

ASSESSMENT OF EU POLICIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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This analysis focuses on the questions of block D of the Euromed Survey that were related to “An Assessment of EU Policies in the Mediterranean”. This block includes a first question on the potential “priorities of the EU’s policies in the near future” and a second one on the assessment of the “visibility and impact of the EU’s actions on Mediterranean Partner Countries in 2013.” The third one was devoted to an assessment of the impact of some specific ENP measures on the Southern Mediterranean countries. The last question relates to a ranking of 15 projects of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

The way the EU evaluates the progress achieved in implementing action plans and its consistence in applying “deep and sustainable democracy criteria” will be crucial.

This Survey took place in a very specific context as 2013 marked the end of the first operational phase of the ENP that lasted from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013, respectively the dates of the entry into force and termination of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) designed to succeed the ENPI was supposed to enter into force on 1 January 2014 but as the negotiations between the European Parliament and the EU Council on the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and on some financial regulations, including the ENI, took more time than expected, the ENI was only published in March 2014.¹

The objective of this short analysis is thus to go beyond the pure factual analysis of the responses to the Survey and to put them into context.

Defining the priorities of the EU’s policies for the near future

Defining the priorities of the EU’s policies for the near future is not an easy task given the numerous challenges the Mediterranean region is currently facing. Moreover, the order of priorities might be different for EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries and may vary from one country to another. Among the 11 priorities, the five that were identified by the respondents as being the most important are the following (see graph 1):

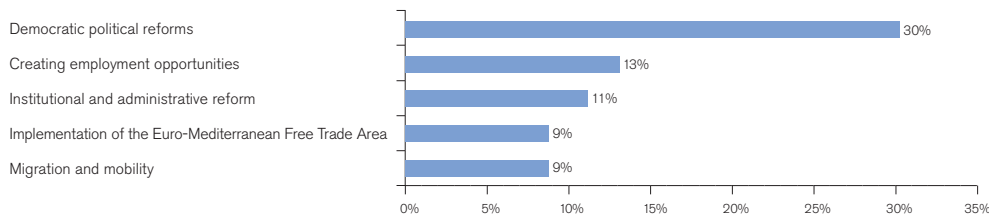
The first priority, i.e. “Democratic political reforms”, has been clearly identified as such by a third of respondents, the highest percentage coming logically from the MPCs (33% for the MPCs, 27% for the EU countries). Moreover, the importance of this priority is fully confirmed by the fact that 63% of respondents ranked it among the top five priorities. The impact of the Arab revolutionary processes is obvious here and certainly includes some thoughts about the latest developments in Libya and Egypt. There is thus a good convergence with the EU’s actions as the new generation of ENP Action Plans “include detailed provisions on democracy, human rights and good governance, setting concrete benchmarks for freedom of expression, the media, association and assembly, religion and belief, and for women’s rights, transparent elections; and the independence of the judiciary.”²

1. Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument, OJ L 77, 15 March 2014, pp. 27-43.

2. Neighbourhood at the Crossroads: Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013, Brussels, 27 March 2014, SWD (2014) 100 final.

Graph 1: EU's policies in the near future for the region: selecting policy areas according to its priority

(5 areas considered to be 1st priority)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 5th Euromed Survey

Communication on the revision of the ENP.³ If so, a number of MPCs should, in theory, face a reallocation of financial resources. The danger of a “double standard approach” perception is never far away and this is certainly one of the major challenges the EU will have to face with the first progress reports to be adopted under the “deep and sustainable democracy umbrella.” In other words the question is: how will the new reinforced conditionality approach survive the “reality test”?

The second priority identified by the respondents is “creating employment opportunities.”⁴ This is also not a surprise given the very high level of unemployment in MPCs especially for young graduates. The Arab uprisings were not only based on demands for dignity or respect for fundamental freedoms but also on “decent jobs” and the fight against corruption. The focus that the European Commission and the High Representative already put on SMEs in March 2011, within the framework of the Joint Communication on “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity in the Southern Mediterranean” in order to promote “sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development”⁵ was concretised by the fact that the EU “put forward multiple initiatives to support the promotion of SMEs and job creation and around EUR 850 million of bilateral assistance has been devoted to these objectives since 2011.”⁶ Finally, it should be emphasised that 66% of respondents ranked it among the top five priorities, so with a higher percentage than the first priority.

