

Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors 2009: What Does It Tell Us About the Present and Future of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership?

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The IEMed's Survey of Experts and Actors on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), commissioned by the European Commission, was carried out between June and September 2009. The objectives of the Survey were threefold:

- i) To assess progress, achievements and shortcomings in the different areas of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
- ii) To create and develop an instrument for the analysis and mobilisation of actors, experts and policy-makers working on Euro-Mediterranean relations;
- iii) To identify major Mediterranean trends with a forward-looking approach and articulate policy proposals to cope with the major challenges the region is bound to face in the coming years.

The Survey offers unique insight into the various perceptions of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and policies – including the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) – among the micro-cosmos of practitioners and experts involved

in these increasingly complex processes. Precisely because of this increasing complexity, a Report on the Status and Progress of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was prepared to provide the respondents with an overview and detailed information about the developments in the field since 2005.¹

Out of the around 2,800 detailed questionnaires sent out, 371 were returned by respondents from the 43 member countries of the Union for the Mediterranean. This can be considered a representative sample of the universe of experts and actors involved with the EMP. Thirty-five questions with more than 400 answer options were submitted, and the 371 full sets of answers received contained 160,000 items of information, as well as 1,800 text answers and comments. The Survey is therefore undeniably a very useful tool for understanding the various perceptions and assessments of the multiple facets of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, its achievements and its shortcomings. Over and above the direct analysis of results, an interpretation of the respondents' answers gives clear indications regarding the prospects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership/Union for the Mediterranean in the near future and, even more importantly, policy guidance for future developments.

The aim of this article is to summarise the Survey's main findings while also offering a more critical analysis and interpretation that were not feasible at the level of the Survey as such. For a more detailed and thorough presentation of the results, please refer to the Survey report.²

* The authors were the principal experts and editors of the Survey report for the *Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors*. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the IEMed or any other institution.

¹ LANNON, Erwan and MARTÍN, Iván. *Report on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Status and Progress 2009*, Documents IEMed No. 3, 2010. Available at: www.iemed.org/publicacions/10_02_25_Report_BCN_Progress_Lannon_Martin.pdf.

² *Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors. Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Perceptions and Realities*. See the analysis of the Survey's results at www.iemed.org/activitats/2010/euromedsurvey/ceuromedsurvey.php.

The EMP as a Whole Is More Than the Sum of its Parts

First of all, it is interesting to note that the overall assessment of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is, generally speaking, quite positive. When respondents were asked to assess the progress of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a whole 14 years after its inception, their responses were heavily concentrated (close to 50%) around the median values (4 to 6 on a scale of 0 to 10, which is neither very disappointing nor very positive), with the remaining answers relatively equally distributed on either end of the spectrum (22% of respondents see the EMP as positive or very positive – 7 to 10 on the scale – and 26% as disappointing or very disappointing). This balanced yet somewhat polarised view of the EMP re-emerges in the assessment of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean and does not show major variations across respondent categories (i.e., response patterns are very similar across policy-makers, experts from think tanks, universities and the media, and representatives of civil society). This overall quite positive assessment can be attributed to the high expectations of experts in the field of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, who seem to welcome any new initiative. It also illustrates the demand for new cooperation actions. New projects and initiatives are welcomed by experts and actors with a vote of confidence and high expectations for their future performance, revealing a widespread engagement with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a project and a process, regardless of the difficulties and shortcomings of its actual implementation. A clear example of this is the highly positive perception of the UfM's potential contribution to achieving the objectives of the EMP or of the new UfM projects well before they have become operational (more than 60% of respondents consider the Mediterranean Solar Plan and De-pollution of the Mediterranean projects to be positive or very positive contributions, and between 50% and 60% hold this view of the other four projects). This is despite respondents' clear reservations regarding the articulation between the EMP, the ENP, the UfM and the EU enlargement process: 48% of respondents detect a certain or total lack of coherence among them. As for the Secretariat of the UfM, even before it was formally established, expectations about its role in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership were quite high, with 52% of respondents expecting it to play an important or key

role in the new institutional architecture and 19% considering that it would play a negligible one.

