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# EU Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean

Cooperation against All Odds?

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Vera van Hüllen

No. 9 | NOVEMBER 2009



**KFG Working Paper Series**

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van Hüllen, Vera 2009: EU Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean. Cooperation against All Odds?, KFG Working Paper Series, No. 9, November 2009, Kolleg-Forscherguppe (KFG) „The Transformative Power of Europe“, Free University Berlin.

ISSN 1868-6834 (Print)

ISSN 1868-7601 (Internet)

This publication has been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

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# EU DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

## COOPERATION AGAINST ALL ODDS?

Vera van Hüllen  
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### Abstract

Focusing on the Euro-Mediterranean relations since the early 1990s, this paper investigates in how far the EU has been able to shape its relations with third countries according to its democracy promotion policy. The paper traces the evolution of the EU's provisions for democracy promotion and compares the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance with seven (semi-)authoritarian regimes (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia) since the early 1990s. A clear regional trend to more intensive cooperation lends credibility to the claim that the EU possesses a certain agenda setting power in international relations. A systematic comparison across countries and over time explores the explanatory power of interdependence, political liberalisation, and statehood for the remaining country variation. The paper finds that the degree of political liberalisation in target countries is the most important scope condition for cooperation in the field of democracy promotion and points to the need of further investigating (domestic) factors to account for the EU's differential 'normative power' in international relations.

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the ‘climate change’ in international politics with the end of the Cold War, the European Union (EU) placed the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law prominently on its new foreign policy agenda. This democracy promotion mission legally enshrined in the treaty of Maastricht (1992/1993) has been central to the debate about the EU’s potential ‘normative power’ (Manners 2002, 2006) in international relations.

Regardless of whether this mission is the expression of an ingrained self-conception or a strategic self-portrayal, it has entailed institutional change within the EU. Since the early 1990s, the EU has developed a package of objectives, instruments and strategies for promoting democracy in its external relations. It clearly pursues a strategy of engagement of the target regimes, placing a strong emphasis on partnership based instruments such as political dialogue and technical and financial cooperation (democracy assistance). This is perfectly in line with accounts of the EU as a ‘civil power’ (Börzel/Risse 2007; Maull 2005; Smith 2005). However, within the EU’s immediate neighbourhood, the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries are least likely cases for cooperation in the field of democracy promotion, as they are both (semi-)authoritarian and lacking a membership perspective. Focusing therefore on the Euro-Mediterranean relations since the early 1990s, this paper investigates in how far the EU has been able to shape its relations with third countries according to its democracy promotion policy. It suggests that several factors mitigate the EU’s ‘normative power’, namely interdependence, political liberalisation, and statehood.

In a first step, the paper traces the evolution of the EU’s provisions for democracy promotion within the framework of its Mediterranean policy (section 2). Second, it analyses in how far this change has actually affected bilateral relations (section 3). It compares the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance with seven (semi-)authoritarian regimes (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia) since the early 1990s. A clear regional trend to more intensive cooperation lends credibility to the claim that the EU possesses a certain agenda setting power in international relations. The considerable country variation, however, requires explanation. The paper therefore proceeds in elaborating and mapping three potential explanatory factors (section 4). Based on insights into EU ‘external governance’ and various approaches to cooperation in International Relations theories, the paper explores to what extent asymmetric interdependence with the EU as well as the degree of political liberalisation and statehood in target countries influence cooperation in the field of democracy promotion. A systematic comparison across countries and over time allows a first assessment of the conditions under which the EU can assert its supposed ‘normative power’ to bring about ‘climate change’ in international relations (section 5). The EU is most successful in bringing about cooperation in the field of democracy promotion in countries with a high degree of political liberalisation. While political liberalisation interacts with statehood, the role of interdependence is not conclusive. However, none of these factors explains the EU’s cooperation with Algeria and Tunisia in implementing political dialogue and democracy assistance. The paper concludes with a discussion of (domestic) factors that might account for the two outliers (section 6).

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1 Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 2009 EUSA and DVPW conferences. The author would like to thank all participants and especially Federica Bicchi, Frank Schimmelfennig, and Tanja A. Börzel for their most helpful comments.

## 2. The EU's Mediterranean Democracy Promotion Policy

Today's relations of the EU with Mediterranean third countries build on several regional policy frameworks developed since the early 1990s. They encompass multi- and bilateral dimensions that cover political, economic, and cultural cooperation (Del Sarto/Schumacher 2005; Calleya 2005). Into these frameworks, the EU has over time integrated various instruments for democracy promotion that are in line with its global strategic framework (Bicchi 2006; Jünemann/Knodt 2006, 2007; Kelley 2006; Pace 2007). The idea of 'co-ownership' is apparent since the mid-1990s in the focus on partnership based instruments and a joint commitment to shared values. Nevertheless, the EU is the driving force behind democracy promotion in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The EU has developed the idea of democracy promotion as a foreign policy objective since the mid-1980s. Including the Mediterranean countries in a broad notion of development policy going beyond the African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, it committed itself to promoting democracy in the Mediterranean in 1990 (European Commission 1991: 3). In 1991, the EU outlined its general framework for promoting liberal, representative democracy as well as the rule of law and respect for human rights.<sup>2</sup> The Council clearly stated that "a positive and constructive approach should receive priority", focusing on such instruments as political dialogue (persuasion), financial assistance (capacity-building) and positive conditionality (incentives), and only secondarily drawing on negative conditionality tied to contractual relations (Council of the EU 1991). In line with this general policy, the European Commission implemented some first exploratory democracy assistance projects in the Mediterranean in the early 1990s (European Commission 1994, 1996a).

In 1995, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law gained a more prominent place in the EU's Mediterranean policy with the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the introduction of a political dimension into the traditional economic cooperation. Launched as a joint initiative with 12 Mediterranean Partners (MP), the Barcelona Declaration contained a commitment of all partners to respect and further these issues.<sup>3</sup> The EMP continued the EU's regionally inclusive approach aiming at an equal or at least consistent treatment of as many Mediterranean neighbours as possible. It replaced the old set of agreements and financial protocols for development cooperation under earlier regional policy frameworks with a new generation of bilateral Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements (EMAA) and a regional external cooperation programme (MEDA). Again in line with its global policy framework, the EU institutionalised several instruments for democracy promotion within its Mediterranean policy framework. The so-called "essential element clause" was introduced to the EMAA and it created the basis for negative political conditionality and political dialogue in bilateral relations (European Commission 1995a). The multilateral meetings and conferences known as the Barcelona Process provided another forum for political dialogue. The early efforts at providing democracy assistance were formalised in a

2 In 1991, several EU institutions worked on a first set of guidelines for the EU's democracy promotion policy, see Council of the EU 1991, European Commission 1991, and European Council 1991; these cornerstones were still valid when the Commission consolidated the EU's strategy in 2001, see European Commission 2001a.

3 The Barcelona Declaration was adopted at the first Euro-Mediterranean Conference on 27 and 28 November 1995 in Barcelona by the EU, its then 15 member states, and originally 12 MP that were Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey; for the text of the declaration see [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/euromed/bd.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/bd.htm) (10 August 2006).

regional MEDA Democracy Programme (Karkutli/Bützler 1999), which merged into the global European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in 1999. MEDA placed financial assistance under a similar caveat as cooperation under the EMAA. Mainstreaming the objective of democracy promotion into MEDA created a second channel for providing democracy assistance. While the EIDHR is committed to a 'grassroots' approach to democracy assistance, funding small scale projects focussing on civil society actors, MEDA added a more state-centred perspective.

The EU's Common Strategy on the Mediterranean (2000) and Strategic Partnership (2004) reinforced its commitment to promote democracy in the region.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the EU started to develop a strategic vision for democracy promotion specifically in the Mediterranean (European Commission 2003a). Existing instruments for democracy promotion were reformed and new ones introduced, especially with the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003/2004.<sup>5</sup> The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) replaced MEDA as external cooperation programme in 2007 and bilaterally agreed Action Plans (AP) have complemented contractual relations since 2005. Continuing the instruments of political dialogue and democracy assistance under the new framework, the ENP created an explicit positive political conditionality, which is based on the negotiation, implementation, and regular monitoring of the bilateral AP. In addition, the so-called Democracy or Governance Facility draws on MEDA and ENPI funds respectively to provide monetary incentives for political reforms (European Commission 2006: 12).

