

THE RESPONSES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE CHANGES IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

ERWAN LANNON

Professor in European Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghent and at the College of Europe.

Introduction

The first European Union (EU) responses to the Arab upheavals have been introduced within the framework of the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).¹ Much was expected from the EU which, just like its member states, was not prepared to face such major uprisings or even civil wars. All in all, the responses provided by the respondents concerning the EU's initiatives were quite positive. However, this should be properly interpreted. First of all, the specificities of the sample have to be taken into account. It should also be underlined that this Survey is not a traditional opinion poll. Second, most of the initiatives taken by the EU to support transition are generally welcome as the demand for the EU to play an active role is considerable. Third, expectations are high so there could be important disappointments and frustrations if the EU fails to address this new challenge.

1. A broadly speaking positive assessment of the role played by the EU during the first phase of the Arab uprisings

The answers to the Euromed Survey reveal that, globally speaking, the assessment of the role played by the EU during the first phase of the Arab uprisings is positive.

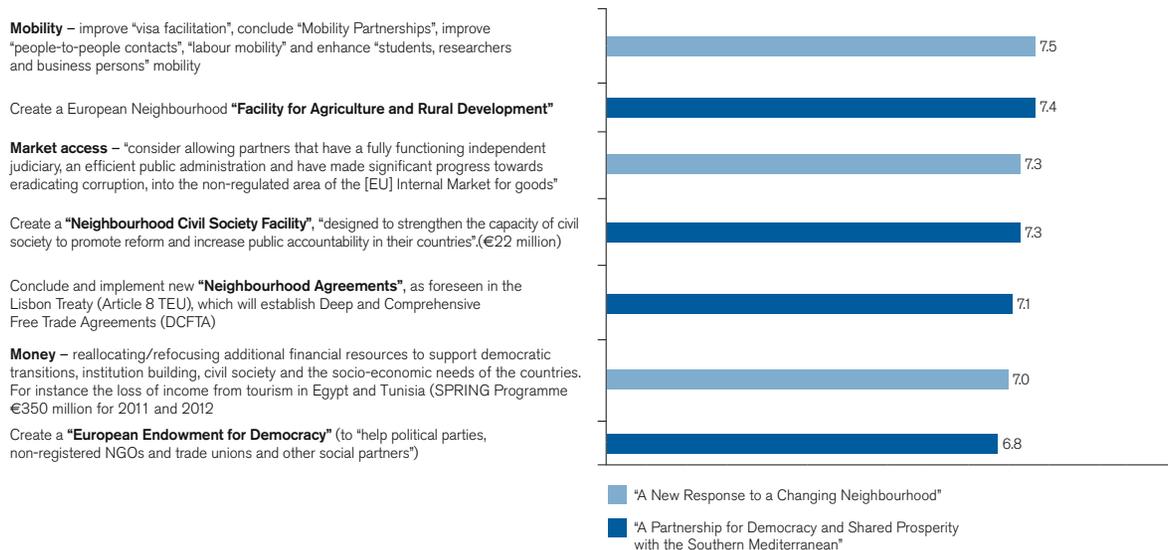
1.1 The revision of the ENP and the priorities identified in the EU's communications on "A new and ambitious European Neighbourhood Policy" and "A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"

As indicated in the Survey report, there is an "overall positive assessment" of the measures adopted by the EU in response to the Arab uprisings and following the revision of the ENP. The initiatives "meant to improve the mobility of people and to improve the rural development" are considered as the most important ones. This is no surprise as mobility has always been considered as a top priority in Euromed relations. The SPRING programme that aims at regrouping a number of EU initiatives to support the transitions is also positively assessed, though less so compared to the other initiatives. In terms of geographical breakdown, a more finely-tuned analysis of the answers reveals that generally speaking (i.e. for all sub-questions) the least enthusiastic respondents are the Turkish and Israeli ones (notably for the mobility issues, even if the average still remains positive: 6.9/10 and 6.5/10, respectively). The least popular initiative is the European Endowment for Democracy (a mean of 6.8/10) with Israel (average of 6.3/10) and the "rest of the EU" (average of 6.4/10) being the less enthusiastic. Note that Maghreb respondents are more positive (average of 7.4/10) than Mashreq respondents (average of 6.8/10) on this issue.

1. See Lannon, Erwan (ed.), *The European Neighbourhood Policy's Challenges*, Series: Cahiers du Collège d'Europe / College of Europe Studies, Volume 14, Peter Lang, Brussels, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford and Wien, 2012.

Graph 1: Assessing the relevance of the priorities that were identified in the Communications of the European Commission and the High Representative on “A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood” and “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean”?

(average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 stands for not relevant and 10 for very relevant)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

It is of course not possible at this stage of the implementation of the new EU initiatives in response to the Arab uprisings and of the revision of the ENP to analyse any kind of impact. The answers are thus based on the sole choice of policy priorities. If we go back to the previous Surveys we see that in general any action or initiative taken by the EU in favour of its Mediterranean Partners is positively received. The relatively lower enthusiasm shown for the European Endowment for Democracy could be explained by the fact that little information was available at the time of the publication of the Survey. Moreover, this initiative has generated a debate, notably on the modalities of this new initiative, contrary to other proposals made in the two communications.

