

**PERCEPTIONS**  
**JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**June - August 1999**

**Volume IV - Number 2**

**CONFLICT PREVENTION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP: A EUROPEAN POINT OF VIEW\***

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INTRODUCTION

In any approach to conflict prevention in the Mediterranean area, three elements deserve attention: the definition of the area, the stage of the conflicts, and the importance of structural factors in Mediterranean conflicts.

The definition of the Mediterranean area represents a conditioning element. The Mediterranean can be defined in geographic as well as geo-strategic or geo-economic terms. Depending on the definition, the implications for conflict prevention vary. While the geographic definition is self-explanatory, the definition in geo-strategic terms is more complicated. In any case, two distinctive zones in the Mediterranean can be singled out clearly: the Western Mediterranean, which is easier to handle in strategic terms, and the Eastern Mediterranean, in which the likelihood of violent conflict is still high, most of all with respect to the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts.

In geo-strategic and geo-economic terms, an expansion of the traditional geographic area is in order, so as to include areas as complicated as the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and a good part of Central Asia.

If such an expansion is taken into consideration, the forces which influence and define the Mediterranean area, from the Caucasus through to the Balkans or the Persian Gulf, can result decisively in obstructing the implementation of preventative measures for Mediterranean conflict or potential conflict. This experience has already been witnessed with the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. For these reasons, the first step of a Mediterranean conflict prevention policy consists of developing a definition of 'Mediterranean' that is functional and appropriate enough to initiate a conflict prevention process.

Conflict prevention in the Mediterranean also requires the establishment of a priority list because the number of actual or potential conflicts is particularly high. This priority list would allow for those conflicts that require immediate conflict prevention measures to be identified and selected.

In this context, conflicts that are sufficiently developed—whether inter-state or intra-state—and those that have escalated into wars, remaining unsolved and generating crises from time to time, must be discriminated from potential conflicts due to changes in the strategic, political, economic, social or environmental situation. The treatment in a conflict prevention exercise must be clearly

different.

Finally, in my opinion, numerous and dangerous conflicts in the Mediterranean area can arise from the maintenance of structures inherited from the past and in many respects unfitting to the new situations.

This is the case with the military structure inherited from the Cold War. Though the military threat from the Warsaw Pact has completely vanished, the North-South military imbalance continues to be a potential source of conflict so long as a more balanced structure, harmonising the different interests and perceptions, is not created.

The same thing can be said about the economic, political and social structures, especially in non-European countries. These structures' lack of adaptation to changes that have taken place not only within those countries, but also in the international sphere, is conducive to instability and violence. This is, for a good part, the aim of the Barcelona Declaration when it points out that "the new political, economic, and social issues on both sides of the Mediterranean constitute common challenges calling for a co-ordinated overall response."

What I would like to emphasise is the importance of managing the deep causes of the Mediterranean's potential instability as one of the top priorities. The main problems are not transient problems, but structural ones.

Taking into account all these considerations, a step by step process can be initiated. The best point from which to begin this process is precisely with the need to face the new political, economic and social issues indicated by the Barcelona Declaration. For sure, the issues to be selected must be the ones more likely to succeed.

## THE SECURITY FRAMEWORK

The original aim of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was to build a security partnership. This concept was dropped in the final draft of the Declaration, but it described initial intentions well.<sup>1</sup> In fact, at the beginning of the nineties, the French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish joint statement on establishing a Conference on Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) was referred to as a 'mutual security' framework.<sup>2</sup>

The meaning of 'security' was not sufficiently clarified in these drafts and documents, however. In any case, the concept was very narrow and still related to Cold-War-like strategic approaches. Such concepts as 'common' or 'mutual security' are predicated more on defence than broad security. They aim to increase mutual confidence and transparency in military budgets and activities as well as limiting the offensive capabilities of the armed forces, thus contributing to breaking up security dilemmas (Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues).

Following the end of the Cold War, the Brookings Institution has refined and more clearly introduced the concept of 'co-operative security' (see Nolan). The authors of a monograph published by the Brookings say, "The central purpose of co-operative security arrangements is to prevent war and to do so primarily by preventing the means for successful aggression from being assembled ... Co-operative security is designed to ensure that organised aggression cannot start on any large scale" (see Carter, Perry, Steinberg, p. 7-8).