The latest addition to the framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations, "The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean" (UMed), does not directly touch upon bilateral relations.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the role of democracy and human rights in cooperation, it builds on the 'Barcelona acquis' and stresses common commitments and objectives, but does not place democracy promotion high on its agenda of multilateral projects.

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4 However, neither the Common Strategy nor the Strategic Partnership touched upon the institutionalised forms of cooperation; see the Common Strategy of the European Council of 19 June 2000 on the Mediterranean region, 2000/458/CFSP, Official Journal L 183, 22.07.2000, p. 5-10 and Presidency Conclusions on a Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Brussels European Council, 17 and 18 June 2004.

5 Apart from relations with Mediterranean neighbours, the ENP also encompasses an Eastern dimension. It leaves out Turkey as an accession candidate country, see European Commission 2003b and European Commission 2004

6 The UMed was officially launched in July 2008: Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, Paris, 13 July 2008, [http://www.ue2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/import/0713\\_declaration\\_de\\_paris/Joint\\_declaration\\_of\\_the\\_Paris\\_summit\\_for\\_the\\_Mediterranean-EN.pdf](http://www.ue2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/import/0713_declaration_de_paris/Joint_declaration_of_the_Paris_summit_for_the_Mediterranean-EN.pdf) (8 September 2008). Institutional changes to the EMP's multilateral dimension were specified in November 2008, but did not affect any provisions for democracy promotion, see Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean ministerial conference, Marseille, 3-4 November 2008, Final declaration, published by the Council of the EU on 4 November 2008, 15187/08 (Presse 314). The UMed goes beyond the original MP, including Libya, Mauretania, and the Western Balkan countries.

Figure 1: EU democracy promotion instruments in the Mediterranean

| Framework for cooperation   | Democracy Assistance (capacity building)   | Political Dialogue (persuasion)                               | Political Conditionality (incentives)   |
|---|--|---|---|
| Renovated Mediterranean Policy (1990-1995)<br>- Cooperation Agreements<br>- Financial protocols   | - First exploratory projects (1993/1994)   |   |   |
| Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP, since 1995)<br>- Barcelona Process (1995-2008)<br>- Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements (EMAA)<br>- MEDA I + II (1996-1999, 2000-2006) | - MEDA Democracy Programme (1995-1999)<br>- European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR): the "Initiative" (1999-2004, 2004-2006)<br>- Mainstreaming into MEDA (since around 2000) | - Association Councils and Committees under EMAA (since 1995) | - <i>negative conditionality</i> since 1995 (cooperation under EMAA, funding under MEDA and ENPI)         |
| EU Common Strategy on the Mediterranean (2000-2006)   |  |   |   |
| European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP, since 2003)<br>- Action Plans<br>- European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI, since 2007)                                       | - EIDHR: the "Instrument" (since 2007)<br>- Mainstreaming into ENPI  | - technical sub-committees under EMAA (since 2003)            | - <i>positive conditionality</i> since 2003/2007 (development of bilateral relations, additional funding) |
| Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East (since 2003)   |  |   |   |
| The Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean (UMed, since 2008)   |  |   |   |

Overall, the EU has been quite successful in shaping the regional agenda on democracy promotion, introducing democracy, human rights, and the rule of law prominently into the Euro-Mediterranean framework for cooperation. Considering the EU's rhetoric (European Commission 2001a, 2003a) and the general trends in its application of instruments (Youngs 2002; van Hüllen/Stahn 2009), the EU pursues a predominantly 'positive' approach to democracy promotion relying on persuasion, socialisation, and capacity building instead of coercion or negative incentives. This supports the wide spread classification of the EU as a 'civil power' in international relations. There is a strong focus on partnership based instruments (political dialogue, democracy assistance) that rely on the partner's consent or active cooperation for implementing measures. By contrast, sanctions as unilateral measures on the basis of formalised negative political conditionality have never been adopted vis-à-vis Mediterranean Partners. Instead, the EU seems to rely on 'reinforcement by reward' (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2004, 2005), given the recent introduction of positive conditionality as a means to incite political reform.

However, the implementation of 'soft' democracy promotion instruments, such as political dialogue and democracy assistance, fundamentally depends on the domestic partner's cooperation. Especially in the



Mediterranean, it is not evident why authoritarian regimes should respond positively to international democracy promotion efforts, given the unique combination of authoritarianism and ‘strong’ statehood, which differs from most other world regions (Schlumberger 2008). So, in how far has the EU actually shaped bilateral relations with its Mediterranean neighbours, i.e. succeeded in actively engaging Arab authoritarian countries in its democracy promotion efforts? The next section investigates the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance as partnership based instruments in seven Mediterranean Partners since the early 1990s.

### 3. Cooperation on Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean

A systematic analysis of the implementation of the two partnership based instruments Political Dialogue and Democracy Assistance with seven Mediterranean countries between 1990 and 2008 reveals two major empirical findings: On the one hand, there is a clear regional trend (over time) that is very much in line with the evolution of the EU’s democracy promotion framework. On the other hand, there is significant country variation both in the timing and the overall level of cooperation. This section will first briefly sketch the overall trend of cooperation on democracy promotion before turning to a more nuanced comparison between countries.<sup>7</sup>

There is a *clear regional trend* for both the conduct of political dialogue and the implementation of democracy assistance over time. While there used to be occasional meetings (negotiation sessions, Troika visits, Cooperation Councils), “political dialogue” really did become institutionalised with the entry into force of the respective EMAA. The Association Councils provided a much more regular forum for dialogue than, for example, the previous Cooperation Councils. In line with the Commission’s Communication on “human rights and democratisation with Mediterranean partners” (European Commission 2003a), all Association Council meetings have included a specific agenda item for “political dialogue” since 2003. However, political dialogue was mostly referred to an informal part of the meeting and thus even more withdrawn from public scrutiny than is generally the case for these meetings. At the same time, the creation of technical subcommittees first included a ‘mainstreaming’ of matters relating to human rights and democracy and then, between 2004 and 2007, the creation of specific human rights subcommittees.

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7 This section is based on an extensive analysis of EU documents and websites. This includes the European Commission’s annual reports on external assistance, programming documents (Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes) for MEDA and ENPI, as well as various resources available on the European Commission’s websites for external relations ([http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/index_en.htm)), neighbourhood policy ([http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm)), the Europe-Aid Co-operation Office ([http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)), and the Treaties Office Database (<http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/default.home.do>), last accessed 4 October 2009.

Figure 2: Political Dialogue under the EMAA: Association Council (ACon) and Human Rights Subcommittee (SubCom) meetings<sup>8</sup>

|           | Algeria | Egypt          | Jordan         | Lebanon        | Morocco        | Syria | Tunisia        |
|-----------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1990-1997 | n/a     | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | n/a   | n/a            |
| 1998      | n/a     | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | n/a   | ACon           |
| 1999      | n/a     | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | n/a   | --             |
| 2000      | n/a     | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | ACon           | n/a   | ACon           |
| 2001      | n/a     | n/a            | n/a            | n/a            | ACon           | n/a   | --             |
| 2002      | n/a     | n/a            | ACon           | n/a            | --             | n/a   | ACon           |
| 2003      | n/a     | n/a            | ACon           | n/a            | ACon           | n/a   | ACon           |
| 2004      | n/a     | ACon           | ACon           | n/a            | Acon           | n/a   | --             |
| 2005      | --      | --             | ACon<br>SubCom | n/a            | Acon           | n/a   | ACon           |
| 2006      | ACon    | ACon           | ACon           | ACon           |                | n/a   | --             |
| 2007      | ACon    | ACon           | ACon<br>SubCom | ACon<br>SubCom | ACon<br>SubCom | n/a   | ACon<br>SubCom |
| 2008      | ACon    | ACon<br>SubCom | ACon<br>SubCom | ACon           | ACon<br>SubCom | n/a   | ACon<br>SubCom |

By 2008, political dialogue was institutionalised with all countries except for Syria, where the EMAA had not yet entered into force. For the other six countries, it has been included as an agenda item in all Association Council meetings since 2003. Among these countries, Algeria is the only one that has not yet agreed to the additional creation of a specific human rights subcommittee.

With regard to democracy assistance, funding has steadily increased and projects have become more diversified. After only few experimental projects in the first half of the 1990s, the regional MEDA Democracy Programme (MDP) under the horizontal budget heading of the “European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights” (EIDHR) generalised democracy assistance across the region. Under the global EIDHR, annual appropriations nearly doubled and the introduction of the micro-project scheme – at first only to so called ‘focus countries’, since 2004 to all Mediterranean Partners – increased the number of projects implemented with local non-state actors.

