Regional Integration and Conflict Resolution in the Mediterranean Neighborhood: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?

RegioConf American University in Cairo (AUC) team
[www.regioconf.eu]
Dr Marco Pinfari – Team Leader
Hirah Azhar – Research Fellow
Justine Louis – Research Fellow

Paper authors
Hirah Azhar
Justine Louis


** Early draft – comments are welcome, citations not yet **

This paper is part of the RegioConf project (“The EU, Regional Conflicts and the Promotion of Regional Cooperation: A Successful Strategy for a Global Challenge?”) funded by the Compagnia di San Paolo, together with Volkswagenstiftung and Riksbankens Jubileumsfondet.
In the Mediterranean region, two protracted conflicts have historically shown a distinctive regional dimension: the conflicts in Israel-Palestine and Western Sahara.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides, in theory, good grounds for encouraging regional cooperation as a strategy for conflict transformation: the conflict is regional in nature and Europe’s geographical proximity and colonial ‘baggage’ makes the European Union the ideal model for region to emulate. However, this has not been the case. The EU has not pursued a tangible regional cooperation strategy to transform the conflict and there has been a distinctive disconnect between its official stances and its actions. Instead, regional cooperation has been used as a tool to strengthen economies within the Mediterranean while the EU has maintained its role as a ‘payer not player’ in the conflict. Moreover, any EU initiatives have been derailed by its refusal to acknowledge Hamas and continued efforts to keep a flailing PA in power. Using both the compulsory and changing context paths of influence, the EU has nevertheless largely failed in using either approach to impact the conflict in a direct and significant way.

On the Western Mediterranean, the historical ties that some European member states like France and Spain share with the Maghrebi states, and that contribute to developing a special relationship with this sub-region, seem to be a double-edged sword for the EU. On one hand, they place Brussels in a unique position to understand its southern neighbors. On the other hand, the interests these member states still retain in the region prevent the EU from adopting a coherent approach, which is sometimes in conflict with its core values of democracy and human rights and creates a dichotomy between the EU declared goals and its practices. While Europe’s impact on the Maghreb has been indirect through model-setting and both direct intentional and unintentional through the way of compulsion, the Eurocentric conception of regional integration and partnership is often at odds with that of the local actors. Moreover, the EU official ‘neutrality’ and possible added-value to the resolution of the Western Sahara
conflict is increasingly being challenged given the systematic exclusion of the Sahrawis from any Euro-Mediterranean initiative and the fisheries agreements it concludes with Morocco.

1. Introduction to the conflicts

1.1 Israel-Palestine

Characterized both by a strong regional dimension and unparalleled international interest, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has never just been a struggle between two sets of people. Not only is the conflict a direct consequence of colonial decision-making; its geographical proximity to Europe and, by default, former colonial masters has effectively turned European states into stakeholders of peace within the Mediterranean. Moreover, unlike the Western Sahara case, the Palestinian question has long been considered a wider Arab problem, partly because of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and partly because of the unique dynamics of this region - what one Palestinian analyst calls the ‘dictatorship of geography’ (Interview Shaban, Gaza 2013).

The conflict began with the first Arab-Israeli War following the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state on Palestinian territories. The resultant exodus of Palestinian refugees into neighboring Arab states, however, changed the nature of the conflict for posterity. Ensuing decades witnessed the emergence of other wars, making the continuation of violence and armed struggle an enduring dimension of the conflict. Predominant among these were the 1956 tripartite invasion of Egypt, the Six Day War (1967), the Yom Kippur War (1973), Israel’s invasion of Lebanon (1982), the First Intifada (1987-93), the Second Intifada (2000-5) and Gaza War (2008-9). Since the end of the 1967 war, the number of Jewish settlements on these territories has steadily risen, making the return of the territories – a UN-sanctioned demand – an increasingly unlikely outcome.
Conflict resolution and management efforts have similarly been a near-constant fixture of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The most important issues dominating any negotiations during the conflict have been the status of Jerusalem; Israeli settlements; Palestinian refugees and the right to return; the ownership and sovereignty over territories; and Palestinian statehood. The 1993 Oslo Accords, which saw the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel sign a Declaration of Principles, enabled the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The functions of this new body were primarily to assume responsibility over a portion of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Moreover, the PLO and Israel both agreed to recognize one another as partners in permanent status negotiations. However, it was not until 2000 and the Camp David talks that a comprehensive final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was given prominence again. The talks failed and the Second Intifada then increasingly eroded any hopes for a multilateral peace plan. King Abdullah’s Arab Peace Initiative (API) in 2002 was first to propose a comprehensive regional peace agreement between Israel and all Arab League member states in exchange for a return to the 1967 borders. However, much like the Roadmap for peace proposed by the Middle East Quartet (MEQ), it has been re-introduced over the years only to be shelved again.

One important reality that dominates the conflict in the conflict transformation context is the involvement of external actors. External intervention to manage or resolve this conflict has oscillated predominantly between multilateralism and bilateralism (Pace, 2007: 663). The United States is generally considered to be the most influential and important mediator of peace initiatives, while the UN has ratified more than 600 resolutions on the conflict since 1947, ending with the de facto recognition of a Palestinian state in 2012. Historically, Europe’s position toward the conflict has remained consistent, especially in rhetoric. There has been vocal recognition of Israel’s right to exist - with European member states signing the first association agreement in 1975 – alongside vociferous support for a Palestinian state. The EU endorsed both UN Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) advocating the
‘land for peace’ principle\(^1\) (Lowe et al, 2008), and further affirmed this stance with the 1980 Venice Declaration - which supported the Palestinians’ right to self-determination and recognized the PLO as a partner for negotiations. From the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) to the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), EU policy has orchestrated a bilateral shift - from normative regionalism to normative bilateralism (Pace, 2007: 668).

Despite extensive international interest and involvement, however, the conflict is essentially a regional one, with key core issues that are exclusive to stakeholders in the region whose security is interlinked to a significant degree. Events in the Arab world since 2010, particularly the crisis in Syria, impact the conflict directly (with the effect on Palestinian refugees in the diaspora) as well as indirectly, by fostering instability in the region as a whole. Moreover, key neighboring Arab states like Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon are direct stakeholders in the conflict with their own vested interests and evolving relations with both Israel and the Palestinians.

1.2 Western Sahara

In contrast to the Israeli Palestinian dispute, the Western Sahara conflict, located at the other end of the Mediterranean region, has never been a primary concern or priority for the international public opinion nor has it reached the top of the world leaders’ agenda. Commonly referred to as the “forgotten” conflict, the Western Sahara dispute erupted in the mid-seventies when Spain relinquished its colony known as “Spanish Sahara” to Morocco and Mauritania, despite previous declarations that it would comply with the United Nations (UN) demands to organize a referendum on self-determination for the local population, the Sahrawis (Zoubir, 1990). Deprived of the referendum, the Polisario Front, a liberation movement that had established itself as the unique representative of the Sahrawi people,

\(^1\) The principle, first posed in the UN Security Council’s resolution 242, has been interpreted to imply the giving up of land (or withdrawal of Israeli forces, i.e. ending the occupation) for peace.
engaged in armed struggle with Mauritania and Morocco and proclaimed the independence of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1976. While Mauritania rapidly signed a peace treaty with the Polisario and abandoned its claims over the territory, Morocco and the Polisario continued fighting until the implementation of the 1991 ceasefire brokered by the UN (Gresham, 2011).

The UN, which recognizes the dispute as a decolonization conflict, established the peacekeeping mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in view of organizing a vote on self-determination six months after the ceasefire. Yet, until this day, it has constantly been postponed because of the two parties’ irreconcilable positions, particularly the identification of the electorate.

Although the Western Sahara conflict is limited in scope, the involvement of the international community shows the profound implications of the dispute for the Maghreb and its international resonance given the region’s geostrategic position. Since Spain’s withdrawal, three out of the five countries constituting the Maghreb region and one non-state actor have been the key players in the conflict, namely Morocco, the Polisario Front, Mauritania and Algeria. Despite the strong ramifications the conflict has on the Maghreb region, the qualification of the conflict as regional is itself tendentious. From a Moroccan perspective, Algeria is a party to the conflict and the Polisario, sometimes labeled as Algérisario, just a façade (International Crisis Group, 2007). However, international law recognizes Morocco and the Polisario as the sole and unique parties to the conflict.

Indeed, the Western Sahara question has been the cause of the breaking of already-tense diplomatic relations between Algeria and Morocco in 1976, following the former’s recognition of the SADR and represents one of the top contentious issues between the two main sub-regional powers, Algeria and Morocco, which alone represent over three-quarters of the Maghreb’s population and two-thirds of its GDP. Also, it largely contributes to
paralyzing the Maghreb, making it the least integrated region in the world with less than 3 percent intra-regional trade (Tunis REI Conference Report, 2013; World Bank, 2010)².

1.3 Overview of regional integration in the region

Though regional security in the Middle East has historically been closely linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is still no de facto regional security mechanism that can help manage the conflict. One important reason for this is the absence of any regional organization that represents both the Arabs and Israelis in one forum and wields enough political clout to address the conflict. Moreover, regional integration initiatives focus overwhelmingly on economic rather than political cooperation whenever it is part of the agenda. Most importantly, the absence of Israel from any Arab regional initiative renders regional cooperation obsolete in the context of the conflict.

