

The 2011 Euromed Survey: Spotlight on the Arab Spring

Xavier Aragall

Jordi Padilla

Department of Euro-Mediterranean Policies
European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed),
Barcelona

The field work for the third edition of the Euromed Survey was carried out between December 2011 and January 2012. Some 695 actors and experts responded. In light of the uprisings sweeping the region, the thematic dossier was devoted to the impact of the Arab Spring on Euro-Mediterranean relations. In addition, an assessment was conducted of Euromed political and security cooperation policies, as provided for in the original four-year plan for the survey.

An extensive review of the survey results can be found in the third survey report (www.iemed.org/publicacions-en/historic-de-publicacions/enquesta-euromed?set_language=en). This paper offers a preview of the results with regard to three key aspects of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

First, it will look at the overall assessment of the evolution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including both the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Second, it will examine the possible impact of the Arab uprisings on Euro-Mediterranean relations, i.e., which actors stand to gain specific clout, what the EU's new role will be, and what new prospects have opened up for Euromed relations in general. Third and finally, it will analyse the assessment of the political and security cooperation basket, which, although influenced by the political changes in the South, is also indicative of the evolution of one of the Barcelona Process's main assets.

Euro-Mediterranean Policy

When asked to provide a global assessment of the EU's initiatives towards its southern neighbours, respondents gave an average score of 4.9 on a scale of 0 to 10, in other words, a neutral response. The percentage breakdown by score follows a normal distribution curve (see Chart 2), with the largest number of respondents giving scores falling somewhere in the middle. In short, the respondents seemed to take an indifferent view of the EU's initiatives towards its neighbours in the South, finding them neither good nor bad.

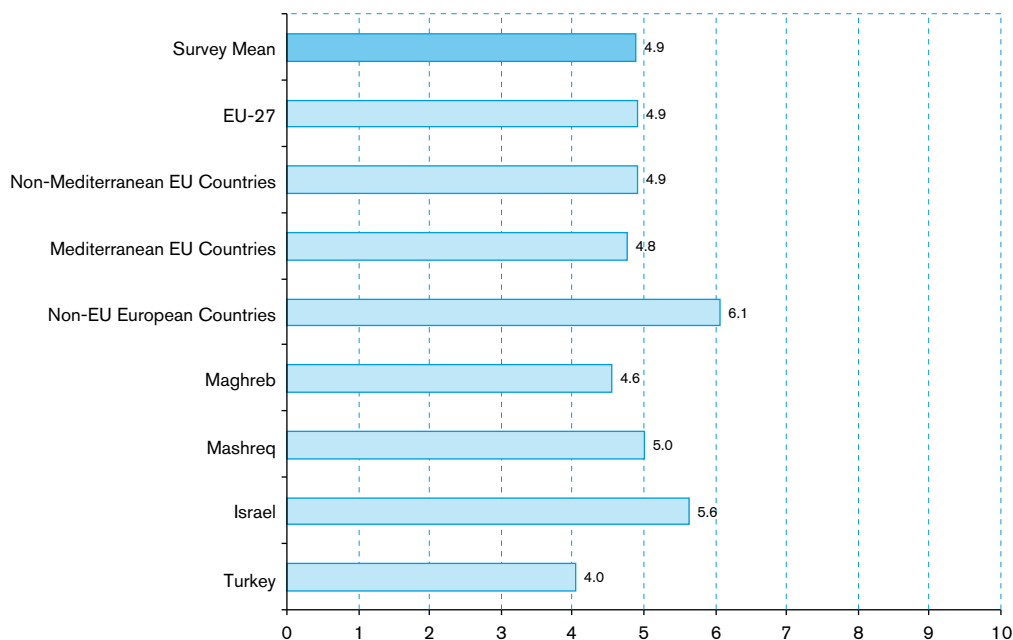
In contrast, the average score awarded specifically to the results achieved by the UfM in 2011 was an indisputably negative 3.8, with some 48% of respondents rating it less than 4, clear proof that the UfM has failed to perform up to even minimum standards. This is down from an average score of 4.5 on the same question in the previous survey. The score was no doubt influenced by the uncertainty surrounding the figure of the UfM Secretary General.

When asked to rate the potential role of the UfM Secretariat in the context of the new Euro-Mediterranean institutional architecture, respondents were more positive, giving an average score of 5.2. By geographical area, the lowest average scores were given by respondents from non-Mediterranean EU countries (4.7) and the Maghreb (4.9), while respondents from Mediterranean EU countries and the Mashreq gave higher scores (5.4).

This notwithstanding, compared to the overall score from 2010, the perception of the Secretariat's role is less positive, falling from 6.0 to 5.2. Likewise, the average scores by geographical area were notably lower than in 2010, suggesting that the Secretariat may yet lose its status as a key institution in the Euro-Mediterranean process in the eyes of actors and experts.

