
Ownership and Co-Ownership in Conflict Prevention in the Framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

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Executive Summary

The rationale behind this research project is the need to prevent violent conflict in the EMP area. In a region where people have long suffered from conflicts and disagreements, it is crucial to find conflict prevention policies that are based on co-ownership, thereby making local populations actors in a cooperation process. In spite of the fact that conflict prevention is contemplated in the Barcelona declaration, and further reinforced in subsequent statements, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) has shown no movement towards the co-ownership of conflict prevention policies. This report gives some ideas about how to create distinct EMP policies, rather than individual state policies that are built on cooperation between broad alliances of northern and southern societies.

Chapter 1, written by Roberto Aliboni, describes the historical and conceptual background to the analyses that follow, focusing on the broad security relationship between the EMP partners. The chapter deals with the evolution of perceptions of the EMP's security task and the concepts of ownership and co-ownership. It ends by asking whether the evolution that has taken place and the innovations that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is bringing about will increase the EMP's as yet modest role in conflict prevention.

Chapter 2, written by Mohamed Salman Tayie, deals with southern perceptions, according to which conflict prevention as pursued by the North is often seen as intrusive and as serving northern interests. Challenges for to the development of common conflict prevention policies emanate from differences between the North and the South. One is the differences in the way security is conceptualised, which relate to factors in the South such as the interconnectedness and overlapping of internal and international politics. Others are linked to the lack of a common definition of security and asymmetry in military capabilities. Many relate to the fact that some see progress with settling the Middle East conflict as a precondition for initiating common conflict prevention policies. The differences in threat perceptions and over the origins of problems are important factors, but so also are the fundamental differences between North and South about which entities are the most relevant for cooperation.

Chapter 3, written by Reinhardt Rummel, analyses the European perceptions of conflict prevention in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Considering its importance, the author regards it as surprising that interest in this field is only of fairly recent origin. The European Security Strategy (ESS) and the capacity build-up that has now taken place in this field, however, demonstrate the new weight that is now being given to it. Although a success story in many ways, there are still deficiencies and internal inefficiencies. As the EU now rushes from case to case, the need to act in order to deal with the root causes of conflict becomes even clearer. The author points out that a broader approach to conflict prevention is needed as well as a sustained effort, a more systematic development of multilateral preventive partnerships, and the goal of ownership. All these require a learning process inside the EU, in the Mediterranean region and between the two.

Chapter 4, written by Gunilla Herolf and Yasar Qatarneh, sets out the conclusions and offers some recommendations for future policies. A comprehensive conflict prevention policy based on co-ownership must be developed inside the EMP. This policy, however, must become not a straitjacket but a guide to a process that should include not only governments and organizations but also a range of groups such as private companies, subregional and local authorities, and youth organizations. The authors particularly emphasise the importance of added knowledge and information in order to display openness combined with respect for the views of others and to achieve a more enlightened public debate. Institutional reforms are necessary as well—as are the development of a common security culture, which also includes a wider setting than that of the EU. Developments in the EU in the past few years have presented added opportunities for cooperation between North and South, which can take place at a variety of levels and in a variety of fields. At the same time, South–South cooperation may gain some benefits from experiences of cooperation further north, including in the Baltic countries. Creating a wide net of cooperation, across levels and fields, and involving people-to-people contacts is seen as the essence of a strong and viable conflict prevention policy based on co-ownership.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACRS	Arms Control and Regional Security [in the Middle East]
AU	African Union
BWC	Biological Weapons Convention
CPN	Conflict Prevention Network
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
CSCM	Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean
CSSDCA	Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
DAC	Development assistance committee
DD&R	Decommissioning, decontamination and reutilization of nuclear weapons
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	EU development fund
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EUPM	European Union Police Mission
EuroMeSCo	Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MONUC	UN Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SADC	Southern African Development Community
Tacis	Technical aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

This report investigates the role of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in the issue of conflict prevention. In this framework, while the European Union (EU) is strongly and systematically engaged in implementing a policy of conflict prevention in accordance with the priorities and threat perceptions of its member states, the same seems to be of little interest to the southern partners of the EMP. As a consequence, cooperation between the two halves of the EMP on conflict prevention, while mentioned in their common declarations and agreements, is very weak. For this reason, a distinct EMP conflict prevention policy—separate from EMP members' own policies, particularly those of the EU—is almost non-existent. The aim of this Report is to make recommendations for change that will lead to an increased role in conflict prevention for the EMP.

This introduction provides a broad historical and conceptual background to the analyses included in the Report. This background is less concerned with conflict prevention policy as such than the broad security relationship between the EMP Partners. First, it explains the evolution of the respective North–South perceptions of the EMP's security task: from the EMP as a regional security organisation based on multilateral-style relations to the more pragmatic set of “hub and spokes” type of relations that the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is seeking to establish in the region. Second, it analyses the concepts of ownership and joint ownership, concepts on which EMP policies will be based in the framework of the ENP. In conclusion, it asks whether this evolution and the innovations the ENP is bringing about will increase the EMP's currently modest role in conflict prevention, thereby leading into the analyses and recommendations of the Report.

The blueprint that the EU member state governments had in mind in initiating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995 was the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). In this respect, it should be remembered that Spain and Italy had proposed the setting up of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) at the end of the 1980s, as a CSCE branch intended to extend the existing security organisation in Europe to the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.¹ Subsequently, even the Middle East Peace Process multilateral track initiated by the 1991 Madrid Conference was, more often than not, inspired by the CSCE model.² The CSCE blueprint was therefore familiar to both Middle Eastern and European governments and diplomats when the Barcelona Declaration was drafted and approved in 1995. As a result, the first chapter of that Declaration—aimed at setting up a Mediterranean area of peace and stability—is influenced by the CSCE model in many respects, including conflict prevention.³

In the light of the above, in the first half of 1996 Italy's EMP Presidency began to work with the aim of turning the EMP into the CSCE-style cooperative security organisation that it was originally intended to be. It set out an Action Plan envisaging six security areas in which the partners would take joint action, one of which was “preventive diplomacy and good neighbourly relations”. Each area was defined by a conceptual framework providing aims and directions and accompanied by a set of operational instructions. It soon became apparent, however, that the southern partners were not really prepared to set up a CSCE-style cooperative security organisation and carry out joint actions in such a framework. This southern attitude was explained, first, by the fact that in 1996 it became clear that the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the end of 1995 had disrupted the Middle East Peace Process. Having already halted the multilateral track of the Process, the ensuing crisis made the implementation of any cooperative security setting in the EMP highly unlikely. Second, in starting the implementation of the EMP security organisation the Europeans failed to consult appropriately with the southern partners. The Action Plan was not adequately negotiated with the partners before it was submitted for approval. Thus, the Arab countries, in particular, were given the impression of a certain European unilateralism, an impression which was bound to be reinforced over time.

For these reasons, under the Irish Presidency in the second half of 1996, the overly prescriptive formula of the Action Plan was replaced by negotiations on the adoption of a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability aimed at defining the principles and objectives of EMP cooperation in a more realistic and consensual way. In general, the partners lacked the will to live up to the task, however, and the Charter was never approved. At the conference of EMP Ministers held in Marseille in 2000, the Charter negotiations were postponed for an indefinite period and the charter was practically set aside. With this development, the idea of the EMP as a structured regional organisation based on cooperative security ceased to exist, and with it went the goal of a joint Euro-Med policy of conflict prevention based on shared Euro-Med institutions and instruments based on the CSCE / Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) example.

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

2. The evolution of perceptions

1 José-Luis Buhigas (1990), 'Una política de seguridad para el Mediterráneo' in *Revista Española de Defensa*, no. 29/30, pp. 78–85; Roberto Aliboni (1991), *European security across the Mediterranean*, WEU Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Paper no. 2, Paris; Victor-Yves Ghebali (1995), 'Mediterranean Problems', in V.-Y. Ghebali, B. Sauerwein (eds.), *European Security in the 1990s: Challenges and Perspectives*, UNIDIR, UN, New York and Geneva, pp. 122–132.

2 Geoffrey Kemp (1994), 'Cooperative Security in the Middle East' in Janne E. Nolan (ed.), *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, pp. 391–418.

3 See Marquina's and Biad's contributions in H. G. Brauch (2000), A. Marquina et al. (eds.), *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the 21st Century*, MacMillan Press & St. Martin Press, London and New York, pp. 129–146.

In fact, what these unfortunate political developments (the unexpected end of the peace process) and the clumsy European diplomacy made clear was that the EMP—whatever role it might give to southern partners—is and remains essentially an EU policy. For this reason, it is not necessarily owned by the southern partners in the same way as it is by the European partners. As a matter of fact, the unilateral character of European diplomacy stemmed from the inherent unilateral nature of the EMP. In sum, while the EMP is an EU instrument of regional governance, it is not necessarily a regional security organisation. In this sense, the attempt to make it work in the same way as the CSCE would have been doomed even in more favourable political and diplomatic circumstances.

3. Breaking new ground

The idea of building up a CSCE-style joint security organisation in the EMP, with its conflict prevention capabilities, ended with the Marseille ministerial conference. In subsequent years the debate inside the EMP about finding political and security-related common ground has taken more realistic directions. First, the EU has become aware of the need to apply the principles of ownership and joint ownership more explicitly and stringently when carrying out EMP activities and deliberations. Second, the infusion of the new European Neighbourhood Policy into the EMP—with the EU's broad approach to the Mediterranean reverting to its earlier bilateralism of the 1970s and 1980s—introduces into the EMP the country-by-country differentiation that is needed for the principle of ownership to become more concrete. These two points, ownership and the ENP, require further elaboration.

Ownership

The concept of and concerns about ownership derive from development policy. The existence of locally owned development policies strengthens the effectiveness of donors' policies by avoiding duplication and project-by-project fragmentation. Furthermore, more often than not, donor countries tend to push projects that are related more to their own views and interests than to recipient countries' priorities. Hence the need for donors to refer to locally owned economic plans, so that recipient countries are offered what they want rather than what donors might think they need.

This process brings about joint ownership between recipient and donor countries. The process includes two stages related, first, to the way intentions converge and, second to the way shared intentions are set in motion operationally. In the first stage, donors' and recipients' objectives converge; in the second, donors empower recipients by making the resources available to implement the objectives they share.

In the same sense, ownership has become a concept that broadly refers to cooperation policies—including security cooperation. It ensures that any given act of cooperation responds to recipients "as well as donors" needs and aspirations. Thus, joint ownership is based on, first, a convergence of will and, second, the empowerment of recipients to implement the common will. This works as well for a peace support operations as it does for an economic plan.

Ownership today plays a pivotal role in both EU development policies and EU security policies. How does ownership relate to the EMP? A distinction must be made here between Barcelona's second (economic development) and first (security and political dialogue) chapters. Ownership, in principle, has always been part of the implementation of the second pillar, if only because the EU Commission has always strictly cooperated with the Development Aid Committee—the OECD agency that evolved and asserted the concept of ownership.⁴ However, development cooperation under both the first and second Meda mandates has been predicated less on ownership than on conditionality. Things have started to change only with the ENP (which the Commission began to concretely enforce during 2005). When conditionality is the guiding concept of development cooperation, recipients have to comply with requirements set out exclusively by donors—whether or not they agree with the policies. Once the emphasis is put on ownership this obviously has to change—requirements have to be shared and co-owned, and conditionality then becomes a secondary factor.

When it comes to the first pillar, ownership is definitely a latecomer. As is pointed out above, in the first five years of the EMP the partners looked for broad common ground that would generate joint action. In the years after 2000, as soon as any common ground was achieved, attention was shifted to the application of the principles of ownership and co-ownership. This allows the identification of joint actions on a case-by-case basis or, in other words, not because partners are guided by broad common ground but because they

⁴ OECD (May 1996), Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-Operation*, Paris.

have identified specific shared actions that both are interested in pursuing. The possibility cannot be excluded that the emphasis given to ownership and joint ownership stems from not only previous experience but also from the larger debate about the need for change to come from inside, which took place in recent years with respect to policies related to the promotion of Western democracy.

In a sense, ownership allows for the poor common ground on which the EMP is resting and its difficulties in acting as a regional security organisation to be by-passed. Cooperation may be more difficult to attain because joint action requires that objectives are fully shared. However, once objectives are shared, cooperation is assured and strong. So, the introduction of the principle of ownership may be of particular importance for the EMP and, more generally speaking, the entire regional cooperative endeavours in which the EU is engaged. This trend is reinforced by the ENP, the new framework with which the EMP now has to work.

The ENP and bilateralism

The ENP is not a Mediterranean policy but a policy that concerns EU neighbours in the Mediterranean as well as the European East. It has not sidelined the EMP: The former is juxtaposed to the latter. The EMP continues to work, particularly as far as regional collective political dialogue is concerned. However, there is no doubt that the ENP emphasises bilateral relations between the EU and individual neighbouring countries over regional relations. A pivotal principle on which the ENP is predicated is the “differentiation” among partners—with a view to recognising their specific needs inclinations and aspirations and tailoring cooperation to such specifics. Clearly, this differentiated environment fits better than previous multilateral or collective approaches the application of ownership and co-ownership. Both differentiation and joint ownership are given prominent roles in the ENP strategy published by the Commission.⁵

Under the ENP rules, The EU prepares Action Plans for each country in cooperation with them and within the framework of the bilateral Association Agreements. These Action Plans establish a number of shared objectives and principles on both economic development and security. At the time of writing, the EU has signed five such Action Plans (i.e., with Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority). All these documents emphasise that their ‘approach is founded on partnership, joint ownership and differentiation’.⁶

In conclusion, the application of ownership should allow for more realistic cooperation in EU-initiated instruments of regional governance such as the EMP and the ENP. These regional governance schemes cannot work as regional security organisations because they lack sufficient common ground for that purpose. However, while ownership and co-ownership are expected to help them to work on a more pragmatic, case-by-case, country-by-country and project-by-project basis, the ENP should also offer a fitting environment for the application of ownership and co-ownership. In sum, the new ENP-EMP approach should foster cooperation in a less ambitious but more effective framework than the founders of the EMP originally envisaged.

To the extent that it is a cooperative endeavour, conflict prevention is included in the general EU conceptual framework discussed above. The progress made by EU conflict prevention policy and, more broadly speaking, EU crisis response capabilities since the Commission issued its first Communication in 2001 has quite naturally also been brought to bear in the EMP.

As is pointed out above, conflict prevention in the Barcelona Declaration referred essentially to the implementation of a regional security organisation based on cooperative security following the CSCE example. While this agenda did not prove feasible, it is more interesting to see how conflict prevention relates to the new framework of cooperation based on ownership and ENP.

First, it should be remembered that, when it comes to conflict prevention, the concepts of ownership and co-ownership are the same as the general ones. The analytical basis on which the EU has built the conceptual framework for its conflict prevention policy—the guidelines worked out by the Conflict Prevention Network (CPN)—discusses ownership and gives the following definition: “Ownership refers to the process by which the responsibility for peace-building, conflict prevention, management and resolution primarily rests with the people concerned”. It adds that the role of the EU—where it shares people’s objectives and aspirations—is to empower people to live up to their responsibility in peace-building

4. Conflict prevention and the new framework of cooperation

⁵ See the sections on ‘joint ownership’ and ‘Differentiation’ in *Communication from the Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper*, Brussels, 12 May 2004, COM (2004) 373 final, p. 8.