<sup>8</sup> Association Council decisions officially mainstreamed the treatment of matters relating to human rights and democracy in other bodies under the EMAA and/or institutionalised specific Human Rights Subcommittees. Sources: for Association Council meetings see documentation of Association Councils (minutes, agendas, EU statements), for human rights subcommittee meetings see Presidency of the European Union et al. 2008: 24, 154, Council of the EU and European Commission 2007: 20, EU HR Report 2005: 31, EU Statement EU-Jordan ACon 2005: 3, 2006: 12.

Table 1: Democracy Assistance under EIDHR (in mio €)<sup>9</sup>

|              | Early EIDHR<br>(1991-1994) | MDP<br>(1996-1998) | EIDHR<br>(2000-2006) | Total |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Algeria      | 0                          | 1,37               | 7,13                 | 8,5   |
| Egypt        | 0                          | 0,91               | 6,72                 | 7,63  |
| Jordan       | 0,69                       | 1,11               | 2,05                 | 3,85  |
| Lebanon      | 0,03                       | 1,11               | 4,93                 | 6,07  |
| Morocco      | 0,05                       | 2,29               | 3,51                 | 5,85  |
| Syria        | 0                          | 0,23               | 1,01                 | 1,24  |
| Tunisia      | 0,23                       | 0,23               | 4,17                 | 4,63  |
| Total        | 1,00                       | 7,25               | 29,52                | 37,77 |
| Average/year | 0,25                       | 2,42               | 4,22                 |       |

While cooperation under the EIDHR has continually taken place since the mid 1990s, democracy assistance was only mainstreamed into the regional cooperation programme MEDA around 2000. There had been virtually no related projects under MEDA I (1995-1999), but with MEDA II (2000-2006), there has been a steady increase in funding for related projects, especially with the 2002 and 2005 National Indicative Programmes. In most countries, projects relating to the judiciary and penal system, civil society, and governance were implemented. Still, projects varied significantly in size, with smaller-scale projects addressing issues more directly related to civil society, human rights and participation, and large-scale projects targeting state actors in public administration and the judiciary. Under ENPI (since 2007), funds for democracy assistance have again nearly doubled, but this only signifies a slight increase of its share of total aid.

Table 2: Democracy Assistance under MEDA/ENPI (in mio €)<sup>10</sup>

|                      | MEDA I<br>(1995-1999) | MEDA II<br>(2000-2006) | ENPI<br>(2007-2010) | Total   |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Algeria              | 5,00                  | 48,20                  | 17,00               | 70,20   |
| Egypt                | 0,00                  | 25,00                  | 40,00               | 65,00   |
| Jordan               | 0,00                  | 7,00                   | 17,00               | 24,00   |
| Lebanon              | 0,00                  | 10,00                  | 22,00               | 32,00   |
| Morocco              | 4,00                  | 32,70                  | 28,00               | 64,70   |
| Syria                | 0,00                  | 2,00                   | 30,00               | 32,00   |
| Tunisia              | 0,00                  | 33,65                  | 0,00                | 33,65   |
| Total                | 9,00                  | 158,55                 | 154,00              | 321,55  |
| Average per year     | 1,80                  | 22,65                  | 38,50               |         |
| Total aid            | 2475,00               | 3072,80                | 2314,00             | 7861,80 |
| Average aid per year | 495,00                | 438,97                 | 578,50              |         |
| DA share of aid      | 0,36%                 | 5,16%                  | 6,66%               | 4,09%   |

9 Own compilation based on the European Commission's early EIDHR Reports (European Commission 1992; European Commission 1994; European Commission 1995b; European Commission 1996a; European Commission 1996b), Karkutli and Bützler (1999), as well as different compendia and project lists for projects since 2000 (European Commission 2000, 2001b, 2001c, 2008a, 2008b).

10 Own compilation based on the 2002, 2005, and 2007 National Indicative Programmes for the seven countries; figures for total aid based on European Commission (2001d: 12, 2007).

This general trend to increasing cooperation in the field of democracy promotion confirms that the EU's agenda setting power has had a real impact on bilateral relations with its Mediterranean neighbours. At the same time, we find *significant variation across countries*, regarding the timing of the first application of instruments and the intensity or 'quality' of cooperation in terms of funding levels, the openness of political dialogue and the smoothness of implementation of democracy assistance projects with state and non-state actors.

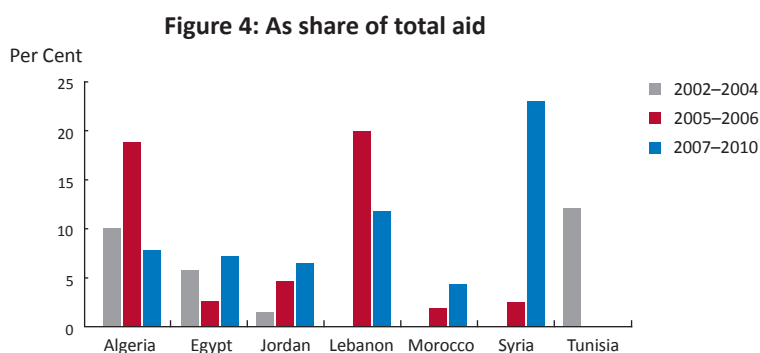
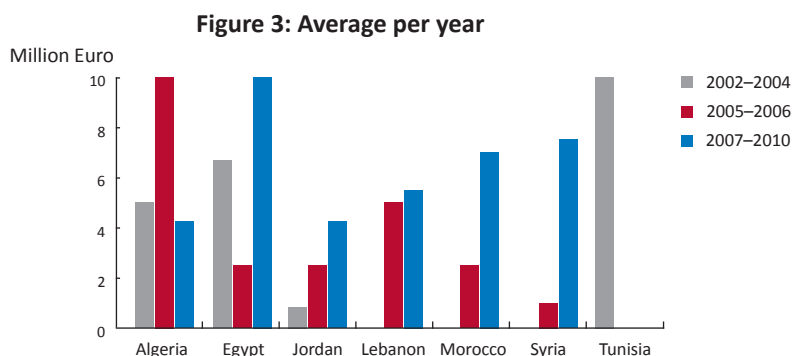
Thus, while the process of institutionalising political dialogue followed a similar pattern in most countries, there was tremendous variation in its timing. This depended on the entry into force of the respective EMAA, ranging from 1998 to 2006 and the Syrian EMAA still pending. Once the EMAA entered into force, however, variation with regard to formal aspects, such as the frequency and transparency of meetings as well as the set-up of human rights subcommittees, decreases. The two most noticeable exceptions are Syria, still lacking the formal structure, and Algeria, which is the only country that had not established a human rights subcommittee by 2008. Still, the set-up took longer for some countries than for others. The delays varied between one year for Jordan and Lebanon and three years for Tunisia. Another source of country variation is the content or 'quality' of the dialogue conducted, judged by the minutes of Association Council meetings and statements made on other occasions. It becomes apparent that beyond the formal conduct of political dialogue, the tone and issues raised varied, both within countries over time, with a trend towards more open dialogue, but more importantly across countries. Thus, the political dialogue with Morocco and Jordan appears to be more open than with Tunisia. Finally, for some countries, there were incidences when partners interrupted the 'normal' conduct of political dialogue, for example through the postponement of meetings, revealing political dissonances. This concerned political dialogue with Tunisia between 2005 and 2007 and the first subcommittee meeting with Egypt.

The timing and extent of cooperation in implementing democracy assistance varied enormously between countries, too. Formal eligibility for funding under the different EU instruments generally did not differ for Mediterranean Partners, except for the short-lived experiment of a limited number of 'focus countries' in 2002-2004 that included Algeria and Tunisia. While the EIDHR has been continuously used after the initial stage of 'experimental' projects, the levels of funding both under the MDP and the global EIDHR differed significantly between countries. The total amount of funding for the whole period varied between more than eight million Euro for Algeria and just above one million Euro for Syria. In addition, the process of 'mainstreaming' democracy assistance into the regional cooperation programme took several years. First projects with Maghreb countries had already been committed at the end of the 1990s, still under MEDA I, whereas the other countries followed as late as 2005. Similarly to the EIDHR, the levels of funding – both total and as a share of overall aid – varied between countries. Tunisia is the only country that did not follow the general trend of increasing democracy assistance: While in 2005 and 2007, even Syria agreed to allocating funds to related projects, the EU and Tunisia have not committed new projects since 2005, due to severe implementation problems of earlier projects.<sup>11</sup>

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11 For the European Commission's explanation see the 2007 ENPI Country Strategy Paper for Tunisia 2007, p. 13.

