

4th International Seminar on Security and Defence in the Mediterranean

Ten years of the Barcelona Process: Results and new aims

Euromediterranean partnership: confidence-building measures

Suggestions for confidence-building measures
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SUGGESTIONS FOR CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

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Introduction

Confidence-building measures (CBM's) can be defined as collective or unilateral actions of states aimed at increasing transparency and predictability of other states' behaviour in the military domain and other security-related fields. CBM's played an important role in easing East-West tensions during the Cold War and have subsequently served to deepen cooperation between the former adversaries in a number of areas. Of crucial importance in this regard have been the OSCE/CSCE process and the Vienna documents concluded in 1990 and 1992. The two documents, building upon measures agreed earlier, provide instruments such as information exchange on force deployments, major weapons programmes and military budgets, and also include rather detailed provisions regarding the size and frequency of military exercises.

In an area like the Mediterranean, which is characterised by fragmentation, underdevelopment, insecurity and continued hostility, the creation of CBM's and security partnerships is a difficult exercise. This is why in the Mediterranean region, with very few exceptions, there are virtually no collaborative projects with the purpose of promoting confidence and transparency. At the same time, it is a region where precisely because of its instability, CBM's are sorely needed. Formal CBM's structures are best developed in multilateral frameworks, such as the Euromediterranean Partnership (EMP) or the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue. The EMP identifies projects such as the EuroMesco Network and diplomacy training in Malta as CBM's or "Partnership Building Measures". Other examples could include the cooperation in disaster relief that has also been developed under EMP auspices.

The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, in turn, has developed over the last years a framework within which CBM's could be carried out. These include cooperation in defence education, port visits, joint exercises, joint projects on border security, as well as still timid efforts in the field of joint defence review. While these measures are important and may –in the long-term– become security-enhancing, they do not yet amount to full-fledged CBM's, given their largely ad hoc and bilateral nature. Outside the EMP and NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, security related cooperation has developed in the form of peacekeeping cooperation and joint military exercises.

The weak record of CBM's in the region is due to a number of reasons. First, some Arab partner states opposed the idea –even during the heydays of Oslo– to engage in collaborative security-related projects that would also involve Israel. Second, over the past ten years, South-South relations have not improved: there continues to be a lack of economic integration and political alignment among the countries of the southern Mediterranean, and the Algerian-Moroccan border remains closed. Third, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime by the US-led coalition and the protracted deadly violence in Iraq has great potential to destabilise the Middle Eastern and Gulf region.

There is, however, a need to review the current weak record of CBM's in the Mediterranean in light of the changing security environment of the region. The emergence of Islamist terrorism after 9/11 as a primary security threat to both the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries has given rise to a common euromediterranean threat assessment. This has led to a cooperative pan-Mediterranean security discourse which has a number of implications. First, the priorities in security cooperation have shifted from defence-related issues towards internal security or justice and home affairs. In fact, the threats of terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and trafficking in humans all reflect the blurring of external and internal security issues. Second, there is an increased willingness throughout the region to engage in security cooperation, particularly in the domain of law enforcement. The move towards more intensive security cooperation has been paralleled by a general agreement that this cooperation should be made more flexible and move away from the principle of "indivisibility of security" that provides each partner state a veto over proposed collaborative projects. For instance, the EMP political and institutional framework has evolved and become more flexible but possibly also less relevant. The EMP policy instruments have been complemented from the EU side by new instruments such as the Action Plans of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the ESDP Dialogue. The principle of self-differentiation embodied in these new instruments allows the EU to pursue a multi-speed policy in the Mediterranean region and to formulate tailor-made reform packages.

For confidence promotion to be successful it needs to be iterative in order to create mutual expectations of future conduct among partners. To achieve this objective, there is a need for institutionalised measures and relations. When the Barcelona Partnership was launched, the Charter for Peace and Security for the Mediterranean was supposed to create a framework within which such arrangements could be concluded. However, the Charter has been watered down from a blueprint for a comprehensive 'Stability Pact' to an arrangement that does not go much beyond the commitments contained in the Political and Security Chapter of the Barcelona Declaration. Moreover, at the November 2000 Marseilles Ministerial meeting, the Charter was removed from the agenda of cooperation. In view of the failure of the Charter, the formal base for constructing CBM's between partner states remains weak. CBM's in the Mediterranean without a security policy framework also have less of a multiplier effect on the EMP. This does not mean, however, that CBM's outside the formal EMP framework are not useful. At this juncture, it

would indeed make sense to either re-launch (a revised) Charter at the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the EMP or to create a less ambitious security cooperation arrangement. Such an arrangement could take the form, for instance, of a code of conduct in various areas of security cooperation.

