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The European Union's Democracy Promotion Policies in Algeria: Success or Failure?

AYLİN GÜNEY & ASLIHAN ÇELENK

ABSTRACT *This article aims at analysing the problem of democratisation in Algeria, with a specific focus on the impact on it of its relations with the European Union within the context of the democracy promotion policies of the EU. Although the EU has expressed ambitious goals regarding democracy promotion in the Mediterranean in general, member state policy preferences within the EU, the weakness of the intervention tools such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and the EU's short-term rather than long-term concern for political stability have acted as obstacles to the EU playing a role in Algeria.*

The Military, Islam and Democracy in Algeria

The problem of democratisation in Algeria has three main aspects: a colonisation history, the legacy of Islam and a highly autonomous military lacking civilian control. Algeria was one of the colonies of France from 1830 until 1962, when the Revolutionary War or the War of Liberation began. After eight years of war, the independence of Algeria was declared in 1962. However, the legacy of the war as well as the colonial history shaped the political structure of Algeria after it gained its independence. The main legacies of these experiences were the supremacy of the military and authoritarian tendencies in governance. The military is one of the key elite groups in Algerian politics, and has designed a 'guardianship role' for itself through military interventions, and strengthened this role by gaining representation in political institutions at national and local levels.

The Algerian army justified the political role also by its internal principles. Entelis argues that the military identified itself with the people, the revolution, the unity of the state and a strong state structure (1982, p. 110), which were also important for most

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Algerian citizens. This made people feel that they were in the same camp as the army, which may have provided additional civilian support for the military's political actions. The activities of the military after independence to a great extent contributed to its legitimacy in the eyes of the Algerian people. For instance, the army took an active role in rural development projects and this gave it popular support and domestic prestige. The military monopolised the nation's coercive instruments, was perceived as the guarantor of law and order and possessed the special organisational and managerial skills needed for the development of society (Entelis, 1982, pp. 96–7). All of these factors contributed to the legitimacy of the Algerian army in politics and the army became defined by many Algerians as 'the mirror of the people, a reliable model and an example to be followed' (Malley, 1996, p. 128).

The military, on the other hand, became 'a remote, unaccountable elite group' (Entelis and Arone, 1994, p. 175), represented in the civilian decision-making institutions. It influenced and shaped political life in Algeria by coups or by taking an active role in political institutions and decision-making mechanisms in the absence of a democratic tradition. One significant aspect of the Algerian political system is the fact that the political power is concentrated in the hands of a few institutions. As John P. Entelis argues, 'particularly significant has been the emergence of a powerful and interlocking technocratic system with its tripartite mobilizational, managerial and military components working collectively to ensure a relatively effective and unchallenged operation of the state' (p. 110). In other words, Algeria is governed by a threefold structure which consists of the military, the bureaucracy and a single party, FLN (*Front Libérale Nationale*). These three institutions are dependent on each other for the continuation of the regime, and, because of the weakness of civil society and the democratic process, they are able to function without being accountable to the people. Moreover, these three institutions share 'a common socializing background' (Entelis, p. 93) because of the independence struggle they all took part in. They share the same ideology and outlook, which may have prevented the definition of independent responsibilities and duties. This situation has enabled the military to take part both in the party and in the bureaucratic apparatus and to assume a self-appointed role of guardianship that stemmed from a 'birthright principle'.¹

More specifically, because of the way in which the independence struggle in Algeria was led, the army and the party could not develop separate identities. The war endowed the army (ALN—National Liberation Army) with considerable ideological authority and soldiers were held up as models to be emulated. Thus while the FLN, in its political platform emphasised the primacy of 'the political' over 'the military', this view rapidly became contradicted by discourse and practice (Malley, 1996, p. 127). The army could justify its presence in the political arena and could influence the rulers, policies and the structure of the state institutions in whatever way it wanted.

One other important characteristic of the Algerian military is their ideological orientation due to their training either in France or in the Soviet Union. They believe in 'Algerianisation' which has strong components borrowed from nationalism and socialism. The officer class also see no contradiction between its adherence to the Arabo-Islamic elements of Algerianisation and its tendency to reject the radical Islamist policies of the FIS (Stone, 1997, pp. 129–30).

After Algeria gained its independence from France in 1962, Ahmed Ben Bella became the first president of the state. However, dissatisfied with his regime that relied almost

entirely on himself and a small group of supporters, the army overthrew him in June 1965. He was replaced by Houari Boumedienne, who had the support of the military. In fact, the prominence of the military in Algerian politics came about exactly during this period when it was used to carry out the Ben Bella coup and later when it was used to replace Ben Bella with Boumedienne. The military was used extensively by Boumedienne to support his regime and this gave him high degree of control over Algerian politics, together with the role of the *Securite Militaire*. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, the military also dissolved the National Assembly and suspended the 1963 constitution. Political power was left in the hands of the Council of Revolution, dominated by military officers.

In 1975, by a decision of the military, the country returned to a constitutional system. However, the military was still represented in the assembly and Boumedienne was backed up by the military institutions as he was named commander-in-chief, the minister of security and defence and secretary-general of the party, in addition to being the president of the country. This shows the level of interdependence between the civilian political authority and the military authority and as a result of the structure of the state apparatus and its decision-making mechanism, the inability of the civilian power to make decisions independently of military influence. This 'political role' of the military constitutes an important obstacle to the establishment of a democratic regime in Algeria.

The army's political influence can also be observed during the period from when Chadli Benjedid was named as the new president in 1979, after Boumedienne's death. However, during Chadli's presidency between 1979 and 1988, there were important political developments in Algeria which redefined the role of the military in politics. The Chadli period is significant for its political and economic liberalisation process which led to the polarisation of society (Entelis and Arone, 1994, p. 184).

During the 1980s, Algeria faced problems stemming from an economic crisis and the rise of political Islamism. These factors, together with the more liberal atmosphere in the country during Chadli's presidency, led to various protests and strikes of mainly university students, workers and Islamist groups. In October 1988, the political climate changed significantly. Violent protests led to a state of emergency and the use of force. The army suppressed the events rather harshly and the incident became known as 'Black October' because of the bloody clash between the army and the people. With these events, the Algerian military lost its legitimacy and popular support and became the target of people's reactions. The role of the army was being reversed because President Chadli responded to the protests with further democratisation instead of suppressing them with the use of force. The years between 1988 and 1992 witnessed a wave of democratisation in Algeria.

