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Common Languages on Democracy in the Euro--Mediterranean Partnership

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Working Group I
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1. Introduction

1.1. The EuroMeSCo on Euro-Med Security Common Ground

The Euro-Med countries are quite heterogeneous. It is debatable whether a Euro-Med community is feasible in terms of traditional international theory. The varying notions of "community" set out by the scientific literature in the last decades (Deutsch: 1957; Buzan: 1991; Wæver, Buzan: 2000; Adler, Barnett: 1998) does not really work in the case of the Euro-Med because there are not the commonalities that theories require to call something a region. In fact, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) is less a project of regional co-operation, and more one of inter-regional co-operation, undertaken between regions and countries divided by basic political, social, economic, cultural differences, or by all three. Furthermore, the Euro-Med framework cuts across the borders of tension between the West and the Arab-Muslim world. This makes life even harder: it may be perceived as magnifying existing differences and make the vision of a Euro-Med region all the more difficult to construct.

However, deepening globalisation in international relations since the 1970s helps to explain regionalism as a response to exogenous pressures even when traditional conditions for pursuing regionalism are absent. Globalisation means regionalism can be regarded from a Realist or neo-Marxist perspective (Joffé: 1999) – a perspective explaining regionalism as an instrument of hegemony or dominance by industrialised countries as with the European Union (EU), or according to a neo-liberal perspective – which explains regionalism as an instrument of international governance consciously intended to reduce political and economic gaps through a process of socialisation. Thus, the governance content of the EMP stems from the fact that "... the partnership process, meant as a co-operative endeavour to ensure that gaps are closed, imposes a great effort to change for one group of partners (the Med-countries) while the other group (the European countries) holds the task of creating the conditions for the successful socialisation of the recruits in the neo-liberal global system." (Attinà: 2003).

The post-Barcelona Declaration experience since November 1995 suggests that there are many significant obstacles to co-operative Euro-Med relations. The intensive diplomatic process that has taken place has not overcome the difficulties. Nonetheless, the neo-liberal perspective (Attinà, Stavridis: 2001; Stavridis, Hutchence: 2000; Gillespie: 1997) is apparently powerful enough to justify the continuation of efforts. The failures that have happened to date can be the result of poor policy-making and management – we cannot yet discard the feasibility and rationale of the EMP.

The EuroMeSCo Working Group on the Search for a Euro-Med Security Common Ground (Working Group I) continues to work in this context. It analyses and debates relevant security concepts as a first step towards fostering a common understanding of Euro-Med security. The aim is not to ignore or eliminate differences to 'flatten' values: rather, the aim is to learn what the differences are so as to work out to how promote cohabitation and co-operation.

The 2001 Working Group Report discussed different notions of security and agreed on comprehensive security, human security and global security as possible Euro-Med concepts on which to base co-operation. It also noted that there were deep North-South disagreements on basic areas making up those concepts – including human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance. The Working Group determined to address these differences head on.

Consequently, in 2002 the Working Group began to look at key theoretical or normative issues of significance or controversial for Euro-Med current relations, so as to build a common language. There was an empirically-based selection of issues according to past experience: asymmetric violence, civil society, conditionality, conflict prevention, democracy, good governance, human rights, non-intervention, property rights and ownership patterns, rule of law, security governance, and sovereignty.

Various papers were produced analysing these topics. The Working Group met twice (Barcelona 14-15 June and Tunis 4-5 October) to discuss the papers and provide input for the 2002 Report. The results of deliberations in 2002 proved insufficient to generate an end-of-the-year report, which led to a prolongation of work into 2003. This 2002 Report therefore reflects an almost two-year endeavour. The Group met in Tunis on 10-11 October 2003 before the final draft of this report was prepared.

The 2002-2003 Working Group activities focused on establishing a common language in the Euro-Med framework. The need for a common language was stressed in the Valencia Action Plan approved by the Fifth Euro-Med Ministerial conference of 22-23 April 2002. The Action Plan called for a common language on "defence and security issues", noting that, "one of the major problem in the region is the absence of a common strategic language". Very early on, EMP Senior Officials mentioned the yet to be approved confidence building measure (CBM) to create a strategic common language with the joint compilation of an "Encyclopaedia of terminology on defence/security and stability issues". There is clearly a need for a common strategic language and for this kind of CBM. However, the Working Group determined to adopt a more wide-ranging approach that reflects more of a partnership-building measure (PBM) for a more comprehensive kind of security. Thus, this Report refers to various common languages rather than to a defence and strategic language alone.

Because of the cross-cultural nature of the Euro-Med framework, socially relevant concepts may be called the same thing but mean different things. Democracy, human rights or terrorism are good examples. A common language does not mean having common definitions or concepts. The Working Group did not attempt to come up with a common definition of democracy, human rights or terrorism. Rather, it attempted to clarify the meanings given to these concepts to permit clear communication, and to identify common languages as a vehicle to forge a common ground.

Common languages should help the Euro-Med parties to identify disagreements and points of convergence or conceptual overlapping. Once convergence and overlapping are identified, sets of partial, more specific common definitions can emerge. However partial or limited, these common definitions could later give rise to common norms. Norms do not have to be translated into international treaties. Initially, they can be merely politically binding agreements, codes of conduct, PBMs or examples of best practice. They may fail to evolve from relatively binding to legally stringent international norms: nonetheless, they permit co-operative and peaceful cohabitation and co-operation among countries with different cultural and political backgrounds. Thus, the Working Group has not attempted to provide common definitions of concepts as contested as democracy, human rights, terrorism or good governance; rather, this Report and the papers (see annex) have focused on existing points of convergence that allow for joint endeavours and/or cohabitation.

A methodological point is in order to clarify the argument as well as providing further insights in the work of the Working Group. The identification of common languages – the first step towards finding common ground and then rules – is a three-step process:

■ First, any issue is multidimensional and can be looked at from different perspectives. Democracy can be seen from a security, economic, or human rights perspective, for example. By the same token, conflict prevention or security governance are normally seen as issues that are strictly security related, but some countries may relate them to economic development or human rights protection. The assumption is that countries are interested in the same issues or have similar concerns but for quite different reasons. Common languages must be found at the intersection between different interests on a converging issue.

■ Second, there are common fragments in the discourse found at these intersections. They are the basis of the common language that may produce common norms. No matter how modest these fragments or norms, they are important because they are building blocks for common ground. It is worth noting that common languages may not emerge spontaneously at the intersection between converging interests and concerns and diverging motives linked to those same interests and concerns. Analysts and practitioners must therefore engage in hermeneutics.

■ The third step is to create instruments or even identify areas for analysts and diplomats to conduct an advanced search or dialogue for a normative framework or joint action. Broadly speaking, this consists of facilitating the search for common languages or consolidating their use and evolution.

