two rims of the Mediterranean, we find out that “stability” as such the main key policy objective the EU is trying to uphold. Accordingly, the purpose of this study revolves around two main objectives: to unleash the ambiguity over the concept of “stability” as a policy objective under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to try to detect the form of “stability” the EU is trying to capitalize on. As for the former objective, the study concludes that concept shall not be merely associated with the depiction of one particular incident or static period –reflecting for example on a specific political, social, or economic condition - of any given country or region. It should nonetheless also consider those stages that led to the final stage of particular status quo. As far as stability as a policy objective of the EU’s within the EMP, the paper argued that the partnership through MEDA tends to maintain stability status quo by continuing on focusing on the economic type of stability. Considering the security interest dimension, such form of stability merges a state of mutual interests and a solid compromise between the Europeans and their Arab regimes counterparts.

Keywords: Stability, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

INTRODUCTION

The Notion of Stability and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Since the launching of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, the EU has repeatedly brought the notion of ‘stability’ as a key strategic objective towards its neighboring region and certainly the Mediterranean (Med region) - see diagram (1)1. Such trend has been explicitly demonstrated in most official agreements or arrangements contracted with its Mediterranean counterparts. Vice president of the European Commission defended that “Necessary for the European Union which cannot maintain its prosperity and deepen its integration without stability and prosperity of its immediate neighborhood” (Marin, 2001, 1). Thus, this vague notion has not been associated with most, if not all, EU’s external cooperation agreement other than its ‘non-neighboring’ regions (i.e. Latin America) (Council Regulation: 2002b 2). As for the overall objectives, the Declaration is “convinced that the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity requires a strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights, sustainable and balanced economic and social development, measures to combat poverty and promotion of greater understanding between cultures, which are all essential aspects of partnership” (Barcelona Declaration). In parallel, the declaration continues “this Euro-Mediterranean initiative is not intended to replace the other activities and initiatives undertaken in the interests of the peace, stability and development of the region, but that it will contribute to their success” (Ibid.). At the bilateral level, the Euro-Jordanian Annual Cooperation Report reiterates Barcelona’s notion’s of stability as a fundamental

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objective for the bilateral cooperation alike, “Its main aim is to create a zone of peace, stability and prosperity by working to remove the threat of political and economic destabilisation that has been an all too frequent characteristic of the region since earliest times” (European Delegation: 2000, 16).

Indeed, the essential objective behind the European project is to introduce stability for security purposes. Schlumberger emphasizes the fact that stability in Europe – in terms of fighting fundamentalism and illegal immigration - is contingent upon prosperity upon stability in the southern states, the political stability of the Arab regimes are however dependent on their capability to provide resources for ‘rent seeking societies. Thus, admitting that prosperity in the south is a must and prerequisite for stability for Europe, he is however questioning whether Barcelona proposes the proper strategy to achieve them or not? If so, then what is the nature of such prosperity and as a result the potential type of stability? (Schlumberger: 2000, 255).

Diagram (1): EU’s Strategy Towards Stability
Apparently, the nature objective of stability required may vary between the two sub-regions of the Mediterranean: the Mashreq (eastern) and the Maghreb (western). For instance, whereas the Europeans are more concerned with economic and social stability in the Maghreb region to deter migration flows, it is on the other hand, more interested on the regional stability on the Mashreq side of the Mediterranean in order to eschew any potential repercussions related to Arab-Israeli conflict as well as to ensure a successful implementation of the prospective Euro-MED project. However, despite these discrepancies sought by the Europeans, the cultural element appears a strong common dominator element to unite the two sub-regions under one region. Islam in particular becomes the main common dominator between them that potentially is seen by the EU as a challenging and threatening power to them. Stephen Calleya argues “Relations in these two sub-regions of the Mediterranean [North Africa and the Levant] remain primarily limited at an inter-governmental level, with cross-borders types of interaction limited to energy sector and Islam” (Calleya: 1997, 1).

Thus, given stability as a prime objective, what is meant by stability and the type of such stability the EU tends to address through the EMP?

Objectives and the Structure of the Research

Based on what is mentioned above and considering the envisaged causes of the partnership, the main objectives of this paper revolve are two fold:

1. To try to conceptualize the type of stability the EU tends to address within the ongoing EMP. In it, the role of foreign aid (MEDA) becomes significantly important in this particular front. Examining the size of allocations, the type of programs, and nature of EU’s aid policy (i.e. political conditionality), shall significantly facilitate the mission of the research.