The other priorities identified by respondents in the open comments relate mainly to the “educational issues” in a broad sense (professional training included) with an obvious link to youth, employment and women. A “serious educational partnership with the Arab World” has been proposed, for example. Moreover, “Research and Student Exchanges” are to be further developed. As this issue has already been addressed by the EU, some respondents again stressed that education should be one of the main priorities of the EU’s action. It is also important to underline that this is also a trend in the two previous Surveys. The second main theme identified in the open questions relates to the need to develop more the “intercultural dialogue” between the EU and its southern neighbours. Another recurring issue relates to the implementation phase of the projects and to the need, in the medium and long term, to develop a “strategy with a good monitoring system” accompanied by better communication, notably to reinforce “confidence” between the two shores.

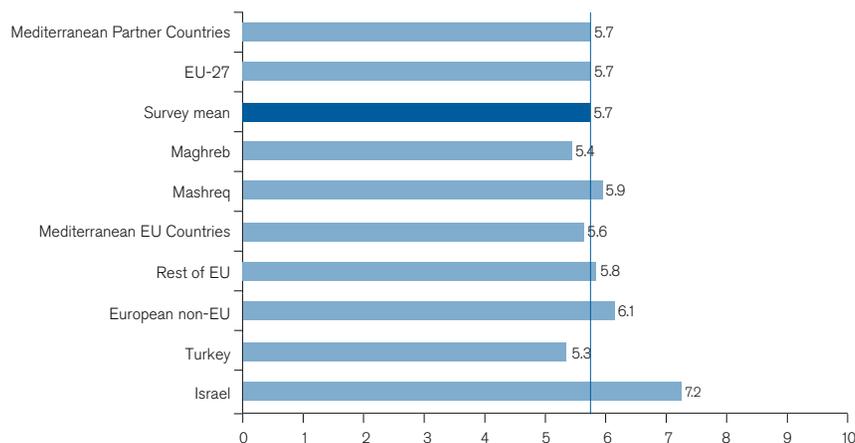
The obvious recommendation that can be derived from the analysis and interpretation of the Survey results is that an extra effort is needed in terms of communicating to the public at large and to the Euromed community the strategy developed by the EU following the so-called “Arab Spring”. The strategy and its components are not sufficiently known and understood. Moreover, the priority of the priorities should be “education” at large with a special emphasis on youth and women. The new initiative related to rural areas has also been very welcomed, indicating an important need.

1.2 An EU financial response considered as being insufficient

The EU financial response to the Arab Spring was referred to in the Survey as the SPRING Programme (€350 million for 2011 and 2012) and the loans from the European Investment Bank (US \$7.5 billion until 2013²). Here, one should note that the negative answers (0-4 on the scale), i.e. respondents considering these amounts to be totally negligible to play a role in the current context, represents 28% of respondents, namely almost a third of the total. Up to 11% consider these amounts as highly negligible (0-2 on the scale). Israeli respondents are the most positive (average of 7.2/10), while the Turkish are the most negative (average of 5.3/10). It is thus obvious that a majority of respondents consider the EU financial effort as not being sufficient to play a (very) significant role in the support of the Arab Spring. This is no surprise as there is obviously a gap between the big financial effort that is needed and the limited amount of funds at the disposal of the EU, at least in terms of grants, and this before the next financial perspectives.

Graph 2: Assessing the EU financial response to the Arab Spring

(average on a scale of 0-10)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

The fact that the Arab uprisings occurred at the end of the first phase of the ENP corresponding to the current financial perspective (2007-2013) limited, on the one hand, the action of the EU (even if the EIB's own budget was not affected). On the other hand, it gave the EU enough time to properly refine its financial strategy that will be implemented with the new European Neighbourhood Instrument³ from 2013 onwards, even if the current financial and economic crisis could limit again the EU's capacity for financial intervention.

Two key issues are mentioned in the open comments of the respondents. First of all, the disbursement rate of the EU funds. One respondent notes for instance that the "absorption capacity is the issue here as well as the capacity for disbursement of the EU Institutions." It is important, for example, to ensure that the "disbursement is timely scheduled, well monitored according to well-defined conditionalities"; another respondent stressed that "there is a gap between earmarked assistance and actual disbursement." The ENI includes improvements at procedural level, so this will hopefully ease things, but a training programme on EU project financing and management would certainly also be welcome. Another recurring point in the open responses is that the breakdown of the financial amounts indicated are not clear enough, and neither are the modalities of the disbursement: "it is not quite clear how it will be shared

2. On the BEI and international financing, see Henry Marty-Gauquié, "Le fait urbain : enjeu majeur de la transition démocratique en Méditerranée", Etudes européennes, Strasbourg, December 2011, http://www.etudes-europeennes.eu/images/stories/LUpM/MARTY-GAUQUIE_le_fait_urbain_FINAL.pdf

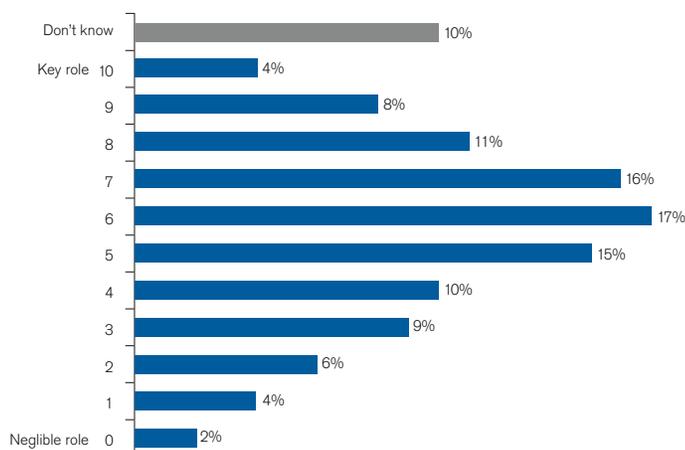
3. See European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument", COM(2011)839, 7th December 2011.

