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Winds of Democratic Change in the Mediterranean?

Processes, Actors and Possible Outcomes

Rubbettino

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The Role of Parliamentary Bodies, Sub-State Regions, and Cities in the Democratization of the Southern Mediterranean Rim*

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Introduction

The European Union (EU) is an international actor (Stavridis and Fernandez Sola 2011) having a long-standing relationship with the Southern Mediterranean countries that may be traced back to the 1950$_S$, when Algeria was still part of France. Over the years, the EEC (European Economic Community) has gradually strengthened its links with the Southern riparian states. After developing into the EU, it began a new process of (inter-) regional links by setting up the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP; also known as ´Barcelona Process´) in 1995. In 2008, this process was further transformed into the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)[1]. Those institutionalized relations fall within a wider context where other sets of intermeshing connections and networks exist, be they bilateral or multilateral, including or not an EU dimension (for a review, see Šabič and Bojinovic 2007).

The purpose of this study is to offer a descriptive analysis of two important dimensions of already existing institutionalized relations: its *parliamentary* dimension on the one hand, its *decentralized* (also referred to as *territorialized*) dimension on the other. Even if changes are almost inevitably made

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1. The Union for the Mediterranean consists of 43 members. The initial 1995 EMP consisted, on the one hand, of 15 members that the EU then consisted of, and, on the other hand, of 12 Southern Mediterranean states. After the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the EU side now consists of 27 members (the original 15 plus Cyprus and Malta), and the South now includes not only the 10 remaining initial ones (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey), but also six new members: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Monaco and Mauritania; that is to say, a total of 16 partners. Libya enjoys an observer status. For details, see *inter alia* the 2009 *Hellenic Studies* special issue.

in the way the current UfM structure works due to the unavoidable impact of the Arab Revolutions, there is no need for new institutional frameworks to be set up. Our argument is that those welcome changes will hopefully make the existing structures work better … *at long last*.

Even if several observers have noted that the whole structure has de facto collapsed as it has not even been able to meet (the initial UfM summit scheduled for June 2010 was postponed to November before being cancelled)[2], and others have called for its abolition[3], it remains formally in place, even if its initial Secretary General, the Jordanian Ahmad Masa´deh, resigned and Egypt has announced it will not continue with its participation in the Co-Presidency[4]. It should not be forgotten that the EU favors structured relations, usually of a regional or inter-regional type. Moreover, the European Neighbourhood Policy Instruments continue to promote public administration modernization, respect of human rights, etc. in the Mediterranean[5]; and the recent public pledges for more financial resources tend to strengthen the existing commitment[6]. Finally, the 'regionalization' of a 'globalizing' and 'globalized' world continues unabated, be it in the Mediterranean or elsewhere in the world (Warleigh-Lack, Robinson and Rosamond 2011).

The above could not be made clearer in the March 2011 European Council meeting Conclusions Declaration[7]:

"Point 14. Looking to the medium term, the European Council calls for a new partnership with the region, in line with its declaration of 4 February 2011. In this respect, it broadly welcomes the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative proposing a Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, based on a differentiated and incentive-based approach bringing together all EU instruments. Such a partnership should also be founded on deeper economic integration, broader market access and political cooperation. It calls on the Council to rapidly examine the proposals contai-

2. José Ignacio Torreblanca, ´Una pequeña ventana´, *El País*, 21.01.10.

3. Timothy Garton Ash, 'Un mensaje de esperanza y advertencia', *El País*, 19.02.11. Others argue that it is time to re-orient the UfM, but not to abolish it: Jean-Marie Colombani, 'La *realpolitik* ya no vale', *El País*, 19.02.11. See also Maxime des Gayets (a French Socialist Party member), ´L´Union pour la Méditerranée manque le train de l´histoire. Un échec de Nicolas Sarkozy´, *Le Monde*, 02.02.11; Djémila Boulhasha, 'La UE también tiene que hacer su revolución', *El País*, 07.03.11.

4. *El País*, 27.01.11; see also his interview in *El Periódico*, 07.12.10. The new Secretary General is the Moroccan Youssef Amrani.

5. For detailed information, see *Country Actions Plans* and their respective *Reports*: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm.

6. Ricardo Martínez de Rituerto, 'La UE aportará 6.000 millones a la democratización de los países árabes', *El País*, 09.03.11; see also 'L' UE envisage 6 milliards d'euros de prêts pour le sud de la Méditerranée', *Le Monde*, 22.02.11.

7. Declaration adopted by the extraordinary European Council (11 March 2011): www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/119780.pdf.

ned in the communication and in particular the conditions under which the EU's support to its partners could be enhanced. It looks forward to their forthcoming communication on the European Neighbourhood Policy.

"Point 16. Drawing the lessons from what has happened, the European Union also stands ready to review the missions of the Union for the Mediterranean, with the objective of promoting democracy and fostering stability in the region. A new push should be given to concrete measures and projects so as to strengthen democratic institutions, freedom of expression, including unhindered access to the internet, reinforce civil societies, support the economy, reduce poverty and address social injustice."

This study is informed by the fact that external relations are no longer the *exclusive* domain for state action – and the Mediterranean is no exception. Thus, on the one hand, sub-state regions in more developed countries tend to spend more and more human, technical and financial resources on the promotion and implementation of decentralized cooperation towards their counterparts in less developed countries in the world. There is also a clear increase in the number of external activities that cities and local governments (widely defined) engage in, including very specialized and experienced operational actions.

Over the last 20 years, and in parallel to the development of traditional (i.e. state-to-state or interregional) Euro-Mediterranean relations, a new dynamic of paradiplomacy (see below) has emerged, linking regions and cities through an ample network of various forums. We point out the following ones: The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPRM) or the proliferation of the so-called Euro-Regions, under the new European legal umbrella of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)[8], or between cities, such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG/ UCLG) Mediterranean Interregional Committee, or *Medcities*. Some include a combination of regions and cities such as the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities (EMRLA or better known as ARLEM under its French acronym), which is linked to the UfM. The UfM Senior Officials have only 'noted' its setting up, but they award it the same degree of recognition as the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), because the ARLEM counts with the direct participation of the EU´s own Committee of the Regions.

On the other hand, the international activities of national parliaments, sub-state parliaments, transnational (or 'supranational') parliaments have transformed parliamentary assemblies of all types into real international actors. Again, the Mediterranean is no exception. To just use examples from Spain, be it the Spanish *Cortes*, the *Parlament de Catalunya*, or the Spanish

8. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/gect/index_en.htm.

MPs or MEPs acting in the European Parlament or the EMPA, there exist multiple levels of action at the regional and the international stages.