2. To attempt to gauge the significance of the partnership’s nature of stability and its implications on the stability in its Mediterranean partners. In sum, economic stability based on economic growth and development becomes the desired stability option for the EU and their Arab regime counterparts.

Security in the Mediterranean in the Post Cold War Era

Introduction: the Road towards Barcelona Declaration and the EMP.

Since the end of the Cold War, new security concerns evolved within EU’s policy circles with regards to the Mediterranean region. The fear of the rising Islamic fundamentalists in the Arab states and the continued illegal emigration of Arab/Muslim citizens to Europe, due to domestic economic and political pressures, became Europe's main political and security agenda towards the Middle East. Let alone, other secondary factors that also led to the impetus of this partnership: to counterbalance the EU’s expansion policy eastward encouraged by northern European states, keeping and maintaining the open markets and oil supplies, and the increasing threats of drug trafficking and environmental degradation (Miller, 1993: 1). Therefore, Europe was keenly interested in finding a policy to deal with these potential challenges. Gary Miller maintained that there are a number of reasons behind EU policy towards southern Mediterranean states in which the former seeks to provide socio-economic and political stability in the later region in order to avoid any potential explosive instability (Ibid. 1).

In parallel, Dominic Fenech argues that since the end of the Cold War, the three main security set-ups -NATO, WEU, and OSCE- have focused their interests towards the Mediterranean. They are functioning individually rather than collectively in response to any potential threats emanating from the Mediterranean (Fenech, 1997: 151). By mid 1990s, bilateral initiatives were taken by these organizations with a number of southern Mediterranean states. In 1995, NATO has launched Mediterranean initiative; a dialogue already has been initiated with Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, and Mauritania. Meanwhile, the WEU has commenced an inclusive dialogue since 1992 with Morocco, Cyprus, Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, Algeria and Malta. In the same vein, OSCE has taken broader steps towards several Mediterranean countries- such as Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Israel- by granting these states an
observer status and allowing them to attend high-level meetings concerning Mediterranean issues (Winrow, 1996: 52-56).

Also, it seems that these efforts, though necessary, are not sufficient to address the growing challenges emanating from the Med region. Despite these intensive security initiatives, none of them would be able to tackle the socio-economic roots of instability. Gillespie's assertion that "The advantage of the EU is paradoxically that is not security organization, and thus is better qualified to tackle the roots of instability that give rise to security concerns, as it is seeking to do through its Euro-Mediterranean Partnership project" (Gillespie, 1994: 4). The region's instability goes beyond military confrontation or arms threats. Some critics argue that even military means cannot be effective in this particular region. Hamadi maintained that: "the regional security [Mediterranean], contrary to yesterday's confrontation between West and East; is not to substitute South for East. It lies in a real balance of a dense network of interests, in an understanding between all our peoples with no one excluded. In short, it lies in a real and global partnership. Security will not be endured by military means or common maneuvers" (Hamdani, 1997: 1).

Thus security is not bound to specific problems or threats; it is characterized by an amalgam of challenges to encompass political instability, migratory and ethnic tensions, environmental degradation, terrorism, drug-trafficking, the expansion of Muslim extremism, and so on. This however is mainly due to various implications emanating from its neighboring southern states such as, poor economic performance, lack of democracy and human rights, the spill-over of regional instability such as the stagnation of the Arab-Israeli peace process, lack of trust and cooperation amongst these states as a result of unresolved boundary disputes which lead to an increasing arms proliferation and conflict over resources in the region. So there is a need for a comprehensive policy that deals with political, economical, and social aspects by which it encompasses the above-mentioned developmental policies as well as security concerns altogether.

In turn, the European Council meeting in Lisbon (June 1992) constitutes a turning point in the Community’s external relation’s policy. “At its conference in Lisbon in June 1992, the European Council initiated a qualitative change in the Union’s policy towards the SEM countries. The change was reflected in new directives for the future of the EU’s policy regarding security in the SEM countries. In this policy, the SEM countries were designated areas of great interest for the EU in terms of security and social stability” (United Nations Report, 1999: 5). As far as the EU-Mediterranean development policy is concerned, the EU was motivated to remodel its Mediterranean policy (New Mediterranean policy 1990-1996). Accordingly, the main aim has shifted from improving access to EC’s market to supporting economic reform policies (EIB Official Report, 2001: 3).