The third priority relates to “institutional and administrative reforms”⁷ that are indeed badly needed in certain countries. This is very much linked to issues such as “good administration” and the “fight against corruption.” The reforms of the constitutions and of the judiciary are key to the success of political but also economic reforms. For instance, a reliable judiciary can promote Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Key constitutional reforms have been initiated in a number of MPCs such as Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia but as far as the judicial reform is concerned the European Commission acknowledged in 2014 that “very limited progress” could be reported in this regard, “even though judiciary remains a key element of all ENP Action Plans and related programming.” Moreover, the “revised EU approach to the use of budget support includes new eligibility criteria on transparency and oversight of public finances. The fight against corruption is also tackled through projects under the European Neighbourhood

The reforms of the constitutions and of the judiciary in Southern Mediterranean countries are key to the success of political and economic reforms.

3. “Free and fair elections; freedom of association, expression and assembly and a free press and media; the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary and right to a fair trial; fighting against corruption; security and law enforcement sector reform (including the police) and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces.” European Commission and High Representative Joint communication on “A new response to a changing Neighbourhood”, Brussels, 25 May 2011, COM(2011) 303 final, p. 3.

4. First priority for 13.1% of respondents (15% for EU Member States, 11% for the MPCs).

5. Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative on “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity in the Southern Mediterranean”, Brussels, 8.3.2011 COM(2011) 200 final, p. 3.

6. Neighbourhood at the Crossroads: Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013.

7. First priority for 11.3% of respondents; for 54% of respondents it should be ranked among the top five priorities.

Conclusion of free trade agreements with the EU will enable Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan to deepen their existing Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement.

and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)."⁸

The implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area is considered as the fourth priority (8.8% of the respondents ranked it in 1st position). One should remember that initially 2010 was the target date for establishing the Euromed FTA. Today Libya and Syria are still excluded from this process while, at the other end of the spectrum, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan could benefit from a deepening of their existing Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with the conclusion of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area⁹ with the EU. Again, one must recall here the specificity of the panel of respondents. Experts are aware of the potential positive impact of Euromed on trade but also on FDI that is still needed, especially from the EU. This also explains why 39% of respondents ranked the Euromed FTA among the top five priorities. One should also underline that in principle the finalisation of the Euromed FTA, which corresponds to a shadow economic integration, should be achieved *before* the finalisation of the negotiations of the DCFTAs.

Regular immigration and mobility have always been considered relevant incentives for implementing costly reforms by most of the Mediterranean Partner Countries.

The fifth and last priority identified is a key issue in Euromed relationships: "migration and mobility."¹⁰ Regular immigration and mobility have always been considered as relevant incentives for implementing costly reforms by most of the MPCs. The fact that Morocco and Tunisia signed their mobility partnerships respectively on 7 June 2013 and on 3 March 2014 and that the discussions started with Jordan in December 2013 are positive signs.¹¹ However, it remains to be seen how those mobility partnerships will be implemented given the very political dimension of readmission processes, for example. Having the legal tools without the political will is a dead-end. In terms of irregular immigration, the flows of refugees crossing the Mediterranean have increased and Lampedusa has become the symbol of this human tragedy.¹² The EU Council therefore decided to "set up a multi-institutional Mediterranean Task Force to prevent such incidents in the future and discuss the ways to address the issue of irregular migration across the Mediterranean."¹³ The proposals of the Task Force were endorsed by the 2013 December European Council.¹⁴ Moreover, a "wider debate on migration and asylum issues is scheduled for the June 2014 European Council."¹⁵ Migration is also unfortunately an issue that has been extensively used by populist parties across the EU during the European Parliament election campaign. The current composition of the new European Parliament, with representatives developing strong anti-immigration discourses, might generate lively debates, bearing in mind the increased conditionality and flexibility introduced within the new ENI.

For the other priorities listed in the Survey (transitional justice; security sector reform; economic governance; partnership with civil society; women's empowerment; development of youth policies), 5 to 6% or less of respondents put them in first position. However, considering the results as a whole (cumulating all results) the picture is quite different:

8. SWD(2014) 100 final, op. cit.

9. The EU Council adopted in 2011 the negotiating directives for DCFTAs with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. Negotiations with Morocco were launched in March 2013.