Regional cooperation in the Middle East essentially began with the creation of the 22-member Arab League in 1945, which made Palestine a full member and has maintained a high level of involvement with the conflict, and. In practice, however, the Arab League has not succeeded in becoming a political union. Structurally designed to be a weak organization, the League consists of member states that have not been willing to delegate sovereignty to any organization (Barnett and Solingen, 2007). Since decisions must be reached by consensus and members are under no obligation to abide by resolutions, existing policy-making mechanisms within the League are too weak to handle the conflict (Interview Muasher, Amman 2013).

Though the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a multilateral rather than regional organization, it pays particular attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Hossain, 2012: 295). Established in 1969 as a direct consequence of the Six Day War, the organization’s charter lists the Palestinian issue as one of its key concerns. Paradoxically, it is

² In comparison, intra-regional trade approximates 60% for the EU, 22% for the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and 20% for the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Lahcen 2012).
the Palestinians who do not look to the OIC for political support, instead using the organization’s status and resources for ‘soft support’ such as voting at the UN (Interview Awawdeh, OIC Jeddah 2013).

At the other end of the Mediterranean, despite evident historical and cultural commonalities, the Maghrebi countries struggle to cooperate and regional integration presents itself as one of the sub-region’s biggest challenges. Some early attempts at creating a Maghrebi organization were undertaken but failed to materialize because of the lack of political will, mutual mistrust, and divergences over the Western Sahara issue.

It is paradoxically the intensification of conflicts, such as the Western Sahara dispute in the 1980s, or perceived threats whether internal, such as the rise of Islamism, or external, such as the enlargement of the European Union, that acted as stimuli to Maghrebi integration and led to the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) (Zoubir, 2012; Mezran, 1998). Established in 1989 with the treaty of Marrakech following the 1988 rapprochement between Morocco and Algeria, the AMU is the organization that, for the first time gathered together the five Maghrebi countries in an attempt to institute a common economic front against a common external threat, Europe. Yet, the prospects for establishing a custom union by 1995 as elaborated during the 1991 third Presidential council and a common market by 2000 were rapidly dashed when some of the Maghrebi neighbors started defecting from the meetings by the year 1992 before officially ‘freezing’ the union in 1994 (Mortimer, 1999). The lack of political will and the deterioration of the inter-Maghrebi relations have been advanced as reasons that precipitated the interruption of the AMU but the main factor blocking the functioning of the organization is its highly top-down structure. The AMU is merely an intergovernmental regional organization and according to article 6 of the treaty of Marrakech, “only the Presidential Council shall have the authority to take decisions, and its decisions shall be taken unanimously” and is therefore seen by the local actors as an empty shell, that
does not exist on the political level (Interviews Lahlou, 2014; Moutik, 2013; Algerian diplomat, 2013) (AMU treaty, 1989).

Since 1994, there have been a few attempts to hold a summit of the heads of state and revive the AMU, once again, in reaction to the EU enlargement eastward (Biad, 2013).

Unfortunately, the summits planned for 2002, 2003 and 2006 were aborted due to the disagreement between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Sahara issue (Baghzouz, 2007).

Most recently, the 2011 Arab uprisings raised hopes to see the revival of the AMU when Tunisian President Marzouki officially declared the holding of an AMU summit for October 2012. The Algerians criticized the Tunisian president for clumsily announcing the holding of a summit without prior consultation of his Maghrebi counterparts and, again, the summit did not take place (Interview Algerian diplomat, 2013). With the political changes the Arab Spring has triggered in the Maghreb, especially in Libya, and the April 2014 presidential elections in Algeria, it is unlikely to observe the thawing of the organization in the near future.

Besides, while security concerns among the Maghrebi neighbors are tackled, the Western Sahara issue has always been sidelined in order for the AMU to work and also because the union’s main objective has been focused on development and economic cooperation among the partners. As Gillespie observes, “Rather than address or dilute the Saharan problem, the regional initiative has attempted (unsuccessfully) to sidestep it” (Gillespie, 2004). The only regional organization that endeavored to address the Western Sahara issue was the OAU. This triggered the biggest crisis in the organization’s history, going as far as threatening its very existence (Damis, 1984). Indeed, the OAU’s decision to grant membership and full recognition to the RASD engendered Morocco’s withdrawal from the organization and left the OAU’s members divided on the issue. Morocco, that considers Algeria as its interlocutor, has for long refused to enter into direct negotiations with the Polisario and seems to make of the exclusion of the Polisario a precondition to its participation in any organization.
Therefore, this situation can explain why some countries or organizations are reluctant to have relations with the Polisario for fear of upsetting an economic or political partner such as Morocco.

2. EU activities in the region

Unlike other prominent external actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the EU is in a unique position of influence, serving both as a model for regional cooperation and as a powerful external actor that can use incentives - sticks and carrots - to help resolve the conflict (Noutcheva et al, 2004: 34). In contrast to its policy toward the Western Sahara conflict, however, the EU has adopted a much more multifaceted approach toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that has increasingly implemented a bilateral shift in its general approach toward the region, impacting key actors via the strong economic partnerships forged between Brussels and individual Mediterranean states.

EU involvement in the conflict is primarily, although not exclusively, economic. As the primary donor to the Palestinians and Israel’s biggest trading partner, it enjoys a position of great influence. Financial assistance to the Palestinians, in particular, is provided in the context of the conflict and seeks to address issues arising from it. Humanitarian aid is provided via the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the European Commission’s Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and civil society/nongovernmental organizations.

UNRWA is the de facto representative of Palestinian refugees in the OPT and neighboring states of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon (Fargues, 2006), while the EU is UNRWA’s single largest multilateral donor, contributing over half of the entire annual budget (Interview UNRWA, 2014) and funding a very large number of UNRWA projects in the OPT and
The EU-UNRWA partnership has multiple layers and forms of cooperation. Most notably UNRWA interacts with a number of EU agencies and instruments including EuropeAid, ECHO and the External Action Service (EEAS), as well as with relevant Council working parties and European Parliament committees (Interview UNRWA, Brussels 2014). Because UNRWA is a multilateral organization, however, it falls under no particular EU policy framework. This makes an accurate assessment of the EU-UNRWA relationship very difficult.

At the time of its inception, the ENP called for ‘creating a ring of friends stretching from Moscow to Marrakesh’ (Commission of the European Communities, 2003a: 12), all sharing the values of good governance, stability and prosperity. In reality, the ENP framework’s overriding emphasis has always been on encouraging economic cooperation first and then institutional and political reforms. Indeed, the rationale underpinning European policy’s bilateral shift was that Association Agreements – providing trade privileges and financial/technical assistance – could be rewarded to partner states for their commitment to reforms. Accordingly, the EU is Israel’s largest trading partner, both as a leading source of imports for Israel and as its second most important export destination after the US (ENP Strategy Paper 2010: 1). The EU’s 2005 Action Plan with the Palestinians also focused on the existing Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation signed in 1997 but was dominated by the 2003 Roadmap’s agenda, which required institutional reforms in the OPT that would enable ‘good governance’ (Solana and Ferrero-Waldner 2007: 2).

The logic behind building or improving Palestinian state institutions has been to create a functioning Palestinian state that could then seek the international community’s formal recognition (Interview Bouris, 2013). Accordingly, the EU has adopted a comprehensive state-building approach over the years, providing funds, training and support for a number of

---

3 Such as the teaching of a special Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) course to Palestinian children in UNRWA schools (Interview UNRWA, 2014).
projects in all relevant state sectors. As the first step of the 2003 ‘Roadmap’, the MEQ established an international task force to organize reforms in financial accountability, civil society, local government elections, the judiciary, administration and market economy.

Judicial reforms, for instance, have includes the ‘Empowerment of the Judicial System’ program (Seyada), which provided institutional support, the development of a permanent professional training system, refurbishment of courts and provision of equipment (European Commission, 2007). Security sector reform was not included in this overhaul and has largely been an independent EU objective. It is also the most significant state building measure to actively adopt a distinctive regional component. In 2007, the EU established the European Union Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS). The rationale behind this was that a ‘self-sufficient Palestinian Civil Police’ would lead to a ‘secure and independent Palestinian state’ (Council of the European Union, 2005). The Mission “encourages a technical cooperation…between the representatives of the Palestinian Civil Police and Criminal Justice Institutions and representatives of similar bodies in neighboring countries” (Interview EUPOL COPPS, 2014). As a result, a workshop was organized recently in Jordan to train Palestinian prosecutors on litigation techniques in the presence of Egyptian trainers (Interview EUPOL COPPS, 2014).

Brussels has also used its Euro-Mediterranean initiatives over the years to direct funds into projects that address specific issues contributing to the grievances on either side. The UfM’s Gaza Desalination Project, for example, was unanimously adopted in June 2011 by all 43 member-states – including Israel – as the organization’s first major joint initiative (UfM Secretariat, 2011). The Arab-EU co-financed project involves the construction of a desalination plant in Gaza. With the availability of fresh water in the OPT amongst the lowest in the world, the only source of water in the Gaza Strip is from a badly deteriorating coastal aquifer underlying the strip as well as Israel and Egypt. The project therefore, directly addresses a critical humanitarian issue in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, since water is already a
thorny geopolitical issue in the region, both Egypt and Israel have a vested interest in safeguarding this shared source of fresh water.