This proliferation of actors and networks that bring together parliamentary entities, regions and cities (see below) raises questions about the traditional organization of the external relations of a state. It challenges the view of coordination, sometimes even points at some incoherence in the activities of a State, be it in its international cooperation policy or in other areas of the international arena. This is further complicated by the absence of similar decentralized set-ups in the Eastern and Southern areas of the Mediterranean, including sometime the appearance of inefficiency. As for the parliamentarization of the two rims of the Mare Nostrum, it is also true that, *at least to date*, there is less interest in the South, as most states still are 'façade democracies'[9].

This chapter consists of three parts: the first part looks at the theoretical and conceptual debate in order to put the subsequent empirical sections in their wider context. Part 2 then considers the parliamentary dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations in general and of the UfM in particular, by considering the structure, role and activities of the EMPA. The third part considers the decentralized dimension of the same, and focuses on the ARLEM and on the city dimension. It concludes that institutions remain of fundamental importance for a 'region' that encounters many serious problems and is experiencing fundamental changes. In other words, the new democratizing conditions in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries make existing institutional frameworks and structures at the parliamentary and paradiplomatic levels all the more crucial both as *actors of,* and as *actors for, change in the Southern Mediterranean rim.*

Theories, Concepts and Approaches

In order to assess the role of parliamentary and sub-state bodies in Euro-Mediterranean relations there is a great deal of International Relations (IR) approaches, theories and concepts to choose from: be it regional integration/regionalization or globalization in their many variations, or more ´policy-oriented´ ones, such as Governance, in general, and Multi-Level Governance in particular; furthermore, other approaches such as paradiplomacy and parliamentary diplomacy are equally useful for our purposes. Without entering into a detailed account of all of the above theoretical and conceptual approaches[10], what follows will summarize some of their main characteristics.

9. For instance, the 2010 *Freedom House Index of Political Rights and Civil Liberties* confirms the existence of a 'democratic deficit' in the region (*El País*, 06.02.11 and 21.02.11).

10. Due to the variety of alternative and complementary approaches, there will unavoidably follow a rather synthetic presentation.

Paradiplomacy

Historically, IR scholars have considered states, together with international organizations and regimes, as the main actors in the international arena (Keohane and Nye 1977; Keohane 1984; Rosecrance 1977). Over the years, however, a new literature has emerged over the role of regional and local governments in the world. From this 'global-local' dimension the concept of paradiplomacy appears in the 1990$_s$ (Soldatos 1990; Jeffery 1996). To date, it has produced a huge literature (Lecours 2002; Freres and Sanz 2002; Kaiser 2003; Aldecoa Luzarraga 2003; Brunet and Grau and Stavridis 2004: 135-139). There is also the so-called 'diplomacy of the cities' that encompasses "the activities of local municipalities on the international scene" (Marx 2008, our translation). Networks of cities and regions have appeared out of the need for those entities to be present in an intensive world society. There are many reasons for forming networks: to do joint lobbying, to create more coherent territorial spaces, to enter the international system, to gain access to information and new technologies, to construct and strengthen leadership, and to generate a space for relations between cities and regions on one side and other actors such as, for instance, national governments, international organizations, or the organized civil society on the other. Network participation is not a prerogative of large cities alone. It extends to small and medium cities (Oberti 2000). Through their own international dynamics, cities have introduced their own international cooperation system, known as 'decentralized cooperation', which strongly favors democratization and decentralization initiatives and efforts in third countries (Gutiérrez and Santonja 2008).

Parliamentary diplomacy

There exist a large number of national and transnational parliamentary bodies that have taken an active role in international affairs. This notable phenomenon represents an emerging form of public diplomacy. Few studies have been made to date (Ghebali 1993; Stavridis 2002a). An Interparliamentary Union/UPI-sponsored study distinguishes three types of parliamentary activities at the international level (Beetham 2006): 'parliamentary diplomacy', 'inter-parliamentary cooperation', and 'technical parliamentary cooperation'. In other words, parliamentary diplomacy is something more than 'just' parliamentary cooperation. Parliamentarians seem particularly aware of the numerous possibilities that parliamentary diplomacy can and does offer them. Parliamentarians do not necessarily ´coincide with their respective country's official position on any given issue. This allows parliamentarians *a margin of flexibility* that is denied to the diplomat [… . They also] tend to bring a moral dimension to international politics that transcends narrow definitions of the national interest, particularly in their principled support for democracy and human rights´ (Beetham 2006: 6, emphasis added; see also Elorriaga 2004).

Nevertheless, there are criticisms concentrating mainly on what is often referred to as 'parliamentary tourism', where what prevails in meetings is '*la langue de bois*', further aggravated by the lack of continuity in international affairs of so many parliamentarians (Sénat 2001: 33; Parliamentary Centre 2003). Others, in particular professional diplomats, still consider it to be an "unwelcome interference in international negotiations"[11]; this is the case even when parliamentarians themselves generally accept the need to "*réspecter un devoir de réserve*", to use the words of Xavier de Villepin when he was Chair of the French Senate´s Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Armed Forces (Sénat 2001: 16).

Multi-Level Governance (MLG)

MLG builds on a number of IR theories, and is usually associated with the internal and external EU relations (Hooghe and Marks 2001a; 2001b; 2002; 2004; Grau 2011; Morata 2011; Awesti 2009). The concept itself refers as much to a decision-making process as it does to the various institutions and organs involved in it. MLG possesses a specific democratic/democratization element, as it claims to bring citizens as close to a policy decision as possible. It draws on the concept of 'subsidiarity', which has been very present in EU discourse for some time now (this is the reason why the Committee of the Regions was set up in the EU).

At the world level, MLG aims to create a 'new international order', which favors international cooperation, multilateralism, regional integration and interregional relations (Warleigh-Lack, Robinson and Rosamond 2011). From that perspective, both New Regionalism (NR, see below) and MLG are trying to explain and (MLG more than NR) organize the emerging system that follows from the collapse of the Cold War and the East-West division, the impact of Globalization, and the appearance of new international powers, such as, for instance, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

New Regionalism (NR)

There is another important conceptual approach for our study, namely, Regionalization Theory and, in particular, its post Cold-War version, New Regionalism/NR, also known as Open Regionalism[12]. It represents a less theoretical, less structured and less normative approach than MLG, in the sense that it is more descriptive and does not necessary aim to produce eventually something as ambitious as world governance. Euro-Mediterranean relations fit particularly well the NR approach, especially when taken from the perspective of its sub-state and parliamentary dimensions. Indeed, Euro-

11. Gérard Davet and Pascal Ceaux, ´Le cas Julia´, *Le Monde*, 09.03.05: www.lemonde.fr.
12. Especially in the literature on Latin American integration.

Mediterranean relations fall more within what might be labelled as ´inter-regionalism´ rather than regionalism *tout court*[13].

Due to regional cooperation and inter-regionalization, characteristics of all of the above theoretical and conceptual approaches are clearly visible in the existing Euro-Mediterranean arrangements, linking states, international organizations, sub-state regions, cities, parliamentary entities, NGOs, civil society actors, etc. Thus, the UfM is a multi-level, multi-actor process.