In general, such instruments regard actions by governments or civil societies from a top-down or bottom-up perspective, respectively. In this Report, the predominant approach is inter-governmental and top-down. Although the Working Group papers have dealt with a number of issues (those listed at the end of section 1.1 and in the

1.2. The 2002 Report: Rationale and Aims

Annex), the Report focuses on the particularly sensitive issues of democracy and human rights to test the methodology and perspectives of the Working Group. The emphasis is on democracy, and it is assumed that human rights can be regarded as a particularly significant dimension or even a proxy of the latter.

Apart from the introduction, the Report is divided into four parts. The following, second section contains the findings and recommendations. The third examines (a) democracy and human rights issues, and (b) the status of these issues within the EMP. The fourth part deals with (a) the concept of democracy in present day Arab political culture and (b) the rationale of Western democracy promotion policies. This latter section focuses particularly on the most significant nexuses between democracy and security, such as democracy and economic development, democracy and peace, democracy and nationalism. The fifth and final part deals with common languages. It attempts to identify the "fragments" that may constitute the common languages that may allow the EMP partners to discover common ground and thereby agree on shared norms.

2. Findings and Recommendations

This Report examines various issues related with democracy and democracy promotion in Arab-Muslim-Western and Euro-Mediterranean relations, so as to identify opportunities to create a common language that can foster the search for common ground and common norms. Common languages are vantage points to talk about generally highly controversial questions and possibly forge agreements over time. Three main common language areas were identified:

Intervention Avoidance: EMP relations should be based on avoiding intervention. Thus, they must agree implicitly to mutually respect perceived differences or relative values in decision-making. A common language must be built on the foundation of intervention avoidance.

Harm Avoidance: The EMP partners must agree that while democracy can take many forms, there are some basic common traits, such as avoiding harming citizens, particularly protecting life, health and well being. There must be a joint search for and definition of the basis for harm-avoidance in partner states in order to create a common language. This can be seen as an exercise in defining "human development" or the meaning of the rule of law.

Making Compatible the International Context and Local Democracy: If local democracies are fostered by propitious international political and economic conditions and cooperation, there must be a common language about those international conditions. Particular attention should be paid to partners adhering to and complying with international agreements and organisations and the development of conditions for true EMP partnership and for common ownership of other cooperative undertakings between Arab-Muslim and Western countries.

3. Democracy and Human Rights in the Barcelona Process

Before considering the question of democracy, it is worth looking at the state of democracy and human rights within the EMP framework (§ 3.1) and the debate on implementation according to the Barcelona Declaration and the wishes of EMP partners (§3.2).

3.1. The State of Democracy and Human Rights in the EMP Framework

Freedom House offers a general view of the state of democracy in the EMP countries, in particular those on the southern shore of the Mediterranean[1]. The index evaluating political rights and civil liberties on a scale of 1-7, which also assesses the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, shows the following: the formerly fifteen countries of the European Union are all 'free', with the exception of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom (UK). In the Southern Mediterranean, the situation is more varied: Cyprus and Malta, which were just included as EU members, are 'free'; Israel is also 'free'. Turkey is only 'partly free' (and improving). Among the Arab Euro-Med countries there are none that are 'free'. Two (Jordan - albeit worsening - and Morocco) are 'partly free', and the remaining five (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia) are 'not free'. None scores more than five, and Lebanon is on a downhill trend. In the Palestinian occupied territories

both the Palestinian National Authority (the autonomous government of the Palestinians) and Israel as the occupying power are judged. They are 'not free' on both counts, do not score above five and are also on a downward trend. The UK is also doubly judged: although it is 'free', Northern Ireland is not because of the impact of anti-terrorist measures and ethnic/religious strife[2].

Thus, in the Euro-Med area we have two countries in an ambiguous situation because of territorial conflicts and the violence they give way to. Although this ambiguity does not affect Freedom House assessments on basic political regimes in the two countries, it is relevant for the nexus between democracy and conflict, a different important issue that this Report discusses below. These figures underscore the extreme weakness, not to say the lack of democracy in the Arab countries within the EMP context. They link up to a broader predicament of weakness and lack of democracy in the whole of the Arab and Muslim world. Again according to Freedom House data, in 2003, out of the 22 members of the Arab League states, none is considered "free" - seven are regarded as "partly free", and 15 are "not free". In the same year, if the Muslim countries are taken into consideration, we have 18 "partly free" countries, 27 "not free" and only two "free".

There are many Arabs and Muslims in government and from civil society alike that contest these figures. While a minority agrees with the assessment, many object that the evaluation is based on Western concepts and thus biased. However, the 2002 publication of the authoritative UNDP report on human development in the Arab world, which was edited and compiled by a team of Arab only scholars, uses Freedom House data and confirms the scenario thereby offered. The UNDP report states that "political participation is less advanced in the Arab world than in other developing regions" (p. 108) and argues that weak political participation very negatively affects economic and human development in the Arab Worlds.

The UNDP report is predicated on the two-way nexus between freedom and development established by Amartya Sen (Sen: 1999) and used by the United Nations under the heading 'human development'. The idea is that socio-economic development contributes to increase the freedom of human beings, and that increased freedom promotes economic development. The virtuous circle of freedom and development leads to 'human development'. The UNDP report on Arab human development singles out three deficits that cause the retardation of human development in the Arab world: the women's empowerment deficit, the human capabilities/knowledge deficit relative to income, and the freedom deficit. Noting that international indicators in the 1990s give the Arab world the lowest score in terms of freedom compared with the world's six other regions, the report points out that "the low level of freedom in the Arab region is confirmed by a set of indicators of 'voice and accountability'[3] ... This set includes a number of indicators measuring various aspects of the political process, civil liberties, political rights and independence of the media." (p. 27). If this set of indicators is applied to the same seven regions, the Arab region achieves the lowest score.

As for human rights, they are partly assessed by Freedom House scores on 'civil liberties'. In general, independent human rights organisations and governmental institutions concerned with human rights make country-by-country assessments and do not use across-the-board indicators. From their reports – particularly Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the US Department of State and other governmental and international bodies – it becomes clear that the human rights situation in the Euro--Med area is similar to the democracy situation.

There are human rights abuses in European countries, particularly linked with conflict in Northern Ireland and the Basque country. Moreover, xenophobia affects a good number of EU countries and gives way to abuse and crimes against immigrants. Nonetheless, the situation in the Southern Mediterranean countries is decidedly worse, with frequent and systemic abuses perpetrated by governments against citizens as well as ethnic and religious minorities. As far as Israel is concerned, the situation is similar to that of the EU where citizens are concerned. However, policies towards the Arab minority inside the country are far below European standards. Notably, there are numerous and persistent abuses against the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

3.2. The Debate on Democracy and Human Rights in the EMP

It is into this profoundly divided context, that the Barcelona Declaration introduces the issues of democracy and human rights as areas for co-operation. Indeed, the preamble states that the parties are "convinced that the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and co-operation 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".