⁶ The wording is slightly different in the EU–Morocco Action Plan. See Council of the European Union (July 2006), *EU/Morocco Plan*.

and related activities. Thus, from the point of view of the EU, ownership applies fully to conflict prevention. To the extent that conflict prevention is contemplated by the EMP, it is subject to the application of the principles of ownership and co-ownership.

Whatever the Barcelona Declaration says about conflict prevention is now subsumed and superseded by what the ENP is saying on the matter. The ENP stresses the intention of the EU to involve its neighbours—including the EMP southern partners—in a number of security endeavours, including conflict prevention. The ENP strategy paper points out that, under the principles of partnership, ownership and differentiation, which underscore the implementation of the ENP, ‘Improved coordination within the established political dialogue formats should be explored, as well as the possible involvement of partner countries in aspects of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), conflict prevention, crisis management, the exchange of information, joint training and exercises and possible participation in EU-led crisis management operations’.⁷

As a matter of fact, the first five Action Plans adopted by the EU and the southern partners in the EMP framework consider the common interests parties bring to conflict prevention and express their intention to carry out joint action in this field. For example, the EU-Israel Action Plan says, in general, that “Israel and the EU will strive to intensify political, security, economic, scientific and cultural relations, and shared responsibility in conflict prevention and conflict resolution”. Subsequently, it is envisaged that conflict prevention will be among the security issues on which there will be cooperation under the CFSP/ESDP. In a more specific way, the EU-Morocco Action Plan says that Morocco is interested in “[taking] part, as appropriate, in training and activities relating to conflict prevention, management of crises and natural disasters, civil protection and possible participation in EU-led civil and military peacekeeping exercises and operations”.

The EU’s insistence on making reference to the ESDP, that is, the possible use of its military forces devoted to the implementation of its Petersburg tasks, should be noted. The five countries that have signed Action Plans so far are also the most keen to accept some form of security cooperation with the EU. How will the negotiations with Syria or even Egypt progress? Joint ownership on this point will almost certainly prove less easy to achieve than in the first five cases. On the other hand, differentiation allows for precisely these kinds of differences, although how significant such differences will be is difficult to predict. This is a problem for the near future and it is also the problem that this report tackles. Chapter 2 considers southern perceptions of conflict prevention. Chapter 3 examines EU policies, approaches and goals more deeply. Chapter 4 evaluates the chances for joint action in the EMP and makes a number of recommendations intended to improve cooperation in the field of conflict prevention as well as the possibility of joint ownership and joint action in the EMP framework.

⁷ See the section on ‘A more effective political dialogue’ in *Communication from the Commission: European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper*, *op. cit.*

The Mediterranean forms a border between the wealthy, developed and stable Europe, on one side, and the fragmented North Africa and the Middle East, on the other side. The Barcelona Declaration has come to represent an exception to traditional mainstream trends in Euro-Mediterranean relations in that, while these relations were confined to financial and commercial aspects for more than 30 years, the declaration covers new aspects that are no less important, such as political, cultural, social and security aspects.

Despite the fact that considerable success has been achieved with respect to the Barcelona Process in its widest sense—represented primarily by the bilateral Association Agreements and the preparations for the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010—achievements in the political and security spheres have not met expectations because of the problems associated with the Middle East peace process. Those who worked on the Barcelona Declaration adopted ambitious goals for the partnership process, among the most important of which was probably “to establish a shared zone of security and stability in the Mediterranean basin”. Nevertheless, as of today a huge gap still exists between these goals and what has so far been achieved.⁸

In the region there is not a major military threat similar to that which existed in Europe during the Cold War. However, the region is characterised by a number of inter-state and intra-state conflicts, as well as wide socio-economic disparities, the majority of which are located along the southern shore, and, at the subregional level, by territorial and border disputes, ethno-cultural rivalry and the low-intensity violence of terrorism.⁹

Instability also stems from underlying soft-security factors such as economic and social underdevelopment, inadequate political institutions in the southern and eastern rims, widespread cultural and ethnic differences, and sharp South–South and North–South cleavages, which represent diffuse and interdependent factors of risk throughout the region. Furthermore, the importance of future potential conflicts over water supplies should not be overlooked, particularly in cases where the situation is complicated by the connections between the territorial and ethno-cultural sources of conflicts—so-called intractable conflicts.¹⁰

This structural instability of Mediterranean security is aggravated by more proximate causes such as the link between conflict, demography and migration; the vulnerability of strategic lines of communication; the diffusion of non-conventional weapons; and the trans-regional impact of long-standing internal and external conflicts (such as the confrontation between regimes and Islamic oppositions or the Arab-Israeli conflict).

This interdependence and the transnational nature of risk factors in the Mediterranean region are not matched by a coherent set of national and multilateral security policies. On the contrary, the security perceptions and needs of regional states differ widely and cooperative security schemes are either absent or weak. EU member states feel threatened by instability and conflict in the Mediterranean region and would like the countries affected by such conflicts to cooperate on conflict prevention by applying EU-style recipes to address the structural and local sources of instability in the region. Governments of non-EU member states in the Mediterranean region reject the aspects of conflict prevention policies that they perceive as Western intervention in their internal affairs but, confronted as they are by multi-directional threats, need Western help to increase their security.¹¹

Conflict prevention was first proposed in the EMP by the 1996 Action Plan. Subsequently, conflict prevention has been mentioned constantly in the context of the Euro-Med Charter for Peace and Stability. According to these proposals, the EMP institutions would agree a set of specific instruments—that is, “procedures of clarification, mediation and conciliation”, “judicial settlement of differences and disputes” and “adherence to appropriate international conventions”—which, depending on the case, could be operated by the institutions themselves by means of “Euro-Mediterranean mechanisms” (e.g., a conflict prevention centre or centres) or deferred to incumbent international courts. These proposals, however, were not accepted by the partners and therefore not implemented.

Since 1993, the EU has progressively developed its own policy of and doctrine on conflict prevention, adapting its external action to a changing international environment. It has developed mechanisms for civilian and military crisis management that could be extended to Mediterranean security issues. The EU has been engaged in the Mediterranean using its full range of capabilities: association and free trade area agreements; cooperation; development assistance; social and environmental policies; humanitarian assistance;

2. The Conflict Prevention Component of the EMP: Southern Security Perceptions

1. Introduction

2. Conflict prevention and the EMP

8 Mohamed Salman Tayie (1998), ‘The Mediterranean Circle in the Egyptian Foreign Policy’, M.A. Thesis, Cairo University: Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences, pp. 235–239.

9 Abdelwahad Biad (1997), *A Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Management in the Mediterranean*, Faculté de droit, Université de Rouen, p. 53, www.cidob.org/ingles/Publicaciones/Afers/37biad.cfm.

10 Ibid. (1997), p. 53.

11 Ibid. (1997), pp. 55–58.

civilian and military crisis management; political dialogue; and cooperation in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs.

Today, while waiting for the political conditions for cooperative security to develop, conflict prevention in the Mediterranean area remains the task of the individual countries and of the EU.

The EU has included conflict prevention among the objectives of its external relations since 1995 and has subsequently delineated the main features of an emerging conflict prevention system. Consequently, the need arose for a conflict prevention component to be included in the EMP.

Within the EMP, an assessment of potential conflict situations is made in all the Country Strategy Papers with the support of appropriate potential conflict indicators such as the balance of political and economic power, the level of control over the security forces, the ethnic composition of the government in ethnically divided countries, the potential degradation of environmental resources, and so on. For those countries where such analysis has highlighted conflict risk factors (“countries with conflict potential”), conflict prevention measures are taken to target conflict prevention in various sectoral programmes in fields such as transport, rural development, energy, the environment, health, and research or education, as well as a systemic analysis of the security sector.¹²

The civilian and military crisis management tools currently being developed in the context of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) could be used to deal with the earliest stages of incipient conflict. Although initially designed for crisis management, they could be just as effective in a preventive ‘pre-crisis’ role.¹³ Yet, when it comes to the EMP, it is obvious that these instruments would represent a source of mistrust and insecurity in the southern Mediterranean countries. That is why the fundamental premise that stands out in terms of the EU’s integrated approach to conflict prevention is that “cooperation programmes are increasingly based on the countries’ own strategies since it is now well recognised that ownership is a condition for success allowing for consideration of countries’ own situations, histories and cultures”.¹⁴ This notion has had the concrete result that the countries that are the focus of the EU’s preventive efforts are fully involved in the EU’s conflict prevention planning.¹⁵

3. Southern security perceptions

The basis for conceptualisations of security

A country’s security culture is shaped by its recent experience as well as its beliefs, traditions, attitudes and symbols, which are intimately related and self-reinforcing. Fulvio Attina points out that this security culture shapes the preferences of national governments for certain security instruments, or combinations of instruments, but also that learning from recent experience—and interaction with the security cultures of other states and regions, as well as the influence of new ideas, practices and experiences—can lead to culture change.¹⁶

Thus, the character of conflict in the Mediterranean area after the Cold War, and the fragmentation and heterogeneity of strategic and security relations in the area concerned, form the basis on which the political context of a conflict prevention mechanism can be assessed.

There is no doubt that in the past ten years the southern Mediterranean region has been characterised by a relative increase in intra-state conflict. This is because of what has been dubbed *protracted social conflict*, which is essentially multidimensional—where internal, religious, cultural and socio-economic factors become inextricable from interstate conflicts. The result is interconnectedness and overlapping of—rather than a separation between—internal and international politics. Moreover, traditional conflicts still plague the Mediterranean in addition to the new ones that have emerged since the end of the Cold War.

Another essential factor is the internal and external fragility of the Arab state. While a vulnerability to external pressures and dependence on the outside is typical of Third World regions and small countries, the extent and nature of the external vulnerability in the Mediterranean Middle East are specific to that region. On the one hand, because of its unique endowment of strategic resources of global importance, most notably energy, no other region in the contemporary world has experienced the same degree of foreign intervention and competition. On the other hand, the reactions of Middle Eastern and North

¹² European Commission, Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention, Brussels, European Commission (2001), 11.04.2001, COM 211 final, p. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.* (2001), p. 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (2001), p. 10.

¹⁵ Esther Barbe and Elisabeth Johansson (2003), *EU and Conflict Prevention*, Working Paper no. 8, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, p. 3.

¹⁶ Fulvio Attina (2004), *The Euro-Mediterranean Project of Security Partnership in Comparative Perspective*, Jean Monnet Working Papers, University of Catania, Italy, no. 52, p. 12.

African countries to external penetration have been particularly intense. The conclusions reached by structural analysis of regional patterns of conflict are therefore that state fragility and external vulnerability specifically combine in the Middle East and North Africa to produce a high incidence of persistent interstate conflicts.¹⁷

In addition, globalisation has recently influenced the conceptualisations of security in the northern and southern Mediterranean countries, albeit in different ways. As is noted by Marquina and Selim: “In the North, the change has been in the direction of moving away from the concept of national security, where the reference object is the territorial state, to the concept of international security, emphasizing interdependence to the concept of world security, fundamental security and global security, emphasizing global risks. In the South, there has been an increasing emphasis on the expansion of the concept of security to incorporate developmental dimensions and linkages with regional and global processes.”¹⁸

Thus, in the post-Cold War period patterns of conflict in the Near East and North African regions are similar to those observed globally, as far as the incidence and causes of domestic “intra-state” conflict are concerned, but differ from global patterns as far as interstate international conflict is concerned, because of the higher than average propensity to and persistence of international conflict.

The obstacles to agreement on conceptions

A major handicap in any discussion about security issues in the Mediterranean is the lack of any common definition of security. According to Biad: “Response to a security threat should not be based on an imposed formula that carries with it the risk of being perceived as intrusive in the eyes of the southern countries. Rather, such a response should be based on a cooperative approach that parts from a common definition of risks and responses. In the first place there are needed mechanisms for political consultation on security issues so that partners might exchange views about the conflicts which take place in the region.”¹⁹

Asymmetry in military organisations on the two rims of the Mediterranean basin is another important obstacle. On the northern rim, national armies are linked to a single alliance—NATO. The development of the EU’s common ESDP increases further the coordination of the national defence systems of the European members of NATO. On the southern rim, however, national military power and, in a few cases, loose bilateral defence agreements are the only means available for a single state to overcome any security dilemma involving potential or real enemies. Arab countries are deeply concerned about any infringement of the norm of territorial sovereignty, and about the practice of foreign inspection on national territory.²⁰

The differences between perceptions in the North and the South

The EMP in itself, it is argued by Roberto Aliboni, can be thought of as “systemic (pluralism, market economy, good governance, etc.) and structural (regional integration, shared institutions, etc.) conflict prevention”. Besides its structural and systemic ability to prevent conflict in the medium- and long-term, the EMP is supposed to develop an ability to prevent conflicts from being settled violently in the short- and medium-term. In this sense, the EMP is expected to develop preventive diplomacy and its attendant intra-state- and inter-state-related instruments.²¹ However, security cooperation is almost excluded from the EMP not only by the encroachment of the as yet unresolved Arab-Israeli disputes, but also by the strong perception by the South of interference from the North (political, military, cultural); this hardly allows for the use of military instruments in the EMP for the purposes of cooperative and collective security.

There are two main schools of thought in the Mediterranean on how to deal with conflicts that concern *the scope of the agenda*. The first school is advocated by the EU and focuses almost exclusively on the task of conflict prevention. The second school argues that conflict resolution must precede conflict prevention. This latter school is mainly articulated by Arab actors in the Mediterranean.

The Arab countries question the EU’s approach to conflict prevention for several reasons. The emphasis on conflict prevention focuses on the future and ignores current security issues, thereby making the EU less relevant to actors that are currently in conflict. Antonio Marquina and Mohamed Selim demonstrate that states pay more attention to their present conflicts than to those which could emerge in the future, and tend to focus on the frameworks that could provide a mechanism for conflict resolution rather than on those

17 Laura Guazzone (December 2001), ‘Part II: Tools for a conflict prevention system for the Euro-Mediterranean area: The Euro-Med conflict prevention chain and the Med country conflict profile’ in Roberto Aliboni, Laura Guazzone and Daniela Pippi (eds) *Early Warning and Conflict Prevention in the Euro-Med Area*. A Research Report by the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Qaderni IAI, 2, English Series, <http://www.iai.it/dbase/5%20part%20II%5B1%D.%20Guazzone.asp>, online 2006-09-25, p. 7.

18 Antonio Marquina and Mohamed Selim (2003), *Security Concepts, Institutions and Strategies for Cooperation, Partnership and Conflict Prevention in the Mediterranean*, UNSC Discussions Papers, p. 2. See also Gamal Abdel Gawad (1997), ‘Possible elements of collective security structures and confidence building measures: an Egyptian viewpoint’ in Thomas Scheben (ed.), *Security Structures in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and the Near East*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Cairo, pp. 94–96.