Figures 3 and 4: Democracy Assistance committed in National Indicative Programmes<sup>12</sup>



Considering the implementation of partnership based instruments in each country, its development over time and in comparison with other countries, allows a tentative assessment of the overall level of cooperation with each Mediterranean Partner. To do so, the significant variation for each country over time needs to be related to the regional trend and to the performance of other countries. Taken together, cooperation with Jordan and Morocco is most advanced, followed by Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Algeria ahead of Syria.

Jordan and Morocco have the best record when looking at the conduct of political dialogue and the implementation of democracy assistance. Their Association Councils have met regularly since the comparably early entry into force of their EMAA and they were the first countries to set up special human rights and democracy subcommittees after a Commission's initiative in 2003. The subcommittees have met regularly ever since. Meetings of the Association Council are well documented and from the EU's statements on Association Council meetings and the EU's human rights reports, it becomes clear that both countries are actively engaged in a comparably open dialogue on political issues. Jordan is the only country that has topics such as human rights and political reform explicitly on the agenda of meetings since 2003 and even established a second political subcommittee on regional cooperation. Morocco is one of the front-runners in implementing EU democracy assistance, both under MEDA since around 2000 and the EIDHR since the early 1990s, receiving high total amounts of funding. Jordan has also pioneered under the EIDHR and joined the process of mainstreaming democracy assistance into MEDA relatively early, in 2002. While overall funding levels are much lower than for Morocco, Jordan still receives a high per capita funding.

<sup>12</sup> Own compilation based on the 2002, 2005, and 2007 National Indicative Programmes for the seven countries.

At the other end of the spectrum, Syria clearly has to be considered the regional laggard. As the EMAA has still not entered into force, there are no formalised structures for political dialogue (Association Council, subcommittee). While there have been ongoing contacts, e.g. in the framework of negotiations for the EMAA between 1998 and 2004, the EU repeatedly complained about the Syrian reluctance to address issues relating to human rights and democracy (Presidency of the European Union et al. 2008: 71; Council of the EU and European Commission 2007: 71; Council of the EU 2006: 200). In addition, Syria has always received very little funding under the EIDHR and democracy assistance was only integrated into MEDA funds in 2005. Nevertheless, the EU and Syria have committed substantial funds for democracy assistance under the ENPI and while it remains to be seen how the actual implementation of projects will evolve, this development is in line with the general regional trend towards increased cooperation on democracy promotion.

The situation is less clear for Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Tunisia. Lebanon and Egypt started much later to engage more actively in EU democracy promotion efforts. The level of engagement seems to be increasing in line with the general trend of intensification of democracy promotion efforts. The EMAA have only recently entered into force, providing the institutional setting for formalised political dialogue, but since then, meetings of the Association Council have taken place regularly and a human rights and democracy subcommittee has been set up without major delays, together with technical subcommittees in other areas of cooperation. Only with Egypt, there have been some occasions where the scheduling of meetings has proven difficult due to political tensions.<sup>13</sup> Lebanon had already during the 1990s engaged in EU democracy assistance under the EIDHR, but first projects were introduced into MEDA/ENPI only lately. While receiving medium funds in total, Lebanon generally has a high per capita funding and democracy assistance makes up for a relatively large share of overall aid. By contrast, Egypt received very little democracy assistance under the EIDHR during the 1990s, but funding increased and democracy assistance was mainstreamed into MEDA already in 2003. Egypt has high levels of total funding, but due to its large population, does less well in terms of per capita funding.

In contrast to these two countries, Tunisia and Algeria are more at odds with the overall trends of increasing engagement in democracy promotion. While Tunisia seemed to be one of the pioneers in the 1990s and performs well in some aspects of formal engagement, implementation of measures has often been obstructed. Especially since the EU stepped up its efforts around 2003, cooperation in matters of human rights and democracy proves to be more and more difficult. Tunisia used to be a front-runner, with the early entry into force of the EMAA allowing political dialogue already since the late 1990s and first experiments in democracy assistance in the early 1990s. However, meetings of the Association Council take place less often than with other countries and especially at some point after 2003, cooperation became difficult due to political tensions. Thus, there were nearly three years between two meetings in 2005 and 2007. EU officials have in interviews referred to this gap as the result of a political crisis, caused by the

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13 The second Association Council meeting took place two years after the first and the EU's statement is not made public, two indicators hinting at political tensions, after the EU had very openly addressed democratic shortcomings on the occasion of the first Association Council meeting. In addition, the first meeting of the human rights subcommittee was postponed for several months, as "following the adoption on 17 January of a European Parliament resolution on human rights in Egypt, the Egyptian government called-off the political subcommittee initially scheduled to take place on 23-24 January", see European Commission's Delegation to Egypt, What's New? <http://www.delegy.ec.europa.eu/en/News/551.asp>, last accessed 4 October 2009.

EU's dissatisfaction with the Tunisian political situation and cooperation on human rights and democracy related issues.<sup>14</sup> This is also reflected in the major delay in the set-up of a human rights and democracy subcommittee in 2007, more than four years after other technical subcommittees had been created. In the area of democracy assistance, Tunisia used to be a pioneer in the region, too, both with regard to first projects under the EIDHR in the early 1990s and the mainstreaming of democracy assistance into the MEDA scheme around 2000. However, while at a first glance, funding levels for democracy assistance seem to be important for Tunisia, hardly any projects have been implemented. Either little democracy assistance has been programmed in the first place, as under the MEDA Democracy Programme in the mid 1990s, or the implementation of projects was limited or failed completely, which was the case for both MEDA and EIDHR projects between 2000 and 2005. As a consequence, there have been no more projects programmed after 2005 and the Commission has even openly withdrawn from its attempt to provide democracy assistance under ENPI.<sup>15</sup>

The picture is very different for Algeria. On the one hand, the EU is confronted with open refusal of cooperation, for example regarding the set-up of a specific subcommittee. On the other hand, Algeria engages quite actively in some democracy promotion activities. While Association Council meetings have taken place very regularly since the entry into force of the EMAA, no human rights and democracy subcommittee has been created along with other technical subcommittees in 2007. The EU and Algeria, however, had started an informal dialogue in the late 1990s that was supposed to address inter alia the internal political situation. While there was little democracy assistance during the 1990s, engagement in democracy assistance has increased up since around 2000. Algeria then pioneered in the mainstreaming of democracy assistance into MEDA as well as under the EIDHR as a 'focus country' (2002-2004) and beyond.<sup>16</sup> High funding levels and the continuation of programmes over different financing periods show that despite its rejection of an overly formalised human rights dialogue, Algeria does actively engage in the EU's democracy promotion efforts.

Taken together, the EU has clearly been able to exert some 'normative power' in its relations with Mediterranean Partners, transforming its regional democracy promotion agenda into actual cooperation. However, the significant variation in the extent and timing of the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance across countries requires explanation, suggesting that the EU's 'power' is very much mitigated by scope conditions.

#### **4. Scope Conditions for Cooperation**

The implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance as instruments of democracy promotion, based on ideas of partnership and cooperation, depends on the willingness and capacity of the

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14 In a more subtle way, both partners spoke in 2007 of a 'relaunch' of the political dialogue, hinting at its disruption due to political tensions, see the Draft Minutes of the sixth EU-Tunisian Association Council meeting in 2007, p.4f.

15 See the European Commission's 2007 ENPI Country Strategy Paper for Tunisia 2007, p. 13.

16 See the European Commission's 2001 Programming Document for the EIDHR 2002-2004, p. 5, and the EU's Human Rights Reports for 2003 and 2005.

target regime to actively engage in external democracy promotion efforts. In order to identify conditions under which they can have an impact, it is useful to conceive of democracy promotion efforts as a process of interaction and cooperation between the international actor actively pursuing its agenda in external relations, on the one hand, and the targeted regime, on the other. The role of the latter can vary from opponent to partner, either boycotting, ignoring, or actively engaging in the external actor's efforts.

