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### Changing Euro-Mediterranean Lenses

The focus of this year's Euromed Survey emerged from our assessment at the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) that Euro-Mediterranean relations continue to be too often dominated by Euro-centric perspectives and debates. It also originates from our commitment to rebalance and challenge prevailing narratives.

Too often, indeed, debates on the political and security situation of the Euro-Mediterranean space tend to limit themselves to the analysis of the security situation in the southern shore of the Mediterranean and how it affects Europe. The idea of the first set of questions ("Block 1") was to reverse the approach, i.e. look at the situation of Europe and how it affects the southern shore and more generally Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Similarly, we observed that Euro-Mediterranean policies are too often understood as policies of the European Union (EU) towards the southern Mediterranean. Therefore, in the second block, questions focus instead on how Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEM) countries engage with the EU.

The questions of the third block relate mostly to existing frameworks such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) or the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), with the objective of identifying prevailing patterns in terms of perceptions, possible shortcomings and the way ahead.

This publication contains ten analytical articles that echo some specific set of results of the Survey in an analytical way. Emma Bonino explains how the European multifaceted crisis prompted from the EU a change of narrative and policies vis-à-vis its southern neighbourhood, which is at odds with some of its foundational principles. Youssef Cherif scrutinises some recent trends of Maghreb foreign policies and what they mean for the EU. Intissar Fakir explores the benefits the EU would draw from further engaging in good governance and the rule of law in Morocco, while Abdennour Bennantar and Mohamed Eljarh examine the EU's role in Algeria and Libya. Jean-Pierre Filiu looks at to what extent the cherished European stability may feed insecurity in the Mediterranean. Anis Nacrour and Dimitris Bouris shed light on the ins and outs of the EU's engagement in Syria. Both Chloe Teevan and Tasnim Abderrahim ponder over the concept of securitisation of the EU approaches vis-à-vis its southern neighbourhood and its consequences, while Assem Dandashly looks closer into the issue of democracy promotion and how it features in the EU's approach to the region.

While the complete set of results can be accessed online, this publication also contains a descriptive report that provides a detailed picture of the most important and interesting results. Below we systematically summarise six patterns that emerged:

1- The EU is seen by respondents to be in poorer shape than it was when the Barcelona Declaration was signed in 1995. The European integration process is threatened mostly by internal phenomena (and in particular populism and nationalism) rather than external. The credibility of the EU in its southern neighbourhood is at stake. More precisely, inner divisions on key issues and a rebilateralisation of relations are the most significant factors affecting the credibility of the EU in the Mediterranean. Its weak role in conflict zones is especially assessed by respondents from SEM countries as a critical spoiler of the EU's credibility.

- 2- The state of play of the EU has direct implications for the policies it implements. In some cases, situations or policies of the EU are likely to have a negative effect on SEM countries. The securitisation of migration policies or the support for authoritarian trends are mentioned prominently in this context. Respondents from SEM countries mention military interventions from some member states as particularly counterproductive. However, despite these spill-over effects, the EU as such is not seen as contributing to the instability of SEM countries. Results show that the EU is far from being considered as a spoiler in the region, especially in comparison with other countries, such as the USA.
- 3- More than this, the EU continues to be seen as an important player and expectations are still high. Overall, most respondents even consider that the EU has become more attractive among civil society actors in SEM countries since 2011. A significant majority of SEM respondents are also of the opinion that the EU is a foreign policy priority of their respective countries. The EU and its policies are seen by SEM respondents as the most appropriate partner across the board to achieve important objectives, especially when it comes to “Democracy promotion” and “Educational and cultural cooperation”, which are considered by SEM respondents the most important priorities of cooperation with the EU. When it comes to engaging with the EU, SEM respondents would want their respective governments to be more pro-active, in terms of agenda setting.
- 4- It is striking to see from the results that European respondents to the Survey are consistently less confident about the relevance and attractiveness of the EU’s foreign policy than their counterparts from SEM countries. They are also more inclined than their southern Mediterranean counterparts to assess that the situation of the EU has deteriorated since 1995. Lastly, European respondents seem to have more confidence in bilateral mechanisms and less in EU mechanisms than SEM respondents.
- 5- It would be a mistake to only measure Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in terms of institutional mechanisms. All too often, debates on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation tend to focus on the “container” rather than the content. The difference of interests among countries (within the EU itself, within the MENA or between both shores) leading to a lack of common vision and political will, regional instability and unresolved conflicts, and power asymmetries between both shores of the Mediterranean are some of the most recurrent issues mentioned by the respondents as an impediment to greater Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.
- 6- Nevertheless, it is useful to assess existing frameworks. There are mixed assessments regarding the ENP and the UfM. The ENP, as reviewed in 2015, has not met the announced objectives. Respondents think that the ENP framework is still relevant but should be reviewed again in order to move further towards an equal footing partnership, better involve civil society actors, provide further financial assistance linked to political reforms, integrate a consistent approach regarding conflict resolution and offer more tools to differentiate approaches to different neighbours. Regarding the UfM, even though respondents point out that it has not significantly succeeded in meeting the main objectives as stated in the 2008 Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, a strong majority says that it should be empowered and its mandate extended. From the main areas of actions identified in the 2017 UfM roadmap, respondents think that “enhancing regional stability and human development” should be prioritised.