Suggestions for CBM's

Information-sharing

There is generally an urgent need for information sharing on security-relevant issues in the region. Whereas some information sharing arrangements exist, they are confined to specific sectors, such as the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (Barcelona Convention and its protocols), which is aimed at protecting the marine and coastal environment in the Mediterranean. In the security domain, it would be important to agree on information exchange on defence expenditures, weapons acquisition programmes and reform efforts in the defence and security sectors. On a politically less sensitive level, the Mediterranean partner states could create a web-based information system, similar to the Information Security Network (ISN) that has been established within the Partners for Peace (PFP) community, and which is open to the public.

Transparency measures

Transparency is an essential prerequisite for CBM's. The continued distrust among states in the region could be addressed by facilitating the flow of information between partner states in the area of peace and security. Example of such measures would include information sharing and reporting. For the time being, the only reliable reporting system in the region are the EU Country Reports, which however are not developed in a collaborative manner. Other contributions to transparency include the publications and reports by EuroMesco and think tanks in the region such as the Cairo-based Al-Ahram Center for Political & Strategic Studies, or the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies in Israel.

Within the framework of EMP or NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, the partner states should be encouraged to improve their reporting records with regard to the UN Register on Conventional Arms (UNCAR) and the UN Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. Assistance could also be provided to southern mediterranean states in developing their national defence white papers, which at least conceptually, would prepare the ground for a clearer separation between internal and external security and would also lead to more transparency and accountability in the security sector.

CBM's in the domain of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)

The events of 9/11 2001 have created greater urgency for cooperation in the field of law enforcement, but also judicial and police reforms as well

as the strengthening of border management capabilities.¹ The EU has recently set up a EUR 250 million fund for assisting third countries in preventing irregular migration towards the EU, and in 2004 a project by the European Police College was carried out aimed at training police forces of southern Mediterranean countries in fighting terrorism and human trafficking (Youngs, 2005: 8)².

At the level of implementation, the Action Plans of the Association Agreements and the ENP have helped to create institutional (bilateral) dialogues between the EU and partner states, particularly in the “justice and security” subcommittee and the “migration and social affairs” working group³. While it remains to be seen to what extent such collaborative projects represent CBM’s, it seems clear that the focus of security cooperation in the Mediterranean is increasingly shifting towards internal security and justice and home affairs.

Security Dialogues

With the deferment of the Charter for Peace and Security, there exists no longer a formal framework for an EMP security dialogue. It is in this context that the EU proposed a dialogue on ESDP after this had become operational. The Valencia Action Plan approved in 2002 provides for a dialogue on crisis management within the framework of EMP.

As a consequence, the ESDP dialogue may have become, *faute de mieux*, the forum for security cooperation among EMP partner states. The objectives of this dialogue are to share information and to explore the possibility for cooperation in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management. The Political and Security Committee met with its Mediterranean partners in 2004, and in November 2004 senior officials and ESDP experts met within the Barcelona framework. It would be useful to increase the number of meetings of defence ministers, chiefs of general staff and, as now practiced in the 5+5 context, Ministers of Interior.

Contribution to peace missions as confidence-building measures

The participation of military and police units in multilateral peace operations certainly has a confidence-building effect. Commanders, officers and troops are being familiarised with working in an international defence environment and they are exposed to military cultures of other troop contributing states. In the Mediterranean context, short of any EMP-related platform, ESDP and NATO provide the frameworks for cooperation in peacekeeping and peace restoration missions.

1. This is evidenced in the relatively large projects on judicial reform have been launched in Algeria (EUR 15 million), Morocco (EUR 28 million) and Tunisia (EUR 30 million) over recent years.
2. Youngs, R. “Ten Years of the Barcelona Process: A Model for Supporting Arab Reform”, *FRIDE Working Paper*, N°2 (Enero 2005) P.8
3. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Tenth Anniversary of the Euromediterranean Partnership: A work programme to meet the challenges of the next five years, 2005.