10. Here 8.6% of respondents identified this as being the first priority (11% for EU Member States and 7% for the MPCs). 45% of respondents ranked it among the top five priorities.

11. To support the dialogues and implementation of the Mobility Partnerships, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Frontex decided to propose a joint project to promote participation by Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan in their work from 2014 "Neighbourhood at the Crossroads: Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013".

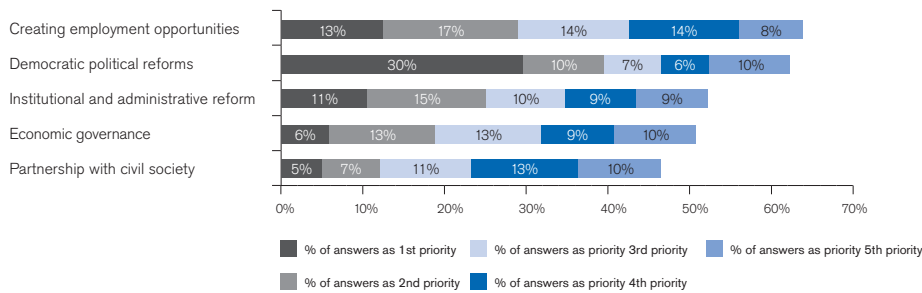
12. Also in Eastern Mediterranean, the Syrian crisis is of major concern. According to the Commission, "since the beginning of 2013 25 EUR 315 million from the ENPI was used to address the consequences of the Syrian crisis (in Syria and in the neighbouring countries). In addition, EUR 350 million in humanitarian aid from the EU budget was allocated to the Syrian crisis." SWD(2014) 100 final, op. cit.

13. SWD(2014) 100 final, op. cit.

14. See the conclusions of the 2013 December European Council, p. 21, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140245.pdf.

15. SWD(2014) 100 final, op. cit.

Graph 2: EU's policies in the near future for the region: selecting policy areas according to its priority
(cumulated % of answers choosing the priority of five EU policies)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Euromed Survey

It must be stressed that the development of youth policies is not considered a top priority despite the fact that this generation played a crucial role in the Arab revolutions.

Assessing the visibility and impact of the EU's actions and the efficiency of specific measures: a major challenge for the European Union

As the first phase of the ENP has come to an end, it is now possible to start to draw some preliminary conclusions on the visibility and impact of the EU's actions in MPCs. The question of the Survey referred specifically to the year 2013 but it is clear that the responses can be extended beyond this year, as it has been a recurrent issue. In fact, for the visibility of the EU's actions the result is very clear, as for almost half of respondents (49%) the visibility is very low (8%) or low (41%). 29% consider it is neither low nor high and only 20% consider that the visibility is high (17%) or very high (3%). In other words, despite the fact that this issue has been identified by the EU institutions and that some measures were taken in this regard, the perception among experts is that the visibility of the EU's actions remains a major issue. Innovative actions are thus still needed. In the framework of the ENP revision, the term "visibility" is only mentioned twice. Once for the Eastern Partnership and once regarding the fact that "efforts should also be made to further associate Civil Society to the design and monitoring of operations and enhance their visibility."¹⁶

Concerning the "impact of the EU's actions", the evaluations made by respondents are also straightforward: 40% consider that the impact is low (34%) or very low (6%). 36% consider it neither low nor high and only 23% high (21%) or very high (2%). It has to be noted that EU respondents are more severe in their evaluations. 43% consider that the impact is low or very low against 38% of the MPC respondents. Compared to the results of the last Survey, it is important to note that the assessment of the visibility and the impact of the EU's actions has evolved:

For 41% of respondents, the impact is very low or low, compared to 28% in 2012. 23% consider that the impact is high to very high, compared to 28% in 2012.

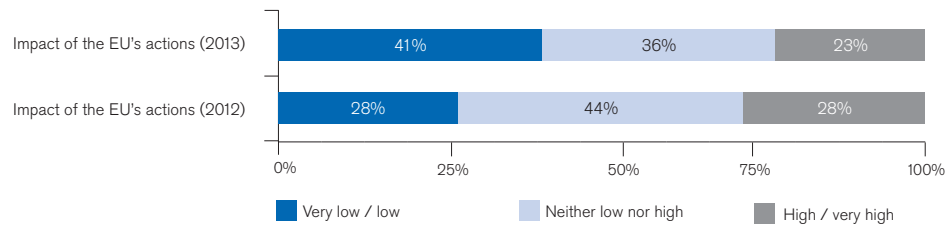
It is not easy to explain this trend but the ENP revision implies an increasing complexity and a reinforced differentiated approach that might be considered as explanatory variables.