CHART 1

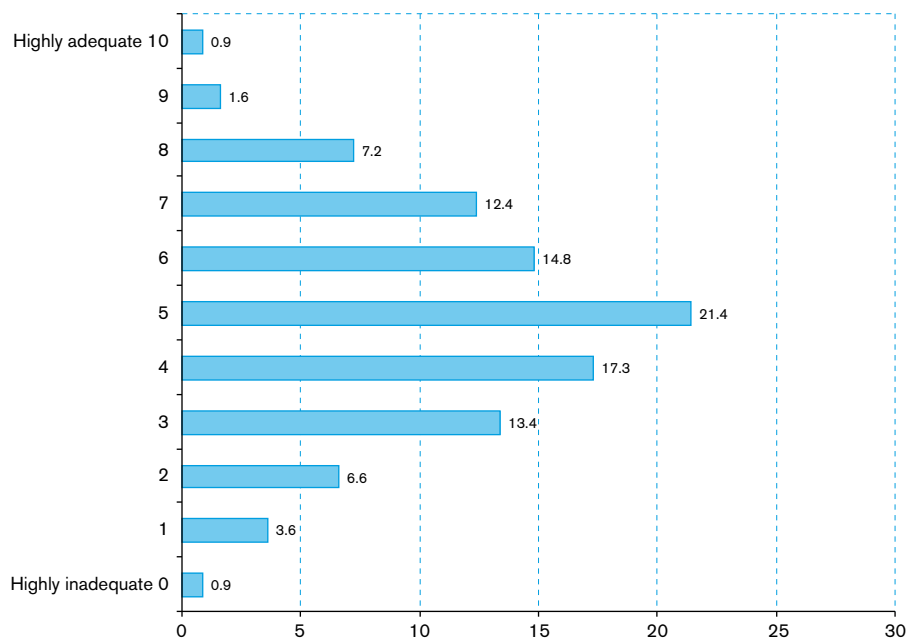
Global Assessment of the Results of the EU's Initiatives towards Its Southern Neighbours in 2011
(Average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is highly inadequate and 10 is highly adequate)



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

CHART 2

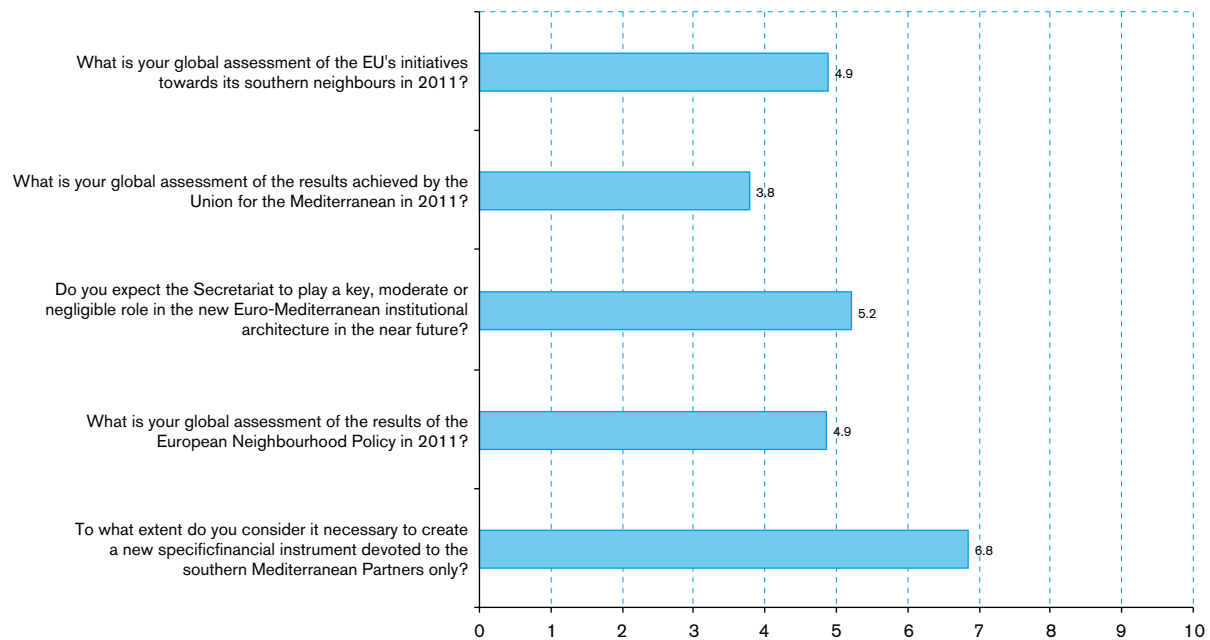
Global Assessment of the Results of the EU's Initiatives towards Its Southern Neighbours in 2011 (in %)



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

The final two questions in this section of the survey dealt with the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In the first question, respondents were asked to offer a global assessment of the ENP in 2011. The average score was 4.9, quite similar to that for the first question (global assessment of EU initia-

tives) and higher than the score given to the UfM. Additionally, the differences between geographical areas followed the same pattern, with respondents from the Maghreb giving the lowest scores. By institution type, the experts were once again the group to hold the most negative view of the ENP.



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

Finally, respondents as a whole gave an average score of 6.8 to the need to create a new financial instrument exclusively for the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs). This score would have been even higher had it not been for the non-Mediterranean European respondents, who gave the need an average score of 5.4, as compared to the other groups, all of which rated it higher than 7. By institution type, civil society members and experts, together with respondents with economic and sociocultural backgrounds, gave the highest scores.

The Arab Uprisings

The Role of International Actors in the Region

Significant differences can be seen in how different groups of actors viewed the responses of different international actors to the uprisings on the southern shore. Thus, only two actors received an average score of more than 5 – Turkey (5.9) and the European Union (5.4) – while, of the rest, only the US and the Arab League received average scores of more than 4 (4.9 and 4.4, respectively). The remaining actors received negative scores from the respondents as a whole: GCC (3.7); Saudi Arabia (3); China (2.9); Russia (2.8); and Iran (2.2).