No doubt, the Northern rim is much more institutionalized and region-alized than its Southern counterpart, not only in the EU, but also in the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, etc. But one of the EMP/UfM objectives is to promote regional integration in the South. There already exists the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU or better known as UMA under its French acronym[14]) from a political perspective, or the Agadir Agreement, aiming at the establishment of a free trade zone between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, from an economic perspective. Both experience various serious difficulties and are under-used, mainly due to political differences between their members. Indeed, Southern regionalism may well fail if politically related bottlenecks prove to be more difficult to overcome than economic and technical ones.

The Parliamentary Dimension of Euro-Mediterranean Relations

The parliamentary context

It is important to note, as already mentioned above, that the UfM seems to be at a standstill and in crisis after, as noted above, the once postponed and then cancelled 2010 UfM summit. But the PA-UfM still met in March 2011 in Rome (under the Italian Parliament's Presidency). This led to some confusion as the EMPA web page went offline and, if reached through a search engine, it directed the browser to the EP home page. However, this was due to the creation of a new website (with no link to the previous one) on the Italian Parliament server[15].

Developments in the region over the next few months will be crucial for the future of the Parliamentary Assembly as well. It does not seem far-fetched to argue that the democratization of at least some Arab partner countries

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13. Hettne (2003: 25) claims that there are various levels of 'inter-regionalisms': *trans-regionalism*, which refers to 'relations between regions'; *inter-regionalism*, which refers to 'organised or formal relations between two regional organizations'; and, finally, multi-regionalism, which means 'regional multilateralism'.

14. It also sounds like 'umma' which is the Arabic word for community, especially the Islamic community.

15. http://english.camera.it/europ_rap_int/892/11738/11758/documentotesto.asp. *EMPA:* www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa/default.htm.

would even represent a unique opportunity to re-launch the UfM and by implication its parliamentary branch.

The existence of regional parliamentary assemblies in the Mediterranean is one expression of the many linkages developed in the region during the past four decades. These Assemblies point to a desire towards strengthening regional institutions, legitimizing them and reinforcing their efficiency in dealing with common challenges. The fact that such assemblies exist does not necessarily mean that a given region has definitely emerged (Šabič and Bojinovic 2007: 317-322). There is no consensus among the players themselves, or even among observers, about the kinds of roles that regional, mainly inter-governmental institutions, ought to play, or what challenges they are meant to confront; whether they need to focus on political objectives and conflict resolution, aim at more practical goals, like economic integration, or pursue a combination of both.

At the level of the national state, yet beyond the traditional limits of state diplomacy, national parliaments in states located in the Euro-Mediterranean 'region' do undertake international activities, but these tend to be either directly or tacitly involved with the almost all-encompassing 43-member EMP/UfM set-up, or with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), which consists of less member parliaments, only the ones for the Mediterranean states, and through more traditional bilateral links.

To this ought to be added the role of sub-state parliamentary bodies, especially those of federal, quasi-federal, or decentralized (mainly European) states. In this respect, it is also important to stress their role within the paradiplomatic nature of the external activities that their respective regions/ states/autonomous communities carry out. This is very much understudied in the existing literature even if there are exceptions (Navarro 2003), and even though there exist parliamentary arrangements that link national, sub-national and transnational institutions (e.g. the Nordic Council, the Commonwealth, the *Francophonie*, or the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference). If one uses a wider definition of paradiplomacy which includes the external action of cities and local authorities as well, then the region's municipal and town hall 'parliaments' are equally important (see below).

There is also a number of parliamentary initiatives that affect the Mediterranean region[16] (for the EP see below). There are assemblies which bring together parliamentarians from each one of the regions which converge on the Mediterranean, but also include non-Mediterranean parliaments. For example, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly

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16. Šabič and Bojinovic (2007: 322) distinguish between: "a) Mediterranean international governmental and non-governmental organizations; b) other Mediterranean institutions; and c) external international institutions". As with so many social science issues, there is no consensus on classification types.

(PACE)[17] includes various Mediterranean riparian states. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly comprises parliamentarians from all the Alliance's member states[18], including those on the Mediterranean littoral; in 1996, a Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) was also established in an effort to promote a regular dialogue with the parliaments of the non-NATO countries of the Mediterranean region. While still active, the Western European Union (WEU) pursued a Mediterranean dialogue for some time. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)[19] carries out an annual dialogue with a number of Mediterranean countries, namely, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

Similarly, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union is composed of member states of the Arab League; it also pursues a Euro-Arab Dialogue with European states[20]. There also exists the Consultative Council of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), with parliamentarians from Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. In the African Union, there is a Pan-African Parliament, which also includes parliamentarians from its Northern African member states.

However, the EMPA and the PAM[21] are the main Mediterranean parliamentary assemblies. For reasons of space, we will concentrate on EMPA. There are many differences, as well as similarities, between the two institutions; their origins explain the difference in their objectives: EMPA originated from the Barcelona Process, and from less formal political declarations for the region as a whole; PAM arose from the initiative of the national parliaments of the Mediterranean region, under the aegis of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). It would be interesting to compare the two, in detail, not only as factors/actors for the democratization of the Southern Mediterranean states, but also with respect to other issues, such as conflict-resolution, for instance.

The above shows how complex and varied the Mediterranean parliamentary network is. The European Parliament[22] is its key actor, of course, because:

17. Established in 1949; expansion post-1989 (several name changes); it consists of 47 parliaments.

18. Self-appointed, parliamentary body in 1955, with members from 28 parliaments.

19. When the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the 'Helsinki Process') became the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) after the end of the Cold War, it consolidated an assembly that nowadays has members from 55 countries.

20. It has existed since 1974 and is composed of 22 parliaments.

21. The latter does not belong to any intergovernmental organization (IO). This represents an exception to the general rule that parliamentary assemblies are linked to IOs. But it is not the only one; see, for instance, PARLATINO in Latin America. PAM: www.apm.org.mt.

22. First established in 1952 (it has gone through several name changes), directly elected parliamentarians from the EU countries (from six members, initially, to the current 27 members).

– It is the most important regional integration-cum-political unification (*voire* supranational) parliament in the world.
– It is the most important IPI (International Parliamentary Institution/ IPI; on IPIs see Cutler 2006; Šabič 2008; Malamud and Stavridis 2011) if only due to its structure, history, powers and potential.
– It has played an important international role and continues to do so.