among social partners and which will be its effective breakdown for countries and sectors”; the “main issue is how the funds will be used and where they go,” added another respondent. This thus confirms the previous conclusions on the need to develop new and more efficient communication tools on the side of the EU to better inform, even experts, about the decisions adopted by the EU. In such a crucial transition process, the EU should be as clear and as transparent as possible in terms of financing. Therefore, the visibility of the financial aid should certainly be reinforced. There is a clear need to show that the EU supports democratic transitions without reservations and to put forward concrete examples of the potential impact of the EU support both from EU and EIB budgets.

1.3 A rather positive assessment of the EU responses regarding the Libyan civil war

Concerning the assessment of the EU's first responses regarding Libya's civil war (i.e. humanitarian aid, consular cooperation, evacuations/civil protection and FRONTEX border control operations), 31% of the respondents are at first sight quite surprisingly negative (0-4 on a scale from 0 to 10), but a relative majority of them (56%) do consider the measures as positive (6-10 on the scale). 23% are actually very positive (8-10 on the scale). Thus, the overall balance is positive but the percentage of negative responses is not negligible, providing for a quite contrasted picture. In terms of geographical breakdown, Israeli respondents were the most positive (average of 7.2/10), while Turkish respondents were neither positive nor negative (average of 5/10). The Survey mean being 5.6, it seems clear that this issue is dividing the respondents as a whole and across geographical categories.

Graph 3: Assessing the EU first responses regarding Libya's civil war (%)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

Even if the question addressed the non-military first responses regarding Libya's civil war, certainly the reference to the FRONTEX border control operation played a key role in the results of the Survey as this was an issue that has been debated during and after the operations. The launch of the “EPN Hermes operation” and the proposal made by France and Italy to re-establish border controls has apparently been perceived as the consolidation of “fortress Europe”.

Moreover, it is clear in the open comments that the main issue here was that EU security interests prevailed over the humanitarian dimension in the South. Some comments are quite tough referring to a security “obsession” on the side of the EU. One respondent underlined the “political mistake when the first proposal made to the NCT is to support border control.” Regarding the humanitarian aspects, the generosity of Tunisia and Malta has been underlined. All in all, the assessment by the respondents is sometimes quite contrasted and the mix of security issues together with the humanitarian aspects of the crisis have not been well perceived, to the point that the issue of the “double standard approach” resurfaced in a number of comments.

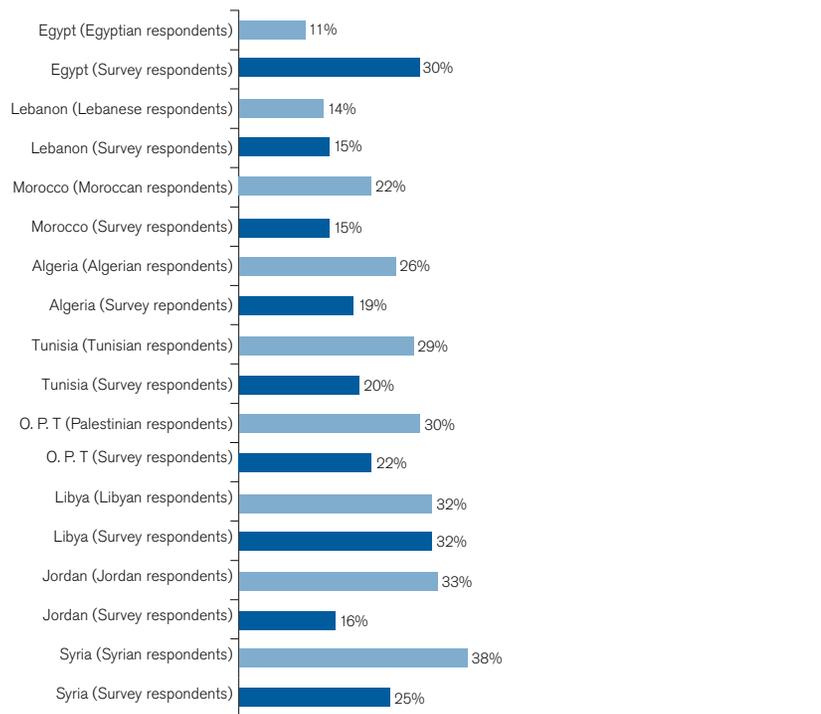
It seems obvious that a reflection is needed at EU level to see to what extent it is possible to combine security initiatives like border control with humanitarian assistance operations. The attempt to launch a Petersberg military mission in support of the humanitarian assistance operations in this regard has failed,⁴ but this might be a good thing.

