

Dossier: Barcelona +20: an Assessment

Migrations in the Mediterranean Region

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The Mediterranean Basin is one of the main migration arenas in the world. It is also, however, one of the most border-controlled areas, since it constitutes the outer border of the European Union on its southern side. Moreover, the EU has turned its back to migration from the South, because it is built on freedom of movement, residence and work within the wider Union, but closing its southern borders along the Mediterranean while opening its borders to the East. Twenty-two states border the Mediterranean Sea. These can be divided into various places of exchange and confrontation: the Maghreb and Western Europe on the one hand, the Balkans, Turkey and the Mashreq on the other. Antiquity's 'sea in the middle of the lands' is today also the arena for some of the major conflicts in the world, a source of strife, insecurity and sometimes terrorism: Christians and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, Turks and Kurds, radical Islamists in Europe and in their own countries, not to mention the many disputes between neighbours (Macedonia, Cyprus, Western Sahara, etc). In sum, the south shore of the Mediterranean supplies the essential migration flows to the EU, which has established its border there, becoming the source of significant clandestine migration that sometimes ends in death, making this sea a vast cemetery.

The Mediterranean Migratory Area

Europe forms a migratory area with the south shore of the Mediterranean. The majority of migratory flows towards Europe are from there, considering the his-

toric and neighbourhood ties it has with this region and the complimentary demographic and economic nature of the two areas. The gateways to Europe, i.e. Gibraltar, Melilla and Ceuta, Malta, Lampedusa, the Canary Islands and the Evros (or Maritsa) River border, where sub-Saharan Africans flock today, give the image of a Europe under siege having trouble controlling its borders while attempting to involve countries of transit, some of which have become countries of immigration, in controlling the flows by making them the border guards of Europe.

Over the course of twenty years, southern European countries and the Balkans, countries of emigration until the mid-1980s, have now become countries of immigration, a phenomenon extending to the threshold of Europe, from the Maghreb to Turkey, which have also now become regions of immigration and transit.

Today, the Mediterranean continues to be crossed by migrants. They begin along the edges of Europe: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the Maghreb and Albania are at once countries of departure, transit and destination. Despite the globalisation of flows, historic, geographic and cultural proximity (languages, particularly transmitted by the media) continues to explain Europe as the desired destination of choice. This is true of Spain, where Moroccan migrants are the second immigrant nationality, Italy, where Romanians, Albanians and Moroccans are the most numerous, Greece, where Albanians make up two thirds of the foreigners, and France, with Maghrebi nationals in the forefront.

Various migratory configurations exist in the distribution of migration within the Euro-Mediterranean area: Paired migration countries, often associated with a colonial past or recruitment in years of contract worker growth, where a single nationality has the majority of its emigrants in a single host country (Al-

geria/France, for instance, where over 90% of Algerians immigrating to Europe live in France, and Turkey/Germany, where 70% of Turks immigrating to Europe live in Germany),

- Quasi-diasporas, characterised by a nationality present in numerous European countries and creating strong transnational economic, cultural, religious, familial and matrimonial networks and links among its different groups (this is the case of the Turks in Europe, followed by the Moroccans),
- Scattered distribution, reflecting the globalisation of flows characterising migratory movement to Europe since the 1990s.

The southern Mediterranean Basin, despite the closed borders, constitutes a region of considerable emigration: Morocco (3.5 million emigrants), Turkey (5.3 million), Egypt (2.7 million), Algeria (one million). In Morocco, emigration has doubled in 11 years.

Diasporas, formerly considered a threat to the sovereignty of the countries of origin, have today become highly solicited because they can allow those countries to exercise an influence on the host countries: acceptance of dual nationality, for instance – many European countries have opened their nationality laws to elements of *jus soli* over the course of the 1990s, whereas all the Muslim countries operate on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, with perpetual allegiance to the country of birth, as is the case in Morocco; acceptance by the country of origin of the political rights exercised by non-EU citizens on the local level in the host country and sometimes even the will to grant political rights to members of a diaspora through a consular vote or a vote in the country of origin; recognition of associations campaigning for the conditions of their compatriots, and not just friendly ones controlled by the country of origin; involvement of associations in local development programmes in the regions of origin; and organisation of religious affairs at a distance. Transnational networks of matrimonial, commercial or entrepreneurial nature cross the Mediterranean and make the border a resource for their exchanges.