In 1989, a new constitution was written which brought important changes to the way in which the state functioned, at least in principle. With the new constitution, the term 'socialist' in the title of the state was removed, people were given new rights and freedoms and there was no special emphasis on the role and importance of the FLN, the single party of Algeria. But, most importantly, with the 1989 constitution, the army no longer had official political status and was assigned to the duty of national defence (Toth, 1994, p. 63). Thus, as a result of its response to the protests of the civilians, the army was pushed out of politics under Chadli's presidency. The army's favourable image based on its role in the Independence War and in the creation of post-war Algerian state was badly tarnished by the ruthless way in which it suppressed the strikes and riots of Black October (Tortter,

1994, p. 255). However, the events following Black October and the political situation that emerged as a result of the wave of democratisation in Algeria also enabled the military to return to politics and to rebuild its political strength.

The re-establishment of military power in Algerian politics after the political liberalisation process can be linked to the foundation of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) as the main opposition party to the National Liberation Front (FLN), and to the rise of political Islam with the FIS. The FIS gained the support of many opposition groups. In 1991, when the Hamrouche government announced parliamentary elections in June 1991 and planned changes to electoral system² including restrictions on campaigning in mosques, FIS reacted by calling general strike. These strikes and protests made the army come out of its barracks again. Although Chief-of-Staff Khalid Nezzar was appointed as minister of defence by President Chadli as a sign of distancing army from politics, when in June 1991 the army was called in to restore order, Nezzar took the opportunity to reinforce its self-appointed role as the guardian of the state against the Islamist threat (Stone, 1997, p. 133). The military also took advantage of the situation to reassert its influence in politics, calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche and his cabinet, a state of emergency was declared and elections were postponed. FIS leaders Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj were arrested and jailed.

The new caretaker government consisted largely of technocrats, a conservative elite drawn from the top ranks of the civil service and former state-owned enterprises. Sid Ahmed Ghazali, until then minister of foreign affairs and a former head of the state-owned gas and oil company, was named prime minister. The Ghazali government distanced itself from the FLN party cadres while remaining subservient to the military. The FLN, meanwhile, broke into several factions. Chadli was forced to resign by the military from the party leadership in July. In September 1991, the state of emergency was lifted and new elections were set for December 1991 and January 1992. In fact, this move against Chadli was a sign that the army, in fact was never constitutionalised. It had only agreed to withdraw from politics temporarily. Yet since it regarded its role as the guarantor of the state, it overthrew Chadli and introduced a regime in which it was at the forefront.

Just two months before the elections, in October 1991, the government issued a new electoral law, which increased the number of seats in the assembly, redistributed them to favour FLN strongholds, and omitted earlier provisions facilitating the participation of independent candidates. Moreover, most of the FIS political leadership was in prison and all newspapers were banned. Once again, the government sought to ensure that the results of the elections would be to its, and the military's preference.

Among nearly 50 political parties that participated in the first round of the elections on 26 December 1991, the FIS emerged as the victor and appeared certain of achieving the two-thirds parliamentary majority necessary for constitutional reform. With nearly 200 seats to be decided in runoff elections set for 16 January 1992, it appeared certain that a transfer of parliamentary power to FIS was imminent. Since the FIS and political Islam were perceived as threats to the state by the Algerian military (Willis, 1996), they used this situation as a means to regain their political position. The second round of the elections was suspended and a military coup took place on 11 January 1992. When the military intervened to block a democratic process that would almost certainly have resulted in the formation of a FIS government, the power of the army re-emerged as the primary bulwark against religiously inspired violence. The role of the armed forces was

legitimated (Tortter, 1994, p. 255) with the declaration of state of emergency. People who feared the Islamist government supported the coup. After the coup, political authority was transferred to the High Security Council which consisted of six military officers and which was soon replaced by the High Council of State of five members dominated by military officers who had almost unlimited political powers (Entelis and Arone, 1994, p. 189). During the period after the 1992 coup, the rule of law almost did not exist in Algeria and the state became a military autocracy with an ongoing state of emergency. For instance, the High Security Council of military officers provided advice on national security matters, and had to be asked for its advice before any decision was made. It was capable of shaping all state policies (Tortter, 1994, p. 257). This shows the level of the military's involvement in Algerian politics. However, this does not mean that the army regained the popular support it had had in the early years of the independence. As Entelis and Arone argue, 'the majority of the Algerians were caught in the middle, distrusting the army as much as the Islamists' (Entelis and Arone, 1994, p. 190) during the coup and afterwards.

The major consequence of the 1992 military intervention can be summarised as the reversal of the process of the reduction of military authority in the 1989 constitution through usage of the idea of the security of the state. The soldiers considered the rise of political Islam as contrary to the security of the state. In fact, the military had agreed to withdraw from politics in 1989 but had continued to see itself as the guarantor of the state. It was this self-assumed role of the military that made it overthrow Chadli and establish a regime in which it was at the forefront. As a result, the threefold state structure (the military, the party FLN and the bureaucracy) was re-established with the army coming back to the political scene.

As Morgan argues, 'in ousting President Chadli, cancelling elections, and imposing a state of emergency, the military and the military-backed government set in motion a sweeping reversal of the democratic drive that had been in motion since 1988' (1994, p. 81). Consequently, after the 1992 coup, 'the virtual elimination of constitutional government and the resurrection of military authoritarianism returned to Algeria' (Entelis and Arone, 1994, p. 175); an authoritarian state structure was strengthened which still can be considered as an obstacle to the establishment of democratic institutions and political liberalisation in Algeria.

The long-existing ties between the Algerian army and the single party contribute to the military's desire to abort the political liberalisation process because democracy would mean the army losing its privileged position and having to stay in its barracks permanently. Therefore, in Algeria, there is a 'tension between the role of the military and the requirements of political and economic liberalization' (Morgan, 1994, p. 70) which means the country has a long way to go to liberalise its political and economic system. This liberalisation has to start with the elimination of the political role of the army, which is not an easy task to fulfil in a country like Algeria.