Cooperation is then the outcome of a process of joint decision-making, as the two sides agree – or do not agree – on joint action, in this case the implementation of partnership based instruments (Zartmann 1977). The process of interaction can be thought of as continuous negotiations in which the partners argue and bargain over an initial offer or demand for cooperation (for the notion of post-agreement bargaining, see Jönsson and Tallberg 1998). This conceptualisation allows drawing on different International Relations (IR) theories that address the topic of cooperation in international relations from different angles. To identify conditions under which cooperation occurs, regime theory (Krasner 1983; Hasenclever et al. 2000), international negotiations (for an overview, see Jönsson 2002; Iklé 1964), action theories (Risse 2000; Müller 2004), and compliance with international norms (Chayes/Chayes 1993; Checkel 1997; Underdal 1998) offer useful insights.

For reasons of simplicity, this paper adopts a rationalist framework for interaction. Actors are assumed to make decisions about cooperation consciously and base their choices on fixed preferences and rational (material and immaterial) cost-benefit calculations. This does not preclude the notion of norm-guided behaviour: cooperation takes place within bilateral relations which are guided by “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area” (Krasner 1983a: 1). It would go beyond the scope of this paper to go into the details of game theory. Suffice to say that it is useful to think of this interaction as a “mixed motive game”, where partners have both diverging and common interests (see Iklé 1964). The EU and the Arab authoritarian MP have different sets of preferences in their bilateral relations, touching upon the issue areas of security, welfare, and (political) authority. The implementation of democracy promotion instruments is assumed to have implications for the attainment of their preferences, shaping their choice of strategy regarding (no) cooperation accordingly. While interests of the EU and Arab authoritarian regimes in regime change clearly diverge, they might still find common ground for negotiations when considering joint interests, such as welfare or regional stability. The cost-benefit calculation for (no) cooperation can be expected to be influenced by three factors which figure prominently in the literature, 1) the partners' (economic) interdependence, the degree of 2) political liberalisation, and 3) statehood in the target country (see Börzel et al. 2008; Jünemann/Knodt 2007; Youngs 2001). These factors can be linked back to theoretical arguments in the IR literature.

Classic IR approaches support the argument that asymmetric *interdependence* directly affects the “bargaining power” (Jönsson/Tallberg 1998: 381; Habeeb 1988) of international actors, making them more or less vulnerable to actions taken by other international actors (Keohane/Nye 2001). Mutual interdependence can be shaped by the respective power resources of partners, in terms of the sheer size of their territory, population, economy, and military (for an overview see Baldwin 2002). However, there are also aspects of bilateral relations that more directly affect important economic and/or security issues for either partner and create interdependence, such as trade, energy resources, regional conflicts, migration, or aid. If the EU is highly dependent on a Mediterranean Partner (MP), for example in terms



of energy resources or geostrategy, it might be more reluctant to push the MP to implement partnership based instruments for democracy promotion against its will. Conversely, if a MP is highly dependent on the EU, e.g. in terms of trade and aid, it might more readily cooperate in the field of democracy promotion. Therefore, cooperation is more likely if asymmetric interdependence favours the EU, as it increases the MP's and decreases the EU's vulnerability to welfare losses (hypothesis 1).

The degree of *political liberalisation* of a target regime indicates its openness to allow for pluralistic and competitive politics. This determines the (mis)fit of the external request for democratisation with domestic norms and institutions (Börzel/Risse 2003; Kelley 2006; Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005; Schimmelfennig/Scholtz 2008). It facilitates or constrains the engagement of an authoritarian regime in international democracy promotion, as cooperation might challenge the regime's domestic power base to a varying degree.<sup>17</sup> From the EU's perspective, a higher degree of liberalisation increases the chances for a gradual regime transformation through reforms that does not risk regional stability because of a more abrupt regime change and a power vacuum during the transitional period (Reiber 2009). In a similar vein, concerns about the domestic power for the MP and regional stability for the EU are directly affected by the degree of *statehood* of the target country. Threats to international sovereignty, but also domestic challenges to the monopoly on the legitimate use of force limit statehood and can destabilise a regime (Risse/Lehmkuhl 2007). Therefore, cooperation is more likely if the MP has a high level of political liberalisation and statehood, because this decreases the MP's risk of domestic power losses and the EU's risk of instability its neighbourhood (hypothesis 2). If the two variables diverge, the degree of political liberalisation is more important than the degree of statehood. The former indicates the authoritarian regime's willingness to engage in cooperation in the first place, whereas the latter only affects the EU's readiness to push for cooperation if necessary. Thus, in the case of a high degree of political liberalisation and a low degree of statehood, cooperation is still more likely than in the case of a low degree of political liberalisation and a high degree of statehood (hypothesis 2a).

Figure 5: Cost-benefit calculations on international democracy promotion

|          | Cooperation                       |  | No cooperation   |  |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
|          | EU                                | MP   | EU   | MP   |
| Costs    | regional stability ↓<br>welfare ↓ | domestic power ↓                           | no change in<br>democracy                                  | welfare ↓<br>international<br>legitimacy ↓ |
| Benefits | democracy ↑                       | welfare ↑<br>international<br>legitimacy ↑ | no change in regional<br>stability<br>no change in welfare | no change in<br>domestic power             |

The remainder of this section presents the findings of an empirical mapping for these three factors for the seven countries under scrutiny since the early 1990s.

17 This interest-based approach is closely linked to an identity-based approach emphasising changing perception of appropriateness (March/Olsen 1998), while a structuralist approach could argue that an institutional fit per se facilitates cooperation.

### Interdependence

Following a ‘power as resources’ approach, the EU with its member states have more (economic) power than any of the Mediterranean countries. However, even in terms of the sheer size of the countries and their economies, variation between the countries in the region is enormous. Algeria and Egypt are by far the biggest countries among the seven, considering attributes such as territory and population, but also their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the volume of their external trade (imports and exports of goods and services). Morocco takes a middle position and among the small countries, Syria and Tunisia are still significantly larger than Jordan and Lebanon. Despite these differences, the countries’ roles in the world economy are limited, looking at their share in global GDP and trade volumes (see also Paczynska 2008: 239). While the level of military expenditure varies both with regard to its share of the countries’ GDP and in total terms, overall “the region is the most highly militarized in the world” (Gerner/Schrodt 2008: 100).

Table 3: Size<sup>18</sup>

|   |      | Algeria | Egypt | Jordan | Lebanon | Morocco | Syria | Tunisia |
|---|------|---------|-------|--------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| Surface area in million sq. km                  |      | 2.38    | 1.00  | 0.09   | 0.01    | 0.45    | 0.19  | 0.16    |
| Population in million                           | 1990 | 25      | 55    | 3      | 3       | 24      | 13    | 8       |
|   | 2007 | 34      | 75    | 6      | 4       | 31      | 20    | 10      |
| GDP in billion current US\$                     | 1990 | 62      | 43    | 4      | 3       | 26      | 12    | 12      |
|   | 2007 | 116     | 107   | 14     | 22      | 66      | 33    | 31      |
| GDP in % of world total                         | 1990 | 0.28    | 0.20  | 0.02   | 0.01    | 0.12    | 0.05  | 0.05    |
|   | 2007 | 0.25    | 0.23  | 0.03   | 0.04    | 0.13    | 0.07  | 0.06    |
| Trade volume in billion current US\$            | 1990 | 30      | 23    | 6      | 3       | 15      | 7     | 12      |
|   | 2006 | 95      | 85    | 25     | 18      | 61      | 31    | 39      |
| Trade volume in % of world total                | 1990 | 0.36    | 0.27  | 0.07   | 0.04    | 0.18    | 0.08  | 0.14    |
|   | 2006 | 0.30    | 0.24  | 0.08   | 0.05    | 0.17    | 0.09  | 0.11    |
| Military spending in % of GDP                   | 1990 | 1.46    | 4.7   | 8.02   | 7.55    | 4.14    | 6.04  | 2.02    |
|   | 2007 | 2.92    | 2.5   | 6.94   | 5.84    | 3.29    | 3.94  | 1.39    |
| Military spending total in billion current US\$ | 1990 | 0.90    | 2.02  | 0.32   | 0.23    | 1.08    | 0.72  | 0.24    |
|   | 2007 | 3.94    | 3.20  | 1.11   | 1.40    | 2.40    | 1.50  | 0.49    |

The form of economic interdependence between two actors can be more directly established when looking at their role for one another in the fields of trade and aid. The EU and its member states are by far the most important trading partners for the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, potentially creating some leverage for the EU (Eurostat 2001, 2007). However, in contrast to its neighbours, oil and gas make up more than 95 per cent of Algerian exports (see Paczynska 2008: 245). This makes Algeria one of the largest sources of energy imports for the EU, shifting the interdependence with the EU in favour of Algeria. The only country in the region with a trade balance surplus, Algeria becomes more dependent on global oil price fluctuations than the EU as a trading partner. The Middle Eastern countries have more diversified trading patterns. For Egypt and Jordan, the United States and countries from the region are more important as trading partners than the EU (Paczynska 2008: 237f). For Lebanon and Syria, the EU

18 Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (online database). The world GDP for 1990 was 21,883 and for 2007 54,583 billion current US\$; the trade volume is calculated as imports + exports of goods and services; the world trade volume for 1990 was 8369 and for 2006 27,809 billion current US\$.

only comes after other Middle Eastern countries as trade partner. Exporting some oil, Syria is the only other country to have a fairly even trade balance.