The Council initial attempt was to put together external relations’ policy and the Common Foreign and Security Policy within the framework of the forthcoming European Union. Hence, the Mediterranean region came under the management of both policies. In 1994 however, the European Council in Corfu decided to mandate the Commission to undertake the ‘Euro-Med’ within a CFSP heading (Veremis, 1997: 46). The Commission had accordingly responded with a proposal (EMP) in October 1994 based on the CFSP annex agreed earlier in Lisbon. The annex clearly recognized and identified the strong relationship between the EMP and Europe’s security in that its political and security, economic and financial, social and cultural ‘policies’ are highly influenced by this security policy. The annex recognizes that, “the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean as well as the Middle East are geographical areas in relation to which the Union has strong interests both in terms of security and social stability” (Whitman, 2001: 4). As a result, the Commission submitted a proposal taking into the account the above-mentioned considerations. In December of that year, the European Council in Essen endorsed this proposal to become its new Mediterranean policy. On 27-28 November 1995, the Foreign ministers of the fifteen European states and their counterparts of
the twelve non-European member states (Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Malta, Cyprus, Algeria, Israel, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority) endorsed the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in Barcelona- see annex I. This Partnership was developed and managed by the European Commission.DG1/B. External Relation (Weidenfeld and Wessels, 1997: 174).

What’s New in the European Initiative of the Partnership

In sum, within the EMP it can be argued that there are five main new features have been declared and added to the EU’s “new look” perspective towards its southern region- which differentiate it from its classical pre-Barcelona process perspective: the initiation of a balanced inseparable political, economic, and cultural pillars of cooperation, the introduction of ‘stability’ as a policy objective, the introduction of political aid, and the prospected establishment of the Euro-Med free trade area (EMFTA) by 2012.

One of the major features of the EU’s new policy under the EMP, is the departure from its classical unilateral economic cooperation into allegedly three-balanced policies based on the above-mentioned baskets. Barcelona Declaration clearly asserts “Hereby agree to establish a comprehensive partnership among the participants the Euro-Mediterranean partnership through strengthened political dialogue on a regular basis, the development of economic and financial cooperation and greater emphasis on the social, cultural and human dimension, these being the three aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership” (Barcelona Declaration, 1995). In the same vein, Chris Patten, EU’s External Relation Commissioner asserts that “While in the years before, the European Union was far from being passive in the region; it was only Barcelona which turned the Mediterranean policy into a coherent and a global approach by striking a balance between different policy fields. By combining all three chapters into one comprehensive policy, it acknowledges that financial, economic, cultural, and security issues cannot effectively tackled separately” (Patten, 2000a: 5). Similarly Zaim argues that “It is assumed that these three aspects [of the partnership] are inseparable, interdependent: there cannot be progress in one of these aspects that is not based on progress in the others” (Zaim, 1999: 37).

In turn, EU’s growing interests in political development became more apparent in the early years of the 1990s. At policy level, the past decade witnessed vivid revolutionary developments on EU’s external democratic policy towards developing countries. Starting mainly from the 1991 European Council Summit Meeting in Luxembourg, passing through Maastricht Treaty on the EU (TEU) of 1992, and ending with the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, the EU has formulated its main democratic development policies or guidelines internationally. In Luxembourg, Member states agreed on recognizing human rights related issues as well as democratic and political institutions as the cornerstone for equitable development and thus expressed great interest to include human rights principles in future economic and cooperation agreements with their recipient partners (Crawford, 2001: 54). Accordingly, the Council of Ministers has issued a regulation (November 1991) providing that political development is an objective as well as a conditional item for its development cooperation toward EU Member States. With the advent of Common Foreign and Security pillar, the Maastricht Treaty has incorporated these democratic principles under the new pillar’s objectives (Article J.1 [2]). Most importantly, the TEU unprecedently presented a legal basis on which the Community’s development cooperation’s objectives shall be based on. In turn, objectives related to democracy promotion were put forward under Article 130u, [2] (ibid. 54-55).