19 Abdelwahad Biad (1997), *op. cit.*, p. 57.

20 Fulvio Attina (2000), *Partnership and Security: Some Theoretical and Empirical Reasons for Positive Developments in the Euro-Mediterranean Area*, Jean Monnet Working Papers, University of Catania, Italy, no. 27, pp. 15–16.

21 Roberto Aliboni (1997-98), *Confidence-Building, Conflict Prevention and Arms Control in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership* ‘Perceptions’, *Journal for International Affairs*, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 3.

which offer the promise of a new world, not least because engagement in a conflict entails a pattern of resource mobilisation that can only be changed after the conflict is resolved—something which is at odds with the nature of preventive policies. They also argue that international relations cannot be compartmentalised: ‘Current conflicts are likely to have a negative influence on the possibilities of establishing a future-oriented cooperative model of trans-Mediterranean relations because current conflicts will necessarily affect future relations’.²²

The North and the South also disagree about *threat perceptions* and *the origins of problems*. Threat perceptions in the North often consist of what Biad calls “multidimensional” and “multi-directional” phenomena, which include the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and ballistic weapons, migration pressures, terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. In the South, the North is seen as responsible for the instability of the price of energy and raw materials, debt pressures, cultural intrusion, racism and xenophobia. The positions and perceptions of each side can be distorted, not least because of a lack of information about each other’s intentions.²³

All this may explain the perception of the North’s unilateralism and intrusion that strongly prevails throughout the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Thus, the most important concern for the majority of southern EMP Partners is to avoid interference from the EU. The EU’s Mediterranean initiatives have caused suspicion and resentment among policy makers and the wider public in the Arab countries. They are seen as intelligence and monitoring operations rather than confidence-building measures.²⁴ Hence, consensus in the EMP framework is difficult to achieve. Relations are based on a genuine wish to cooperate with the EU but, for the time being, on a low common denominator and weak political context. The southern Mediterranean countries are much less well equipped institutionally than the EU and its member states. Furthermore, the latter are definitely preponderant in the EMP institutional set-up. If this asymmetrical character of the EMP is combined with the weakness of its political context and the limits this places on actual action, it is clear that the EMP suffers important limitations in its interactions with the EU. EMP joint action, entailing the use of military instruments for whichever kind of peace support operation, is highly unlikely at present, and this trend would tend to make unlikely any EMP joint military action in the future.²⁵

A further point of difference concerns the *crucial elements of security culture*. The security cultures of contemporary Arab countries contain various distinct views. One of these is the Arab nation view, which advocates an Arab trans-state community as the building block for peace and security in the area. Another sees Arab states as having friendly relations with each other, and providing mutual protection against external influence. In the 1990s two contrasting views came to the fore. One of them was a reformist view, developed especially in North Africa, which emphasised security in civil society, achieving better living conditions and the need for economic reforms that are in agreement with the traditions of Arab culture and the Islamic religion. Another radical conception strongly emphasised religion, the Arab security identity and the threat posed by the non-Islamic world.

Security cooperation at the region level is unfamiliar to Arab security culture. Building regional security through cooperative means creates strong suspicion in governments that are attached to national military power and the traditional view of strategic secrecy. Comprehensive security is also a suspicious concept for the Arab political elite and for Arab policy makers.²⁶ For these reasons, the Mediterranean lacks a single unifying security concept around which security arrangements could be developed.²⁷

On the other hand, the current security culture of the European countries is linked to three recent experiences that entailed regional cooperation: (a) the arms control negotiations of the Cold War and détente eras; (b) the Helsinki Process, with the three-decade long elaboration of new ideas and the formation of the mechanisms for comprehensive and cooperative security; and (c) the formulation of new defence policies in the 1990s to react to unexpected crises and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to countries and non-state actors insensitive to the conventional logic of military strategy.²⁸

The connections between perceptions in the South and EU policies

The eternal conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians is the main stumbling block to an enhanced security partnership between both shores of the Mediterranean. Since EU enlargement on 1 May 2004, the importance of the Middle East conflict to the EMP has become even more pronounced because—with the accession of Cyprus and Malta, and with Turkey’s special status as a candidate country and a NATO member—the EMP is now

22 Antonio Marquina and Mohamed Selim (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 12.

23 Abdelwahad Biad (1997), *op. cit.*, p. 57

24 Fulvio Attina (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 14 .

25 Roberto Aliboni (December 2001), ‘Early Warning and Conflict Prevention in the Euro-Med Context’, in Roberto Aliboni, Laura Guazzone and Daniela Pioppi (eds), *Early Warning and Conflict Prevention in the Euro-Med Area*, Istituto Affari International, Quaderno IAI 2, English Series, p. 6, <http://www.iai.it/dbase/4%20part%201%20aliboni.asp?back=2%20index%20completo.asp&book=Part%201>.

26 Fulvio Attina (2000), *op. cit.*, pp. 13–14.

27 Antonio Marquina and Mohamed Selim (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

28 Fulvio Attina (2000), *op. cit.*, p.13

only made up of the Mediterranean Arab countries and Israel. Attempts by the EMP to add substance to the security dimension, and to conflict prevention in particular, have failed, in large part because a lack of political will in the southern Mediterranean partner countries. According to Sven Biscop, authoritarian regimes abuse the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to increase their legitimacy. Proposals for a security partnership that ignore the resolution of ongoing conflicts are not taken seriously in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.²⁹

There is also dissatisfaction with the EU's limited investment in the financial and economic chapter. It is often felt that the EU puts undue emphasis on the security aspects of the EMP, to the detriment of the Barcelona economic package which is considered by the southern Mediterranean partners to be the field that requires priority action.

Moreover, there is a certain mistrust with regard to the ESDP itself. The debate on 'pre-emption' fuels this mistrust and, since the 1990 Gulf War and the intervention in Kosovo, there is a fear of becoming the object of 'Western interventionism'. Research, however, demonstrates that a generalised lack of information about the ESDP is more important than actual mistrust—and this can easily be abused in order to increase levels of mistrust.³⁰

On a more general level, Biscop argues that there is limited interest in the southern EMP countries, both among policy makers and academics, in the Mediterranean as an organising concept for policy. The EMP is regarded as a mechanism for bilateral relations with the EU. Regional dynamics and South–South regional integration between the Mediterranean partners receive little attention. The Mediterranean partners are less familiar with notions of comprehensive and cooperative security, or with confidence- and security-building measures. Furthermore, large sections of public opinion often oppose security cooperation with 'the West', which again would have negative consequences for regimes' internal power bases.³¹

From another perspective, it is also important to note that the framing of the Barcelona Declaration, in its political and security aspects, was vague and indeterminate, and allowed for the possibility that any one party might reject it. Such framing does not assist with making a judgment on whether there are shared concepts and security priorities for both parties. Consequently, it does not help to evaluate the extent to which the partnership between the two parties might succeed in achieving its targets. Hence, there is a need to adopt a more widely acceptable security concept. In addition, transparency, justice and clarity are needed in order to sustain shared security—and these are currently absent. For instance, in spite of the fact that Israel is the only country that has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), when the European partners discuss this issue it is the Arab countries that are the main focus of their attention.³²

Another crucial drawback in the conflict prevention mechanism of the EMP is the unclear distinction between short- and long-term conflict prevention policies. In the Communication on Conflict Prevention presented in April 2001, the Commission distinguishes between conflict prevention as projecting stability (long term) and conflict prevention as reacting quickly to nascent conflicts (short term, i.e., crisis management). In the Communication, long-term conflict prevention appears to imply actions supporting regional integration, building trade links, supporting democracy, encouraging the rule of law, supporting civil society, and promoting gender equality in development policy, and so on, while the short-term actions encompass early-warning systems, rapid reaction mechanisms and the appointment of special representatives.³³ These two policies look very different from one another.

In addition to the lack of a consistent definition, it is necessary to make a point about the often fairly minor differentiation in EU discourse between conflict prevention and the general external policy aims of the EU (humanitarian assistance, development aid, supporting democracy, promoting human rights, etc.). The confusion is compounded by the integrated approach adopted by the EU in matters related to treating the root causes of conflict. In this context, the Commission states that "development policy and other cooperation programmes provide the most powerful instruments at the Community's disposal for treating the root causes of conflict".³⁴ These root causes are often the result of a lack of government legitimacy, the repression of minorities, the proliferation of arms, economic scarcity, migration, a lack of a vibrant society and regional instability.³⁵ This has caused many analysts to question whether the EU has conceptually fused normal peaceful relations between countries into a broad umbrella concept of conflict prevention. The danger implied by the confusion between the EU's general external policy aims and a conflict prevention programme is that it leads to a securitisation of normal, peaceful international relations.³⁶

29 Sven Biscop (31 March–2 April 2005), *The European Security Strategy and the Neighbourhood Policy: A New Starting Point for a Euro-Mediterranean Security Partnership?*, paper presented at EUSA 9th Biennial International Conference, Austin, Texas, Royal Institute of International Relations, Brussels, p. 10.

30 Sven Biscop (31 March–2 April 2005), *ibid.*, p. 11. Biscop refers to Alvaro de Vasconcelos (2004), *Launching the Euro-Mediterranean Security and Defence Dialogue*, EuroMeSCo Brief, Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais, Lisbon; and Annette Jünemann (2003), 'Repercussions of the Emerging European Security and Defence Policy on the Civil Character of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership', *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 8, no. 2/3, pp. 37–38.

31 Sven Biscop (31 March–2 April 2005), *ibid.*, p. 11.

32 Mohamed Salman Tayie (1998), *op. cit.*, pp. 223–227.

33 Esther Barbe and Elisabeth Johansson (2001), *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6.

34 European Commission (2001), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

35 Eide Barth and Karen Smith (1999), *Mapping Out the Knowledge Accumulated with CPN's Products: a Lessons Learned Survey*, SWP-CPN Selected Contributions, no. 9, p. 16.

36 Eide Barth and Karen Smith (1999), *ibid.*

Inter-Arab differences

There is little trust and a lack of solidarity at the inter-Arab level, as is highlighted above. Arab states tend to have fairly good relations at the bilateral level but fail to cooperate at a collective level. In contrast, collective groups such as the Arab Maghreb Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are reportedly more active at the local level. Broadly speaking, it should be clearly understood that many countries only cooperate when it is made a condition by the EU.³⁷ This is something that makes dialogue in general, and on security-related issues in particular, a less genuine process, and something that increases the importance of cultural confidence building for the benefit of all member countries in the partnership.³⁸

The interests and objectives of the countries in the southern region usually conflict, and the scope for ethical, regional and international alliances between these countries is widening and extending the ramifications of these conflicts on a larger scale. This, in turn, results in increased antagonism and competition.³⁹

4. Conclusions

While the Barcelona Process has achieved some real success, it has also suffered from a gap between expectations and its achievements. As is described in this chapter, some problems are related to the multifaceted security problems and the basic instability of the region. Ownership is now acknowledged to be a precondition for progress in conflict prevention but hurdles still remain.

This chapter, focusing on southern perceptions, has identified problems that go back to the different bases for conceptualisations of security, which relate to factors such as protracted social conflict, the internal and external fragility of states and the effects of globalisation. Some problems concern the lack of a common definition of security and the asymmetry that exists in military capability, while others concern the agenda itself. One of the main reasons for the lack of progress is the fact that reaching an agreement on the peaceful settlement of the Middle East Conflict is considered, from the Arab perspective at least, to be a precondition for initiating a genuine process of confidence building in the EMP framework, and, in turn, represents a precondition for the process of conflict prevention within the partnership. Other major obstacles concern differences in threat perceptions and in perceptions of the origins of the problems as well as the differences in the geographical and political units to which the South and the North relate.

Perceptions in the South in many cases do not fit well with EU policies. This is linked to such factors as a lack of common well-understood terminology and results in a mistrust of the ESDP. To this can be added inter-Arab differences and dissatisfaction with the EU's limited investment in the financial and economic chapter.

In order to ameliorate these problems and make progress with conflict prevention strategies, it is important that EU strategies are adaptive and not rolled out in the fashion of a 'one size fits all approach'; and that they are tailored to the unique characteristics of the case in hand and to the overall political contingency in which it takes place, structured according to a coherent methodology and customised to the aims and means of the specific institution building them. By doing this the hope is that confidence between states on the southern shore of the Mediterranean as well as between North and South can be increased and that a step-by-step approach towards constructive cooperation can be initiated among all the countries.

³⁷ Ali Eddin Hilal Dessouki (1995), 'The political situation in the region after the end of the cold war' in Thomas Scheben (ed.), *Security and Peace: Towards a Partnership between Europe and the Mediterranean Region*, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Cairo, p. 18.

³⁸ Fathi El Shazli (1995), 'Opening remarks' in Thomas Scheben (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 13.

³⁹ Ali Sadek (1995), 'The political dialogue on security and conflict prevention structures: forms and conditions, an Egyptian viewpoint' in Thomas Scheben (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 133.

Conflict prevention and crisis management have recently been added to the agenda of the European Union (EU). In the mid-1990s the EU and its member states felt that they could have made a difference had they acted early on to reduce large-scale human suffering—including instances of genocide such as in Rwanda. They could also have avoided episodes across the world where the positive results achieved by many years of development aid were wiped out within weeks or days by civil war and cross-border fighting. In short, EU member states could have agreed earlier that they “should be ready to act before a crisis occurs” (Javier Solana). Experience in the former Yugoslavia, particularly the deaths in Srebrenica and the air raids in Kosovo, finally led to a change of course by the EU and its member states and preparations were made for a more proactive foreign and security policy.

Today, the EU expresses its preference for prevention in many ways: in its security strategy, its operational structures, the resources attributed to the issue, and the techniques developed to deal with violent conflict. However, while there have been some achievements on the ground, the EU continues to operate pretty much in a sphere of learning with only a few successful and convincing practical showcases, none of which is in the Mediterranean region. Conflict prevention is crucial to Europe—there is little alternative for Europe but to try to achieve significant aspects of its security through conflict prevention, especially with regard to efforts beyond its borders—and the EU’s late arrival in this field is therefore surprising and difficult to justify.

It is only recently that the EU has discovered this field for itself. In that time it has managed to mainstream conflict prevention philosophy and policy into most of its external activities, including the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).⁴⁰ However, this is only a first and incomplete step. A more extensive learning period lies ahead where the EU must work together with its southern partners to shape a more effective approach to conflict prevention.

The EU seems to mean it: prevention is not just a fashionable trend; it is regarded as serious and fundamental. This impression can be gained from the EU’s overall security strategy as well as from the resources attributed to conflict prevention, including the build-up of operational structures and the development of techniques. However, is conflict prevention the correct tool for mastering today’s risks and threats or does it represent an expression of altruism towards those involved in the conflict? How is conflict prevention perceived by those affected in critical regions such as the Mediterranean? Will it give the EU a more substantial role in world affairs? Will it lead to a more balanced regional security partnership with its neighbours? Not all of these questions can be covered in this chapter, but the EU’s motives for regional conflict prevention as well as the external and internal challenges encountered are addressed briefly.