According to the International Monetary Fund, all seven countries have emerging economies, but their level of economic and human development varies. Except for Lebanon, which is classified as an “upper middle income” country by the World Bank since 1997, all other countries remain in the category of “lower middle income”. However, the distribution of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is uneven in the region, with Egypt and Syria at the lower and Algeria at the upper end of the category. Similarly, all seven countries show “medium human development” according the Human Development Reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), but Lebanon is ranked 78 whereas Morocco is ranked as low as 127. The countries therefore face different challenges when it comes to economic and social development, which might make them more or less dependent on external assistance. In terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and official aid they receive, again figures vary enormously in absolute terms and more importantly in view of their respective GDP and populations. In general, the region has seen a major decline of ODA during the 1990s. This trend has been reversed around 2001 for all countries except for Syria and, on a high level, for Egypt. Egypt used to be the by far largest recipient of (US) external assistance since the Camp David Accord with Israel in 1978. In relation to their size, the smaller countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, receive much higher levels of ODA per capita and as a share of their GDP. They are followed by Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, whereas Algeria only receives negligible amounts of aid. For Syria, the Soviet Union used to be the most important donor until its break-up (see Paczynska 2008: 228). This source of external assistance has not been replaced since the early 1990s, leaving Syria with marginal ODA levels.

Table 4: Development and aid<sup>19</sup>

|  |              | Algeria        | Egypt                 | Jordan           | Lebanon                                 | Morocco        | Syria          |                |
|--|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)  | 1990<br>2006 | 2420<br>3030   | 770<br>1360           | 1390<br>2650     | 1230<br>5580                            | 1030<br>2160   | 890<br>1560    | 1430<br>2970   |
| World Bank Analytical Classification<br>L = Low Income<br>LM = Lower Middle Income<br>UM = Upper Middle Income |              | LM             | LM<br>L 1990-<br>1994 | LM               | LM until<br>1996<br>UM<br>since<br>1997 | LM             | LM             | LM             |
| HDI  | 1990<br>2006 | 0.645<br>0.748 | 0.572<br>0.716        | ..<br>0.769      | ..<br>0.796                             | 0.516<br>0.646 | 0.625<br>0.736 | 0.625<br>0.762 |
| HDI rank 2006<br>All Medium Human Development  |              | 100            | 116                   | 90               | 78                                      | 127            | 105            | 95             |
| Official Development Assistance and official aid (million current US\$)  | 1990<br>2006 | 132<br>209     | 5426<br>873           | 886<br>580       | 252<br>707                              | 1048<br>1046   | 683<br>27      | 391<br>432     |
|  | ave-<br>rage | 260            | 2173                  | 583              | 252                                     | 693            | 243            | 267            |
| ODA in % of GDP  | 1990<br>2006 | 0,21<br>0,18   | 12,58<br>0,81         | 22,04<br>4,11    | 8,88<br>3,11                            | 4,06<br>1,60   | 5,55<br>0,08   | 3,18<br>1,43   |
|  | 1990<br>2006 | 5,21<br>6,25   | 98,41<br>11,77        | 279,49<br>104,66 | 84,75<br>174,41                         | 43,36<br>34,29 | 53,68<br>1,38  | 47,95<br>42,65 |

13 Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (online database); UNDP, Human Development Reports (online statistics).

When looking at the share of external assistance that comes from the EU and its member states, Europe is the most important source of funding for Tunisia and Morocco. This is also true for Algeria and Syria, but the importance of Europe as a donor is attenuated by the fact that both countries receive only low levels of aid. Egypt and Jordan, and to a lesser extent Lebanon, have been traditional recipients of US aid, even though the role of Europe has been growing for Egypt and Lebanon.

*Table 5: Aid dependence on Europe<sup>20</sup>*

|  |      | Algeria | Egypt | Jordan | Lebanon | Morocco | Syria | Tunisia |
|--|------|---------|-------|--------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| All donors, in million US\$ (current prices)     | 1990 | 132     | 5426  | 886    | 252     | 1048    | 683   | 391     |
|  | 2007 | 389     | 1096  | 516    | 956     | 1072    | 82    | 323     |
| DAC EU Members, in million US\$ (current prices) | 1990 | 100     | 664   | 212    | 49      | 395     | 63    | 153     |
|  | 2007 | 276     | 314   | 42     | 284     | 547     | 49    | 184     |
| DAC EU Members in % of all donors                | 1990 | 76      | 12    | 24     | 20      | 38      | 9     | 39      |
|  | 2007 | 71      | 29    | 8      | 30      | 51      | 60    | 57      |

The seven Arab authoritarian countries are definitely the ‘junior partners’ in bilateral relations with the EU. However, the asymmetry of interdependence varies, making them more or less dependent on the EU. In general, there is a clear distinction between the Middle Eastern and the Maghreb countries as regards the EU’s role in international trade and aid, but factors such as a country’s ‘size’ or the availability of natural resources further differentiates the picture. Thus Morocco and Tunisia are highly dependent on the EU whereas oil and natural gas exports make Algeria one of the least dependent countries. Similarly, Egypt and Syria enjoy relative independence. Egypt heavily relies on the US as an alternative source of aid and support and Syria is geared towards other regional actors. Jordan and Lebanon as the smallest countries of the Middle East take a medium position in terms of dependence on the EU in international relations.

#### *Political liberalisation*

The region is known for a conspicuous resistance to the ‘third wave’ (Huntington) of democratisation. While there have been reforms, none of the countries in the region is in a process of transition. Even though we see regime transformation, no regime changes have occurred since independence and the wave of national revolutions in the 1950s and 1960s. The region is considered exemplary in discussing the ‘end of the transition paradigm’ (Carothers 2002). At the same time, these countries illustrate the difficulties of classifying regimes in the ‘grey zone’ between democratic and authoritarian regimes. The seven countries of interest all have representative democratic institutions and hold (more or less) regular elections. However, they lack significant attributes of liberal democracy and do not even qualify as ‘electoral democracies’ according to Freedom House standards.<sup>21</sup>

14 Source: OECD.StatExtracts, ODA by Recipient by country, <http://stats.oecd.org>, 12 September 2009.

21 Freedom House 2009: Electoral democracies, FIW 1989-90-2009, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw09/CompHistData/ElectoralDemocracyTable.xls>, last accessed 3 September 2009.

While the Freedom House indices for political rights and civil liberties do not provide a thorough picture of the 'quality' of democracy in a country, they are a good starting point for systematically comparing the degree of political liberalisation across countries. The overall picture is one of widespread and persisting authoritarianism, but there are differences in degree between the countries. Jordan and Morocco, the two remaining constitutional monarchies, are the only ones consistently ranked as "partly free" since 1990. Their combined ratings are 4,3 and 4,8 in average for 1990-2008. Lebanon was ranked as "partly free" in 2008, but generally ranked as "not free" since the mid 1990s, just as Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia, with averages around 5,5 in the last 19 years. Finally, Syria has scored worst possible during the whole period, with an average of seven. This picture is largely confirmed by one of the World Bank's World Governance Indicators (WGI), namely "Voice and Accountability."<sup>22</sup> All seven countries are in the lower third in a world-wide comparison, but there are still important variations between countries. As none of them shows significant and lasting changes over time, their average values for 1996-2008 allow a similar grouping as the Freedom in the World index, with Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco in the lead, followed by Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia, and with Syria at the bottom.