Conceptualizing Stability

Introduction:

As far as the very concept of stability is concerned, the term is undoubtedly highly complicated and contested notion in the study of international relations in that it has been frequently discussed without being thoroughly examined or analytically defined. Oxford
dictionary identified stability as balance, consistency, durability, equilibrium, firmness, immutability, permanence, reliability, solidity, soundness, steadiness, and strength. The adjective word however is interpreted as “Firmly fixed or established without fluctuating or changing”. Apparently, the term’s definition seems to lack its own definite and conflicting meanings in terms of balance, consistency, firmness, soundness, and above all reliability.

However, despite its ambiguity, it can be argued that the concept of stability is generally revolves around maintaining status quo and/or order. But what remains blur is trying to define the forms and types of stability such as what is meant by the stability of state? And what are its main particular components or pillars? On the other hand, are there any ‘model’ stable states or even single state that currently exists or ever existed throughout the course of history? If not, then how can the European project succeed if there are no precise indications or identifications of the term that is the cornerstone for its policy objective in the region? In parallel, if the answer is yes, then what are the major and fundamental characteristics of that given model? In other words, is stability attributed, for instance, to those nations that enjoy prospering civilizations, economic ‘stability’, social ‘stability’, or political ‘stability’, etc? If so, then what is meant for example by political stability of state? Would it be referred to stability of the ‘ruling’ parties/entities or stability of ‘citizens’ within a given state?

Accordingly, the process of defining stability becomes much more difficult and complicated when it comes to define the terms which are often associated with as it repeatedly produce by some means even a fuzzier and blur interpretation than the concept stability per se. For example, political stability is defined by some “as the absence of open conflict” (Higgott, 1982: 29) whilst others may views it as “the absence of civil wars, of coups, of frequent constitutional changes, and of domestic political terrorism, corruption, and expropriation” (Ponser, 1997: 344). Political instability however is perceived by many as any potential changes leading to changes in executive power (Longdeman and Poole, 1990). Clearly, the term remains elastic and loose in nature and hence opens doors for a wide range of interpretations and speculations. The ambiguity of the term appears to reside in the fact that it is not directly associated with particular phenomenon or major event where such ‘newly’ term/s can be interpreted in conjunction with that specific period or phenomenon. Terms such as regionalism globalization, fundamentalism, or modernity and so on have clearly evolved during or in the aftermath of particular major events (i.e. major wars or social transformation).

Examining Stability within the EMP

Within the EMP, it was not clear enough whether the EU seeks to achieve stability as a final objective or a preconditioned objective – a milestone towards attaining a final objective? For instance, David Kilgour, in his article, Stability and Good Governance: Preconditions for Development, views stability as a precondition and a prerequisite step before striving for development and growth. He defended that, "Stability and security are prerequisites for economic growth and development.” If these are prerequisites, and they surely are, any discussion of development must address as its starting point the promotion of peace, democratic development and good governance. Without these three ingredients, no amount of foreign aid, no matter how carefully spent, can ever achieve "development" (Kilgour, 1998: 2).

However, the apparent official language speaks on stability as a final end of a policy objective, it nonetheless remains unclear if there are any veiled agenda beyond stability. Regardless, general literatures have considerably failed to take these considerations thoroughly into account when discussing or examining stability especially as far as the Euro-Med relations are concerned. Yet, only a handful of literatures and publications that have discussed the notion of stability within the Euro-Arab context whereby most of which have examined either the existing or the future EU’s regional policy towards the Middle East -after outlining their perspective sources of instability within the region. Generally speaking, these perspectives on state’s stability have fallen under two main folds. First, at intra-
state or inter-regional levels through which regional cooperation or integration becomes the cornerstone to achieve state or regional stability. Second at domestic level by examining mainly the relationship between regimes and their citizens. In this respect, state’s stability through cooperation was only to succeed within regimes-citizens context.

As for the former, Gary Miller for instance discussed the sources of instability within socio-economic and security context by asserting that “over a range of subjects such as economic, development, security, migration, environment and water resource management the assumption is that closer and stronger cooperation will help resolve many of the most severe problems of public policy in the region and so contribute to its stability and prosperity” (Miller, 1993: 7). In parallel, other view state’s instability shall be dealt with at national levels – inter regional cooperation between the two distinct rims of the Mediterranean. In parallel, Tim Niblock asserted that stability in the region couldn’t be envisaged without separating the region into different realms that share similar nature of problems and characteristics (Niblock, 1993: 47). From the Jordanian official perspective, King Abdullah II frequently stressed the fact that that Jordan could never enjoy a state of stability or prosperity so long Arab-Israeli conflict - the settlement of Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular - remains unresolved and only through, Jordan could attain a genuine state of stability (Abdullah II, 2002).