The first chapter on political and security co-operation specifies the aims in detail: the signatories "undertake in the following declaration of principles to:

a) Act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, as well as other obligations under international law, in particular those arising out of regional and international instruments to which they are party;

b) Develop the rule of law and **democracy** in their political systems, while recognising in this framework the right of each of them to choose and freely develop its own political, socio-cultural, economic and judicial system;

c) Respect **human rights** and fundamental freedoms and guarantee the effective legitimate exercise of such rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of association for peaceful purposes and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, both individually and together with other members of the same group, without any discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, language, religion or sex;

d) Give favourable consideration, through dialogue between the parties, to exchanges of information on matters relating to **human rights**, fundamental freedoms, racism and xenophobia;

e) Respect and ensure respect for diversity and pluralism in their societies, promote tolerance between different groups in society and combat manifestations of intolerance, racism and xenophobia. The participants stress the importance of proper education in the matter of **human rights** and fundamental freedoms; ..."

The terms of the Declaration seem to indicate that the parties fully understand the need to promote democracy and human rights. However, as subsequent developments reveal, the principles in the Declaration reflect less Arab than EU values. Indeed, the Declaration equates democracy with security in the same way that moulds the identity of the EU, and is enshrined in the Nice Charter on Fundamental Rights (December 2000) and the likely European Constitution. During the first half of the 1990s this equation shaped relations between the EU and Eastern European countries and was enshrined in the 1993 European Council of Copenhagen in the form of principles for EU membership. With the Barcelona Declaration, the EU aimed to adopt a similar approach towards its southern neighbours as a way to enhance EU and regional security (a new version of the Stability Pact, the European Association agreements, TACIS, and others). The Declaration was less an undertaking among peers than a solemn act by the EU, which Southern countries heralded in a moment of enthusiasm as a new, more sophisticated version of long standing EU Mediterranean policy.

The Barcelona Declaration was approved after hasty negotiations – which many Arabs subsequently complained about – given a shared conviction that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were about to conclude positively with the Oslo accords. It was therefore necessary to create a framework to manage and reinforce the new peace and develop economic and political relations in the Euro-Med region between Arabs, Israelis and Europeans. By the time the Declaration was approved, however, the regional political landscape had changed. First there was the failure of democratic reform in most Mediterranean Arab countries in the beginning of the 1990s; then there was the collapse of the Middle East peace process marked by President Rabin's murder and the election of Mr. Netanyahu as Israel's new leader. Consequently, a few months after its approval, the Arab partners asked for renewed talks to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability in order to define the substance of Euro-Med security and common goals.

During the extended Charter talks (over four years,) political reform practically vanished, replaced by attempt to codify principles and norms to ensure the stability of incumbent Arab regimes. The Arab partners expressed two main concerns over successive EU submitted drafts: the need to ensure that co-operative security mechanisms envisaged

 in the first chapter of the Declaration did not surreptitiously become a form of military co-operation with Israel even before the latter had attained peace with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians; and making sure that the promotion of political reform did not dangerously interfere with regime stability.

Between the second semester of 1996, when Senior Officials initiated the Charter talks, and 2000, when the *intifada Al-Aqsa* erupted and after the failure of Camp David II, the gap between the Euro-Med parties kept on widening until the Foreign Ministers at the Marseilles Conference decided to postpone Charter talks indefinitely. This may have seemed a reaction to the Palestinian uprising and the strong Israeli reaction or overreaction. However, the Palestinian uprising was nothing more than an opportunity to discontinue a process of negotiations with aims that were entirely unacceptable to largely fearful Arab governments.

In sum, there is a situation of authoritarianism and human rights abuse in the countries south of the Mediterranean. The EU sees this situation as a security risk and has therefore tried to foster political reform through the EMP initiative. Arab regimes have not ignored the significant opportunities offered by the initiative (at least economically), but they have perceived the serious risks it entails for political survival. Consequently, although they have stopped short of dismissing the process, they have sought consistently to turn the EU reform initiative into one focused on stability and consolidation. This Arab orientation has been ambiguously greeted because Europeans have never been certain about how to deal with Islamist oppositions. On many and significant occasions, Europeans have opted for stability rather than unwittingly fostering an even more undemocratic option.

Despite the fact that the issue of reform was sidelined, the reform debate continues within Arab and European civil societies, and many European governments are now trying to resume talks, as witnessed by most EMP ministerial statements, such as the Conclusions of the EU Presidency for the Valencia Foreign Ministers Conference and its corresponding Plan of Action (April 2002). However, the debate is being revived less by EMP and more by outside factors, particularly the emerging US policy towards the Arab-Muslim world and EU enlargement. In both cases, the focus is on democracy and human rights.

Enlargement generated a fresh EU regional perspective, encompassing all EU neighbouring countries into the same external policy – the so-called Neighbourhood Policy (EU Commission 2003). The latter envisions strong economic integration among neighbours contingent upon progress with economic and political reform. The more neighbours liberalise their economies and democratise their political regimes, the more they will be rewarded by inclusion in the EU sphere of enlarged co-operation. This new enlarged system of positive conditionality will apply to neighbours independently of their geographic location, so that the Southern Mediterranean EMP members must compete with non-Mediterranean countries for neighbourhood benefits or risk becoming losers. This new enlarged conditionality will make democracy and human rights more urgent and constraining for Southern Mediterranean EMP partners.

Democracy is also at the heart of the policy of President George W. Bush towards the Arab-Muslim world – albeit in a decidedly ambivalent way. The US has recognised unambiguously the repressive nature of Arab and generally Muslim regimes and the need for change and reform through the promotion of democratic regimes. However, change and reform are pursued by means fully inconsistent with the substance of democracy and the rule of law, namely by force and abuse. This double standard challenges European policies towards the Arab-Muslim world, particularly the EMP, and towards the Mediterranean and Near East. Generally, Europeans reject the idea that coercion can induce democracy, but they cannot conduct their policies towards the Arab-Muslim area in isolation from the United States. European policies must include a transatlantic dimension. In this sense, it is an open question how EMP democracy and human rights promotion policies (and for other Arab-Muslim areas). Whatever the choice, the impact on the EMP will be immediate. If democracy and human rights are going to become a more difficult challenge for the Southern Mediterranean countries because of the new EU neighbourhood, the same is going to happen to Europeans because of current developments in transatlantic relations.

To conclude, Arabs and Europeans cannot continue to co-operate in the EMP without reconsidering the issues of democracy and human rights put on the back burner at

Marseille. These challenges will be of primary significance in future EMP developments. The EU and the Arab governments may well be right to criticise the use of force to attain democracy but they cannot escape the need to respond to the democracy and human rights challenge just because they are right, and must debate how such aims can be promoted peacefully.