Algeria and Post-2000s under Bouteflika

In 1998, President Zeroual, who had won a five-year term as president of the republic with a comfortable majority, announced his intention to cut his term short and hold early presidential elections. Thus former foreign minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected as president in 1999 after all opposition candidates withdrew from race, saying

they had received inadequate guarantees of fair and transparent elections (Szmolka, 2006, p. 51). Thus, the main problems of political reform and democratisation still persisted in Algeria under Bouteflika and the current Algerian system can be regarded as a façade democracy.

One of the major features of Bouteflika presidency has been the ‘incidences of authoritarianism’, as Hugh Roberts points. There have been repressive aspects, such as a campaign of threats against elements of the press, including the jailing of a number of journalists. A number of riots that have occurred in various parts of the country were harshly suppressed. Roberts argue that ‘a *dirigiste* aspect is clear in the government’s approach towards the promotion of reform, such as the reform of local and regional government’ (Roberts, 2005, p. 4).

Another aspect of the Bouteflika period is the way the government is evolving into a corporatist state in the form of the tripartite negotiations between the government, the employers’ associations and the National Trade Union (UGTA—*Union Generale de Travailleurs Algeriens*). As Roberts points out, this corporatist approach involves a hostile attitude on the part of the authorities towards independent trade unions. In other words, the regime is tending to assist the UGTA in its efforts to preserve its virtual monopoly over trade union action (Roberts, 2005, p. 4).

The enormous concentration of power in the presidency can be regarded as another aspect of this façade democracy. The constitution changes have been quite frequent and designed to increase the power of the president. There were five constitutions in the 44 years since independence. The main amendments that are planned recently by Bouteflika include the removal of the two-term limit on presidencies and to make the term seven years instead of five, allowing Bouteflika to keep rerunning for office much longer. In addition to this, the position of the prime minister will be downgraded to co-ordinator of the government and still be appointed directly by the president. In this new system of government, the new post of vice-president, while the Council of State, one of the principal subdivisions of the legislative branch, is to be directly subordinated to the president.³ Roberts points to ‘the enormous pre-eminence of the Executive branch of the State over the other branches’ (2005, p. 8), as well as the weaknesses of the political parties. He argues that the ‘weakness of the parties, is a function among other things, of the Legislature. The parties such as FLN or RND are a part of the state apparatus. The situation of *la hogra*, i.e the condition of suffering humiliating abuse of power is a consequence of this political deficiency’.

The domestic instabilities in Algeria continued until 2001. In spite of the efforts of reintegration into Algerian society of Islamists who laid down their arms and the relative calm seen at the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000, violence and terrorist actions have flared up again, especially outside the cities.

The Algerian government also refused to recognise the new Islamist grouping called Wafa. Riots broke out in the Kabylie region in April 2001 following the murder of a young student held in police custody. There have been many demonstrations since then, both in the Kabylie region and in other parts of the country, including Algiers.⁴ These have been put down violently and it was found out as a result of an investigation committee set up by the president that the national gendarmerie was involved in the violence, although the president himself did not want to accept this fact. On 3 October 2001, the president declared Berber an official national language, announced compensation for the victims of violence, as well as the launch of legal proceedings against those

responsible in the security forces. In the area of fundamental freedoms and human rights, there are still concerns about the application of the law on civil concord, about torture, and about 4,800 'disappeared' people.⁵ While these were happening in Algeria, the EU went on to play its passive role in promoting democracy.

The post-September 11 period offered new opportunities and played into the hands of the President Bouteflika as well as the military. International terrorism put Algeria on the international agenda because of its knowledge of how to fight terrorism (Holm, 2004, p. 7). High-ranking officers agree on the need for modernisation in order to participate more effectively in the fight against international terror that has made Algeria an ally of both the USA and the European Union.⁶

All of the above-mentioned historical and current context show that the rise of the military, especially since the 1990s, 'poses substantial challenges for Algeria's future development and stability because the administrative elite and top party functionaries have been relegated to a subordinate position' (Entelis and Arone, 1994, p. 204). This is equally true of the people. Robert Malley argues that 'while most states have armies, Algeria's army has a state' (1996, p. 247) and this situation is clearly contrary to the ideal model in Europe of a state based on democratic principles and thus is a matter that concerns the EU because of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which includes Algeria.

The EU and Democracy Promotion in the Southern Mediterranean

The end of the Cold War marked a significant increase in 'democratic enlargement' (Brinkley, 1997), 'democratic peace' (Ikenberry, 1999, pp. 56–66) and 'democracy promotion' (Youngs, 2001, p. 2) policies pursued towards non-democratic countries by Western democracies. Quite elaborate theories arose in the 1990s to address the issue of the spread of international norms (Youngs, 2001, p. 2). As Youngs states, 'part of the EU's philosophy relied upon elements of a constructive-style moulding of shared understandings and values' (2003, p. 414). In this regard, the external dimension of democratisation and the linkage between international and domestic spheres gained importance. More specifically, the interaction between supranational organisations and nation-states became quite significant in bringing about change in their political systems.

The European Union has been an important actor in world politics in the post-Cold War era in terms of its increased concern for democracy promotion, especially in the neighbouring regions of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and North Africa. One of the most important components of democracy promotion in those countries has been democratic control of their armed forces. Some of the recent civil–military relations (CMR) theories deal with outside triggers which play an important role in 'democratising' civil–military relations in these countries. Cottey and Edmunds point to the importance of a number of transnational institutional structures which have been established with the specific aim (amongst others) of encouraging the democratisation of civil–military relations (Cottey and Edmunds, p. 2). They argue further that the combination of transnational norms and institutions, backed up by political conditionality, creates strong pressures on the countries of central and eastern Europe to democratise their civil–military relations.

