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**Title:** “The Taming of the ‘Mad Dog’? –  
Progress, Opportunities and Risks of the EU’s Rapprochement with Libya.”

Despite frequent invitations following its return to the international community in 2003/2004, Libya has been hesitant about participating in the EU programmes for the Southern Mediterranean. This thesis analyses the reasons for this reluctance.

As Libya is currently the only Mediterranean country without formal ties to the EU, there is a distinct lack of literature on EU-Libyan relations. Research therefore focused on analyses of Libya by think tanks and foreign policy journals, as well as on studies evaluating EU programmes for the Mediterranean (namely the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – or ‘Barcelona Process’ – and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)). In order to include the most recent events in EU-Libyan rapprochement, current media reports were consulted. Interviews with European foreign policy officials involved in talks with Libya gave insight into the status quo of rapprochement talks.

To build a reliable foundation for further statements about Libya, the first chapter looks into recent Libyan history, focusing especially on the developments that led to Libya’s isolation under UN sanctions, and on the actions its government undertook in order to overcome this isolation. Latest developments in Libya’s economy, politics and society are also described. Chapter two then assesses the feasibility of an EU-Libyan association by looking into the principles of the Barcelona Process and the ENP and by examining Libya’s new-found willingness to engage with the EU. The chapter also addresses all possible fields of collaboration between the EU, its member states and Libya – such as energy and migration – and describes the extent to which cooperation is already taking place. Finally, chapter 3 concludes the findings, develops scenarios for a future political development of Libya, and based thereon, formulates recommendations for EU actors shaping policy towards Libya.

The main findings of the thesis can be summarised as follows:

- Libya’s quick conversion from ‘rogue state’ to ally of the West around the year 2000 was only partly due to external pressure. Facing serious internal opposition, the regime needed primarily to stabilise its power. It seems to have succeeded at this.
- Political opening towards the West was not followed by domestic liberalisation. While the first signs of economic restructuring are visible, the societal situation has barely changed in recent years. Despite the emergence of progressive actors on the political scene, the regime remains authoritarian and repressive, and can still be considered a dictatorship.
- While expanded cooperation between the EU and Libya could be profitable for both sides, Libya has shown little interest, as it considers the Barcelona Process/ENP to be both an intrusion into its domestic affairs, and lacking in concrete gains. Instead, the country would prefer to conclude a mere trade and cooperation agreement. It is advised for the EU to accept such an agreement, in order to build mutual trust and to accompany and slowly influence Libya on its way towards further liberalisation and democratisation. However, any further rapprochement would seem to be contingent on successful resolution of the Benghazi HIV case.