The motives

In recent times, the EU has been preoccupied with adapting the preventive concept to the enlarged EU. The idea of prevention has been, and continues to be, at the heart of the European integration process. Even those who are in favour of less deepening see the benefits of this aspect of enlargement. The EU’s enlargement concept is inherently a preventive security concept, but the formula of “*security through enlargement*” focuses mainly on security between the participating European states. To create security outside Europe requires an adaptation of the preventive concept to other parts of the world, especially the areas adjacent to the newly extended borders of the EU, and for the EU’s responsibility to be widened accordingly.⁴¹

The concept of more extended responsibility taking was certainly boosted—if not initiated—by the wider reach of the EU at 25. The ten new members have extended the EU towards often unstable neighbourhoods in the Caucasus, the Mediterranean and the wider Middle East. EU policy makers have become more aware of the risks and dangers at the EU’s new borders. They have also developed a better understanding of the instabilities geographically distant from the EU that might affect it in various ways. This extended perspective has widened the scope of strategic thinking in Brussels. As a consequence, the EU has increased its ambition to becoming a global player in the international security arena. Thus, while the immediate neighbourhood has gained in importance for the EU, this upgrade is only relative given that other regions of conflict have also been given increased attention and moved up the EU agenda.

3. European Perceptions of Conflict Prevention in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

1. Introduction

2. The EU’s preference for prevention: altruism or strategy

⁴⁰ Fraser Cameron and Rosa Balfour (2006), *The European Neighbourhood Policy as a Conflict Prevention Tool*, EPC Issue Paper no. 47, Brussels; Judith Kelley (March 2006), ‘New wine in old wineskins: promoting political reforms through the new European neighbourhood policy’ in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Oxford, no. 44, pp. 29–55; Andreas Marchetti (2006), *The European Neighbourhood Policy: Foreign Policy at the EU’s Periphery*, Zentrum fuer Integrationsforschung, Bonn; Michael Emerson and Gergana Noutcheva (2005), *From Barcelona Process to Neighbourhood Policy: Assessments and Open Issues*, CEPS Working Document no. 220, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels.

⁴¹ International Crisis Group (2006), *Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: the EU’s Role*, ICG Europe Report no. 173, Tbilisi; Kai Olaf Lang (2005), ‘Closeness with new bonds: the EU-neighbourhood policy towards Eastern Europe’ in Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (ed.), *Fourth Baltic-German Dialogue: Vilnius, 20 May 2005*, Riga, pp. 12–17; and Steven Blockmans (2004), ‘EU conflict prevention in the Western Balkans’, in Vincent Kronenberger et al. (eds.), *The European Union and Conflict Prevention: Policy and Legal Aspects*, The Hague, pp. 293–321.

There is clearly an element of altruism in the policy of the EU. As a relatively rich and stable group of states, the EU feels an obligation to contribute its share to promoting worldwide security. The aim is not to become a military superpower, to compete with the USA, or to bring peace to the whole world, but instead to develop as a diversified pole of influence with a broad interface regarding the increased variety and scope of security tasks. The EU wants to project its concept of peace, progress and stability on the basis of specific European skills adapted to the nature of the security tasks of today and tomorrow. A main feature is a desire to avoid zooming in on one security threat only, but instead to open up and prepare for all kinds of threat in all the critical regions.

This altruistic element is combined with the self-interest of the European Union in seeking to meet the new threats. The European Security Strategy (ESS) explains the EU's shift towards a new "preventive engagement" in world affairs:⁴² the new threats are dynamic and less territorial; the risks of proliferation grow over time; left alone terrorist networks will become ever more dangerous; and state failure and organised crime will spread if they are neglected. This assessment also explains why the EU is pushing its geographical focus beyond the Balkans and Africa, and particularly to Central Asia and the Middle East. As the ESS states, it is in the EU's interest that countries on its borders are well governed: "Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe".⁴³

In addition to the threat perceptions expressed in the ESS, the new European perceptions are also motivated by the geostrategic realities of the ongoing EU enlargement process. As a result of the accession talks with Turkey, which began in 2005, the EU could soon be an immediate neighbour of Syria, Iraq, Iran, and the republics of the Caucasus. Hence the imperative to invest more in the build-up of security in the EU's neighbourhood and to revise respective programmes and implementation structures.⁴⁴

External and internal challenges

Despite major response efforts in recent years, the EU continues to be confronted with a charged agenda of global challenges and key threats. The EU rushes from case to case on an ever larger watch-list. The most urgent contingencies are treated with care but their root problems cannot be solved quickly or easily. While these challenges remain on the to-do list and absorb increasing resources, new conflicts emerge and threaten to escalate. If they are not dealt with the EU risks suffering from an even wider and more complex need to respond. Earlier action seems to be one of the more efficient ways to cope with such a dynamic security environment. While a conflict remains small, the EU is more likely to be in a position to handle it.

For the EU, policy makers, the activists in the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the wider public, the benefits of preventive policy are beyond doubt. If more of the causes of a conflict can be tackled early on, there are fewer reasons for conflicting parties to justify violence, prolong disputes, or reject peace-building efforts. Similarly, the earlier a conflict can be defused, the less likely it becomes that it will slide into violence, spill over into neighbouring regions, and affect European interests. As the ESS suggests, the EU must be prepared to act before the crisis occurs—the prevention of conflicts and threats cannot be started too early.

If there has been little progress in the institutional quality of the EU as an actor, it is nonetheless possible to find some significant improvements in its approach to international security. Whether these will shape the international profile of the EU in important ways remains to be seen. The conceptual improvement is not linked to new ideas from the new members, although the ten certainly helped to drive the new prevention-oriented security concept further and to make it a development project of all 25 member states. The Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme, which was added to the humanitarian assistance in the Great Lakes region, is just one prominent example. The accession of two additional Mediterranean member states, Cyprus and Malta, did not significantly reinforce the EU's southern dimension. Instead, the eastern (Russia) and the western dimensions (United States) were activated, although for different reasons.

It is not only the EU but also many Middle Eastern actors that are part of a learning process with respect to conflict prevention.⁴⁵ The new EU-25 can choose from an extensive set of diplomatic, economic, financial, political and military means with which to either engage in direct preventive action or support other actors engaged in peace-building and conflict prevention. The long-term instruments include trade, development cooperation, human

⁴² Council of the European Union (12 Dec. 2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, drafted by Javier Solana.

⁴³ Council of the European Union (2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Scholars had been asking for this improvement for a long time. See Steven Everts (2003), *The EU and the Middle East: a Call for Action*, Centre For European Reform, London.

⁴⁵ "Barcelona plus: towards a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States", a EuroMeSCo Report coordinated by Álvaro de Vasconcelos with a drafting committee composed of Roberto Aliboni, Volker Perthes and Abdalah Saaf (2005), Lisbon, <http://www.euromesco.net/imgupload/barcelonaplus_en_fin.pdf>.

rights and environmental policies as well as political dialogue and arms control. The short-term instruments include a wide range of diplomatic tools as well as confidence-building measures and humanitarian assistance. Many of the traditional mechanisms for EU relations with third countries are now being adapted to the new challenges of conflict prevention. A high-profile external call on these assets (i.e., through an indigenous initiative from the Mediterranean region) would encourage further transformations of European foreign and security policy.

With this new variety and depth of instruments, ten years after the inception of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and five years after the launch of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) project, the EU is significantly better prepared for coping with external security than it was before.⁴⁶ Relatively speaking, the build-up of the CFSP/ESDP and its practical achievements are still in the embryonic stages. That said, they are a success story and at present it seems that there is more to come. The EU has become a more political and a more serious actor in conflict prevention because of the possibility that it might use force. As Robert Cooper of the Council General Secretariat claims: “When a country or an organisation contemplates the deployment of forces, the atmosphere changes, ambiguity ceases to be an option, decisions go up to the highest levels; the risks, costs and commitment are of a different order from those involved in other actions—making statements or giving aid.”⁴⁷

Yet, while the development of the CFSP/ESDP towards its goal of autonomous action continues, its growth rate and effectiveness are increasingly limited by its unnatural separation from the external relations of the European Communities. Overcoming the historic schism, therefore, and connecting the ‘structural weight’ of the Community with the ‘strategic weight’ of the ESDP has become a precondition for a qualitative leap forward in the EU’s prevention policy as well as for crisis management and post-war stabilisation.

In other words, the EU and its member states have a lot of homework to do before they can seriously start thinking about building a preventive partnership with one of its prime neighbour regions—the Mediterranean. However, as in the 1980s, when relations with Eastern Europe and with the Middle East formed the testing ground for European Political Cooperation, the EU could today grow as an actor in conflict prevention by shaping a common security space for the Euro-Med Partnership.

Views on conflict prevention as a security strategy

When the EU declares prevention to be its primary approach to security, this does not mean that preventive policy is regarded as the only way to deal with conflict and risk or with other security concerns. Instead, Brussels seeks to engage early on, before disputes escalate into violence and before crime and war destroy societies and their basis for living. The rationale for prevention is to keep threats away from the EU, to contribute to stability elsewhere and, thus, to avoid more demanding and more costly European interventions later. However, the EU has not established a hierarchy of critical regions in this regard.

The EU does not shy away from intervention, even if it is more selective with regard to crisis management than to crisis prevention. There seems to be little reluctance in Brussels when it comes to humanitarian aid or to post-war reconstruction. In fact, this has been the most prominent, and the most extended, area of EU external engagement—mainly in the Western Balkans. A large part of the EU’s practical emphasis on post-conflict stabilisation is motivated not only by preventive calculations, but also by reasons related to cooperation with, and emancipation from, the USA. This is particularly true for the Mediterranean region where the USA has the strongest influence of all the external powers.

Nor is prevention an unknown area for the USA. It seems, however, that the concept is less widely used than is the case in the EU. For some risks more than for others, preventive engagement is prominent in US security policy. A military superpower can rely on its force projection and determination to satisfy its security needs at a later stage of the cycle of conflict. With regard to threats derived from a dangerous combination of risks such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and non-state actors, however, even Washington makes certain to act early on and, in some cases, to prepare for pre-emptive intervention. A pre-emptive strike is not part of the official Brussels strategic doctrine but, if such a critical situation were to arise, it is highly likely that there would be an unorthodox move by some of the affected EU member states.

3. Conflict prevention as a security strategy

⁴⁶ Roy H. Ginsberg (2001), *The European Union in International Politics: Baptism by Fire*, New York/Oxford.

⁴⁷ Nicole Gnesotto (ed.) (August 2004), *EU Security and Defence Policy: The First Five Years (1999–2004)*, Paris, p. 192.

The EU declares that it is unlikely that such an extreme situation will emerge soon and, therefore, concentrates on the long list of more likely conflict scenarios and horizontal security challenges. It repeats that it must use all its instruments to deal preventively with the wide range of concerns. This is the formula used to express its view that civilian and military assets from the Community and from the member states should be included (see below, section 4). On paper, this is quite an impressive arsenal: in reality, and for well-known reasons, the resources available for operations are substantially smaller. Yet, the resources that have proved to be available are still of a significant size and quality.

Only a few of the EU's overall resources for external action are explicitly reserved for preventive operations, such as the Rapid Reaction Mechanism which is a financial mechanism managed by the Conflict Prevention Unit of the External Relations Directorate General of the European Commission. Many more important funds are located in the various geographical and functional cooperation and development programmes of the EU. These pre-existing programmes have recently been reviewed to enable them to serve preventive goals (see also the EU long-term budget perspective⁴⁸).

A new and additional instrument for prevention policy (the "Stabilisation Instrument"), which will broaden the financial basis of EU external relations in the 2007–2013 budget period, was agreed in January 2006. It will be endowed with a fund of €2 billion and could lead to an upgrade of the civilian intervention capabilities of the European Commission and the European Parliament.⁴⁹ This could lead to more and better-tailored instruments for shaping a more refined Euro-Med security culture and conflict-prevention infrastructure.

By placing prevention at the centre of EU efforts to address violent conflict and other security threats and concerns, the European Security Strategy matches the approach taken a few years earlier when the Gothenburg EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts was launched. Thus, the Strategy and the Programme, although developed in reverse order, are compatible and consistent. The rift between EU member states over Iraq did raise some doubts about the durability of this consistency, but the enlargement of the EU, the elaboration of the Constitutional treaty, and the growing number of ESDP operations seem to have reconfirmed the EU's basic choice. The preventive approach has been extended to a wider dimension of security, including the recognition of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and organised crime as additional challenges—all of which are present in the wider Mediterranean area. When setting its priorities, the EU will naturally focus on this particular region.

In these fields, prevention may have to come close to pre-emptive moves. For the US government extreme situations, such as weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a dictator who is determined to launch them at the USA or one of its close allies, are the most important and the most likely cases to prepare for. The US government, therefore, invests in its capacity to deter or pre-empt these dangers, or to shield against them. Naturally, its investment in military operations is much higher than in civilian aid programmes. Its civilian aid is still huge in absolute terms at roughly half the amount the EU gives. More important than its size is the fact that official development aid from the United States seems to serve preventive purposes less stringently than is the case with EU aid. Most of the substantial EU programmes that target regional instability and state failure such as Tacis (for the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia), Meda (for the South Mediterranean and Middle East countries) and Cards (for the Western Balkans) are guided by preventive imperatives and goals. The new budget line for neighbourhood activities will reconfirm this choice.⁵⁰

Developments in the past five years

Taking the past five years as proof, the EU can claim that it has introduced the idea of conflict prevention at the European and the national levels. Certainly, because of its institutional deficits, not all the EU agencies have been fully engaged in the enterprise. Similarly, some member states have been late to mainstream conflict prevention while others have been forerunners. The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands are among the most advanced group with the UK taking the lead.⁵¹ With its Conflict Prevention Pools the British Government has managed to overcome some long-standing structural hurdles to exploit the synergies of integrating military, developmental and aid-related capacities.⁵² However, these preventive devices have been developed for regions other than the Mediterranean (see the UK Africa Prevention Pool).

There is no commonly accepted textbook, no "Clausewitz", for the art of conflict prevention. Over the past five years, the EU has devoted some of its energies to developing skills and best practice. From early-warning schemes to conflict impact assessment the EU has

⁴⁸ Annegret Bendiek and Hannah Whitney-Steele (2006), *The Financing of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy*, SWP Comments, 16 June, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin.

⁴⁹ For the report (Rapporteur Angelika Beer), adopted by the European Parliament on 7 July 2006 see www.angelika-beer.de/index.php?/s,2,4,37.

⁵⁰ Gustav Lindstrom (Sep. 2005), *EU US Burdensharing: Who Does What?*, Chaillot Paper no. 82, Paris, p. 61f.

⁵¹ Nicolaus Rockberger (Nov.2005), *Scandinavia and ESDP: Are the Nordic States Holding Back?*, Strategische Analysen, Büro für Sicherheitspolitik, Wien.