The EP has over 40 Delegations, various Committees dealing with international issues, and a number of institutionalized inter-parliamentary assemblies (chronologically speaking: the EU-ACP Joint Assembly; the EMPA; the EUROLAT; and the EURONEST, launched in 2011[23]). The increase in EP powers since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect in December 2009, also entails that, at present, the Parliament has a legislative role in those internal EU policies, in the fields of justice and internal affairs, where the EU is also engaged in co-operating with its Mediterranean partners (the fight against organized crime, terrorism and migration). The Mediterranean is a key area for the EU´s external relations and also for the EP, which was the driving force behind the parliamentary dimension allocated to the Barcelona Process (with a number of national EU parliaments involved, such as the Italian Parliament, but also various Italian and Spanish MEPs). Finally, there is the EU-Morocco Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), announced at the end of the first-ever EU-Morocco Summit (due to Morocco´s new advanced status agreement) (Fernández Sola and Sorroza Blanco 2010: 7), which held its second meeting in May 2011.

What follows sumps up the plethora of existing parliamentary bodies: 'Universal' entities:
– IPU/Interparliamentary Union, with plenty of Mediterranean basin parliamentary bodies.

'Northern' Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities:
– Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)[24]

23. It is also possible to include the EP-NATO PA. For the ACP Joint Assembly, see Delputte (2010); for the EUROLAT, see Ajenjo Fresnos and Stavridis (2011); Fernández Fernández (2011); for EURONEST, see http://www.euronest.europarl.europa.eu/euronest/.

24. Established in 1949; expansion post-1989 (name changes). 47 parliaments (various enlargements, especially linked to East-West divide). PACE: *Albania*, Andorra, Armenia, *Austria*, Azerbaijan, *Belgium*, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Bulgaria*, *Croatia*, *Cyprus*, *Czech Republic*, *Denmark*, *Estonia*, *Finland*, *France*, Georgia, *Germany*, *Greece*, *Hungary*, Iceland, *Ireland*, *Italy*, *Latvia*, Liechtenstein, *Lithuania*, *Luxembourg*, *Malta*, Moldova, *Monaco*, *Montenegro*, *Netherlands*, Norway, *Poland*, *Portugal*, *Romania*, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, *Slovakia*, *Slovenia*, *Spain*, *Sweden*, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, *Turkey*, Ukraine, *United Kingdom*. The Belarusian Parliament has been suspended since January 1997. The parliaments of Canada, *Israel* and Mexico enjoy Observer Status (in italics: UfM member states).

–   European Parliament[25]
–   NATO Parliamentary Assembly[26]
–   OSCE Parliamentary Assembly[27].

'Northern-Southern' Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities:
–   EMPA/PA-UfM
–   PAM[28].

'Southern' Mediterranean regional parliamentary entities:
–   Arab Interparliamentary Union (since 1974, 22 parliaments)
–   Consultative Council of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), parliaments from Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia
–   Pan-African Parliament (of the African Union), in particular its Northern African members.

The above also shows how complex and varied the parliamentary web in the Mediterranean is. Now that the wider context has been presented, however telegraphically, what follows considers in more detail the structure and activities of the EMPA/UfM-PA.

The EMPA/PA-UfM
There follows a presentation of EMPA's structure and activities to date. The inaugural EMPA session took place in Vouliagmeni (Athens) on 22-23 March 2004. It consists of parliamentarians appointed by:

25. It also participates directly in the PA-UfM.
26. Brussels Treaty 1949 (successive enlargements). Self-appointed parliament 1955 (formerly: North Atlantic Assembly/NAA). 28 member parliaments, several enlargements over the years. NATO PA: *Albania*, *Belgium*, *Bulgaria*, Canada, *Croatia*, *Czech Republic*, *Denmark*, *Estonia*, *France*, *Germany*, *Greece*, *Hungary*, Iceland, *Italy*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania*, *Luxembourg*, *Netherlands*, Norway, *Poland*, *Portugal*, *Romania*, *Slovakia*, *Slovenia*, *Spain*, *Turkey*, *United Kingdom*, United States of America (in italics: UfM member states).
27. OSCE 55 member parliaments: *Albania*, Andorra, Armenia, *Austria*, Azerbaijan, Belarus, *Belgium*, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Bulgaria*, Canada, *Croatia*, *Cyprus*, *Czech Republic*, *Denmark*, *Estonia*, *Finland*, *France*, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, *Germany*, *Greece*, *Hungary*, Iceland, *Italy*, *Ireland*, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, *Latvia*, Liechtenstein, *Lithuania*, *Luxembourg*, *Malta*, Moldova, *Monaco*, *Montenegro*, *Netherlands*, Norway, *Poland*, *Portugal*, Russian Federation, *Romania*, San Marino, Serbia, *Slovenia*, *Slovakia*, *Spain*, *Sweden*, Switzerland, Tajikistan, *Turkey*, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, *United Kingdom*, United States of America, Uzbekistan (in italics: UfM member states).
28. *Albania*, *Algeria*, Andorra, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Croatia*, *Cyprus*, *Egypt*, *France*, *Greece*, *Israel*, *Italy*, *Jordan*, *Lebanon*, Libya, *Malta*, *Monaco*, *Montenegro*, *Morocco*, *Palestine*, *Portugal*, Serbia, *Slovenia*, *Syria*, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, *Tunisia*, *Turkey* (in italics: UfM member states). Associate Members and Observers: Maghreb Arab Union, Romania, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Western European Union (www.apm.org.mt/membersCountry.php?lang=en).

- the national parliaments of the EU member states
- the European Parliament
- the national parliaments of the Mediterranean partners.

The EMPA/PA-UfM consists of 280 members: 130 EU members (81 members of the 27 EU national parliaments, on the basis of equal representation, and 49 members of the European Parliament), 10 members from the parliaments of the European Mediterranean partner countries (2 members each from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Monaco and Montenegro), 130 members of the parliaments of the 10 founding Mediterranean partners, on the basis of equal representation, and 10 members from the Mauritanian parliament. Its working languages are English, French and Arabic. Until now, there have been 10 plenary sessions:

- Athens, Greece: 22-23 March 2004
- Cairo, Egypt: 12-15 March 2005
- Rabat, Morocco: 20-21 November 2005
- Brussels, Belgium: 25-26 March 2006
- Tunis, Tunisia: 16-17 March 2007
- Athens, Greece: 27-28 March 2008
- Dead Sea, Jordan: 12-13 October 2008
- Brussels, Belgium: 16-17 March 2009
- Amman, Jordan: 13-14 March 2010
- Rome, Italy: 3-4 March 2011.

In addition to the plenary sessions, the Parliamentary Assembly is structured along a Bureau and a number of Committees. The current Bureau is composed of the European Parliament (presidency March 2008-March 2009), Jordan (2009-2010), Italy (2010-2011) and Morocco (2011-2012).

There are currently 5 Committees, 4 permanent and 1 *ad hoc*:

- Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights
- Committee on Economic, Financial and Social Affairs and Education
- Committee on the Promotion of the Quality of Life, Human Exchanges and Culture
- Committee on Women's Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Countries (during the first four years, it was only an ad hoc Committee)
- *Ad hoc* Committee on Energy and Environment (March 2008).