Below, the Report gives some ideas on a possible common ground on democracy and human rights so as to enable EMP partners to pursue a more effective policy of political reform based on conviction rather than fear.

4. Democracy and Democracy Promotion in Arab--Western Relations

This section interprets the antagonism over democracy and human rights between Arab and European partners in the Barcelona Process (a microcosm of wider relations between the Arab-Muslim and Western worlds). If the argument is correct, two questions deserve consideration if we are to find a way to overcome that antagonism: (a) the concept of democracy in Arab political culture today (§§ 4.1 and 4.2) and (b) the rationale of Western policies to promote democracy (§§ 4.4 and 4.5).

4.1. Democracy and Human rights: A Fundamental Opposition within the EMP

Democracy and human rights are deeply intertwined in the framework of the Barcelona Process, and are the source of deep disagreement between European and Arab partners. This is a key obstacle to implementing the broad co-operative tasks of the Process. Disagreement centres on the very concept of democracy and, even more acutely, of human rights. For Europeans, democracy and human rights are universal concepts inspired by universal values; Arabs contest the universal nature of these concepts and refer to concepts of democracy and human rights predicated on indigenous values that differ from the accepted credo in Europe and the West.

The dispute is not just academic or philosophical. The implications are deeply political: the universal nature that the West attributes to democracy and human rights carries with it an inherently expansionist dynamic, whereby the aim is to make universal democracy and human rights as they are conceived of in the West and Europe. Furthermore, trends to make values universal are bolstered by globalisation, which makes the process even more intrusive. Indeed, in the Arab debate today there is less disagreement on concepts than on their practical consequences. What disagreement there is stems less from the allegedly universal nature of democracy and human rights than the 'trend to universalise' that it brings about. There is a not negligible sector in the Arab world that believes in the universality of democracy and human rights as shaped by Western modern and contemporary history. However, the sense of mission that this historical fact triggers is that the West is not accepted. Most Arab organisations defending human rights fully agree with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and yet they continually complain about what they perceive as intrusive and unilateralist attitudes of Western organisations and their *de facto* monopoly over the UN when it comes to defending human rights[4].

Thus, when dealing with democracy and human rights in the co-operative framework of the Barcelona process, we must remember that there are two interlinked but distinctive challenges: there is a conceptual difference, and a political one. What is the relationship between the two dimensions? Greater conceptual harmony is a necessary but insufficient condition to solve political disagreement. A concept may be shared, but several partners may still perceive inequality in capabilities with respect to any given situation. Even if conceptual gaps are significantly narrowed, this may not suffice to allow for the implementation of co-operative aims within the Barcelona Process. Conceptual rapprochement must be accompanied by measures providing for a more acceptable balance of power between partners: in other words, by measures of inclusion and institutionalisation, and balancing of powers.

The final result will not be perfect conceptual homogeneity nor a perfect balance of power or both together. Rather, a satisfactory result will be an acceptable and *de facto* accepted constellation of powers and capabilities in which conceptual differences, even when significant in their character, are given the chance of cohabiting (and hopefully evolving towards convergence).

Section 5 focuses on how opposition on democracy and human rights can be attenuated; this section analyses the two dimensions of that opposition. As noted above, any

4. See Kamel Al Sayyid, Steiner (2000), particularly the proceedings of session four.

conceptual rapprochement must be coupled by measures providing a more acceptable balance of power in Euro-Med relations. This means that the following must be examined: (a) Concepts: how is the Arab world conceptualising democracy (for the sake of simplicity human rights can be left out and assumed to be synonymous with democracy) and (b) how are Europeans promoting democracy in the EMP Arab countries? By considering Arab concepts of democracy it should be possible to understand if there are points of contact with European concepts, and under what conditions and to what extent. The analysis of European policies should make it possible to understand if they comply with their stated aim. In fact, according to our assumptions, these policies, to be congruous with their aim, have to be convincing and acceptable to Arabs and, to be so, they must contribute to improving the Arab-European balance of power.

4.2. Democracy in the Arab Debate

The debate on why democracy is absent and whether it can ever emerge in the Arab world is an old debate that, with reference to different situations (colonialism, Cold War, among others), is deeply rooted in the whole history of Arab-Western relations (Guazzone: 2002). Presently, it reflects Western reactions to the so-called Islamic revival, which began between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s with the Iranian revolution, the spread of Islamic extremism in the Arab-Muslim world and Afghani resistance to the Soviet invasion. (It should be noted that the debate is more about the Islam/democracy than the Arab/democracy dichotomy. The focus here is on the latter).

There is a school of thought that posits full incompatibility between Islam-Arabs and democracy because the concept of democracy (and, before it, nation) is alien to Muslim culture[5]. This 'culturalist' interpretation of the so-called Orientalists is rejected by the so-called neo-Thirdworldists (Esposito, Piscatori: 1991; Krämer: 1995; Sachedina: 2001) whose analyses shed vivid light on elements of democracy that permeates Islamic-Arab political culture and institutions. They maintain that, while these elements are not predominant today, they could develop if fostered or conditions become propitious.

Orientalism, it should be pointed out, includes various views that differ significantly from one another. There is the rather crude mainstream, but there are also those who believe that incompatibility is historical rather than inherent. Thus, were circumstances to change, democracy would be possible. Bernard Lewis has gradually evolved to recognise Arab democratic potential beyond cultural determinism. More recently, he explained the absence of democracy as the result of the historical process that led some Arab countries to espouse aggressive nationalisms, mostly Nazism and Fascism, in the context of the Second World War[6]. Contrary to the culturally deterministic position, the historical argument leaves room for change. It should further be noted that while Lewis and other Orientalist historians view the state as the main obstacle to democracy, the neo-Orientalists believe that it is civil society, particularly radical brands of Islamism and nationalism that is to blame.

In a sense, Orientalist historians and neo-thirdworldists are rather close. They reject cultural determinism and think appropriate changes in political circumstances and environment could give democracy a chance. The question remains, however, as to how to create more favourable conditions. The state will not reform itself while in the hands of authoritarian regimes. And, as neo-Thirdworldists maintain, while civil societies have a democratic potential, major stumbling blocs on the path to democracy are found precisely in that context (Sadowski: 1993).