2. What kind of role could the EU play in the near future?

2.1 A proactive and cautious role

Question 16 of the Survey was of particular importance as it is related to the (non-)intervention of the EU in the various MPCs. According to the Survey report, the “majority of respondents think the EU should remain cautious and work on the basis of the demands emanating from the MPCs.” It is interesting here to detail the responses of experts and actors when they were asked to give their view on their own country for the question “should the EU make its influence felt to avoid the takeover of the extremist parties.” Below is the ranking of the results of the Survey:

Graph 4: Assessing of the EU's role with regard to domestic developments in the Mediterranean Partner Countries: The EU should make its influence felt to avoid the takeover of extremist parties (responses of participants on their own country)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

These results are interesting, but of course the specificities of the current sample need to be taken into consideration (i.e. the number of respondents per country and the breakdown of professional categories; see the Survey report in this regard). At one end of the spectrum, Syrian respondents are the ones that most want EU influence to be felt in their country to “avoid the

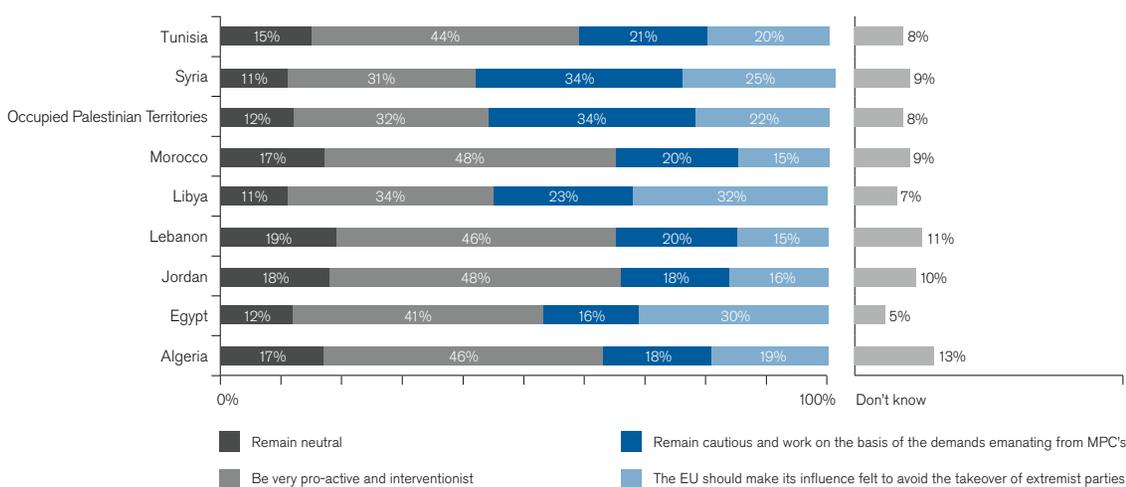
4. See Council Decision 2011/210/CFSP of 1st April 2011 on a European Union military operation in support of humanitarian assistance operations in response to the crisis situation in Libya (EUFOR Libya), OJ L 89, 5th April 2011, p. 17, and Erik Brattberg, “Opportunities lost, opportunities seized: the Libya crisis as Europe’s perfect storm”, European Policy Centre, Policy Brief, June 2011, http://epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1310_opportunities_lost.pdf

takeover by the extremist parties.” This is easily interpreted given the current dramatic situation on the ground. At the other end of the spectrum, few Egyptian respondents (11%) are in favour of this kind of action in Egypt. This clearly shows the difference of both situations: one civil war and a revolutionary process that has led to a constitutional reform and elections (with almost one third of representatives of a Salafist party being elected). It is thus perceived that, in certain specific cases, an overly strong EU political intervention could be counterproductive.

If one takes the group of respondents as a whole and all the countries mentioned above, one can see that:

- between 11% and 19% are in favour of the EU remaining neutral in all MPCs in general;
- between 31% and 48% are in favour of the EU remaining cautious and working on the basis of the demands emanating from MPCs in all MPCs in general;
- between 16% and 34% are in favour of the EU being “very proactive and interventionist” in all MPCs in general;
- between 15% and 32% are in favour of the EU “making its influence felt to avoid the takeover of extremist parties” in all MPCs in general.

Graph 5: Assessment of the EU's role with regard to domestic developments in the Mediterranean Partner Countries



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

Here, the results are also of interest. First, it is clear that the majority of the respondents do not favour a neutral stance on the part of the EU. The highest percentages are to be found first in the category of “EU should remain cautious and work on the basis of the demands”, followed by the EU should be “very proactive” and even (in quite similar proportions) the EU should “make its influence felt to avoid the takeover of extremist parties.” Generally speaking, the EU is thus asked to play a real and concrete role in the current situation in the Mediterranean. However, one should read this conclusion in the light of the results above, so this involvement should be highly differentiated and carefully thought out.

One key recommendation would be to deepen the first results of the Survey in order to get a more complete picture of the perceptions regarding the role the EU should or could play with regard to domestic developments in the Mediterranean Partner Countries. It would be, for instance, interesting to identify what are to be considered as the ultimate limits of the EU's potential interventions or to identify mechanisms and procedures that could avoid any misunderstanding about the type and nature of intervention the EU can conduct in the framework of political transitions so as to avoid the “neo-colonialist” flavour mentioned by some respondents.