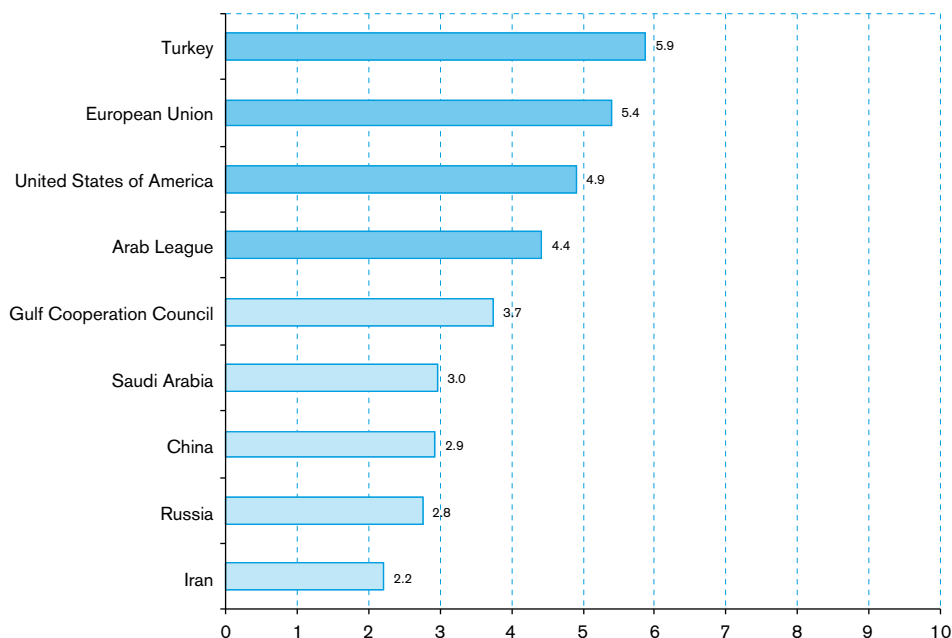
The Future Role of the EU in the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs)

However, the assessment changed when respondents were asked whether, in future, the EU would have a greater or lesser impact than other actors on Mediterranean regional development. The results for all respondents as a whole suggest that the EU will have less influence than the US (41%) and Turkey (45%), a similar level of influence to the Arab League and Saudi Arabia (48% and 52%, respectively), and more influence than China (64%), Iran (68%) and Russia (74%).

Also of note was the little influence that Arab countries themselves attributed to the Arab League, which received its lowest scores in the Mashreq and the Maghreb (only 26% and 32% of respondents in these countries, respectively, believed that it will be more influential than the EU). The influence assigned to Turkey also varied considerably depending on where respondents were from: it received its lowest ratings from respondents from the Maghreb, 56% of whom believe that the EU will have more influence, while respondents from the Mashreq and Turks themselves placed it on a level with the EU (almost 50% for both options). In contrast, 57% of respondents from Mediterranean EU countries believe that Turkey will have more influence than the EU, and this figure rose to

CHART 4

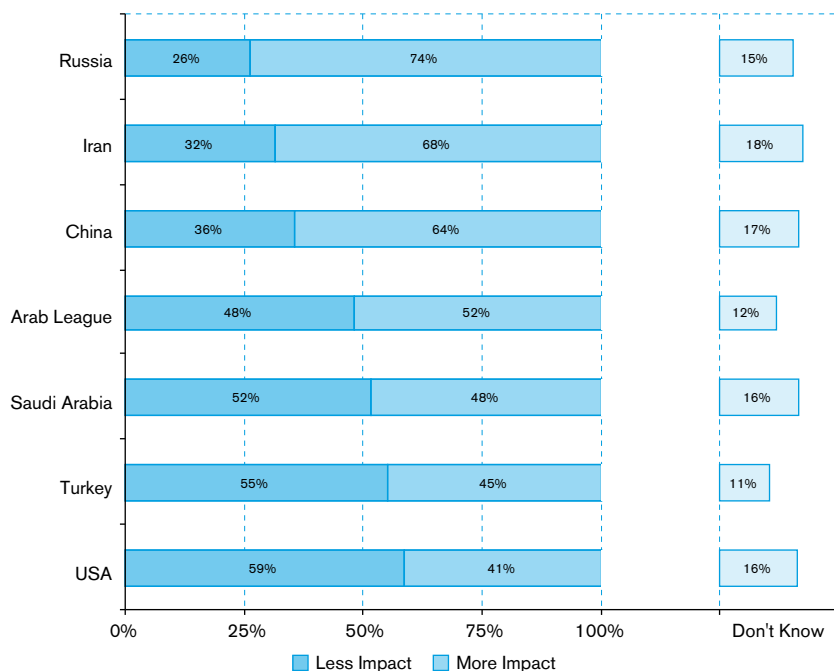
Assessment of the International Response of Different Actors to the Uprisings on the Southern Rim (average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is very disappointing and 10 is very positive)



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

CHART 5

Assessment of the EU's Future Role in MPCs Compared to Other External and Regional Actors