Thus far, the involvement of Mediterranean partners in peace missions is ad hoc and reflects a bottom-up approach; it is security cooperation less by design than by opportunity. Morocco, for instance, is currently contributing to the ESDP mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Althea*). For this type of cooperation to gain currency, there is a need to develop joint training programmes and involve potential EMP troop contributors in ESDP pre-deployment programmes, common exercises, pooling of soldiers, and legal training. Peacekeeping cooperation is a promising avenue for security cooperation. Some Mediterranean partners also have long-standing experience in UN peace missions. Jordan has been the leading contributor to UN missions among southern Mediterranean partners, followed by Morocco.

Cooperation in Disaster relief and Civil emergencies

Another area where cooperation with southern Mediterranean countries could be strengthened, also with the aim of building confidence between the countries north and south of the Mediterranean, is in the management of civil emergencies. The dramatic pictures of the disaster in New Orleans highlight the necessity of early warning and rapid response to natural or man-made disasters. Over recent years, there has been an increase in collaborative efforts in this field. The Egyptian-Italian initiative for cooperation for the prevention and management of natural and man-made disasters has been launched in the EMP context. In the NATO Partnership framework, in turn, Mediterranean states have been invited to participate in civil emergency planning courses at NATO School in Oberammergau, and several seminars on civil emergency planning designed specifically for Mediterranean Dialogue countries have been organised. In 2002, a NATO-sponsored seminar in this field was, for the first time, organised in a Mediterranean Dialogue country, namely Jordan. There has generally been an intensification of information exchange in the field of civil emergency planning within the framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue.

Joint Exercises

There have also been numerous joint military exercises have been carried out between the countries north and south of the Mediterranean, which are also likely to have a confidence-building effect. Thus far, however, these exercises have for the most part been bilateral in nature, focusing for example on search and rescue operations or control of illicit activities at sea, including irregular migration.

Since 9/11, these activities have also been increasingly aimed at combating international terrorism in the Mediterranean region. For these efforts to have a broader confidence-building effect in the region, they would however have to go beyond their predominantly bilateral nature. Moreover, they should also include other than 'merely' operative aspects and aim to create a common 'security culture' among the countries of the Mediterranean region.

Training and Education

A final field area where confidence-building measures could be carried out in the future is in the field of joint training in the field of security policy. For instance, the possibility of creating a joint training Centre on peace and security that could function similarly to the George C. Marshall Centre, that has been established to assist transition countries in East and Central Europe, should be considered. This Centre could, for example, be attached to the Alexandria Library, similarly as the The Anna Lindh Euromediterranean Foundation.

Moreover, the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), and in particular its "ESDP Orientation Course", could be opened to participants from the EMP partners⁴. In the mid-term, it should be examined whether this ESDP Orientation Course and possibly other region-specific courses could be delivered by the ESDC in partnership with institutions of EMP partner states. The training and education dimension of the ESDP should also help to create networks among civilians and military personnel of EMP countries in crisis management and peacekeeping. Finally, joint training programmes for civil servants from foreign and defence ministers could be envisaged.

Conclusions

Even in the absence of an encompassing formal framework for security cooperation in the region, given an increasingly shared threat assessment, there is a clear need to strengthen security cooperation between the countries north and south of the Mediterranean. Such cooperation, in particular if it is long-term and multilateral in nature, and goes beyond strictly operative aspects, can serve to foster mutual confidence among the countries of the region. Moreover, it is also imperative to enhance collaboration between the EU and NATO with respect to the Mediterranean. The EU with its EMP and NATO with its Mediterranean Dialogue Partner states pursue similar objectives in the region, in particular in the fields of "soft" security, peace mission interoperability, military-to-military and civil-military relations as well as border security.

For the time being, cooperation and confidence building in the Mediterranean region, again given the absence of a general framework, will have to proceed in *à la carte* fashion. Nevertheless, great efforts should be made to take into account the evolution of the more general normative environment which encompasses the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean basin.

4. The draft modalities of the ESDC state that (...) « it should also be possible for civil and military personnel from Candidate Countries and, as appropriate, from third states to participate ».