There are also various working groups. According to the information on its official website, there is only one such working group right now: Financing of the Assembly and Revision of the EMPA's Rules of Procedure[29]. Previously,

29. www.europarl.europa.eu/members/public/yourMep/view.do?name=pittella&partNumber=1&language=EN&id=4436, consulted on 23/9/10.

there were other working groups on the following topics, but they no longer appear on the EMPA's website:

– Peace and Security in the Middle East
– The Problem of Landmines
– Conditions for the transformation of FEMIP into the Euro-Mediterranean Development Bank
– Civil protection and prevention of natural and ecological disasters in the Euro-Mediterranean region
– Ways for the EMPA Assembly to participate in bodies of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.

Assessing the EMPA to date

Drawing from past publications (Stavridis 2002b; 2004; Stavridis and Manoli 2008; Pace and Stavridis 2010; Stavridis and Pace 2011), the main conclusions for the EMPA can be summarized as follows: first, if it did not exist, the EMPA/UfM parliamentary dimension would need to be invented. But this sentiment is not shared by the Southern member states, which were mostly against granting EMPA real powers in the UfM. The role of the PA-UfM is restricted, as was the case for the EMPA before it, to a consultation role. It may only make recommendations. It is possible that this negative feature will change in the near future if the Arab Revolutions conclude successfully.

Second, it allows for the legitimization and democratization of the process. It also brings some 'visibility' to the process, a constant criticism as it is an overall little-known institution. It is also considered to add, at least at the theoretical level, a dose of 'morality' in international affairs (parliaments as 'moral tribunes'). Third, one should note the importance of acquainting partners with 'best practices´ and promoting these practices is a worthwhile parliamentary dimension. It is ´hoped´ (some say, ´expected´) that it will lead to the *socialization* of all its members. As a result, the EMPA offers an additional forum for exporting democratic practices, by enhancing the role of the EP and national EU parliaments. The 'socialization effect' is meant to work in such settings where democratic parties live together with undemocratic or partly democratic ones. Such institutional frameworks are meant to socialize their less democratic or experienced participants over time. Another argument is that by participating in these forums, members of democratically elected parliaments are able to engage their 'counterparts' from non-democratic states. Of course, the debate is more complex. Southern Mediterranean MPs bring their own domestic politics into the workings of the EMPA – but do they take back home the lessons they learn there? Are they acting as MPs in the Western liberal sense of the word, possessing political ties with their parties back home, but also enjoying some freedom of action and initiative? Or are they the parliamentary arms of governing elites using

the Parliamentary Assembly to defend national positions in the same way as so many diplomats normally do within the UN General Assembly or other major diplomatic conferences? In short: are they, for want of a better term, diplomats disguised as MPs?

One should note, nonetheless, that parliamentarians from the developing countries themselves often express the wish to see their own national parliaments develop from 'rubber stamp' institutions into full-fledged legislative assemblies[30]. It is also true to point out the fact that regional parliamentary meetings, normally held in exotic settings by the host countries, could sometimes also lead to criticism of 'parliamentary tourism', but most observers and practitioners agree on their long-term beneficial impact on a wide range of ever increasing domains. Linked to this point, we should also mention that the EU, and the EP in this case, try their best, for instance by insisting on some form of legitimization for the Southern parliamentarians. They must be elected and can no longer be just representatives of their respective regimes (usually appointed diplomats) in order to be accepted as EMPA/PA-UfM members. This practice began in the ACP Parliamentary Assembly[31]. No need to say that those regimes have invented ways of circumventing this hurdle, yet it is an additional obstacle they still need to overcome.

Fourth, parliamentary assemblies are often described as forums where what dominates is the *langue de bois*, as there is still a long way to go before national prejudice be ignored in their debates and resolutions. Fifth, *electoral monitoring* plays an important role in parliamentary activities. As far as electoral monitoring in the Mediterranean is concerned, parliamentarians ought to play an important role. The European Parliament has been involved in a limited number of election monitoring missions in the Mediterranean: so far in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (2002), Lebanon (2005) and Palestine (1996, 2005, 2006). But the EMPA/PA-UfM has not been directly involved in such initiatives. During a hearing of the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and Human Rights Subcommittee held on 24 June 2005, it was argued that election monitoring was the first step towards democratization; but the obstacles in mounting them were many, particularly because prior agreement was required from the governments of the states concerned before they could be carried out.[32] Democratization was placed at the heart of the EMPA at its first meeting in Cairo in March 2005 and criticism of Egypt during the session coincided with the release of the Opposition leader

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30. For an example from *outside* the Mediterranean context, see MP Anne S. Makinda, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania, speaking at a UN conference (quoted in Stavridis and Pace 2009: 142-143).

31. French Green MEP Alima Boumédiène interview, in Stavridis (2002b: 47-48).

32. www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-200506241+0+DOC+ XML+V0//EN (accessed 15.08.08).

Mr Ayman Nour, though pressure on Egypt in this case was also mounted by the USA. In a Resolution adopted in that first session of the Assembly, it was stated that the EMPA instructs its Political Committee on Security and Human Rights to monitor among other things, 'the strengthening of democratic processes in all the partner countries, particularly *the sound organization of elections*'[33].

Sixth and finally, there is a clear link between sub-state entities and their respective parliaments, a feature that is to be found, as noted above, in other parliamentary set-ups (IPIs). It remains to be seen whether the recent creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) in 2010 will act as a competing actor, or as a complementary actor, in the much-needed democratization of the Mediterranean Basin (see below for an assessment of the ARLEM).

Paradiplomacy of Cities and Regions in the Context of Globalization[34]

The wider context

In order to offer a comprehensive picture of non-traditional state-to-state relations in the Mediterranean region, one should add to the above the paradiplomacy of cities and other local authorities: indeed, 'Local governments have become actors on the international stage. This is a recent phenomenon, in historical terms, that has occurred in a relatively short period of time and in an apparently spontaneous and poorly articulated way' (Badia i Dalmases 2009: 9)[35]. Fifty-two percent of the world's population currently lives in cities and it is expected to reach 1 out of every 3 people by 2050[36]. In the Mediterranean, the current urban population amounts to 170 million. The projection for 2025 is that 243 million people will be living in urban centers[37]. The financial crisis has made the role of local and regional governments more important, because their economic situation is often worse than the central government's[38].

33. Point 44, 'Resolution of the EMPA on the assessment of the Barcelona Process on the eve of its tenth anniversary, adopted on 15 March 2005 in Cairo (Egypt) on the basis of the resolution tabled by Mrs Tokia Saïfi, Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee on Political, Security and Human Rights Issues', *First Session of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly*, Cairo, March 2005, p.64 (emphasis added).