Thus, co-operative security addresses arms regimes and is mostly directed at attaining military security by means of co-operative behaviour and measures by states.

The model of co-operative security the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is trying to develop seems less dependent on military components. According to the 1996 Lisbon Declaration, the OSCE's concept of co-operative security, is "based on democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, market economy and social justice. It excludes any quest for domination. It implies mutual confidence and the peaceful settlement of disputes."

Co-operation in the new OSCE concept contemplated such endeavours as the continuation of the arms control process, but gives prominence to the development of good neighbourly relations by means of the establishment of confidence and security-building measures (CSBM) in support of regional security processes and the full respect and implementation of all commitments related to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

If we compare these ideas with those originally developed by the Brookings Institution, we find some remarkable similarities, especially if we take into account the size and the content of the Lisbon Declaration's annexes: 'A Framework for Arms Control', and 'The Development of the Agenda of the Forum for Security Co-operation'.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, emphases are different and the comprehensive security approach of the Lisbon Declaration's model of co-operative security seems closer to the model envisaged by the Barcelona Declaration than that set out by the Brookings Institution.

In fact, the underlying philosophy of the Barcelona Declaration points to a comprehensive security concept. Although in the first chapter, it emphasises arms control, non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), prevention of the excessive accumulation of conventional arms, the principle of sufficiency for defence requirements, equal security and mutual confidence with the lowest possible levels of troops and weaponry, the attainment of security is linked to non-military measures. Overall, military issues are given a relatively low profile. On the other hand, it must be noted that, unlike the case of the OSCE, there are no regional arms control agreements involving all the countries of the Barcelona process.

## FORMER EXPERIENCES IN CONFLICT PREVENTION

### The OSCE Experience

At the end of the Cold War, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) created new instruments and mechanisms to face the possible development of conflict in Central Europe. Uncontrolled inter-ethnic conflicts were an almost unknown phenomenon in Europe during the Cold War. As they began to re-emerge abruptly, international institutions were unprepared and lacked instruments to deal with this challenge. For this reason, the CSCE was little by little transformed from a forum for negotiation and dialogue into an active operational structure, ie. the OSCE. At the Budapest summit in 1994, the CSCE became "a primary instrument of early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management in the region". At the OSCE summit in Lisbon in December 1996, it was decided to continue efforts to further the efficiency of the organisation as a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. These efforts are led by the OSCE Permanent Council, which replaced the CSCE Permanent Committee in

taking responsibility for implementing the day-to-day operational tasks of the organisation.

The CSCE and the OSCE have generated a set of important instruments of conflict prevention.<sup>4</sup> At the Paris summit in 1990, a Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) was created with the task of supporting the implementation of several CSBM included in the 1990 Vienna Document. Later on, in 1991, at the first meeting of the Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers, which took place in Berlin, the CPC was designated the 'nominating institution' for the peaceful settlement of disputes mechanism set out at the Valletta Meeting in January and February 1991. Subsequently, however, the CPC has been turned into a unit with logistical tasks.

The "Mechanism for consultation and co-operation regarding emergency situations", was adopted in Berlin and became known as the 'Berlin Mechanism'. In September-October 1991, another significant mechanism was created at the Moscow meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension (known as the 'Moscow Mechanism'). In Moscow, the CSCE participating states took two decisions: (a) the commitments undertaken within the CSCE in the field of the human dimension were considered matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating states and did not belong to the internal affairs of the state concerned and (b) the 'rapporteur missions' of the CSCE were institutionalised.

At the 1992 Helsinki summit, the CSCE began to develop an outright operational capacity to respond rapidly to emerging conflict. The frustration that emerged during 1991 because of ineffectiveness in a variety of conflicts led the CSCE to seek a new philosophy and create new instruments to take action. A shift was clearly needed from a declaratory and reactive policy to one allowing rapid intervention.

To that purpose, the post of 'High Commissioner on National Minorities' (HCNM) was created with two clear tasks: early warning and early action regarding the tensions involving national minority issues. The Helsinki Summit enacted another important instrument regarding "missions of long duration" in troubled areas.