⁵² Greg Austin (2005), *Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools*, Review of the British Government's approach to conflict prevention, Department for International Development, London, EVSUM EV647.

developed a methodology of prevention policy with the list of conflict indicators built into the country strategy papers as well as at a regional level.⁵³ Taken together, the tools of EU prevention policy aim to be more than just proactive policy. They also go beyond the geographical approach, such as in the case of the Mediterranean region or EMP, and now target cross-cutting components of instability (such as the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons).

When focusing on the outputs of the EU, its record regarding capacity building in the field of conflict prevention is impressive. The direct outcome of EU preventive policies is less obvious, except in a case such as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Too many conflicts from the EU watch-list remain unresolved and require long-term stabilisation efforts, military intervention, or both. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is rich in this regard and new cases are being added at the time of writing (see Israel's invasion of Gaza and Lebanon in July 2006).

Capacity building for conflict prevention must be taken as a sign of determination on the European side: there are quite impressive assets but also stunning deficiencies. Part of the deficiency is that some of the EU's most promising tools (such as the civilian elements of the ESDP) lack the experience to serve as conflict prevention instruments in an EU operation. Roughly speaking, the EU's comparative advantage continues to be the richness of its instruments. A major disadvantage is that these instruments are scattered and difficult to coordinate given the institutional and legal arrangements of the EU.

The launch of a more strategically oriented European neighbourhood policy starting from, but moving beyond, the Barcelona Process is part of the new thinking in Europe.⁵⁴ Equally important is what now looks like a failure to revise the EU's instruments and foreign policy structure in the new EU Constitutional Treaty of June 2004. If the EU is not prepared for and not capable of reform at home how can it convey a convincing message of reform to the nations of the Middle East? One crucial aspect in this regard is the EU's attitude to the use of military force. The EU used to be regarded as a civilian power lacking the will and the potential to use military force in international relations. Surprisingly, there was no collective EU military force worthy of mention until quite recently. This has changed with the build-up of the ESDP since 1999 and its peacekeeping force (including 12 so-called battle groups). The EU has autonomous and specialised forces to offer when asked to assist with a UN stabilisation mission, as contemplated in Brussels in case of a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, or when called on by a regional organisation to support a preventive operation, such as the request from the African Union (AU) to the EU for logistical support in the Darfur case.

The EU was wise enough, however, to exclude participation in any pre-emptive strike. It knows that "none of the new threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means".⁵⁵ Violence cannot simply be countered with violence, and the comparative advantage of Brussels is its variety of instruments and skills. In fact, the prevention package offered by the EU includes civil *and* military instruments, just as it encompasses incentives and sanctions as well as immediate and structural means (see below, section 4.). Originally, these packages had been prepared and projected mainly for pre-violence situations and post-war conflict prevention. However, the list of activities since the EU started to use its military and police forces includes a conflict prevention operation undertaken during ongoing violence (peace enforcement), the Artemis operation in the summer of 2003.

Alongside its internal preparation the EU is about to renew its two most important strategic partnerships: those with the Middle East and with the USA. The EU intends to expand its special relationship with the Mediterranean countries to the countries "east of Jordan". The carefully designed 'EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East'⁵⁶ has a typically European emphasis on a comprehensive, multidimensional, and institutional approach and thus contrasts with the US approach taken in its "Strategy for Freedom".⁵⁷ Attempts are being made at the governmental as well as at the non-state level (such as those during the 2004 Istanbul conference⁵⁸) to reconcile the two approaches and to bring the EU and the USA closer together as partners.

As of now the Mediterranean region does not possess a strong voice in this part of the Euro-US partnership. Its voice will become stronger if the Middle East can present itself as more innovative in terms of both intra-state reform and regional cooperation. With regard to prevention, and more specifically to in-conflict conflict prevention, the Mediterranean countries can be optimistic about finding the EU at their side—and potentially also the USA, depending on who is in power in Washington at the time.

53 Javier Nino-Pérez (2004), 'EU instruments for conflict prevention' in Jan Wouters and Vincent Kronenberger (eds), *Conflict Prevention: Is the European Union Ready?*, Brussels, pp. 93–117.

54 Laura Felio (June 2004), 'Political Reforms in the Mediterranean as a conflict prevention methodology' in *Conflict in Focus*, no. 1, pp. 14–17.

55 A Secure Europe in a Better World (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 7.

56 European Commission (23 June 2004), *EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Euromed Report no. 78, Brussels.

57 Peter Rudolf (2004), *The 'Strategy of Freedom' in the Middle East: The Rhetoric and Reality of US Policy* Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, <http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?id=746&PHPSESSID=149e532819eeaac2bc721c6356cf4b26-3>. Volker Perthes (Feb. 2004), 'America's "Greater Middle East" and Europe', SWP Comments, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?id=778.

58 For the official side see the record of the June 2004 NATO meeting; for the non-governmental view see: The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, (2004) (eds.), *Democracy and Human Development in the Broader Middle East: A Transatlantic Strategy for Partnership*, Istanbul Paper no. 1, Istanbul/Washington.

4. The comprehensive approach of EU conflict prevention

Since the key documents and action plans on conflict prevention were launched in 2000–2001, all of the EU's institutions have been trying to integrate the concept into their activities. They have all had the same experience: while conflict prevention is a plausible strategy, it seems to be one of the hardest to implement. As stated above, in spite of some achievements on the ground, Brussels continues to operate in a sphere of learning with only a few convincing practical showcases of success.⁵⁹ Most international agencies and actors are not doing much better in this regard.

Yet, as the most recent EU Presidency annual report on conflict prevention rightly claims, “substantive progress towards a more effective approach by the EU towards preventing violent conflict” has been made.⁶⁰ This is visible in the more active approach to conflict-related issues, in the development of applicable capabilities, in the more effective integration of instruments, and in the way in which the EU is building partnerships with other actors in conflict prevention. The UN and a variety of regional organisations are mentioned, but not the Mediterranean region. Is Brussels simply going it alone?

On the other hand, the same report admits that many important practical fields remain underdeveloped such as the follow-up to early-warning issues, the link between security and development, a comprehensive approach to fragile states, and the strengthening of a rules-based international order. What is not mentioned is the need for a broader approach to conflict prevention, sustained effort, and a more systematic development of preventive partnerships as well as the goal of ownership. All of these areas seem to require a learning process inside the EU, in the Mediterranean region and between the two.

Broaden the range of instruments

Dealing with security challenges in an integrated manner represents a civil-military approach. The EU has developed as a civilian power over many years. Only since the launch of the ESDP in 1999 has it started to add a military arm. Starting in March 2003 with the Concordia operation in Macedonia, the EU has taken over or initiated a number of low-level military stabilisation operations in the Balkans and in Africa. Combined civilian and military operations are the next phase of the EU's new policy of intervention as realised in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Althea, EUPM). At present a small civil-military planning cell is being built up in Brussels that will enable more of these integrated operations. A new Operation Centre will be in place by September 2006. Integrated planning and autonomous operation without support from NATO or national headquarters is certainly an experiment for all involved.

Some of the EU member states have pioneered this approach, particularly the UK with its Prevention Pools and the Netherlands with a similar device that has been combining foreign, development and defence policies in an integrated and targeted manner. More importantly, the EU still grapples with the well-known structural problems of integrating short-term and long-term measures into a single strategy. Linking Community instruments with CFSP/ESDP assets remains an institutional and procedural challenge. Applying the full spectrum of instruments for crisis management and conflict prevention, including diplomatic, political, military and civilian, trade and development activities, requires a more fundamental reform of the EU political system than has been ventured so far.

The emphasis by the EU of holistic strategies for support in post-conflict situations, which focuses on meeting both the immediate security needs and the longer term reform of the security sector, is in line with the broad civil-military approach that the ESDP is supposed to represent in the future.⁶¹ Until recently, the EU could only be active in providing assistance for disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, on the one hand, and in supporting partner governments with institution building and local community development activities, on the other hand. This wide range of instruments corresponds with the complexity of the conflicts in the MENA region.

The civil-military cell is the conceptual nucleus of a broadly based EU security policy. It is a testing ground and an experiment to learn innovative approaches to conflict prevention by overcoming the traditional narrowness of either military or non-military instruments and decision makers. Prevention can now be part of a civil-military process of assessment and implementation. The requirement is to look at both civilian and military resources and to determine their respective functions in a broad approach rather than integrating the civilian assistance strategies into military peacebuilding doctrine.

The coordination inside the European institutions and with partners is more demanding the broader the conflict prevention approach—especially if the partners, as in the case of

⁵⁹ Reinhardt Rummel (2004), ‘The EU's involvement in conflict prevention: strategy and practice’ in Jan Wouters and Vincent Kronenberger (eds.) *Conflict Prevention: Is the European Union Ready?*, Brussels, pp. 67–92.

⁶⁰ Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, Draft report to the European Council on EU activities in the framework of prevention, including implementation of the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts, Brussels 02.06.2004, 10051/04, p. 13. ⁶¹ Heiner Hänggi and Fred Tanner (July 2005), *Promoting Security Sector Governance in the EU's Neighbourhood*, Chaillot Paper no. 80, Paris.

the Mediterranean region, are even more poorly prepared for such complex emergencies. There are still some who feel that civilian operations undertaken by the Council of the European Union (Council) are a duplication of work already carried out by the Commission or—worse—who believe the Council’s international policies have less impact given that it cannot match the weight and expertise of the Commission. Council representatives claim that their missions are likely to make a greater impact on the ground: “Using manpower directly generated by member states produces—in cooperation with the Commission—a higher degree of commitment and ownership than do the more arms-length programmes that the Commission organizes”.⁶² It is necessary to choose from both sources of expertise and to launch initiatives either on the Commission or the Council track. The European Parliament will have to play an important role in the process of choosing the option that promises to achieve the best result.

With regard to civilian capabilities, a more substantial process of commitment, preparation and training needs to be launched to raise this component to the quality required by complex and more demanding missions and to reach the level of professionalism achieved by the military component of the ESDP.⁶³ Emphasising the civilian component of the ESDP will allow the EU to make better use of the military in conflict prevention as well as in post-war stabilisation efforts (‘post-conflict conflict prevention’). It is necessary to learn from the rich experience in the Balkans (including the March 2004 riots in Kosovo) that a more tailor-made and differentiated response capability should be organised for escalation situations, for transition situations from war to peace and for situations of fragile peace, where fighting may reoccur or where riots may lead to the spread of violence.

So far, police power has not been contemplated as a means of prevention deployed early on in an attempt to prevent disputes from becoming violent and organised crime from getting out of hand. In the future, the EU may want to use police power more often for preventive goals and to deploy it earlier, before fighting breaks out. It would be helpful to know whether such police operations would be regarded as more acceptable to Mediterranean governments and societies than interventions using military personnel.

A similar case can be made regarding a civilian “reserve” to deal more specifically with so-called human security. In their recent report, commissioned by High Representative/Secretary General Solana, Mary Kaldor and her team focus on basic insecurities caused by gross violations of human rights in regional conflicts and failed states.⁶⁴ These violations are the source of new global threats including international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and organised crime. The report suggests a “Human Security Response Force” composed of 15 000 personnel, most of whom would be civilians. While this “force” seems to be largely identical to the civilian component of the ESDP, it would also contain a “Human Security Volunteer Service”. Could such a service be contemplated in cooperation with Mediterranean countries? Or is there too much fear that such a connection would reduce the EU’s image and confidence which it has built up over time.

A sustained effort

The second lesson to be learned by both the EU and policy makers in the Mediterranean is that prevention is achieved through sustained efforts. This means concentrating on, and including, all stages of a conflict: the escalation phase, the crisis phase and the period of post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation. Prevention is not an isolated, surgical operation but part of a holistic approach.

For the time being, most of the resources of the EU’s security efforts still flow into the reconstruction phase. Brussels has tried unsuccessfully to shift the emphasis towards preventing the escalation of international conflicts. Similarly, it has been attempting to encourage thinking in more comprehensive terms and planning for exit strategies before an operation or a programme begins. There is still a tendency in Brussels to ‘visit’ conflicts rather than tackle the root causes and engage long term. This is even more evident with regard to horizontal issues such as terrorism, organised crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—and their root causes. “Addressing poverty, exclusion, denial of basic human rights, gender inequalities, discrimination against minorities and the effects of pandemics is fundamental to what we see as a practical strategy aimed at the root causes of conflict”.⁶⁵

Operation Artemis—launched in Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in June 2003—helped to stabilise security conditions and improve the humanitarian situation in support of UN Security Council resolution 1484, which authorised the deployment of an interim emergency multinational force until September 2003. This peace enforcement

⁶² Nicole Gnesotto (August 2004), *op. cit.*, p. 192

⁶³ See the Civilian Capabilities Commitment Conference (22 Nov.2004), Brussels.

⁶⁴ A Human Security Doctrine for Europe, The Barcelona Report (15 Sep.2004), Presented to EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Barcelona.

⁶⁵ Tom Kitt [The Irish Foreign Secretary during Ireland’s EU presidency] (31 March 2004), Opening statement at the European Regional Conference on the Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Dublin, p. 3.

mission involved some minor incidents, which resulted in the force having to use its weapons, but in the end was successful in stopping the massacres in Bunia.⁶⁶ The European military force worked in close coordination with the UN Mission in DRC (MONUC). In parallel, the use of development instruments has helped to consolidate security in DRC and to work for good governance and the rule of law— factors essential to the peace process. In the meantime, the EU is providing assistance with the setting up of an integrated Police Unit in Kinshasa. This is intended to help to reinforce the internal security apparatus and to ensure the protection of state institutions. The goal, and the hope, is to contribute to a critical sector at a critical juncture in order to prevent further destabilisation of the country. The ESDP operation, which started in July 2006, aims to uphold law and order in the DRC during the general and presidential elections and is the next step in a series of small interventions that have been requested by the local (President Kabila) and the UN levels (Secretary-General Kofi Annan).

The EU has invited third countries to contribute forces and civilian experts to almost all its ESDP operations. The countries of the MENA region, thus far, have not taken up this invitation in significant numbers or in systematic ways. It would be useful to assess past as well as current ESDP missions for their suitability for cooperation between the northern and the southern partners in the EMP. Moreover, participation by southern partners could also be tried in EU conflict prevention and crisis management exercises (CME), such as CME 06 where this time NATO is the ESDP's partner, as well as inclusion in training and reviews.