On the other hand, in his edited book, The Middle East and Europe: the Search for Stability and Integration, Gerard Nonneman identifies fourteen key obstacles of domestic and regional stability in the Middle East. The first two of which are “the lack of political participation and the lack of legitimacy for (a) the regimes and (b) the state itself” (Nonneman, 1996: 29). In parallel, in 1998, Eberhard Kienle has thoroughly analysis the potential implications of the partnership on the stability of the Med region. In his article, Destabilization through Partnership? Euro-Mediterranean Relations After the Barcelona Declaration, he argues that “the search of stability that dominates this [partnership] ‘new Mediterranean policy’” (Kienle, 1998: 1). He continued arguing that the partnership does not tackle the roots of stability and has the propensity to exacerbate the already deteriorated political stability status quo- in terms of widening the gap that separates Arab regimes from their citizens. Unlike Miller’s perspective, he envisaged that stability should evolve from within in forms of ‘domestic’ rather than regional integration’. Political participation along with direct political dialogue between rulers and citizens are of stressing need to overcome such endemic stability status quo (ibid. 14-16). Though, he expressed doubts over potential positive relationship between economic development and the political one. In fact, he expressed doubt that the partnership owns the means to trigger economic growth in the future (ibid. 4-5).

Based on the above-mentioned brief examination, it worth reemphasizing that stability is a very wide and multifaceted concept in that it cannot be understood or examined without having it disintegrated into subcomponents. Stability, political stability, and economic stability have different – whilst interrelated in some cases- meanings and interpretations by which trying to envisage the EU’s perspective of stability as a policy objective becomes certainly a very difficult task.

II.I. Understanding Stability

As shown above, assuming that stability in its political terms reflects the traditional wisdom perspective as the overall state of order and non-violence or anarchy of states so as to reflect a status quo for any given specific time-framework. Though, in this sense, similar complexities arise when trying to define what is meant by violence or/and anarchy. What is the degree of instability/chaos needed to be counted as such? Does it differ in nature and expression between democratic than non-democratic states? and what are those particular components that constitute it? Is there a ‘model’ state that enjoys entirely free state of violence in order to attain a state of instability? Thus, how far ‘violence or/and anarchy’ shall reach in order to attain the state of instability? In parallel, do states under authoritarian regimes consider being stable regardless whether
violence prevails or not? As shown below, as for the Med Arab region, the author perceives that stability shall not merely be associated with end of violence or/and anarchy. How can someone describe the state of stability of a given country who enjoys considerable political stability but lacks the economic one or vice versa? In other words, are states under repressive regimes, which enjoy high degree of order, example of stable states? On the other hand, are democratic countries, which may undergo economic crises, reflects an example of being instable (i.e. financial crises in Greece in 2009)?

Indeed, the Tunisian uprising paradigm clearly illustrates the above-mentioned understanding and outcomes. In this respect, how could someone defines stability within the Tunisian revolution? More specifically, where stability resides? Is it before the revolution – in terms of absence of violence and order? Or is it during and after the revolution, whereby it entails a process of changes (violence) that led to new status quo – where public violence/upheaval led to form new democratic government (new stability status quo)? It is believed that Tunisian favored stability ‘via- violence’ to attain a new state of stability over stability via order and absence of violence in the pre-revolution era. Hence, on the one hand, it is not necessarily to associate stability with absence of violence or maintaining order. On the other, stability should entail a whole process that leads to new status quo and not only a status quo as such. The question worth asking here is, does the West in general and the EU in particular favors the ‘current’ or the ‘upcoming/after’ setting of stability? Again, what is meant of stability and promoting stability as a police objective of the EU in the Mediterranean region under the EMP?