On a regional level, the EU communicates with existing organizations like the Arab League on regional political issues, although there is no clear strategy behind this and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rarely singled out for attention. One recent exception to this is the 2012 joint declaration by the EU and Arab League that agreed on the need to continue to support Palestinian state building efforts politically and financially. Notable too is the League’s extensive financial cooperation with Brussels via UNRWA on the matter of Palestinian refugees. Nevertheless, most collaboration is through ad hoc arrangements such as the partly EU-funded Crisis Room at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, which has been established to handle crises in the region but is not tailored specifically to conflict situations⁴.

In terms of direct Israel-Palestinian cooperation, one key instrument launched as part of the ENP framework and Middle East Peace Projects (MEPP) is the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. With a substantial budget of 5-10 million Euros, the PfP’s involvement in Jordan, Israel and the OPT seeks to ‘strengthen the capacity for conflict resistance and…build trust between Israelis and Arabs by increasing regional cooperation in areas such as integrated cross-border issues…’⁵. Two recent projects are concerned with Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in the field of medicine, including the training of Palestinian medical personnel by European and Israeli medical professionals (Interview EEAS, Tel Aviv 2014).

In the Maghreb, inter-regional trade with the EU amounts for 70 percent of the region’s external trade, a number that is in sharp contrast with the 3 percent of inter-Maghrebi trade and displays the EU economic involvement in the region (Lamrani, 2013). In the absence of a functional AMU, the EU has launched sector-based cooperation initiatives in order to create an integrated Euro-Mediterranean space that would ensure stability and security on its

⁴ Funding comes from the EU’s Instrument for Stability (IfS), part of the European External Action Service (EEAS).
⁵ ENPI Information Center.
southern borders. Aiming at establishing closer cooperation, especially in the economic and security sectors, the 5+5 dialogue, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and its upgraded version, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), are of particular relevance for the Maghreb region. More concretely, these initiatives allow for the implementation of Euro-Mediterranean policies, principally in the fields of migration, energy and fisheries, the main drivers behind the EU’s promotion of regional integration in the Western Mediterranean (Interview Volkel, 2013).

Currently considered as the key to EU-Maghrebi relations, migration has become an increasing source of concern for the EU policy-makers (Interview Sahel, 2013, Seeberg, 2013). While trade liberalization was the cornerstone of the EMP, one of the hidden objectives of the EU was to restrain migration flows into the Union (Joffé, 1997). Despite the multilateral dimension of the EMP, the policies that have been implemented through the Association Agreements vary among the Maghrebi partners. Illegal migration, which is now almost always linked to terrorism in the EU documents, is perceived as the main problem in the field of migration but the solutions offered in the agreements differ between Morocco and Algeria (Collyer, 2008; Calleya, 2003). The subsequent ENP has reflected the increasingly political and security-driven approach undertaken by the EU in the migration field and widened the gap between migration policies among the Maghrebi countries as the EU furthered its cooperation with Morocco through action plans that have largely focused on repressive measures such as border control and repatriation of illegal migrants (Wunderlich, 2012). At a more informal level, issues of illegal migration are also tackled within the 5+5 dialogue. It is a more flexible forum for discussion, whereby the five Maghrebi countries gather together with five Euro-Mediterranean states (France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain) and share ideas instead of individually negotiating frameworks elaborated by and with the EU. Since the revival of the 5+5 dialogue in 2001, meetings are held every year whereby less ambitious goals such as information sharing and common training programs are implemented (Collyer, 2008).
In addition to migration, EU activities in the Maghreb region are also centered on the energy sector, which is one of the foundations of “economic and social integration, as it was for the European Community” (Duhamel and Beaussant, 2011). The two main objectives in the Mediterranean are to establish electricity and gas rings around the Mediterranean (Interview Volkel, 2013). As an example, the construction of a gas pipeline from Algeria to Italy similar to the gas pipeline from Algeria to Spain previously mentioned has been discussed but has been recently interrupted (Interview Volkel, 2013; Duhamel and Beaussant, 2011). Besides, the development of transport infrastructures in order to enhance trade and economic integration is also a priority for the EU. The most notable project in this domain is the UfM-labeled project of the Trans-Maghreb Motorway Axis which aims at completing the portion of the road between Morocco and the Algerian border and Tunisia and the Algerian Border in order to facilitate trade through the implementation of logistic platforms (Dialogue 5+5, 2013). Unfortunately, the almost completed construction of the motorway has been put on stand-by officially because of the financial crisis in the Eurozone that has affected the functioning of the UfM (Lamrani, 2013). However, according to Moroccan economists, it is the Maghrebi partners’ lack of political will that has hampered the completion of the project as both Morocco and Algeria have the sufficient financial capacities to fund the remaining portion of the motorways but completing the project would itself be politically loaded. Indeed, it would mean that the two countries accept to reopen the Algerian/Morocco land border, which has been closed since 1994 (Interviews Abdelmoumni, 2014; Lahlou, 2014).

While the EU has sought to encourage regional integration in the Maghreb, its policies towards the transformation or the resolution of the Western Sahara conflict remain limited to the provision of humanitarian aid to the Saharawis through the ECHO program (Darbouche and Colombo, 2010). With the introduction of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), the European Commission (EC) expressed its will to play an increasing role in conflict management, explicitly mentioning the Western Sahara along the Israeli-Palestinian dispute
in its 2003 ‘Wider Europe Scheme’ (Del Sarto and Schumacher, 2005). Yet, these official declarations did not materialize into concrete policies to address the conflict. Indeed, no Special Envoys, no border assistance missions, nor any other confidence-building measures were submitted, and the Action Plan elaborated for Morocco also eluded the way it could be used to alter the conflict (Darbouche and Colombo, 2010). The Western Sahara issue has traditionally been eluded in the bilateral relations between EU and Morocco but it has been a subject of discussion since the 2012 crisis in the Sahel region despite the fact that the Sahara question was once again not mentioned in the recent EU-Morocco Action Plan adopted in December 2013.

Indeed, a notable development in the EU-Maghreb relations was the December 2012 joint communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security policy, Catherine Ashton, entitled “Supporting closer cooperation and regional integration in the Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia” (European Commission, 2012). Fearing the rise of terrorism, insecurity and illegal migration generated by the 2011 Arab uprisings and the 2012 crisis in the Sahel region, the EU, through the joint communication, expressed its will to “encourage on-going efforts by the Maghreb partners to deepen cooperation at the level of the Maghreb and accompany them in the process” and asserted that “the strengthening of bilateral relations between the EU and countries of the Maghreb can support this objective” (Interviews Algerian diplomat, 2013; Lahlou, 2014; European Commission, 2012). In the wake of the two abovementioned events, it has been argued that the fisheries agreement signed between the European Commission and Morocco seven months after the communication was an attempt to strengthen cooperation between the EU and the Kingdom in order not to alienate a major Maghrebi partner which had been deprived from the fisheries deal with the EU following the 2011 European Parliament decision to abrogate the previous fisheries agreement (Interview Lahlou, 2013).
3. Evaluation and assessment of the EU impact

3.1 Broad impact

EU engagement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) makes up only one part of a multifaceted EU approach toward the region that also covers Euro-Mediterranean relations, Iraq, Iran and the EU-GCC Dialogue (Hollis, 2012: 87). While EU policy has pursued conflict transformation as a tangible goal in the region, there is much less evidence to indicate the adoption of regional cooperation as a strategy to achieve that goal. Indeed, it is questionable whether Brussels has even seriously considered regional integration as a goal in itself for the Middle East. Moreover, even though EU policies have often directly impacted the conflict, that impact has yielded negative as well as positive transformations.

The dichotomy between the idealism of EU norms and its actual policies remains the single most frustrating element of EU engagement in the peace process. European assumptions about political reform and expectations from southern Mediterranean states have clearly overshot the EU’s capacity for inducing those changes. Once it became clear that the EMP vision – of turning ‘the Mediterranean basin into an area…guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity’ (Barcelona Declaration, 1995: 3) – had failed partly because of Arab resistance to political and judicial reforms, the ENP’s Action Plans were created on the basis of similar ambitions (Interview Hollis, 2013).

Launched shortly after Oslo in 1995, the multilateral Barcelona Process had already assumed that Oslo would resolve the conflict, with the EMP focusing instead on establishing a common area of peace and stability through political dialogue (Asseburg, 2009a: 231). Instead of an integrated approach, however, the EMP increasingly became characterized by a ‘hub and spokes arrangement’ with Brussels connecting to each southern Mediterranean state on a bilateral level (Xenakis and Chryssochoou, 2001: 147). The eventual failure of the Oslo process and resumption of hostilities made it almost impossible for the EMP’s stability
objective to materialize. The EMP’s downsizing became apparent with the creation of the highly institutionalized UfM in 2008.

