IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2017

Director
Senén Florensa

Assistant Direction
Josep Ferré

Coordination
Jordi Padilla

Editorial Team
Laura Aimone Secat, Hugo Gallego

Collaborators
Núria Esparza, Lauren Dirrig

Advisory Council

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Foreword

Senén Florensa
President of the Executive Committee
European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed),
Barcelona

Upon studying the Mediterranean Region, there is unfortunately the sensation of running on a loop. The problems in the region seem to festering and the progress made, despite being highly significant, seems small against the magnitude of some of the problems being experienced across the Mediterranean area.

Despite its major advances, the contemporary world has reached a point of uncertainty, facing major challenges in all spheres: violent conflicts, wars, indiscriminate terrorism, the effects of climate change, new types of security threats, such as cyberattacks or manipulation of public opinion, an increase in economic inequality as a result of the economic crisis, etc. Furthermore whereas in the face of such problems, the rise of xenophobic populisms and exclusionary nationalisms do not make it easy to handle these uncertainties.

The Mediterranean area must not only rise to the challenges caused by these uncertainties, but it is at the heart of a number of them. Middle East conflicts continue to be the Gordian knot of world geopolitics. The war in Syria, whose local actors keep changing position as the war develops, continues to demonstrate the geopolitical labyrinth in which world powers, regional leaders and those who aspire to become ones, make their play on a chessboard full of destruction and death. A conflict that, with the expulsion of millions of refugees from conflict zones and together with the precarious situation in Libya, has exacerbated one of the elements most difficult to manage, human movement across the Mediterranean. Thus, every year a humanitarian crisis repeats itself, for which European countries have not succeeded in finding a solution that meets both border management criteria and the essential matter of humanitarian aid.

Hence the selection of topics for the Yearbook has become an exercise in precision, as it attempts to combine the most relevant aspects of current affairs with reflection on subjects that, although having a lower media profile, determine development in the Mediterranean Region to a large extent.

Insofar as the Keys section of this year’s edition, the Yearbook kicks off with a topic that has unfortunately been prominent in each and every edition: conflict in the Middle East. In the 2017 edition, 100 years after the Balfour Declaration, 50 years after the Six Day War and 30 after the First Intifada, the time seems right to spotlight the Arab-Israeli conflict as the featured topic of the year, which, though it has not been gaining as much media attention due to the war in Syria, continues to be present and to determine much of the situation in the Middle East. The topic is approached from various angles, emphasizing both the internal dimension of each party and the international dimension of the conflict.

The second of this year’s Keys focuses on the future of Europe and the challenges facing the European Union. The future of the Mediterranean Region is intrinsically linked to that of the European Union. Euro-Mediterranean relations will largely determine the future of the region, and this is why a crisis of the European project does not bode well. Regarding topics related to the EU crisis, we chose to discuss aspects such as Brexit, the rise of populisms and the refugee crisis, all factors that have shaken the European edifice. Nonetheless, these symptoms can give rise to a remedy for the EU project. Although no satisfactory solution to the refugee crisis...
that is in keeping with European values has yet been found, Eurosceptic populism has threatened but failed to achieve quotas of power in the main countries of the continent. Although Brexit is certainly a failure of European integration, negotiations have, for now, been a show of unity among the rest of European countries. Seen with optimism, if countries have the political will, the EU crisis of the past few years could lend new impetus towards advancing and deepening European unity. The progression of Euro-Mediterranean relations, for its part, will depend on the role of Mediterranean European countries in the Union.

The problems in the region seem to be festering and the progress made seems small against the magnitude of some of the problems being experienced.

The third of this year’s Keys focuses on the debate of ideas within Islam. A debate on the future of Islam, or, in the words of some of the authors regarding the reform of Islam, which, beyond political interests, centres on the conciliation of religious tradition with the demands of modern civilization, with its values and limitations. Three articles (centring on the debate of ideas, reform theories and the singularity of Islam in Europe) analyse debates and proposals underway on reform within Islam in an extremely complex framework of relations between religion, society and politics. The result of this process will be decisive for the future of the Muslim world, prevailing over the threats embodied by both the arbitrary violence of jihadi terrorism and the most extreme fundamentalism, or the interventionism of world powers. Finally, the last Keys section deals with the processes of radicalization and deradicalization of youth who end up swelling the ranks of jihadi terrorism. Through two articles – one on radicalization processes in Europe, the other on deradicalization experiences in Europe and the Arab world – a highly relevant topic rooted in an underlying social problem is raised. Extremist radicalization of disoriented or rootless youth in Europe is probably just the tip of the iceberg of a structural problem in which a multitude of factors beyond the religious ones converge, such as integration of immigrant communities, the economic crisis and youth unemployment, the lack of opportunities, growing economic inequality, poverty, education, etc. As one of the authors says, only an integral approach to the phenomenon will allow us to establish successful mechanisms of deradicalization.

Following the Keys, the Dossier section of this year’s edition deals with the current geopolitical labyrinth and its effects on the Mediterranean area. Nine articles analyse in depth the role of the different actors on the geopolitical chessboard in the region. First of all, the role of the major powers in the region is discussed: on the one hand, the first steps taken in the region by new American policy with Donald Trump in the presidency, and on the other hand, how Russia seeks to restore its sphere of influence of the Soviet era through its intervention (among other things) in support of the Bashar Al Assad regime in Syria. The role to be played by the European Union in the Mediterranean in the face of changes and the diversity of situations in the region is also analysed. The UE will have to adapt to situations in which its traditional political relations with other countries are hardly suitable.