Thus, to understand stability, the concept shall not be affiliated with the depiction of one particular incident or static moment –reflecting on for example any specific political, social, or economic situation - for any given country or region. It should rather also consider those stages that led to the final stage of particular status quo (being the final distinct stage of stability). In other words, it can be argued that the traditional interpretations takes the meaning as given (maintaining status quo) and accordingly view merely one phase of stability (final stage or the status quo static period ‘T₀’) in synchronic terms without considering previous stages that led to the evolution of such status. However, this paper perceives that status quo setting should view the final phase of a diachronic framework to include those stages or phases that precede it ‘T₀’. In this respect, the classical perspective in terms of absence of violence for example should only be reflected in one stage (status quo ‘T₀’) within stability stages framework. Also, to preserving the final stage (status quo) or even to create new form of status quo (T₁), shall also require further sets of phases – can be seen for instance in terms of sustaining or changing some or particular existing domestic or foreign policies, or in case of coup or revolution. In fact, in some cases, the road to stability (towards attaining status quo ‘T₁’) may undergo under certain stages/or phases of stability/instability -see diagram (2). Apparently, the latter scenario may reflect the way most of Arab authoritarian regimes reached to the existing political stability status quo.
Apparently, every state or region maintains its own distinctive political, economic, or social foundations (phases in terms of sub-stability structures) by which the formation of all sub structures produces the final stage of stability (‘T0’ status quo). Of course, in some cases, countries within same region may enjoy similar foundations of sub stability structures. However, regardless of such discrepancies, the combination of these entire sub/or types of stability structures (phases) shall eventually forge the overall characterization of stability of that given state or region. Hence, stability should reflect the final product of process accrued by the interactions of the various forms of sub-stability rather than depicting a given state of order/status quo in a particular timing.

It is envisaged that such differences reside in the nature of those stages that have preceded (let to current status quo) as well as those that will proceed (to maintain or create a new status quo). For instance, whereas democratic states go considerably through benign stages of stability before and after the stage of status quo, authoritarian regimes however appear to considerably go through violent stages to attain as well as to maintain the status quo. Accordingly, it can be argued that, in the authoritarian-democratic paradigm of stability, there are ‘positive’ and negative ‘forms’ of stability.

After scrutinizing the formation of stability it is worth readdressing here the main question of this paper: what is intended by ‘stability’ under the EMP as a policy objective of the EU policy makers?

‘Stability’ as the EU’s Policy Objective within the EMP

One of the main tools the paper employs to unleash the vagueness in detecting the nature of stability as policy objective of the EU resides in analyzing the distribution of its financial assistance under the EMP towards its Mediterranean partners. Certainly, understanding the trend of the EU’s financial assistance should considerably reflect its interests in the region and accordingly the nature of stability is trying to enforce.
Realizing the significant efficacy of foreign interventionist policy— the role of foreign aid particularly— in influencing changes in the recipient countries (i.e. Med region), the paper concludes that stability as such is seen in terms of process that leads eventually to attain a particular status quo.

When reviewing the nature of the Association Agreement and the distribution of financial assistance of the EMP. The paper detects that the EU is very much interested in focusing on the economic dimension/stability of the partnership. As for the Association Agreement is concerned, Annex (I) vividly reveals the strong economic nature of the partnership despite the rhetorical earlier commitments of the EU officials – as declared in Barcelona Declaration- to introduce a balanced inseparable type of cooperation. The annex illustrates that out of the total 107 articles, the political pillars counted for only three articles whilst the economic one enjoyed 85 articles. Furthermore, when scrutinizing the distribution of the EU financial assistance, democratization and human rights programs accounted for less than 1% of overall EU funds (see table 1).


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<td>1995</td>
<td>Private Sector Development</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Facility I</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>Risk Capital Resources in Support of SMEs</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Industrial Modernization Program</td>
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<td>Protection &amp; Promotion of Cultural Heritage</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Amman Water Management</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Facility II</td>
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**MEDA II**

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<td>Risk Capital Resources in Support of Private Sector</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Regularity Reforms and</td>
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Hence, the above demonstration reveals the strong trend of fostering the economic form of stability option approached by the EU - in terms of reiterating its long-standing continued financial assistance on economic sectors at the expense of the political one (e.g. political development and reforms). Such trend reflects a compromise with Arab Mediterranean governments and forges mutual interests for both since it is conceived as the most ‘desired’ type of stability (current and try to preserve it) by the EU and Arab regimes to deter any potential chances for the revival of ‘citizen’s political’ type of stability (democratization). Clearly, by preserving stability status quo with its economic nature bent, ‘political stability’ of the Arab regimes becomes the winner party of the whole stability formula within the context of the EMP. Within this context, in one of his article, Eberhard Kienle assessed the economic political synthesis under the EMP since 1995. He clearly demonstrated two main themes: first, the preponderance economic nature of the partnership at the expense of the political one. Second, economic development under the EMP failed to trigger political development. In it, he underlines that,