Despite calling for a resolution to the conflict at the time of its inception, however, the UfM has never reinforced this as an official objective and there has been no mention of a specific instrument for conflict transformation (Reiterer, 2009; cf. also Paris Summit 2008, article 7). The organization is essentially an example of ‘neofunctionalism in reverse’ (Reiterer, 2009: 320), which has consisted of downgrading the initial concept of a collective security initiative in the Mediterranean and ‘all idealistic notions about political reform and security cooperation’ to scale down its political leverage (Interview Hollis, 2013). While Israel does not consider the UfM a suitable forum for peace negotiations (Hollis, 2011: 104), the Palestinians are more hopeful but criticize its neo functionalist approach (Khatib, 2010: 45).

In reality, the UfM does not have a particularly good track record in the context of this conflict. The Gaza crisis in 2009, for instance, led to the de facto suspension of the development of UfM institutions as well as the cancellation of all talks (Balfour, 2009: 102). Moreover, initiatives like the Gaza water desalination project, do not address significant conflict issues or demand compromises from either side. There is no tangible Israeli involvement in the aforementioned project, for example.

The ENP, established in 2004, has been far clearer about its regional security objectives (Del Sarto and Schumacher, 2005: 21). In practice, however, it has only really focused on economic cooperation and introduced no instruments for conflict transformation (Asseburg, 2009b: 22). As the objectives of both stability and security increasingly started dominating the EU’s agenda, it also informed the ENP’s explicit regional security objectives (Del Sarto and Schumacher, 2005: 21). The bilateral nature of its proposed Action Plans was essentially designed to “improve the economic situation of Arab states and limit immigration to Europe” (Interview Muasher, Amman 2013), as the EU ‘sought to free the flow of trade, finance and services, but not people’ (Hollis, 2009: 144). To do this, it used a “soft reform” process that
provided Mediterranean states with a set of mild reforms in exchange for the EU’s economic cooperation (Interview Muasher, Amman 2013).

What has increasingly become apparent is not EU incapacity to play a bigger and more effective role in the conflict, but rather, the lack of cohesive will to do so. EU member states, though in agreement about the fundamentals of any peace agreement, are divided over the specificities and what role Brussels can play. With 28 member states, the EU’s foreign policy is determined through consensus, arguably making concrete EU measures both hard to formulate and implement. Not all EU member states have granted diplomatic status to a PLO representative, for instance⁶. Individual European states also pursue their independent foreign policies and vested interests. For instance, while Britain has long been considered the Americans’ biggest EU ally, the French have increasingly become more sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and sought to direct European policy in a different direction (Hollis, 2011: 101). The difficulty of reaching a consensus on practical matters has dampened the EU’s capacity for making conflict-transforming decisions. This ‘institutional weakness’ (Hyde-Price 2009:2) has exacerbated the problem and led to the absence of European impetus on final status issues (Le More 2008:84).

In the Southern Mediterranean, Brussels has repeatedly expressed its enthusiasm to speed up the regional integration process. However, whether the EU has achieved its intended policy goals and whether the promotion of regional integration in the Maghreb region has been used as a strategy to transform the Western Sahara conflict remains questionable considering the bilateral shift the EU has gradually performed, especially since the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy.

The Barcelona Process (BP) launched in 1995 in order to establish “a multilateral and lasting framework of relations based on a spirit of partnership” seems to present major drawbacks for

⁶ Spain, France and Italy amongst those who have done so.
regional integration in the Maghreb (Barcelona Declaration, 1995, 2). First, it has been partly responsible for the interruption of the AMU and the 5+5 Dialogue. While the EU multiplied official statements manifesting its will to see the AMU succeed, it refused any negotiations that would have enticed the Maghrebi countries to participate as a united front on the grounds that Libya’s membership to the organization was making it impossible for the EU to engage in direct negotiations with the AMU (Vanderwalle, 1999). Moreover, the 1992 events whereby the European Parliament (EP) decided to block a financial protocol to Morocco for its human rights violations and ‘recalcitrance on the Western Sahara conflict’ have had profound implications (White, 1999, 112). Surprisingly, the ‘dispute’ ended up in Morocco’s favor and marked the beginning of bilateral relations between Europe and the Maghrebi countries. Morocco signed a new fisheries agreement with the EC and started bilateral negotiations for the establishment of a free trade agreement and a special partnership by 1996 (White, 1999; Milano, 2006). Therefore, the very aim of the AMU to create a block to bargain with the EU became pointless, especially since the volume of trade between each AMU country and the EU was much more important than the volume of intra-Maghrebi trade (White, 1999; Mortimer, 1999).

Secondly, while the EMP was structured as a multidimensional framework, with a regional/multilateral dimension complemented by a bilateral one with the Association Agreements the EU negotiates with each Mediterranean partner, the bilateral nature of the Euro-Maghrebi relations has intensified, especially after the implementation of the ENP Action Plans, without giving the Maghrebi partners incentives that would have encouraged inter-Maghrebi integration have rendered the idea of a ‘Great Maghreb’ even less palpable (Urdy, 2004; Biad, 2013). On the contrary, econometric studies have shown that the Association Agreements concluded between the EU and its Maghrebi partners have not been

---

7 In 1992, the then director of the European Commission’s Mediterranean, Near and Middle East directorate, Eberhard Rhein declared that the EU wanted the success of the AMU as “the prospect of a market in which the free movement of products is ensured would be definitely more attractive to European firms” (White, 1996).
successful in promoting intraregional trade in the Maghreb (World Bank, 2006). The result of
these Association Agreements has been the creation of “a hub-and-spoke trading system in
which trade amongst spokes (Maghrebi countries) remains highly restricted with the ‘hub’
(EU) enjoying improved access to all the spokes.” (World Bank, 2006)

Similarly, the 5+5 dialogue initiated in 1990 bore the brunt of the establishment of the EMP,
the latter being a bigger project generating more resources. As a consequence, the Maghrebi
countries were more interested in the Barcelona Process programs, which had a more
generous financial endowment (Interview Algerian diplomat, 2013). Secondly, the Barcelona
Process did not foster regional integration in the Maghreb, partly due to its format. It has
focused on blocks that are not homogeneous and far less on the Maghreb as a regional block
(Interview Algerian diplomat, 2013). Roland Dumas, the former French Foreign Minister
who initiated the 5+5 Dialogue, also criticizes the global approach undertaken in the BP
because:

“having an initiative encompassing the South Mediterranean countries as a whole
entails the risk of transposing a localized conflict, which is the Israeli-Palestinian
conflict, to the rest of the region and therefore monopolizes the North-South
Mediterranean agenda instead of separately tackling South-Eastern and South-
Western Mediterranean problems.” (Interview Dumas, 2013)

The revival of the 5+5 dialogue in 2001 as a complement to the EMP further displays the
inefficiency of the latter in fostering regional integration in the Maghreb (Gillespie, 2010).

Apart from sporadic official declarations that it supports the UN peace process, the EU, which
in principle has adopted a neutral position, has not manifested a great interest in playing an
active role in the Western Sahara issue (Darbouche, Colombo, 2010). The conflict is not even
explicitly mentioned in the EU-Morocco ENP Action Plan that limits itself to pledging to
'contribute to the UN-efforts in the resolution of regional conflicts’ (Crombois, 2008). This is a substantive difference compared to the territorial conflicts the EU deals with in its neighborhood, as the conflict has been progressively silenced and excluded from negotiations to allow for a dialogue to take place (Interview Fernandez, 2013). Usually, the closer a conflict, the more the EU is inclined to “engage in peacemaking through deep contractual relations” and this involvement goes well beyond the UN resolutions as it is, for example, the case for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Tocci, 2007; Vaquer I Fanes, 2004). A case in point is the May 2011 joint communication by the European Commission and Catherine Ashton that proposes to “enhance EU involvement in solving protracted conflicts” which constitute a “serious security challenge to the whole region” (European Commission, 2011). Mentioning the Western Sahara among other neighboring conflicts, the communication describes the EU involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian, the Georgia and the Transnistrian conflicts and even offers to “step up its involvement” in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict but flagrantly omits to clarify what Brussels’ involvement would be in the Western Sahara dispute (European Commission, 2011). Even more striking, the 2012 joint communication lists the situation in Libya and the crisis in Mali among the challenges that prevent Maghrebi integration but flagrantly omits to mention the Western Sahara conflict which is one of the main causes of the non-Maghreb (European Commission, 2012).

The ‘passive’ neutrality of the EU can be explained by the multiple incoherencies between the EU institutions that result from the EU member states’ diverging positions regarding the issue. Some of them deplore the fact that the EU is unable to tackle the Western Sahara conflict because of France and Spain (Zunes, Mundy, 2010, 86). Indeed, Spain and France, the two former colonizers of respectively Western Sahara and Morocco seem to have a constant ascendency over the EU policies in the Maghreb. Being the first economic partner, investor and donor in development aid to Morocco, France has maintained close and friendly relations with Morocco (French Foreign Ministry, 2013). While it openly supported Morocco in the early years of the Western Sahara conflict and has been the only third party to intervene
militarily into the dispute, France subsequently adopted a position of “positive neutrality in favor of Morocco” in 1983 when the socialists came to power and adopted a less pro-Moroccan stance (Zunes, Mundy, 2010; Berremdane, 1992). During that period, France pushed hard for Hassan II to agree to the idea of a referendum on self-determination but to no avail (Balta, 1986). Following the UN involvement in the dispute, France has been Morocco’s main support at the Security Council, backing Morocco’s Autonomy Plan and recently blocking the inclusion of a human rights monitoring mechanism in the MINURSO mandate for the second consecutive year (Gillespie, 2010; Sahara Press Service, 2013a; Charbonneau, 2014).

