

Canterbury Workshop

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Security and the Environment in the Mediterranean in the 20th Century –

Conceptualising Security and Environmental Conflicts

7. What is the Mediterranean?

By © Hans Günter Brauch

Excerpts from his forthcoming book chapter:

“The Mediterranean Space and Boundaries”,
in: Antonio Marquina, Hans Günter Brauch (Eds.):
*The Mediterranean Space and its Borders. Geography, Politics,
Economics and Environment*. Collection Strademed 14
(Madrid: UNISCI - Mosbach: AFES-PRESS, September 2001).

2.1 Introduction and Focus

There is no generally accepted definition of the Mediterranean nor are there any common criteria of the Mediterranean Sea, its space, region, climate or way of life. It is a ‘sea’ whose shores combine the three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that it is a ‘region’.

...

This chapter attempts to achieve several goals: a) to review the wealth of definitions and concepts of the Mediterranean region in the scientific literature by geographers, historians, political scientists, economists and environmental specialists; and b) to offer a definition of the Mediterranean space to deal with the environmental challenges that confront the Mediterranean in the 21st century. ... The chapter is organised in the following nine parts: a) to survey the manifold definitions of the Mediterranean and of its boundaries (2.2); b) to present four different geographical concepts of the Mediterranean region (2.3); to review the different historical spatialisations of the Mediterranean since the Roman Empire until the end of the 20th century (2.4); to offer an overview of the institutionalised functional cooperation (2.5) in the security and military realm (2.6) as well as for the political (2.7), economic (2.8) and environmental spatialisation of the Mediterranean (2.9).

2.2 Efforts to Define the Mediterranean Sea and Space

The definitions of the Mediterranean have differed for a) various time periods, b) for scientific disciplines, c) based on the conceptual lenses of the scientist and in many national perceptions and traditions and d) according to specific purposes and goals of the analyst. In order to avoid a total confusion both definitional and conceptual clarity is essential. A consensus exists that the Mediterranean is a 'sea', a 'space' and a 'region' with narrow, medium and wider boundaries (table 2.1).

Table 2.1: The Mediterranean and its Boundaries

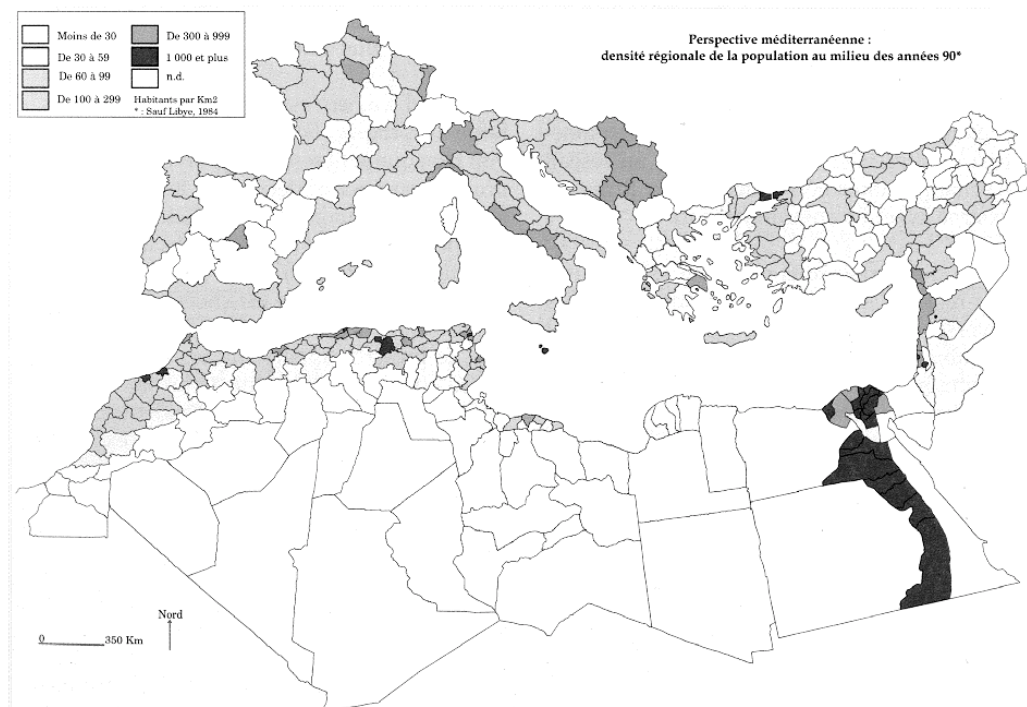
	Narrow	Medium	Wide
Sea (Basin)	coastline (administrative unit)	watershed (district, country)	coastline (?) or watershed (??)
Space			
geographic	Western and Eastern Mediterranean	coastline, hinterland (watershed)	including Black Sea (coastline, watershed, hinterland)
political	<i>European Union</i> (4 + Portugal) <i>Méditerranée Orientale</i> (Balkans, Malta, Cyprus, Israel, Turkey) <i>Maghreb</i> (4) <i>Mashrik</i> (4)	– Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (15 EU + 12) – South European Stability Pact (Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania)	– EU-Enlargement (3 Med., 10 CEEC) – Euro-Arab Dial. – EU-Russia – EU-Ukraine – EU-Georgia – EU-Armenia – EU-Azerbaijan – EU-GCC
economic	Sub-regional: AMU, European Union	OECD, OSCE, European Union	Black Sea Cooperation Council
environmental	Barcelona Conv., MAP, Blue Plan	Mediterranean climate (global feat.)	tectonic (seismicity, volcanism)
cultural/religious	Greek, Latin, Slavonic, Arabic, Turkic	Mesopotamia, Iran	Caucasian, Central Asian cultures
historical	civilisations, empires, nation states	Roman empire	Muslim, Byzantine, Ottoman
Region			
geographic	region of contact of three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa)		
political	5 + 5 process (10) Mediterranean Forum (11)	Euro-Mediterranean partnership Barcelona Declarat.	Euro-Arab dialogue, CSCM, EU - GCC, EU-Russia
economic	EU, UMA	Arab Free Market	Economic Cooperation Organisation
environmental		Barcelona Convention of 1975	
Boundaries			
South	Sahara	Sahara, Syrian, Arabic Deserts	Sahara, Syrian, Arabic, Central Asian to Gobi deserts
West	Atlas, Rif, Sierra Nevada, Pyrenees	Atlantic Ocean	
North	Alps	Rhone, Rhine and Danube	Northern and Baltic Sea
East	Mountains (Dinar, Pindos, Rhodope, Taurus, Lebanon)	Danube, Krim, Caucasus, Elburns, Sagros Mountains Persian Gulf	Central Asian Steppes, Deserts (Kara-Kum, Kysyl-Kum, Mujun-Kum)