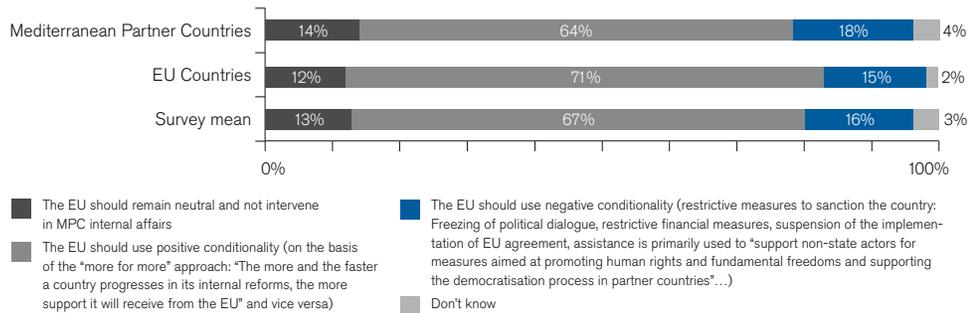
2.1.1 The use of positive conditionality when partners fail to introduce democratic reforms

Question 17 is about the type of policy response the EU should provide in relation to countries that fail to introduce democratic reforms. Three options were proposed to the respondents:

- i) The EU should remain neutral and not intervene in MPC internal affairs;
- ii) The EU should use positive conditionality (on the basis of the “more for more” approach: “The more and the faster a country progresses in its internal reforms, the more support it will receive from the EU” and vice versa);
- iii) The EU should use negative conditionality (restrictive measures to sanction the country).

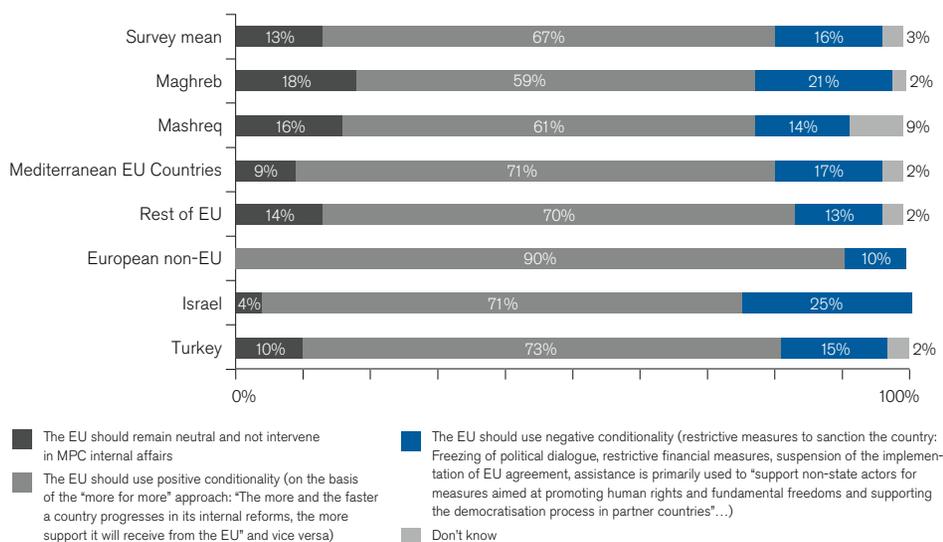
A fine-tuned analysis of the responses reveals the following: first of all, the percentage of respondents in favour of the EU remaining neutral is, indeed, low (the Survey mean is 13%). This is shared by MPCs and EU countries (14% and 12%, respectively). This confirms the results of question 16 (see above). The second conclusion to be inferred is that the respondents favour largely positive conditionality and therefore the use of incentives (the Survey mean is 67%). Here, there is a slight difference between the northern and southern partners, as EU countries are more in favour of positive conditionality than MPCs (71% and 64%, respectively). Finally, the negative conditionality is the least chosen option with a Survey mean of 16% and a slight geographical difference as MPCs are slightly more in favour of using this option than EU countries (18% and 15%, respectively). This is also interesting as 16% of responses is not negligible and as the question referred to a case where an MPC would have “only” “failed to introduce democratic reforms.” It thus confirms the demand for quite a strong role on the part of the EU even when this entails the use of negative conditionality.

Graph 6: EU policy response in relation to countries that fail to introduce democratic reforms (%)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

In terms of sub-regions, Israel and the Maghreb countries are more in favour of using negative conditionality (25% and 21%, respectively), whereas the European non-EU countries are less in favour of this option (10%). There is a contradiction in the case of Maghrebian countries, as it is the sub-region that most favours the EU remaining neutral (18%). This shows that some experts and actors are divided on this issue even if a clear majority (59%) is in favour of positive conditionality. The same scenario applies to the Mashreq: a majority of respondents support the use of positive conditionality whereas an almost equal number of respondents are in favour of EU “neutrality” or of the “use of negative conditionality” (16% and 14%, respectively).

Graph 7: EU policy response in relation to countries that fail to introduce democratic reforms (%)

Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

Since the events that started in Tunisia, the European Union has used negative conditionality in Libya, Syria and Tunisia, mainly in the form of restrictive measures (freezing of financial assets etc.), whereas positive conditionality has been used as the main strategy for the ENP since its inception. The answers of the Survey reveal that there is quite a significant variety of positions. Of course, it is very tricky to answer this question without having in mind a precise case study, but this confirms that conditionality remains a highly controversial issue.