Middle East conflicts continue to be the Gordian knot of world geopolitics

After this overview of the policies of the major powers, the Dossier focuses on regional aspects with articles on the situation in Syria and the role played by regional powers and their allies in the Middle East. The Dossier dedicates separate articles to the international policies of Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey. And lastly, it closes with two more articles, the first on the conflict in Libya seen from a regional perspective, making particular reference to the consequences for its Maghreb neighbours and for regional integration, and the second on the source of instability represented by Sahel countries in relation to terrorism, migration and other security aspects.
After the Dossier, the Yearbook goes on to the Panorama section, which offers a wide variety of brief articles that attempt to provide a general overview of the situation regarding a wide variety of topics of significance to the Mediterranean region. In this section, you will find a series of more geographically-circumscribed articles, such as those dealing with the recent changes in different Mediterranean countries or those discussing the activity of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the war in Yemen, EU-Africa relations, the rise of Salafism in Bosnia and Herzegovina and those analysing the elections in France or Italy. The second major set of articles has a sectoral focus, with economic, social and cultural topics, among which are articles on youth unemployment, investment, climate change and migration, sustainable tourism, the challenges of water in Mediterranean countries, the media’s approach to refugees, cultural diplomacy, interreligious dialogue, the geopolitics of energy, the role of women in the agricultural sector, or the funding of terrorism, among others. These articles are a good example of the diverse nature of the topics dealt with in the Yearbook.

All of the above is but one of the pillars on which the Yearbook rests. Just as important as the articles are the Yearbook’s Annexes. The chronologies, tables, charts, statistics, fact sheets or country profiles and of course, maps, are the second column on which the Yearbook rests. The Annexes provide essential information on Mediterranean countries on a purely informative level to complement everything contributed by the articles or provide information on topics that the articles, for reasons of space, were unable to cover in this year’s edition.

The war in Syria continues to demonstrate the geopolitical labyrinth in which world powers, regional leaders and those who aspire to become ones, make their play on a chessboard full of destruction and death.

About to reach its fifteenth edition, the IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook continues its task of providing political, economic, social and cultural keys of the Mediterranean agenda from diverse, plural perspectives and with a broad selection of complementary data and information. It is our aim to keep this engagement with the Yearbook’s readership, attempting to improve with each new edition, with the help of all of those who collaborate and contribute their knowledge to this work.
Perspectives
Johannes Hahn
Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy &
Enlargement Negotiations
European Commission, Brussels

The Mediterranean region has never been so central to the European Union’s concerns. The turbulence of recent years has served to demonstrate – in case anyone needed persuading – that Europe’s interests, its well-being and security, are intimately tied up with developments in its southern neighbours. These partners currently face some extraordinary challenges, which impact ever more directly on Europe, and not only on its Mediterranean Member States.

The days are gone when Europeans could look across the Mediterranean Sea and consider benevolent development aid as an enlightened but optional activity. Migratory flows to and through our southern partners are a matter of common concern. Radicalization and terrorism threaten our societies on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. Conflicts that once seemed far away, have direct repercussions on our daily lives.

And, the emergence of an overwhelmingly young demographic across the region offers exciting potential, but daunting challenges for us all.

Net population growth in a country like Egypt is around 7,000 a day, over two million a year. We all have reason to work for sustainable economic and societal development that can offer the rising generation the opportunities they need: the education, the jobs, and the individual freedoms that are the best safeguards against bad choices – either to seek irregular migration in the hands of unscrupulous people smugglers or recruitment to organizations that offer the young false ideology and violence in place of peace.

That is why the EU will continue to work through its Neighbourhood Policy to co-operate with Mediterranean partners on all these issues in a strategic fashion, and not simply respond to each latest crisis to hit the European headlines.

The EU is, and will continue to be, a very significant donor in the region. For decades the leading provider of financial support to the Palestinian people, the EU is now also the leading donor in the international response to the Syrian crisis, supporting refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities in neighbouring countries, where we focus particularly on education, access to healthcare, improved water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as support for projects promoting resilience, economic opportunities and social inclusion.

Lebanon alone is hosting 1.1 million Syrians – besides other refugees in the country. EU support under the Neighbourhood Policy is designed to address not just the current urgent needs, but to help address the economic structural weaknesses that were there BEFORE the crisis, and invest in public services that will continue to help the country develop AFTER the crisis is over.

Similarly, in North Africa we are providing hundreds of millions of euros to support not just improved handling of the migration crisis but to strengthen the countries through which the migrants pass. While the media highlights our measures to enhance the Libyan Border- and Coast Guards’ capacity to effectively manage the country’s borders, few are aware of the very wide-ranging work underway to help Libyan municipalities and communities improve their economies and services, reducing the attraction of moving on or joining the smuggler networks.

In the review of Europe’s Neighbourhood Policy, which we carried out two years ago, I was determined to set our relationships with the Mediterranean on a new footing. Partnership means respect and our
new agreements with our southern neighbours are much more differentiated, thus reflecting their individual aspirations and interests, as well as their different choices for engagement with the EU. The EU continues to believe its own success is founded on certain fundamental pillars – human rights, democracy and rule of law. We promote these values, and continue to argue for them, but we have left behind the self-righteous tone and set aside the megaphone.

EU will continue to work through its Neighbourhood Policy to co-operate with Mediterranean partners on all these issues in a strategic fashion, and not simply respond to each latest crisis to hit the European headlines.

We would like to see more open societies, because we believe this is the key to building stability and increasing resilience, making each country less vulnerable to external and internal pressures. Where there is a will to reform we will support it, and where there is not, we will support civil society and the private sector where we can, and try to demonstrate the relevance of our case, without the condescension of the past.

In a country like Tunisia, which is pursuing a wide programme of reforms, we are doing all we can to support both governance reforms and economic development with significant economic assistance, hoping that we can play our part in supporting Tunisia’s transition.