In fact, today's civil societies are far from expressing significant support for democracy. Signs of democracy can be discerned in Arab trends, but the democrats are just not there (Salamé: 1994). The authoritarian regimes in power – briefly surveyed in § 3.1 of this Report – are strongly opposed by organised political groups but only a few act in the name of democracy and democratic political reform. Apart from a weak handful of liberals, most opposition groups are nationalist or religious, and ideologically extremist or radical in nature. They oppose governments not because of their oppressive policies, lack of democracy and human rights abuse (although they legitimately complain about abuse against their ranks); rather, they oppose the weakness of their governments vis-à-vis Israel and the West. The latter are perceived as colonialists, post-colonialists, crusaders returning in hi-tech clothes, or infidels. What they want to change is not participation or freedom but stronger governments that can successfully reject infidels

5. Among many authors, P.J. Vatikiotis has been particularly sharp in maintaining such opinion. (Vatikiotis: 1987). Shireen Hunter (1998) offers a good bibliography.
6. See Lewis (1990) and Lewis (1993), and recently, Lewis (2002), as well as a long interview with an Italian journalist in Nirenstein (2002).

and intruders. The point is to assert independence and avoiding interference rather than develop democracy.

Democracy is not absent from Arab political discourse, however, even of the most militant variety. There are essentially four responses to the question of democracy in the Arab world. The first is that democracy is just not an issue. In the most orthodox Islamic discourse, democracy is, in fact, not an issue: it is a heresy with respect to the divine revelation (as modernity and liberalism were for the Catholic Church at the beginning of the twentieth century). For many Arab nationalists democracy is a foe. Like some inter-War Europeans, some Arab nationalists see democracy as a Western capitalist conspiracy, supported by the usual suspect: the malevolent cosmopolitan Jewish lobby. In many instances, therefore, Arab nationalism includes the racist and paranoid features that once characterised European nationalism. Democracy is quite out of question.

The second kind of response is that Islamic democracy has to be achieved within the Arab-Muslim world and in opposition to any Western or alien democracy. Thus, when democracy appears in the political discourse, it is a 'communitarian' or 'ethnic' democracy, a concept that was part of a reactionary and, then, Fascist and Nazi ideology in Europe (indeed, it is present again in European xenophobic movements and parties – the "extremes droites" recently analysed by historian Pierre Milza (2002). Arab nationalist regimes have espoused and spread this notion of a distinct brand of communitarian democracy, rooted in the Arab *Kultur*, in order to strengthen social and political consensus. This communitarian ideology has allowed them to maintain and manipulate old social structure, such as tribes or village communities.

Arab governments and oppositions alike sometimes oppose Western pressure to reform by expressing a preference for Islamic democracy. The argument is more often than not instrumental, particularly when voiced by governments. However, there are currents of thought in civil societies that refer to non-communitarian interpretations of Islamic democracy. Thus, a third response to the issue of democracy is a series of analytical endeavours that seek to reconcile culture and religion with a kind of Islamic democracy. The perspective is completely different from the above, because democracy is seen as a political process geared to regulate relations among individuals in the society and to preserve freedom and personal security. While religious and cultural factors can enter the process and shape choices, they must respect the rules of the democratic game. There could therefore be an Islamic democracy as there is an American or a British democracy.

This stream of secularising religious reformation thought is more and more important in the Islamic and Arab world today and will not fail to influence the outcome of the debate on democracy (Branca: 2003; Khatami: 1999; Sadri: 2000; USIP: 2002). It is assumed that democracy is a shared, in a sense, universal, process and not a cultural, ethnic or religious concept. It is accepted that there is historical change and that there is a consequent need to adapt and room for evolutionary interpretations. It de-links political processes from religion, not in the sense that secularism is a precondition for democracy but that political processes and religion are not mutually exclusive. A democracy can be Islamic in the same sense it can be Christian, that is contingent on the acceptance of a core concept of democratic process. On the other hand, religion can develop independently of political processes.

The fourth response is that of the few liberals who believe that democracy and human rights are universal concepts and reflect shared values. Today, this response is converging with the one above, in the political arena and the public debate. However, like reformists, liberals (§ 4.1) are concerned with preserving independence and authenticity vis-à-vis the West.

4.3 Arab Concepts of Democracy from a Western Policy Perspective

The four responses above suggest four remarks that may be helpful from a Western policy perspective. The first is that, apart from the few liberals who see democracy as a universal political regime, the conceptual debate is largely about Islamic democracy compatible with indigenous religion and culture. The islamo-democrats prevail. Liberals and islamo-democrats are already very close in the political arena. The idea that believers can participate in a political process that is free of religion and include non-

believers is key to the establishment of a vibrant democratic process. It could help democracy emerge, as European Christians did when, at the beginning of last century, they began to participate in the broad political process as citizens and contribute their values to that process while holding on to their religious faith.

Governments and civil society organisations should support strongly this Islamo-democratic sector. NGOs such as the San Egidio Community in Rome and the Ibn Khaldoun Centre in Cairo are already doing this, along with private foundations such as the German political foundations Friedrich Ebert, Adenauer Stiftung, and others. Partners that should be emphasised by US and EU programmes to promote democracy are Meda Democracy, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI).

The second remark relates to the fact that Islamic democracy manifests ambiguities. Although innovative, it is also understood as a conservative value-loaded discourse. The innovative discourse comes from a social and academic minority, but the conservative discourse is very diffuse and reflects an alliance between nationalists and religious groups. The two meanings of Islamic democracy must be understood and noted clearly by those committed to democratisation in the Arab world.

This is not easy. It calls for a wide research agenda that can differentiate the huge body of political Islam. Although much is known about conservatives and radicals, we know very little about islamo-democrats and moderates. We know their leaders but we ignore them as a social group (Ottaway et al: 2002). This kind of research should be fostered and supported by Western actors involved in democracy promotion policies, both within government and civil society. It should be a fundamental component of any democracy promotion policy.

The third remark is that the four Arab responses, however diverse and even contradictory, share a common concern over Western intrusion. Some are opposed to the substance of the intrusion – democracy; others do not oppose democracy but the political influence Western democracies may gain (§ 4.1). Even those who identify with a universal concept of democracy and human rights are afraid of the impact that a power imbalance may have on their autonomy. It is clear that the issue of intrusion should be central in the articulation of democracy promotion policies.

The fourth remark follows from the three above: it concerns the need for abiding by a less value-laden concept of democracy that allows for a combination of universality and indigenous values. This is true for both the Arab and the Western worlds: Arabs must reconsider *Kultur* democracy and its instrumental use; Westerners must stop promoting democracy as a detailed recipe. They should promote it as a method of organising collectively individual freedom and for solving conflicts peacefully. As a matter of fact, finalities, values and options may well turn out to be different from those of the West, once a democratic system securing pluralism, participation and the rule of law has emerged.

That shared methods do not necessarily entail shared outcomes has been illustrated by Giovanni Sartori (Sartori: 1995) as a distinction between the "freedom from" and the "freedom to" any people should be basically able to enjoy: "The former means freedom from tyranny and consists primarily of the structural and legal means to limit and control the exercise of power. It equates with the form of liberal constitutionalism. The latter is what an empowered people "wills and demands", that is the actual policy contents processed through the liberal democratic political form. The liberal constitutional form, that is the unique blend of institutions and procedures that guarantees the substantive exercise of the "freedom to", is the universally exportable element" (Aliboni, Guazzone: 2004).