As far as the open comments of the respondents are concerned, three main issues should be highlighted. First of all, a respondent stated that "a regulated shift between positive and negative conditionality may be required to best articulate the EU policy response." This confirms the fact that both positive and negative elements can be combined and (re-)balanced depending on the situation. Second, the need to differentiate the approach on a country by country basis and to take into account specific contexts has been underlined. Finally, it has been mentioned that the "EU should be more cautious in general" vis-à-vis the sovereignty of the countries concerned and should bear in mind the risk of its policies being perceived as "neo-colonialist".

In terms of policy recommendations, it seems obvious that a deep reflection is to be launched on the issue of conditionality in the current context. The new deep democracy criteria mentioned in the recent communications of the High Representative and of the Commission should for instance be specified more clearly and also better explained. There is a duty of pedagogy on the side of the EU to explain its strategy in the field of conditionality. There is sometimes a sense of double standard approach that might actually be motivated by the absence of any kind of military intervention in the case of Syria (see also question 18) and the emotions generated by the civil war in this country. However, it is not well known that a series of restrictive measures have been adopted by the EU and its member states vis-à-vis this country. Once again, a more dynamic communications strategy could certainly help to clarify and explain the EU's positions and actions undertaken. This should be done in particular with regard to the general public, but also at the level of experts and actors of Euromed relationships.

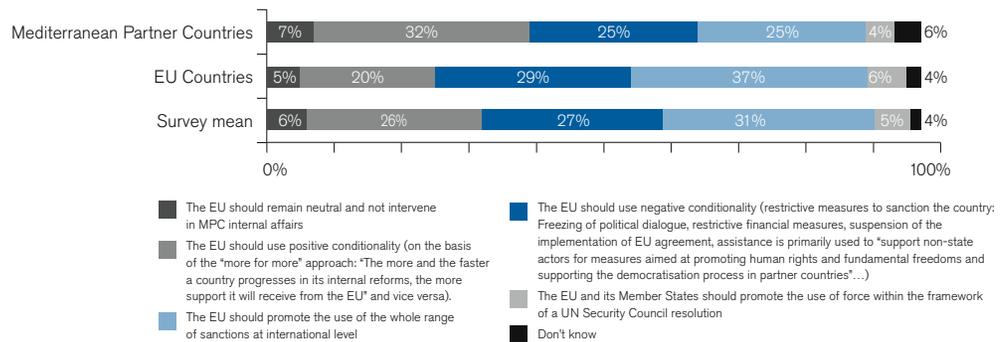
2.1.2 A mix between positive and negative conditionality and the use of force as the last resort when countries implement repressive measures against popular movements

Question 18 of the Survey relates to the situation of several MPCs and could thus be considered with special interest by decision-makers. Here, more options were offered to respondents when they were asked about the type of response the EU should use when countries implement repressive measures against popular movements:

- i) The EU should remain **neutral** and not intervene in MPC internal affairs;
- ii) The EU should use **positive conditionality**;
- iii) The EU should use **negative conditionality**;
- iv) The EU should promote the use of the whole range of **sanctions at international level**;
- v) The EU and its member states should promote the **use of force** within the framework of a UN Security Council resolution.

The overall results show that the least favoured options are i) and v), the most “extreme ones”, namely neutrality and the use of force. The use of force is clearly the last resort (Survey mean: 5%) and neutrality is also not favoured by the vast majority of respondents (Survey mean: 6%). The majority of answers is, in general (see below) quite well distributed across options ii), iii) and iv), i.e. the EU should use “positive” and “negative” conditionality or even promote the use of the “whole range of sanctions at international level” in relation to countries that implement “repressive measures against popular movements.”

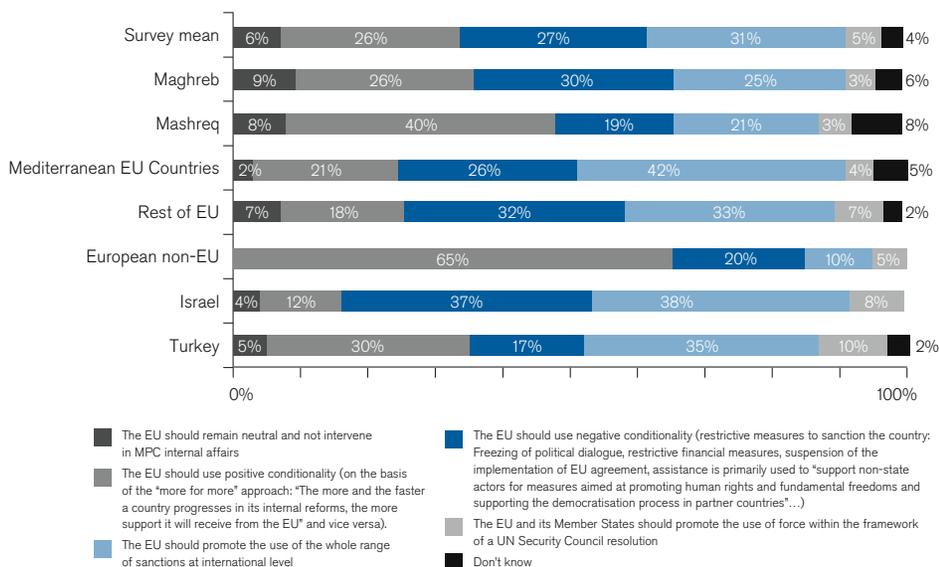
Graph 8: EU policy response in relation to countries that implement repressive measures against popular movements (%)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

This confirms the appropriateness of the reorientation of the ENP: i.e. reinforcing positive conditionality (incentives) and negative conditionality (restrictive measures) at the same time in order to face situations where MPCs implement “repressive measures against popular movements.” In terms of geographical breakdown per sub-region, Turkish respondents are those who most support the use of force (10%) followed by Israeli respondents (8%) and by respondents from the rest of the EU (i.e. non-Mediterranean EU countries). This comes as no surprise since these two countries have both recently implemented military interventions in their neighbourhoods (Kurdistan, Palestinian Territories) and directly face important security/military challenges.