The EU's commitment to promote democracy in its neighbouring regions was made explicit in the 1991 Development Council resolution and was then incorporated into the

EU's mainstream foreign policy machinery through the Maastricht treaty (Youngs, 2001, p. 2). The EU's main concerns in the international arena, and thus its foreign policy, have been characterised by promotion of democratic principles, political stability and respect for human rights, as well as economic development (Roberts, 2002, p. 106). The Mediterranean enlargement of the EU in the 1980s had made the EU neighbours with North Africa where a range of issues and challenges relating to the promotion of democracy existed. As the source of both vital energy resources, rapidly increasing migratory flows and the challenge of political Islam, this region became perceived by the EU as one simultaneously posing opportunity and challenge to its security interests (Youngs, 2003). The limitation of military power is also a necessary ingredient of the security of the Mediterranean region and this includes not only a decrease in weaponry and troops but also limiting the power and influence of the military over domestic political issues, which should in principle be the responsibility of the civilian authority. In other words, according to the EU, the democratic institutions of the Mediterranean partners should be strengthened and democracy be consolidated, and the most important means to achieve this is to ensure democratic control of the military.

The countries in the Mediterranean region have had varying historical experiences with respect to systems of government, though most of the partners have been centralist, authoritarian and conservative states where the army has traditionally had a strong role in political life. In its relations with these states, the EU has expected them to liberalise their political systems. The EU has also frequently emphasised that respect for human rights is a fundamental element of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In sum, as Toviás puts it, the challenge faced by the new generation of the political leaders of the region is 'to revitalize the process of government and to develop democracy and the rule of law whilst maintaining stability'.⁷

The essential motivation of any nation's foreign policy is to preserve its fundamental values (Lahav, 1993, p. 74). As Jonathan Dean argues, 'after the Cold War, there have been four general objectives of European security: to promote a functioning democracy and market economy; to institutionalize the security system; to be an autonomous community in defense; and to establish confidence building measures, all of which can be observed in the emerging security structure of the EU' (Dean, 1993, pp. 106–7). To achieve these goals Larson argues that 'The EU has based its dominant understanding of international conflicts on democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law' (2002, p. 291). In other words, we can argue that the very first aim of forming the European Community, which was to preserve peace and stability in Europe through the promotion of democracy, is now reflected in the foreign policy of the EU, in which the promotion of democracy in the Mediterranean is of primary importance.

With these concerns, the EU member states launched a special relationship called Euro-Mediterranean Partnership at the Barcelona Conference of November 1995 which has provided the official context for the future of the EU policies towards the Mediterranean countries. Martin-Munoz argues that the Barcelona Declaration highlights the fact that 'political and social dialogue between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean is also the basis for consensus and solution to imbalances between these two entities'. She further states that 'the reason for this is partly that, if liberal economic reforms are accompanied with a democratic deficit, their effects in terms of political integration are minimized whilst the social costs of restructuring can have a destabilizing effect' (Martin-Munoz, 2000, pp. 96–7). One of the objectives of the Partnership is

'to increase confidence in the (Mediterranean) region through positive measures. Instead of defense-related or military partnership, which the EU has opposed so far, the focus will be on expanding where possible the small number of civil measures which have been developed until now' (pp. 96–7). Stressing the importance of civil measures is another indicator of the importance, according to the EU's political understanding, of refraining from the use of military force and from including the military in the solution of conflicts. This principle applies not only to external relations but also to domestic matters. For the EU, the military's sole responsibility is the external defence of the country and it is not a legitimate political actor who should influence state policies.

The Partnership also aimed to 'encourage actions of support for democratic institutions and for strengthening of the rule of law and civil society'.⁸ As democracy requires the participation of people in the decision-making process, and civil society organisations are an effective way of influencing state policies and government decisions, the Mediterranean policy of the EU includes making civil society organisations more influential actors in the politics of the Mediterranean partners. In a well-functioning democratic system, decisions are taken by elected civilian political authorities; the military is not a political actor, is responsible for only the external defence of the country and is under the control of the civilians. For this reason, in order to create stable democracies in the Mediterranean region, the EU has encouraged the strengthening of democratic institutions and the development and expansion of civil society organisations for the active participation of people in politics, and discouraged political systems in which the military is considered as a political actor.

The High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, has argued that 'the political evolution in this region should be steered in a positive direction. Instead of clinging to existing patterns, European institutions should seek proactive, constructive, and specially tailored approaches to the region' (Solana, 1999, p. 37). Carpenter has argued that the EU can decrease tensions in the Mediterranean region through co-operation and economic and social aid (Carpenter, 1999, p. 84). These ideas show the importance given to civilian instruments within the CFSP context in the establishment of peace and order.

In the 2000s, the Barcelona Process was supplemented by a new policy called the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The ENP is designed as a result of the 2004 enlargement of the EU in order to avoid the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours. It is a 'privileged relationship based on mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development',⁹ yet it has no accession perspective. The ENP works on the basis of Action Plans with each partner country, which comprise an agenda for short-term and medium-term political and economic reforms. It also creates bilateral relations in place of the multilateral relations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and allows the recipient country to determine the rate of progress towards the Union's goals.¹⁰

Algeria and the EU

In order to create an incentive for the Mediterranean partners to fulfil the principles determined by the Barcelona Declaration, the EU implies that it can suspend its relations with

the partners in the case that they break one of these principles. As stated in the Regional Strategy Paper,

the European Union's relations must remain conditional on each country's commitment to achieving respect for the principles underpinning the Barcelona Process, namely, strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of good-neighbouring relations, respect for obligations under international law, intensified regional cooperation and integration, furthering of sustainable market economies and promotion of greater understanding between cultures.¹¹

The issue is also repeated in Article 2 of the Association Agreement which stipulates,

Respect for the democratic principles and fundamental human rights established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shall inspire the domestic and international policies of the parties and shall constitute an essential element of This Agreement.

Yet, the core of the Union's failure in democracy promotion lies in the fact that together with the Barcelona Declaration Article 2 of the Association Agreement has never been invoked in any circumstance including the case of Algeria. As Youngs points out, 'the EU's Mediterranean policy, in a comparative context, is notable for the extent to which it was driven more strongly by strategic than commercial considerations (2002, p. 44). Thus, there was no consideration of suspending MEDA funds on political grounds. This contrasted extensively with the EU's willingness to withhold parcels of aid where economic reforms failed to materialise (p. 44).