“Ten years after the Barcelona Conference the European Union’s southern and eastern Mediterranean neighbours have made little or no progress towards democratization or political liberalisation. In some cases during this decade, political regimes even became more authoritarian and repressive than they had previously...”
been. Crucially, the expected causal link between economic and political liberalisation, such a central element of the Barcelona Process philosophy, has not materialised in practice” (Kienle: 2005, 24).

As for the EU, most studies and literature clearly associate the partnership with the EU’s security fears and interests. The fear of Islamic revivalism as the potential threat for its economic (i.e. oil market) security, (i.e. peace process), and strategic interests in the region – which in parallel appears to challenge the stability of Arab regimes – seems to force the EU to shy away from its political commitments as stated unequivocally at the Barcelona Declaration. Dominic Fenech foresees that the recent partnership arose from the fear of Europe that history may repeat itself and bring the revelation of Islam again in the future. He maintained that,

"Indeed, since the Mediterranean represents the meeting point between Europeans and Arabs, the history of Euro-Mediterranean relations can be said to have travelled full circle. The phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism, denoting as it does the rejection of the western model of the modern state, introduces more than a casual suggestion that the distinction between the opposite shores of the Mediterranean is susceptible to be defined in terms of Christian versus Muslim. Whether spoken of openly or in whisper, this phenomenon has been at least the catalyst, if not the prime cause, of Europe's concern about the dangers to itself issuing from the Mediterranean” (Fenech, 1997: 153).

Most importantly, the European parliament stated publicly the EU’s security concerns about the region, on which Islamic expansionism become the first in its priority list. It maintains, “the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, the continuing endemic nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict… have greatly exacerbated the political and social destabilization of the whole southern and southern-eastern Mediterranean” (European Parliament Report as quoted in Aguirre, 1998: 31). Apparently, to fulfill its security interests, the nature of stability the EU is trying to address via EMP is to continue enforcing economic stability option within set of phases that the partnership is seemingly addressing to maintain ongoing status quo (see diagram 3). The continued financial and economic assistance focusing on economic development and growth at the expense of political development/democratization ‘citizen’s stability’ reflect the nature of the economic stability the EU is addressing.
In the same vein, Arab Mediterranean governments strive to invest heavily in regional instability factor particularly with respect to Arab-Israeli conflict so as to discourage foreign donors and the EU specifically to promote democratization ‘political stability of citizens’. Public opinions – with their Islamists and nationalists’ majority attachment – are undoubtedly opposing their national government foreign policies towards recognizing Israel. This very much explains the special relationship enjoyed by Arab moderate states with the West and the EU in particular. On the other hand, the struggle over political stability - between regime and the opposition of the Mediterranean- to amass public opinion popularity diverge. Whereas the former stressed on economic stability in terms of economic growth/development and prosperity (mainly through foreign and financial assistance) to gather people’s support against any attempt for political change in the existing stability status quo formula, the latter however, tends to invest on the deteriorated economic, social, and political circumstances to gain their support. Certainly, regional dimension remains highly important not in determining the shape of democratic process as much as being an instrument to measure the gap between Arab regimes and their citizens particularly over foreign policy issues mainly as far as Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned (see diagram 4).

Consequently, both the governments and the EU tend to encourage maintaining ‘economic stability’ option and as a result preserving the current status quo - by concentrating on economic oriented policies to avoid any potential unforeseen political changes and consequences.

**Conclusion**

The main purpose of this paper is to analytically examine the complex concept of stability within and outside the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (EMP) framework on the one hand and scrutinize what is meant by stability as such as a policy objective of the EU towards its southern flank of the Mediterranean.
The above analysis portrays the concept stability in terms of sets of stages (process) may be needed to maintain such status for any given state—regardless whether such state is democratic or not. Thus, it shall not be construed as merely a state of an absence of violence (adjective), rather than continues process (verb) which may entail changes in phases structures to maintain the status quo (i.e. absence of conflict) for that particular state. Hence, the paper highly invested on the role of aid—through MEDA (the financial arm of the partnership)—as a significant step towards conceptualizing the sort of stability the partnership is seeking to uphold.