On this view, support for a liberal political form is not based on Western concepts of individual freedom and rights, but on a universal "harm-avoidance aspiration" (i.e. to be free from harm to one's life, health and well-being). Thus, country specific contexts and cultural beliefs play a greater role in determining what is to be decided (content). In other words, the "freedom to" component of democracy cannot be the same everywhere. The Sartori paradigm is not a universal panacea: differentiating between method and substance can produce uneasy results. However, it does have the virtue of providing an important yardstick for policy-making. The distinction between "freedom for" and "freedom to" should be an important building block in shaping Western democracy promotion policies.

4.4. The Rationale of Democracy Promotion in Western Policies

A set of Arab concepts of democracy has been examined, and the way in which Western policies can promote democracy in a more acceptable and convincing way is now emerging. The following section examines in greater detail the compatibility between Western policy and Arab perceptions.

The value-laden discourse and the widespread perception of interference that permeates Arab views of democracy reflect historical memory, although Arabs also react against the value-laden Western discourse that permeates (as part of a global agenda) democracy promotion in the Arab world. As benevolent as it may be it does involve interference. Convincing democracy promotion must transform what is seen as interference into a dialogue. It is therefore important to consider the rationale of democracy promotion and what is produces, even inadvertently. Learning about the rationale and values of democracy promotion policies may help to change policy and render them more acceptable and, concomitantly, more effective.

This is the focus of this section. The final section below examines a number of links, between democracy and other 'goods' such as peace, economic development, or other factors, like nationalism. The aim is to unveil the values underpinning Western policies of democracy promotion that make them unacceptable to non-Western people, particularly Arabs and Muslims.

Promoting democracy is a goal embedded in the foreign and security policies of the Western nations. These policies have varied in significance and intensity over time in Western relations with non-Western actors, and have shifted with changing aims and doctrines. After the Second World War, in particular during the decade after the end of the East-West confrontation, they gained prominence. These policies are predicated on the strong Western belief that the expansion of global democracy strengthens international security and prosperity in the West and globally. The argument is that democratic regimes, by replacing authoritarian, corrupt, and incompetent regimes, would focus on economic liberalisation and adopt co-operative, non-aggressive foreign policies (Jerch: 2002). To a large extent, the argument reflects liberal and neo-liberal theories of international relations as opposed to conventional realism. The argument, however, reflects a clear Western – both American and European – strategic perspective.

In a recent article, Richard N. Haass, in his capacity as head of the planning unit of the State Department, stressed that the promotion of democracy is fundamentally "a matter of principle" for the US, and that "there are also practical reasons for the United States to promote democracy, demonstrating that realism and idealism are complementary. Quite simply, the United States will prosper more as a people and as a nation in a world of democracies than in a world of authoritarian or chaotic regimes" (Haass: 2003).

The wording of the Barcelona Declaration (which is essentially expressive of EU ideology) reveals a clear link between democracy and security. On the basis of its own experience, over time the EU developed a doctrine that links international economic co-operation, domestic democracy and inter-state peace. This doctrine is enshrined in the Nice Declaration and will be incorporated into the European Constitution. It provides the rationale for EU security and foreign policies. The link between democracy and security is very clear in the concept of structural stability proposed by the Commission over the course of its experience with development co-operation and conflict prevention, a concept also adopted by the OECD. Structural stability means "a situation characterised by sustainable economic development, democracy and respect for human rights, viable political structures, and healthy social and environment conditions, with the capacity to manage change without resorting to violent conflict"[7]. In other words, the EU aims to promote democracy with its external policy because the attainment of democracy is a basic condition for its own long-term security – and this is exactly what the US does.

There is criticism within the Working Group of a strategy to promote democracy predicated on a security rationale: it has been argued that democracy should be promoted from a human development/human security perspective[8]. This would allow for a concentration on individual rather than inter-state security, and on the broad conditions of personal and economic security of the citizens, in tune with the bi-directional relationship between economic development and freedom embedded in the concept of human development. In reality, the Western idea is not that democracy

7. The definition is taken from SWP-CPN (2001). See also EU Commission (2001: 6).
8. See Working Group I and the paper presented to the Working Group by Khalifa Chater (see Annex).

itself brings about security but rather that democracy is linked to the nexuses peace, economic development, political culture, and so on. This is the subject of what follows.

Democracy and Economic Development

The Western intellectual tradition tends to establish a uni-directional link between democracy, economic development, and international co-operation (or peace, or security). No doubt, the West recognises the significance of the interplay between these three factors, in the sense – for instance – that democracy may be fostered or generated by economic development, international co-operation or both. As John Rawls says, there is no doubt, however, that it is democracy – the collective organisations of individual liberties – that the West generally sees as the early source of the sequence of development and the primary goal [9].

Eastern (or Asian) thought has differed in the last decades. It established successfully a more bi-directional relationship between democracy and economic development. This happened with the development of the UNDP "human development" concept, although Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen made a fundamental contribution to this kind of thinking. In a book devoted to analysing relations between development and freedom, he says: "Freedoms are not only the primary ends of development, they are also its principal means" (Sen: 1999). At the same time, liberal and neo-liberal thinking on international relations has contributed to establish bi-directional relations between peace and development, and between international co-operation and democracy through inclusive processes.

What these arguments suggest is that Western policies to promote democracy should be set in a larger context that should include economic development and international co-operation or peace as well. These three goals should be combined and pursued in a more integrated way. No individual goal should be prioritised nor directed by uni-directional rules of thumb only (like conditionality). While the combination of the three goals can only be determined empirically, what is important is the principle of combination and integration. At present, there is a hierarchy for the West and non-Western side. In the EMP the EU regards democracy as a strong priority and the key factor for change, while many Southern Mediterranean partners consider economic development (without conditionality) the key. The parties should base themselves on the bi-directional nexus inherent in the concept of human development.