How do these instruments perform? After the Helsinki Summit, the then CSCE took action for the first time, dispatching a resident mission to Kosovo, Vojvodina and Sandjak. Later on, further resident missions were developed. The mandate, composition and task of the missions were different from one another, but all of them have contributed to stability by providing support and advice or by their very presence. They have tried to de-escalate tension, to regain control of those political, economic, social or military issues that remained unhandled and to establish conditions for effective conflict resolutions. All missions have co-operated with international organisations active in their respective area as well as with NGOs.

Other shorter-term missions, such as fact-finding, rapporteur or expert missions, were also sent to investigate specific situations of a military nature or related to the human dimension.

The HCNM has emerged as an OSCE institution particularly important in the field of conflict prevention. His task of identifying and promoting an early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or relations between OSCE participant states has been rapidly expanded. Visits, reports, on-site missions, recommendations, the encouragement of dialogue, confidence and co-operation have allowed the containment or early resolution of ethnic conflicts. The High Commissioner may consult with up to three experts with relevant knowledge in specific matters, but

with a clear mandate and a calendar previously established.

The OSCE can also launch peacekeeping operations in order to prevent conflicts and contribute to crisis management.

In the field of early warning, the OSCE has tried to improve its capacity for gathering information. One of its instruments is the intensive use of regular, in-depth political consultations within the structures and institutions of the organisation. The possibilities of dialogue and political consultation were expanded after the establishment in December 1993 of the Permanent Committee—subsequently, the Permanent Council—which meets at least once a week.

Another type of early warning comes from debates taking place in the various institutions, summits, conferences, and experts, steering and working groups, and other meetings. Monitoring of the implementation of previously agreed norms and commitments leads to the uncovering of violations and these are indicators of potential conflicts.

Another instrument of early warning is the review of the implementation of CSBM, such as sharing long-term plans and intentions regarding the structure and deployment of the arms forces.

The HCNM has an explicit early warning function. The Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights has been also tasked with contributing to early warning. To that purpose, several methods and instruments are contemplated: regular and in-depth political consultation within the OSCE, regular implementation debates and resident missions.

Other instruments for early warning are the Moscow Mechanism on the human dimension, the Vienna Mechanism on unusual military activities and the Berlin Mechanism. They go from the initiative of a limited number of states asking for clarification of situations through to consultations with states involved. These could lead to OSCE meetings at which fact-finding measures may be decided upon. Another early warning and conflict prevention mechanism was approved at the Helsinki-II summit: any country directly implicated or a group of countries not directly implicated in a situation that can produce a conflict or crisis can attract the attention of the Senior Council.

In all that, the OSCE has developed several instruments for peaceful settlement of disputes such as the Convention on Conciliation and Arbitration and direct conciliation procedures.

The OSCE infrastructure for conflict prevention has not proved very successful, however. The case of Yugoslavia was a clear example. "Their potential has not been full realised because of the absence of political will among the OSCE members to take difficult positions, the existence of competitive interlocking relations between the CSCE and other international organisations such as the UN, the temporal immaturity of the new OSCE institutions and process and their jurisdictional inappropriateness to the violent conflicts plaguing post-Cold War Europe. The focus on inter-state conflicts and not on the relations within OSCE states (except the Moscow mechanism) made this organisation irrelevant in the most important spots" (Sandole).<sup>5</sup>

### The Mediterranean Experience

In the Mediterranean region, the early attempts to create a security framework in the Five + Five Western Mediterranean Group\* as well as in CSCM project did not consider the possibility of

conflict prevention explicitly.

The Five + Five Group was an attempt by the Southern European countries to project European interests in stability in the Maghreb and, from there, to the whole of the Mediterranean area. The main concern was economic co-operation. However, an international framework of political dialogue was established and involves annual meetings of the foreign ministers. A Political Committee was also established and has the task of debating political and common security questions between the annual meetings of the Group.<sup>6</sup>

The CSCM, an unborn initiative, was envisioned as an instrument to create and manage shared interests in the areas of security, co-operation and human dimension. Taking into account the CSCE experience, three baskets were envisaged: security, economic co-operation and the human dimension. The goal of the security basket was to promote stability by dealing with the economic, social and political factors causing insecurity in the area, and to develop CSBM. A conflict prevention mechanism could well be included within the CSCM, Although it was not contemplated in the proposal formally put forward by the Spanish and Italian governments in 1990, it was in the minds of its initiators. It was also considered as a possible instrument for crisis management.<sup>7</sup>