Considering the Polity IV "polity" index, the picture slightly changes, as indicators for "institutionalized democracy" and "institutionalized autocracy" put much more emphasis on procedural aspects. Thus, while Lebanon only achieves mediocre scores on the other indices, it has emerged as the only noteworthy democratic polity once Syria had withdrawn its troops in 2005.<sup>23</sup> Also, the variation for Algeria over time is more pronounced, with the latest change in 2004 bringing it into the realm of democracy. By contrast, Moroccans might enjoy relatively high freedoms, but the regime itself is qualified as only slightly less autocratic than the Syrian, albeit improving over time.

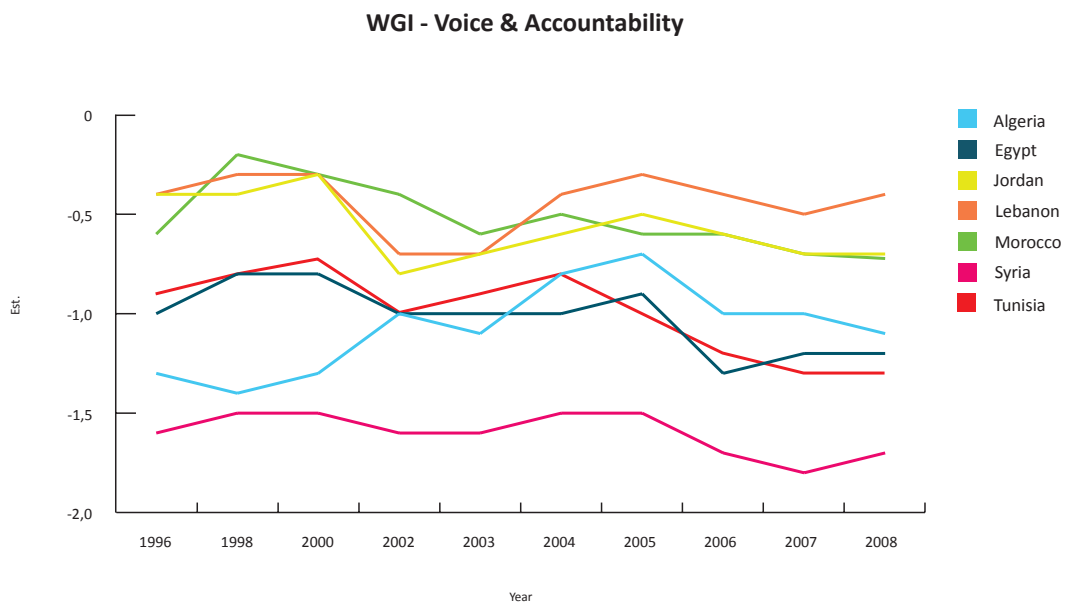
Most regimes experienced a period of opening/political liberalisation in the 1980s or early 1990s, that did, however, not survive for long in most countries. With the cancellation of the 1992 elections, Algeria is the most prominent example of a failed transition, but other attempts at opening up the political arena were also followed by periods of stagnation and renewed repression, as in Jordan, Egypt, and Tunisia. Similarly, the opening in Morocco, begun under Hassan II, has not led to a clear democratic breakthrough. Here it is interesting to note that the high hopes for political reform linked to the generational change in Jordan, Morocco (both 1999), and Syria (2000) have not transformed into significant and lasting improvements.

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22 While the team around Daniel Kaufman draws on the Freedom House "Freedom in the World" ratings for the composite indicator of "Voice and Accountability", "Political Rights" and "Civil Liberties" are only two sources of over 30, see Kaufmann et al. (2009: 74).

23 Due to the continued foreign intervention in domestic politics, the polity index for Lebanon had been coded as "interrupted" for 1990-2004, the first 15 years after the end of the civil war (1975-1989), which was itself coded as a period of "interregnum". For the use of 'standardized authority scores' see Marshall and Jagers 2008: 17f.

Graph 1: World Bank's WGI „Voice and Accountability“



Taken together, albeit none of the regimes under scrutiny qualifies as a liberal democracy, the degree of political liberalisation varies significantly across countries. Lebanon and the two monarchies, Jordan and Morocco, are the most liberalised regimes. In comparison, Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia take a middle position well ahead of Syria which is the least liberalised autocracy among the seven.

### Statehood

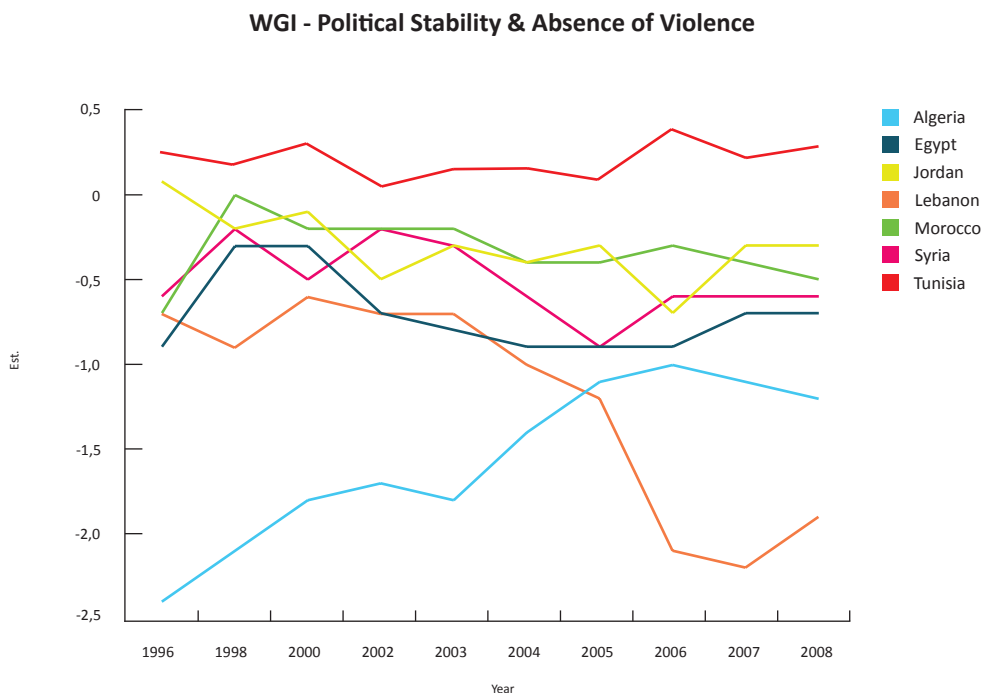
Although all seven countries are recognised as internationally sovereign states, statehood can be threatened both externally and internally, challenging the regime and forcing it to defend its power base (see Krasner 2009). Apart from international war, external intervention or occupation can threaten a state's "Westphalian" sovereignty. Domestically, the monopoly on the legitimate use of force can be contested in violent conflict. Civil war or terrorist attacks can severely limit statehood and create instability for the regime. Some indicators that capture these different aspects are, at a general level, the World Bank's Governance Indicator "Political Stability & Absence of Violence", and for specific incidences of violence and (internal and external) conflicts the Conflict Barometer of the Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research, the Political Instability Task Force (PITF) with data on state failure, and the list of High Casualty Terrorist Bombings (HCTB) of the Center for Systemic Peace.

Overall, Tunisia emerges as the least contested country in the region – according to the World Governance Indicators, its political stability values are above the regional average, it is not involved in international conflicts, and internally, there have been no violent conflicts since the early 1990s. The two monarchies of Morocco and Jordan also present a picture of stability, with good WGI scores and little internal violence, even though Morocco has not yet settled the conflict over the Western Sahara, neither internally nor

with Algeria, and Jordan is situated in a war-prone neighbourhood and has a latent conflict with Israel over water resources and of course the West Bank. Syria has also been quite stable, but has experienced growing international and internal tensions since 2004. Israel still occupies the Syrian Golan heights. While all these countries have suffered from terrorist attacks after 2001, they are not confronted with movements regularly resorting to violence. By contrast, Egypt still scores similarly on the WGI, but has been challenged by the Muslim Brotherhood and militant Islamist groups since 1992. While state repression has ended the “revolutionary war” (PTIF) in 1999, the conflict still overshadows the regime’s dealing with Islamist opposition. In 2004-2006, there were three HCTB that hurt international tourism to Egypt.