Gaining from multilateralism

A third lesson that the EU is about to learn—and where the EMP partners could organise a deeper and more operational understanding—relates to the need for more reliable international legal regimes and common codes of behaviour in order to extend the set of international standards that serve as a universal reference for dealing with specific countries or regions of concern and specific instabilities. Thus, the EU has been supporting the creation of further international institutions, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC); of regimes, such as in the field of Human Rights; and of conventions, such as on small arms or on the decommissioning, decontamination and reutilisation of nuclear weapons (DD&R). As an example, the EU₃ (the UK, France, Germany) have negotiated with Tehran to try to persuade the Iranian leaders away from any plan to develop nuclear weapons. The references for those negotiations are the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

EU support for peacekeeping operations that can be made possible through the ESDP can be regarded as a growing field of prevention. Bringing together the parties in the Darfur crisis and the wider Sudan conflict was a mediation effort that the EU would not have attempted a few years before, but also demonstrates the limitations of influence. In a different approach, the EU can contribute funding to African-led operations in Burundi, Liberia and Ivory Coast aimed at securing stability and implementing peace agreements, but in none of these cases will the outcome of these efforts be under the EU's control as events in Ivory Coast and Sudan have demonstrated.

Despite these limitations, cooperation with relevant regional and international organisations, particularly from the Mediterranean region, should move ahead because it makes multilateral engagement more effective. In this regard it is encouraging that the EU has finally reached out to the UN, a front runner in matters of conflict prevention. The EU-UN Joint Declaration of September 2003 sets out a framework for closer cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management, especially in the areas of planning, training, communication and best practice. An EC Communication on EU-UN relations aims to consolidate international support behind UN objectives and to develop strategic partnerships with specialised agencies. Such a partnership covering conflict prevention has already been concluded with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). High-level meetings have started and steering committees have been established to coordinate joint work. EU officials participate in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) assessment missions. Commission services have launched a desk-to-desk dialogue (including early-warning information), with integrated UN teams, on five countries. Many more of these exercises in cross-fertilisation could be launched.

Measured by the number of attempts in recent decades to bring together all the Middle Eastern states, the group in the Mediterranean region or various sub-groups of them, a solid network of multilateral relations might be expected to be in place that could be turned into a framework of regional peace and security.⁶⁷ Such a framework would set the standards for peaceful conflict resolution and thus back up the intra-state processes of

⁶⁶ Intervention by Javier Solana (18 July 2003), EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Public Meeting of the UN Security Council, 'Democratic Republic of Congo', New York.
⁶⁷ Thomas Demmelhuber (2006), *The Euro-Mediterranean Space as an Imagined (Geo-)political, Economic and Cultural Entity*, ZEI Discussion Paper C 159, Zentrum für Integrationsforschung, Bonn.

political reform and social responsiveness referred to above. It would also set the rules for cross-border and interstate behaviour as well as provide the instruments and the infrastructure to ensure respect for those rules. It seems, however, that, so far, political leaders in the Middle East and activists alike have grossly underestimated the preventive potential of regional cooperation.

There are exceptions to the rule in all Middle Eastern countries and at all levels of society:

The participation of states with similar experience in conflict resolution, peace-keeping and regional cooperation is, of course, imperative to assist the countries of the Middle East in overcoming their difficulties. In this respect at least, the Middle East idiom needs to be globalised. New security arrangements must by their nature link up with those of neighbouring regions; in the case of the Middle East, Europe in particular.⁶⁸

Even a prominent member of the royal family in Jordan, however, must admit the limits of rational thinking. It is true that meaningful regional cooperation between states and populations with partly hostile histories, disparities in resources, and incompatible desires is not an easy task—especially if propped up by colonial legacies and interference from external powers. Yet, it is necessary only to refer to the standard example, the integration process in Europe, to prove that even the most difficult obstacles can be overcome. Africa may well serve as a small showcase in this regard.⁶⁹ In recent years the AU and various African regional organisations have managed to get their institutions to deal with peace and security more operationally and effectively. Maybe the African example is worth studying in order to find some practical ideas for the Middle East case (and vice versa).

Certainly, substantial regional cooperation will not advance much if official leaders and non-governmental activists do not dare to test unconventional avenues. The Constitutive Act of the AU not only shifted the balance significantly from the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference to the responsibility of member states to ensure peace and security on the continent and to intervene in grave circumstances, it also created new structures for implementing these tasks. The Peace and Security Council of the AU is to be supported by a continental early-warning system, a panel of the wise as well as an African stand-by force and a peace fund. Flanking initiatives include the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA), which tries to replicate the CSCE model; and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which tries to organise reform and political commitments in the socio-economic field. Crisis-related NGOs have also begun to spread recently and are cooperating on a regional basis.⁷⁰

Expectations of such initiatives should not be raised too high—neither in the African, nor, if similar structures were to be installed, in the Middle Eastern contexts.⁷¹ On the other hand, such an indigenous dynamic can, as the African example demonstrates, mobilise considerable political will at home as well as support from abroad. Not only have the UN, the G8, the USA and the EU endorsed the home-grown plans for operationally effective cooperation at the AU level, they have also—by extension—encouraged financially and otherwise supported the strengthening of subregional groupings such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as well as regionally focused NGOs. These groupings, in turn, have started to use their capabilities for crisis management and prevention.⁷²

The lesson to be learned from the African case is that practical improvements can be made even in the midst of major ongoing hostilities. It is not obvious why the constellation in the Middle East would not allow a similar leap forward in strengthening region-wide and subregional organisations (governmental and non-governmental) and assisting them in their efforts to mainstream prevention and tackle key causes of conflict. This can be done—as again the African example suggests—using all kinds of existing regional organisations starting with the larger organisations such as the Arab League and the Greater Arab Trade Area,⁷³ and moving on to the smaller groupings such as the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab Maghreb Union, and the Agadir Agreement. South–South regional integration structures (such as the Arms Control and Regional Security in the Middle East, ACRS, framework⁷⁴) as well as the reflex of regional cooperation in times of tension (as displayed by Arab leaders during the last war in Iraq⁷⁵) deserve review with regard to the imperative of prevention.

The call for regional cooperation is certainly not a new one, but in the midst of insecurity and conflict in the Mediterranean region it helps to renew regional cooperation with the goal of advancing conflict prevention.⁷⁶ In-conflict conflict prevention should screen and

68 El Hassan bin Talal (2001), *Continuity, Innovation and Change: Selected Essays*, Amman, p. 55.

69 *EU Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa*, Report prepared by Saferworld and International Alert in coordination with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003), Rome; and Council of the European Union (2005), 'The EU and Africa: towards a strategic partnership', Brussels.

70 European Centre for Development Policy Management (October 2003), 'Regional approaches to conflict prevention in Africa', In Brief, no. 4, pp. 1–12.

71 European Commission (2004), *Europe Aid Cooperation Office (eds), EU strategic partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Euromed Report no. 78, final report, Brussels; and Isabel Schäfer and Ferhad Ibrahim (2005), 'Regional crises and Europe: how the Middle East conflict and Iraq War affect the EMP', *EuroMeSCo Papers*, no. 40, Lisbon.

72 Fernanda Faria (April 2004), *Crisis Management in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of the European Union*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Occasional Paper no. 51, Paris.

73 EuroArab Management School (2001), 'Arab commercial and economic co-operation: The Greater Arab Free Trade Area', Granada, <http://www.eams.fundea.es/research/AFTArea.pdf>, accessed 23 July 2004.

74 Centre for Non-proliferation Studies (2002), *Arms Control and Regional Security in the Middle East*, Monterey Institute of International Studies, <http://cns.mii.edu/pubs/inven/pdfs/acrs.pdf>, accessed 23 July 2004.

75 See the ad hoc attempt by Arab officials and scholars to organise an 'Arab Security Council' as a regional fallback structure after the Iraq war. 'Call to set up Arab security council to protect members', *Gulf News*, 5 May 2003, www.gulf-news.com/Articles/news.asp?ArticleID=86480, accessed 23 July 2004.

76 For one of the most thorough and sensible regional designs, which later led to a draft Security Charter for the region, see Peter Jones (December 1998), *Towards a Regional Security Regime for the Middle East: Issues and Options*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Stockholm.

develop existing regional frameworks because they are a source of understanding, and cooperation and can help to re-establish trust. The relationships in the Middle East should not be left to the unholy law where violence breeds violence. Instead, areas of practical and pragmatic cooperation should be identified and increased in order to encourage societies to open up towards each other. The experience of the so-called Harmel Doctrine,⁷⁷ which in the heyday of the Cold War allowed for mutual agreement and common problem solving among hostile camps, comes to mind in this context. In this sense, each item on the long agenda of conflict is also a nucleus for cooperation, whether this is the Arab-Israeli conflict (including the Israeli fight against militant Hamas and Hisbollah), the stabilisation of post-war Iraq, the Iran case or the conflicts in North Africa, to mention just a few. The geographical, cultural, economic and political overlap between the AU area and the Mediterranean should be taken as a chance for interregional cooperation and learning.

If regional cooperation were to be enhanced in the Middle East and given a conflict prevention focus, outside actors such as the EU would feel a stronger obligation to engage. The EU has been advocating the regional concept as a prime tool of preventing violent conflict. How could it stand idly by? And how could it not respect and honour indigenous concepts and activities with such a focus? There is the chance that the EU could be open to unconventional efforts.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the initiators should not expect too much from EU assistance given that, so far, Brussels has a mixed record in this field.⁷⁹

The goal of ownership

The fourth lesson to be learned is that no actor is capable of achieving sustainable success in prevention if parties to the conflict are left out of the process, if regional powers are not included and if security partners remain aloof from the preventive efforts. The EU is well aware that its resources and capacities are limited in size and that its intervention in local conflicts as well as regional crises will always be insufficient given that it is the indigenous parties to the conflict that finally need to settle their own disputes. The EU understands well that it will have to shift parts of its activity from intervention to build the local capacity for peaceful conflict resolution. As an example, the EU is supporting the creation and the activities of the new Peace and Security Commission of the African Union. To do this, the EU had to break a taboo among its development experts and allow funds from the European Development Fund to be diverted to security tasks including the use of military forces for peace support operations.

Given the limitations of any external conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilisation efforts, and the magnitude of the task in many critical regions of the world, the ownership approach has become more prominent—especially in the EU's relations with Africa. Thus, investment in strengthening the AU and sub-organisations such as ECOWAS, particularly with regard to their preventive capabilities and activities, ranks high on the EU agenda. Support through the European Development Fund for the Peace Facility for Africa is a significant step. Although mainly focused on the deployment of peacekeeping troops and related capacity building, it will support conflict prevention by re-enforcing the early-warning system, conflict mediation, and ceasefire observation. The downside to the ownership approach, seen from the side of the EU, is that the EU may have less influence over the launch and outcome of interventions undertaken by these regional organisations.⁸⁰

It would be naive to assume that all that is required in the MENA region is the application of the right preventive measures for violence to disappear. Conflict prevention should not mean sidelining or even ignoring the perennial Israeli-Arab conflict, the post-war situation in Iraq or the dispute with Iran over the nuclear issue and the support of terrorism. While it would not be justified to say that these mega-conflicts cannot be engaged with successfully using a conflict prevention approach, these examples demonstrate, first, the magnitude of the efforts required to try to avoid further escalation and, second, the importance of early and suitable policies to try to avoid armed solutions to political problems in the first place. Moreover, the urgency of the political, economic and social reconstruction in Iraq proves that progress on the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be a precondition for launching preventive initiatives and implementing political reform elsewhere in the Mediterranean region.⁸¹

Many of the case studies published in various editions of *Conflict In Focus*⁸² demonstrate the need for proactive action, be it at the state or sub-state level. The declaration by the Arab League Summit of 23 May 2004 recognised that cross-cutting issues such as good governance, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender issues, respect for the rights of minorities, cooperation on non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, and economic development are all part of the Middle East conflict prevention agenda.⁸³

77 The Harmel Doctrine is named after Pierre Harmel who, as the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1967, advocated in a NATO report a strong defence combined with good diplomatic relations with the countries of the Warsaw Pact. The Harmel Doctrine paved the way for the détente period that followed.

78 The EU has recently made an exception regarding the use of its development fund (EDF). Brussels is now prepared to contribute from the EDF to the AU's Peace Fund, which includes support for African intervention forces.

79 For an extensive record of the EU's attempts at inter-regional and inter-organisational cooperation see Emma J. Stewart (2006), *The European Union and Conflict Prevention: Policy Evolution and Outcome*, Berlin; and Reinhardt Rummel (2004), "The EU's involvement in conflict prevention: strategy and practice" in Jan Wouters and Vincent Kronenberger (eds), *Conflict Prevention: Is the European Union Ready?*, Brussels, pp. 95–118.

80 Bezen Balamir Coskun (January–March 2006), 'The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Middle East regional security complex' in *Insight Turkey* no. 8, Ankara, pp. 38–50.

81 Raffaella A. Del Sarto and Tobias Schumacher (spring 2005), "From EMP to ENP: what's at stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the southern Mediterranean?", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 17–38.

82 The bi-monthly online Bulletin published by the Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention (RCCP) in Amman.

83 Arab League (2004), 'Tunis Declaration of 16th Arab Summit', Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the USA, <http://www.saudiembassy.net/2004News/Statements/StateDetail.asp?cIndex=421>.

A policy of prevention should not be conceived of as a distinct policy area of its own separated from other political sectors and activities. Instead, it represents a conflict-sensitive approach which must be integrated into relevant state and non-state functions. Mainstreaming conflict prevention helps guide politicians and activists alike to bring instruments to bear that address specific conflict factors. Determining the most influential features of a conflict risks becoming no more than an academic exercise.⁸⁴ Yet, to prepare efficient countermeasures and connect them with political reform requires at least an identification of the root causes of violent conflict, the aggravating and prolonging factors and the trigger events because many are typical for the Middle Eastern societies of the Mediterranean region, although each of these conflict's causes demand a distinctive answer.⁸⁵

With regard to the root causes of violent conflict, attention should be paid to the legitimacy deficit of undemocratic governments, the systematic violation of minority and group rights, various degrees of state failure, a culture of impunity, employment shortages combined with demographic stresses, and destabilisation by neighbouring regimes. These are prime targets for political reform, including education. Of course these factors require elaboration with regard to individual countries or regions, their timeline, and their content of ownership, that is, the contribution that should be made by the EU to a comprehensive preventive policy that is initiated and implemented in essence by indigenous actors.

Aggravating factors refer to conditions contributing to the (re-)escalation and prolongation of existing conflicts. This category of conflict causes seems to be of particular importance in the Middle East and includes such items as the security management of refugee camps, perceptions of fundamentalist threats and religious confrontations, radical rhetoric and the use of hate media, increasing corruption, an undermining of the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force, illicit trade in arms, and external intervention—to mention just a few. Many of these factors could be addressed by a substantial renewal of the civil administration. Again the question, from the perspective of co-ownership, is—what should be contributed by the northern or the southern partners of the EMP?

Triggering events set off and escalate violent conflict. They consist of an unlimited list of factors ranging from local disputes to mass demonstrations, from the assassination of key leaders to military coups, from breaches of accords to peace enforcement operations. If at all, these factors can mainly be addressed from inside countries and require a well-functioning early-warning system. Especially in situations of in-conflict conflict prevention where—by definition—the environment is already explosive, the avoidance of trigger events requires particular attention and maybe a joint effort.