2.3 Three Geographic Definitions of Mediterranean Basin

Based on this differentiation of the Mediterranean 'sea' or 'basin', 'space' and 'region' three geographic concepts have been generally used:

- the *narrow concept* of the Blue Plan of the administrative land units with a Mediterranean coastline and of the watershed used by the EIB and World Bank ;
- the *medium concept* of a Mediterranean perspective that includes all countries with Mediterranean coastlines plus Portugal and Jordan;
- the *wide concept* of the Mediterranean that includes the Black Sea or even the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf region.

Figure 2.3: A Medium Definition of the Mediterranean of the Institut de la Méditerranée



2.3.3 A German Definition of the Mediterranean Space: Wagner

In his regional geography of the Mediterranean space Horst-Günter Wagner distinguished among three methodical goals:

- a historical analysis of the genesis of cultural landscapes (*'historische Kulturlandschaftsge-nese'*) focusing at long-term socio-economic factors (urbanisation: rise and decline of political and economic centres, industry, trade, mobility and migration);
- an action orientation (*'Handlungsorientierung'*) dealing with contemporary activities and the emergence of new spatial structures and new regional awareness but also on the degradation of the ecological basis of future economic activities;
- an interaction within the space (*'räumliche Interaktion'*) that have an impact on neighbouring regions, e.g. on Central and Western Europe on the Near and Middle East, on North Africa up to the Sahel states but also developments in these regions have repercussions for the Mediterranean. Globalisation has further deepened the regional inequalities and competition with other regions on the globe has increased.

Wagner pointed to both regional features of *unity* (climate, ecology, vegetation, agriculture, urban culture, traditional economy, one-sided industrialisation, emigration, tourism, similar social attitude, interaction of historic cultural and economic activities) and historical *diversity* due to demography and migration, religion, ethnicity, colonialism and particularism.

2.3.4 A British Definition of the Mediterranean(ism)

In a recent British textbook, King pointed out that only few geographical texts treat the Mediterranean “as a relatively homogeneous regional unit” even though

the Mediterranean presents itself as a more unified region than either Europe or Africa. Between these the real boundary is the Sahara Desert, which has been a more effective barrier to contact than the Mediterranean which, rather, has acted as a focus for communications and interaction. ... Indeed, it is the multi-layered interactions between physical, cultural and contemporary social and economic geographies which define the essence of the Mediterranean landscape and Mediterranean life, and which make the littoral regions of the Mediterranean states cohere as a recognisable geographical entity.

King and his co-authors consider it inappropriate “to define the Mediterranean in any hard and fast way”. ... The term *Mediterraneanism* refers to the close interaction between the physical and human realms influenced by the climate, the sea the land, the vegetation, the long tradi-tion of urban life and the resources offered by the Mediterranean environment. King concludes on the *unity* (climate, ecology, cultural traditions, economy, strategic location for transporting hydrocarbons) and *diversity* (heterogeneous political regimes, coexistence and confrontations of religions and cultures, economic division between EU and non-EU states) in the modern Mediterranean. ...

2.4.4 The Mediterranean Space: 1919-2000

During the 20th century after World War I and World War II, the process of the formation of nation states in the Mediterranean further progressed with the establishment of modern laicist Turkey by Atatürk in 1923 and the division of the former Ottoman rule in the Mashrik between France (Syria, Lebanon) and the United Kingdom (Iraq, Jordan and Palestine) as part of a mandate from the League of Nations.

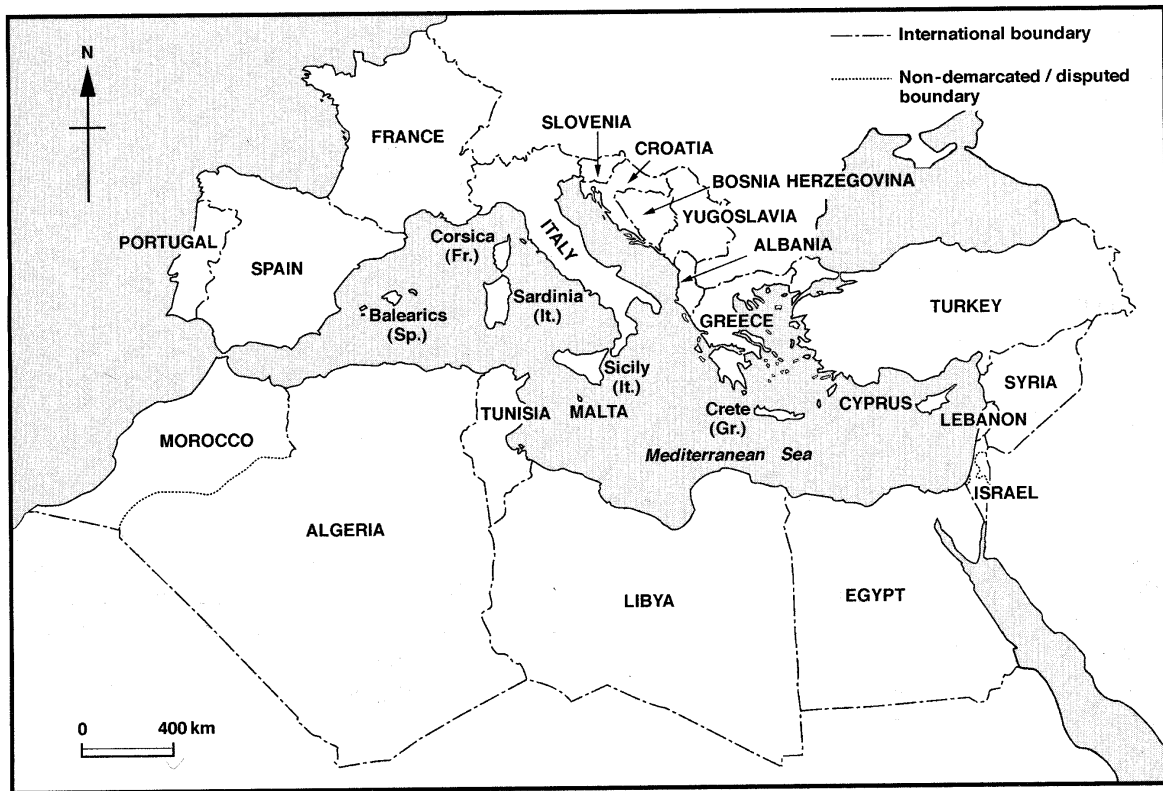
After World War II, the Arab colonies of the Mashrik (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) and in the Maghreb (Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and finally Algeria in 1962) as well as Malta (1974) and Cyprus (1960) gained their national independence. In 1948, on the territory of Palestine Israel unilaterally declared its independence against the will of Britain.

After the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, two multiethnic countries, disintegrated. In 1991, Yugoslavia split into its former republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. The future of the former Yugoslav province Kazoo is still uncertain as is that of Montenegro. In the wider Mediterranean, at the Black Sea region, since 1991/1992, the former USSR is now represented by Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and the adjacent Caucasian states of Armenia and Azerbaijan and by the Central Asian states Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz and Tajikistan. The process of disintegration of Russia by the unilateral declaration of independence of Chechnya resulted so far in two violent wars of Russia against its separatist republic (1994-1996, 1999-). In Georgia, the quest for independence by Aphasisia and South Sestina was defeated.

The process of nation state formation will be completed with the formation of an independent Palestinian state and a peace treaty with Israel, and possibly with the reunification of Cyprus and its integration in the European Union. While in the Balkans the process of fragmentation due to belated nation state formation may gradually be overcome by regional co-operation in the framework of the South European Stability Pact and EU integration (Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta) and possibly in the longer-run also of Turkey, in the Arab world the fragmentation persists.

While the geographical space remained unchanged during the past millennia, during the past 5,000 years of human history the spaces of political rule has been in a permanent flux. What different spatialisations due to functional cooperation in different issues areas have emerged since the end of the Cold War?

Figure 2.15: Countries around the Mediterranean (King 1997: 3)



[All authors of the Canterbury workshop and book contributors are advised to use this geographical space of the Mediterranean that includes Portugal but please add Jordan that actively participates in all four Euro-Mediterranean dialogues of the EU, NATO, WEU and OSCE.]

2.5 Functional Cooperation in the Mediterranean Since the End of the Cold War (1990-2000)

Empirically, cooperation among actors in the Mediterranean space or region may be analysed for different *types of actors* (states, economic and societal organisations) at different *levels of analysis* (international, state, sub-state) for different *degrees of intensity* (organisations, regimes, dialogues) and for different *issue areas*: 1. Security and military; 2. political; 3. economic and environmental or ecological. This review of existing institutions of cooperation both in the narrow, medium and wide Mediterranean space point to different institutional boundaries.

Table 2.2: Actors, Levels and Issue Areas of Cooperation in the Narrow and Wide Mediterranean Space

	Security	Political	Economic	Environmental
State world				
•international organisations	UN, OSCE, NATO, WEU	OSCE, EU	WB, IMF, EU, UNDP, OECD	UNEP, MAP
•functional regimes	non-proliferation regime	EMP	EMP	Barcelona Convention
•dialogue fora	NATO, WEU Med dialogues	EMP ↑	EMP↑	Med. Commit. on Sustainable Development
Economic world				
Societal world				

Table 2.3: Membership of Mediterranean Countries in International Organisations & Regimes

Countries	General IGOs				Security		Political			Economic								Environm				
	Narrow Med.	UN	OSC E	OAU	AL	NAT O	WEU	CE	EMP	AMU	WB	IMF	OEC	EU	ECE	ECA	ESC	ACM	AMF	BC	MAP	
Albania	x	x									x	x			x			x	x	x	x	
Algeria	x		x	x					x	x	x	x				x					x	x
Bosnia	x	x									?	?			x						x	x
Croatia	x	x									x	x			x						x	x
Cyprus	x	x						?	x		x	x		C	x						x	x
Egypt	x		x	x					x		x	x				x		x	x		x	x
France	x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						x	x
Greece	x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						x	x
Israel	x								x		x	x									x	x
Italy	x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						x	x
Lebanon	x			x					x	x	x	x					x	x	x		x	x
Libya	x			x						x	x					x					x	x
Malta	x	x						x	x		x	x		C	x						x	x
Morocco	x			x					x	x	x	x				x		x	x		x	x
Slovenia	x	x									x	x		C	x						x	x
Spain	x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						x	x
Syria	x			x					x		x	x					x	x	x		x	x
Tunisia	x		x	x					x	x	x	x				x		x	x		x	x
Turkey	x	x							x	x				C	x						x	x
Yugoslavia	x	x							?						x						?	?
Countries	General IGOs				Security		Political			Economic								Environm				
Narrow Med.	UN	OSC E		AL	NAT O	WEU	CE	EMP	AMU	WB	IMF	OEC	EU	ECE	ECA	ESC	ACM	AMF	BC	MAP		
Palestinian Authority and adjacent states																						
Palestine	x			x					x								?	?	?	?	?	
Portugal	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x						?	?	
Jordan	x			x					x		x											
Macedonia	x	x								x	x				x							
Black Sea																						
Bulgaria	x	x							x		x	x			x							
Romania	x	x							x		x	x			x							
Ukraine	x	x							x		x	x			x							
Russia	x	x							x		x	x			x							
Georgia	x	x							?		x	x			x							
Countries in the Caucasus and Caspian Sea region																						
Armenia	x	x							?		x	x			x							
Azerbaijan	x	x							?		x	x			x							
Iran	x										x	x					x					
Kazakhstan	x	x									x	x					?					
Turkmenistan	x	x									x	x					?					
Persian Gulf																						
Iraq	x			x							x	x					x	x	x			
Saudi Arabia	x			x							x	x					x	x	x			
Kuwait	x			x							x	x					x	x	x			
Gulf Emirates	x			x							x	x					x	x	x			

2.9 An Environmental Spatialisation of the Mediterranean

The only truly pan-Mediterranean regime emerged from the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (*Barcelona Convention*) that was adopted in Barcelona on 16 February 1976 and entered into force on 12 February 1978. ... As of 31 March 1998, 21 parties including the European Union (but excluding Portugal, Serbia/Montenegro, Macedonia and Jordan) have ratified the Convention.

The Secretariat for the Implementation of the Barcelona Regime has been the UNEP Co-ordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan (MEDU). This environmental regime is one of so far nine Regional Seas Programmes of UNEP. Three additional regimes deal with the 'seas' in the wider Mediterranean region: the *Black Sea* (Bucharest 1992/1994), the *Persian Gulf* (Kuwait 1997/1979), and the *Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden* (1982/1985). From an environmental perspective, the Barcelona regime (1976) refers to the narrow and truly 'Mediterranean space', but all four regimes make up for the wider Mediterranean region with the exception of the Caspian Sea area.

To conclude the definition of the 'Mediterranean space' used by international organisations, regimes and dialogues depends on the specific intentions and aims to be pursued given the lack of commonly accepted geographic and political criteria and depending on the parties involved.

2.10 Environmental Challenges in the Mediterranean During the 21st Century

What is the most appropriate geographical 'space' to deal with the environmental challenges that will confront the Mediterranean in the 21st century? This author has pointed to six fundamental long-term challenges that will confront the Mediterranean until 2050:

- different levels of *population growth* on the Northern (low), and Southern and Eastern shores (high) ;
- the regional impact of global *climate change* due to projected increases in temperature, decline in precipitation and rise of the Sea level
- the *scarcity of water* for drinking and irrigation
- the decline in self-sufficiency in *food production* and the increasing need for imports of cereals
- the progressing *soil erosion* and *desertification* confronting all countries around the Mediterranean; and
- the progressing *urbanisation and pollution* in the major cities on the Eastern (projection for Istanbul in 2015: 12,5 million; Cairo 2015: 14.5 million people .

These six factors are part of a '*survival hexagon*'. As has been argued elsewhere non of these factors pose any direct security threat. These new global challenges of the 21st century may require a new international order based on a 'survival dilemma' that may necessitate additional multilateral cooperation in international regimes, international and supranational organisations. While the old '*security dilemma*' persists in the Mediterranean region, given the many unresolved conflicts (Middle East, Cyprus, Balkans etc.), the new '*survival dilemma*' requires a gradual realisation of a 'sustainable development' concept. It implies for the states, economies and societies of the Mediterranean 'space' and 'region' a mutual effort to define and to address present and future root causes that could lead to new conflicts and environmental victims. While this approach was stimulated by Braudel's structural historical method (1969), it differs with respect to focus and aims.

Braudel's *history of structures* focuses at geography, milieu, environment and thus at an environmental spatialisation of the Mediterranean. This author's focus is different. As a

political scientist in the tradition of Grotian pragmatism he is most interested in functional cooperation and in inducing a long-term co-operative scientific process.

If the linkages of 'environment' and 'security' are analysed from the structural Braudelian perspective (*longue durée*) a focus at the natural processes, their interactions within the Mediterranean geographical space and their possible implications on the political Euro-Mediterranean region is needed. Within the Mediterranean these are common features:

- *Climate change*, and weather extremities (droughts, floods) do not distinguish between Turino or Tanger, Almeria or Algiers
- *Water scarcity* will affect Andalusia and Murcia in the same way as it will affect semi-arid and arid regions in the South in North Africa and in the Middle East
- *Soil erosion and desertification* is a challenge not only for North Africa, the Middle East but also for large parts of Spain, Sicily and Southern Italy.

But there are major differences in the other three factors:

- *demography* (increase pressure in the South, relieve in the North);
- *food scarcity and surplus*: the gap will become more severe;
- *urbanisation and pollution*: urgency and the sources to cope with them are different in North and South.

While the Barcelona Declaration reflects the different attitudes of North (progressive denationalisation and deborderisation) and South (defence of state sovereignty, non-intervention, territory, borders) the Barcelona Convention reflects the common Mediterranean space which will be affected most by these man-made trans-territorial environmental determinants.

Which of the many different definitions of the 'Mediterranean space' may be more appropriate for dealing with long-term environmental challenges: The Mediterranean space of the Barcelona Convention (1976) or that of the Barcelona Declaration (1995)? While the 'space' of the Convention has focused on the Mediterranean riparian nations and on the functional cooperation to protect the Mediterranean Sea ('environmental space'), that of the Declaration relies on a larger Euro-Mediterranean space as a common area of peace and stability, of shared prosperity and of understanding between cultures and exchanges between civil societies ('political space'). While this environmental space will remain unchanged the political space will significantly change due to EU enlargement.

The Mediterranean environment within the natural boundaries of the Sahara desert, Europe, and the Atlantic Sea does not respect national borders. Within these natural boundaries, the *Mediterranean climate* implies complex interactions between global climate change and regional implications that will negatively reinforce ongoing processes of desertification both of which requires an analysis of endogenous and exogenous anthropogenic factors. There are common long-term non-military environmental challenges affecting the whole Mediterranean region that will have socio-economic and possibly political or even military consequences that may affect the whole Euro-Mediterranean region. Thus, the analysis of 'environmental security' requires an environmental spatialisation of the Mediterranean.

A common long-term scientific agenda is needed that develops an early warning system of common challenges and concerns that conflicts only be solved co-operatively. The analysis of climate change impacts in the Mediterranean requires an analysis of the interaction between global processes and regional activities. For the progressing soil erosion and desertification an analysis of local activities, of anthropogenic and natural processes and their interaction with climate change is essential. Both climate change and desertification may constrain the supply side for water and thus also for food production. For the analysis of population policy and urbanisation national policies set the framework. Population growth contributes to the increasing demand for water and food.

While for the analysis of ‘environmental security’ issues only an environmental spatialisation of the Mediterranean applies, for a policy of avoiding conflicts emerging from medium-term implications of long-term structural causes of the ‘survival dilemma’ that transgress national borders and environmental boundaries, early and joint action by the countries participating in the wider Euro-Mediterranean space of the Barcelona framework is needed.

2.11 Conclusions: Common Challenges – Divided Space

The Mediterranean region is confronted with a major contradiction: The longer-term common environmental challenges are confronted with highly fragmented institutionalised security, political and economic spaces. At the beginning of the 21st century only two pan-Mediterranean political ‘spaces’ exist:

- The truly Mediterranean environmental regime of the *Barcelona Convention* (1976), of the Mediterranean Action Plan and of the Blue Plan that include all Mediterranean riparian countries (with the temporary exception of the Federation of Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro due to Serbia’s isolation resulting from its involvement in the Balkan wars in the 1990s);
- The emerging multi-issue political regime of the *Barcelona Declaration* (1995) that includes all 15 EU member countries but excludes the Balkan countries bordering the Mediterranean (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia/Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with a direct Mediterranean coastline).

While the first regime fully reflects the ‘narrow’ definition of the Blue Plan, the political regime of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is both wider and narrower in scope. However, only the European Union has the resources, and only the Barcelona process can deal with the long-term environmental challenges the southern and eastern shores will be confronted with in this century. In its four scenarios on the *Future of the Mediterranean Basin*, the Blue Plan has pointed to the manifold environmental challenges the Mediterranean riparian states will be confronted with until 2025.

To conclude, to cope with these environmental challenges in the narrow Mediterranean ‘space’ in the decades to come, already now co-operation on these non-military challenges to life and survival of the whole region, a close political and economic co-operation is crucial. The wider Euro-Mediterranean partnership offers the only political ‘institution’ where competence, legitimacy and resources are present

Too often persisting conflicts (especially in the Middle East) but also lack of understanding, courage and vision have paralysed or impeded this only institution that could change the negative trends referred to by the Blue Plan team that have not been reversed since 1989.

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