In relation to conflict prevention, the concepts and ideas developed by the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) of the Middle East Peace Process (see Peters, p. 36-45) have been of explicit significance. Among these ideas was that of setting up a Regional Security Centre. This centre would evolve over time gradually. It would work as a centre for seminars and training in arms control and regional security, and other activities related to the implementation of specific CSBM. At a later stage, the centre could also evolve to include other tasks such as conflict prevention and conflict resolution. However, the ACRS Working Group was unable to approve a common declaration of principles on arms control and regional security. Without the common ground such a declaration of principles would provide, it is impossible to develop the idea of setting up a regional security centre tasked with implementing prevention and management in the area.

The themes and issues of other working groups in the peace process multilateral track, such as water resources, refugees, economic development and the environment, reflect sources of conflict in the region possibly even more significant than those taken into consideration by the ACRS Working Group, particularly from a conflict prevention perspective. In this sense, the ACRS scope appears quite limited. Anyway, the mere existence of this group could be in itself an instrument to maintain communication and prevent conflict. The ACRS Working Group's deliberations, however, were suspended at the end of 1995 as a consequence of the standstill in the peace process. This confirms the fact that conflict prevention has remained largely foreign to the Mediterranean area so far.

#### INSTITUTIONS, MECHANISM AND INSTRUMENTS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION

The most developed instruments available so far for preventing conflict are those of the OSCE. These instruments were created bearing in mind the possible types of conflict in the new European order, such as those deriving from the dissolution of the USSR, the transition from Communist regimes to democracies and market systems, and national minority troubles.

In the Mediterranean, most of the conflicts are well established. As for potential conflict that need to be prevented, the political context is quite different from that encompassed by the OSCE. Like in the OSCE, the partners of the EMP start from common challenges calling for a co-ordinated overall

response and a set of principles accepted by every participant country, similar to the Helsinki Act. However, in the EMP the Partners have to develop their consensus. In fact, the Barcelona Declaration is too recent to bring about a determined common effort to comply with and enforce the principles in question.

Furthermore, the interests and priorities of the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries are not the same. The priority for the southern Mediterranean countries is to be enabled to face the economic gap with the North and the challenges posed by the envisaged 2010 free trade area. For the EU countries, the main interest is to face the economic, political and social instability coming from the southern Mediterranean countries, and to control the proliferation of WMD and migration flows.

Another difficulty in the Mediterranean is that this area is exposed to factors that can weaken and even break up the Barcelona Process, both from inside the process (like the existing Arab-Israeli conflicts) or from outside (like the potential conflict over energy resources in the Caucasus and Central Asian republics and the conflict in the Gulf or related to Turkey).

Taking all that into consideration, conflict prevention in the EMP area is no less needed than in the OSCE, but there is a need to look more to long-term, systemic and structural issues rather than to imminent crises or conflicts. The character of conflict prevention in the EMP framework requires a gradual approach to policy implementation. In fact, if a policy of conflict prevention started by including all existing and potential conflicts, such a policy and its instruments would be overburdened and hardly feasible. Consequently, the start should be gradual and the process should enlarge later on to encompass more and more urgent conflicts.

The Action Plan for the Development of the Political-security Chapter of the Barcelona Process

The Action Plan worked out by the Senior Officials Committee of the EMP for developing the politico-security pillar of the Barcelona Process contains six annexes, ie. areas in which common security policies would be expected to be elaborated:

- Enhancement of stability and reinforcement of democratic institutions,
- Preventative diplomacy and good neighbourly relations,
- Confidence and security-building measures,
- Ways and means of arriving at regional security and an arms control and disarmament arrangement,
- Prevention of and fight against terrorism,
- Fight against organised crime and drug trafficking.

The conceptual framework on which the preventative diplomacy and good neighbourly area of the Action Plan is predicated asks for participant states to "engage in reflections on the methods which would allow exchange of information, on a voluntary basis, on the situation in the region and on security issues and explore the means of establishing a well structured, gradually evolving political consultation process, which will be underpinned by the principles of the Barcelona Declaration."