Long-lasting conflicts such as those in the Mediterranean region change their pattern over time and develop their own dynamics during the conflict cycle. Therefore, the preventive package has to be composed differently for different stages of conflict. Roughly speaking, pre-conflict can be addressed by non-military means, crisis management requires peacekeeping forces, and post-conflict periods are characterised first by a period of security concern and then require all the skills required for state-building and reform. These prescriptions sound like social engineering which can never fit MENA reality. However, without a refined methodology and an interest in the internal structure of society, neither prevention policy nor political reform will succeed.

Taken together, the EU member states are on their way to developing a distinct profile in international security characterised by features that deviate significantly from those of other international security actors such as the USA, China, the Russian Federation, NATO or the UN. As of now the southern partners of the EMP are not yet regarded by the EU as a strategic group of countries with whom to embark on a common mission of conflict prevention.⁸⁶ However, many activities below this level of cooperation are conceivable and have been tested and prepared for in one way or another in the recent past. The EU's formula for dealing with security challenges outside the EU could be called *security through a comprehensive approach*.

As is argued above, this approach needs to be broad, sustained, multilateral and inclusive. However, the new comprehensive security concept is not yet settled. What may be true for the EU as a collective actor is not necessarily true for all its member states or their Mediterranean counterparts. Small and large states may opt out of such a common concept depending on the situation and on their individual national interests.⁸⁷ Yet, the effort of jointly testing the comprehensive approach to conflict prevention is justified given the mutual gain that is likely to flow from such a common learning process.

5. Final remarks

84 For an exception to this rule see Roberto Aliboni and Laura Guazzone (2003), 'Democracy in the Arab countries and the west' in Roberto Aliboni (ed.), *Peace-, Institution- and Nation-Building in the Mediterranean and the Middle East*, Rome, pp. 7–17.

85 For a systematic assignment of appropriate measures in order to target specific problem areas and causes of conflict see the CD-ROM (Dec. 2001), *Conflict Prevention and Peace-building: A Practical Guide* Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik/Conflict Prevention Network, Berlin/Brussels.

86 Sharon Pardo and Lior Zemer (spring 2005), 'Towards a new Euro-Mediterranean neighbourhood space' in *European Foreign Affairs Review*, no. 10, vol. 1, London, pp. 39–77.

87 Jean-Yves Moisseron (2005), 'Vers la fin du processus de Barcelone?' in *Confluences Méditerranée* vol. 55, Paris, pp. 165–178; and Council of the European Union (2005), Agreed conclusions for the 7th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Luxembourg, 30–31 May 2005, Brussels, http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/85023.pdf.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Introduction

From the views expressed about southern and European perceptions of conflict prevention in chapters 2 and 3 of this report, it is clear that conflict prevention policy is surrounded by misconceptions, mistrust and difficulties of a political and a practical nature. At the same time, it is a crucial factor for both parties that they have little alternative but to try to achieve significant aspects of their security through conflict prevention activities, albeit in conjunction with other security policies.

While the South does not perceive conflict prevention as a precondition for creating security, stability and prosperity for individual countries and their citizens, the North, by contrast, regards conflict prevention as a necessity for several reasons. As is discussed in chapter 3, the continued stability and success of the EU is dependent on maintaining security in its neighbourhood, but it has neither the resources nor the desire to pursue crisis management on a large scale. It can therefore only achieve its goals by meeting threats at their early stages, that is, through conflict prevention. In addition, the new threats to Europe are of such a character that the traditional military means of achieving security are no longer viable—nuclear proliferation, the problems associated with illegal migration, and organised crime must be tackled by attacking their root causes.

At this time of general pessimism with regard to outcomes, the view of the authors of this report is that it is important to raise ideas that might contribute to progress with regard to security cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the southern Mediterranean. From this perspective, conflict prevention cannot be left out of the equation. Thus, in order to succeed, it is our belief that conflict prevention policies must be developed in the framework of the EMP, and that such policies must take account of the need to strengthen co-ownership when fostering regional cooperation between the South and North as well as the need to tailor conflict prevention policies to the region's specific requirements. We also believe that a comprehensive programme must be developed since disparate plans in which the different elements counteract each other are likely to be detrimental to the ultimate goal of establishing a safe and prosperous region throughout the Mediterranean.

However, given the weak common ground in the EMP, there would be significant problems associated with the launch and implementation of a distinct conflict prevention policy. Instead, all those involved in efforts to create stability around the Mediterranean Sea must contribute to this effort using the means available to them in a variety of areas and dimensions. Some of the activities pursued may be far from what might be perceived as typical conflict prevention measures, but it is the effects of the policies undertaken, more than any other characteristics, that merit their inclusion among conflict prevention activities.

Conflict prevention usually encompasses activities that are pursued with both a short-term and a long-term perspective. The former relate to such measures as efforts to avert imminent crises, while the latter concern a wide range of efforts, including such issues as promoting trade, development cooperation, human rights, gender equality, environmental policies and the rule of law. The recommendations suggested here include a mix of short-term and long-term activities. The emphasis on co-ownership, however, puts the focus more on long-term measures, although with a view to creating effects that will also be helpful in crisis situations.

Because they have been initiated by the North, conflict prevention activities undertaken through the EMP have dealt mostly with North–South and South–South matters. North–North conflicts have not been seen as relevant in the context of the EMP since they have taken place elsewhere. It is argued in the introduction to this report that one effect of the inclusion of conflict prevention in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) might be that some of the ENP's principles on cooperation that are relevant to conflict prevention policies and activities will become relevant to the EMP area. There is a logic to this thinking because problems have changed and are also less geographically restricted than during the Cold War, although the historic legacy influencing North–South and therefore also South–South relations still exists. Culture and religion are also areas that have been discussed and are sometimes seen as major problems in North–South relations. In all these fields, however, there are similar examples in current or recent North–North relations. For example, Northern Ireland is a conflict based on historical, social and religious factors. Russia's influence in several pre-Soviet areas, such as Transnistria, is a historical legacy, albeit of a different character to the relations between certain European states and states in North Africa and the Middle East. In addition, it seems that the Europe-EMP scene is increasingly dominated by issues such as crime, migration, the environment and energy—issues without clear boundaries with regard to either problems or solutions. Such problems may pit countries

and regions against each other but they are by no means restricted to a North–South perspective, and they also exist inside the EU itself.⁸⁸

A typical aspect of EU cooperation is that, while the organisation itself might pursue a certain policy, some EU member states might pursue an individual policy that is at times coordinated with that of the EU, but at other times not. This is an important factor for EMP cooperation, as is the fact that some states are major actors in world affairs while others are not, and that some are neighbours of the southern Mediterranean states while others are geographically distant. The interests of EU member states in cooperating with southern Mediterranean countries might vary considerably. It is important that this variety is used to the advantage of cooperation. Neighbouring states are, for example, more involved in the policies of the Mediterranean and therefore more knowledgeable, which is an asset to cooperation. On the other hand, more distant countries might at times become valuable cooperation partners because they have no common history of past conflict or no conflicting interests in areas such as, for example, trade.

In view of this rich vein of possibilities, this report makes a number of recommendations below in order to promote stronger and more viable co-ownership of conflict prevention policies and activities among the EMP's partners, and to contribute to more positive developments in the security environment in the Mediterranean basin. While the chapters above have demonstrated the intricate and serious nature of the problems facing the Mediterranean region, we believe that these suggestions, even though they may not all succeed in the short term, are worthy of consideration.

The chapters above have demonstrated the low level of information about conflict prevention in the region and emphasised that even specialised debate is rare. Future efforts to actively promote a higher degree of knowledge about conflict prevention policies would have a double advantage.

First, it would display openness by the partners and provide evidence that neither have anything to hide, thereby increasing confidence between them. As is demonstrated in chapter 2, the South often perceives conflict prevention policies as being pursued by the North in order to promote northern interests, and as a way to influence the internal policies of a southern country. While not hiding its own interest in creating a safe neighbourhood, it is the task of the North, as the party putting forward such policies, to demonstrate that suggested conflict prevention measures are in the interests of both North and South. An open attitude by northern countries should also include admitting their own historical responsibilities—while not allowing such discussions to dominate the debate. Since the root causes of the conflicts in the Mediterranean region will be subject to disagreement, the focus needs to be kept on the future and the benefits to be gained from cooperation. Openness should also characterise the discussion of values. While each side must show respect for the culture of the other, there are also cultural habits on both sides that should be the subject of open discussion. From the perspective of the North there is, for example, no reason to mute its criticism of laws and habits that do not give women and girls the same rights as men and boys. The South also has the right to criticise certain aspects of European societies, and the same respect, combined with openness, must be demonstrated in relations between the countries on the southern side of the Mediterranean.

Second, increased knowledge and information could promote a more enlightened public debate (through the EuroMeSCo Network and by other means) that could help to dispel exaggerated expectations, and would be essential to achieving better public awareness of conflict prevention. In this way it might be possible to avoid the setbacks caused by unrealistic perceptions of early rewards. It is particularly important to use methods that will engage young people when seeking to involve people in debates on these matters. It is possible that they will be the easiest to reach because of their knowledge of computers and languages.

Because inter-Arab relations are sometimes characterised by mistrust it is important to increase knowledge of the benefits of conflict prevention measures among neighbours. While co-ownership is sometimes difficult to attain in North–South relationships, the challenge is different for bilateral and multilateral conflict prevention activities in the South. The role of the North in this context would be to assist by supplying knowledge about creating the conditions for South–South cooperation while becoming directly involved by invitation only.

2. Knowledge and information

⁸⁸ See 'A Secure Europe in a Better World', European Security Strategy (2003), *op. cit.*

Increased knowledge and information are crucial to conflict prevention measures based on co-ownership in several ways since, for such measures to work, the two parties need to have a more or less equal level of knowledge and be equally convinced of the value of the undertaking. Co-ownership of the process means that activities must develop at the pace of the conviction of both parties. This also means that clear goals should be set for each of the activities undertaken—and be communicated to those involved. In this way, confidence may grow and the activities, once completed and evaluated, can serve as stepping stones for new activities because both parties will see the benefits of what has been achieved.

In the same way, the basic elements of cooperation need to be clear to all. As is pointed out in chapter 2, the lack of a common definition of security is an obstacle to cooperation. This is partly a sign of the underlying differences over the substance of cooperation, but it is also a matter of vocabulary. The former can be addressed by dividing problems into smaller issues in order to find agreement. The latter requires that a specific task must be undertaken in order to ensure that definitions and expressions prevalent in the North are not imposed on the South. Using only concepts that are acceptable and understandable to both sides is a first requirement for creating the trust necessary for cooperation in conflict prevention activities based on co-ownership.

3. Institutional reform

Institutional reform is a clear demand made by the southern Mediterranean elites, based on their wish to play a more active role in the EMP. At the policy level, this would require rules that allow for a more even-handed decision-making process. Meanwhile, it would be important to have at least a semi-permanent presence of representatives from the southern Mediterranean (whether in an autonomous secretariat or not) and a presidency that rotated between the partners. This is especially apparent at the level of political and security representatives, where the need for a greater degree of participation by the southern countries is clear from the research conducted for this report. The creation of a co-presidency of the EMP that rotated between the EU Presidency and each of southern Mediterranean partners would be an important initiative.

One initiative that deserves to be revived is the Balladur Plan,⁸⁹ which served the EU well in the mid-1990s. The Balladur Plan focused on solving minority issues while preserving existing borders, and was primarily used in Central Europe, for example, with Hungary and Slovakia, and with Hungary and Romania. It was well designed for problem solving in that it involved the forming of 'Tables' in which discussions with the different participants in a conflict took place. A mechanism of this type would be particularly useful for problems where positions had not yet become fixed by years of conflict, but where misunderstandings and the stereotyped perceptions of participants were part of the picture.

While these proposals concern the EMP, it would also be an advantage if the present stalemate in connection with the EU Constitution were to be resolved. The ENP-EMP is a major challenge for the EU that requires cohesion as well as administrative and decision-making capabilities.

4. A common security culture

As emphasised above, greater effort should be devoted to questions of language as a source of potential conflict. Efforts to address possible sources of misunderstanding and to create a common culture in terms of security issues between the two shores of the Mediterranean—while acknowledging the remaining differences of perception and interest—should be the focus of cooperation. To be more specific, a common security culture and a cooperative security approach that aim to legitimise Euro-Med responses to aggression, or other equally serious violations of internationally agreed norms of state behaviour, should be sought by both partners in order to consolidate co-ownership in this field.

As is described in chapter 2, some crucial elements of security culture differ between the South and the North. To take one example, the northern concept of regional security is not familiar to the south, where the concept of the Arab trans-state community is more natural. The problem of both sides continuing to speak in their own terms can, as suggested above, be addressed by increasing the level of knowledge, information and dialogue, but it can also be tackled by dealing with specific issues through which concrete goals can be formulated and associated with gains for both sides.

As is indicated in the introduction to this chapter, a huge challenge for the development of a common security culture is the fact that this would not only be a case of coordination

⁸⁹ Adam Daniel Rotfeld (1994), 'Europe: towards a new regional security regime' in *SIPRI Yearbook 1994*, Stockholm.

between the North and the South. While it is well known that achieving agreement on a common security culture is difficult in a Mediterranean context, EU member states may also hold differing views on important aspects, depending on such factors as their size, their individual national interests and the particular situation at hand. At the same time as EU states aim to convince southern partners of the benefits of cooperation and coordination, they must also work on aligning their own policies with those of the EU, using their individual differences as assets and not to the detriment of EMP cooperation.

In spite of the hurdles along the way, the aim must be to work towards a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention. Specifically, and in order to achieve security commonality in the context of the Mediterranean, there is a need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to security that encompasses the political, economic, environmental, social and spiritual dimensions. This must be undertaken as soon as possible because the risk of potential chaos in the region is high, linked to the unpredictability of future developments such as the proliferation of non-conventional weapons, foreign debt, migration and the subsequent emergence of racist movements, economic disparities, ethnic conflicts, conflicts over access to energy and water, religious rivalries, and the resurgence of nationalism and terrorism. As progress is made towards the goal of a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, the potential to succeed in conflict prevention activities based on co-ownership will also increase.

As is explained in chapter 3, there has been considerable improvement in the EU's capacity to deal with problems in this way, but there are still many important fields that remain to be developed. For example, the EU still has problems with the integration of short-term and long-term measures into one strategy, and with linking Community instruments with Common Foreign and Security policy (CFSP) / European security and Defence Policy (ESDP) assets. These, and a range of other issues, have to be resolved to enable seemingly intractable challenges to be addressed effectively.

A common security culture also needs a wider setting. The problems of the region have to be tackled within a larger framework that is beyond the capacity of a single party or organisation to deal with. Just as European security cannot be assured without stability in the Mediterranean basin, the EU is doomed to failure if it is launching a Mediterranean policy in order to increase its profile in the area vis-à-vis others. The best example of conflict prevention is probably that of Macedonia in the spring of 2001, when conflict prevention policies were well coordinated between NATO, the EU, the UN and the OSCE, and supported by member states that did not seek to raise their profile outside of these organisations. As is suggested in chapter 3, such a framework might have the additional benefits of backing up the intra-state processes of political reform and increasing social responsiveness. An all-encompassing approach and corresponding capability, however, should not lead to a search for an all-encompassing and rigid conflict prevention policy. Grand schemes that have to be negotiated among a number of countries are unlikely to find general acceptance.