But Europe only attracts half of the migrants from the south shore of the Mediterranean, since they also go to Arab countries such as Libya and the Gulf States, as well as the United States and Canada. Certain Mediterranean south shore countries are also countries of immigration. This is the case of Israel, Turkey, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan. In addition, there is an unknown number of illegal immigrants or migrants in transit, including sub-Saharan in the Maghreb and Sudanese in Egypt. Spain is the primary destination of these migrants from the South. It is the European country that has experienced the greatest migration hump in the past few years. In the mid 1980s, Southern European countries began establishing immigration policies with characteristics that distinguish them greatly from traditional countries of immigration: progressive accession to the 'acquis communautaire,' successive waves of legalisation, bilateral labour agreements in employment niches previously occupied by illegal migrants. On the other hand, south shore Mediterranean countries, which have emigration policies, have not established immigration policies apart from penalising illegal immigration.

Since 1985, Europe has strengthened its outer borders and opened its inner borders in the belief that immigration pressure from the southern Mediterranean was over.¹ A visa system was established to complement the programme for non-EU citizens and suspicion increased, with the Europeanisation of border controls as of the 1990s. Walls were built, as in Ceuta, on the initiative of the European Union, with camps not only in countries of transit such as Morocco and Libya, but also in Malta or outlying EU countries. These dissuasive and repressive measures tend to increase the random settlement of those who cannot return to their countries of origin, heightening migratory pressure at the threshold of Europe. Illegal immigration continues in order to reimburse the cost of the trip, and casualties mount along the borders.

Another challenge: Euro-Mediterranean dialogue. Hopes were soon dashed due to the implementation of an EU external border surveillance and anti-terrorism system (development aid being conditional to the capacity of countries of emigration to

¹ Catherine WIHTOL DE WENDEN, *Faut-il ouvrir les frontières ?* Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2014, 2nd edition, and *Atlas des migrations dans le monde*, Paris, Autrement, 2012, 3rd edition.

control illegal migration), the asymmetry of trade, instability in the region (dialogue dependence on the Middle East conflict), corruption, Islamic terrorism and the weak appropriation of the partnership by south shore countries. Agriculture and fishing, the only sectors producing at competitive levels in the South, has run up against a protectionist EU system. In the North, Euro-Mediterranean dialogue remains far from interesting all EU Member States, some of them being more interested in the eastern neighbourhood or the Nordic Union. The Barcelona Process (1995-2005) was succeeded by the Union for the Mediterranean, launched by France in 2007, which eliminated migration from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership content.

Finally, Islam is also a challenge. In the past, Europe was built where Muslim powers retreated. But the confrontation of Islam with the secularisation of European countries is often a reciprocal ordeal and outbreaks of terrorism have aggravated the divide.

One of the Greatest Lines of Divide and Proximity in the World

The asymmetric population profiles are a first divide. Over the past sixty years, the population has grown significantly in the eastern and southern Mediterranean Basin, while it has stagnated in the North. The median age (the age separating the population of a country or group into two equal parts) in Europe today is forty, as compared to twenty-five on the south shore. This disparity is nonetheless diminishing due to the entrance of the majority of south shore countries into the demographic transition, that is, the transition from so-called traditional reproductive behaviours (some six births per woman) to generational replacement levels (two and a half children per woman on average). We are therefore now in a situation of complementarity between the two shores, with an ageing population in the North and the availability of a vast skilled labour reserve consisting of young adults in the South that the labour market there cannot absorb. The South-North migratory pressure in the Mediterranean area is diminishing.

Contrary to popular belief, the rise of political Islam has not had an impact on the demographic transition, as is indeed also the case in other Islamic countries such as Iran.² On the north shore of the Mediterranean, countries such as Italy and Spain have entered a stage of demographic ageing, with the number of children per woman at sub-replacement levels and the entrance of a growing proportion of the population into old age, which calls for new migration sources. At the same time, emerging together with the phenomenon of 'de-ageing'³ (whereby senior citizens are in better physical and mental condition than the preceding generation at the same age) is the phenomenon of North-South migration that is often the extension of international tourism, with people settling long-term (in France for the British, Spain and Portugal for the Germans and British, Malta for the British, and Morocco and Tunisia for the French).

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And finally, the rampant urbanisation of the planet also involves the south shore, marked by rural exodus, megapolisation (as in Cairo or Istanbul) and the transformation of south shore Mediterranean countries into countries of transit and immigration, with the settlement of migrants due to closed borders to the North. This is the case of Morocco and Turkey, as well as Algeria and Libya, which have become countries of transit for sub-Saharan.

The South's countries (French, Italian, Spanish), at times associated with the colonial past, is facilitated by dissemination through the media (television, internet, mobile telephones), transnational migrant networks built by migrant families that settled in European countries long ago (France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Benelux, Switzerland), remittances that, to-

² Youssef COURBAGE, Emmanuel Todd, *Le rendez-vous des civilisations*. Paris, Seuil, 2007.