Spain’s position and attitude towards the conflict is more delicate. On one hand, the country has moral responsibility and, unlike the rest of the European countries, the public opinion is highly aware of the conflict and strongly supports the Saharawis (Interview Dauger, 2013). In this regard, Spain has sought to adopt a “policy of equilibrium” towards Morocco, the Polisario and Algeria (Benabdallah, 2009). On the other hand, the Spanish government’s official support of the Polisario would subvert Spanish political interests because of the country’s migration concern and the huge economic benefits derived from the fisheries agreement with Morocco. Indeed, as the world’s third-largest fishing fleet, Spain is the country that benefits the most from the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement and the 1984 Spanish-Morocco fisheries agreement was the absolute precondition for the country’s accession to the European Union (Zunes and Mundy, 2010; Jeannel, 1986; Interview Dumas, 2013). Therefore, since the 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid and the rise of the so-called new security threats, Spain has gradually aligned itself to France’s position and even openly supported the 2007 Moroccan autonomy proposal (Darbouche and Colombo, 2010).

---

8 In a meeting between Hassan II, François Mitterrand and Roland Dumas, the French officials sought to convince the King that if he were to organize a referendum, Morocco would win. However the King’s response was: «The Spanish Sahara for us, it’s like the Alsace-Lorraine for you. We want it back. You who are French patriots, you wouldn’t have organized a referendum on Alsace-Lorraine. For us, it’s exactly the same thing!» - R. Dumas (personal communication, 20 November 2013).
Needless to say that, in this context, the predominant influence of these two European member states explains the incoherencies between the different EU institutions. Where their national positions are reflected or when economic interest is at stake, such as in the European Council, the conflict is barely mentioned to say the least. However, the European Parliament, which is the only directly elected body, is much more vocal on the issue and stands out for the respect of human rights in Western Sahara as illustrated by the 1992 event, the 2011 abrogation of the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement or the recent adoption of the Tannock report on the situation of human rights in the Sahel and Western Sahara (Bendabdallah, 2009; Sahara Press Service, 2013b).

3.2 Paths of influence

The EU’s unwavering support for the two-state solution and a return to the 1967 borders as well as its immense financial contribution to help relieve the humanitarian crisis in the OPT indicates both a continued involvement in the conflict as well as substantial sympathy with the Palestinians. After the start of the peace process with the Oslo Accords in 1993, in particular, Europe was perceived as proactive, with value-based decisions informing its bilateral policies as well as helping to create a multilateral framework for the Mediterranean region in the form of the Barcelona process. This involvement remained more or less consistent until the Second Intifada and breakdown of the Oslo Process by 2000, followed by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the subsequent invasion of Iraq and ultimately, the Bush administration’s ‘vision’ of a two-state solution and drafting of the 2003 Roadmap. As a result of these events, EU’s policies toward the Mediterranean and Israeli-Palestinian conflict specifically, became increasingly reactive.

On paper, EU language has remained more or less consistent and neo-functionalist in nature, operating on the assumption that conflicts can be positively transformed through cooperation on functional – economic and institutional – matters (Diez et al, 2006: 568). In reality, EU concerns about inward migration and its possible impact on European borders – alongside the
existing belief in the virtues of democratization – has contributed to a change in EU priorities and objectives toward the Mediterranean as a whole. Instead of directly helping troubles states in the region, the EU turned to providing help and guidance for the self-management of those same problems (Bayoumi, 2007: 17). This has affected policy on the Israel-Palestine conflict by default and resulted in a gradual downgrading of EU ambitions from conflict resolution to conflict management.

Long considered overly pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian by the Israelis (Everts 2003:18), the EU has arguably managed to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship with Israel after the breakdown of the Oslo Process. Until the 1991 Gulf War, however, it had refused to consider Israeli requests to revise institutional relations to address the restrictive rules-of-origin. Moreover, the Madrid Conference in 1991 introduced the European Commission’s ‘double track’ approach, which stated that Israel had to improve relations with its neighbors before it could do so with the EU (Tovias, 2003: 45). Post-Oslo negotiations for a new EU-Israel agreement culminated in the 1995 Association Agreement, which included free trade arrangements for industrial goods and concessions for agricultural products.

The impact of this improvement in relations has been significant. Bilateral relations with Israel are criticized for Israel’s manipulation of the EU’s compulsory pathway (Interview Barat, London 2014). This has translated to little or no punitive action by the EU in response to Israeli violations of the Association Agreement by the continued building of Israeli settlements. This inaction correctly assumes that both EU-Israel economic ties and EU-US relations are too important to be made contingent on progress in the peace process (Newman and Yacobi, 2004a: 23). Accordingly, the destruction of a number of EU-funded administrative and security installations, and civilian infrastructure (Asseburg and Perthes 2009: 2) by Israel during the Second Intifada, saw no cohesive reaction by the European

---

9 Elements of the EU’s common migration policy were established at the European Council in Tampere, Finland in 1999.
member states. Ironically, the damage included the bombing of the Gaza seaport, which the EU had funded. This is all the more surprising since the EU’s Association Agreement with Israel contains a clause that states that both the EU-Israel relationship and the agreement’s provisions of ‘shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles’ (EU-Israel Association Agreement, 2000: 23).

On the Palestinian front, the 1997 Association Agreement’s framework has become increasingly obsolete since Israel controls all official commercial exit and entry points (Interview Palestinian diplomat, Amman, 2013). Financial assistance forms the cornerstone of the EU’s relationship with the Palestinian diaspora and is provided in the context of the conflict. However, this has increasingly come to depend entirely on the type of assistance offered. For example, the EU’s PEGASE mechanism, which provides direct financial assistance to the PA, only covers costs associated with the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan’s (PRDP) various programs. Employing the compulsory pathway of influence, EU policy has rewarded the PA’s implementation of institutional reforms with financial assistance. This has only served to continue the decidedly undemocratic policy of propping up the PA. Furthermore, Palestinian trade is hampered by the Paris Protocol (1994), which allows the PA to establish trade relations with other states, provided that such agreements do not deviate from Israel's import policy. Even Palestinian trade with the EU remains low largely due to the many restrictions on movement and access imposed by Israel.

Similarly, though the Roadmap’s logic was that Palestinian reforms were a prerequisite for negotiations (Tocci, 2011: 40), the institutional reforms installed between 2002 and 2004 were reversed after the 2006 elections to re-establish the superiority of the presidential office over Hamas (Asseburg, 2009b: 179). In fact, the EU policy to not recognize Hamas or engage with it, has led to a ‘one-way policy of no inclusion’ (Bouris, 2010: 388) that undermines

10 These include the following: Governance, Social Development, Economic and Private Sector Development and Public Infrastructure Development.
most of the EU’s conflict transformation policies in the Palestinian territories. After Hamas
won the legislative elections in 2006, the EU devised a Temporary International Mechanism
(TIM) in order to resume direct financial assistance to the Palestinians by bypassing Hamas.
This resulted in a doubling of EU aid from 2005 to 2007 (Tocci, 2011: 43) and formed part of
a more general EU policy of ‘pouring money into keeping the […] PA afloat in the name of
defying the Israeli claim that there was no partner for peace’ (Interview Hollis, 2013).

An important element of this evolving policy has been encouragement for a form of Israeli-
Palestinian cooperation that avoids high politics issues. However, EU-backed joint Israeli-
Palestinian ventures – often a pre-condition for funding – are not always well received by
some sections of Palestinian society, making the collaborating organizations “look bad in
front of ordinary Palestinians” (Interview Awawdeh, OIC Jeddah 2013). Moreover, certain
economic cooperation ‘projects’ have seen Israeli textile businesses re-locate to the West
Bank and Jordan, only to qualify for European and American export tax reductions Interview
Steinberg, Ramat Gan 2014) rather than in an attempt to foster any cooperation and
understanding between the two sides or boost Palestinian employment.

As a result, one of the key accusations leveled against the EU by the Palestinians is that they
are pursuing a policy of ‘normalization without peace’ and effectively paying for Israel’s
occupation (Tocci, 2011: 43). Israel, in turn, blames the Palestinian reluctance to pursue
normalization as one of the main reasons for the failure of regional cooperation and conflict
transformation initiatives (Interview Steinberg, Ramat Gan 2014). This is also jarring since
the EU, on paper at least, argues that a final status agreement is the prerequisite for any
regional cooperation, citing cooperation as a tool that can “make Israeli-Palestinian peace
viable and irreversible” (Interview EEAS, Tel Aviv 2014). Nevertheless, the notion of
normalization suggests that the changing context pathway may be at work, although pursuing
an objective other than sustainable peace.
There is also a distinct lack of support for independent initiatives that actively promote the transformation of this conflict. The German developmental organization GIZ, for example, operates extensively in the OPT as well as Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, dealing with Palestinian refugees. GIZ has recently collaborated with UNRWA in developing a conflict transformation approach specifically catering to the Israeli-Palestinian case, although its project advisor claims that the EU has shown no interest in working with the organization on this project (Interview Jarchow, Amman 2013). Similarly, the PfP-funded Palestinian NGO Adalah (The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) seeks to achieve equal individual and collective rights for Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, indirectly championing the one-state solution (Haaretz, 20 December 2007). This runs contrary to the EU’s position on the subject, which has consistently called for the two state solution. PfP projects therefore also make use of the changing context through integration pathway but with direct unintentional results.