Lebanon and Algeria are at the same time at the lower end of the WGI scores and the only two countries with significant variation over time (see Kaufmann et al. 2009: 33). Algeria started into the 1990s with a civil war between Islamist militant groups and the government, after a short period of political liberalisation that was abruptly ended by the military cancelling elections in 1992. Although the civil war was officially ended in 2000 and the political stability score has much improved since then, the PTIF considered the “revolutionary war” as ended only in 2004 and the Conflict Barometer shows that the conflict with Islamist groups, but also with the Berber movement in Kabylia, is persistent. Lebanon, by contrast, had just overcome 15 years of civil war in 1990 so that the 1990s were mainly a period of (economic) recovery. During this period of relative stability, external interventions significantly limited Lebanese statehood. The second country in the region to conclude a peace agreement with Israel in 1994, Israeli troops nevertheless occupied parts of Southern Lebanon until 2000. In addition, Syrian troops remained in Lebanon after the end of the civil war, securing on the one hand the fragile peace, on the other illustrating the Syrian claim to dominate Lebanese politics. Syria only removed its troops after the “Cedar Revolution” on the occasion of former Prime Minister Hariri’s assassination in 2005. At the same time, however, political instability has increased significantly in Lebanon, marked inter alia by terrorist attacks, the war between Hizbollah and Israel in 2006 and an internal conflict with the Palestinian refugees in 2007 and 2008.

Graph 2: World Bank’s WGI „Political Stability & Absence of Violence“



In sum, Tunisia has the highest degree of statehood, followed by Jordan and Morocco. Egypt and Syria are still strong, but more contested. Finally, civil war and violent conflict have severely limited statehood in Algeria and Lebanon.

## 5. Analysis

Even though it is impossible to aggregate overall values of cooperation, interdependence, political liberalisation, and statehood for each country over the course of nearly 20 years, this section tries to sum up empirical findings to allow a more systematic comparison.

The previous sections have shown that *cooperation* in the field of democracy promotion has evolved in line with the EU's provisions introduced to its Mediterranean policy framework. However, the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance as partnership based instruments varies across countries, both regarding intensity and timing. Morocco and Jordan are in the lead, whereas Syria clearly is the regional laggard. In the middle field, the cases of Tunisia and Algeria are especially noteworthy. While the former is the only country openly going against the trend of intensifying cooperation over time, the latter seems much more selective in its engagement than the other countries.

Regarding *interdependence*, there is a clear difference in the role of the EU for the Maghreb and the Middle Eastern countries. For Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, the EU and its member states are trading partner and donor number one, whereas trading patterns in the Middle East are much more diversified and the US plays a greater role in trade and aid. Nevertheless, while Morocco and Tunisia appear highly dependent on the EU, Algeria can balance the relationship with its important oil and gas exports. Similarly, in the Middle East, the small countries of Jordan and Lebanon are still more dependent on the EU than is Egypt, after Israel the largest recipient of US aid in the region, which exceeds by far European assistance to other countries. Syria is very much focused on relations with regional actors, but Western actors cannot ignore its strategic importance in the Middle East conflict. Indicators for *political liberalisation* and *statehood* are a bit more straightforward. Jordan, Morocco, and Lebanon qualify as the more liberalised regimes in the region, whereas Syria is a closed autocracy. For Algeria and Lebanon, civil war and violent conflict interrupted the democratic process and severely limited their statehood. By contrast, the two monarchies, Jordan and Morocco, and especially Tunisia emerge as the less contested states.

Figure 6: Overview of cooperation and potential explanatory factors

|         | Cooperation | Dependence | Liberalisation | Statehood |
|---------|-------------|------------|----------------|-----------|
| Algeria | 0           | -          | 0              | -         |
| Egypt   | 0           | -          | 0              | 0         |
| Jordan  | +           | 0          | +              | +         |
| Lebanon | 0           | 0          | +              | -         |
| Morocco | +           | +          | +              | +         |
| Syria   | -           | -          | -              | 0         |
| Tunisia | 0           | +          | 0              | +         |



Overall, the picture for Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria seems to confirm the expectation that interdependence favouring the EU as well as high levels of political liberalisation and statehood in the target regime are linked to better cooperation in implementing political dialogue and democracy assistance (hypotheses 1 and 2). However, this is not the case for Algeria, Lebanon, and Tunisia. More generally, the degree of political liberalisation seems to be related most closely to cooperation, whereas the relation with statehood and interdependence is inconclusive. In Lebanon, the high degree of political liberalisation does not go hand in hand with intensive cooperation in the field of democracy promotion. Considering the combination of political liberalisation statehood, the Lebanese case actually supports the expected interaction between the two variables: The severely limited statehood mitigates the effect of an open regime (hypothesis 2a).

Finally, the cooperation of the EU with Algeria and Tunisia occurs under very different circumstances. Considering the Tunisian dependence on the EU and its strong statehood, it should be a candidate for active engagement in the EU's democracy promotion agenda. However, after a promising start in the late 1990s, cooperation has deteriorated to the point that the European Commission has openly given up on implementing democracy assistance with Tunisian authorities. In contrast, Algeria should be a least likely candidate for cooperation on democracy promotion, given its limited dependence on the EU, but this is only partially reflected in the Algerian refusal to take political dialogue further on aspects of democracy and human rights. After the turmoil of civil war in the 1990s, democracy assistance has actually made up a relatively high share of overall EU aid compared with other countries in the region. In addition, political dialogue had early on been conducted on an informal basis.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper has investigated the EU's democracy promotion efforts in the Mediterranean to scrutinise its claimed 'normative power' in international relations. Committed to the quest of promoting democracy vis-à-vis Mediterranean Partners since the early 1990s, the EU introduced conceptual and institutional change to the framework for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. Its approach truly qualifies as that of a 'civil power.' A clear trend to more cooperation in the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance testifies to the EU's capacity to shape bilateral relations with its Mediterranean Partners. However, significant country variation hints at the importance of scope conditions for the EU's differential 'normative power.' A systematic comparison of cooperation and three potential explanatory factors suggests that the degree of political liberalisation is more relevant than interdependence and statehood for the implementation of political dialogue and democracy assistance. While interdependence does not show any clear relation with the degree of cooperation in the field of democracy promotion, statehood seems to mitigate the role of political liberalisation. However, the analysis cannot account for the two outliers of Algeria and Tunisia. Even though they are respectively least and most likely cases, this is not reflected in the observed outcomes of cooperation. Tunisia is more dependent and has stronger statehood and should therefore cooperate much better than Algeria. This is not the case, as cooperation with Tunisia

has been degrading over time, whereas Algeria has engaged in selective but active cooperation since the late 1990s.

Based on these empirical findings, it seems promising to refine the theoretical framework and the operationalisation of the explanatory factors in order to take research on international democracy promotion and cooperation between external actors and target countries a step further. In light of the two outliers, a closer look into processes of domestic politics in the target countries might be necessary. This might nuance the picture drawn for the variables of political liberalisation and statehood and their effect on cost-benefit-calculations regarding the risks of domestic power losses and instability. For example, the configuration of the domestic political situation, existing change agents and reform dynamics, but also the regime's handling of internal demands for reform might impact on a regime's willingness to engage in political cooperation with external actors. For the Mediterranean in particular, there is a growing literature on strategies of in- and exclusion of oppositional, especially Islamic, actors in domestic politics (Brown et al. 2006; Lust-Okar/Zerhouni 2008). In addition, the content of external democracy promotion efforts needs to be considered in more detail. Comparing it with the domestic political agenda, overlapping interests and objectives might reduce the 'misfit' and significantly lower the costs for the authoritarian regime to engage in cooperation (Börzel/Risse 2003; Kelley 2006; Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2005). For instance, EU democracy assistance to Algeria has had an unusually strong focus on the security sector, which might support Algerian efforts at consolidating statehood. Finally, on the EU's side, unilateral measures of democracy promotion, such as naming and shaming by diplomatic means and the application of political conditionality, might indicate differences in the EU's readiness to push an authoritarian regime for cooperation (Schimmelfennig/Scholtz 2008).

Considering the political implications of these findings, the link between the degree of political liberalisation and the readiness of a regime to actively engage in external democracy promotion efforts creates a dilemma: Cooperation is most difficult where it is most needed. At the same time, practitioners of democracy promotion are faced by an increasingly critical discussion of 'coercive' or highly 'intrusive' instruments and strategies (Dalacoura 2003) in light of insights that successful democratisation is a foremost domestically driven process (Whitehead 2002; Geddes 1999). However, the EU's experience in the Mediterranean is also encouraging, as it proves that institutions do matter: In the long run, even the most 'stubborn' authoritarian regimes have started to engage in the EU's democracy promotion agenda. The EU has often been chided for its 'one size fits all' approach (Börzel/Risse 2004), but in this case it might be an essential part of its 'normative power.'

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