It is, however, important to have a basic understanding of the complexities of the situation in order to plan activities in such a way that: (a) those undertaken in one field do not counteract those undertaken in others; (b) short-term and long-term measures are not in conflict with each other; and (c) valuable time is not spent on infighting among or within organisations. In addition to achieving this, conflict prevention activities are also highly dependent on a rich variety of ad hoc initiatives and on initiatives taken at the individual level in order to allow a common security culture to develop from below, which in the long run is a much more efficient way than imposition from above.

Security is a crucial area for cooperation in the EMP. Despite its controversial character in the eyes of many, there are many possibilities for progress with building conflict prevention.

Based on the principles mentioned above, coordination mechanisms should be created for bilateral cooperation between EU member states and the southern partners. The aim would be to incorporate important multilateral security relations between different partner countries and EU member states, at least at the level of exchanges of information. Such coordination mechanisms must not only operate at state level but also relate to problems at the local and regional levels (see also under institutional reform). Furthermore, they should extend to existing organisations and groups such as the "5+5 process" and the Euro-Mediterranean Forum. It would be important for them to include a mixture of actors from, for example, governments, parliaments and administrators.

5. Euro-Mediterranean security cooperation

Some particular areas should be the object of such cooperation. One of these concerns activities related to the universalisation of existing multilateral instruments (i.e., the Chemical Weapons Convention, CWC; the Biological Weapons Convention, BWC; the Geneva Protocol; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT; the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, CTBT; and the Convention on Conventional Weapons, CCW). To this end, the EU and the Mediterranean partners should promote concrete adherence to instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction (the BWC, the CWC, the Geneva Protocol, the NPT, the CTBT, and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, CPPNM). From this perspective, the EU and the Mediterranean partners should support the work of international organisations, such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in their endeavours—in particular by sustaining and expanding their capacity to conduct effective inspections (and especially challenge inspections) and investigations into alleged use.

The effective implementation of international instruments requires the enactment and strict application of the national implementation legislation set out in these instruments. A number of steps along the way should help to achieve this:

1. The EU and the Mediterranean partners should promote the implementation of confidence-building measures, such as the submission of national reports on conventional and non-conventional weapons, within the EMP structure;
2. Military officers from the southern countries could receive academic instruction in the North through their participation in courses run by national military academies and by the EMP structures based in the North. Officers from the North could also participate in courses in the South as a way to familiarise themselves with the threat perceptions and problems of the South;
3. Joint exercises as well as joint participation in peacekeeping missions could be arranged, particularly in areas of common concern to European and southern Mediterranean security such as Sub-Saharan Africa. In general, this would be an ideal way to create useful personal bonds and to provide information on European defence. Efforts to this effect have been made in the EU but a higher level of participation by southern Mediterranean countries is required in order to achieve the desired effects.⁹⁰

An important aspect of the development of the ESDP in the past few years is that it has been characterised by a stronger role for civilian crisis management. Generally, civilian and military crisis management are perceived as reinforcing each other and the emphasis is put on improving the long-term situation in the crisis area. This stronger role is useful for integrating contributions from the southern Mediterranean since it downplays the military element, which is more sensitive and connected to issues of power and dominance. Generally, the way in which the EU now deals with the spectrum of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilisation activities provides not only possibilities for southern Mediterranean countries to participate but also opportunities for political dialogue and confidence building.

While the Arab–Israeli conflict endures—and particularly when, as it did in the summer of 2006, it develops into full-blown warfare—it is a constant obstacle to the pursuit of conflict prevention activities in other areas. Whether in Euro-Mediterranean security cooperation or in other kinds of conflict prevention activities, the conflict is a real or constructed impediment to improving the situation in wholly unrelated fields. While major resources need to be devoted to solving this enormous problem, other efforts should be made to promote the gains to be made from decoupling this conflict from unrelated problems in the minds of many people. A richness of bilateral projects in which the benefits from the variety of forms of cooperation become obvious may be one of the ways to resolve this impasse.

The inclusion of the EMP in the ENP might be of assistance in this connection. The strong bilateral dimension of the ENP could contribute to achieving an acceptance of the uniqueness of each of the relationships that each southern Mediterranean country has with the EU, thereby helping to develop possible areas of cooperation for the particular countries. At the same time, it should be recognised that several of the ENP countries see future membership of the EU as a strong incentive to cooperate with it and to comply with some of its rules. Without this incentive, cooperation by itself has to be seen as rewarding.

While differentiation is an asset there is also another side of the coin. If a country believes that all the possible benefits accrue from its own bilateral cooperation with the EU, then

⁹⁰ Council of the European Union (12 May 2006), PSC Report on Dialogue and Co-Operation on ESDP between the EU and Mediterranean Partners, Brussels.

regional cooperation with its neighbours has no attraction. However, for both the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries as a whole, regional cooperation is a precondition for stability and the various forms of regional cooperation therefore have to be pursued in order to increase the security of all.

The Mediterranean area is at present characterised by a richness of forms of cooperation. Overlapping bilateral and regional structures might lead to inefficiency and duplication but there is also the possibility that they will increase horizontal connections and thereby possibly lead to improved relations, including conflict prevention activities, among states. One example of this elsewhere is the Northern Dimension in the Baltic Sea Region, which continues to be a useful forum for dealing with many issues, and includes a strong ownership dimension among member countries.⁹¹ Pursuing cooperation in this way makes it possible to reap the advantages of bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation.

A crucial dimension of EMP cooperation is that of empowerment. In order to reach this goal activities have to be undertaken to increase knowledge and information. Other steps towards a common security culture are also helpful.

One possibility to consider, which may as yet be a little premature, is for the North to assist southern Mediterranean states to perform civilian and military crisis management missions on their own. An example of such a relationship is that between the EU and the African Union. Such cooperation would be an advantage for both parties. For the southern Mediterranean countries it would be a good opportunity to reduce their dependence and feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis the north. For the EU, in spite of its big ambitions for the ESDP, the awareness that resources are limited would make such independence welcome. As is pointed out in chapter 3, while the EU would gain in the sense that it would be relieved of a burden, it must also face the fact that it would lose control of activities.

In general, as is emphasised in chapter 3, some guidance on how to accomplish increased cooperation between southern Mediterranean countries could be gained by looking at the establishment of the African Union, to which existing organisations provided assistance when forming this new organisation in a situation where the prospects were not particularly promising. Because it is characterised by co-ownership, the African Union provides good opportunities for expanding conflict prevention activities.

Some benefits may also be gained from studying the experiences of cooperation among the three Baltic countries. While perceived by many as similar, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania differ from each other in important ways, including religion and language—the languages being so different that, unlike for example the Scandinavian languages, there is no general link between them. However, the countries are “brothers of destiny”—having endured similar historical fates throughout the 20th century and facing similar challenges in the future.⁹²

It is clear that a long term attempt must be made to bridge the gap in security cultures between both flanks of the Mediterranean. Such an attempt must be made at all levels. The bilateral level is especially valuable because of the possibility of working at the local level, thereby creating a large number of links between countries and cultures. A successful means of increasing confidence, which at the same time is capable of meeting immediate and long-term needs, is that of twinning cities. As the Baltic States became free from Soviet oppression the twinning concept, in which the Nordic states were very active, had a highly beneficial impact on their development. While, for political reasons, twinning will not be possible in all of the southern Mediterranean states, it might be applied in others and create a dense bilateral network of contacts on a person-to-person level. Twinning also has the advantage that confidence is built by actively working on small-scale projects rather than by just talking. New capabilities are created in step-by-step approaches in which both parties take part and have an influence, achieving a co-ownership of the process. Confidence grows between people and this may lead to new projects.

At the regional level, representatives of civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership could be invited to participate in specialised consultative bodies whenever the policy-making institutions of the European Union or the EMP intend to take measures in a specific area. This could help to dispel the fear, prevalent in the post-11 September 2001 context that enhanced security cooperation would focus on internal security cooperation—leading to European acceptance of illegitimate state repression.

6. Cooperation between the southern Mediterranean countries

7. Civil society and security

⁹¹ See Roberto Aliboni (June 2006), ‘Globalization and the wider Black Sea area: Interaction with the European Union, eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East’ in *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 157–68.

⁹² See Giedrius Cekuolis, Political Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Lithuania, ‘The Baltic Region and the changing security environment in Europe’ in Gunilla Herolf (2000) (ed.), *Subregional Cooperation and Integration in Europe*, The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, p. 49.

Furthermore, attempts must be initiated at the civil society level to encourage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to acquire and develop a joint and common conflict prevention culture. In this regard, there have been recent calls for the establishment of a centre for conflict monitoring that brings together researchers and specialists from different Mediterranean and European countries to monitor regional developments, warn concerned parties of potential conflict situations, and suggest alternative policies that might help to prevent them from escalating.⁹³

8. Conclusions

The development of conflict prevention and the consolidation of co-ownership can be seen in many ways: in terms of security strategies, operational structures, the resources attributed to the issue and the scope and number of activities and actors. However, as is explained in the chapters above, while there have been some achievements on the ground, both partners continue to operate pretty much in a sphere of learning with only a few successful and convincing practical examples. A more extensive learning period lies ahead where both partners must work together to shape a more effective approach to conflict prevention. In sum, strategies to enhance conflict prevention co-ownership have to be adaptive. They must not be brought out in the fashion of a one size fits all approach but tailored to the unique characteristics of the case in hand and to the overall political contingency in which it takes place. They must also be structured according to a coherent methodology and customised to the aims and means of the specific institution that is establishing them. Finally, they must involve a wide range of actors in the EMP members' societies. The driving forces created by local communities, NGOs, private companies, youth organisations and others will contribute to developments that will be considerably richer and stronger, and more likely to be based on co-ownership, than those supplied by governments and state organisations alone.

This chapter demonstrates the need and the potential for conflict prevention in the EMP area. The next, and more difficult, step is to increase the level of concrete achievements in this field. The authors of this report understand that in several countries there are political impediments to many of the proposals outlined in its pages. In other countries, we believe that the suggested methods of conflict prevention, in which both sides have something to learn and in which large sections of society are involved, are appropriate. Much has already been achieved in this field, for example, through the Anna Lindh Foundation. The highest political and organisational levels have already been involved in confidence building. We suggest that, to an increasing extent, their task is now to recognise the potential in the work of others. Much of what is suggested in this report can be carried out on a small scale and then expanded as confidence increases. The responsibility for this is shared. The first task, however, is for the highest political levels to show initiative and imagination in envisaging how bilateral and regional cooperation at a wide variety of levels can be accomplished. The task is not to manage the work of others in detail, but to set out the bigger picture and to encourage all the positive forces that already exist to establish the bottom up approach to conflict prevention which we believe is necessary.

⁹³ Willem Van Genugten, Ruud Peters, Mohamed Elsayed-Said and Gamal Soltan (1999), *Violence and Politics in Modern Society*, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Den Haag. An existing example of such a centre is the Regional Centre on Conflict Prevention in Amman.

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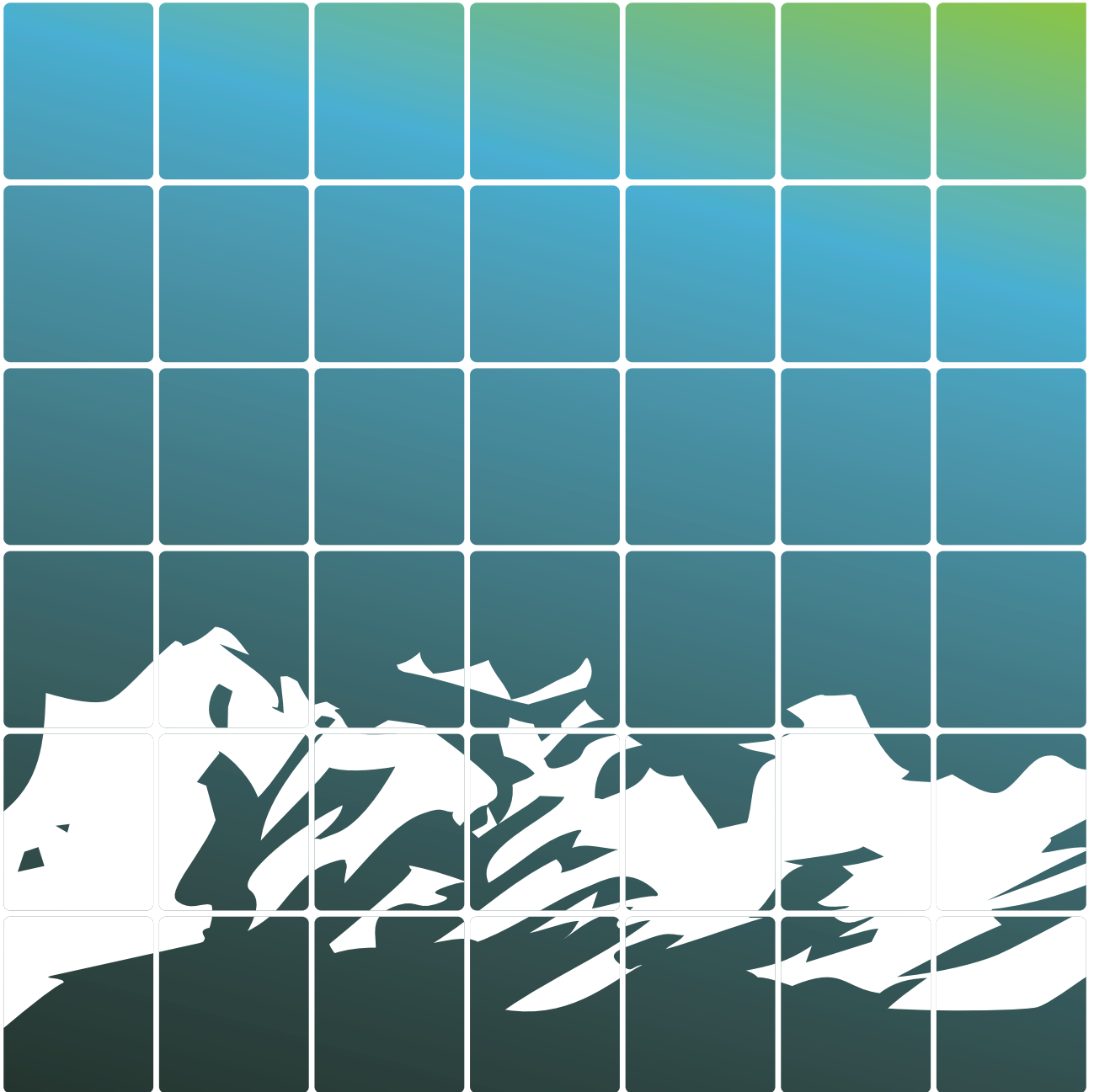
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