Democracy and Peace[10]

The nexus between democracy and peace is at the heart of the matter and deserves thorough consideration. Only some key points are made here on this vital topic. Democracy is still what it was in fifth century BC Athens: a way to solve conflict and overcome the polarised "culture of tragedy" through the use of dialectics. Conceptually, however, the basic aim of a democratic regime to solve conflict peacefully and the foreign policy of that same regime are not the same thing. A democratic regime is by definition dedicated to finding a peaceful resolution to conflict within the polity through appropriate dialectical means, widespread checks and balances, guarantees and freedoms and increased capabilities. It is not necessarily dedicated to peace and co-operation abroad. External conflict may even be a function of solving internal problems. By the same token, there is no strict relationship between the democratic nature of a nation and its aggressiveness, its desire to dominate or to use violent means to assert its perceived interests abroad. In principle, democracies are not inherently peaceful. In this sense it would be wrong to believe that if a country becomes democratic it becomes peaceful. A democracy moved by strong nationalist feelings, as many European countries were before the First World War and Israel is today, may even be less co-operative and peaceful internationally than an authoritarian regime, like Egypt today.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to overlook that there is a correlation between domestic democracy and peace. Admittedly, this link emerges from two relatively recent developments in the West, particularly Western Europe, after the Second War due to the interplay of various factors. The approximation of Western Europe to Kant's model of *pax perpetua* does not stem only from the emergence of democratic regimes in

4.5. Checking Democracy's Nexuses

9. John Rawls in his famous *Justice as Fairness* (1971) establishes two principles of fairness. The first is that everybody is given the amplest set of liberties consistent with the same liberty for others. The second is that economic and social differences are justified up to the point that they generate advantages for the most disadvantaged. The first principle has priority on the second, in the sense that liberties have not to be restricted in order to improve welfare. Of course, this thinking not only is not representing Western thinking, sometime very much opposed to Rawls principles, admittedly it does represent a most typical trend in Western political philosophy. The Italian edition of J. Rawls' work was edited by Sebastiano Maffettone, *Una teoria della giustizia*, Feltrinelli, 1982.

10. The two sections on democracy and peace and democracy and nationalism are to a large extent drawn from Aliboni, Guazzone (2004).

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individual European countries, but also from a virtuous combination of developments in domestic democracies, liberal economies and international institutions. It may be that the American umbrella and the existential threat posed by the East-West confrontation must be added to the equation. Whichever the factors of the equation, the European experience with regional integration provides the blueprint for correlating democracy and security because it stresses the need for the simultaneous emergence of domestic democracy, economic liberalisation and international law. If this is, indeed, the right correlation, this means that Western policies to promote democracy in the Arab world should promote, at one and the same time, economic liberalisation, international law and the strengthening of international organisations in an integrated policy.

In conclusion, the establishment of democracies domestically is a necessary but not sufficient condition for implementing what is called a "democratic peace" (democracy in an inter-state context) between the West and the Arab world – or the Third world more generally. To bring about peace democracy must be accompanied by a set of international conditions, such as free trade, the rule of international law, and a cosmopolitan institutional organisation the states should strongly comply with. In isolation, the promotion of democracy cannot succeed and, consequently, cannot deliver peace and security to the West or anyone else.

Democracy and Nationalism
Another correlation that must be considered is that between democracy and ideologies such as nationalism or socialism. The modern concept of democracy is always related to nationalism and social justice. In the XVIII and XIX centuries the absolutist, aristocratic and oligarchic regimes of Europe were gradually supplanted by new political systems that were more or less democratic. These democracies, however, were shaped to a varying extent by nationalism and aspirations to social justice. In most cases, nationalism and socialism in Europe downgraded considerably the role of democracy, to the point that the latter actually disappeared. In 1848, for example, when the first German state was established, democratic feeling was very soon overweighed by nationalist sentiment[11]. Nationalism coalesced with Prussian militarism and henceforth Germany history was one of nationalism and aggressive nationalism, punctuated by significant but short-lived democratic experiences, until the defeat of Nazism and other circumstances finally fostered democracy through the abandonment of nationalism. As noted above, a strongly nationalist democracy may not be a positive factor for international co-operation. Whether dressed up as democratic or authoritarian, nationalism has played a fundamental role in the political dynamics of the Middle East, and is the source of disastrous unsolved conflicts in the region. These conflicts prevent the emergence of democracy. Thus, it would be wrong to wait for the establishment of democracy in order to see conflicts solved.

There are plenty of examples in contemporary international relations of situations in which policies to promote change reconstruction and democracy are frustrated by the absence of a political solution to a national conflict (Kosovo, Bosnia, historical Palestine). While the establishment of a democratic regime can broadly promote the emergence of conflict resolution, the dynamics of democratisation may be seriously obstructed unless a political solution to the conflict is found. In this sense, while the West (and Israel) generally sees the lack of democracy in the Arab countries and Palestine as the main cause of the Israeli-Palestinian (and Arab) conflict, the reverse is also largely true: a political solution to national conflict would help democracy emerge in the region and also make Israeli democracy less nationalistic.

In general, democracy promotion will be facilitated by successful peace negotiations of national conflicts, just as conflict resolution will be facilitated by successful political reform. However, democracy promotion should not be regarded directly as a conflict resolution tool. While democracy has to be promoted in the longer term in the framework of conflict prevention, outstanding conflicts must be tackled in the short term with conflict resolution policies. There can be interplay between longer and shorter term as well as conflict prevention and resolution. In terms of security, however, the West should not confuse instruments and timeframes. Outstanding national conflicts must be given a reasonable and acceptable solution if democratic processes and transition are to have a chance. The foregoing comments on Western democracy promotion

11. The German early nationalist feelings in the 1848 meeting held in the Frankfurt *Paulskirche* - a meeting aimed at founding the German nation-state - are vividly described by Altiero Spinelli, *Tedeschi al bivio* (Germans at the Cross-Road), Opere Nuove, Rome, 1960, pp. 83-84, a fundamental work in the then emerging Europeanist and federalist perspective.

unveil a set of challenges:

■ Democracy is seen by the West as a value predicated on the absolute priority of Individual liberties, whereas in the Muslim and Arab world – and the wider Third World – it is linked with development and welfare;

■ Inter-state democracy (or democratic peace) is primary related to the implementation of domestic democracy, whereas attaining democratic peace means that countries have to be included in a framework of international free trade, they have to abide by international law and contribute to strengthening international institutions;

■ Nationalism and the existence of unsolved national issues may make even democracies prone to violent conflict; if there are unsolved national issues, conflicts must be addressed by first promoting their solution rather than democracy.

These challenges have to be recognised and the rationale of democracy promotion be change if policies are to become effective and credible. Otherwise policies of democracy promotion will fail to strengthen Western security and hinder transition to democracy in the Arab countries. If they are not properly addressed, the challenges that have been just pointed out may render the Arab debate on democracy more difficult and weaken democrats with respect to nationalists and Islamists. In particular, this would contribute to blur the distinction between the innovative search for an Islamic democracy and the conservative one.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, ineffective democracy promotion policies contribute to reinforce rather than weaken the overwhelming perception of interference in Arab-Western relations. In fact, because of their weak rationale, such policies contribute to creating a double standard in Western behaviour, and to confirm Arabs in their negative perceptions.