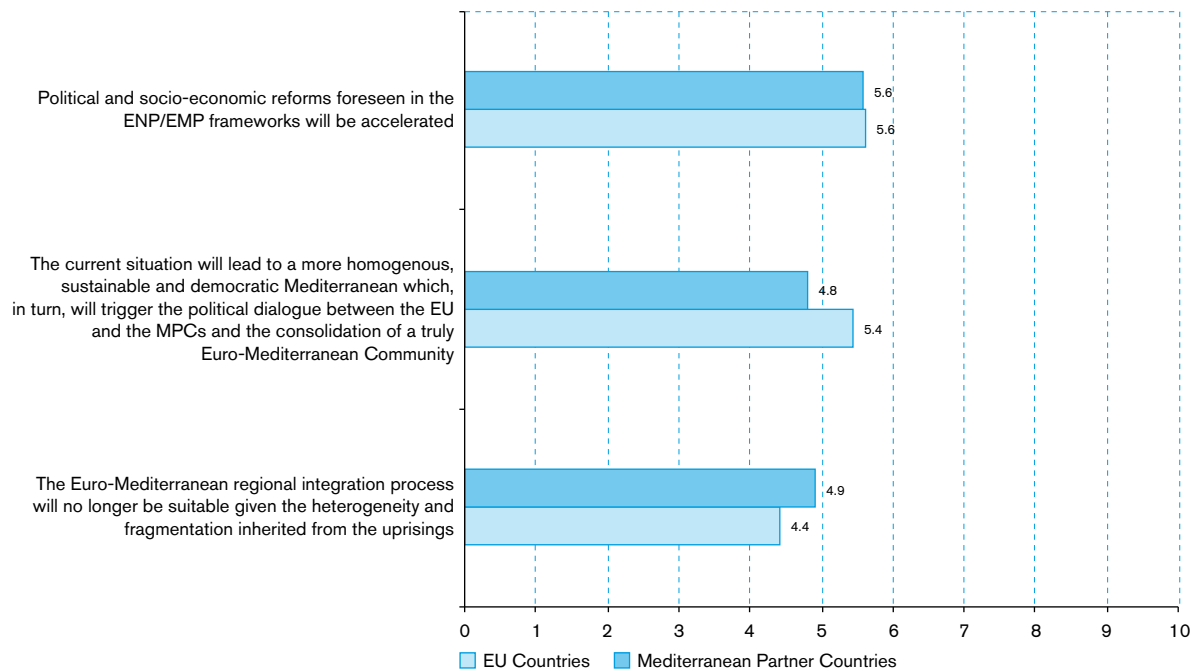


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey.

70% among respondents from non-Mediterranean EU countries, far more than the figure for the US. As for the rest of the actors, it is worth noting that Turkish respondents gave much higher scores than anyone else to the influence of Russia and Iran, while China was rated highest by respondents from the Maghreb, although always behind the EU.

Impact of the Uprisings on Euro-Mediterranean Relations

The survey also aimed to measure the future impact of the uprisings on Euro-Mediterranean relations through the degree of probability attributed by respondents to three future scenarios (Chart



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

6). On the whole, respondents felt that the most likely scenario was an accelerated pace of reform (5.6), followed by the consolidation of a truly Euro-Mediterranean community (5.1) and, finally, fragmentation (4.7).

A comparison of the average scores given by respondents from MPCs and from EU Member States shows an inverse trend with regard to the two least likely scenarios: while respondents from the MPCs had a similar distribution to that of survey respondents as a whole, albeit with slightly more pronounced differences (5.4 for consolidation and 4.4 for fragmentation), Europeans consider both scenarios to be almost equally likely, rating the former 4.8 and the latter 4.9.

The Role of the EU in the Countries of the South

As for what role the EU should play in domestic developments in the MPCs, in nearly all cases the most popular response was for the EU to act cautiously and only at the request of the country in question. This trend was broken in the cases of Palestine and Syria, where a bare majority wanted the EU to play a pro-active and interventionist role.

As can be seen in Chart 7, the MPCs can be divided into three groups based on the results. The first

group consists of countries in which the breakdown of scenarios closely mirrors the one discussed above (Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria and Tunisia). The second group consists of Egypt and Libya, where support for the neutrality scenario was weaker and one third of respondents preferred a scenario in which the EU exerted greater influence to act against extremist parties. Finally, Syria and Palestine yielded similar breakdowns in which, as noted above, the majority of the respondents chose the interventionist scenario.