Given the political dimension of readmission processes, it remains to be seen how the mobility partnerships will be implemented.

The new composition of the European Parliament might generate lively debates on the issue of migration.

16. European Commission and High Representative Joint Communication on "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood", Brussels, 25 May 2011 COM(2011) 303 final, p. 29.

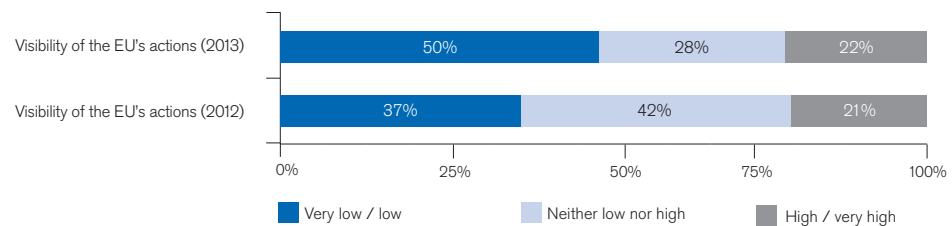
Graph 3: Assessing the impact of the EU's actions in Mediterranean Partner Countries
(comparing 2012 and 2013 results)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 4th and 5th Euromed Survey

For 50% of respondents, the visibility is very low or low, compared to 37% in 2012. 22% consider the visibility is high or very high, compared to 21% in 2012.

Graph 4: Assessing the visibility of the EU's actions in Mediterranean Partner Countries
(comparing 2012 and 2013 results)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 4th and 5th Euromed Survey

The third question relates to an assessment of the impact of a series of seven specific measures of the ENP on the Southern Mediterranean countries.¹⁷ Among them, the three following ENP measures are considered to have a low or very low impact:

- I) "Mobility Partnerships" to enhance mobility and improve visa facilitation, for 47% of respondents. Only 27% consider that the impact is high or very high;
- II) "Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) programme to provide support for democratic transformation, institution building and economic growth in the wake of the Arab Spring," for 45% of respondents, only 22% consider the impact high or very high;
- III) The "reallocation of extra financial resources to support the transition to democracy," for 43% of respondents. 27% of respondents consider the impact to be high or very high.

These results are quite interesting as most of these measures are considered priorities for the EU's policy in the near future (see question D1). For the Mobility Partnerships, it is perhaps a little early to draw definitive conclusions as the first partnerships were signed recently (see above). For the SPRING programme one should remember that it was mainly based on existing measures. Finally, for the "reallocation of extra financial resources to support the transition to democracy" it must be stressed that this is the direct consequence of the adoption of the so-called "more for more approach" and that the appraisal is quite diverse with respondents of the Maghreb countries being far less enthusiastic than the ones from the Mashreq (16% compared to 9%).

17. Support for the Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) programme to provide support for democratic transformation, institution building and economic growth in the wake of the Arab Spring; Reallocation of extra financial resources to support the transition to democracy; "Mobility Partnerships" to enhance mobility and improve visa facilitation; Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) and other market access initiatives; Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility to strengthen the capacity of civil society to promote reform and increase public accountability; European Endowment for Democracy to help political parties, non-registered NGOs, trade unions and other social partners; Facility for Agriculture and Rural Development.

For the four other measures of the ENP, the responses are rather mitigated:

I) "Facility for Agriculture and Rural Development" (27% high and very high impact and 39% low to very low impact);

II) "European Endowment for Democracy to help political parties, non-registered NGOs, trade unions and other social partners" (28% high and very high impact and 39% low to very low impact);

III) "Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility to strengthen the capacity of civil society to promote reform and increase public accountability" (33% high and very high impact and 34% low to very low impact);

IV) "Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) and other market access initiatives" (34% high and very high impact and 34% low to very low impact).

What is striking here is that for each of these four measures, approximately one third of respondents expect a high to very high impact, one third a low to very low impact and one third considers it neither low nor high. It should be noted that between 11% and 19% of the respondents did not know how to answer. The only conclusion is that a serious effort is needed in terms of information and visibility.