The ENP, which supplemented the Barcelona Process, has also not helped democratisation so far. In fact, it acts as a further means of avoiding democratic governance. According to Tocci, with the ENP the Union is faced with a dilemma since, during the accession process, conditionality was a pivotal element in transformation of the candidate states. In the case of the ENP countries, reforms induced or imposed by EU conditionality would have no democratic accountability. Furthermore, especially in the political realm, reforms made to fulfil conditionality are viewed existentially threatening to the domestic elites of the third countries (Tocci, 2005, p. 25). Thus the ENP has not worked in the Algerian case as an effective tool, since the mechanism of automatic entitlement to rights when obligations are fulfilled and automatic withdrawal of benefits when they are not has never been implemented effectively (p. 30).

In addition to the EU, the UN has also been interested in the situation in Algeria. Declarations in September 1997 by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson about the bloodshed in Algeria set the stage for increased, though wavering, UN attention to the country's human rights situation. Perhaps the year's biggest disappointment was the report prepared by a delegation of eminent persons, led by former Portuguese President Mario Soares, that Annan had dispatched to Algeria. Asked simply 'to gather information on the situation and present a report to [the Secretary-General]', the 'Soares delegation' was the first UN visit relating to Algeria's internal troubles.

The delegation's report, issued 16 September, vehemently denounced terrorism but offered no direct criticism of the authorities responsible for torture, 'disappearances', and other abuses. It urged the government to strengthen the rule of law and handle abuse complaints expeditiously, but these recommendations were quite general and seemed secondary to the plea to the international community to support Algeria in fighting terrorism and 'consolidating democracy'. The EU expressed that 'it remains supportive of the Algerian government's efforts to consolidate democracy and protect its citizens from terrorism' (Roberts, 2002, p. 123).

Before and during the delegation's visit, Algerian authorities had insisted that Soares and his colleagues had no investigative mandate. The delegation itself acknowledged this. But upon seeing the report, Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf spoke as if the delegation had conducted a definitive fact-finding investigation. The report, he said on 16 September, has 'refuted any doubt about the sources of terrorism' and 'reaffirmed the Algerian government's assertions that there is no human rights crisis in Algeria, only a number of isolated abuses and individual cases which have been dealt with in accordance with the stipulations of Algerian law' (Roberts, 2002, p. 123).

The UN Human Rights Committee declared that it was 'appalled at the widespread massacre of men, women and children in a great number of villages and towns' and the sexual violence directed against women and expressed concern about the 'lack of timely or preventive measures of protection to the victims [of massacres] from police or military officials in the vicinity and at the persistent allegations of collusion of members of the security forces in terrorist attacks'; at the 'persistent allegations of systematic torture', and at 'the failure of the State to respond adequately, or indeed at all' to 'disappearances', and urged independent investigations into abuses. Despite this fact, at the March–April session of the Commission on Human Rights, no member state introduced a resolution on Algeria, and no formal discussion took place of the need to investigate human rights conditions there. The committee urged Algeria to conduct independent investigations, and 'in all cases of massacres to conduct an independent enquiry into the conduct of the security forces, from the lowest to the highest levels, and where appropriate, to subject them to penal and disciplinary sanctions'.

The Soares Report, which was also welcomed by the EU thus seemed as a mild report that went down well with the Algerian government and did not express clearly the real problems of democratic governance in the country (Roberts, 2002, p. 123). As Roberts states, 'a perfunctory and comparatively mild resolution on press freedom was passed on 19 November but no parliamentary debates took place on Algeria throughout 1999 and 2000. This led to the release of the pressure upon the Algerian government on the way for more democratic governance (p. 123).

On 19–20 January 1998, the troika's junior foreign ministers (representing the preceding, current, and next presidents of the European Council) conducted the first official EU political mission to Algeria since 1992. Their whirlwind visit was heavily circumscribed by the authorities, who turned down their request to visit a massacre site and offer a symbolic gesture of sympathy to the victims. The troika ministers failed to convince the government to accept humanitarian aid or immediate access for the UN rapporteurs on torture and summary executions. The European Council responded by calling on 26 January for 'greater transparency on the part of the government of Algeria about the situation in which terrorist groups continue to perpetrate cowardly and brutal attacks on innocent civilians'. It 'regretted' that Algeria 'felt

unable to provide unhindered access for international organizations, NGOs and the media'.

A 8–12 February 1998 visit to Algeria by a nine-member ad hoc delegation of European parliamentarians also encountered heavy-handed control. The delegation was largely confined to an official guest-house in Algiers, where nearly all of its meetings took place. The government determined the schedule of meetings and prevented the delegation from meeting with some of the Algerians that the delegation had requested, including two human rights lawyers and a dissident journalist. Members of the delegation submitted contrasting reports on their mission, although they concurred on the need to engage with democratic forces in Algeria, including the multiparty national assembly. The delegation leader, André Soulier, urged Europeans to bury the 'notorious' idea of an international human rights investigation and the question of who is doing the killing. The army's hands may not be 'totally clean', he said, but it was not implicated in mass killings. Soulier argued that human rights issues could be best addressed through inter-parliamentary channels.¹²

Limitations of the EU's Democracy Promotion Policy in Algeria

The main argument underlying this article is that the EU's political conditionality has not worked in the case of democracy promotion in Algeria in general, and democratic control of the armed forces in particular. Algeria has been a key country, in which the EU has had great interest regarding its peace through democracy policy; yet at the same time it is a remarkable example of how the idealistic rhetoric of the EU, as stated in the Barcelona Declaration, for instance, has for various reasons failed in promoting democracy in Algeria.

On the one hand, the EU is interested in the political stability of Algeria, as the accelerating violence and political polarisation in this country may become a threat for European security in the future (Gillespie and Whitehead, 2002, p. 204). On the other hand, security matters have such priority for the EU that this may lead to leaving authoritarian regimes as they are instead of promoting democracy for the sake of the EU's security and stability. The main reason for this is the fear of the rise of political Islam and its spillover effects. The ambiguity of the EU's position has created doubts about its seriousness in promoting democracy since the EU has not really used its political conditionality to increase democratic control over the Algerian armed forces. As Olsen notes, although 'during the 1990s promoting democracy abroad was a high profile item on the EU's foreign policy agenda, the significance of this particular goal has since diminished considerably, whereas other priorities, such as conflict prevention and conflict management have become the order of the day' (2002, p. 311). Thus, although Algeria is a signatory to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, it still suffers from weaknesses in the rule of law due to a strong military and so can still not be considered as a democratic state. This may be considered as an indication of the failure of the EU as an effective transnational actor that can impose some conditionalities and thus contribute to democratisation in Algeria. In fact, instead of being a policy priority, promotion of democracy became a policy instrument which was used on occasion for the management of these new concerns.