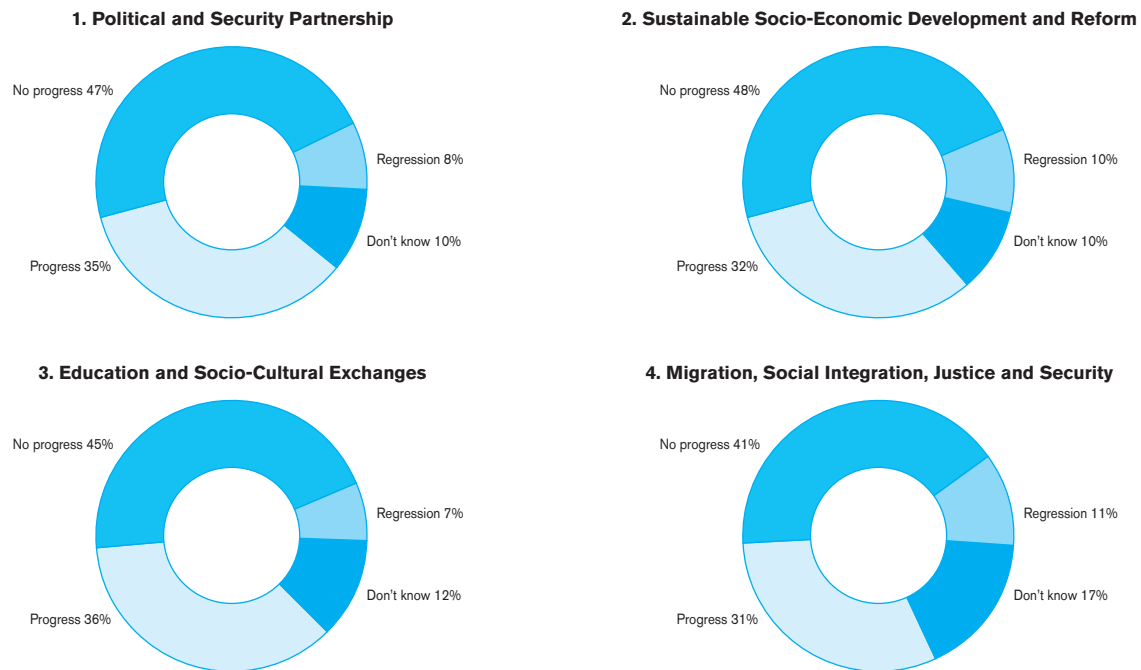
However, there are huge and significant discrepancies in perceptions and assessments among countries and sub-regions, as well as in priorities (see Table 13 below). The assessment of the EMP's achievements is far more negative among Southern and Eastern Mediterranean respondents (i.e., the assumed main beneficiaries of the process) than among EU ones, and more negative in the Maghreb (where the stakes of relations and cooperation with the EU are much higher) than in the Mashreq. Indeed, a comparative analysis of assessments of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy by groups of countries (see Map A.2, p. 292) shows a clear pattern: the farther away the respondents are from the core of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the less important the latter is for their countries in geopolitical terms, the more they value it. Thus, the assessment is more negative in Maghreb countries than in Mashreq ones or Turkey, and more positive in the Balkans or Israel than in any of the former. This also applies to the ENP and UfM. This poses some questions about the cohesive and region-building power of the whole exercise. By category of respondents, public actors and officers tend to give a much better assessment of the process than experts, and civil society representatives give an even less positive assessment than the latter.

In any case, the assessment is much more qualified when it comes to detailed, disaggregated questions about the EMP and the Survey results are analysed by major priority area. Indeed, as shown by the results of Question 1.4, when the answers regarding the objectives set for all four priority areas in the 2005 Five-Year Work Programme are viewed together, the majority of respondents consider that there has been no progress or even a regression in all fields of cooperation (see Chart 8), and only around a third of respondents see progress in all four priority areas.