34. The authors thank Tami Williams for the translation of Part 3, from Santonja (2011: 230-234).

35. See also Tourret, Seon, Dioudonnat and Walleart (2010).

36. Sandro Pozzi, 'El mundo se hace urbano', *El País*, 05.04.10.

37. See also Martín and Oddone (2010).

38. *El País*, 18.04.10. In Spain, for instance, the Central Administration spends 21.7% of the total public expenditure costs (2007 figures), with Social Security another 28.6% but

The Euro-Mediterranean area is a very well interconnected space. International diplomacy plays a strong role on major issues in the region (international security, unresolved conflicts, etc.). This is a vital point in understanding the relationships in this region and an element to be considered when initiating or conducting any kind of international cooperation process. The fact that local and regional governments are relatively neutral and distant from the issues related to traditional diplomacy has made their actions in the Mediterranean increasingly noticeable in recent years.

The reasons that encourage the initiation of cooperative relationships with Mediterranean partners do not differ substantially from other regions (historic links and relations between former colonies and metropolis, immigration, etc.), although some are worth mentioning in detail[39].

First, due to the socio-economic reality of the region, collaborations have taken on a predominantly urban characteristic[40]. Not surprisingly, in the Mediterranean, a huge number of its residents live in most densely populated cities[41]. In 2009, two out of three inhabitants of the Mediterranean were living in urban areas. The strong urban concentration and constant growth, due to rural exodus, has caused major challenges for water management, transport, housing, waste management and treatment. The need for strategic planning for these challenges has led to an immediate collaboration between Europe and the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean to address specific problems. This shows that such collaboration is developed more in line with geographical needs and less with the dynamic of the State, which can sometimes become entrenched in unresolved conflicts and bilateral tensions.

Secondly, there is a collaboration of essentially European cities and regions that concentrates in a number of countries and cities in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The local and regional governments who have mobilized and taken action in the collaboration in the Mediterranean are mostly from the European countries, with Spain, France and to a lesser extent (due to a smaller volume), Italy. It is difficult to quantify precisely the extent of involvement in the collaboration, as there is no common source of collecting data[42]; except for the recently launched Atlas on decentralized

the CC. AA. (regions or autonomous communities) are responsible for 36%, and the Local Authorities for another 13.6%.

39. For a more detailed description of the motivations for embarking on a partnership with a city in the South, see Santonja (2009).

40. This is a trend that is spreading globally, but needs to be stressed, taking into account the high population density in Mediterranean coastal cities.

41. See *State of the environment and development in the Mediterranean*, 2009: http://www.planbleu.org/publications/SoED2009_resume-executif_EN.pdf.

42. The Spanish case is the most difficult to quantify given the large amount of decentralized cooperation of the Autonomous Communities and local authorities. They have devoted some effort regarding cooperation with Latin America (www.observ-ocd.org), but in the case

cooperation of the Committee of the Regions, which in the future may be useful in providing information about each region[43]. Moreover, each city or region has an official budget that does not necessarily cover the same budget period.

As for local and regional governments of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, in general terms, they are mainly concentrated in Morocco in Maghreb, and in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories in the Mashreq. This prevents some cities and territories from becoming particularly active in further cooperations, especially in Maghreb, where they tend to be more familiar with collaborations with French entities.

Thirdly, politically speaking, the collaboration between cities and regions of the Mediterranean has occasionally become a way for citizens to express their opinions on various issues in foreign policy: solidarity movements of the people with unresolved conflicts, as is the case for Palestine or the Western Sahara, are good examples of this. A well-known example is the case of Barcelona, which is twinned with the cities of Gaza and Tel Aviv. It was subjected to a strong civil society campaign demanding the cancellation of the town twinning with Israel after the attacks on Gaza in December 2008. This campaign had a major impact on the media and mobilized a significant number of the citizens of Barcelona, but the City Council decided to maintain relations with both cities, as part of its commitment to help with the communication between the two countries. In this sense, the mobilization by elected local and regional governments in times of crisis or political tensions and their support visits to the area of tension can be pointed out as important[44].

Fourth and finally, the collaboration has been based within the wider Euro-Mediterranean framework, but has evolved parallel to it. Before the start of the Barcelona Process, the European Commission launched a series of programs designed to promote collaboration and cooperation among civil society actors (media, universities, organized civil society, youth ...) as well as between cities. The program 'Med-Urbs', established in 1992, promoted collaboration of European cities in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean through the creation of networks set up to allow collaborative activities, some of them are still active.

of the Mediterranean, it is still a pending issue. In contrast, France has data on the cooperation of French local and regional governments around the world (this is so because many of the projects carried out are dependent on funding by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: http://cncd.diplomatie.gouv.fr/frontoffice/bdd-monde.as).

43. http://portal.cor.europa.eu/atlas/espanol/Paginas/welcome.aspx.

44. By way of example, a large delegation of local elected Europeans traveled to Lebanon in November 2006 after the war in the summer of that year to show support and solidarity and to propose joint projects of reconstruction.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, launched in 1995, was also the starting point of the political mobilization by which Mediterranean cities could see their demands met. The first meeting of mayors, held in Barcelona in February 1995[45], demonstrated that there was a lack of clarity as to what the role of local governments would be within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Therefore, the Barcelona Declaration stipulated that "the municipal and regional authorities should actively participate in the operation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It will encourage representatives of cities and regions to meet annually to discuss their common problems and share experiences." Despite this explicit recognition in the founding Declaration, the Euro-Mediterranean institutions did rather prompt the involvement of so-called non-state actors (organized civil society) as guarantors of democracy and the promotion of good governance. Quickly, initiatives were put into place (Euromed Civil Forum) and programs were designed to support the activities of organized civil societies in the Euro-Mediterranean. Paradoxically, the basket related to local and regional governments was always left out, probably because of differences in regional realities and the difficulty in politically legitimizing some of their structures, which despite being regarded as sub-state administrations, do not in practice result from an election.

In spite of the lack of momentum expressed by the European Commission (again, different from what happened with the other actors), there are numerous territorial initiatives with Mediterranean vocation. Thus, the multiplication of common areas of collaboration between Mediterranean local and regional authorities has been accompanied by their institutionalization through more or less stable networks of cooperation. The existence of local authorities' networks in the Euro-Mediterranean acts as a lobby mainly to the EU, but also to the main bodies of the Barcelona Process in order to demand an increased attention to the needs of local governments in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Many networks have been created in this region, sometimes causing confusion or overlapping in initiatives or representations (as many local and regional governments are involved simultaneously in several of them).

In this sense, surely the most visible initiative of networked local representatives to show their concern and solidarity has been towards the victims of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the creation of a Network of Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East (Coeppo). It brings together elected representatives from six European countries who travel regularly to the region and set up triangular cooperation projects in which European, Israeli and Palestinian cities work together.

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45. During that event, Mayor Pasqual Maragall, backed by strong social and political support after the successful hosting of the Olympics in the city in 1992, launched the first political message by a representative of the Mediterranean cities.

In 1990, the Inter-Mediterranean Commission was created in the framework of the network Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPRM/CRPM in its French acronym); in 1999, the provincial network of Arco Latino; a year later, the Standing Committee for the Partnership of Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Powers (COPPEM in its French acronym); and in 2004, the Mediterranean Commission of the worldwide network of cities: United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG/CGLU in its French acronym).