In some other countries where there is a choice for a narrower range of engagement with the EU, we concentrate on the shared goals. Algeria has embraced this new approach, and on the basis of a new set of agreed “Partnership Priorities” we are working together, for example, on diversification of the Algerian economy, till now predominantly focussed on hydrocarbons, and on shared security challenges. Some issues are addressed more effectively at regional level. The Union for the Mediterranean, co-chaired by the EU and Jordan, is a fruitful forum and we support regional dialogues on a wide range of shared challenges. To take one example, the energy platforms (on gas, renewables and electricity) are proving valuable places to exchange experience and develop joint agendas. Energy consumption is rising exponentially across the region – and looks set to double by 2030. So our work together on regional strategies, to get the best from gas resources, develop renewables and boost energy efficiency, is important for the energy security of partners on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Similarly, the EU is supporting joint action through the UfM on water. The Mediterranean is among the most water-stressed regions in the world. We are supporting the development of a shared agenda for action, and contributing to the investments and governance systems necessary to manage an increasingly scarce resource.

We will support implementation of the latest declaration on sustainable urban development, and look forward to the ministerial meeting later this year, which will adopt a declaration on women’s empowerment.

Of course there are areas of work that never move as fast as we would like. Increased South-South trade, currently at 5%, would boost economies across the region. The EU is ready to help but, ten years after the Agadir agreement, this needs southern ownership.

Europe and the Mediterranean are bound together forever for better or for worse. Even where we have our differences we should work together for a more prosperous and peaceful future – because the future we build, will be one that we share.

Geography is destiny: just as you cannot choose your family, you cannot choose your neighbours. Europe and the Mediterranean are bound together forever for better or for worse. I am determined that our partnership should be decisively for the better: the EU will continue to seek to be a relevant and effective partner. Even where we have our differences we should work together for a more prosperous and peaceful future – because the future we build, will be one that we share.
Keys
Palestine after Oslo: Time as Politics

Bernard Botiveau
Emeritus Director of Research,
French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)
Institut de Recherches et d’Études sur le Monde Arabe
et Musulman (IREMAM), Aix-en-Provence

The year 2017 has no lack of opportunities for historical recollection and commemorations of recent historical events in Palestine, from the 1917 Sykes-Picot Agreement to the 1947 UN Partition Plan, not to mention the war of 1967. The idea of the coexistence of two populations that nothing seems destined to reconcile has gained ground without succeeding in being translated into political terms acceptable to both parties. This remains a problem whose comprehension does not seem to fall within the political short term. So as not to limit ourselves to a snapshot taken in 2017, we shall consider the period of approximately the past 25 years, which in practice amounts to the Oslo peace process since the signature of the first self-government accords in September 1993 in Washington, as a good indicator of the change of tested hypotheses on the possibility of such coexistence.

Two successive sets of problems have dominated negotiations on the political future of Palestine since the 1991 Madrid Conference between the Arab countries and Israel. In the context of the end of the Cold War, the destabilization risk for oil-producing countries and the entire region after the Gulf War prompted the US under Georges Bush to take the initiative. Two years after Madrid, in September 1993 in Washington, the famous Declaration of Principles was signed, creating the Palestinian Authority (PA). The idea was, after a certain period of self-government, to reach a Palestinian state endowed with internationally recognized sovereignty. The failure of this initial peace plan, confirmed in July 2000 at the Camp David II summit organized by Bill Clinton, triggered a series of confrontations in Palestine during the Second Intifada from 2000 to 2005, and later, in the summer of 2007, between Palestinian factions after Hamas’ electoral victory in January 2006.

The acknowledgement of this first failure modified the terms of negotiation. Negotiators began speaking of a “two-state solution.” Less ambitious, the two-state solution advocated by George W. Bush at the Annapolis Conference in November 2007 addressed the shortcomings of the Oslo Accords, which had put off discussion of the crucial issues of borders, Jerusalem and above all, the right of Palestinian refugees to return. In any case, though these issues were on the negotiation agenda, it was too late. The Intifada had left its mark: the brutality of Israel’s Operation Defensive Shield in April 2012, especially in the Jenin refugee camp, showed that Ariel Sharon, head of the Israeli government, had put an end to dialogue, which was confirmed by the 2005 unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. In reality, they were insisting on two completely separate states in a geographic area where only Israel would have sovereignty over borders. In his statements, moreover, G. W. Bush insisted on the Jewish nature of the State of Israel and the Palestinian nature of the State of Palestine, which led to the fear of a project of ethnic separation, liable to devalue the status of Palestinian Israelis.

The first two sections of this article discuss the circumstances of the decline of the Oslo process, whose first symptom was the regular expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Then, the constant demand of the successive Israeli administrations to limit themselves to bilateral relations with Palestine is analyzed as a negotiation strategy pro-
End of a Political Cycle: The Slow Deterioration of the Oslo Process

An assessment shared today by nearly all actors is that the Oslo Process has failed. John Kerry, the last American negotiator before the advent of the Trump Administration, said in late 2016 in Washington, in a speech considered his political testament, that the two-state solution was “in serious jeopardy” due to Israel’s uninterrupted pursuit of settlement of the territories occupied since 1967. In his last speech on the Middle East as Secretary-General of the UN Security Council on 16 December 2016, Ban Ki-moon basically said the same thing, finding it deplorable that the number of settlers had quadrupled over the 23 years of the Oslo process, and pointing to Israeli settlement activity as an element crippling negotiations.\(^1\) In Israel, whether they are in favour of the acceleration of the settlement movement, such as extreme right-wing parties, or against it, such as humanitarian NGOs, it can be stated that Israeli settlements are irreversible. The opponents themselves often consider that ending this illegal occupation of land would require distributing it, accompanied by compensation. And then there is the radical approach of annexation, which would eliminate the issue, but of course without resolving the central political problem, which remains one of an occupied people deprived of its fundamental rights.