The reasons for this EU attitude are various. The limits were mainly imposed by the high priority given to security, understood in terms of stability in the region, by the EU's institutional structure and its political bureaucratic culture (Olsen, 2002, p. 316),

by member state policy preferences and the 'EU's incoherent and ineffective policy-making in international affairs vis-à-vis the Mediterranean' (Stavridis and Hutchence, 2000, p. 36). Some other factors like economic interests, emigration and the containment of political Islam have also affected EU policy and limited the EU's power as a political actor in the region.

Weaknesses and Paradoxes of the CFSP

The fact that an unstable and unpredictable security environment exists in the Mediterranean, and the 'alarming political and economic trends' (Carpenter, 1999, pp. 69–70) made the EU include the Mediterranean region as one of the strategic areas of the CFSP, with the Southern members of the EU playing a major role in this process. 'The Mediterraneanization of EC' (De Vasconcelos, 1988, p. 135) and the historical existence of France in the region made the Mediterranean an area of interest for the EU. The colonial, economic, cultural and strategic ties of France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece with the Mediterranean basin made the Southern members of the EU lobby for a Mediterranean strategy that in a way reflected their national interests as they are the immediate recipients of a possible threat coming from this region (De Vasconcelos, 1988, p. 136).

With the efforts of these Southern members, 'ethnic and religion-based violence, organized crime, migratory pressures, terrorism' (Calabrese, 1997, p. 88) in the Mediterranean region were added to the security agenda of the EU. As Calabrese argues, 'the EU's southward enlargement set in motion two processes: first, a search by the Maghreb states for regional approaches to arrest their socio-economic decline; and second, a search by the Southern EU members to develop a formula for expanding the Community's role in the Mediterranean' (p. 97). In other words, both the EU, due to the lobbying of its Southern members, and the countries of the Mediterranean region were willing to co-operate with each other for the sake of their economic, political and security interests and this willingness led to the initiative of the Barcelona Process as one of the outcomes of the CFSP. Algeria is an interesting case in terms of testing the effectiveness of the CFSP because it creates dilemmas for the security understanding of the EU. On the one hand, because of the EU's concerns of domestic political stability and economic interests, the threats of mass migration, nationalism, religious fundamentalism and terrorism in Algeria require the EU to preserve the status quo there in which the military seems to have established political control. On the other hand, the desire to preserve the status quo contradicts with the principle of promotion of democracy because in Algeria democracy tends to create chaos which poses threats for European security. For this reason, EU members refrain from pursuing policies of promoting democracy in Algeria.

This paradoxical attitude of the EU has invoked criticisms from within Algeria. As Antonio Marquina suggests, although the Algerians accept the role played by the EU in the Mediterranean region, they do not want to feel obliged to follow its directives in their domestic affairs (1988, p. 179). This shows that the EU has no politically binding power over Algeria in terms of the promotion of democracy because of its economic interests and the risk of chaos arriving with democratisation.

It is possible to argue that the Algerian case demonstrates that the economic interests of the EU are crucial in shaping the European reaction to domestic instability in the strategic regions around the EU, but most importantly it reveals the fact that the promotion of democracy is not always the basic principle of the CFSP, as sometimes for the sake of

political and economic stability and for the sake of the other aspects of security, it can be sacrificed as in the case of Algeria. As Youngs indicates, 'between CFSP's inception in 1993 and 1997, only three declarations were issued on Algeria, out of a total of over three hundred, compared with the ones addressing events in the Balkans, the Middle East Peace Process and the Lome countries' (2002, p. 98).

The 'French Factor' and the 'Spanish Factor'

While analysing EU policies with respect to Algeria, one important factor that has to be taken into account is the influence of France. Having colonial ties with the region, and having governed Algeria for a long time, made France some sort of an expert in the EU in the formulation of policies concerning Algeria, and France played a significant role in shaping the attitude of the EU towards this country. After the coup in 1992, France supported the military as a power against the threat of religious fundamentalism (Ciment, 1997, p. 124) and this led to the undermining of the promotion of democracy in Algeria by the EU. In other words, the security concerns and the threat perceptions of France in a way became the security concerns of the EU and shaped community policy. It was France who defined the nature of the problem in Algeria as it was perceived as the only foreign country to understand the situation (Roberts, 2002, p. 127). Youngs argues that 'European policy was moulded to France's perceived national interests' (2001, p. 99). As a result, the EU failed to develop a policy that reflects the concerns and interests in Algeria of all of its members, but instead the discourse was dominated by the concerns and interests of France. Economically, the French economy has close relations with Algeria since the former depended on the latter for nearly one-third of its natural gas supplies.

The French concern was due to the immigrants of Algerian descent in addition to the terrorist attacks of Algerian Islamists. Mass migration from Algeria not only to France but also to other EU countries is a major adjustment problem because the immigrants have entered the economic systems of the European countries during a time of recession and this has led to a revival of racism and xenophobia as Europeans felt that their jobs and well-being were threatened by these immigrants. This has led to the rise of right-wing parties which has created the possibility of political instability within the territories of the EU. For these reasons, the EU feels the need to preserve stability in Algeria (and in North Africa generally) in order to preserve its own stability, as it is believed that if political instability can be avoided in the North African countries, then there will be no migration to Europe. Some political leaders of France underlined this preoccupation by stating that 'it is indispensable that in the political debate that will be instituted with our Southern partners, we will help them understand that the future does not consist in crossing the Mediterranean Sea' (Meyreide, 1999, pp. 66–7).

In addition to the mass migration problem, extreme nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria create potential threats for Europe, and so the EU tends to support a regime which is capable of dealing with these problems, which does not necessarily have to be democratic.