Graph 9: EU policy response in relation to countries that implement repressive measures against popular movements (%)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

The need to proceed on a case-by-case basis taking into account specific contexts is highlighted by respondents. In terms of sanctions it has been noted that the "EU working with international organisations can be more effective." This aspect of the international coordination has been referred to several times regarding EU cooperation with the Arab League, the GCC and with international (UN) and regional actors (such as Turkey). On the use of force, comments stress that this should only be possible in cooperation with the Arab League and international organisations. An important concern is also to avoid any impact on civilians.

The answers of the Survey reveal that respondents from the Maghreb are in general keener on interventions on the side of the EU than respondents from the Mashreq countries. This can be explained by the very sensitive situation of the region and the links with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the wider Middle East environment (i.e. Iraq and Iran). There is a clear need to implement a cautious differentiated approach in the two regions. Obviously, it could be very important to draw the lessons from the military operations conducted in Libya and to conduct an analysis to understand the current perceptions of the population of the South in the current context.

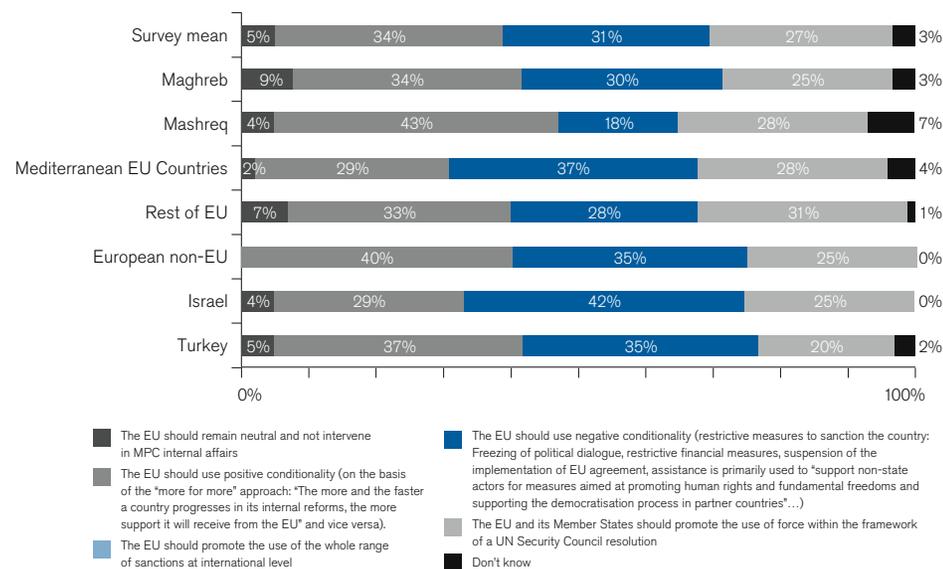
2.1.3 The use of a "conditionality mix" together with a broad support of NGOs when countries implement repressive measures against women's rights and gender equality

This question focused on women as this cross-cutting issue is of special relevance to the current Survey. 4 options were proposed in the question "what should be the EU policy response in relation to countries that implement repressive measures against women's rights and gender equality?":

- i) The EU should remain neutral and not intervene in MPC internal affairs;
- ii) The EU should use positive conditionality (ibid.);
- iii) The EU should use negative conditionality (ibid.);
- iv) The EU should support NGOs and individuals that are engaged in women's rights promotion.

Taking the set of answers as a whole, it is clear that options ii) iii) and iv) are considered broadly as having the same importance (between 25-30% for each of the three options). The percentage of those in favour of neutrality is 5% for the Survey mean. The message is thus very clear: use all measures at the EU's disposal equally to counter the adoption of "repressive measures against women's rights and gender equality." It is also important to highlight that the sub-regional breakdown shows that it is the Maghreb (9%) followed by the "rest of the EU" (7%) which are in favour of EU neutrality. This stands in sharp contrast to respondents from the Mashreq (4% in favour of neutrality). The lowest result being Mediterranean EU countries with only 2% in favour of a neutral EU position. This is not necessarily easy to interpret as local context matters. Moreover, the gender balance of the Survey sample must be taken into consideration for this specific question (see the Survey report).

Graph 10: EU policy response in relation to countries that implement repressive measures against women rights and gender equality (%)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

In their comments, most of the respondents insisted on the need to support NGOs and individuals: for instance "a regulated shift between positive/negative conditionality may be required to best articulate an EU policy response while EU support towards NGOs and individuals should continue in parallel to other reactions." The emphasis on open comments is more on the specific "rights of women" rather than on "gender equality" as such. The status of women is in fact considered as "fundamental" for the democratic transitions in the MPCs.