This situation, which threatens Palestinian and Israeli societies, has its timeline. The first fracture, undoubtedly irremediable, in the development of the peace process inaugurated in the summer of 1994 by the arrival in Palestine of Yasser Arafat and part of the PLO, was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on 5 November 1995. The Israeli elections following this event in 1996 brought the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu along with a right-wing administration openly hostile to pursuing the peace process, obstructing the application of Palestinian self-government established in the Oslo Accords. Whereas these accords envisaged the proclamation of a Palestinian state on 5 May 1999, that is, exactly five years to the day after they began to be implemented, the process was deferred several times. Apart from the signature of the Protocol Concerning the

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\(^1\) Over the course of 23 years, he stated, the number of settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories had gone from 110,000 (in 1993) to over 400,000 (in 2016). Cf. www.un.org/apps/newsFr/storyF.asp?NewsID=38663#WXsWhelpzIV
Redeployment [of the Israeli Army] in Hebron on 15 January 1997, the first Netanyahu Administration made no territorial concessions until 28 October 1998, the date of the Wye Plantation mining agreement, i.e., for exactly 29 months, that is, half of the interim period of five years established to prepare the proclamation of the State.

An assessment shared today by nearly all actors is that the Oslo Process has failed.

The Oslo peace process practically came to halt, which confirmed the failure of the “last chance” summit convened in Camp David in July 2000 by Bill Clinton, with the presence of Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak, then Israeli Prime Minister, followed by the one in Taba in 2001. A succession of diplomatic failures exploited by General Sharon – in his visit to the Esplanade of the Mosques in Jerusalem in September 2000, accompanied by an impressive military unit – triggered the Second Intifada. The Oslo framework began to unravel as of that time, a process punctuated by a number of decisive events: siege of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah in 2002, death of Yasser Arafat in 2004, withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip in 2005 in co-ordination with the onset of construction of the new separation barrier, the electoral victory of Hamas in 2006 followed in 2007 by its takeover of the Gaza Strip. In the following years, the United States and their allies “put the negotiation process on an intravenous drip,” so to speak, through more or less binding measures: the roadmap imposed in 2003 by the Bush Administration, further defined in 2007 at the Annapolis Conference and the Paris Donors’ Conference. The past ten years have confirmed this deterioration of the peace process, one of the examples most detrimental to the PA likely being the political scission between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as of 2007 and the successive failures to form a national unity government despite numerous attempts at mediation by various Arab countries. The absence of elections during this entire period has undermined the negotiation capacity of Palestinian leaders, headed by the last elected President of the PA, Mahmud Abbas. Regarding the wars launched by the Israeli Army against Gaza in 2008-2009, then in the summer of 2014, they confirmed the stagnation of the Oslo Process despite repeated diplomatic initiatives.

Failure of Multilateralism in Negotiations in Palestine and Disengagement of International Actors

This brief chronological overview suggests the risks involved from the start of the Oslo Process. The interim agreements signed in 1993 engaged the “international community” with a solemnity as great as the one surrounding the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. However, at the time, the Palestinians were weakened by their allegiance with the Saddam Hussein regime during the First Gulf War and they had to compromise much more than they wished, with Israel retaining the initiative and the decision-making power in applying the agreements on site, for example: unshared sovereignty over the external borders of the Territories, checkpoints on all roads inside the Territories, a monopoly on the civil status of Palestinians and the universal use of Israeli currency, to mention but a few cases of asymmetry. In any event, the door to negotiation remained open. With the victory of the Likud Party in 1996, Israel toughened its negotiation strategy by adding a guarantee of security to the terms of the “land for peace” exchange. The insistence on the security argument, legitimate in principle, further highlighted the structural asymmetry characterizing interactions between the two “parties.”

The Oslo negotiation approach can be understood in the context of the internationalization of risk management in the Middle East region after the Gulf War, which had drawn attention to these risks. State actors thus urged the adversaries to meet. Apart from the secret part of the Oslo negotiations, the interim arrangements signed in 1993 employed a multilateral approach. Since 1994, the objectives to be achieved have shifted over the years. At first, the aim was to eventually institute a Palestinian state following the state-building model, and abiding by the constitutional prerequisites of “democratic transition” models, which called for strong international engagement. The UN, the European Union, the US...
and influential NGOs supervised a project with suitable goals and funding. As of 2000, the Second Intifada practically ended the process, with the US imposing the two-state-solution, supposedly guaranteeing security not only for the Palestinian State but also the state of Israel. The approach gained ground until it was endorsed at the Annapolis Conference in 2007.

Sitting on the fence with regard to Israelis and Palestinians was tantamount to denying the asymmetry characterizing the relations between a state and an institution of self-government lacking real sovereignty over the territory it had been granted by the Oslo Accords. This radical difference of status explains why Israeli administrations have always preferred direct negotiation with their Palestinian counterpart, even if given a great deal of media attention in the United States, and why the Palestinians have constantly sought international support, which has increasingly emerged over the past five years as a quest for recognition from the UN and UNESCO.

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Israeli rejection of a multilateral approach reached a climax during the evacuation of Israeli settlements in Gaza in August 2005, advocated by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. This decision was approved by former US President G. W. Bush, the latter also seeking to disengage from the Middle East. Both leaders wanted to see the Palestinian leadership disappear, whom they considered responsible for the Second Intifada, and concentrate on the West Bank. One of Sharon’s senior advisers, went as far as to declare: “The significance of the disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace process. And when you freeze that process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you prevent a discussion on the refugees [...]. The disengagement [...] supplies the amount of formaldehyde that is necessary so there will not be a political process with the Palestinians.”

The rejection of any attempt at internationalizing the conflict also directly affected relations with the Arab world. In March 2002 in Beirut, the proposal for global peace made by the Arab League countries to Israel in exchange for their withdrawal to pre-1967 borders (Fahd Plan) was quickly rejected by Ariel Sharon. The latter had even anticipated this announcement, preventing Yasser Arafat from participating in the Arab League Summit where the proposal was put forth (Ezzi, 2002). An attitude facilitated by the disengagement advocated by American Presidents G. W. Bush then Barack Obama. The latter recalled in 2009 that the US bond with Israel was “unbreakable,” and that “the situation for the Palestinian people is intolerable,” but he simply sent envoys, the last to date, John Kerry, having to “throw in the towel” in 2014 after over a year of ceaseless shuttling to and fro between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Insofar as European countries, although some of them have attempted to raise their voices against Israeli arbitrariness in the field, the European Union as a collective institution, member of the Quartet established for Palestine, has hardly intervened. In 2006, it even decided to institute retaliatory measures against the PA after the victory of Hamas in the legislative elections, elections that it had nevertheless supervised from start to finish to ensure they were conducted properly.