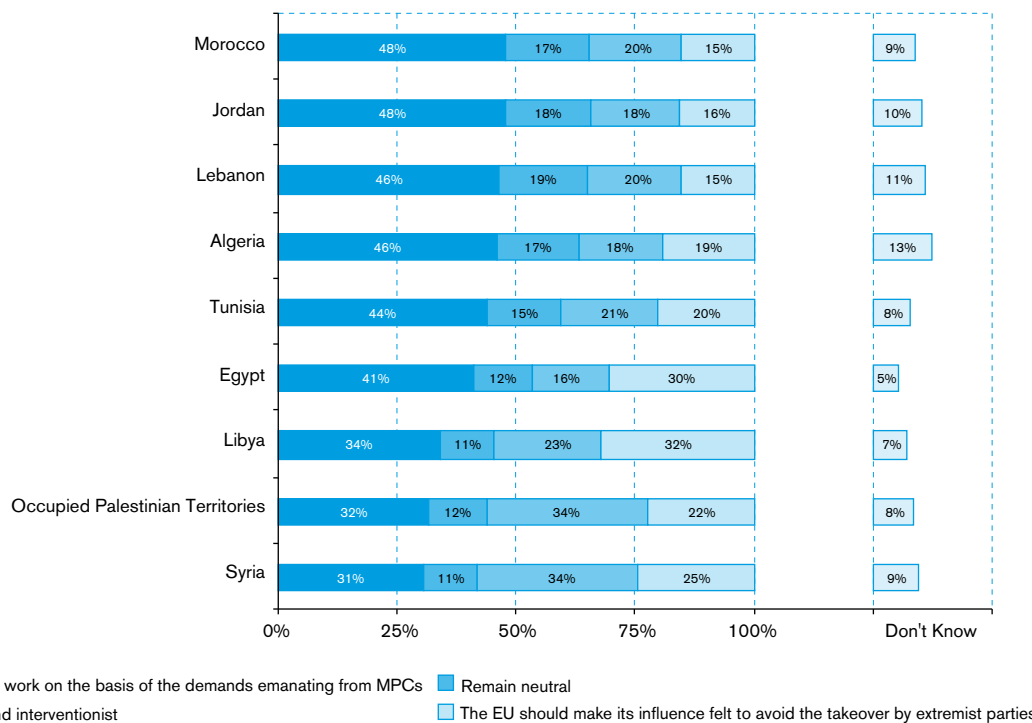
Notwithstanding the above, when respondents' answers are viewed in relation to their own countries, appreciable differences can be seen with regard to the overall responses. Thus, countries with similar overall breakdowns cease to have them when the focus shifts to the responses of the nationals of the country in question.

The EU's Political Response

One of the thorniest aspects of the EU's relations with the MPCs is the issue of what policy it should follow in response to reproachable behaviour by MPC governments. To shed light on this point, the survey asked how the EU should react to: a) the failure to introduce democratic reforms; b) repressive

CHART 7

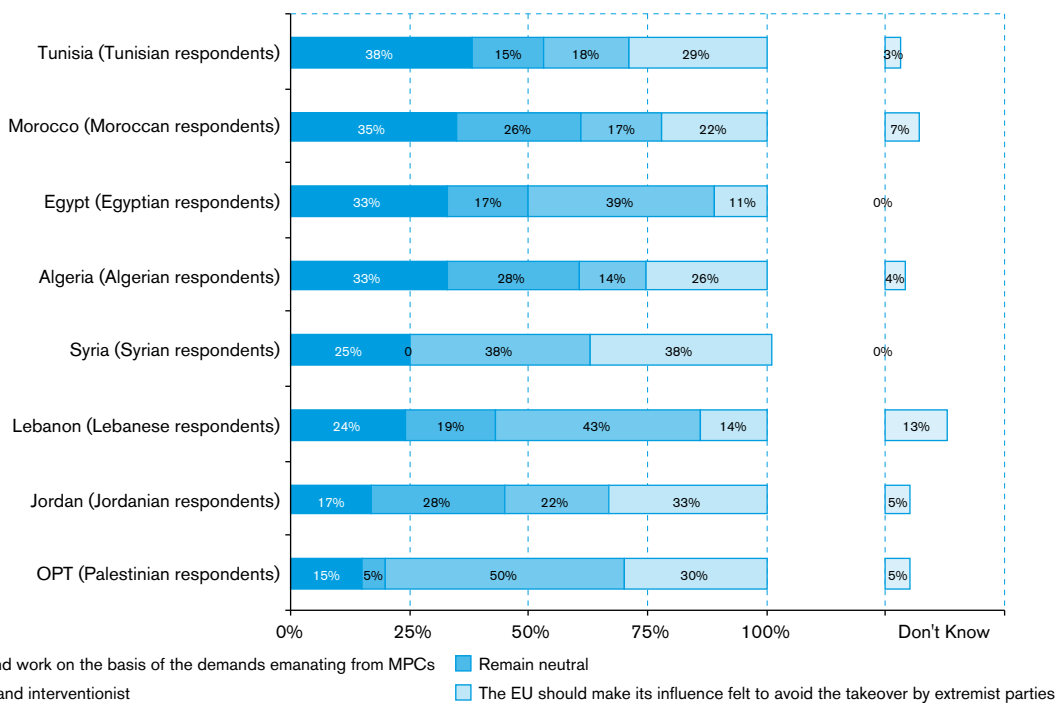
Assessment of the EU's Role with Regard to Domestic Developments in the Mediterranean Partner Countries