Thus, France's attitude to Europe's role regarding Algeria has been effective within the context of the CFSP since 'France has expected her European partners to defer to her "vital interests" in the Algerian situation and how Paris has instrumentalized Europe while seeking to prevent it from acquiring an independent point of view' (Roberts, 2002, p. 126).

However, it is wrong to conclude that the European policy is directed only by France. The role of Spain both in directing the European policy and its failure in democracy promotion is also worth mentioning. In the 1990s, the Spanish policy was developed mainly in agreement with that of the EU which can be summarised as 'expressing satisfaction with the measures adopted by the Algerian government to bring into dialogue the political leaders of the Islamist movement and on the need for peaceful cooperation between all sides' (Garica and de Larramendi, 2002, p. 178).

However, September 11 prompted the Mediterranean Partners to rethink their objectives within the EMP (Gillespie, 2003, p. 25). Gillespie argues that following September 11, to some, Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis seemed a more plausible scenario and therefore the EMP was regarded as a medium through which conscious efforts could be made to avert this threat in the form of reinforced security co-operation and of enhanced dialogue and cultural co-operation aimed at challenging cultural stereotypes and gradually constructing a security community in the Mediterranean (p. 24).

This new emphasis on EMP created an opportunity for the Spanish presidency to exert influence over the Mediterranean policy of the EU. The strengthening of the relationship between Britain and Spain (Gillespie, 2003, p. 25) and the heavy domestic political agendas of Germany and France with the approaching elections, enabled Spain to play an active role in the enhancement of the third basket of the Barcelona Declaration. Whereas prior to September 11, the third basket was thought to be given a Justice and Home Affairs content, with an emphasis on migration, after this date there was a considerable shift towards developing a cultural agenda chiefly through proposals to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation (Gillespie, 2003, pp. 24–5), which were discussed in the Valencia Conference held in April 2002.

However, according to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, the new JHA agenda would lead to security priorities overshadowing EMP promotion of rule of law and human rights. The Network pointed to the poor performance of many MPCs in relation to their democracy and human rights commitments yet the Spanish presidency failed to provide any response to this criticism. Gillespie further argues that, on the contrary, Spanish–Algerian relations were reinforced with the signing of the Friendship Treaty in October 2002 (Gillespie, 2003, p. 33). Thus, the Spanish influence also could not contribute to the promotion of democracy in Algeria.

EU's Lack of Determination

As Brynjar Lia argues, the presence of authoritarian and repressive regimes among the southern neighbours of the EU has security implications in the sense that the aims of establishing political stability and expanding economic and military co-operation may lead to support for undemocratic regimes in the region (Lia, 1999, p. 27). In other words, the EU's fear of the rise of violence is a crucial part of its security understanding. Thus, the EU may not always want to upset the existing status quo and prefers to secure its own interests instead of leading a wave of democratisation which is likely to bring political instability mainly because of the tension between the military and the opposition groups. From the account above, the most important aspect of the problem of democratisation in Algeria can easily be understood as one that stems from the strong role of the Algerian military in political life especially in the 1990s. Despite this problem, during the period after the launching of the Barcelona Process, the 'EU factor' has remained quite insufficient and

ineffective in promoting democracy in Algeria, particularly with respect to the civilian control of the military. One can also observe that the EU has not been sufficiently consistent and determined to impose political conditionality to secure some democratisation in Algeria. As Youngs argues, 'the European policy toward Algeria was one of the most emblematic cases of non-intervention and of the EU's disinclination to employ coercive pressure in relation to democratic shortfalls' (2001, p. 95).

In terms of the EU's lack of determination, the legality of the High Security Council after the 1992 coup and the lacking European response to it is worth mentioning as well. The HSC was an existing body in the constitution, but its defined role in the constitution was simply to act as a consultative body to the Head of State on issues of state security. Thus it was not designed to act, even in a provisional capacity, as an executive or legislative body. However, when the coup occurred HSC assumed the extraordinary powers of the National Assembly and was converted into a political forefront as it was dominated by senior military officers including Nezzar, Guenaizia, Balkheir, the Ministry of Interior (Willis, 1996, pp. 249–50). President Chadli's resignation, the cancellation of the second round of the elections and the FIS were all the developments which did not meet with sufficient response from the EU. The French attitude is interesting to note in this respect since the French authorities tried to keep the EU at arm's length from any political intervention in the country as François Mitterrand stated at the end of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Europe of 27 October 1993: '... I do not think that the current drama in Algeria is in the domain of the European Union. As far as that is concerned, France is acting as she must in respect of this neighboring country' (Daguzan, 2002, p. 5).

When the coup took place in 1992, 'the essence of European discourse on Algeria had been the critique of the regime on democratic grounds' (Roberts, 2002, p. 119). There were various resolutions and declarations emphasising the negative views of Europe with respect to the undemocratic character of the Algerian regime. On many occasions, 'the EU re-confirmed its willingness to support a policy of democratic development and economic restructuring in Algeria' (CFSP, Declaration on Algeria, 23 January 1995). However, despite declarations condemning the political situation and violence, 'little has been done in the way of pursuing the EU's stated aims. The EU has not attached any political conditionality to the aid, trade and financial relations it already has with Algeria' (Stavridis and Hutchence, 2000, p. 51). For instance, the European response to the revocation of the 1992 elections and the subsequent prohibition of the FIS did not explicitly condemn the military's action. On the contrary, Algeria was offered a fourfold increase in EU aid and a rescheduling of over \$20 billion of its debt (Youngs, 2001, p. 95).

The EU did not impose any pressure on Algeria concerning political liberalisation. The EU continued to be highly tolerant of the restrictions imposed by the Algerian government on the political freedoms. In fact, military rule was preferred over a possible FIS government and the EU supported the status quo instead of promoting democracy because economic relations had priority. Consequently, existing trade agreements and business with Algeria were not used as instruments for pushing economic and political liberalisation. These relations were not conditional on the development of human rights and democracy in Algeria. On the contrary, despite the existence of an authoritarian regime and the internal violence, negotiations for the association agreement between the EU and Algeria continued, were concluded in 2001 and an agreement was signed in Valencia,

in April 2002, whose principles were based on economic concerns with no mentioning of the promotion of human rights and democracy.¹³

While criticising the lack of effectiveness of the EU as an international actor in Algeria in particular and in North Africa in general, we should also consider the status of the region in its relations with the EU, which determines the methods and sanctions available for the EU to promote democracy. In its previous experiences of southern enlargement and also regarding the recent Central and Eastern European enlargement, the EU had an advantageous position because the issue concerned the accession of countries that had problems of democratisation. The desire of these countries—Greece, Spain and Portugal—to join the Community provided them with an incentive for making democratisation reforms. On the other hand, there is no such incentive for Algeria because of the experience of Morocco, who applied for EC membership in 1987 and was denied. With this case, the Community apparently determined its southern geographical boundaries, so currently there is no such incentive towards democratisation of EU membership for Algeria. However, there are still the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Barcelona Declaration and recently the ENP, which can provide a framework for the EU to promote democracy in Algeria.