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2 The Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995, commonly known as Oslo II, only allowed the PA sovereign administration over “Zone C,” representing 62% of the West Bank.

3 Cited by journalist Meron Rapoport in the daily newspaper, Haaretz (Rapoport, 2005)


5 The Quartet on the Middle East was established in 2002, in the middle of the Intifada. It consists of the USA, Russia, the European Union and the UN. Its special envoy was Tony Blair.
Since the Arab Uprisings of 2011, Marginalization of the “Palestinian Question”

Apart from these factors specific to Palestine, the reconfiguration of regional relations since the Arab uprisings of 2011 has contributed to isolating Palestine and marginalizing it. In Cairo, in any case, Palestinian flags were present at the protests against the Hosni Mubarak regime. On 10 September 2011, a group of protesters forming on Tahrir Square even went to the Israeli embassy, attempting to take it by assault. These sporadic actions are in line with a popular tradition in Egypt of rejection of the normalization of relations with Israel since the 1979 peace treaty signed by Anwar al-Sadat. Moreover, the word Intifada entered Arab political vocabulary to designate the Arab uprisings underway and had already been used earlier, for instance in 2003 in Egypt during protests against Egypt's intervention in Iraq, by the US’s side. But these were just expressions of symbolic solidarity, which did not go as far as contesting the recurring policies of the last years of Mubarak’s regime, when, for instance, restrictions were imposed on the entry of Palestinians into Egypt via Rafah. A mistrust that grew – to the point of being relayed by some of the demonstrators of Tahrir Square – after the military deposed the elected President Mohamed Morsi, who was even accused in court of having escaped from Wadi Natroun Prison in early 2011 with the assistance of members of Palestine’s Hamas.

Since 1993, we have gone from the global conception of a sovereign Palestinian State to a “two-state solution” whose terms reflect the inability of international mediation as well as bilateral negotiation to allow this sovereign state to develop.

In Syria, the ambivalence towards the Palestinian institutions, which the regime had at times used and others combatted, in Beirut as well as in Damascus, was made clear when the Bashar el-As-

Exclusion or Integration? Time as Politics

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solution” whose terms reflect the inability of international mediation as well as bilateral negotiation to allow this sovereign state to develop. This failure has spurred the Palestinian Authority, amputated from the Gaza Strip in 2007, to seek greater recognition from international institutions. The fact that it was granted the status of Non-Member Observer State on 29 November 2012 by the UN General Assembly does not carry the same weight as a decision by the Security Council, but it does allow the PA to work in partnership with specialized UN organizations and above all to stand before the International Criminal Court to demand reparations for the damages caused to Gaza by recent Israeli wars. The UNESCO, moreover, defends the property rights of Palestinians, as demonstrated by its decision on 7 July 2017 to declare the city of Hebron a World Heritage Site.

To date, Israel has only reacted through retaliation, as, for instance, through repeated initiatives to develop new settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. At present, Palestinian control over territory is no greater than 20% of former Mandate Palestine, and over the territory defined by Oslo, the PA only has a certain power, obstructed by Israeli control. Moreover, settlement expansion threatens any attempt to establish a Palestinian state to such an extent that the Obama Administration ended up allowing the UN Security Council to vote on 23 December 2016 on what was to be the famous Resolution 2334, declaring that settlement of the Territories “constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace [...].”

However, as we have seen, not only has this resolution come too late, but also the Israeli government, under pressure from the most radical factions of the coalition in power, does not plan on heeding it. Insofar as associations against settlement and military occupation, as, for instance, Breaking the Silence.

For Israeli writer Avram Yehoshua, there is no other reality than the bi-national one, and at the same time, the binational State approach is a “double
pipe dream,” since true citizenship could not be guaranteed by either of the two nations in question, given the balance of power in the field and the contents that would be lent to the identity dimension of the conflict.8 Israeli Palestinians’ chronic deficit of citizen’s rights does not speak in favour of an integration of populations in the short term.

The failure of the Oslo peace process does not invalidate the need for an integrative approach, but it does call for additional reflection on the political timeframe within which the search for a sustainable compromise should fall, which reinforces the hypothesis of an overall solution associating the two physically separated populations, obliging the consideration of the nature of their respective fundamental rights. These rights remain to be imagined and instituted. The failure of the Oslo peace process does not, however, invalidate the need for an integrative approach, but it does call for additional reflection on the political timeframe within which the search for a sustainable compromise should fall.

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The Arab-Israeli Conflict Revisited


Professor Bichara Khader
Catholic University of Louvain

The Palestinian question was not born of the UN General Assembly Resolution in November 1947, unfairly dividing Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State. It emerged much earlier, when the First Zionist Congress, held in Basel in 1897, adopted the project to create a Jewish State in Palestine. Since then, there was a colonial project clearly aimed at Palestine. But for the project to become a reality, the support of a major power was needed. This came about with the November 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which Great Britain promised the Jews of Europe it would create “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, without consulting its Arab inhabitants, who nonetheless constituted 95% of the population. From the start, Arab peoples have expressed unwavering solidarity with “our brother nation of Palestine.” During the British Mandate period (1922-47), Arab volunteers came in from all over to join the Palestinian resistance to the Zionist project, above all during the great revolt of 1936-39. The matter of Palestine took hold in the Arab collective conscience as a “new colonial issue.” Later, the expulsion of two thirds of the Palestinian population in 1947-48 (called the Nakba) and the creation of Israel in May 1948 would be seen by Arab peoples as a “major collective humiliation.” In 2017, the Nakba continues, more painful than ever, with an occupation combined with colonization.

