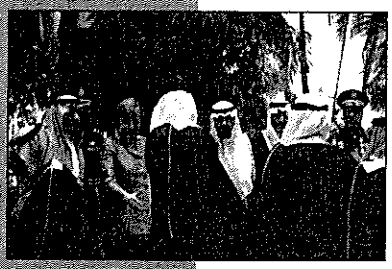

In Europe and Germany, the so-called "Arab Spring" has led to a change of paradigm in the public view towards the peoples of MENA countries. No longer is the theory of the "Arab exception" of relevance, no longer will it be possible to legitimize support for despots with the notion that Arabs simply "are not ready for democracy".

ABSTRACT

การเปลี่ยนแปลงนโยบายต่อภูมิภาคตะวันออกกลาง ของเยอรมนี และบริบททางการเมืองในยุโรป

ไมเคิล เบาเออร์ และ ปีเตอร์ นาชีฟ

บทความนี้ศึกษาบทบาทของเยอรมนีต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นในประเทศบริเวณตะวันออกกลางและแอฟริกาเหนือตั้งแต่เดือนธันวาคม 2553 เป็นต้นมา งานชิ้นนี้เห็นว่านโยบายของเยอรมนีต่อสถานการณ์ดังกล่าวมีความต่อเนื่องเป็นอย่างมาก ถึงแม้ว่าสภาวะแวดล้อมในบริเวณนั้นมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงอยู่ตลอดเวลา ความต่อเนื่องดังกล่าวเป็นผลส่วนหนึ่งมาจากวัฒนธรรมในการกำหนดนโยบายต่างประเทศของเยอรมนีที่เน้นหนักในประเด็นทางด้านเศรษฐกิจและกิจการพลเรือน การใช้กรณีศึกษารายประเทศในงานชิ้นนี้ทำให้เห็นภาพว่านโยบายของเยอรมนีมีลักษณะอย่างไรและตอบสนองต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงผันผวนในโลกอาหรับอย่างไร งานชิ้นนี้ยังได้ประเมินภาพกว้างของยุโรปในฐานะที่เป็นฐานของนโยบายต่างประเทศและความมั่นคงของเยอรมนีด้วย ประการสุดท้าย ผู้เขียนได้อภิปรายความเหมือนและความต่างของการตอบสนองทางการเมืองของเยอรมนีและของยุโรปในภาพรวม

Germany's Changing Middle East Policy and its European Context

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Germany and the Middle East

German ties to region are well received: First of all, Germany does not carry the burden of the colonial legacies of other European powers in the region. Secondly, as a major player in international trade, Germany has always put a big effort in forging and maintaining good economic relations with the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. Also, historical ties to many formerly socialist countries of the region date back to the Cold War when the former German Democratic Republic enjoyed good relations with them. Following the reunification, the German Federal Republic has succeeded in revitalizing these relations.[2]

But there is another aspect of German Middle East policy that highly concerns one of the oldest and most complicated conflicts in the world, the Arab-Israeli conflict. Due to German history

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[2] C.f.: Tobias Schumacher, Germany: A Player in the Mediterranean, in: IEMed and CIDOB (eds.): Med.2009: 2008 in the Euro-Mediterranean Space, pp. 182-186.

during the Third Reich and the holocaust, German-Israeli ties have always been special and have continuously grown stronger and better. Following the end of the Cold War, throughout the late 1990s and arguably up to 2005, Germany tried to profile itself as a strong and reliable power in the Middle East and especially as a neutral mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Under Chancellor Merkel, Germany's policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict changed and became less coherent. One example is Germany's early decision to reject the Palestinian bid for full UN membership in September 2011 that would have de facto recognized the State of Palestine without having fully consulted with its European partners. This not only weakened Germany's position in the Arab world but also showed once more the limits of a common European foreign policy. The fact that Germany did abstain from voting on Palestine's bid for non-member observer state status at the United Nations in November 2012, in turn provoked an angry reaction by the Israeli government.

Germany: The Transformation Partnership

While governments on EU level were still working on an effective joint response, national governments such as Germany quickly moved towards setting up an extensive aid and development program. The Federal Republic was able to adapt quickly to the new situation and adopt a stance largely supportive of the on-going push for democratic change. Even in times of economic hardship, Germany created many new projects supporting democratic change,

ensuring their funding and proceeding forward with implementing them. The German strategy puts high emphasis on transformation partnerships, a framework that has been set up with Egypt and Tunisia. In addition to this, Germany also tries to address the various needs of Libya and Yemen in the fields of development as well as state-building and supports the democratic change in Jordan and Morocco. As part of this strategy, the German Federal Foreign Office has received an additional € 100 million for the years 2012 and 2013 from the government to support of transformation processes in Northern Africa. This fund, known as the "Transformation Partnership", was dedicated to Northern Africa, a large part was to benefit Tunisia, with 60% going into support of political and economic transformation and 40% reserved for education and research. An additional € 30 million annually will be provided in 2012 and 2013 by the foreign office to German and international NGOs for a broad spectrum of measures created to support and stabilize the transformation process especially in Tunisia and Egypt but also to some extent in Jordan and Morocco. By now, several other countries such as Libya, Yemen and even Mali have been added to this list – while not expanding the funding.

Germany's Federal Foreign Office had set up a working unit for coordinating the government's support efforts in Northern Africa in 2011 and 2012.[3] The new German coalition government's coalition

[3] Federal Foreign Office, Umbruch in der arabischen Welt. http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/NaherMittlererOsten/Umbrueche-TSP/Ueberblick_Umbrueche_Arab_Welt_node.html

agreement of 2013 promises to continue the transformation partnership with the Arab world.[4]

While the Federal Foreign Office has the overall political control and responsibility, the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (InstitutfürAuslandsbeziehungen, ifa) oversees projects and advises foreign and domestic NGOs. In addition to that, the political foundations that are associated with the political parties in Germany as well as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) received funding to intensify their activities in Arab transformation countries. Moreover, also through the GesellschaftfürInternationaleZusammenarbeit (GIZ, Germany Agency for International Cooperation) also the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development provides assistance to the Arab transformation countries.

In recent months, the downside of this strategy can be felt as more countries are being added to benefit from the Federal Foreign Office transformation fund while decreasing or at least not increasing the money in it. As new countries are being added, on-going projects in other countries such as Egypt and Tunisia had to be cut or even cancelled. The perception of this inconsistent policy in Germany as well as with the partners in MENA countries could not be worse.

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4 Bundesregierung, Deutschlands Zukunft Gestalten, 2013, pp. 171-172; http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/_Anlagen/2013/2013-12-17-koalitionsvertrag.pdf

Tunisia

The former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted from office and left the country for Saudi Arabia on January 14, 2011. Only one month later, on February 12, the German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle visited Tunis to offer assistance for democratic change.

On January 9, 2012, almost a year after the Tunisian revolution, Foreign Minister Westerwelle came for a second visit to Tunis. This time, he and his Tunisian counterpart signed a Joint Declaration of Intent, agreeing on "a number of specific projects to strengthen democracy, the rule of law, media and civil society as well as vocational training, job creation and educational and cultural cooperation." For the period until the end of 2013, projects worth € 32 million have already been planned, with an extension of the program being expected. One focal point will be the "Network for Labour, Education and Mobility". Additionally, the Federal Government has pledged to cut Tunisian debts by € 60 million, releasing the money for investment in previously agreed projects.

Germany has also moved on to strengthen bilateral relations with the new Tunisian government that had been elected into office on October 23, 2011. For the first time in its history has the German Government engaged with a country of the Maghreb on such deep and comprehensive consultations: On 12 September 2012, the first German-Tunisian intergovernmental consultations on state secretary level took place in Berlin.

Following the political crisis in 2013 started by the assassination of two important opposition politicians, Tunisia has returned to a relatively peaceful state. In early 2014, the new Tunisian constitution was adopted, opening the way for new elections. Given the developments in other Arab transformation countries (see the next paragraphs), the German government declared Tunisia a focal point of its Middle East policy.

Egypt

Besides Tunisia, Germany also highly prioritizes Egypt, which the German Foreign Office regards as "key to the Arab world". On 24 February 2011, Germany's Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle was among the first high-ranking western politicians to visit Egypt after the downfall of former president Hosni Mubarak and to be welcomed by crowds on Tahrir Square. The "Berlin Declaration", issued during the visit of the Egyptian Foreign Minister to Berlin on 12 August 2011 by both countries lays the foundations for the post-Mubarak bilateral relations of Germany and Egypt.

Besides being among the first countries to support the democratic change in Egypt, Germany was also quick to financially and technically support the transition process. In addition to an agreement to swap € 240 million of outstanding loans for development purposes, a transformation partnership similar to that with Tunisia was formed. As mentioned before, it consists of € 100 million for both countries and concentrates on ensuring a democratic transition towards stronger rule of law and the promotion of intercultural

understanding. As agreed in the "Berlin Declaration", both sides came together in Berlin once again for a second round of the Steering Committee in November 2012.

Further fields of the German assistance concentrate upon strengthening civil society as well as freedom of the media, rule of law and human rights, cooperation in the science and education sector, all ultimately thought to be contributing to the political, economic and social stabilization of the country.

Since Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood became Egypt's first democratically elected President, much has changes: At first, the Morsi-government failed to meet the economic expectations of the Egyptian public. Then it alienated large parts of the Egyptian public through an uncompromising policy of power consolidation. Public criticism and protest intensified and tensions grew until mid-2013. Eventually, the Morsi-government was brought down in a publically supported military coup on July 3, 2013 and the Muslim Brotherhood as well as its political party became illegal. The interim government of President Mansour has adopted a new constitution in January 2014, planning new presidential elections for mid-2014.

Libya

The ousting of former Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi greatly differed from the process in neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt. Not only did it take much longer, but it also developed into a military standoff, a brief civil war and an over seven-months NATO

mission, depriving Gaddafi of his military, his power and lastly his life. As a result, the German response to the situation also greatly differed – from its previous quickly applied support on transformation processes but also from the approach of most other western nations.

When fighting broke out in early February 2011, Germany quickly reacted by sending humanitarian aid worth € 8 million for immediate relief. But it was not willing to actively involve itself in the conflict. With Gaddafi-forces closing in on the opposition stronghold of Benghazi, the UN Security Council came together on 17 March 2011 to decide on an intervention. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Germany was the only western country to not vote in favour of Resolution 1973. Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized that Germany's abstention should not be seen as a lack of support "for the aims of the resolution" but only as a statement on Germany not participating in military action in Libya. While this may be a legitimate point, the question on whether the support of the resolution would have inevitably brought with it a German military involvement, remains to be discussed. What is certain though is that Germany was the only NATO member in the SC that did not vote in favour, positioning the country in one line with Russia and China (as well as India and Brazil). Apart from working for Gaddafi's propagandistic benefit, who thanked China, Russia and Germany for their support, the vote directly opposed Germany's aim for a role as a reliable ally and political player in international security affairs.

With the end of military operations however, Germany sought to make up for the previous restraint and tried to increase its involvement in Libya. It offered help for the destruction of ammunition, weapons and mines as well as the setting up projects to secure chemical and nuclear agents. The Federal Republic has also offered its support and expertise in setting up state security such as training police and border forces, as well as infrastructural projects such as the medical apparatus or the water and sewerage systems. On the political field, state-building activities are supported as well as provision of advice on constitutional issues, and a number of projects for civil society and media.

Despite all that, due to a lack of financing and because of the unstable security situation the German presence in Libya remains limited. Moreover, the fact that large areas of the country are under the control of armed militias contributes to political instability and unpredictability.

Yemen

Although a neighbour of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Oman, Yemen is the poorest country on the Arab peninsula and one of the poorest countries in the world, with one in two Yemenis living below the line of poverty. Due to its location on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, the territory is of high strategic importance. Its vicinity to oil-rich KSA and its position on the Gulf of Aden, enabling it to control the access to the Red Sea, and across from the pirate-afflicted Somalia underline its important role for regional

security and German, European and global strategic interests. A major concern is the wide and uncontrolled Yemeni desert, rendering the country a safe haven for separatist movements but also – and this is of much bigger concern to the international community – to al-Qaeda terrorists. Therefore, political stability, the rule of law and a strong government is of highest importance to German foreign policy in Yemen. During the last 40 years, Germany has been one of the biggest donors for development aid to Yemen, providing over € 120 million of support in 2011 and 2012.

The year-long anti-government protest against former president Ali Abdullah Saleh forced him to hand over power to his Vice President AbdRabbuh Mansour Hadi in November 2011. On 13 March 2012, German Foreign Minister Westerwelle visited Sana'a to meet the new President Hadi and Foreign Minister al-Qirbi as well as Yemen's democracy movement and members of the civil society. Westerwelle last met President Hadi on 27 September 2012 in New York, expressing his support for the new government and his hope for political stability. Germany also supports the National Dialogue launched in November 2011, as well as the constitutional reform agenda. Although in light of the security situation German staff was withdrawn in 2011, various kinds of support were still provided, including € 23 million of food aid. Other help includes humanitarian aid as well as supporting the de-mining process.

Syria

At the time being, the civil war in Syria has turned into a humanitarian catastrophe and poses as one of the biggest challenges to the international community. Dealing with Syria is characterized by a large amount of uncertainties. It is not clear how much support the Assad Regime still holds with its population, who his opposition really constitutes of or what their ultimate goals are. The organization of support for both sides and its donors are shady at the least. Also, Western countries are still struggling to find a unified and legitimate opposition platform to work and negotiate with. The country has become a battleground for regional rivalries between Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the US on the one side and Iran and Russia on the other. With the UN Security Council divided between supporting the opposition or Assad, not much may be done in terms of concrete steps. In these difficult circumstances, Germany has not been able to develop a strategic approach to the Syrian crisis that would reach beyond humanitarian aid and declaratory political support for the opposition.

The Federal Republic and 56 other countries have called on the SC to refer the case of Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Up until now, the EU has had 18 rounds of implementing new sanctions against the Assad regime, the most recent one in February 2013. Germany is a founding member of the "Group of Friends of Syrian People" and hosted a meeting thereof on 4 September 2012 in Berlin. In November, the group recognized – just as the EU – the

joint leadership body of the opposition, the "National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces" as Syria's legitimate representative. In a "Friends of Syria" meeting on 24 February 2013, Germany initiated the "Working Group on Economic Recovery and Development", establishing together with the UAE a trust fund for reconstruction. When the core group of the "Friends of Syria" met the National Coalition in Istanbul on 20 April 2013, Guido Westerwelle supported the election of GhassanHitto as interim prime minister of the National Coalition and repeated Germany's intent of boosting its development of institutions and internal cohesion.

Although the National Coalition declared its rejection of terrorism and extremism, Islamist extremism and the growing brutality of opposition fighters are becoming a major problem for the moderate opposition as well as for western nations supporting them. While some European countries such as France, Great Britain and most recently Spain are pushing for supplying opposition fighters with lethal weaponry, Germany still insists on sticking to financial and humanitarian support. Therefore, Germany is one of the biggest supporters in bilateral aid to Syria, having provided until April 2013 over € 125 million, thereof € 68 million in humanitarian aid and € 50 million in structure-building measures. On 30 January, another € 10 million were granted by the Federal government. German aid concentrates on supporting the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Syria and surrounding countries and the "German Federal Agency For Technical Relief" (THW) in the Jordanian refugee camp Za'atari as well as the works of German NGOs.

Apart from providing help in the region, Germany also grants residence permits to Syrian refugees. Since the beginning of the conflict, some 10,000 refugees have arrived in Germany and have been granted a stay permit for the period of the on-going conflict. Additionally, the Federal Government has decided to grant residence and working permits to over 5,000 quota refugees from Syria, with a focus on Christians and other persecuted minorities. However, at the same time, almost no visas are being issued to Syrians anymore, even if they have family members in Germany vouching for them. German and European refugee policy is slow, inconsistent, highly restricted and – just as dealing with the Syria crisis in general – lacks a clear vision in the long term.

EU Policy before the "Arab Spring"

Germany is not a Mediterranean power and its regional policy has traditionally been concerned with its Central and Eastern European neighbours. The European framework has therefore been an important factor shaping Germany's policy and an instrument to pursue German interests in the region.

From the 1970s on, bilateral agreements between European states and the countries of the MENA had proved somewhat confusing. Following Spanish lead, the European Union therefore adopted during the early 1990s a process of renovating its policy towards the Mediterranean, known as the Barcelona Process. After the end of the Cold War and in times of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the EU aimed for a multilateral framework that would

strengthen their ties with the Arab World, Turkey and Israel. The Barcelona Declaration[5] of 1995 introduced this framework in the form of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). The declaration established three main baskets of partnership: the political and security basket; the economic and financial basket; and the social, cultural and human basket. In 2004, the newly introduced European Neighbourhood Policy added a forth basket aiming specifically at migration issues. Unlike the Barcelona Process with its European take-it-or-leave-it approach, the ENP aimed for a bilateral dialogue of equal partners. Just as the prospect of EU membership had been an incentive for Eastern European states to push for political and economic reforms, it was felt that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) from 2004 on could provide a similar appeal to the states of the MENA-region. Yet when compared to the European policy adopted towards the Central and Eastern European states during the 1990s and 2000s, a major flaw appears in the approach towards MENA-countries: for Central and Eastern European nations, the eventual admission into the EU was a realistic goal and has mostly been reached by now. Middle Eastern and North African countries however are not offered the perspective of joining the EU, nor is this thinkable in the medium-term – as demonstrated by the unsuccessful EU-Turkish negotiations. Therefore, the incentives for democratic reform provided directly by the ENP are considerably lower than they were in Eastern Europe. More importantly, the

[5] Barcelona Declarationadoptedatthe Euro-Mediterranean Conference - 27-28/11/95 http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/bd_en.pdf

global War on Terror that had been initiated as a response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 played an overwhelming role in Europe's viewing of its southern neighbourhood. Security had become the top priority for the EU's dealing with its neighbours. Especially the authoritarian regimes of Tunisia's Ben Ali, Libya's Gaddafi, Egypt's Mubarak amongst others could make the case for their fight against al-Qaeda and terrorism in general. Europe prioritized security from terrorism and illegal immigration above all, followed by economic ties and open markets while human rights and democratic values would seldom be more than lip service.[6]

The aims of the French-initiated Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in the "Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean"2008 were of similar nature. The overall aim of the UfM was to promote "peace, stability and prosperity" within and amongst its 43 member states. While the UfM had been envisioned by French President Sarkozy as an exclusively Mediterranean project the states along the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, German and EU opposition led to the integration of all 28 EU member states into the UfM.[7] European interests include trade partnerships with a push towards free trade, the security of European borders and the promotion and strengthening of human rights and democratic, pluralistic structures. The UfM has identified six priority projects:

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[6] Michael Bauer, Mittelmeerpolitik, in: Werner Weidenfeld and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.) Europa von A bis Z, Baden-Baden, pp. 374-379.

[7] As a matter offact, Germany hadbeenparticularlyciritcalofthe French initial initiative.

the de-pollution of the Mediterranean, the development of maritime and land highways, civil protection from catastrophes, the promotion of alternative energies, higher education and research, and the Mediterranean business development initiative aiming at small- and medium-sized businesses. While the UfM is proud to be the only forum to have Israelis and Arabs sit at the same table, in combination with its consensus-based approach, this proved to be a major obstacle to reaching agreements. Starting with Israeli operations in Gaza in 2008/2009, the refusal of Arab delegations to meet their Israeli counterparts has led to the cancellation of several high-level meetings.[8] Next to a lack of funding for the ambitious agenda, the consensus-driven decision-making process and inflexibility are some of the largest problems that the UfM has to deal with.

Despite the ENP's stipulation to promote a ring of "well-governed states" around the EU,it has always been more convenient to cooperate with the authoritarian regimes of the MENA region addressing European security concerns than to promote civil society. The pursuit of hard interests has therefore at many times overruled a values-based approach in favour of pragmatism. Furthermore, just as in times of the ENP, the EU was confident that economic ties and trade agreements with MENA countries would be incentive enough for their authoritarian regimes to engage in democratic reforms and the promotion of human rights. Influencing the countries' elites was seen as a sufficient alternative to direct contacts and support of their civil societies.

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[8] C.f. SenénFlorensa, Union fort he Mediterranean :ChallengesandAmbitions, in: IEMED (ed.), MediterraneanYearbook 2010, pp. 58-67.

European reaction to the Arab Spring

When the uprisings of the so-called "Arab Spring" began in December 2010, they caught not only the western world offhand. The start of the Tunisian revolution and the fall of Tunisia's President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali came as surprise and shock to the members of the EU. A secular public uprising to oust an autocratic ruler in an Arab country represented an unprecedented development to the whole region. Especially Tunisia's Ben Ali and Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak had been perceived as reliable allies for decades. There were neither plans for such an event nor any foreign policy agenda concerned with the fall of the regimes Europeans had cooperated with for so long. The EU members were unsure of how to react to this new situation and what it would mean for their ties to the established government elites – the French Foreign Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie famously even went so far as to offer to send French paratroopers to the Ben Ali-regime to quell protests in Tunisia.[9] With the uprisings in the Arab world, the European approach to stability in the Mediterranean through authoritarian elites had proven to be a political and strategic mistake[10].

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[9] French foreignministerresigns, The Guardian, 27/07/2011, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/27/french-foreign-minister-resigns

[10] Most emphatically put by Stefan Füle, Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy who stated: "... We must show humility about the past. Europe was not vocal enough in defending human rights and local democratic forces in the region. Too many of us fell prey to the assumption that authoritarian regimes were a guarantee of stability in the region...." European Commission - SPEECH/11/130, 28/02/2011, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-11-130_en.htm

After a period of uncertainty and hesitation the European Union tried to react to the Arab Spring along its traditional foreign policy approach, using soft power and leaving hard power and quick reactions to its member states.In the first quarter of 2011, the EU started to act. It sought to position itself as civilian power and moved to integrate its response within the framework of the ENP. Specifically, it adjusted the ENP to focus more on civil societies and democratic transformation processes. Moreover, since the EU had identified the socio-economic hardship of lower- and middle-class citizens as a main reason for the Arab Spring, its response also concentrated on supporting economic growth and the development of the civil society. The EU was able to quickly agree on 30 million Euros as emergency aid for Tunisia and Egypt, with further financial support being allocated to the concerned countries.

In March 2011, the European Commission first presented the communication on the Southern Mediterranean for "A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean" built upon the three elements: 1) democratic transformation and institution-building, 2) stronger partnership with the local people, especially the civil society, and 3) sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development. The High Commissioner of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton introduced these pillars as Money, Markets and Mobility, the "three Ms" as a European answer to the Arab Spring.[11] From 2007 to 2013, the

[11] EU Joint Communication: A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, COM(2011) 200 final

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was financed by the European Neighbourhood- and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). From 2014 on until 2020, financial support to the programs will be provided by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). During this period of time, 15.4 billion EUR will be provided to the ENP, two thirds of it to the Southern Partnership – that is MENA countries.

Furthermore, the EU announced the "Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth" (SPRING) Program in September 2011. This was to include emergency financial aid to partner states, major recipients including Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan. Although the latter two were not countries that had experienced a revolution, they had seen limited protests and the aid was seen as an incentive to their monarchies to introduce reforms for a top-down transformation. At the same time, the EU enjoys good relations to Morocco and Jordan, seeing them as moderate regimes that may be of help in such challenges as the Arab-Israeli conflict or illegal immigration.

Besides the EU's joint programs supporting democratic change and reform in the MENA, several EU member states have also set up their own mid- to long-term programs – either on a national basis or in a multilateral context.

During the G8 Summit in Deauville in 2011, a more multinational program has been launched - the "Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition" that is funded by the G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States), the EU and the regional partners Kuwait, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Partnership

also includes international financial institutions (IFI) such as the African Development Bank, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance Corporation, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the OPEC Fund for International Development, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank. The country holding presidency of the G8 also has the Chairmanship of the Deauville Partnership. The partners compiled pledges amounting up to € 14.4 billion in aid, loans and debt relief for the program. The Deauville Partnership has identified 4 key goals: Economic stabilization, job creation, inclusion and governance as well as integration.Since European foreign policy is based on a consensus position of all member states, often times it cannot be more than the least common denominator of the member states' positions. As the no-fly zone in Libya has shown, controversial situations such as humanitarian interventions will most likely lead to the absence of a common position – and thereby to the absence of a European foreign policy position. At many times during the uprisings of the Arab Spring, European member states have held differing positions on their approach, often influenced by their traditional role within the region.

As a former colonial and European power, France historically has had strong ties to its former colonies in North Africa and its mandate states of Syria and Lebanon. Although countries such as Algeria have fought long and bloody wars for their independence

from France, the francophone culture of Maghreb states from Morocco to Tunisia clearly shows the special relationship. Additionally, French influence stems from its role as a UN Security Council permanent member and nuclear power.

Together with other southern European countries such as Spain and Italy, France has a heightened interest in strong economic and political ties to the countries facing it on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea – just as Germany seeks closer ties to Eastern Europe. In that sense, French leadership in a project such as the UfM – especially in its originally perceived form as an exclusively Mediterranean project – may be understood as an attempt to regain its former position of power.

French politics and industry allegedlyhad held close ties with the ruling elites in North Africa and therefore at times been accused of putting a blind eye on the problematic practices in the region. Partly also to make-up for past mistakes and especially in the early phase of the Arab Uprisings, France pushed for a particularly tough stance with regard to the military intervention in Libya in support of the rebels.

The British supported the French and took an equally tough stance on Libya. Yet, sustaining the military campaign proofed also a considerable challenge for British and French defence capabilities. When the air-campaign ran out of precision-guided ammunition, it was only thanks to US support that the operations could continue. However, in line with the European tradition, Britain also developed a more nuanced and structured approach to contribute to the

change in the region. In 2011, Britain set up the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office's (FCO) so-called Arab Partnership (AP) as a long-term response to the "Arab Spring".[12] The UK has committed £ 110 million (€ 131.35 million) to their Arab Partnership Fund covering the period from 2011 to2015. Of that sum, € 48 million are administered by the FCO as "Arab Partnership Participation Fund" (APPF), whereas the rest goes to the Department of International Development (DFID) for the "Arab Partnership Economic Facility". The British program pushes for four main goals: economic growth & youth employability; political participation; freedom of expression; and good governance, that is rule of law and access to justice, support of civil society and fighting corruption.

AP funding is available for 19 countries of the MENA region, namely the priority countries Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Mauritania, Lebanon, and Iraq. The GCC members Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, UAE are also eligible for funding, but the financial resources for them are capped. The Palestinian Territories and Yemen are included but get their funding mostly from other programs. So far, the APPF has funded 46 projects in 2011-12, 73 in 2012-13 and currently funds 62 projects in 15 countries for 2013-14.

[12] Department for International Development and Foreign & Commonwealth Office, The Arab Partnership.https://www.gov.uk/arab-partnership

Conclusion: German Middle East Policy and the European Union

In Europe and Germany, the so-called "Arab Spring" has led to a change of paradigm in the public view towards the peoples of MENA countries. No longer is the theory of the "Arab exception" of relevance, no longer will it be possible to legitimize support for despots with the notion that Arabs simply "are not ready for democracy".

It is true that by now, peaceful revolutions have been over-taken by bloody street fights, coups and civil warand the enthusiasm of the early days has been swept away. Yet still, the EU as well as Germany and the other member states have to concede that their dealings with authoritarian regimes before 2011 were far too uncritical. They also have to be careful not to return to the modus operandi, but rather support the civil societies in their struggle towards moderate democratic transformation and a political culture of governmental accountability – a goal that was paid only in lip-service for far too long.

Looking specifically at German foreign policy concerning the Middle East certain continuities and discontinuities as well as parallels to European policy can be observed:

Germany puts special emphasis on its own economic interests, seeing an important chance in increasing employment through new fields of business such as the renewable energy sector in which Germany is one of the front-runners worldwide. But the Federal Republic also tries to strengthen economic growth and job-creation

as well as the education sector in the MENA countries. After all, the socioeconomic conditions have been a major factor for the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere and also contribute to the continuing turmoil in the region.

In addition, the improvement of living conditions in North Africa is seen as an option to meet the question of economically driven migration originating from the region. Stable governments with the means to stop migration streams from leaving their coasts towards Europe as well as the means to provide the legal protection and political stability necessary for foreign investments are regarded as key here. Yet in the past, in many cases this political stability had been confused with autocratic rule, undermining the EU's and Germany's overall claims of holding high democratic values and human rights. This policy proved to be unsustainable and Germany claims to have learned its lesson.

Another problem is Germany's very restricted visa policy towards professionals, educators and businessmen from the MENA region trying to participate in an exchange of expertise with Germany. While migration streams have to be controlled, German restrictions on travel also impair trade relations and obstruct building trust and strong relations with civil societies. Since this attitude can also be found in other European countries, the promised "mobility" between the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean seems to be far way off.

For the time being, the strength of the German support program lies within financial, personal and technical assistance, with

German foreign policy resembling more of a development program rather than hard-boiled political realism. Yet the overall success of the Federal Republic's foreign policy in a changing MENA region is smothered by the lack of solid commitment in times of conflict. A common example of this problem was the reaction – or rather inaction – in the case of Libya. The German government, on the one hand, highlights its rapid provision of humanitarian aid when fighting began and its support of state-building efforts after the fall of the Gaddafi regime. Yet when it came to the question of supporting a mission to protect the civilian population politically and let alone militarily, the German response was the now somewhat infamous abstention from voting on UN Security Council resolution 1973, the no-fly zone for Libya. While there are good historic reasons for Germany to avoid military action as much as possible, Germany also fell short of taking a political stance. As the early French reaction on the Tunisian revolution has shown, taking the "wrong" stance may backfire. But if Germany wants to fit in the role of the global player that it views itself in, its foreign policy must also take smart and reliable positions on unpopular issues. It seems, however, that the German abstention on Libya has done more damage to Germany's position in NATO and to the EU's foreign policy ambitions than to Germany's reputation in the Middle East.

The EU's foreign policy has to deal with several big problemson the policy level as well. For one, the strength ofEuropean foreign affairs lies in its introversion, focused on intra-European policy. The narrative of an emerging EU Common Foreign and Security Policy

(CFSP) may therefore be an effective tool for the European integration process, but its international implementation struggles with its ineffectiveness. With 28 member states, all following their own foreign policy interests, there is a clear lack of vertical convergence within the EU. Due to the Lisbon Treaty (as effective by December 2010), the EU has succeeded in focusing its foreign policy coordination in one single position, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently manned by Catherine Ashton. Despite this, her political priority seems to be limited to the search for the lowest common denominator.

Moreover, despite the fact that the EU has put additional emphasis on bilateral relations and a differentiated approach based on the "more-for-more and less-for-less" principle, political practices display a high degree of continuity. For the EU, foreign policy goals in the Middle East and northern Africa have not changed significantly since before the "Arab Spring": opening and strengthening MENA markets for European products, stopping the flow of immigrants into the EU, and curtailing terrorism. In this sense, German and European priorities display a high degree of similarity. Support for democratic reforms also figures high on the political agenda, it remains to be seen, however, where the priorities will rest when foreign policy objectives get in conflict with each other.

Similarly, the European approaches towards fulfilling these goals have not changed since before the Arab uprisings: on the economic level, negotiations on several Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreements are pursued further. The same is true for readmission

agreements being negotiated with non-European neighbours that would allow them easier access to visas to the EU in exchange for the readmission of illegal immigrants from the EU.[13] It remains to be seen if these kinds of agreements coupled with development aid, would open up the concerned states to political influences from Europe and serve as enough of an incentive for democratic reforms. The "more-for-more" strategy may work in an ideal environment and arguably is more effective than a "less-for-less" approach that only punishes for "bad" behaviour. However in most cases, it does not offer enough incentives for regimes to change; while in some case other external players step in and provide an alternative to the EU.

This also highlights one of the major dilemmas that the Europeans face: on the one hand, Europe and Germany are highly interested in domestic security as well as economic development, therefore pushing to close borders while at the same time opening markets abroad. This contradicting situation is bound to either harm trade and economic power or breach the "Fortress Europe". With the Arab Spring, another aspect has been added to the dilemma as Europeans now also seea moral duty in promoting democratic values in MENA countries.

With civil war in Syria, a military coup in Egypt, an explosive situation in Libya and Iraq as well as political struggle in Yemen, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia it remains to be seen whether

[13] European Commission: Evaluation of EU Readmission Agreements, COM(2011) 76

the EU and consequently also the German government will find the necessary approaches to be able to balance the different dilemmas they faces. In any way, the hope remains that the EU's and Germany's regained interest in the Middle East and their commitment to support the democratic transition in the region will be kept now that the public enthusiasm about the political change in the Arab world is cooling down.