Successes and Failures of the EMP

The Survey also offers a clear picture of the main concrete successes and failures of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in these 14 years. Overall, respondents consider that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is mainly benefiting the business climate and economic interests, without this translating into job creation, the integration of women into economic life, a reduction of poverty and disparities in education or a convergence

Question Q.1.4. Among the priorities defined in 2005, for which do you consider progress was achieved and for which do you think that there was no progress or even regression?



towards EU income levels. This means that improving people's living conditions is still the major untackled challenge of the EMP. Another line of interpretation, based on the positive assessment of most EMP regional programmes, is that respondents appreciate all concrete undertakings, i.e. what is actually done. Among the EMP's successes one should highlight:

- i) Regional programmes in the economic field: Some 71% of respondents stated that there has been progress on technical assistance and risk capital support from the FEMIP, 70% on transport and energy cooperation, 69% in relation to the development of the information society (Medibitar, the EuroMed Innovation and Technology Programme), and 65% on investment promotion (ANIMA and Invest in Med). Some 59% make the same assessment in relation to environmental programmes, and 59% also consider that the programme on the "Role of women in economic life" has experienced progress.
- ii) Business climate: Some 60% of respondents consider that there has been progress on improving the business climate for SMEs in the MPCs. The same applies to business-to-business contacts, enhanced support for reforms, and efforts to improve trade and the economic regulatory

environment or multilateral programmes in the economic field.

- iii) Exchanges, be they educational, cultural, youth or research exchanges, are also very positively assessed (72% of respondents see progress). All multilateral programmes in the field of education and social exchanges are considered to have experienced progress by between half and two thirds of the respondents. This was particularly true of those on dialogue between cultures and cultural heritage.
- iv) Perhaps as a consequence, 59% of respondents consider that there has been progress on "Increasing awareness and understanding of the different cultures and civilisations."

But the Partnership has also clearly failed, in the view of respondents, in some key areas of cooperation:

- i) Promotion of democratisation and human rights: Some 73% of respondents consider that there has been no progress or even regression in enabling citizens to participate in decision-making at the local level, 71% in the extension of political pluralism and participation by citizens, and 69% in the promotion of freedom of expression and association.

- ii) In the area of sustainable development, 80% see no progress or even regression in reducing the poverty rate, 80% in reducing the prosperity gap and 76% in the creation of job opportunities for young people.
 - iii) Strengthening of financial cooperation, in particular, maximising the impact and leverage of scarce resources (i.e., the issue of efficiency), where 71% see no progress or even regression.
 - iv) South-South regional economic integration, where 76% see no progress and 7% a regression.
 - v) In the area of social and cultural cooperation, respondents consider that there has been no progress or even regression in reducing disparities in education achievement between European and Mediterranean States (73%), enhancing graduate employment through efficient, high-quality higher education (70%) and promoting equitable access to quality education (61%).
 - vi) With regard to cooperation in the area of migration and justice and security (introduced as a fourth pillar for cooperation in 2005), 50% of respondents consider it disappointing or very disappointing (0 to 3 on a scale of 0 to 10), as opposed to only 6% who consider it positive or very positive (7 to 10).
 - vii) As for facilitating mobility and managing migration, 83% see no progress or even regression for visa facilitation, and slightly less for readmission and border management. Along the same lines, 83% see no progress or even regression in addressing the “brain drain” caused by migration, 71% in significantly reducing the level of illegal migration and trafficking of human beings, and 69% in promoting legal migration opportunities.
- Continued paralysis of Euromed cooperation as a consequence of the Arab-Israeli conflict;
 - Intensified demographic dynamics and employment pressures in MPCs leading to dramatic social tensions;
 - Water scarcity as an additional source of conflict and social tension in the region;
 - Environmental deterioration in the Mediterranean that will threaten the living conditions of riparian States;
 - A lack of convergence to EU levels of income;
 - An uncontrolled rise in illegal migration, leading to an increase in social tensions and xenophobia in Europe;
 - Entrenched political regimes in MPCs showing a high degree of continuity

The only positive dynamic to emerge from the Survey is the probability of increased participation by women in economic, social and political life.