The Union for the Mediterranean projects

It need hardly be recalled that the genesis of the Union for the Mediterranean was quite epic. Once partly "communitised" through the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean"¹⁸ framework and once the previous system of co-presidencies was amended according to the Lisbon Treaty, things started to improve. With a new Secretary General and a new mandate that includes the management of the Euromed sectoral ministerial meetings,¹⁹ things have recently evolved in the right direction. As underlined by the European Commission in March 2014: "after a lapse of several years, UfM ministerial meetings resumed. Three were held in autumn (on strengthening the role of women in society in September, transport in November, and energy in December)."²⁰ This is undoubtedly good news as the ministerial meetings are the arenas where the multilateral projects are actually proposed. As the core of the work of the UfM Secretariat remains the project-based approach, identifying clear priorities has become increasingly important as more and more projects are currently being "labelised" by the UfM Secretariat.²¹

The fourth question related to the degree of priority to be attributed to 15 projects of the Union for the Mediterranean covering six sectors of cooperation. (see graph 5).

A serious effort is needed in order to enhance the information and visibility of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

With a new Secretary General of the UfM and a new mandate that includes the management of the Euromed sectoral ministerial meetings things have evolved in the right direction.

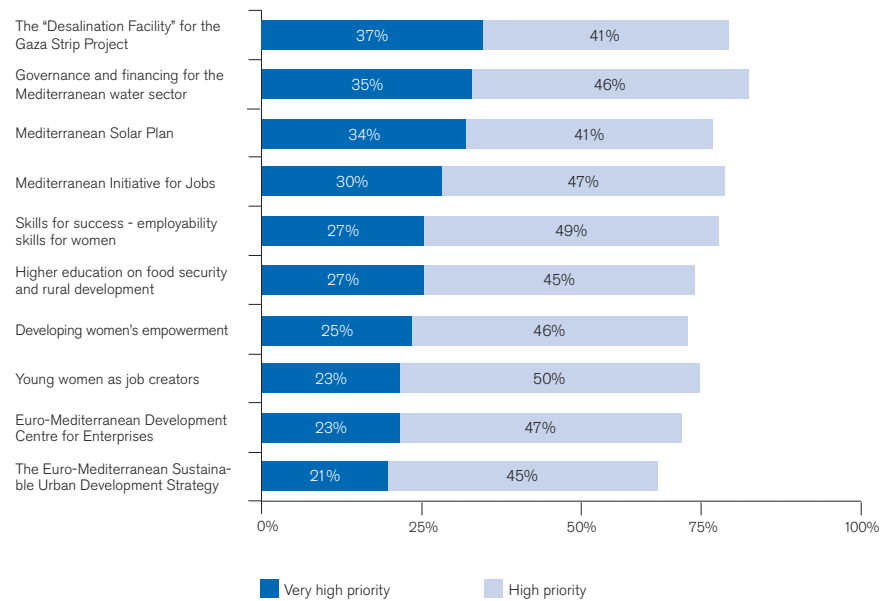
18. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 20 May 2008 on the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean", COM(2008) 319 Final.

19. European Commission and High Representative Joint Communication on "Delivering a New European Neighbourhood Policy", Brussels, 15 May 2012, JOIN(2012) 14 final.

20. N SWD(2014) 100 final, op. cit.

21. See <http://ufmsecretariat.org/>

Graph 5: Degree of priority attributed to the following projects of the Union for the Mediterranean
(ordered by % of “Very high priority” answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 5th Euromed Survey

What is interesting here is that respondents mainly emphasise the “environment and water sector” (even through the Gaza Strip project also has a very political dimension) as well as “business development” and “social and civic affairs”, which are related to women. The employment dimension is also essential in this appraisal.

The five remaining projects (completion of the central section of the trans-Maghreb motorway axis; Euromed Masters and PhDs; LOGISMED training activities; Creation of the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes; Jordanian railway network) have been less prioritised. This can be explained partly by the quite technical nature of some of them but the two academic projects are, surprisingly, not well ranked despite the fact that the deepening of the economic integration will address the so-called “behind the border issues” (technical standards, legal approximation, etc.) and will require more and more experts and regular trainings.