In the Maghreb, a closer look at the EU approach shows that the promotion of regional integration has taken three forms.

First, we witnessed a form of indirect, yet limited, model-setting effect of the EU. It was sometimes pinpointed that the different integration ventures by the Maghrebi countries corresponded to each stage of the establishment of the EU, such as the 1958 Maghreb Unity Congress or the 1989 establishment of the AMU and the recent attempts at reviving the organization in 2003 and 2006 (Bell and Finaish, 1994). In his attempt to resuscitate the AMU, Marzouki put forward the idea of “a Maghreb of freedoms modeled on the EU inside which citizens of the five member states could cross borders, reside, invest and buy property freely” (AFP, 2012). From a Maghrebi point of view, European integration has always been perceived as a source of inspiration and a reference model to adapt to the region because the Maghreb has its own history, culture and experience (Interview Moutik, 2013). Some observers liken Algeria and Morocco to the French-German ‘couple,’ and would like these
two countries to advance and follow the example of the EU. Yet, Algeria and Morocco have not been ‘in an open war with each other and (they) share a common destiny, a historical journey whereby the two countries have helped each other so the resemblance has its limits’ (Interview Algerian diplomat, 2013). Therefore, the structural impact of the EU remains extremely limited and has not so far helped the Maghreb to progress toward regional integration as attested by the cold relations between Morocco and Algeria and the interruption of the AMU, literally modeled on the European Community (Rivlin, 2013).

Secondly, the EU has mainly used compulsion, through financial assistance, to promote regional integration but this promotion has been direct unintentional. Indeed, the EMP and the ENP have not delivered the expected outcomes, or at least the declared ones. The bilateral natures of the EMP and the ENP Action Plans (AP) have further increased the gap between the Maghrebi countries. Indeed, Morocco has become the largest recipient of EU financial aid under the ENP and acquired an advanced status in 2008 while Algeria still hasn’t signed any action plan denouncing the vertical nature of the ENP and the fact that the EU use of conditionality goes against ‘the spirit of Partnership’ of the EMP (European Commission 2013a; Boumghar, 2013). Moreover, the policies pursued by the EU display some horizontal inconsistencies, sometimes within the same institution. Within the framework of the ENP AP, the European Commission contributes to Morocco Reparation Community Program in favor of the regions affected by human rights violations that only targets 11 Moroccan provinces and from which Western Sahara is excluded on the grounds that the aid allocated to Morocco did not include Western Sahara because the EU does not recognize Morocco’s sovereignty over the territory (Interview Jimmi, 2013; Europa, 2009; CNDH, 2008). Yet, the fisheries agreements concluded between European Commission and Morocco systematically include the territorial waters of Western Sahara (European Commission, 2013b).

With the 5+5 Dialogue, the EU has also used social learning and taken a horizontal rather than a vertical approach in its cooperation with its Maghrebi neighbors, which has had a
direct intentional impact on intra-Maghrebi cooperation. Unlike the EMP Association
Agreements and the ENP Action Plans elaborated by the EU that incorporate conditional
incentives and sanctions, the 5+5 Dialogue has been conceived as a more flexible forum for
discussion.

This initiative is considered by the actors of both shores of the Mediterranean as the most
successful cooperative venture ever launched in the Maghreb and a ‘true model of regional
cooperation and integration’ (Romeo Núñez, 2012). More modest in terms of resources and
format than the EMP, the ENP or the UfM, it is nevertheless ‘the most ambitious and
pragmatic program Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries have achieved together as
it targets smaller projects in specific domains that meet the Mediterranean countries’ concerns
and generates employment and stability’ (Interview Algerian diplomat, 2013). Conceived as
an ad hoc cooperation on specific issues, the decisions are adopted following the consensus
rule and the Maghrebi countries seem to be happy with the 5+5 even on area issues they are
usually not happy with when tackled in other frameworks (Interview Fernandez, 2013).
Hence, in the case of the Maghreb, it seems that the less institutionalized the initiatives are,
the better they work. However, compared to the other EU-launched cooperative ventures the
5+5 Dialogue is relatively much smaller in terms of scope and capacity. Therefore, the 5+5 is
rather seen as a laboratory for ideas and methods that could later on be applied and
implemented on bigger-scale initiatives such as the UfM (Coustillière, 2012).

3.3 Assessment and local perceptions

In Israel-Palestine, one significant reason for the failure of EU policies in moving the peace
process forward is how local actors perceive EU policy as well as the presence of variables
that are independent of the EU. Governments in the region have never really shared or
attempted to adopt European views on democracy and human rights, for instance, and the EU
has consequently ‘turned a blind eye’ to human rights violations and undemocratic behavior
(Marchetti, 2012: 401). Events in the Arab world since 2010 – where protests called for an
end of dictatorships – have only exacerbated the disparity. Having tirelessly advocated for democracy in the region, ‘unfavorable’ electoral choices made in Tunisia and Egypt “threw European member states into a spin” (Interview Palestinian diplomat, Amman 2013).

Indeed, it has become increasingly clear that Arab states are content to pursue bilateral, and not regional cooperation. The entire notion of Arab unity, comments Professor Norman Finkelstein, is largely a myth in this present time, with Arab countries pursuing state interests “often at the expense of the Palestinians” (Interview Finkelstein, New York 2013). “There is no cohesive Arab policy on the matter,” adds Rabbani. “It is so fragmented that you can see signs of a new policy which involves Arab states seeking out Israel in alliance with their more parochial concerns like the Shi’a and Alawites…and are prepared to sweep the Palestinians aside in order to get Israeli support” (Interview Rabbani, Amman 2013).

Another reason for this is general Palestinian distrust of their closest neighbors, namely Jordan, Egypt and Syria but also certain Gulf states. One Palestinian diplomat living in Amman, for example, calls Jordanian involvement in the conflict a “double-edged sword”, citing IMF funding to Jordan as one of the Arab state’s main reasons to continue with the status quo (Interview Palestinian diplomat, Amman 2013). This atmosphere of general wariness is further exacerbated by impractical and emotional – but largely rhetorical – reactions to the conflict. “One of our problems with our Arab brothers,” Shaban explains, “is that they hate Israel more than we do. They have comfortable lives from which they speak negatively about Israel…but we have become more practical” (Interview Shaban, Gaza 2013).

For Palestinians living in the OPT, for instance, there is no point in discussing regional cooperation without the presence of a not just a Palestinian state but one with equal bargaining power to Israel and its Arab neighbors (Interview Diab, OIC Jeddah 2013). This issue is also of concern to the wider Palestinian diaspora and refugees living in Jordan, Syria and elsewhere, but in an entirely different sense. Those opposing it at the time of the UN bid,

11 Qatar, in particular.
says human rights’ activist Frank Barat, were unhappy with the absence of any discussion on
the question of refugees and justice and the suspicious lack of any details on the kind of state
being recognized by the UN (Interview Barat, London 2014).

Palestinians also face the dilemma of a fractured government in the form of the Fatah-Hamas
split. This has had widespread repercussions for a substantial number of the EU’s actions in
the OPT. The rivalry between both parties has historically often escalated into armed conflict
since then, despite the signing of mediated reconciliation agreements in 2007 and 2011-12
and more recently in 2014. Another problem on the Palestinian front has been the “corruption
of elites” (Interview Bouris, 2013), namely the Palestinian leadership and particularly the PA.
The only Palestinian representation in peace negotiations between 2006 and 2014 was by the
PA’s President Mahmoud Abbas, whose term expired in 2009, raising questions about his
capacity to fully represent the Palestinians (Interview Bouris, 2013).

The absence of a comprehensive political union or regional security mechanism in the area
has deprived Middle Eastern states from an institutionalization of regional cooperation and
conflict transformation efforts. The United States has historically filled the power vacuum in
the region. Generally perceived to be the most influential and important mediator of peace
initiatives, the US has always given precedence to bilateral talks and pursued a decidedly
non-regional approach “by involving the smallest possible group in negotiations” (Interview
Hollis, 2013). This perceived American hegemony over the peace process has only served to
politically incapacitate the EU further. Key EU member states\(^\text{12}\) have also perpetuated this
situation by following the US lead of appeasing the Israelis and refusing to consider proposals
of trade embargoes or sanctions at key points in time. Susceptibility to US influence has had a
two-fold impact. Not only are certain EU member states unwilling to support a bigger
European role in the peace process, but they are regularly involved in the toning down of any
criticism of Israeli policies.