5. Towards Common Languages to Promote Democracy in the EMP

■

This final part of the Report is devoted to identify common languages relating to democracy and human rights (see § 1.2) with a view to enable the EMP partners to define common ground and, in time, agreeing on common norms. It also sets forth various policy suggestions on democracy promotion.

Throughout the Report, the topic of interference has emerged frequently as a significant one. The point to emphasise is that, at the end of the day, the Arab-Muslim world is less concerned with the universal nature of democracy and human rights than with the expansionist political dynamics that the claim of universality in their experience usually entails. Even human rights activists and other liberals who share the Western understanding of human rights and democracy, complain about the Western tendency to intervene, and Western arrogance and monopoly. Thus, intervention is a key issue in Arab-Western, and particularly Arab-European relations where democracy and human rights promotion are concerned. Consequently, intervention or intrusion-avoidance or -containment should be central in Arab-Western relations in general and in Western democracy and human rights promotion policies in particular.

The way to contain or regulated intervention is fertile ground to generate common languages in relations between the EMP partners and, more widely, between the Arab--Muslim and the Western worlds with a view to establish common grounds. The development of common languages on intrusion-avoidance or -containment would be very important in reassuring Arab partners that Western democracy promotion will appeal to shared rules and not operate as an instrument of domination.

The first common expression is interference, the most traditional and visible form of intrusion. The Barcelona Declaration, like the OSCE and CSCE, includes non-interference as a principle governing relations between EMP partners. Generally speaking, the principle confirms that both bilateral and multilateral international relations among partners are predicated on the Charter of the United Nations, which permits intervention only when the governing bodies of the organisation decide that way according to

Charter rules. There is broad agreement about these norms, although their interpretation may be controversial and even eroded by recent tendencies to emphasise human rights violations as a factor legitimising intervention even without a proper international waiver. The post-Cold War period is dotted with disagreement between the Arab--Muslim and the Western world about legality vs. legitimacy in international interventions. Nonetheless, the principle is generally accepted.

The observance of this principle is a precondition of any process of democracy promotion predicated on consensus, of course. (If it is not observed and democracy is imposed by force, we are clearly engaged in a process that has nothing to do with the aim of this Report – the search for common languages and ground.) In this sense, it is fundamentally important. However, when it comes to common languages, intervention should be interpreted in the broader and pervasive sense of intrusion. It should concern less inter-state relations in a traditional Westphalian context than overall inter-societal relations in a globalising world. Consequently, the principle should be formulated as a guideline according to which EMP partners agree to negotiate and related to one another by taking on board explicitly the need to avoid or contain intrusion. Thus, they would agree to take into reciprocal consideration perceived differences or relative values in decision-making.

This could obviously complicate negotiations and relations. It could be misused, prevent progress, and bring partners to a standstill. However, at the end of the day, the use of a common language to avoid or contain intrusion (i.e. a tool to work together) may have more chances of success with fostering democracy and human rights than the present dialogue of the deaf in the EMP and elsewhere. Apart from occasional ministerial statements, democracy and human rights in the EMP are taken into consideration unilaterally by the EU in the implementation of its own policies rather than debated in the context of a dialogue forged by common criteria and rules. Any dialogue, however weak, is preferable to this state of affairs.

A second possible common language could emerge from partners' attempts to define jointly the "freedom for" area of democracy (see § 4.3), understood as the area of democracy that can be defined differently by different countries. This area is not necessarily a part of mere so-called "electoral" democracies (in which the democratic relevance of regular elections is undermined by the absence of institutions and checks allowing citizens to express a conscious and free choice). As noted in § 4.3, the "freedom for" area is where harm-avoidance develops: in other words where there are guarantees that citizens are free from harm to their life, health and well being. Thus, a common language would refer to a joint search for and definition of the requirements of harm-avoidance in states independently of different values that societies and communities pursue after assuring harm-avoidance with respect to all citizens.

A "harmless" state towards its citizens mirrors John Rawls' definition of a "decent" country (in his *The Law of Peoples*) – a country that assures a minimal degree of tolerance and safety for its citizens, although not necessarily a fully-fledged liberal and democratic. Harm-avoidance can be regarded in terms of implementation of either "human development" or the rule of law or a reasonable combination of both. If a "human development" perspective is adopted the search for states' harm-avoidance will be closer to Southern perceptions of a bi-directional relationship between welfare and freedom; otherwise, the perspective will be closer to Western liberal perceptions (see § 4.5, democracy and economic development). Whatever the perspective, the search for harm-avoidance as a minimal common definition of democracy can constitute another common language.

This common language can be particularly significant as it focuses on minimal requirements of democracy – understood as harm-avoidance – and puts aside relative values and finalities, thus sidestepping some probably impossible issues. The same common language can be seen from an intrusion-avoidance perspective. Further, searching jointly for harm-avoidance in a "human development" perspective could ease Arab participation without detracting from the merit of the exercise from a European point of view.

Within the framework of harm-avoidance common language, the partners could try

to deal with human rights by agreeing that a nucleus of personal guarantees are needed anyway if harm to individuals is to be avoided; at the same time, these guarantees do not necessarily have to be predicated on universal criteria. The Working Group noted the possibility of coming to a first common list by predicating human rights on moral criteria. The possibility of listing together human rights shared by partners, although stemming from different rationales, has been regarded as helpful to pave the way forward.

A third common language refers to the relationship between national democracy and the international context. In § 4.5, it was argued that the nexus between domestic democracy and inter-state democracy or "democratic peace" cannot be taken for granted. Domestic democracy is a necessary factor, although insufficient to attain inter-state peace. It has to be supplemented by a context in which liberal economies, international law and international institutions prevail. In this sense, a common language could look less at domestic democracy than the international context on the assumption that developing the context will help domestic democracy to emerge. This common language would allow the partners to talk about domestic political reform in an indirect way.

The Barcelona Declaration provides for joint efforts to attain economic development and entails a joint commitment to abide by international agreements and reinforce international organisations. While a common language on economic development is slowly emerging and will be able to provide results in the middle-long run, active participation in international agreements and organisations should happen faster. Efforts to encourage partners to adhere to international organisations and comply with existing international agreements have been few and far between. Partners are invited to adhere to and register as members of agreements and organisations, but there are no incentives or joint monitoring of 'compliance'. This issue should not be seen as a CBM but as a PBM and give way to common language exercises (i.e. how adhering to and complying with international agreements and organisations affects and shapes the EMP). In fact, the development of a common vision of the international community would just strengthen the sense of partnership among EMP members. In this context, there is another common language exercise focusing on Southern – rather than simply EU – ownership of the Process.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBM	Confidence-building measure
CPN	Conflict Prevention Network
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EuroMeSCo	Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission
Meda	Technical and financial support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the Mediterranean partners
MEPI	Middle East Peace Initiative
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation In Europe
PBM	Partnership-building measure
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

Annex

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