But it was the momentum of an exclusively European network, *Eurocities*, and its Mediterranean working group (led at that time by the city of Bordeaux in France) who were able to reestablish local governments onto the Euro-Mediterranean agenda under the framework of the Valencia Action Plan[46]. With this re-launch, and the implementation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument[47] in 2005, two specific programs that boost cooperation between local and regional governments (MEDPACT and the Mediterranean Basin Program[48] under the framework of cross-border cooperation)[49] have materialized since then. They therefore respond to the repeated demands of Euro-Mediterranean cities and regions, together with other remaining programs of a regional or transversal character[50].

Networks of local and regional Mediterranean governments
– CGLU Med Commission[51]
– Arco Latino[52]
– Network of Euromed Cities[53]

46. www.ces.es/TRESMED/docum/Conf_2002_Valencia_es.pdf.

47. See also Shapira: *About local authorities and development cooperation.* (2006/2235(INI)). European Parliament. Development Committee. 01/03/2007. Committee of the Regions, *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and local and regional Authorities: The Need for Coordination and a specific instrument for Decentralized Cooperation,* Outlook Opinion, April 21, 2004, CdR 327/2003.

48. www.med-pact.eu; www.regione.sardegna.it/speciali/enpicbc.

49. For detailed information on political and operational cooperation of local and regional governments at the Euro-Mediterranean level, see Martín (2009).

50. Among them are the environmental program SMAP and LIFE: Third World Countries, the Euromed Heritage, and the Program to support Non-state Actors and Local Authorities.

51. www.commed-cglu.org: Network of networks of local and regional governments in the Mediterranean. Management structure: Tripartite Presidency: Europe Piedmont Region, Marrakech Maghreb, Mashreq-Beirut. Secretary: Marseille. Members: Network of 47 Euro-Mediterranean countries.

52. www.arcolatino.org: Established in 2002, it is a network for social and economic cohesion for the territories that comprise it. President: *Conseil Général Aude.* Secretary: *Barcelona Provincial Council.* With 4 thematic sections: social cohesion - territorial and economic - and cooperation in the Mediterranean. 61 Provinces, Provincial Councils and Departments of 4 European countries of the Western Mediterranean (Portugal, Spain, France and Italy).

53. Succeeding the Euromed Committee of *Eurocities,* the main driving force behind the re-launch of a new municipal cooperation program for the Mediterranean in 2004 Med'Act. Chair: City of Nice.

– *Medcities*[54]
– COPPEM - Committee of local and regional authorities for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership[55]
– Inter-Mediterranean Commission of the Committee on Peripheral and Maritime Regions[56]
– COEPPO - Network of European local governments for Peace in the Middle East[57].

The ARLEM

From a more political mobilization initially, we have now entered the phase of consolidation of the institutional representation of local and regional governments within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean process: in January 2010, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (AR-LEM) was established[58]. Its mission[59] is to complement existing organizations around the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the UfM[60] in order to join forces and to push for the agenda of local and regional governments to be taken into account[61].

54. www.medcites.org: Established in 1991 based on METAP initiative, it aims to strengthen the environmental sustainability of Mediterranean cities. Chair: City of Rome. Secretary: Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. Sector: environment, strategic planning. 28 cities in the Mediterranean coastal countries (Spain, France, Italy, Croatia, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco).

55. www.coppem.org: Created in 2000 from the initiative of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the Organization of Arab Cities. Chair: Sicilian Region. Secretary based in Palermo. Scope: general with 5 working committees: Policy and institutional, cooperation between cities and regions, economic and financial developments; culture, technology, tourism and environment, and equal opportunities. 101 members from 35 countries in the Euromed.

56. www.medregions.com: Established in 1989 under the CPMR, it brings together 50 regions from 10 countries. Chair: *Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur*. Independent secretariat based in Rome. Scope: general with 4 working groups: agriculture and rural development, water, renewable energy, and territorial cooperation.

57. www.paxurbs.com: Established in 2002, it brings together local authorities in Belgium, Spain, France, Greece and Italy. Sector: promoting dialogue and peace.

58. For a more detailed description, see Committee of the Regions, ARLEM: www.cor.europa.eu/pages/CoRAtWorkTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=38133fb1-2263-415e-9a23-90b831a7e3cc&sm =38 133fb1-2263-415e-9a23-90b831a7e3cc.

59. www.cor.europa.eu/pages/CoRAtWorkTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=38133fb1-2263-415e-9a2390b831a7e3cc&sm= 38133fb1-2263-415e-9a23-90b831a7e3cc.

60. The others are: the EMPA (see above) and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

61. In its Plan of Action 2010-2011, ARLEM is committed to developing various reports regarding the role of regional cooperation within the framework of the UfM (Rapporteur: Montilla, Catalonia), urban development (Rapporteur: Al-Hnaifat, Great Tafilah, Jordan) and local water management (Rapporteur: Valcarcel, Murcia).

This is therefore the culmination of the goal of local and regional authorities as they never had previously held such an acknowledgement within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations[62]. This Forum was created, not only in order to form a space for discussion among peers, but also to strengthen the coordination mechanisms between different levels of government, and in particular to give voice to local and regional authorities as genuine actors in the development process of the region. In this sense, the new body provides finally the missing territorial dimension to Euro-Mediterranean relations, recognized in the declaration adopted at the 2008 Paris Summit: "The Heads of State and Government underline the importance of active participation [...] of local and regional authorities [...] in the implementation of the Barcelona Process"[63].

In terms of its composition, the ARLEM has 84 members from the EU and from its sixteen partners in the Mediterranean of which the Committee of the Regions has named 32; and 10 belong to associations of cities and regions in Europe. The remaining 42 members are partners with Mediterranean countries: Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestinian Authority, Monaco and Montenegro. All members are representatives of regional or local structures and hold an office in a local or regional government (with the exception of the 10 chosen by European associations of local and regional authorities). As a statutory body created under the scheme of the Committee of the Regions, the selection of most members of ARLEM is done by state designation. This involved a fierce debate among the members of the Assembly itself, including networks and local and regional partnerships, which enjoy greater autonomy than some national associations of the countries of the Southern rim. Indeed, these are more representative of the Mediterranean territorial dimension as their only requirement is to be part of a local or regional authority (which does not need state approval). Thus, the intervention of the state in the election of members of ARLEM could result in decreasing the involvement of the ARLEM respective to that of the Mediterranean members of networks and partnerships.

ARLEM is co-chaired by a co-presidency from both the EU and its Mediterranean partners. The co-chair of the Mediterranean partners, currently Mohamed Boudra, President of the Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate region (Morocco), has been confirmed for this group by consensus for a period of two and a half years. The EU co-chair is the President of the Committee of the Regions.