\(^\text{12}\) Including the UK and Germany.
Accordingly, another obstacle is the disparity in Israeli and Palestinian reception of the EU’s involvement. While the Israelis have never seriously considered the EU a valid or effective substitute for the United States, the Palestinians express far more mixed feelings for the EU’s involvement. Indeed, there is a clear US bias in Israel and near-constant marginalization of the EU as a politically influential actor in the peace process. On the other hand, US bias toward Israel has increasingly frustrated the Palestinians and made resultant policy recommendations untenable and obsolete. The immense appreciation for EU funds and Brussels’ enduring support for Palestinian statehood has been tempered by disappointment with the EU’s deference to the Americans in key matters (Interview Shaban, Gaza 2013).

Also in the Maghreb, the impact of the EU on regional integration is perceived rather negatively.

As previously mentioned the Maghrebi partners attribute Europe’s failure in fostering regional integration to the format of the EU initiatives that are focused on heterogeneous blocks rather than the Maghreb as a sub-region on its own (Interview Algerian Diplomat, 2013). The ENP, which has brought together an even larger number of EU neighbors and was originally designed for the EU Eastern European neighbors, only had the effect of encouraging Mediterranean partners in the quest of an ‘advanced status’ to pursue bilateral negotiations with the EU at the expense of the regional integration process (Gillespie, 2008). In an attempt to remedy the shortcomings of these initiatives, the EU launched the UfM whereby ‘high politics’ would be avoided in order not to contaminate the multilateral initiative with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Kausch and Youngs, 2009). However, far from reassuring the North African states on the EU commitment to the sub-region, the UfM has comforted the Maghrebi partners in their belief that the Mashreq is the only target of the EU Mediterranean initiatives as the UfM joint secretariat was characterized by the absence of
North Africans (Boulares, 2012). Hence, the general sentiment that prevails among the Maghrebi partners reflects the EU lack of strategy for the Maghreb, which adopts a “à la carte profit-making style of approach” whereby interest-driven member states act depending on the opportunities that arise (Abdelmoumni, 2014).

Accordingly the main obstacle that prevents the EU from playing a positive role is the French and Spanish grip on the EU policies in the Maghreb, which consider the region as their ‘private turf’ (Interviews Moutik, 2013; Moroccan source, 2013). Both German professor Volkel and an Algerian diplomatic source agree on the fact that, in international relations, it is an open secret that the EU constantly aligns itself to the positions of the member states that were the former colonial powers which in turn have an informal veto right on the policies to be adopted despite the fact that the EU decisions are officially taken in a collegial fashion (Interviews Volkel, 2013; Algerian diplomat, 2013). From an Algerian perspective, the new nature of the Euro-Mediterranean relations represents a loss of bargaining power as everything is decided in Brussels and the Algerians think that the ENP policy is a setback in a sense that it does not treat the Maghrebi partners on an equal footing (Boumghar, 2013). Furthermore, the uneven relations between individual Maghrebi countries with the EU, whereby some member states seek a privileged partnership with specific countries and vice versa, happen to the detriment of the idea of a ‘Great Maghreb’ (Interview Sidati, 2013). Some actors go as far as saying that the EU favors the bilateral nature of the partnership because ‘negotiating with a unified Maghrebi front would be less advantageous’ (Interview Sahel, 2013). Others actors consider that the responsibility of the ‘non-Maghreb’ has to be found primarily on the Maghrebi partners’ side but that the EU does not make of the rapprochement of Algeria and Morocco a high priority concern (Interview Abdelmoumni, 2014). Pr. Lahlou and economist Abdelmoumni concede that it would be in Europe’s interest

---

13 Based on the principle of co-ownership, the UfM established a co-presidency system and established a joint secretariat, which was originally headed by a Jordanian, assisted by three European Deputy Secretary Generals (from Greece, Italy and Malta) and two Southern Mediterranean respectively from Israel and the Palestinian Authority (Miltner, 2010).
to trade with a common Maghrebi market but the low intensity of the conflict does not prevent Brussels from trading individually with Algeria and Morocco (Interviews Abdelmoumni, 2014; Lahlou, 2014).

Secondly, the idea of having a sound regional integration process without first attempting to address the Western Sahara file demonstrates the shortsightedness of EU policy-makers. Instead of ‘rooting out the evil, the EU maintains a situation in palliative care’, which in the long term will undermine the EU interests, particularly those of France and Spain because any instability in that part of the region will undermine any economic progress made, whether it is in terms of trade or development’ (Interview Moutik, 2013). Conversely, Moroccans feel that the key to the resolution of the conflict has to be found in regional integration and a rapprochement between Algeria and Morocco through the re-opening of the land border (Interviews Abdelmoumni, 2014; Lahlou, 2014). Yet, in practice, both countries have invested too much money and efforts to retreat from their traditional position (Interview Madani, 2014).

Most importantly, the Sahrawis and the Algerians are increasingly questioning the neutrality of the EU. The Sahrawis welcome the EU declared goals and its promotion of democracy and human rights but oppose its practices, which place a premium upon economy with the exception of the Nordic countries like Sweden or Denmark that stand up against the Human Rights violations and boycott the products from the Western Sahara territory (Interview Jimmi, 2013). While they feel that the UN should remain the lead organization in the peace process they would welcome a more active EU support given the economic leverage the Union has on Morocco (Interviews Sidati, 2013; Moutaouakil, 2013). Despite their disappointment with the EU policies driven by influential member states, the Sahrawis still hope the EU will play a role in the Western Sahara conflict. Acknowledging the member states’ diverging interests and the work of the different EU institutions, the Sahrawis praise the European Parliament’s reports on the human rights situation in Western Sahara (Interview
Jimmi, 2013). As Sidati, explains, “Europe is involved in the conflict and this is the reason why we say that Europe can have another approach, that of a committed neutral mediator through a policy of active neutrality because the EU can contribute to the solution to the conflict” (Interview Sidati, 2013). From the Moroccan point of view, “the proposition of autonomy of Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty seems to be more in conformity with what the EU and the international community want and further from the Algerian position” (Interview Lahlou, 2014). Currently, Moroccans consider that the political environment, altered by the Arab uprisings and the Sahel crisis, has brought the EU closer to the Moroccan position than it has ever been (Interview Lahlou, 2014).

4. Conclusion

Even during periods of relative calm, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been just a hair’s breadth away from exploding into violence. Accordingly, unlike the Western Sahara case, it remains high on the agendas of the UN, Arab League, EU and US. With the region in a constant state of turmoil, there are justifiable fears that any tensions in the neighborhood might just be the catalyst for a resumption of violence and hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians or neighboring Arab states. The obvious solution seems to be a regional arrangement that will provide the region with a blanket of mutually reinforced security. However, the so-called Arab Spring has further reinforced the EU’s focus on cultivating deeper bilateral ties between Brussels and individual Arab states, making regional integration a very distant goal.

It would be inaccurate to say that EU policy or actions have not sought to promote regional cooperation or positively transform the conflict at all. With respect to the our theoretical framework, EU policy has evolved from a period of Direct unintentional promotion of regional integration following Oslo, to an Indirect approach in the form of the UfM, whose intergovernmental nature provides no framework for regional integration. Furthermore, it is
questionable whether EU policies have even brought about a wholly positive transformation of the conflict.

Any future EU policy must condense its different approaches into a ‘single and coherent policy framework’ (Gylfason and Wijkman, 2011). Accordingly, if economic integration and the compulsory pathway are continued as strategies, then they must be implemented properly and with far more conviction than at present. This includes a firmer carrot and stick policy, particularly with Israel. In addition, institutional overlap and the lack of one voice further complicate existing policies. This is most evident within the UfM, which operates on an intergovernmental level but pursues a EU foreign policy agenda (Reiterer, 2009: 324).

It is necessary for the EU to use its position as the PA’s biggest donor and Israel's biggest trading partner to take over leadership of peace negotiations from the United States whose bias toward Israel has increasingly frustrated the Palestinians and made resultant policy recommendations untenable and obsolete. There is a ‘distinctive division of labor’ between the United States and the EU, says Professor Finkelstein, with the EU seemingly content to ‘dangle financial incentives’ in front of both parties to appease them while the US steers the peace process on its own (Interview Finkelstein, New York 2013).

Perhaps most importantly, for regional cooperation to have an impact on this conflict, the EU needs to seek and establish partners for peace within the region, in the form of existing regional organizations like the Arab League. Support for and the promotion of existing regional proposals (the API and 2003 Geneva Accord) on both a regional and global level can make the EU appear assertive and willing to take a lead on the matter (Emerson and Tocci, 2006).

Compared to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Western Sahara dispute is an epiphenomenon in terms of scope and causalities, and so far has not prevented the EU from cutting economic
deals with the Maghrebi countries as it has always been excluded from the Euro-Mediterranean initiatives.

The exclusion of the Western Sahara conflict from the EU policy-makers’ agenda has not, however, eased the development of regional integration in the Maghreb. The multiple regional initiatives launched by Brussels have led to a bilateral shift that go at cross-purposes to the very idea of regional integration. Despite the obvious failure of the EMP and the ENP to foster cooperation among the Maghrebi countries, the EU seems to maintain this logic of action. Following the 2011 Arab Uprisings and the 2012 crisis in the Sahel that shook the MENA region, the EU reinforced its politics of conditionality and its concept of ‘more for more and less for less’.