In this perspective, four operational aspects are envisaged:

- The establishment of communication networks among focal points,
- Strengthening dialogue as an early warning procedure (by setting up a Euro-Med Situation Centre) and establishing a dispute prevention mechanism,
- Appointing conciliators to facilitate political conciliation procedures,
- Peaceful settlement of disputes by Euro-Med instruments.

These operational aspects are insufficient for setting up a framework of conflict prevention. As it was said in the above, the situation in the Mediterranean region embraces existing and potential conflicts whose dimensions and characters ask for something more than purely diplomatic and short-term action.

By the same token, the method identified by the Action Plan to allow for exchanging information is limited to official information on a voluntary basis. On the contrary, information gathering, as a central aspect in early warning, requires a different and broader approach. The crucial precondition for preventative diplomacy is early warning, and the latter cannot exist without appropriate information gathering. The problem in the Mediterranean is that official information on numerous potential conflicts or possible crises is not entirely reliable because it is widely conditioned by existing interests or secrecy of information in official multilateral fora. Thus, it is not appropriate to consider official channels as the only source of information for early warning; other actors and information sources are needed.

On the other hand, a large part of the operational aspects are predicated on the peaceful settlement of disputes. This requires additional methods of information-gathering that are not specified, however. More precisely, because of North-South cultural differences and the asymmetry of interests between the EMP parties, there are several important issues that would need to be clarified to allow for a conflict prevention exercise. These would include, for example, agreement on:

- The potential conflicts to be addressed,
- Institutional aspects to be developed,
- The categories of common analysis,
- Possible scenarios to be established,
- The decision-making processes.

In sum, though these deficiencies are understandable because of the necessity of a gradual approach for the Action Plan, the contents of the operational aspects and their underlying instruments fall short of the implementation of an effective policy to secure "preventative diplomacy and good neighbourly relations."

In the area of CSBM, there are also insufficiencies and asymmetries. In the Action Plan, Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) and Confidence and Security-Building Measures seem differentiated. In fact, the most adequate measures to generate confidence in the Mediterranean are CBM. The primary goal is to achieve mutual and common understanding on important issues of



common interest, and to highlight shared values and common aspirations. For that to be done, the Action Plan proposes joint or parallel declarations dealing with:

- Political initiatives,
- Exchange of information,
- Documentation,
- Experiences and codes of conduct on issues such as tolerance, coexistence, the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination,
- Co-ordination and mutual assistance on matters such as prevention, management and response to natural and man-made disasters or air-sea search and rescue operations,
- The enhancement of understanding and tolerance among religions and civilisations,
- The consolidation of the EuroMesco network of non-governmental institutes dealing with international security and relations.

This area on common action also appears insufficient because the principal measures to generate confidence in the Euro-Mediterranean relations are those defined by Brauch as "partnership-building measures" and "exchange-furthering measures"<sup>8</sup>. In other words, the measures that would need be emphasised should not be only those related to the first chapter of the Barcelona Declaration on political and security partnership or the third chapter on social and cultural partnership; they should also include measures envisaged by the second chapter on economic and financial partnership. The three chapters are interconnected, the substantial centre of the Euro-Mediterranean exercise being the economic one.

In the field of CSBM, the measures to be studied and developed are centred on the promotion of transparency, the exchange of information, co-operation among defence and security institutions, co-operation on peacekeeping operations and studying the conditions for convening a Euro-Mediterranean conference on nuclear safety.

After all these measures were negotiated in 1996-97, the measures selected for implementation at the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Malta (15-16 April 1997), are practically only of a declaratory nature, however.<sup>9</sup> As such they cannot remedy the real shortcoming in the draft of the Action Plan, ie. the fact that the Plan does not connect functionally the section on CSBM with the subsequent section on ways and means of arriving at regional security, arms control and disarmament arrangements. If the purpose is essentially to face the challenge of the proliferation of WMD as well as the excessive accumulation of conventional arms, and the development of military capacities going beyond legitimate defence requirements, CSBM should be the bridges making the change from one military structure to another possible.