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62. Only mentioned briefly to the local and regional authorities of the Euro-Mediterranean area at the Barcelona Declaration and in a few papers later, but without citation.

63. www.ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/ufm_paris_declaration1.pdf.

The 40 seats reserved for the Mediterranean partners are chosen by their respective national governments. Each member country of the Union for the Mediterranean may designate 3 regions for ARLEM, while Egypt and Turkey can designate 4 regions each, as their populations are considerably larger than those of other partner states.

The inaugural ARLEM meeting was held in Barcelona on 21 January 2010, under the Spanish Presidency of the EU Council. It confirmed that this body was created to "represent the dimension representing the regions and local authorities of the Euro-Mediterranean area to increase the sub-national contribution to the reinvigorated Euro-Mediterranean Partnership"[64]. This statement was reinforced by the conclusions of that meeting in the evident desire to shape the agenda of the following ministerial meetings under the work program of the Union for the Mediterranean.

ARLEM aims to, and should have, a role as an interlocutor with the European institutions (Commission) with a view to the negotiations of the new financial perspective, as well as with other States and international organizations.

Care should be taken to contribute to improving the degree of interaction among groups representing ARLEM and not to fall into the trap of the bureaucratization of their practices. So far, 2 committees have been set up to prepare opinions (similar to what usually occurs within the Committee of the Regions) and focus on economics, social and territorial, and sustainable development[65]. Still pending is how ARLEM will articulate itself within the institutional framework of the UfM (the Secretariat, the Co-Chairs, and the Parliamentary Assembly). Given the progress that has been made in the creation and institutionalization of both the APEM and the ARLEM in the field of Euro-Mediterranean relations, one should not miss the opportunity for them to be considered as valid consultative bodies in the UfM decision-making process.

There has been significant progress from the initial momentum of the so-called Barcelona Process, essentially of an intergovernmental type, to a wider recognition of the territorial actors within the European Neighbourhood Policy (and especially the Cross-border Cooperation Program), the UfM and its institutional culmination with the creation of ARLEM.

However, for this to be possible, it seems advisable to strengthen the capacities of local governments through the promotion of decentralization.

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64. Conclusions of the Founding Assembly of ARLEM (Barcelona, January 21, 2010): www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=01da2561-f039-4abd-a42e-47995ffc0fc5.

65. Both opinions were adopted at the general meeting in Agadir on 28 and 29 January 2011, together with an opinion on the territorial dimension of the Union for the Mediterranean: www.cor.europa.eu/pages/CoRAtWorkTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=7c765b8b-70fb-49e4-8c7a6475bf142662 &sm=7c765b8b-70fb-49e4-8c7a-6475bf142662.

In the Mediterranean region, the challenge is even greater[66]. For one, co-operation is driven by the European cities that have their own agenda and priorities. However, if in the case of other regions, like Latin America, decentralization is already a feature of the administrative and political settings, this is not the case for the Mediterranean: we find countries in transition to democracy and with an especially high concentration of power in the central state. The movement towards decentralization and strengthening of democracy, as called for by the worldwide network of cities (UCLG)[67], is a handicap in the Mediterranean as it is already conditioned by the priorities and guidelines established by the European counterparts. Thus, we see very clearly that the French cities that are very active in the region tend to prioritize other aspects such as administrative devolution and strategic planning at the expense of a lack of political decentralization and the strengthening of local power. This is due essentially to their own model of development in which decentralization is not as advanced as in other European countries.

It is important to note that we are not advocating decentralization for its own good; decentralization should not be an end in itself, but a means to improve the living conditions of citizens. As indicated in the Guidelines on Decentralization approved by UN-Habitat, the political decentralization at the local level is an essential component of democracy, good governance and citizen participation. The European Parliament has spoken in similar terms by asking the Commission to "promote structural measures designed to promote and support the decentralization and strengthening of local capacities in partner countries, accompanied by greater democratization and participation of citizens"[68]. Cooperation between cities in this region should therefore focus in part in supporting the democratization process through institutional strengthening: on the one hand, encouraging the exercise of citizens' rights through local democracy, on the other hand, ensuring sustainable economic, social and territorial development, and strengthening community services at the local level.

This also largely depends on the willingness of local and regional governments to align their cooperation strategies and go beyond the rhetoric in the context of collaboration networks in which they participate. In fact, beyond the traditional demands linked to the identification of a space for political dialogue in Euro-Mediterranean relations, small steps have been taken to

66. GOLD report on Local Democracy and Decentralization in the Mediterranean, *Diputació de Barcelona* and CGLU, 2008: www.commed-cglu.org/IMG/pdf/GOLD_Med_Resum_exe_FR-2.pdf.

67. UCLG leads the Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralisation (GOLD) and its regular report: http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/gold.

68. European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2007 on local authorities and development cooperation (2006/2235 (INI)).

try and make the appropriate actions within local and regional governments in the Euro-Mediterranean area converge[69].

Conclusion

At a time of fundamental changes in the MENA countries, that is to say at a time of uncertainty, it is difficult to predict what will be the new situation once the various democratic revolutions of the Arab Spring are over. No doubt it would be a different scenario irrespective of how many of them will – hopefully – be successful. What remains clear is that the old 'stability vs. democracy' axiom has shown empirically its (many) theoretical, philosophical and political limitations.

As noted in the Introduction, the fact that there exist so many parliamentary and paradiplomatic, including parliamentary paradiplomatic, actors means that at least there will be no need to invent them but instead to update and adapt them to the new realities. As also noted above, a key criticism of all those existing mechanisms has been the non-existence of real democratic states in the South (the so-called *façade democracies*). Many critical observers emphasized, often rightly, that no real progress towards democratization would be possible through the Euro-Mediterranean sub-state and parliamentary entities until and unless the Southern members could democratize themselves. The other view being of course that 'engagement' is constructive by itself because it allows for dialogue and interaction. Admittedly, it would only be effective in a longer term perspective, but it is needed in order to try and promote democratization (which will not only be achieved from within, however crucial the external dimension is both in theory and in practice).

This chapter has detailed how complex and comprehensive both parliamentary and paradiplomatic networks and institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean area are. It is hoped that it would attract the necessary attention that has lacked in the existing academic literature to date, although it is true that such a criticism applies more to that on parliamentary entities.

The EU integration process has been characterized by an institutional 'obsession', best witnessed in the recent decade-long 'Constitutional saga' that ended with the signing, ratification and entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It is hoped that this chapter confirms that there is no need for such a repeat performance in the changing Euro-Mediterranean context. The institutions exist: 'all' that is needed is to find ways to make them work better. Perhaps a

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69. In the different political declarations signed on the occasion of the 3 forums of local and regional authorities, the need for concerted efforts in the collaboration of decentralization and implementation of common strategies to maximize objectives and results is mentioned less and less.

first step would be to start by simplifying the existing complex picture that has been described in this chapter.

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