Theoretically, possible alternatives would be to use incentives through financial packages that would ‘reward’ greater cooperation between the two main Maghrebi actors, Algeria and Morocco, and to increase financial assistance to the 5+5 Dialogue, which has been unanimously praised by the Northern and Southern Mediterranean partners as the most successful initiative in the region. As for the situation in Western Sahara, the EU is currently considered part of the problem instead of being part of the solution (Interview Sidati, 2013). Since the EU limits itself to humanitarian assistance to the Sahrawis and does not express a clear will to be more involved, a first step would be to persuade France and Spain not to hamper the UN-led peace settlement. By doing so, the EU would gain more credibility as a foreign policy actor that speaks with one voice on the issue and clarify its increasingly questioned ‘neutral’ position vis-à-vis the conflict.

A further step, however utopic, would be for the EU to directly compensate the Sahrawis for any economic deal, whether fisheries or phosphates, that it concludes with Morocco since it does not recognize the sovereignty of the latter over Western Sahara. Unfortunately, in the short-term there is little hope to see the situation evolving unless drastic events occur. As
Dumas observes, ‘the only two things that could wake Europe up are money and war’

(Interview Dumas, 2013).

References


Agence France Press (AFP) (2012), “Tunisia president in drive to revive Maghreb Union. Available at: http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iq4h43C2SiHs7-CUV_5MhiHhGNLOg?docId=CNG.2d2388619fde1f59a6d91682efa15a38.6b1, (accessed December 2013)


—— (2009b)” Is the EU Up to the Requirements of Peace in the Middle East?”, The International Spectator, 44 (3), 19-25.


Coustillière, Jean-François ed. (2012), Le 5+5 Face aux Défis du Réveil Arabe, L’Harmattan


—— (2012) “No friend of democracy: Europe’s role in the genesis of the “Arab Spring”. International Affairs, 88(1) 81-94.


HR/VP-Commission Joint Communication, “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean”, Brussels, 8/03/2011;


Mohsen-Finan (1997), Khadija, Sahara occidental: Les enjeux d’un conflit regional, CNRS éditions


http://www.spsrasd.info/fr/content/elargissement-du-mandat-de-la-minurso-m-galand-
denonce-le-role-pervers-de-la-france, (accessed 15 January 2013)

—— (2013b), “Adoption of the Tannock Report Makes Urgent Sahrawis claim for self-
determination”, 11 September 2013. Available at:
http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/adoption-tannock-report-makes-urgent-sahrawis-
claim-self-determination, (accessed 14 January 2014)

Political Science Quarterly 116 (2), 171–99.

Seeberg, Peter (2013), Morocco and the EU: New Tendencies in Transnational Migration and
the EU’s Migration Policies, Center for Mellemoststudier

Solana, Javier (2007), Summary of remarks by Javier Solana at the PES Conference on
Middle East at the European Parliament (S298/07), Brussels, 2 July 2007. Available at:
pdf

Souaré, Issaka K. (2007), “Western Sahara: What Can We Expect From the Manhasset


Policies”, Jerusalem Viewpoints, 5 (10).


—— (2005b) “Does the EU Promote Democracy in Palestine?”, M. Emerson (ed.)
Democratization in the European Neighborhood, Brussels, CEPS.

—— (2007), The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard, Taylor &
Francis

—— (2011) “The Middle East Quartet and (In)effective Multilateralism”, The Middle East
Journal, 67 (1), 29-44.

—— (2007), The EU and Conflict Resolution: Promoting Peace in the Backyard, Taylor &
Francis

Relations with the European Union”, Middle East and Euro-Med Working Paper no. 3,
Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels.

Tunis REI Conference Report (2013), Tunis Conference on Regional Economic Integration
Conference Report, 18 July 2013. Available at:
29 October 2013).

UfM Secretariat (2011), “Gaza Desalination Project Fact Sheet”, Prepared by the
Environment and Water Division, Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, 14
May 2011.

Practice of the Security Council, Supplement 1989-1992. Available at:
http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/89-
92/Chapter%208/AFRICA/item%208_Western%20Sahara_.pdf, (accessed 8 October
2013)

dorénavant?” , L’Année du Maghreb 2004 : L’espace euro-maghrebin: des homes au
peril des politiques, pp. 57-70


and Development in North Africa” in Dick Vandewalle (ed), North Africa:
Development and Reform in a Changing Global Economy, New York: St. Martin’s
Press


Zunes, Stephen, Mundy, Jacob (2010), Western Sahara: War, Nationalism, and Conflict Irresolution, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1st ed.
## APPENDIX No. 1 – List of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>INTERVIEW TYPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdelmoumni, Fouad</td>
<td>Economist and former Vice-President of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights (AMDH)</td>
<td>10/03/2014</td>
<td>Rabat, Morocco</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aknounk, Mohannad</td>
<td>Assistant Palestinian Representative to the OIC</td>
<td>04/11/2013</td>
<td>Jeddah, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awawdeh, Dr. Shaher</td>
<td>Political Officer for Palestine and Al Quds Affairs at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)</td>
<td>04/11/2013</td>
<td>Jeddah, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barat, Frank</td>
<td>Coordinator of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine and human rights’ activist</td>
<td>20/03/2014</td>
<td>London, United Kingdom</td>
<td>Telephone interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouris, Dr. Dimitris.</td>
<td>Research Fellow, European Neighborhood Policy Chair, College of Europe</td>
<td>18/11/2013</td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burchard, Matthias</td>
<td>Director, UNRWA Representative Office to the EU</td>
<td>03/03/2014</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Email questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>Algerian Diplomat</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>Moroccan Source</td>
<td>11/2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>Palestinian diplomat</td>
<td>12/2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>Official at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Amman office</td>
<td>12/2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>Official at the EU Delegation to Israel</td>
<td>02/04/2014</td>
<td>Tel Aviv, Israel</td>
<td>Email questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidential</td>
<td>Official at EUPOL-COPPS</td>
<td>10/04/2014</td>
<td></td>
<td>Email questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dauger, Alain</td>
<td>President of the <em>Comité Limousin de Solidarité avec le Peuple Sahraoui</em> and member of the <em>Association des Amis de</em></td>
<td>03/10/2013</td>
<td>Limoges, France</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Title and Details</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Type of Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diab, Ambassador</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary General for Palestine and Al Quds Affairs, OIC</td>
<td>04/11/2013</td>
<td>Jeddah, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernandez, Irene</td>
<td>Research Fellow, European Neighborhood Policy Chair, College of Europe</td>
<td>19/12/2013</td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finkelstein, Dr.</td>
<td>Political scientist and expert on Israel-Palestine conflict - professor, author and activist</td>
<td>06/11/2013</td>
<td>New York, United States</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galand, Pierre</td>
<td>Former Belgian Senator, President of the European Conference of Coordination and Support to the Sahrawi People (EUCOCO)</td>
<td>21/11/2013</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollis, Dr. Rosemary</td>
<td>Professor of Middle East Policy Studies and Director of the Olive Tree Programme at City University, London. Political scientist and expert on Israel-Palestine conflict - professor, author and activist</td>
<td>07/11/2013</td>
<td>London, United Kingdom</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarchow, Dr. Ute</td>
<td>Regional Project Advisor for the Regional Social and Cultural Fund for Palestinian Refugees and Gaza Population, at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH</td>
<td>05/12/2013</td>
<td>Amman, Jordan</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Interview Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmi, El-Ghalia</td>
<td>Human Rights Activist formerly imprisoned by the Moroccan Authorities, Vice President of Sahrawi Association of Victims of Grave Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State, Member of the Committee for the Families of Disappeared Sahrawis</td>
<td>16/11/2013</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahlou, Pr. Mehdi</td>
<td>Professor of Economics at the University of Rabat and member of the Parti Socialiste Unifié</td>
<td>04/04/2014</td>
<td>Rabat, Morocco</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marchetti, Dr. Andreas</td>
<td>Senior Fellow at the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) at the University of Bonn.</td>
<td>12/11/2013</td>
<td>Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moutaouakil, Mohamed</td>
<td>Human rights activist formerly imprisoned by the Moroccan authorities, Member of the Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA)</td>
<td>16/11/2013</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moutik, Bachir</td>
<td>Representative in France of the Association for the Families of Sahrawi Prisoners and the Disappeared (AFAPREDESA)</td>
<td>16/11/2013</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbani, Mouin</td>
<td>Jordanian journalist and</td>
<td>04/12/2013</td>
<td>Amman, Jordan</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Title and Affiliation</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahel, Ali</td>
<td>Former Algerian Deputy, President of the National Association for Youth Exchanges (ANEJ)</td>
<td>16/11/2013</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaban, Omar</td>
<td>Founder and Director of Palthink for Strategic Studies - Independent researcher and analyst of Palestinian affairs</td>
<td>05/11/2013</td>
<td>Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territories</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidati, Mohamed</td>
<td>SADR Minister for the EU</td>
<td>22/11/2013</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinberg, Gerald</td>
<td>Professor, Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation and Political Science Department, Bar Ilan University</td>
<td>05/04/2014</td>
<td>Ramat Gan, Israel</td>
<td>Email questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voelkel, Dr. Jan</td>
<td>Professor at the Euro-Mediterranean Studies Programme, Cairo University</td>
<td>09/12/2013</td>
<td>Cairo, Egypt</td>
<td>Personal Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>