It is interesting to note the high degree of consensus regarding the assessment of the probability of different hypotheses over the mid to long term across respondents from different countries and groups of countries. The probability of the Arab-Israeli conflict paralysing the EMP is the only hypothesis where divergences were somewhat marked: the farther away from the conflict respondents are, the higher the probability assigned. Thus, Maghreb respondents consider it significantly higher (7.5 on average) than Mashreq respondents (6.92), and respondents from the “Rest of the EU” (7.17) consider it higher than Mediterranean EU respondents (6.48). Israeli respondents either are clearly optimistic or do not attach much importance to such paralysis (average of 3.75), and Turkish respondents consider the current global economic crisis particularly dangerous for their development prospects.

Mid- to Long-Term Scenario in the Mediterranean

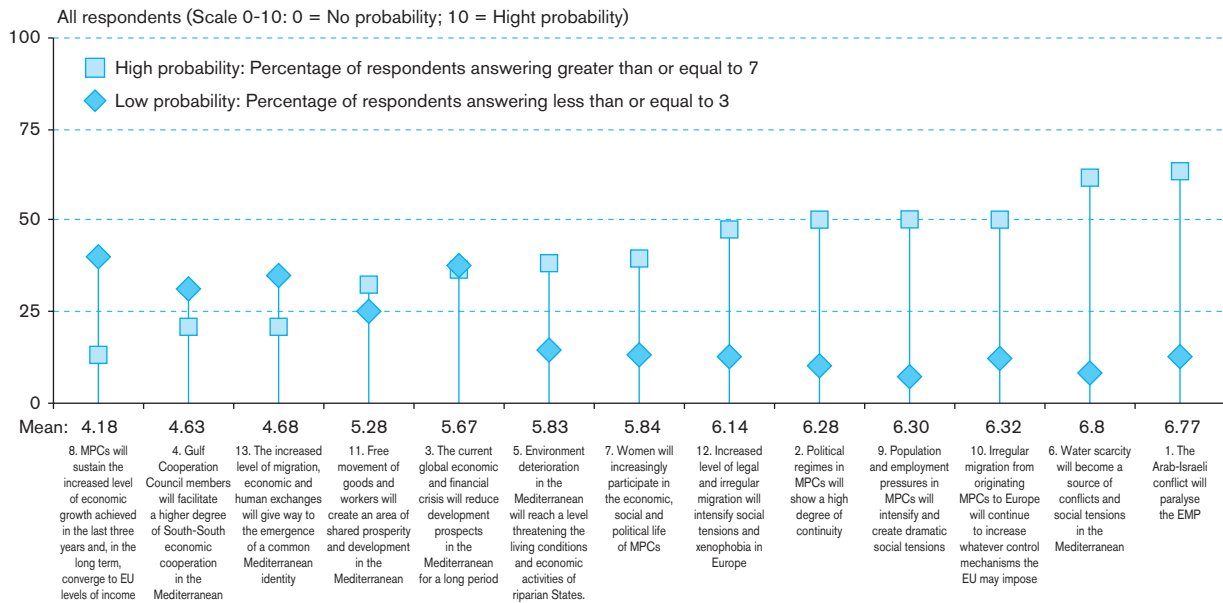
Given this overview, and turning our attention towards the future of the region and the Partnership, based on the probability assigned by the respondents to different hypotheses that assume that the current level and framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation will be maintained (see Chart 9 below, which summarises the answers to question Q.4.2 of the Survey), a baseline scenario for the mid- to long-term prospects of the Mediterranean can be constructed. This scenario would feature:

Priorities for the Development of the EMP/UfM

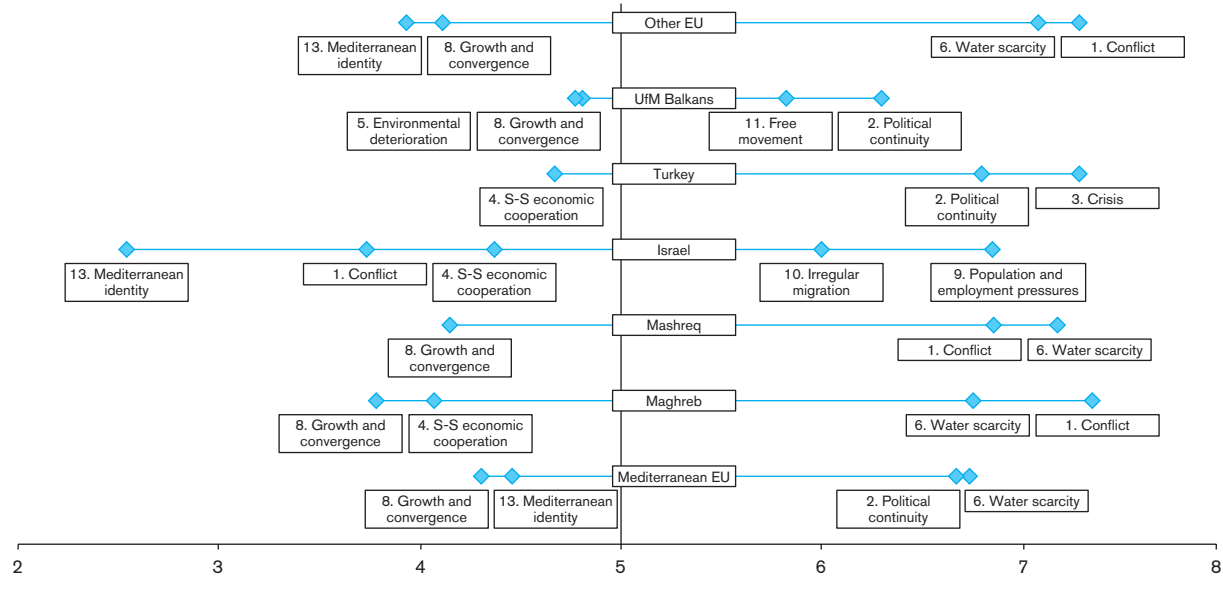
In line with this analysis of current trends in the Mediterranean, with regard to the question concerning the top five priorities for the Union for the Mediterranean and the upcoming UfM Summit (Question 5.2 of the Survey), the most frequently mentioned are:

- Conflict resolution in the region (62% of respondents)

Q.4.2 What degree of probability do you attribute to the following potential mid- to long-term hypotheses in the Mediterranean under the present level and framework of cooperation?



Main results by region (Mean 0-10: 0 = No probability; 10 = Hight probability)



- Promotion of democracy and political pluralism (49%)
- Water access and sustainability (41.5%)
- Education (41%)

The least cited priorities, in contrast, include civil protection (only 18% of respondents include it in their top five priorities), a wider free trade area, liberalisation of EU agricultural markets, food security, the fight against international terrorism, the creation of an area free of weapons of mass de-

struction in the Mediterranean, and the establishment of free movement of persons in the Mediterranean (21% each), the management of migration flows (22%), and the promotion of equality between men and women (23%). This casts a certain shadow on the current choice of priorities in the framework of the UfM, as some of the issues that are high on the agenda for the upcoming UfM Summit (such as the deepening of the free trade area or food security) do not seem to be considered priorities by the experts and actors.

TABLE 13

Results of Question Q.5.2

In your opinion, what should be the main priorities for the Spanish Co-Presidency of the UfM (and the Euro-Mediterranean Summit Barcelona 2010)? Please choose five from the whole list.