There are declarations which state the EU's concerns about the situation but there are no coercive actions, no conditionalities imposed on Algeria, so there is no serious action to promote democratisation. The most significant concrete measure taken by the EU was the decision taken at the end of 1997 to suspend negotiations for the association agreement. While there was no conditionality, or explicit coercion to implement specific democratic reforms, the EU stressed that the general fragility of the country's political institutions had contributed to the decision to break off talks.¹⁴ The EU has not called for 'the executive branch of the state to be accountable to the legislature, the army to withdraw from the political sphere, the judiciary to be independent of the executive, the proper measures to be taken for fair elections' which are the crucial aspects of a well-functioning and stable democracy, not to mention the existence of 'the state of emergency and the weakness of civil society' in Algeria (Roberts, 2002, p. 127). For the EU, in Algeria, economic interests have priority and the Community prefers to preserve the status quo by supporting an undemocratic regime. The EU did nothing to promote democracy as the region's regimes became consolidated after independence, and in more recent years the EU may be seen, in practice, as having bolstered elite coalitions rather than promoting political pluralism (Gillespie and Whitehead, 2003, p. 196).

Algeria, as a trading partner, feels political pressure less despite the military coup and the state of emergency because of its economic ties with the EU. However, as 'the stability of North Africa is of strategic importance to Europe, particularly Southern Europe' (De Vasconcelos, 1988, p. 145), possible security challenges coming from Algeria are taken seriously by the EU and these challenges contribute to adjustment problems for the future of EU–Algeria relations.

Concluding Remarks: Has the EU Failed in Algeria?

The Algerian case reveals an important litmus test indicating how the EU has handled the problem since democracy promotion has been declared as an important goal. From the account above, it can be concluded that the EU has been very ineffective regarding its involvement with a partner country who signed the Barcelona Declaration. The EU has

failed to put the principles of the Barcelona Declaration into practice in the Algerian case and this shows that there is still a long way to go before the Union can be seen as a coherent international actor in the Euro-Mediterranean area (Stavridis and Hutchence, 2000, p. 42).

The reasons for the EU ineffectiveness were various. The EU position has been strained by factors as the weaknesses and paradoxes inherent within the CFSP, the 'French and Spanish factors' which were quite important and the lack of determination as a result of these two previously mentioned factors. This lack of determination was particularly due to the overriding concern for stability that can be ensured with authoritarian governments instead of a possible instability that may arise due to democratic functioning. In other words, stability rather than democracy was the primary concern for the EU in the 1990s. The containment of political Islam, immigration from Algeria to the EU in general and to France in particular were also important factors that limited the scope of EU action. The EU, most of the time, had become captive of the member state policy preferences, as seen above especially in the French and Spanish examples. In addition, the EU did neither use sanctions nor imposed conditionalities effectively to push for democratisation reforms. In other words, the trade bonds with Algeria were not sacrificed for the sake of democracy and the EU failed in this respect as an international actor in promoting democracy in Algeria.

In sum, it can be concluded that the Algerian case revealed the fact that the idealist–constructivist paradigm of the Barcelona Declaration seems to remain merely rhetoric, as the EU has been pursuing a rather rationalist approach based on its own interests in the region. The members of the Union are expected to have well-functioning democratic systems because of the belief that a problem in one-member country can affect the whole community, but when it comes to the associates or trade partners like Algeria, the promotion of democracy becomes of secondary importance and is only used as a policy tool when it is seen as necessary for the economic interests of the EU. The priority of economic interests and stability even at the expense of democracy explains why the strong role of the military and the authoritarian tendencies of the regime in Algeria is so far not seriously challenged by the EU.

Notes

1. 'The birthright principle implies that the military are perceived to have been at the birth of the nation, or that without the sacrifices by the armed forces the nation would not have been formed or survived' (Koonings and Kruijt, 2002, p. 19).
2. The bill increased the number of parliamentary seats while altering their distribution to achieve over-representation in rural areas, where the FLN's base of support rested. The bill also created a two-round voting system—if no party received an absolute majority in the first round, only the top two candidates would participate in a second round runoff.
3. From the Statement for 28 June from Mohammed Larbi Zitout of El Karama, found at <http://www.campacc.org.uk/Library/zitout_280606.doc>.
4. Found at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/algeria/intro/>.
5. Ibid.
6. Roberts points out, 'the way in which President Bush and President Chirac rushed to congratulate President Bouteflika on his re-election'. Roberts argues that the 'democratically-elected president' could measure up to their yardstick (2005, p. 15).
7. Taken from the Regional Strategy Paper, found at <www.femise.org/PDF/A_Tovias_1000.pdf>.
8. Barcelona Declaration, found at <<http://europa.eu.int>>.
9. See European Neighbourhood Policy, found at <http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm>.

10. It is officially stated that 'Progress in meeting the agreed priorities will be monitored in the bodies established by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and Association Agreements. The Commission will report periodically on progress accomplished. On the basis of this evaluation, the EU, together with partner countries, will review the content of the Action Plans and decide on their adaptation and renewal'. Commission of the European Communities (2004, p. 3).
11. Taken from the Regional Strategy Paper, found at <www.femise.org/PDF/A_Tovias_1000.pdf>.
12. HRW World Report 1999: The Role of the International Community, found at <<http://www.hrw.org/worldreport99/mideast/algeria3.html>>.
13. <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/externalrelations/algeria/docs/index.htm>>.
14. Ibid., p. 102.

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