³ Raimondo CAGIANO DE AZEVEDO, Cinzia CASTAGNARO, "Vieillesse et déviessement: un débat européen," *Gérontologie et société*, No. 139, December 2011.

gether with films, foster the image of a European Eldorado where traversing the Mediterranean is like a modern odyssey.

The Arab revolutions, though they have not changed the trend, have at times accelerated the phenomenon, as with the arrival of Syrians in Turkey, Libyans in Tunisia and Tunisians in Italy and France in the spring of 2011. Certain Mediterranean islands, destinations for tourist and also recurrent arrivals of illegal immigrants, are at the heart of the confusion between the great openness to tourism and labour and the barring of undocumented migrants: this is the case on Lampedusa, Malta, Cyprus, the Greek islands, the Canary Islands and, to a lesser degree, the Balearic Islands. New borders have likewise appeared, associated with migration and strengthened by European border surveillance systems, as at the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, or the Evros River marking the border between Greece and Turkey. These border scenes are a control production in a world where the aspiration to move freely has never been greater while at the same time there has never been a greater need for putting up barriers to migration.

The 22 states bordering the Mediterranean total approximately 400 million inhabitants. Seven of these States belong to the EU (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal –even if it is primarily Atlantic–, Greece, Malta and Cyprus), with a revenue ten times superior on average to that of their neighbours to the South. By 2025, the population of these European States will hardly have increased, whereas that of the other states will have grown by 70%. The closing of borders often combines with the absence of a genuine alternative to migration.

Each north-shore Mediterranean country, despite its proximity to the South, has its own migratory landscape: hence France is strongly marked by its colonial past through the presence of Maghrebis, but also by the Portuguese, the leading immigrant nationality in France according to the 1982 census; Spain, which in the past few years has become the second most popular country of immigration in Europe (5.5 million foreigners), is characterised by its proximity to Morocco, as well as its South American and African tropism; Italy, the third country of immigration, which has reached a population of 5 million foreigners, is a mosaic of nationalities arriving since the 1990s; while Portugal, apart from its Eastern Eu-

ropean workers (Romanians and Ukrainians), is dominated by its migration of colonial origin, from Portuguese-speaking countries. And finally, Greece, which had no adjoining border with the EU until 2004, is characterised by the presence of Albanians and Eastern Europeans.

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In twenty years, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Malta, former countries of emigration, have become countries of immigration. This radical transition can be ascribed to a combination of factors: these countries' location along the external borders of Europe, the implementation, at times deferred, of EU border control systems, the demand for labour in sectors that cannot be delocalised (tourism, the restaurant business, fishing, agriculture, caring for the elderly, domestic services for nationals as well as for the elderly and European retirees), the existence of a 'black' labour market, and the frequent recourse to 'massive' regularisation to absorb a proportion of the illegal immigrants. Public opinion is still reticent to the idea of long-term immigrants, though they are nonetheless an integral part of these societies.

A European System of Border Control Is Characterised by Closing Off the South

The EU system to manage migratory flows is called the 'acquis communautaire,' constituted by the essential Schengen Agreements of 1985 on the elimination of internal EU borders and the strengthening of external borders. For non-EU foreign nationals, this has meant the obligation of obtaining a single-entry visa of less than three months in order to enter and travel as tourists within the Schengen Area. Readmission agreements were signed as of 1991 with

non-EU Member States bordering the Mediterranean or the EU, accompanied by the adoption of a computerised control system, the SIS (Schengen Information System), a database for sharing national data on 'undesirables' (illegal immigrants, rejected asylum seekers), obliging all EU Member States to refuse their right to residence and deport them. The Dublin Convention and Dublin II Regulation on asylum, the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty on the Communitisation of the decision process and the 2007 Lisbon Treaty round off the system. Numerous instruments for heightened control of external EU borders have been deployed, such as the adoption in 2000 of a Eurodac Convention on asylum, facilitating comparison of digital fingerprints of asylum-seekers and individuals having irregularly crossed an EU border through an information database accessible to all EU Member States. The Frontex System of cooperation among EU Member State police forces has been patrolling the borders of Europe since 2005. In 2013, following the decease of 366 people in the vicinity of the island of Lampedusa, Italy decided to implement, until the end of autumn 2014, a national rescue operation called Mare Nostrum, which saved thousands of lives and was succeeded in late 2014 by Triton, a control mechanism belonging to Frontex, whose primary mission is not, however, the assistance of shipwrecked individuals.

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In any case, sovereignism, under pressure from the populism rampant here and there in Europe, is gaining ground over the Communitisation of migration policies, as demonstrated by debates on the modification of the Schengen Agreement and the return to national control of borders after the arrival of Tunisians and Libyans in Lampedusa and then Ventimiglia in spring 2011.