#### Proposals for Conflict Prevention

Taking into account the specifics of the Euro-Mediterranean context and the different priorities of the counties on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean basin, it seems that, in a conflict prevention perspective, the first measures to be achieved should be an agreement on the

creation of a Conflict Prevention Centre whose primary missions would be:

- Information gathering on possible intra-and inter-state conflict: 1. in the economic field, including the distribution of wealth; 2. in the social field, including migration issues and the existing cultural, religious and ethnic identities and diversities; 3. in the political field, including lack or loss of legitimacy of current regimes and leaderships, large-scale violence and human rights violations.
- Development of CBM and talks on disarmament in order to establish in the medium-term a new North-South and South-South military structure.

An early warning capacity should be the first aspect to be developed. Early warning is a pre-condition for conflict prevention (see Leatherman and Väyrynen). In fact, the Barcelona Declaration provides important elements for accurate information gathering:

- Exchange of information on matters relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, racism and xenophobia,
- Exchange of data on economic and financial matters,
- Exchanges between leaders of political and civil societies, the cultural and religious world, universities, research communities, the media,
- Exchanges between private associations, trade unions and public and private enterprises,
- Thematic meetings of ministers, senior officials and experts; exchanges of experience and information and by any other appropriate means,
- Contacts between members of parliaments, regional authorities, local authorities and social partners,
- Meetings of senior officials to evaluating the follow-up to the Barcelona Process and all its components and to update agendas,
- Periodical meetings of foreign ministers in order to monitor the application of the Barcelona Declaration.

These elements set up per se a wide network of information gathering. Non-governmental actors from civil society can make a significant contribution since they are often closer to conflict or potential conflict. For that to become possible, though, the political control of NGOs has to be lifted in many countries and freedom of association must be permitted and encouraged. The role of the media and their contribution as sources of information must also be stressed (see Strobel). In fact, one of the principles shared by the Partners in the Barcelona Declaration is precisely the guarantee for the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression.

The EMP Conflict Prevention Centre should thus be able to establish a wide multilateral network of information on political, economic and social issues in terms of their ability to generate conflict. Later on, other instruments for information gathering can be established in addition to political consultation and civil society networks, such as fact-finding missions, resident missions, rapporteur or expert missions, which may serve a variety of functions depending on their mandate. There is also

a need to develop criteria and benchmarks by which the development of tensions and abuses in each relevant country can be monitored. Another important question is the summarisation of information by using appropriate indicators (see Leatherman and Väyrynen, and Lund p. 111-113]. About all of this information, a suitable consensus is needed due to cultural diversity among European and Arab-Islamic countries and the difference in interpreting information they may give way.

Once information is processed, a message regarding the emergence of crises and the likelihood of conflict has to be presented to the political authorities in order for them to take initiatives, be they political, diplomatic, economic or even coercive measures, geared to preventing conflict, ie.:

- Disputes arising between parties,
- The vertical and horizontal escalation of disputes (leaving aside, in this first stage "hostilities"),
- The re-emergence of disputes.

Given the fact that conflicts pass through different stages, different types of early warning and preventative action are required depending on the stage of the conflict.

This exercise demands the modification of present EMP institutions. First, like in the OSCE, a stronger EMP secretariat should support an early warning and preventative action centre. At the same time, the decision-making process demands the existence of a decision-making body in which all EMP states must be represented. In this sense, neither the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process at the senior officials level nor the periodical meetings of the foreign ministers are enough. A permanent institution that meets regularly for consultations and decision-making on all issues relevant to the different chapters of the Barcelona Declaration is necessary. It would also be convened in emergency situations. It should be similar to the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

True, the creation of these institutions demands a very important change in the original EMP conference philosophy. The EMP, from being a flexible organisation without permanent institutions and no permanent bodies to take action between the foreign ministers' meetings, would become a less consultative and more operational organisation. In Europe, the CSCE was transformed into an inter-governmental organisation so it could become the primary instrument for early warning, conflict management and crisis management. A similar perspective should be envisaged in the EMP.

Regarding the decision-making process, another issue to take into account consists of the possible different judgements on information coming from early warning, according to different experiences, political constraints and cultural values (see Cohen). The critical issue would be to reach an agreement on possible scenarios (see Alker, Gurr and Rupesinghe) and on the type and timing of intervention.

To sum up, the first steps would consist of setting up a permanent structure that would include:

- A secretariat to support all the Euro-Mediterranean activities and manage all meetings and operations,
- A permanent consultation and decision-making body to bridge heads of state and government or foreign minister meetings,

- A conflict prevention centre.