	Total		Maghreb		Mashreq		EU-27		Med EU		Rest of Europe		Turkey	Israel	France	Spain				
	%*		%*		%*		%*		%*		%*		%*	%*	%*	%*				
Political and Security Cooperation																				
Conflict resolution in the region	211	62%	52	73%	40	77%	96	55%	54	53%	42	57%	7	58%	7	50%	21	81%	13	43%
Fight against international terrorism	72	21%	22	31%	13	25%	21	12%	8	8%	13	18%	4	33%	8	57%	1	4%	4	13%
Creation of an area free of weapons of mass destruction in the Mediterranean	73	21%	19	27%	19	37%	28	16%	11	11%	17	23%	2	17%	4	29%	4	15%	2	7%
Civil protection and prevention of man-made disasters	62	18%	19	27%	10	19%	26	15%	13	13%	13	18%	1	8%	3	21%	3	12%	4	13%
Human rights and intolerance	132	39%	20	28%	20	38%	76	43%	43	42%	33	45%	6	50%	4	29%	13	50%	14	47%
Promoting democracy and political pluralism	167	49%	37	52%	32	62%	84	48%	51	50%	33	45%	2	17%	5	36%	16	62%	18	60%
Total answers	717		169		134		331		180		151		22		31		58		55	
Total respondents	342		71		52		176		102		74		12		14		26		30	
Economic and Financial Cooperation																				
Increasing the funds allocated to the EMP	99	29%	31	44%	17	33%	35	20%	24	24%	11	15%	5	42%	5	36%	9	35%	9	30%
Wider Free Trade Area	71	21%	15	21%	10	19%	40	23%	26	25%	14	19%	2	17%	2	14%	9	35%	12	40%
Energy	91	27%	15	21%	10	19%	56	32%	32	31%	24	32%	3	25%	2	14%	6	23%	13	43%
Water access and sustainability	142	42%	32	45%	20	38%	75	43%	41	40%	34	46%	1	8%	6	43%	17	65%	7	23%
Food security	71	21%	18	25%	16	31%	32	18%	14	14%	18	24%	1	8%	1	7%	6	23%	4	13%
Environmental issues and sustainable development	123	36%	29	41%	15	29%	65	37%	37	36%	28	38%	6	50%	2	14%	12	46%	10	33%
Liberalisation of EU agricultural markets	71	21%	14	20%	9	17%	39	22%	22	22%	17	23%	3	25%	1	7%	8	31%	8	27%
Total answers	614		154		97		342		196		146		21		19		67		63	
Total respondents	342		71		52		176		102		74		12		14		26		30	
Social, Human and Cultural Cooperation																				
Employment promotion and employment policies	102	30%	29	41%	16	31%	50	28%	26	25%	18	24%	1	8%	2	14%	11	42%	11	37%
Education	140	41%	27	38%	24	46%	74	42%	32	31%	29	39%	7	58%	2	14%	13	50%	15	50%
Promoting equality between men and women	78	23%	17	24%	7	13%	44	25%	41	40%	15	20%	4	33%	2	14%	13	50%	14	47%
Promoting the participation of civil society and social partners in the EMP	79	23%	16	23%	12	23%	39	22%	26	25%	13	18%	2	17%	4	29%	7	27%	8	27%
Promoting dialogue between cultures and cultural diversity	119	35%	21	30%	15	29%	67	38%	32	31%	34	46%	4	33%	3	21%	14	54%	9	30%
Management of migration flows	76	22%	13	18%	8	15%	52	30%	41	40%	22	30%	1	8%	2	14%	4	15%	9	30%
Establishment of free movement of persons in the Mediterranean	71	21%	15	21%	10	19%	40	23%	26	25%	11	15%	4	33%	2	14%	10	38%	7	23%
Total answers	665		138		92		366		224		142		23		17		72		73	
Total respondents	342		71		52		176		102		74		12		14		26		30	

* % overall respondents.