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

CHART 8

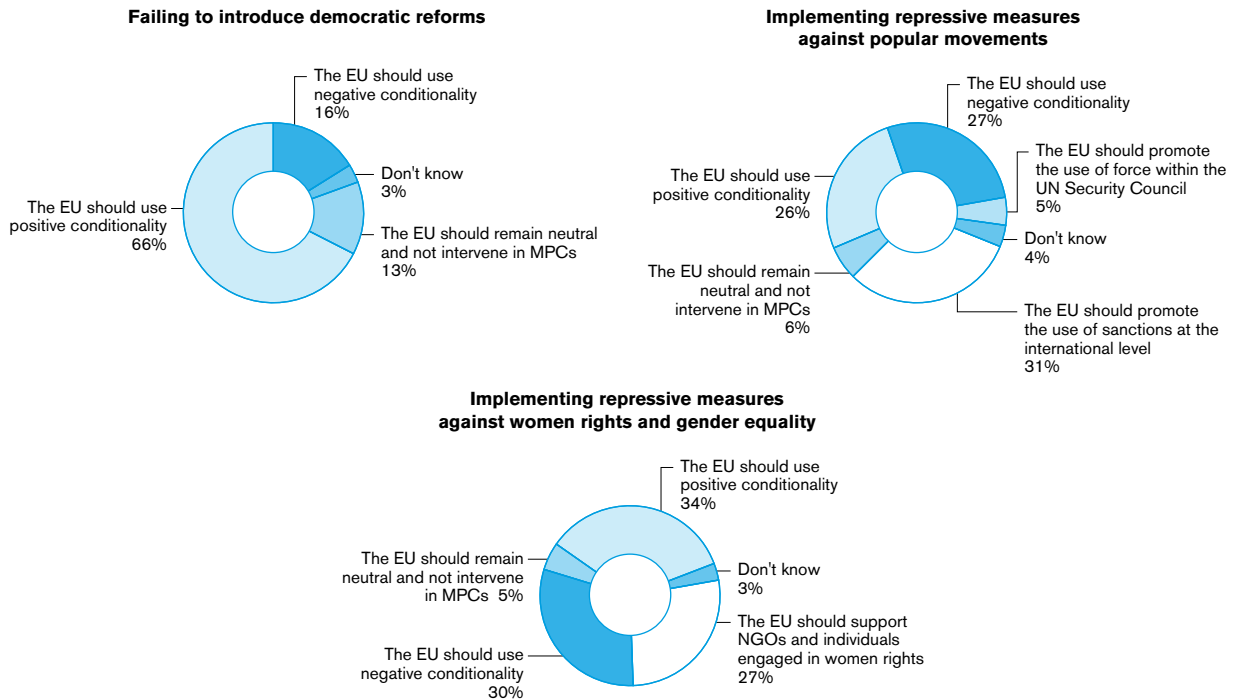
Assessment of the EU's Role with Regard to Domestic Developments in the Mediterranean Partner Countries (by Country Nationals*)



* These data should be interpreted with due caution as the number of respondents per country is small.
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 3rd Euromed Survey.

actions taken against popular movements; and c) repressive measures taken against women's rights and gender equality.

One common feature was the low percentage of respondents who chose the option whereby the EU should remain neutral, whereas, in the case of a fail-



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

ure to implement democratisation measures, nearly 70% of respondents thought the EU should respond with positive conditionality.¹

However, an analysis of the policy responses to repressive measures shows a balance between measures to promote and support reforms (positive conditionality) and restrictive measures and sanctions (negative conditionality²). The question also included another possible measure, which drew considerable support. With regard to the repression of popular movements, in addition to positive conditionality (26%) and negative conditionality (27%), the option of seeking international sanctions was offered and it emerged as the most often chosen (31%).

As for the question regarding countries that take repressive measures against women's rights, the third option (in addition to positive conditionality (34%) and negative conditionality (30%)) referred to direct support by the EU for NGOs and individuals committed to defending women's rights in the relevant countries.

Euromed Policies on Political and Security Cooperation

Before analysing the assessment of the Partnership's first basket, it is necessary to note the possible influence of the Arab Spring on the participants in the survey. The fervour of the uprisings stands in stark contrast to the intrinsic slowness of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, causing respondents to have a more negative perception than they might otherwise have had.

The average score given to the achievement of the general objective of the first basket (Political and Security Basket) of the 1995 Barcelona declaration – establishing an area of peace and stability – was 3.3, showing that much remains to be done before this objective can be considered fulfilled. It is particularly telling that some 60% of respondents gave a score of between 0 and 3.

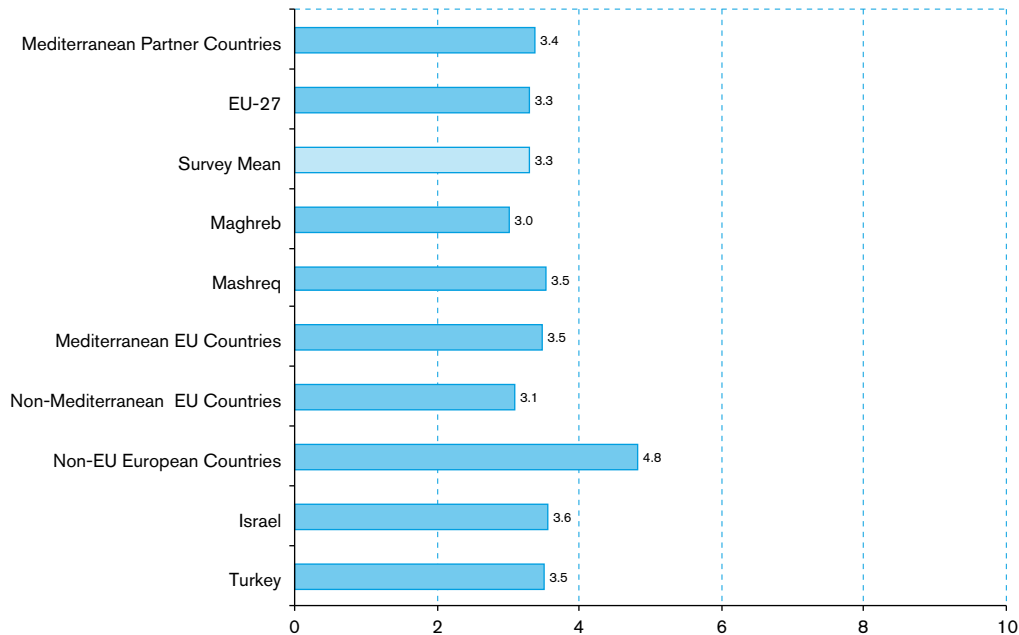
A breakdown of the scores given to this measure by region shows minimal differences, except in the case

¹ 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.