But although for the Arab peoples, the question of Palestine is above all an “Arab matter,” it is often more of a matter of Arab inter-state relations than a national cause to be defended tooth and nail. From 1917 to the present, the Palestinian issue has been manipulated by Arab regimes in a sort of nationalist one-upmanship where defending the Palestinian cause emerges as a lever for political legitimation or regional leadership, or a means to divert attention from internal problems.

This does not mean that the solidarity of Arab states was always “self-serving” or “suspect.” During certain periods, the solidarity of Arab countries was real, sincere and decidedly fraternal. Unfortunately, this solidarity has been quite ineffectual since, 100 years after the Balfour Declaration (1917), 70 years after the UN Partition Resolution (1947) and 50 years after the occupation of all of what remained of Palestine (1967), the Palestinian question remains.

The Palestinian Question between the Two World Wars

Upon returning from the First World Zionist Congress in 1897, Théodore Herzl wrote in his journal “I have founded the Jewish State... [it will exist] possibly five years from now, definitely fifty years on.” This statement was prophetic: in 1947, the UN General Assembly voted in the Partition Resolution.

For the Palestinians, this was a catastrophe in the making. The 1917 Balfour Declaration already “made them foreigners in their own country and heralded their expulsion” (H. Laurens, 2007, p. 8). No one failed to notice the danger. The British repression of the Palestinian revolts of 1922, 1929 and above all 1936-1939 confirmed British support for the Zionist project (B. Khader, 1977, Vol. II). Palestine then became a decisive factor in the development of Arab nationalism, even its emblem. Arab populations demanded their governments rush to the aid of the Palestinian people. Support congresses were held just about everywhere. But the independent Arab States had no military means or concrete war expe-
The experience, whereas the others were still bent under the colonial yoke and therefore had no autonomy. Thus, Great Britain, the mandate power from 1922 to 1948, could crack down on the resistance to the Zionist project without fear, especially since nationalist sentiment was in its infancy and torn between various antagonistic tendencies.

In fact, in the early 1940s, the Hashemites of Iraq and Transjordan had embarked upon two competing projects: that of the Fertile Crescent, whose objective was to unite Syria, Transjordan and Palestine under the aegis of the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq; and that of Greater Syria, aiming to regroup Syria and Palestine under the Transjordan Hashemites. Both projects caused concern among the Egyptians, who saw it as an attempt by the Hashemites to create a regional power capable of opposing the Kingdom of Egypt. Egypt thus “torpedoed” both projects, inviting independent Arab countries to discuss a project to create a League of Arab States, which resulted in the Alexandria Protocol of 7 October 1944, preparing the Arab League Pact, which was signed in Cairo on 22 March 1945, officially founding the League of Arab States (LAS).

Since it was founded, the League has made the Palestinian question its signature issue. Of the 17 resolutions adopted by the LAS Council on 14 December 1945, 11 concerned Palestine. One of the first steps taken by the League was to set up an Arab National Fund (Sanduq al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah) designed to prevent the appropriation of Palestinian land by Jews. On 16 September 1947, the LAS Political Committee proposed sending Arab troops to Palestine should the UN General Assembly vote in favour of partition.

But the Transjordan Hashemites were concocting other plans. Whereas Transjordan had ratified the Arab League Pact, on 10 April 1945, King Abdullah of Transjordan (he had proclaimed himself king on 25 May 1946) relaunched the idea of a Kingdom of Greater Syria covering Syria, Transjordan and Palestine to his advantage. Syrian nationalists, favouring a republic, sabotaged the project. At this point, King Abdullah did not hesitate to turn to the Zionist leaders, letting them know that in case Palestine was partitioned, Transjordan was ready to annex the Arab part. On 17 November 1947, a few days before the partition vote, King Abdullah secretly met with Golda Meir, then acting head of the Jewish Agency’s political department, informing her of his project to annex what remained of Palestine to Transjordan (Avi Shlaim, 1988).

Sensing what was afoot between the Zionists and the Hashemites, the League attempted to set up an Arab Salvation Army (Jaysh al-Inqahd al-Arabi), but instead of giving its command to Mufti Amin al-Husseini, an emblematic figure of the Palestinian resistance, the Arab States chose a competitor, Fawzi al-Qawuqji. The Mufti then proceeded to establish his own militia, the Army of the Holy War (Jaysh al-Jihad al-Muqaddas), placing it under the command of his cousin, Abd al-Qader al-Husseini. Thus, on the eve of the creation of Israel, Palestine had simply become a bargaining chip between Zionists and Transjordanian Hashemites, and a factor of division among the Arab States.

The Palestinian Nakba and the Arabs (1947-1949)

The Arabs managed to prevent neither the Partition Resolution (1947) nor the creation of Israel (1948), nor, a fortiori, the ethnic cleansing taking place between those two dates (Ilan Pappe, 1992). The forced exile of two thirds of the Palestinian population constitutes a veritable sociocide, that is, the displacement of the Palestinian people from their homeland and their geographic dispersion. At the same time, the massive influx of Palestinian refugees to Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon has made the Palestinian question an internal issue for a number of Arab countries.

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The magnitude of the disaster was such that the popular demonstrations multiplied in all Arab countries, demanding that the Arab armies be mobilized to liberate Palestine. In fact, Iraq, Egypt, Syria and

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Transjordan sent troops, but they were less numerous than the Haganah and Jewish militias, and above all poorly equipped and poorly trained, when not simply directly under British command, as was the case with Transjordan’s Arab Legion. In addition, there was the rivalry between King Farouk of Egypt and King Abdullah of Transjordan, whom Egypt suspected of having sent his Arab Legion less to save Arabic Palestine than to annex what was left. Egypt’s suspicions proved founded.

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Indeed, after the Arab armies were routed in 1948, Egypt, with the support of Saudi Arabia, attempted to establish an autonomous Palestinian State in the remaining part of Palestine and set up a Palestinian government under the authority of the Jerusalem Mufti. But King Abdullah caused the project to be aborted by convening a major Palestinian congress on 1 December 1948 and having them recognize his sovereignty over Palestine and the unification of the two brother countries. This was the birth of the Kingdom of Jordan.

As could be expected, the proclamation of Palestine’s annexation caused a general outcry in Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The Jericho Congress was derided as a “dangerous diversion” and a “Great Conspiracy” (al-Mu’amarah al-Kubra). But with the strength of British support, the King was not intimidated: on 25 December 1948, secret negotiations were initiated with the Zionist leaders to bring his project to fruition. Clearly, Palestine was sacrificed on the altar of state ambitions.

Palestine in the Arabist Age (1952-1967)

The Arab defeat of 1948-1949 left an immense sentiment of bitterness and anger. In 1948, Constantin Zureiq (1909-2000), one of the great ideologues of Arab nationalism, published an uncompromising book entitled “Ma’na al-Nakba” (“The Meaning of the Disaster”), in which he condemned Arab leaders’ ineptitude and their divisions in dealing with “existential” threats and called for unity in moving forward. Another Palestinian intellectual, Musa al-Alami (1897-1984), in a book entitled “The Lesson of Palestine,” censured Palestine’s exploitation by certain parties and called for unity and modernity. Both of them sensed that the question of Palestine would create havoc in the Middle East if not resolved rapidly. Indeed, beginning in the 1950s, the Middle East was the scene of considerable upheaval directly tied to the Palestinian question. The Lebanese Prime Minister, Riad al-Solh, was assassinated on 13 July 1951. On 20 July 1951, it was Jordan’s King Abdullah who was assassinated in the Al-Aqsa Mosque of Jerusalem, foreshadowing Anwar Sadat’s assassination 30 years later, in 1981. In 1952, Egypt’s King Farouk was forced into exile following the Free Officers’ Revolution of 23 July 1952.

After the Egyptian Revolution, the issue of Palestine became the cardinal question for Arab nationalist renewal, of which Gamel Abdel Nasser became the uncontested leader.

The Eisenhower Administration attempted rapprochement with Nasser in the hope of recruiting Egypt into the anti-Soviet camp, as had been the case with Turkey, which joined NATO in 1949. Nasser’s reply to US Secretary of State Foster Dulles was decisive: the real threat to Egypt was not coming from the Soviet Union but rather from Israel. Traveling to Israel on 13 May 1953, Foster Dulles was informed by Moshe Sharett that Israel lacked the space to accommodate all Jewish immigrants (it already occupied 78% of historic Palestine), that it would never revert to the former territory allotted by the UN and that there was no question of authorizing the return of refugees as stipulated in Resolution 194 (H. Laurens, 2007, p.351). His language had the merit of clarity. For the Arabs, it became patent that Israel would not be content with what it had obtained but would implacably pursue expansion, constituting a threat not only to the Palestinians but also to all Arabs. The Ara-
It became patent that Israel would not be content with what it had obtained but would implacably pursue expansion, constituting a threat not only to the Palestinians but also to all Arabs. The Arabization of the Palestinian question thus followed from the very nature of Zionist ideology. What happened next is well known: defeated militarily, Nasser walked away with a political victory. He became an Arab leader and later a great Third-World leader and an architect of Non-Alignment. As of the Suez War, the Palestinian question became an Arab question. Nasser’s Egypt led the way. The Hashemite monarchies became concerned. And although the Jordanian monarchy managed to weather the nationalist storm and survived internal and regional convulsions, Iraq’s Hashemite monarchy was swept aside in 1958. That same year, the United Arab Republic was proclaimed (Egypt-Syria). Arab nationalism was in fashion and pro-Western regimes were on the defensive. There was a reversal of alliances. After that, two axes faced one another: the nationalist axis represented by Egypt, Iraq and Syria, and the monarchic axis, represented by Saudi Arabia and Jordan. A cold war (M. Kerr, 1973) now divided the Arab States, at times leading to open conflict (Yemen Civil War beginning in 1962). This polarization weakened the League of Arab States. Using its position as “Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques,” Saudi Arabia sought to replace the Arab regional subsystem with a more extensive Islamic subsystem by creating the Muslim World League (1961-1963), the Islamic Alliance, and the Organisation of Muslim States (1968 Mecca Conference). Despite Saudi diplomatic activism in the Muslim world, the political initiative up until 1967 was Egypt’s, and Arabism, despite the dissolution of the United Arab Republic (1962), remained the predominant ideology and the main source of legitimation for existing regimes. Israel was considered the “national enemy of the Arabs,” and the liberation of Palestine would only occur through “Arab unity.” The Palestinians were caught between the two axes and used by both in a bidding war serving their interests. This was confirmed in 1964 when the Alexandria Summit (5-6 September 1964) decided to create the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with a Palestinian lawyer at its head, Ahmad Shuqayri. For Nasser, it was a question of getting a jump on Yasser Arafat’s Fatah fighters, who were preparing their struggle outside of any state control, but also a way of sending a signal to Jordan that their annexation of Transjordan was not irreversible. This was understood by the Kingdom of Jordan, which only grudgingly accepted the creation of the PLO and which, on 14 June 1966, ended its cooperation with it. In a gesture of defiance towards Nasser, Jordan even joined the Islamic Pact launched by Saudi Arabia as a parry to Nasser’s Arab nationalism (B. Korany & A. Hilal Dessouki, 1984, p. 268-269). Clearly, the PLO has been caught in the snares of inter-Arab conflict from the outset. The Palestinian question has been internalized within the Arab regional system, and therefore prisoner to its contradictions.