Second, taking into account that in launching this process the goals have to be realistic, the instruments have to be initially diplomatic, political and economic and exclude coercion. Otherwise, consensus will be very difficult. Common crisis management and conflict management have to be excluded, and efforts concentrated on preventative diplomacy in a narrow meaning. It is probably very little, but in the short-term, it is probably all that can be accomplished.

Third, the EMP should concentrate on a few mechanisms. For instance, establishing:

- A peaceful settlement of disputes mechanism<sup>10</sup>,
- A soft human rights protection and promotion mechanism,
- A mechanism for monitoring the economic stability of the member states.

The implementation of such a program will take time. The experience we have gained in the last two years, since the end of the Barcelona Conference, and the results of the last meeting in Malta do not cast an aura of optimism. Progress is likely to be extremely slow. We probably do not have sufficient time to spare.

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1 The OSCE Budapest Declaration of 1994 established that the participating states wanted to build a "genuine security partnership", and in light of continuing rapid change they considered it important "to start discussion on a model of common and comprehensive security". Initially, something quite similar was considered appropriate for the Mediterranean.

2 See the CSCM document in Marquina, p. 433.

3 Annex III (FSC DEC/8/96) and Annex IV (FSC DEC/9/96) in the Lisbon Document.

4 In order to gain a broader overview of the OSCE evolution in conflict prevention after the Cold War see OSCE in Chigas, Heraclides, and Lucas.

5 There are other positions more nuanced in this regard. See, for instance, Chigas (p. 82): "The OSCE's greatest weakness—its consensus decision-making and its lack of 'teeth'—is also its greatest strength. Rather than reduce its power, it has enabled the OSCE to gain the co-operation and confidence of the parties in reducing conflict. Many organisations are able to generate binding decisions, impose sanctions, or supply the threat of coercive action. Few have the ability to gain the co-operation of the parties concerned in a search for a way out of further escalation. The OSCE's structure and mechanisms give it that power."

6 See "Déclaration des Neuf sur le dialogue et la coopération en Méditerranée occidentale" and "Déclaration ministérielle d'Alger" in Marquina.

\* Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Malta and Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya.

7 See the already quoted CSCM in Marquina (footnote 2).

8 'Partnership-building measures' are defined as "political measures primarily in the economic but also in the ecological realm which have a positive impact on the societal and cultural level" (Brauch, p. 274) and 'exchange-furthering measures' as directed at overcoming existing mutual 'enemy' images (Sainz de la Peña).

9 The measures adapted at Malta are the following: (a) setting up of a network of contact points for political and security matters; (b) exchange of information on adherence to international human rights instruments; (c) exchange of information on adherence to international legal instruments in the field of prevention of and fight against terrorism; (d) convening of diplomatic seminars; (e) establishment of the EuroMesco network of foreign policy institutes.

10 The OSCE experience demonstrates the difficulty of putting into action the mechanisms and instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Following the creation of a pan-European unified space, based on common political and legal principles, the situation has not significantly changed. These mechanisms favour a phase by phase process. In the first phase, the situation is clarified by way of consultation between the states in dispute. Following this first phase, the OSCE intervenes, calling for the discussion of the matter on the possible enforcement of fact-finding procedures. In this way, the mechanisms' weakness lies in the fact that recommendations do not become compulsory or binding. The Convention on Conciliation and Arbitration, entered into force on 5 December 1994, also presented some problems. The parties in dispute have to accept the conclusions of the Conciliation Commission. If an agreement is not reached within 30 days, the Commission's report passes to the Arbitration Tribunal. However, this would only be set up if the parties agree or accept

in advance the jurisdiction of the Tribunal. According to the OSCE handbook, "None of the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes Procedures, however, has yet been used so far by the participating states" (OSCE p. 42-44, Lucas p. 83-109). Possibly the best way to induce the process for the peaceful settlement of disputes would be to establish various options of settlement. Also, opening the possibility for the existence of an Arbitration Tribunal. The issues to be dealt with must be of an inter-state nature, as in the OSCE Valletta Mechanism, thus excluding issues like territorial integrity, national defence, national sovereignty or territorial claims (see Chigas). As a matter of fact, it is very little to begin with.

\*This article is part of a programme on conflict prevention sponsored by the Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome.