EU SECURITY DISCOURSE: CREATİNG NEW REGIONAL BOUNDARIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND GULF REGIONS[*]

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) as an international actor has slowly been incorporated into geopolitical reality, by academics and other international actors. This makes it all the more important to understand how the EU sees the world in which it interacts and what role security matters play in this construction. In this article we will analyse how the EU constructs regions. We will be looking at how the Mediterranean and the Gulf in particular are represented as regions by the EU. The EU relationship with the Mediterranean is quite developed, but as to the Gulf there is still much to do. This is slowly changing; recently the EU began considering a regional approach due to increasing security concerns. The current trend in discourse incorporates the Gulf countries into a wider Middle East, perhaps signalling the beginning of a coherent regional strategy for what could become another area of insecurity in EU eyes.

Keywords

EU Foreign Policy, Discourse, Regional Boundaries, Geopolitics, Security, Gulf Region, Mediterranean

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is increasingly seen as a capable actor in world affairs, not only in the sphere of economic relations but also on security issues. Its presence has slowly been incorporated into geopolitical reality, by academics and other international actors. Security wise, the EU

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is set to take on greater responsibilities in the coming years: the creation of "Battlegroups"[1] and the recent EU operation in the Congo are but two recent examples of this growing responsibility. This makes it all the more important to analyse and understand how the EU represents, and sees, the world in which it interacts. How does the EU deal with the world? What spatial divisions does it recognize in the world and why? Also, what role do security matters play in this construction? In this article we will be looking at the regional level: how the EU constructs regions. This constitutes, after all, the lens through which Europe sees and relates to the world. We will therefore be looking at boundaries, not in a traditional sense meaning those between two states and the associated disputes that borders usually bring, but instead, looking how the Mediterranean and in particular the Gulf are represented by the EU as regions.

The focus, then, is on the relationship between discourse and boundaries, specifically on how European Union security discourse conceives regional boundaries in the Arab world[2], giving special attention to the Gulf as a region and its boundaries. In the first section of this article, we will look at Euro-Mediterranean relations that produced its own discourse, reflecting both concerns and aspirations for the region, but also renewing the Mediterranean as a region. The Euro-Mediterranean process is an important example of how the EU has previously affected regional boundaries through security discourse. The Gulf region is another area in which the EU is showing increased interest, developing its relationship with countries in the region. We will be looking at how EU discourse is shaping regional boundaries in that part of the Arab world.

With an ever-evolving security discourse, how does European security discourse see the Gulf region and its boundaries? In particular, what boundaries is EU discourse favouring for the Gulf region? Could we see another regional grouping forming in the region to better address the EU's security concerns or will the EU prefer a bilateral approach, negotiating with the different countries in the region? There is also the possibility of extending the Euro-Mediterranean framework to encompass

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[1] European Union Council Secretariat, "EU Battlegroups", Factsheet, Brussels, Council of the European Union, 2005. [Available Online] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/BattlegroupsNov05factsheet.pdf

[2] For the European Union, the Arab world consists of: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the Palestinian Authority, Iraq, Yemen and the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates). See: The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union, "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World", 15945/03, PESC 791. Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2003.

the Gulf countries. To address the different regional security issues, new regional boundaries might be drawn up in order to support a more active European role, giving us some insight into EU plans regarding the region. For instance, perhaps a Barcelona style framework for the Gulf region or even the entire Arab world is being planned, or some other form of cooperation could be in the works.

The notion of boundaries is a complex one, yet a very present one: its importance in contemporary international affairs may perhaps be a paradox as we often hear about the disappearance of borders in a globalized planet. This paradox is further complicated when one takes a closer look at the term 'boundary' which reflects a limiting line, a limit of action.[3] The demands of the contemporary world make it harder to impose limits of action; states, international organizations and even multinationals are capable of affecting societies well beyond their own borders or jurisdictions. In the words of Ó Tuathail, in recent years there have been:

> spatial transformations that have seriously eroded state sovereignty, blurred boundaries between the "inside" and "outside" of states, and produced a common "global society" facing dangers and threats that emanate from no single state but from the successes and excesses of advanced modernity.[4]

Hence, the way in which boundaries are defined changed, adapted to this new context, no longer lines on a map, but complex constructions that reflect more than physical or material elements.

As such, boundaries are both a social construction and a political representation, localized in time and space within a specific context and the result of concrete practices (treaties for example).[5] Within this new approach to boundaries and geopolitics, security discourse is to be a crucial element for the perception of boundaries and gives way to a set of concrete practices that reflect both boundaries and concerns. The French word for boundaries, "frontières" helps us understand this point. The French word

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[3] C. T. Onions, ed. with the Assistance of G. W. S. Friedrichsen and R. W. Burchfield, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, London, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 110.

[4] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "The Postmodern Geopolitical Conditions: States, Statecraft, and Security at the Millennium", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90, No. 1 (2000), p. 167.

[5] Michel Foucher, *L'Invention des Frontières*, Paris, Fondation pour les Etudes de Défense Nationale, 1986, pp. 55-56.

contains "front", the front line, where the enemy passes, and it is associated with conflict and security.[6] What or who the enemy is has also changed. The whole concept of security, and the way we speak about it has undergone a major transformation: it is no longer limited to the traditional military threats. These geopolitical discourses are increasingly flexible, going beyond a state centric view of "space and security, territory and threats".[7] How we perceive security has evolved, discourse serves to identify which issues are considered security threats or priorities, or at least presented in that way; it, discourse, mediates facts, to give "meaning that is then carried by actors in a particular situation".[8]

Discourse is how we can discover these social constructions; discourse, or rather its rhetorical structures, allow studying and identifying how these constructions are established and what meaning is given to certain terms or concepts.[9] In other words, boundaries are to be understood "not merely as static lines but as a set of practices and discourses which 'spread' into the whole of society".[10] From a geopolitical point of view, discourse has been assimilated, being considered an essential element in the constructing and perceiving of the world: "The study of geopolitics in discursive terms, therefore, is the study of the socio-cultural resources and rules by which geographies of international politics get written".[11] Boundaries go beyond simple lines on a map they define; they are a representation of social practices and discourses. Discourse can tell us how we see the other, and who he is and even where he is, and this immediately creates boundaries. As a result, looking at the discourse we can determine the meaning of certain terms, like Gulf or Arab world for example, and identify what they represent in the public sphere, in other words their boundaries.

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[6] Ibid., p. 60.

[7] Ó Tuathail, "The Postmodern Geopolitical Conditions: States, Statecraft, and Security at the Millennium", p. 167.

[8] Henrik Larsen, *Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis. France, Britain and Europe*, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 26.

[9] Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, pp. 176-177. See also Ole Waever, "Resisting the Temptation of Post Foreign Policy Analysis," in Walter Carlsnaes and Steve Smith (eds.), *European Foreign Policy. The EC and Changing Perspectives in Europe*, London, Sage Publications, 1994, p. 254.

[10] Anssi Paasi, "Boundaries as Social Practice and Discourse: The Finnish – Russian Border", *Regional Studies*, 33, No. 7 (1999), p. 670.

[11] Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse. Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy", *Political Geography*, 11, No. 2 (March 1992), p. 193.

As we have seen, the way we perceive security and boundaries has changed. The interaction between them within the contemporary context needs to be explored. In that respect regions are today an important reality in the international scene; the regional level has taken up an increasingly important role in international relations.[12] There is a greater tendency to talk about the world with an emphasis on regions; we speak about the Arab world, the Mediterranean or the Gulf, about Latin America and the Mercosul and so forth. In this respect, the EU has been at the forefront, helping to put regions back on the agenda, both as a successful model and in engaging various regions and regional groupings throughout the world. As we will see, EU security perception helped to forge the boundaries of a Mediterranean region, bringing together various actors in order to solve the region's security problems. These security perceptions are also at work in the Gulf region, bringing forth new boundaries and possibilities for EU foreign policy.

The Creation of the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is an important case study for anyone attempting to understand how boundaries and discourse interact. This region has received particular attention from the EU redefining the Mediterranean through discourse, notably security discourse. After the end of the Cold War new security threats emerged and, consequently, European discourse began to address these threats and the location from where the threats where originating. It can be said that while doing this, the EU began a process of construction or reconstruction of the Mediterranean, turning it into a geopolitical area of concern to Europe.[13]

The EU perceives the Mediterranean as an area of insecurity from which threats emanated, posing a challenge to European security. This perceived insecurity was enough to create a Mediterranean region, encompassing various states that supposedly belong to a coherent region; security was enough of a criterion to bind them together. According to Michelle Pace, "the Mediterranean becomes more 'real' on the EU agenda

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[12] See Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[13] Pinar Bilgin, "A Return to 'Civilisational Geopolitics' in the Mediterranean? Changing Geopolitical Images of European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era", *Geopolitics*, 9, No. 2 (2004), pp. 270, 273. See also Michelle Pace, "The Euro-Mediterranean *Partnership* and the *Common* Mediterranean Strategy? European Union Policy from a Discursive Perspective", *Geopolitics*, 9, No. 2 (2004), p. 265 and Martin Ortega, "Some Comments on the European Union's Mediterranean Policy", *Perceptions*, VIII, June-August (2003).

when issues are conceived as a threat to Europe's security … Thus, what unifies the Mediterranean in European eyes and the issues that make discourse of the Mediterranean 'effective' … are security matters".[14] Security concerns form a substantial part of EU regional creation in the Mediterranean, creating an "other" characterized by elements of insecurity and by boundaries reflecting the discourse.

Before we deal with the boundaries of the Mediterranean, a few words on the security issues that shape the region. First, we must understand security in a broad sense; there are many issues that are addressed from a security viewpoint. Looking through, for example, the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences, certain issues are repeated throughout the meetings, issues that are considered a threat to peace and stability in the region: one can identify five security issues in the Mediterranean of concern to the EU: Immigration, Terrorism, Organized Crime, Regional Conflicts and Weapons of Mass Destruction. As we can see these issues encompass a wide range of areas; they affect both external and internal security, threatening economic, social and political stability within the Union. These issues are agreed upon by all participants in these meetings and are the object of measures in order to deal with them; although, as some have suggested there is an imbalance of power regarding the participants which can affect what issues are put on the table.[15] Despite this, there is a desire to engage the region to address security concerns on the part of the EU. It is the perceived presence of these issues that brought the EU to its current initiatives, especially at the beginning of the 1990s, when various countries in the region were facing political and economical crises:

> high demographic growth rates, economic crises, and the incapability of several governments to initiate comprehensive political reforms are major causes for the fundamentalism and its violence in Algeria as well as in other countries. The breakdown of ideologies and failure of economic models due to corruption of

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[14] Michelle Pace, "The Ugly Duckling of Europe: The Mediterranean in the Foreign Policy of the European Union", Journal of European Area Studies, 10, No. 2 (2002), pp. 203-204.

[15] See Pace, "The Euro-Mediterranean *Partnership* and the *Common* Mediterranean Strategy? European Union Policy from a Discursive Perspective", pp. 293, 303. She argues that initially the Mediterranean dialogue was concluded only on the EU side and that the other participants did not have any input on what was initially to be discussed. See also the meeting of Cannes 1995 where the EU sets its priorities for then upcoming Barcelona Conference in: The Council of the European Union. Cannes European Council 26 and 27 June 1995. [Available online] http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00211-C.EN5.htm

government elites are typical causes of frictions in the Mediterranean.[16]

This context helped reshape the Mediterranean region, forcing the EU to rethink its approach and view of the Mediterranean region. Initially, Euro-Mediterranean relations were bilateral, happening only at the state level, led by a few European states. Several EU member states had a long history in the region, including a recent colonial history, so countries like France or Spain were at first more inclined to pursue bilateral cooperation, in particular with their former colonies. Despite this there where some initiatives by the then European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1960s and 1970s mostly in the economic area. During this time there used to be a separation between Western and Eastern Mediterranean, that is, between Maghreb and Mashreq. For example, accords were signed with countries forming the Maghreb in 1976 and with the countries of the Mashreq in 1977. However, from the 80s all the way through the 1990s, a series of events brought the EEC and later the EU closer to the Mediterranean. With Greece, Spain and Portugal joining, the Mediterranean dimension gained new momentum; the EU now had now a continuous border with the Mediterranean. But beyond this, events in the region influenced EU perceptions, discourse and its approach to dealing with the different security challenges in the region. Mounting instability with the local regimes, including civil war in Algeria, the Gulf War but also the launching of the Middle East Peace Process all contributed to a changing discourse.[17] Prior to the Barcelona Conference of November 1995, a common position had been agreed upon, putting forward Europe's concerns regarding the region. The Cannes European Council meeting (June 1995) expressed Europe's desire to tackle the perceived problems mentioned earlier, notably immigration, terrorism, organized crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and regional conflicts. With the signing of the "Barcelona Declaration" we have the Mediterranean being tackled as one region, where the EU wishes for peace, stability and security.[18]

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[16] Jean-François Daguzan, "Confidence Building Measures, Disarmament and Crisis Prevention: A View from the North," in Hans Günter Brauch, Antonio Marquina, Abdelwahab (eds.) with the language assistance of Peter H. Liotta, *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for the 21st Century*, Basingstoke-London, Macmillan, 2000, p. 95.

[17] Pace, "The Ugly Duckling of Europe: The Mediterranean in the Foreign Policy of the European Union", p. 197.

[18] Euro-Mediterranean Conference. Barcelona Declaration. Barcelona, 1995 [Available Online] http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/bd.htm See also Helle Malmvig, "Cooperation or Democratisation? The EU's Conflicting Mediterranean Security Discourses*", Danish Institute for International Studies*, DIIS Working Paper 2004/8 (2004) for additional information on the EU's security discourse in the region.

This discourse led to an approach to deal with security threats from the Mediterranean, notably the "Barcelona Declaration", which above all things engaged all Mediterranean partners in dialogue. Therefore, Mediterranean boundaries reflect the fact that there is a need to counter these security threats, but that this will be done through dialogue and cooperation. Looking at the "Barcelona Declaration", we see that all 15 EU member states, plus an EU representative from the Council and Commission, along with 11 non-EU Mediterranean States and a representative of the Palestinian Authority, signed the declaration.[19] It is of note that all EU member countries plus representatives from the EU itself signed this declaration. The absence of Libya but the presence of Israel and the Palestinian authority are also of importance.

Despite this, there remains one important question to be answered, a question that is not entirely addressed in the discourse or at least the discourse still is unclear as to the answer. The question is the following: is the EU part of the Mediterranean? The EU definition of the Mediterranean remains a flexible one. There is, as we will see later, the possibility of extending the Mediterranean all the way to the Gulf, but one of the questions that remains to be answered is that of the EU's relationship with the Mediterranean. The EU gave a Mediterranean identity to a number of states, and by doing so defining, partially, the borders of the Mediterranean. But will the EU's discourse ever fully include itself in the Mediterranean, making the Mediterranean boundary go through the EU, therefore acquiring a Mediterranean identity? For now, we can put forward that to the EU, there is a Mediterranean, and although its borders are not permanent but subject to changes, there is an identifiable region called the Mediterranean to the EU.

EU and Security Discourse in the Gulf

The EU's relationship with the Gulf States can be dated back to the early 1970s. During that decade Europe had to deal with oil price shocks and later on with the Iranian revolution, all these events helped the European countries realize the need for an independent European policy. One example of this growing awareness is the "Venice Declaration" of 1980 where the ancestor of the EU established its basic position on the

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[19] Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the Palestinian Authority. At the time Malta and Cyprus were not EU members.

Middle East, calling for the right to existence, exchange of the Territories and security for all States in the region.[20] However, until recently as we will see, no call for setting up a comprehensive framework encompassing the Gulf was made, only the Mediterranean became the object of a regional initiative. The 1970s with war and unrest in the Middle East marked the beginning of an independent European policy, albeit it a modest start, with preferential trade agreements and some policy cooperation between member states.

Currently one could say that in contrast to the Mediterranean, the Gulf region is not immediately regarded as an area of priority for the EU, but this is perhaps about to change as we will see in this section. EU discourse and notably security discourse has evolved slowly, at first bilateral but later recognizing the importance of the region, recently calling for the adoption of a regional framework. In addition, despite this bilateral nature of discourse, security concerns have been present and thus are not a new addition for the EU in regards to the region. The change is in the realization of the impact security issues from this region could have for the EU. Looking at official EU documents[21], in addition to some research papers and opinion pieces, we hope to determine how the Gulf is represented by the EU as a region. Within what is traditionally recognized as the Gulf, the EU maintains relations with several local actors, notably cooperation agreements with the GCC, in addition to relations with Iraq, Yemen and Iran.

The EU has had a long relationship with the GCC as an organization, having followed its evolution since the late 1980s.[22] In regards to security discourse, there are certain issues that seem to preoccupy both actors. For example, the conflict in the Middle East,

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[20] Dorothee Schmid, Shai Moses, Alfred Tovias and Stephen Calleya, "Mapping European and American Economic Initiatives Towards Israel and the Palestinian Authority and their Effects on Honest Broker Perceptions", EuroMeSCo under the auspices of Leonard David Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University (Jerusalem), October 2006. [Available Online] http://euromesco.com.pt/images/leonard%20davis_ifri_medac_eng_final%20ts_ak.pdf

[21] Official documents included: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - EU Joint Ministerial and Council meetings from 2000 to 2005, the EU papers "Strengthening the EU's Partnership with the Arab World" (The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union, "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World".) and the "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East" (Presidency of the Council of the European Union, "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", 10246/04, COMMEM 11 COMAG 9, Brussels, Council of the European Union, 2004).

[22] The GCC was founded in 1981 by Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates with the basic objectives of coordinating, integrating and inter-connecting members States in all fields. In the course of this article the individual policies of each member States will not be analyzed since our main interest is EU perceptions and construction of boundaries in the Gulf.

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the nuclear standoff with Iran, the war in Iraq and finally terrorism.[23]

The case of the GCC is an interesting one; the first element of interest is its nature as a regional organization. Despite not having the same degree of integration that the EU has, the GCC constitutes a viable partner in the region, that most importantly has shown a desire to continue to evolve, taking example from the EU.[24] Another element of interest is the important security dimension present as the *raison d'être* of the GCC, which has to deal with both external and internal threats to regional security. Within this context, the EU favours a two-part strategy: on one hand, continuing the dialogue with the GCC on various security issues as we have seen above, and on the other hand, pushing for further integration in the region, specifically for the GCC, as a means for long term security for the GCC members themselves. Regional economic integration was discussed during the 15th EU-GCC Ministerial Meeting of 2005, in it "The EU considers regional economic integration processes as important instruments for peace, stability and prosperity".[25] The GCC and its member states will remain important for any EU initiative in the Gulf, having already established some foundations they can continue to work for security in the entire region.

In Iran, European involvement has been constant in regards to the nuclear crisis currently taking place, pushing for dialogue and a comprise solution through diplomacy. The EU's major security concern as to Iran is its possible nuclear weapons program, although questions of human rights and support for radical groups are also of concern, but these last two issues are strangely not included under the security heading of the 2001 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on EU-Iran relations, which is clearly dominated by Iran's nuclear program.[26] Strangely because these issues, human rights and especially

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[23] See the GCC – EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meetings between 2000 and 2005, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.asp?id=398&lang=en&mode=g for the 15th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/gulf_cooperation/intro/finaldecl_050405.pdf

[24] An example of this is the push for a single currency. See, "Gulf States Push for a Single Currency", BBC News, Business, 10th October 2002. [Available Online] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/2313847.stm

[25] 15th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, Joint Communique, Manama, 5 April 2005, p. 2. [Available Online] http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/gulf_cooperation/intro/finaldecl_050405.pdf

[26] Commission of the European Communities, "EU Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran", COM (2001)71, Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, 2001. [Available Online] http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iran/doc/com_2001_71en.pdf

support of radical groups, are traditionally approached by the EU from a security perspective. With reference to Iran, the EU has put forward a series of issues that guide the dialogue with Iran:

– *Global issues* (terrorism, human rights and proliferation);
– *Regional issues* (Iraq, Gulf, Central Asia, the Middle East Peace Process);
– *Areas of cooperation* (drugs, refugees, energy, trade and investment).[27]

Finally, regarding EU-Iran relations, it is of note that some experts meetings on drug trafficking and refugees have taken place, showing a broadening engagement with Iran. The EU approach to Iran has been to engage in dialogue and offer incentives, rather than excluding it from the international community or any settlement on the nuclear issue. The EU did not support immediate military options, trying to mediate between Iran and the more hawkish position of the United States.

Iraq and Yemen are the two other actors that are engaged with the EU within cooperation agreements or, in the case of Iraq, assistance programs. Regarding Iraq, the EU and notably the Commission have supported reconstruction efforts in the country, while the invasion of Iraq caused a rift between member states. The reconstruction efforts are part of EU policy with three main objectives:

- The development of a secure, stable and democratic Iraq;
- The establishment of an open, stable, sustainable and diversified market economy;
- Iraq's political and economic integration into its region and the international system.[28]

Stability and security in Iraq are a concern for the EU, who commits funds not only for the reconstruction of infrastructures, but also supports the political reconstruction that is now being attempted. The EU is looking to intensify its relation with Iraq, preparing the framework for formalised

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Commission of the European Communities, "The EU and Iraq: A Framework for Engagement", COM (2004) 417/1, Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, 2004.

contractual relations.[29] Until now the EU's involvement in Iraq has been relatively low key, although one of its members, the UK, has an important contingent of troops in the country. Despite this, the EU will continue its mainly political and economical engagement, as well as to work with all parties involved to achieve its main objective, which is security and stability in Iraq.

In the case of Yemen, there are concerns over terrorism, according to the European Commission "Security remains a major problem for Yemen; the country is a target for terrorist attacks, but even more a potential safe haven for terrorist groups as logistical base for arms-smuggling, training and recruiting of terrorists".[30] In addition to the economic aid received by Yemen, a political dialogue was initiated between the EU and Yemen in 2004. This dialogue focuses on democratisation and human rights, but also on terrorism and on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the aim being the enhancement of regional security and stability.[31]

As we have just seen, there is no overarching policy regarding the Gulf that directs EU efforts; rather the discourse shows that several independent initiatives are in place and that dialogue has been mostly bilateral, with agreements with Yemen, Iran, and Iraq, but also with the GCC. Remarkably, such a complex region with important security issues, as for instance terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, is the object of a weak security discourse. The absence of energy security in the security discourse so far is of interest: it is perhaps unexpected when taking into account the energy reserves present in the different states in the Gulf.[32]

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[29] Commission of the European Communities, "The EU's Relations with Iraq", Commission of the European Communities external relations web page [Available Online]
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iraq/intro/index.htm
[30] Commission of the European Communities, "The EU's Relations with Yemen", Commission of the European Communities external relations web page [Available Online]
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/yemen/intro/index.htm
[31] Commission of the European Communities, "Draft Joint Declaration on Political Dialogue between the European Union and the Republic of Yemen", Commission the European Communities [Available Online]
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/yemen/intro/joint_decl_06-07-04.pdf
[32] In the recent European Green Paper on Energy Security there is little mention of the Gulf, only two passing references to the region, in contrast with the growing attention being given to Russia. See Commission of the European Communities, "A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy". COM(2006), *Green Paper*, Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, 2006. [Available Online]
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/green-paper-energy/doc/2006_03_08_gp_document_en.pdf

The dialogue initiated between the EU and the different states has not concentrated on security matters, and the dialogue that has existed has been of little substance, including the EU-GCC initiatives.[33] Despite this, security has begun to take a greater role in the EU's perception of the region, as was made evident by the 2003 EU communication on "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World":

> The main objective of the EU in its relations with the Arab World is to promote prosperity, peace and stability, thereby not only contributing to the welfare and security of the region, but also to its own security. Problems of terrorism and WMD originating there have a direct impact in Europe. In this context, the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is essential. There will be little chance of dealing fully with other problems in the Middle East until this conflict is resolved; such a resolution is therefore a strategic priority for the EU.[34]

Other declarations seem to reinforce this idea of a greater EU interest in the region, due to security concerns, an interest that can lead to greater cooperation between the EU and the Gulf. In December 2005 then French Foreign Minister, Michèle Alliot-Marie, was quoted as saying:

> Concerning security issues, the Arabian-Persian Gulf seems to many like the private domain of the United States … Europe could provide a very important contribution to the region because it is a heavyweight actor and because we, Europeans, consider that we are capable of bring in our experience and help in the stabilization of the Gulf.[35]

Perceptions and discourse about the Gulf have evolved enough for the EU to recognize the importance of this region. The dwindling credibility of US in the region, unable to stabilise it after its invasion of Iraq

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[33] Christan Koch, "Making Education the Focus of Gulf-Europe Ties," *Khaleej Times*, September 25, 2005, Opinion, [Available Online] http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?section=opinion&xfile=data/opinion/2005/september/opinion_september65.xml
[34] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World", p. 7.
[35] Agence France Presse, "French Minister Calls for EU-Gulf Security Cooperation", Agence France Presse, Decembre 3, 2005 [Available Online] http://www.iiss.org/whats-new/iiss-in-the-press/press-coverage-2005/december-2005/french-minister-calls-for-eu-gulf-security

and to stop terrorist groups operating in the region, has in part contributed to this change in perception. Therefore, like earlier in the 1970s, today the EU has diverging policies from the US preferring a different independent approach based on cooperation, attempting to tackle the root causes of insecurity.[36]

Perhaps more than in any other region, security issues seem to permeate the Gulf at all levels, the EU seems to believe that any further developments in the Arab World are dependent on the resolution of these issues. In this respect, terrorism is an important issue for the EU, exemplified by the joint GCC-EU countries seminars on Combating Terrorist Financing, the second such meeting held in Abu Dhabi in March 2005. The issue of terrorism is at the centre of EU security discourse throughout the region, but the broader question of regional security is also present in the dialogues between the EU and the different local actors, demonstrating that there are issues affecting all and not only some in the region. This idea of common regional security issues has been further solidified by the EU, following up its earlier communication regarding a partnership with the Arab world with its 2004 "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and Middle East", the latter putting forward a policy agenda which includes several issues considered essential to the EU and countries "East of Jordan". Issues like: the Middle East Peace Process, Non-Proliferation, Security Dialogue and Counter Terrorism were included.[37] Although there is a lack of any discourse on immigration, legal or illegal, to the EU from the Gulf, the EU recognizes that the security issues present in the region, notably of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, do "have a direct impact in Europe".[38] Furthermore, if in the past the issue of oil supply, notably due to the oil crisis of 1973-1974, is in part responsible for the emergence of an independent EU policy for the region, in regards to the Gulf the issue of oil seems not to have been

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[36] This divergence in approaches is also apparent due to the almost nonexistent mention of US backed frameworks for the region, notably the Greater Middle East Initiative, in official EU discourse. There seems to be little concern for US initiatives within European discourse, including if there is overlapping or not. For a more in-depth look at the diverging policies in the Gulf between the US and the EU see Helle Malmvig, "An Unlikely Match or a Marriage in the Making? EU-GCC Relations in a Changing Security Environment", *Danish Institute for International Studies*, DIIS Brief, November (2006).

[37] Additionally, the EU called countries "East of Jordan" to consider confidence building measures and to tackle the question of financing of terrorism. See: Presidency of the Council of the European Union, "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", p. 10-12.

[38] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World", p. 7.

securitized for now.[39] Therefore, future EU discourse should promote peace, prosperity and stability in order to achieve EU objectives of security for the region and security for the EU as well. This likely new discursive orientation that moves towards a regional framework instead of a series of bilateral agreements would undoubtedly have an impact on the boundaries of the Gulf region in regards to the way the EU perceives them:

> In the process of progressively defining its Common Foreign and Security Policy, it is time for the European Union (EU) to focus on the Gulf region. In the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the regional realignment stimulated by the campaign against terrorism, an intensification of EU engagement in the Gulf region is imperative. A full-fledged Common Strategy toward the Gulf will have to include the EU's position towards Iran, Iraq, Yemen and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).[40]

EU Security Discourse and Regional Boundaries in the Gulf

We have seen how EU security discourse seems to be increasingly aware of the strategic importance of the Gulf. This has been reflected in recent EU strategy papers on the Mediterranean and Middle East and the Partnership with the Arab World, despite the fact that these documents contain no concrete proposals, only mentioning a need to develop a stronger link with the region "beyond Jordan".[41] This increasing strategic

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[39] Dorothee Schmid, Shai Moses, Alfred Tovias and Stephen Calleya, "Mapping European and American Economic Initiatives Towards Israel and the Palestinian Authority and their Effects on Honest Broker Perceptions", EuroMeSCo under the auspices of Leonard David Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University (Jerusalem), October 2006. [Available Online]
http://euromesco.com.pt/images/leonard%20davis_ifri_medac_eng_final%20ts_ak.pdf
The absence of oil and gas supply issues from the security discourse could be a conscious decision when dealing with the Gulf region, intended to avoid unsettling relations and compromising the EU's energy security (an issue which would have arisen if the region's energy reserves were introduced into a security discussion). Consequently, this seems to reflect, on the EU's side, a perceived stability in oil and gas supplies coming from the Gulf to Europe. The same can be said about the Mediterranean where the issue of energy security seems not to have been securitized.
[40] Felix Neugart and Giacomo Luciani (eds.), "The EU and the GCC. A New Partnership", in Bertelsmann Group for Policy Research, Center for Applied Policy Research in cooperation with The Mediterranean Programme, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advance Studies, European Institute [Available online]
http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2005/2005_GCC-EU.pdf
[41] Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East" and Christian Koch and Felix Neugart, "Introduction", in Christian Koch and Felix Neugart (eds.), *A Window of Opportunity Europe, Gulf Security and the Aftermath of the Iraq War*, Dubai, Gulf Research Center, 2005, p. 10.

importance is due to certain issues that seem to be present throughout the entire area and that the EU views from a security perspective, for example, the situation in the Middle East, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the situation in Iran and Iraq and finally terrorism.[42] In particular, within the EU-GCC framework, an important partner in the region, security issues have been gaining increasing importance. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a significant concern, but recent events in Iraq, Iran and the rise of terrorism have all been central to a growing security dimension within EU-GCC talks.

For the moment, the Gulf region does not have a single unified meaning for the EU, but rather it makes reference to the GCC, Yemen, Iran and Iraq, each are being addressed individually, in a bilateral framework, and not as part of a Gulf policy. On the contrary, these countries plus de GCC are referred to as: "The countries of this part of the Middle East region".[43] All the actors are dealt with on an individual basis and not as part of a "Gulf region" with its specific dynamics and boundaries. However, with increasing calls for cooperation with the actors in the region, even if these calls still lack any specific measure; one expects them to lead to renewed region building efforts on the part of the EU in the Gulf.[44] As such, we can identify three possibilities for region building:

- The creation of a Gulf region distinct from the Mediterranean or the Middle East;
- The creation of a Middle East region;
- Joining the Gulf and Mediterranean into one region.

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[42] See the GCC – EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meetings between 2000 and 2005, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.asp?id=398&lang=en&mode=g for the 15th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting consult:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/gulf_cooperation/intro/finaldecl_050405.pdf

[43] Commission of the European Communities, "The EU's Mediterranean & Middle East Policy", Commission of the European Communities external relations web page [Available Online]
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/med_mideast/intro/index.htm

[44] Javier Solana, "Intervention by Javier Solana EU High Representative for CFSP at the Forum for the Future: Opening Session", Rabat, Secretary General, High Representative for CFSP, December 2004. Javier Solana states "It is no secret that the EU is also keen to strengthen its relationship with several countries beyond its immediate neighbourhood of the Southern Mediterranean particularly with respect to the countries around the Gulf". Also: "With the Mediterranean Partner countries, these objectives will be taken forward through a more effective implementation of the Barcelona Process goals, within Association Agreements and the development of the Wider Europe/New Neighbourhood Initiative. Reflection may be needed on the merits of developing a regional strategy in the future for the Gulf region, including Iran, Iraq, the GCC and Yemen." In The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union, "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World", p. 8.

The creation of a Middle East region or the gradual extension of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Gulf are present in EU documents and in some research papers.[45] On the European side, there are concerns about the overall stability of these regions: the security discourse identifies similar security issues from Morocco to Iran. In addition, both the EU and the different states of these regions see the Israeli/Palestinian conflict as a matter for concern. These are arguments in favour of the extension of the Neighbourhood Policy all the way to the Gulf. When we turn our attention to the Middle East, it is still unclear to the EU what this term encompasses; however in some of the discourse it does seem to include the Gulf.[46] The Middle East is also referred to in another manner, as the "Wider Middle East" from December 2003. Here the EU brings in the GCC, Yemen, Iraq and also including Iran to create a wider Middle East. The reasoning behind this is as follows:

> Recent developments point towards the need to establish a regional stability strategy for this group of countries which, with the addition of Iran, could be defined as the "Wider Middle East". From a strictly political point of view, relations with the ACP belong to a different set of problems. There will then be two main lines of action for the EU in its relations with the Arab countries, the Mediterranean line and the Wider Middle East.[47]

The creation of a "Wider Middle East" seems to produce some confusion between the Gulf region, identified in the EU Commission web page, and between the planned "Wider Middle East". There is also confusion as to what the EU identifies as the Middle East, which in turn is also referred to as the Near East. The EU, when referring to the Middle East Peace Process or the Near East, includes both Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel and the West Bank and Gaza strip. All of these actors are also included in the Euro-Med partnership. If there are plans for a wider Middle East, this "wider" Middle East does not take full account, at least for the

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[45] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World" and Felix Neugart and Giacomo Luciani, eds. "The EU and the GCC. A new Partnership".
[46] Commission of the European Communities. "The EU's Mediterranean & Middle East Policy". Also The Strategic Partnership will focus on the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, including the countries of the GCC, Yemen, Iraq and Iran. In: Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", p. 12.
[47] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's partnership with the Arab World", p. 7.

present, of Syria, Egypt, Israel nor Jordan. To complicate matters further, the EU Commission web page states: "In addition, the EU maintains relations with Middle Eastern countries situated around the Persian/Arabian Gulf (Gulf region)".[48]

This "Wider Middle East" is an option for a new specific framework for the region, faced with the option of extending the Barcelona Process or using the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) framework to deal with the challenges of this region, the EU decided for the grouping together of the GCC, Iran, Iraq and Yemen. According to the EU, both frameworks were incapable of properly tackling the specific problems of Arab States in that region and only a new framework could help to build stability for this group of countries.[49] Joining two regions in one framework might seem appropriate, however according to Antonio Marquina, it is crucial to properly define regions if one is to achieve security, since simply expanding one region to include the other can cause obstructions in achieving the EU's objectives in one of them:

> In geo-strategic and geo-economic terms, an expansion of the traditional geographic area is in order, so as to include areas as complicated as the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and a good part of Central Asia.
>
> If such an expansion is taken into consideration, the forces which influence and define the Mediterranean area, from the Caucasus through to the Balkans or the Persian Gulf, can result decisively in obstructing the implementation of preventative measures for Mediterranean conflict or potential conflict. This experience has already been witnessed with the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. For these reasons, the first step of a Mediterranean conflict prevention policy consists of developing a definition of 'Mediterranean' that is functional and appropriate enough to initiate a conflict prevention process.[50]

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[48] Commission of the European Communities. "The EU's Mediterranean & Middle East Policy".
[49] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's Partnership with the Arab World", p. 7.
[50] Antonio Marquina, "Conflicy Pervention in the Framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A European Point of View", *Perceptions*, IV, No. 2 (1999).

The EU aims at creating areas of stability particularly around its borders, transforming potential areas of chaos into regions of security. This objective was made specific within the European Union Security Strategy which was approved in December 2003, especially in the case of the Mediterranean: "Our task is to promote a ring of well-governed countries … on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and co-operative relations".[51] In regards to this objective of creating an area of stability, Gulf discourse is consistent with Mediterranean discourse. As such, in the case of the Gulf and the Arab World in general, the EU's discourse has identified a comprehensive series of threats emanating from these regions as we have seen, recognizing the implications that chaos in the Arab World can have for the EU. EU discourse recognizes this threat, but more than this, calls for a comprehensive approach in order to tackle the roots of instability and stop it from spilling into the EU:

> The main objective of the EU in its relations with the Arab World is to promote prosperity, peace and stability, thereby not only contributing to the welfare and security of the region, but also to its own security. Problems of terrorism and WMD originating there have a direct impact in Europe. In this context, the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is essential. There will be little chance of dealing fully with other problems in the Middle East until this conflict is resolved; such a resolution is therefore a strategic priority for the EU.

> An essential element of this overriding objective should be to encourage, support and facilitate reform in the political, economic and social areas. The aim is to advance political pluralism and democracy, and to stimulate social and economic development. In order to be effective, such reforms have to come from within the societies. An approach needs to be developed that is based on the mutual interest of Arab countries and the EU.[52]

As we can see, EU discourse supports an approach which touches many areas, not just promoting democracy, but also tackling the Arab-

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[51] The Council of the European Union, "A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy", Brussels, The Council of the European Union, 2003, p.8. [Available Online] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf
[52] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's Partnership with the Arab World", p. 6.

Israeli conflict, and increasing stability by promoting economic and social development throughout the Arab World.

Therefore, EU discourse is aiming at the creation of geopolitical boundaries, meaning areas of stability, both in the Mediterranean and in the Gulf, in order to achieve security for itself.[53] The EU seeks to tackle the various threats it identifies to its security within these two regions so that they do not spill over into European territory. These geopolitical boundaries are accompanied by transactional boundaries, as in the case of the Mediterranean and eventually of the Gulf, the EU seeks to facilitate trade between regions. It seeks to implement a set of regulatory structures in order to facilitate commerce. In the case of the Mediterranean for example, the EU hopes to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. This would guarantee the EU access to other markets on preferential terms, as well as encouraging others to access its common market.

With this process we can see that the EU is identifying the boundaries of its security priorities, be it in Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Gulf or even the entire Arab world. This does not mean that bilateralism between individual EU member states and the Gulf is abandoned; the very nature of the EU allows this to continue. Nonetheless, according to the EU there is a need to ensure a coherent approach, coordinating different policy instruments, which could imply coordination both at the national level as well as at the EU level,[54] allowing for bilateralism to be strengthened in the context of relations between two regions. Also, the EU identifies regions with common security problems, problems that may also prove a threat to the EU:

> While different countries face different challenges, it is possible to identify a number of challenges common to the majority of the countries involved. There is general agreement on the nature and scope of these challenges, which have been extensively documented in reports emanating from the countries concerned. These challenges will not be overcome by maintaining the status quo;

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[53] Regarding the different notions of boundaries relating to the EU see: Michael Smith, "The European Union and a Changing Europe: Establishing the Boundaries of Order", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34, No. 1 (1996), pp. 5-28.

[54] See: The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's Partnership with the Arab World". And Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", both these documents recognize de need for better coordination of EU instruments and mechanisms.

political, social and economic reform is required. Such reforms can succeed only if they are generated from within the affected societies; they cannot and should not be imposed from outside.[55]

Regarding the Gulf, the EU recognizes the need for a regional stability strategy,[56] bringing forth the regional element in EU foreign policy. Perhaps there will be divergences within the EU member states as to which concrete measures to apply, but an agreement was reached between members on the need to tackle a specific region. The reason for this, according to EU discourse, has to do with two different aspects. On the one hand, securing itself from threats originating in the Arab World and on the other contributing to regional and international stability by creating a zone of peace and prosperity in this same region. Greater coordination can only help in strengthening the Common Foreign and Security Policy, but coherency and coordination are needed when dealing on a regional level. There is a need for unity and a coherent approach to region by the EU, but any future common EU policy must take into account not only European aspirations but it must also not compromise on how to deal with the serious challenges facing the Middle East.[57] This of course has a series of implications for the EU and its members but also for international relations and the EU's role. One can say that the EU, a victim of its own success, is called to play a role in both the regional and international level that has and continues to put it at odds with the United States, but gaining the support of the Arab World or Latin America for example.

In the end, creating a Gulf region might be possible, but through this idea of "Wider Middle East" it would include the GCC, Yemen, Iran and eventually Iraq. Previously we have seen that the EU has put forward a policy agenda for a common zone of peace in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, representing a possible basis for a comprehensive regional strategy. However, the possibility of extending the Neighbourhood Policy all the way to Iran or even to the GCC countries seems to have been, for the moment, discarded. Creating this "Wider Middle East" could require a significant region building effort on the part of the EU, putting in place a

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[55] Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", p. 2.

[56] The Secretariat General of the Council of the European Union. "Strengthening the EU's Partnership with the Arab World", p. 6.

[57] Éric Remacle, "L'Europe au Moyen-Orient: Puissance Civile ou Militaire?" in Bernard Adam (ed.), *Europe Puissance Tranquille? Rôle et Identité sur la Scène Mondiale*, Brussels, GRIP-Éditions Complexe, 2006, p. 183.

Gulf wide security system, as suggested by some.[58] But for the moment it signals a long due recognition for the region from the EU, but most of all it seems to indicate a willingness on the part of the EU to continue expanding its global awareness, notably into this strategically vital region decades after Britain left the Gulf. As we can see, this wider Middle East seems different from what we traditionally associate with the Middle East. It seems not to focus on countries like Syria, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, which are already covered by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, but addresses the EU's wish to engage what lies "East of Jordan". Such creative terminology is not new to the EU, which for example includes Iran when speaking of the Arab World. Despite these regional arrangements, links between the two regions exist as we have seen. In a 2004 report the EU identified in its policy agenda some of the elements which the two regions have in common.[59] There was at the same time, however, a recognition that there were differences between the two and the need for different instruments for dealing with them would be needed.[60] In this respect, it seems that for the time being the GCC, Iran, Iraq and Yemen are to be considered together as part of the same grouping.

Conclusion

The relationship between discourse and boundaries is indeed a natural one, since it reflects how we see the other and it defines who we are but also who the other is. In this relationship, security is an important element: when something or someone is considered a threat it immediately places a barrier between two actors. In the cases we have seen, both in the Mediterranean and the Gulf, EU discourse has identified a series of security threats to European stability and from where they originate, creating regional boundaries that represent these areas of insecurity. Furthermore, these boundaries do not inhibit interaction between the two sides but, on the contrary, they form the basis for interaction and for dialogue in order to tackle any security threat. In this sense "the region" forms the best platform

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[58] Felix Neugart and Giacomo Luciani (eds.), "The EU and the GCC. A New Partnership", Original Version of March 2002**.** In Bertelsmann Group for Policy Research, Center for Applied Policy Research in cooperation with The Mediterranean Programme, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advance Studies, European Institute [Available online] http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2005/2005_GCC-EU.pdf

[59] Presidency of the Council of the European Union. "EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East", p. 14.

[60] Ibid., p. 5-7.

from which to engage a common threat or threats, involving all state actors and sometimes even non-state actors in the dialogue.[61]

Small steps have been taken in regards to the EU's role in the Arab World, with some boundaries being created. The latter, however, remain rather unclear, such that questions of the role of Europe in the wider Middle East are still being asked. Although EU security discourse regarding the Mediterranean seems quite developed, there is still much to do as to the Gulf countries. This is, however, slowly changing; discourse in the Gulf region was mainly bilateral in nature, and only recently, in 2003-2004, has the EU begun considering a regional approach. Additionally, security seems at present to figure at the top of EU priorities for the region: terrorism and Iran's nuclear program are examples of priorities of the EU. The current trend in discourse seems to treat the Gulf not as a separate unit, but part of a broader region, the "Wider Middle East". More than just a change of designation, the "Wider Middle East" signifies a perception by the EU of common challenges in that area. Moreover, this wider Middle East will perhaps signal the beginning of a much-needed coherent strategy for the region that could become a new area of insecurity from the point of view of the EU.

However, developments in the region might make the EU reconsider certain aspects of its policy, in particular the need for two distinct regions and its level of engagement. Consequently, we may ask how the EU will react to further integration by the GCC countries. The evolution of future relations with the GCC will be very interesting to follow. While building a regional framework the EU will have to deal with a regional organization within the framework. Additionally, we can ask ourselves why does the EU believe that the "Arab World" requires two frameworks, the Mediterranean and the wider Middle East partnership? Discursive elements show the potential overlap in certain areas: terrorism or the question of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are examples of issues common to the two regions. With the risk of nuclear proliferation in Iran, and the continuing instability in Iraq with its risks of "bleed-back", there could be a change in perceptions realizing that the two regions can be linked, leading to a single framework from Morocco to Iran. For this to happen, the level of discourse must be equal throughout this region, and it is clear that in order to play a greater role in international relations the EU must have a stronger presence

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[61] Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security*.

in the Gulf region. At present, the Mediterranean is the object of a much stronger discourse, being considered in the context of a "Wider Europe" initiative; whereas with regards to the "East of Jordan" it is within the "Wider Middle East". Despite the direct impact of security threats from this last region, there are apparently no plans to bring the Gulf into the EU Neighbourhood Policy. A final thought on this last question: could the development of two frameworks, as opposed to a single one for the entire Arab World, reflect the larger US presence in the Gulf, which affects any other "outside" attempt at region building? Strong US penetration in the Gulf will be a barrier to any EU regional framework, forcing the EU to adopt specific frameworks for the Mediterranean and the Gulf. This situation could indeed begin to explain why these two frameworks and the difference in the level of discourse as well. However, with the current situation not favouring the US in the Arab World in general, in part due to the failure in Iraq, the misperceptions surrounding the war on terrorism, not to mention strained relations with Iran, this could represent a chance for the EU to increase its participation in the region bringing it closer, discourse wise, to the Mediterranean region.

Discourse could also change with eventual Turkish membership, as then the EU's borders will reach Gulf region. How will this modify European perceptions of not only the Gulf, but the entire Arab World?[62] Turkish membership would bring in a new series of challenges, but furthermore, and this is not to be underestimated, a direct land link to the region. The inclusion of Turkey in the European Union would allow the latter a stronger presence in the Middle East and Gulf regions, but also provide linkage between the Euro-Mediterranean framework and any future "East of Jordan" framework.

All these uncertainties raise important questions for the future of the EU as an international actor and as an actor in the Gulf. We may ask what responsibilities is the EU willing to take on and how will its Common Foreign and Security Policy be defined. Finally, we have seen how EU discourse sees the Gulf but we have not seen how the Gulf sees the EU and its regional plans. The success or failure of EU initiatives based on the discourse we have identified above will depend, not only on the EU itself, but also on its partners in the region and their own discourse. It will depend

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[62] Christian Koch and Felix Neugart, "Introduction", in Christian Koch and Felix Neugart (eds.), *A Window of Opportunity Europe, Gulf Security and the Aftermath of the Iraq War*, Dubai, Gulf Research Center, 2005, p. 11 and Felix Neugart and Giacomo Luciani (eds.), "The EU and the GCC. A new Partnership".

on how the different actors are reacting to EU policy and to this creation of a wider Middle East and, furthermore, how they perceive any future EU regional plans in relation to their own interests. On the European side, will the EU continue with two frameworks for the "Arab World" or will it pursue one framework from the Mediterranean all the way to Iran? Both regions have discursive contact points that seem to favour an eventual merging, but further study should be done to determine the characteristics of these regions and their exact relationship with the EU, because this is a two-way process. Answering these questions is an important step to further understand the interrelation between boundaries and discourse, but it will also help to understand the role of the EU within the region and regional cooperation in general.