Panorama

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However, in some cases priorities vary very significantly across countries and groups of countries. Thus, as seen in Table 13, conflict resolution is considered a top priority by 62% of respondents as a whole, but by 73% of those from the Maghreb, 77% of those from the Mashreq and only 55% of those from the EU-27 (and, within the EU, by 81% of French respondents but only 43% of Spanish ones). Promoting democracy and political pluralism is considered a top priority by 49% of respondents, but again with marked variations: 62% of those from the Mashreq, 52% of those from the Maghreb and 48% of those from the EU-27. The increase in the

funds allocated to the EMP is considered a priority by only 29% of the total sample, but 44% of Maghreb respondents and only 20% of those from the EU. Employment promotion is considered a top priority by 41% of the Maghreb respondents, but only 30% of the overall sample (and 28% of respondents from the EU-27).

Policy Implications for the EMP

The results of the Survey contain few surprises for those familiar with Euro-Mediterranean dynamics, but

it is worth pointing out certain highlights so as to draw policy implications for the near future:

- The Euro-Mediterranean cooperation process has become so complex (overlapping cooperation schemes, multiplication of instruments and sectoral dynamics, institutional complexity, differentiated impact in the nine Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Partner Countries) that there is a widespread lack of knowledge of how it works and of its details at the technical ground level, even among the experts and actors involved in it. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is less and less the domain of diplomats, and more and more that of specialised experts from sectoral ministries. The push for region-wide projects (and hence more technical approaches) and the emergence of the “UfM mission” in France, reporting to the Presidency of the Republic and made up of experts from sectoral ministries, as a powerful engine of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation matched only by the European Commission’s structures, has reinforced this trend. This has major implications for the institutional architecture of Mediterranean policy in most of the EU and the Mediterranean Partner Countries and is becoming an increasingly significant hurdle to the effectiveness of the whole process. The consolidation of the Secretariat of the UfM could increase this imbalance between the driving structures of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and the national policy structures in EU Member States and Mediterranean Partner Countries, and this is increasingly worrisome in the framework of the intergovernmental drift the UfM is promoting.
- On a more substantive level, there is a broad consensus that the Arab-Israeli conflict is a major hurdle to advancing on cooperation (73% of respondents think that the objectives of the EMP and the UfM are seriously endangered by the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict), and the developments of the last two years and, more specifically, the last few weeks of the Spanish Presidency of the EU in the first semester of 2010 have fully confirmed this perception in reality. A full 63% of respondents consider it probable or very probable that the EMP will be paralysed by this conflict in the mid to long term. This should be interpreted in relation to the poor perception of the contribution of the EMP’s new partners (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Mauritania and Montenegro): for all of them but Croatia, the percentage of respondents considering that they will not contribute at all to strengthening the EMP (0 to 3 on the scale) exceeds 40%. This calls for reflection on the perimeter of the UfM and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation at large, i.e., whether it would make more sense to advance towards a region-to-region approach (for instance, between the EU and the League of Arab States) or to focus on sub-regional areas such as the Western Mediterranean (3+3 or 5+5 setting).
- A detailed analysis of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership by priority area, as asked in the Survey questionnaire, shows a relatively high appreciation of the EMP’s actions in the fields of culture and education and of its people-to-people programmes, but also that respondents consider that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is mainly benefiting the business climate and economic interests, without this translating into job creation, the integration of women into economic life, the reduction of poverty or disparities in education or convergence towards EU income levels. It can thus be inferred that the EMP has either failed to ensure the visibility of its actions or, more plausibly, that it has failed to be relevant to citizens’ daily lives.
- The priorities identified by the experts and actors in the Survey (conflict resolution, promotion of democracy and political pluralism, water access and sustainability and education) and the priority projects of the Union for the Mediterranean do not seem to match. The latter likewise fail to tackle the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’s main perceived failures over the last 14 years.
- The main conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of trends and prospects for the Mediterranean under the current cooperation framework is clear: the status quo should not be an option, as it entails substantial risks for stability and cohesion in the Mediterranean.
- However, the “Euro-Mediterranean” is still a valuable “brand,” as evidenced by the high expectations about the Union for the Mediterranean despite all the political difficulties hindering its launching in the last two years, contamination by the Arab-Israeli conflict, the lack of clear financial resources and confusion about its institutional structure. This brand value should be leveraged to deepen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation along the priority lines indicated by the Survey respondents.