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sors, drones and the Frontex system. This proliferation of migration controls is based on three essential factors: the security economy, whereby private companies have become specialised in conveying the deported and military technology recycles its instruments in the civil domain; the security escalation, amalgamating the struggle against illegal immigration, anti-terrorism and the struggle against the Rom; and the use of migrants as negotiation instruments through agreements made with countries in the South (Senegal, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco).

In 2014, Romanians and Bulgarians, whose countries became EU Member States in 2007, were granted the freedom to work and settle within the EU, and this has created a certain tension. The 'disentanglement' of nationalities occurring in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall was preceded by 'disentanglements' in Mediterranean Europe: nearly half a million Bulgarians of Turkish origin returned to Turkey, some 350,000 Pontic Greeks (from the region of Pontus, along the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea) returned to Greece, Romanians of Hungarian origin returned to Hungary and Albanians of Greek origin (the Arvanites) moved to Greece, where they comprise 60% of foreigners, while the departure of Romanians for Italy continued. The struggle against illegal immigration in the Mediterranean area is a declared priority of the EU. Common regulations to combat irregular residence have been defined on an EU level since 1990. The strengthened border controls are also symbolised by SIVE (Spain's Integrated External Surveillance System), functioning with the aid of radars between Spain and the African coast. Readmission agreements between the EU and south Mediterranean countries tend to make numerous buffer states the 'border guards' of the EU, other states (particularly African) already being bound by obligatory readmission clauses. Immigration and asylum liaison officers, through the Frontex programme based at a specialised agency in Warsaw, ensures reinforced control of external EU borders, and EU repatriation (that is, where various EU Member States join efforts to repatriate people) is considered a strong deterrent. Other instruments used to control the south European borders are bilateral agreements. These consist of agreements between the countries of arrival and departure on readmission of foreign nationals in an irregular situation to their countries of origin.

Libya is an example of bargained agreements in the name of the struggle against clandestine immigration. Libya has not ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugees and it does not adhere to the European Neighbourhood Policy. When in 2011, 1,500 immigrants arriving on the Sicilian island of Lampedusa were deported to Libya, the migrants seeking international protection were unable to exercise their rights. Colonel Gaddafi demanded five billion euros from the EU to 'stop' illegal immigration and build a road from Egypt to Tunisia. By a decision on 23 February 2011, the European Commission reiterated that Member States should always respect fundamental rights and suspend agreements whenever there was violation of fundamental rights.

Bilateral agreements often have the aim of limiting the migratory flow through policies of returning undocumented migrants to the other side of the border in exchange for development policies, trade agreements or the concession of residency permits for the elite.

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Another type of agreement is multilateral, signed between a country of origin and transit with the ensemble of the EU. Numerous south-shore countries have signed such agreements. Others, such as Morocco, resist, due to the weakness of what Europe offers in return (Morocco wishes to receive privileged partners status with the EU, arguing that signing such agreements could ruin its relations with West African countries, whence come many of the migrants passing through Morocco on their way to Europe). In the same vein, Turkey, which has facilitated movement for migrants from neighbouring countries to the East and South was faced in 2010 with the Greek announcement that it was going to

build a wall in Thrace, at the Greek-Turkish border to prevent entry by undocumented migrants from Turkey.

Countries of origin are, moreover, beginning to develop diaspora policies to use migrants as agents of influence in their host countries through the attention they garner the country: this is the case of Turkey and Morocco

One can observe a return to regarding border management as a state affair, while the existence of European borders along the external edges of the EU is emphatically displayed. This reveals a lack of confidence of EU Member States in EU policy, which is nonetheless highly security-oriented.

Conclusion: Migrants, Bridges between Two Shores⁴

Despite this closure, initiatives by migrants and their descendents contribute to building transnational spaces between the north and south shores of the Mediterranean: first of all through remittances, then through associations, as well as through people with dual nationality, whose elite are courted by the countries of origin, and finally through their everyday transnational practices, such as marriage, information exchange, trade, the creation of small businesses and the organisation of Islam in secularised European countries. Countries of origin are, moreover, beginning to develop diaspora policies to use migrants as agents of influence in their host countries through the attention they garner the country: this is the case of Turkey and Morocco. A number of hybrid cultural initiatives have been flourishing in music, theatre, dance and sports, and today are an integral part of popular European culture. Europe can no longer disregard this component of its diversity, in which migrants are among the main actors.

⁴ Catherine WIHTOL DE WENDEN, "Pour accompagner les migrations en méditerranée." *La bibliothèque de l'iReMMO*, Paris, L'Harmattan 2013.