As far as stability as a policy objective of the EU’s within the EMP, the paper concludes that the partnership through MEDA tends to maintain stability status quo by continuing on focusing on the economic type of stability. To certain extent, the planned partnership has a propensity to replicate in nature the classical cooperation in that both highly focus on economic cooperation.

Indeed, there is a clear gap between ambitions declared at Barcelona and those implemented through the Association Agreements. Despite the increases in financial assistance under MEDA, such a scenario is expected to produce various and complex political, social, and economic repercussions on the stability of Europe’s Mediterranean partners. The type and the nature of stability sought by the EU is indeed a determinant factor shaping the hypothesis of this thesis. The paper concludes that the partnership tends to maintain the political stability status quo in the Arab Mediterranean region in order to maintain the stability of relationship between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The fear of unforeseen circumstances that may emanate from political development is thought to make EU’s decision-makers reluctant to genuinely employ financial assistance to make any changes (see diagram 5).

Hence, the nature of stability sought by the partnership and the governments of the Arab Mediterranean states is more or less identical but it nevertheless tends to conflict with that of the opposition/public opinions understanding of stability. Whereas the latter foresees economic stability (in terms of sustainable growth) as the key ‘solution’ and the backstage for attaining overall stability, the former however, tends to view political stability (regime survival Vs political reforms) as an indispensable and primary instrument for such objective. The reason explains why Arab regimes tends to seek the ‘roots’ of economic stability and shies away from implementing the ‘roots’ of political stability—with implicit and indirect approval by the EU—in
terms of political liberalization, is due to the growing fear that such inaction may bring other political forces especially the Islamic ones to threaten their existence. In short, this explains the continued economic nature of the partnership despite rhetoric political endeavours sought by the EU towards promoting political development and democratization in the Southern Mediterranean under the EMP.

NOTES

1. Diagram (1) shows the perception and the relevance of EU’s ‘stability’ policy towards its neighboring region whereby EU’s security interests assume the introduction and the reintroduction (especially Med region) of stability policy towards its neighboring regions. However, although the nature of stability as such appears to diverge between the two regions, it however opt to seek security purposes. The figure presumes the clear interest of the EU towards its eastern part region which was initially embedded within its enlargement policy which speculations arise regarding the success of its policy towards southern part.


3. See also Richard Whitman, who implicitly distinguished between security threats to Europe and the source on instabilities in the Southern rim of the Mediterranean. Hence Europe – through its new security policy – has determined to tackle the sources of instabilities in the Mediterranean that may eventually forge a real threat to Europe’s. Low economic growth, drug trafficking, demographic movements, terrorism are vivid examples of such causes.

4. Also other similar initiatives were made whether by Europeans (i.e. ‘5+5’ Group presented by the French Government) or by their southern Mediterranean states (i.e. the Egyptian proposal of creating a Forum of Dialogue and Cooperation in the Mediterranean ‘Mediterranean Forum’) deemed considerably marginalized in that they had swiftly been subsumed under the auspices of the EMP.

5. Managed by Directorate General 1B External relations.

6. For example, the eras of the late 1980s and the early 1990s have witnessed a significant revival of regionalism in the contemporary international relations. The end of the alliances systems during the Cold War, along with the renaissance of the multilateral trading role (i.e. GATT) and the growing economic integration phenomenon worldwide, have opened the door for a rebirth of regionalism in world politics. Let alone, of course, the role of other sub-regional developments particularly within Europe (i.e. the completion of EC Single Market which have also played a key role in advancing regionalism momentum internationally. See Fawcett and Hurrell (1995) p1-2.

7. Despite the complexities associated with it, this paper however, will deal with stability as policy objective as stated in official documentations and manifestations of the EU.

8. Economic stability here is referred to economic development primarily based on economic growth/capita.

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i Diagram (1) shows the perception and the relevance of EU's 'stability' policy towards its neighboring region whereby ... within its enlargement policy which speculations arise regarding the success of its policy towards southern part.

ii For instance, see Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council concerning Community's cooperation with Asian ... of the EU. viii Economic stability here is referred to economic development primarily based on economic growth/capita.