² The EU should use negative conditionality (restrictive measures to sanction the country: freezing of political dialogue, restrictive financial measures, suspension of the implementation of EU agreements, use of assistance primarily to "support non-state actors for measures aimed at promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and supporting the democratisation process in partner countries," etc.)

CHART 10

Achievement of the General Objective of the First Basket (Political and Security Basket) of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, "Establish an Area of Peace and Stability"
(average on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not achieved at all and 10 is fully achieved)



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

of non-EU European countries, which gave it an average score of 4.8. Respondents from the Mashreq, Mediterranean EU countries, Israel and Turkey gave slightly higher-than-average scores. Respondents from non-Mediterranean EU countries and the Maghreb were somewhat more critical.

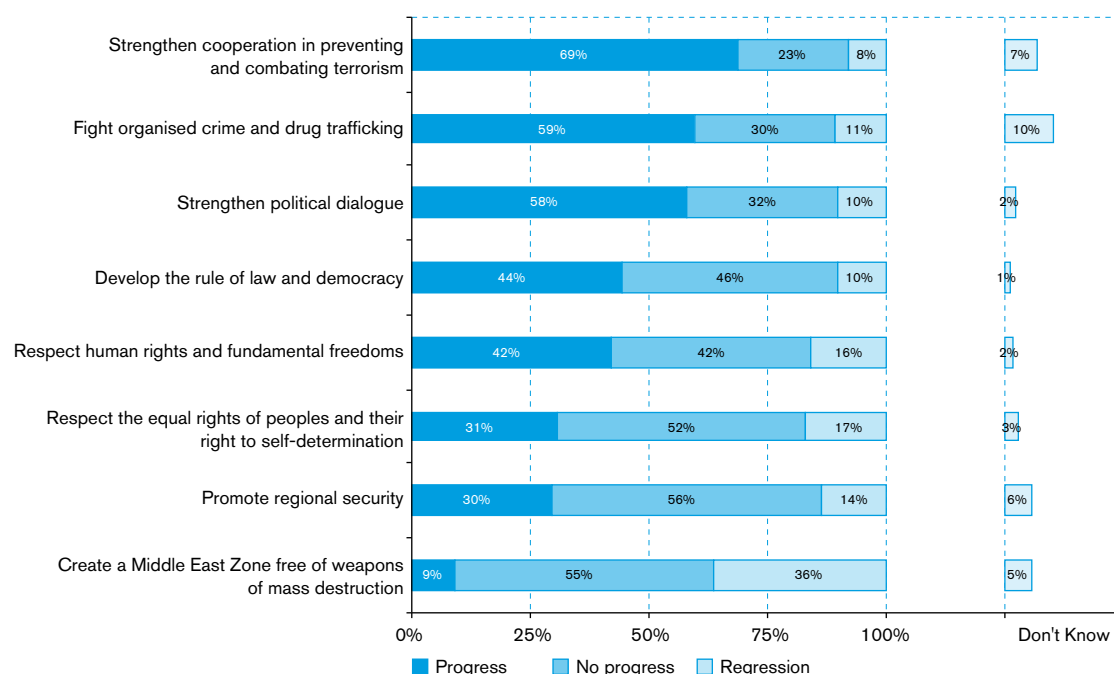
To obtain a detailed assessment of the progress made on the objectives of the "Political and Security basket of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration," a filter question was used to select only those respondents who considered themselves to have a clear perception of them. Thus, in total, only 37% of the respondents answered this block of questions. Consequently, due caution must be taken when analysing any subsequent breakdown of their responses (the entire sub-sample consisted of only 259 people).

Of the objectives proposed in 1995 for the Partnership in the area of political and security cooperation, 70% of respondents considered that the most progress had been made on *Strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating terrorism*. At the opposite end of the spectrum, not only did most respondents (55%) consider that no progress had been made on the objective *Create a Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction*, but some even believed there had been a regression (36%).

The rest of the objectives fall into two groups, those with a positive score, that is, on which more than