In terms of policy-orientated recommendations, it would therefore be very interesting to assess how the Moudawana experience in Morocco has been perceived in the country and in the region as a whole and to see to what extent it has promoted an emancipation of women in Moroccan society. Fears that the rights gained by Tunisian women might be lost if the political orientation of the recent elections were to be confirmed at constitutional level were raised by many observers. Moreover, the declaration about the role of Sharia in Libya confirms the need for the EU to continue to consider this issue as strategic for the promotion of the democratic transitions.⁵

5. See EuroMeSCo Report, "Women as Full Participants in the Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States", Lisbon, April 2006, 65 p., <http://www.euromesco.net/images/02.pdf>

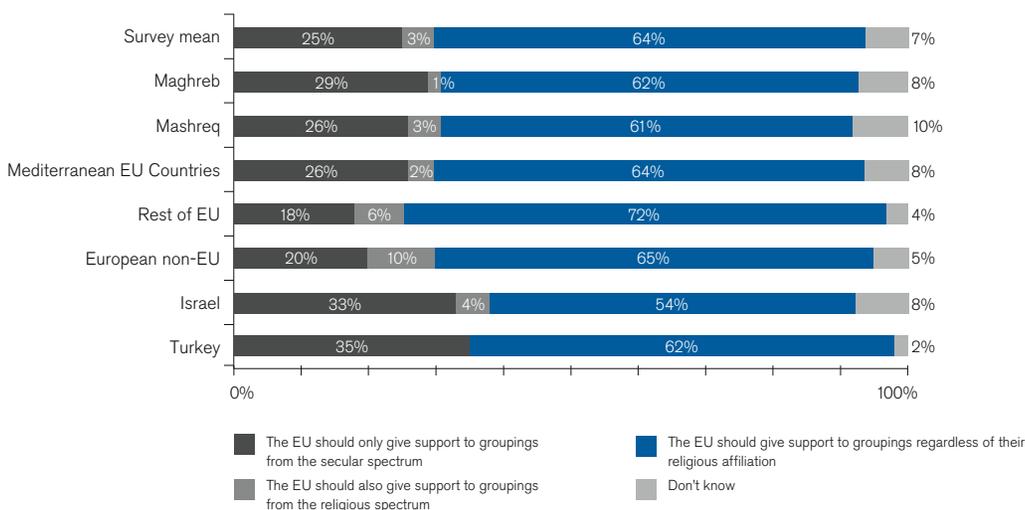
2.2 Support for civil society regardless of religious affiliation

Question 20 related to the way the EU should allocate its aid in terms of support for civil society organisations (CSOs). Three options were proposed:

- i) The EU should only give support to organisations from the **secular spectrum**;
- ii) The EU should also give support to organisations from the **religious spectrum**;
- iii) The EU should give support to organisations **regardless of their religious affiliation**.

According to the Survey report, “the majority of respondents think that the EU should give support to groupings regardless of their religious affiliation (64%, on average) and about a quarter of respondents believe the EU should only support groupings from the secular spectrum.” Actually, very few respondents (3% for the Survey mean) considered that the “EU should also give support to organisations from the religious spectrum.” Taking into account the geographical dimension, it is interesting to note that respondents from European non-EU countries are those who are the most in favour of providing support to “organisations from the religious spectrum” (10%), respondents from the Maghreb being the least enthusiastic (1%).

Graph 11: How should the EU allocate its aid in support of civil society (%)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey

The religious organisations enjoy a certain degree of popularity in some “non-Mediterranean EU countries” or “other European non-EU countries”. This is due to the perceptions of the different roles played by Christians (both Catholics and Orthodox), but also Muslim organisations. The debates that surrounded the inclusion of a reference to Christianity in the EU draft Constitutional Treaty illustrated a clear division between some member states and candidate countries and this also seems to be reflected in this Survey. For Arab countries, the percentage of answers in favour of this option is very low. The lowest percentage (0%) paradoxically comes from Turkish respondents. It is a paradox that a political party of Islamic beliefs has been presiding over the destiny of this secular country for a number of years now.

Generally speaking, if respondents in the open comments are in favour of the fact that the EU could provide aid to “organisations regardless of their religious affiliation” this is to be subjected to clear conditionalities, notably in terms of human rights (including women’s rights) and international law. Moreover, a “deep understanding of religious issues is needed” together with a “real questioning of the definition of democracy.” Transparency and accountability are also mentioned by respondents and should be considered by the EU as being key elements of the new strategy.

Conclusion

The EU's attention should be focused on the transparency and conditionality of financing mechanisms. As a new instrument for the ENP will soon be implemented, this should be taken as an opportunity to launch an information campaign vis-à-vis the potential beneficiaries of the actions foreseen in support of the socioeconomic and political transitions in the southern Mediterranean.

There is also an obvious need to better understand the perception of the initiatives launched by the EU to support the transitions in certain MPCs. A carefully thought out strategy based on differentiation is to be implemented in the coming months by the EU. The comments and answers provided at the occasion of this Survey shows that there can in fact be a great variety in the answers of the different categories of respondents regarding sensitive issues such as conditionality or support given to civil society.

Such a complex context requires a crystal-clear EU strategy based on a solid analysis and on a deep understanding of the various perceptions in the South. The results of the Survey give us much food for thought in this regard.