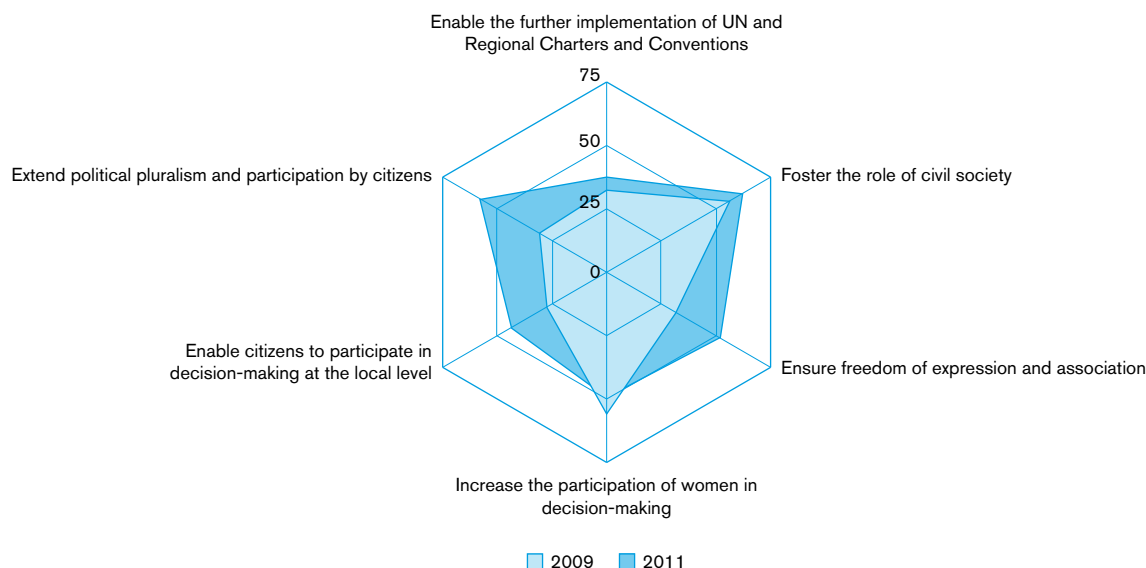
50% of respondents believed progress has been made (*Strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating terrorism, Fight organised crime and drug trafficking and Strengthen political dialogue*) and those with a higher percentage of negative responses (no progress or regression) than positive ones (*Promote regional security, Respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, Respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and Develop the rule of law and democracy*). This section of the survey also sought to assess the progress made on the priorities defined in the Political and Security Partnership within the framework of the 2005 Five-Year Work Programme. To this end, attention should first be drawn to the general lack of familiarity with this issue, with about 20% of the respondents, who were chosen from a public of Euro-Mediterranean policy experts and actors, answering *Don't know*. This suggests an ongoing need to increase the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean action programmes and priorities. As for the results themselves, it is telling that, according to the respondents, progress has been made on only two priorities, *Foster the role of civil society* (61%) and *Extend political pluralism and participation by citizens* (57%). The 2009 edition of the survey also asked about progress on these priorities. The assessment of the progress made on those priorities aimed at expand-

CHART 11 Assessment of Progress on the Objectives of the Political and Security Basket of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration



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

CHART 12 Assessment of Progress on the Priorities Defined in the Political and Security Partnership within the Framework of the 2005 Five-Year Work Programme (comparing 2009 and 2011 results). Percentage of Respondents Who Answered that the Programme Has Progressed (2009-2011)



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

ing political and citizenship rights has substantially improved (see Chart 12).

As for the priorities related to participation by civil society, improved civil rights, and gender equality, the assessment of the first two has slightly improved, while respondents considered that there had been a regression on *Increase the participation of women*

in decision-making, implying a need to focus on strengthening measures geared towards enhancing gender equality. These differences between the 2009 and 2011 results seem to underscore the influence of the Arab uprisings on the perception of progress or regression with regard to political and security priorities.

Finally, the survey also sought to assess what progress, if any, has been made on the programmes, projects, confidence-building measures, networks and support mechanisms carried out with funding from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The most salient aspect of the responses was the widespread lack of knowledge of the programmes. When asked to assess the progress made on them, in all but one case more than 50% of the respondents answered *Don't Know*. The only programme known to most respondents (73%) was support for the Middle East peace process. Although the programmes in question are quite specific and, when unsure of the progress made on them, respondents always had the option of simply answering *Don't Know*, the extent of the actors' and experts' unfamiliarity with them highlights the need to improve the channels for publicising Euro-Mediterranean programmes in general.

Among respondents who were familiar with them, the programmes fell into three distinct groups. The first comprises those programmes that most respondents believe have progressed, such as the EuroMeSCo network, the seminars for diplomats and the "Euromed Police" programme. The second consists of those programmes on which opinions were quite evenly split, including the disaster prevention programme (PPRD South) and the Governance Facility. Finally, the third consists of those programmes that respondents considered had not progressed at all. This group includes the Euromed Justice I and II programmes, which 59% of respondents claimed had made no progress or had even experienced a regression. The aforemen-

tioned support programme for peace merits special mention. Although it is the most well-known programme, it is also the most poorly regarded, with only 12% of respondents believing that progress has been made on it and the overwhelming majority divided between those who believe that no progress has been made (55%) and those who believe there has been a regression (33%).

The third Euromed survey conducted by the IEMed highlights the complexity of Euro-Mediterranean relations and the difficulty of raising awareness of Euro-Mediterranean policies in turbulent times. The Arab uprisings have determined the policy of Mediterranean countries and, thus, for better or for worse, influenced the responses to the survey, with regard to both questions directly concerning the revolts and questions referring to Mediterranean policy in general.

The ardour of the uprisings contrasts sharply with the sluggishness of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. However, the construction of a new future in the Mediterranean Partner Countries will undeniably require Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the political sphere, and it is thus more necessary than ever to understand how the key actors and experts assess these policies and the future of the Mediterranean region as a whole.

References

Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors: Euro-Mediterranean Policies in the Light of the Arab Spring, IEMed, Barcelona 2012.