On 5 June 1967, Israel launched a blitz offensive on various fronts, occupying Egypt’s Sinai, Syria’s Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and Transjordan. Israel
never made any secret of its intention of taking down the Nasser Regime and breaking the Arabist spirit, considered an “existential” threat to the Jewish State. The defeat of the Arab armies produced the effect of an earthquake. The nationalist sentiment of the Arab masses, deeply wounded, devastated and disoriented, clung to the Palestinian Resistance. The Arab States, humiliated, simply reiterated their refusal of any peace agreement with Israel at the Khartoum Summit (29 August – 2 September 1967).

But the Palestinian Resistance suffered from a congenital ailment: in contrast to the Algerian or Vietnamese maquis, it was being organized from outside of Palestine, primarily in refugee camps in Jordan. Its armed presence in sovereign countries was not only exposing them to possible Israeli strikes, but above all threatening their very sovereignty. Elated about their victory over the Israeli army at the Battle of Karameh in 1968, the Palestinian Fedayeen ended up constituting “a State within the State of Jordan.” King Hussein sent his troops against the Palestinian Fedayeen, forcing them into exile: this was Black September, 1970. Nasser died of a heart attack in the same month. It was the end of an era and of a dream, the twilight of nationalist ideology and its standard-bearer.

With Sadat, statist ideology prevailed: the slogan was now “Masr awwalan” (Egypt first). This statist orientation emerged in 1971 when Sadat dropped the term “United Arab Republic” and returned to the name “Egyptian Arab Republic;” began encouraging Islamic organizations to act as a counterbalance to Nasser nostalgics (H. Laurens, 1991, p. 247), and changed the Constitution (September 1971) to indicate that “Islam is the State religion.” In view of these new orientations, the 1973 October War was more a war for the liberation of the Sinai than for that of Palestine.

The events that followed proved this: on 9 November 1977, Sadat announced to Parliament that he was ready to go to the Knesset with a message of peace. Putting words to action, he went there on the 19th and delivered a speech followed by the media of the entire world. He mentioned Palestinian rights but ignored the PLO in order not to “offend” his Israeli hosts. By travelling to Israel, Sadat broke a taboo. His solitary action displeased his Arab peers, who accused him of “breaking the Arab consensus.” A restricted Summit, held in Algiers on 2-4 February 1978, established a “Steadfastness Front” to defeat the Egyptian initiative. To no avail: Sadat signed the Camp David Accords in September 1978, to the consternation of the other Arab countries and the PLO.

At the Arab Summit of Baghdad (2-5 November 1978), the other Arab countries unanimously rejected the Camp David Accords and proposed transferring the League of Arab States’ headquarters from Cairo to Tunis. But Egypt was determined to forge ahead, encouraged by the United States: a Peace Accord between Israel and Egypt was signed on 26 March 1979. Egypt recovered the Sinai, but the talks on Palestinian autonomy envisaged in the Camp David Accords quickly bogged down. What was worse, on 30 July 1980, the Israeli government passed a law regarding the annexation of Jerusalem, which became the “eternal capital of the Jewish people.” That was the end of the Palestinian facet of the Camp David Accords: Egypt had been hoodwinked. Sadat had recovered the Sinai but lost Palestine. In July 1981, he was assassinated during a military parade.

From 1973 to 1981, the PLO had the wind in its sails and was a focal point in the media. The solidarity of Arab peoples was total. The Europe of the Nine (i.e. the 9-member Economic Committee of the EEC) engaged in the Euro-Arab dialogue as of 1975 and began to refine its position on the Israeli-Arab conflict by recognizing the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, through negotiations in which the PLO would be a partner (Venice Declaration) (B. Khader, 2017).

The pragmatic orientation of the PLO, which was no longer discussing the full liberation of Palestine, displeased certain Arab countries, in particular the Baathist regimes of Syria and Iraq. Syria attempted to short-circuit the PLO by creating resistance organizations totally subservient to the Damascus regime, such as Al-Saika, or Ahmad Jibril’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC). Iraq did the same, creating the Arab Liberation Front and Abu Abbas’ Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), wholly under control of the Iraqi government. Not only was Palestine dividing the Arabs, but the Arabs were now also dividing the Palestinians.
Palestine and the “Petro-Dollarization” of the Arab Regional Sub-System

Sadat’s assassination gave Saudi Arabia free rein. Made rich by the two oil price shocks of 1973 and 1979, the country now felt empowered to pilot the Arab regional sub-system. The situation couldn’t be better: Saudi Arabia had financial means, its competitors were weak: Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was embroiled in its war against Iran (1980-1989) while Hafez al-Assad’s Syria was entangled in the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1989).

Now it was up to Saudi Arabia to defend the rights of the Palestinian people. A month after Sadat’s assassination, the Crown Prince of Arabia proposed a peace plan on 7 August 1981 based on UN resolutions. Among other things, Prince Fahd demanded Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, and the creation of a Palestinian state with its capital in the Arab sector of Jerusalem. He demanded the US stop supporting Israel, an end to the Israeli arrogance so hideously embodied by Menachem Begin, and the recognition of the Palestinian factor... which was the main factor of the Middle East equation. But in Point 7 of his plan, he demanded that “all states in the region should be able to live in peace in the region,” which implicitly meant recognizing the State of Israel.

Normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab countries was in the air. This was a considerable change and historic opportunity that Israel could have seized. The opportunity was wasted: after destroying the Iraqi nuclear reactor Osirak on 7 June 1981, Israel annexed the Golan Heights on 14 December 1981 and on 6 June 1982, the Israeli army invaded Lebanon. PLO infrastructures were destroyed and Arafat and his comrades went into exile. The Palestinian refugee camps, left unprotected, were now at the mercy of Ariel Sharon and his Lebanese Phalanges allies. From 16 to 18 September 1982, Lebanese forces, under the Israeli army’s watchful eye, entered the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Nearly 4,000 men, women and children were massacred. In March 1983, following the Kahan Commission Report on these tragic events, Sharon was forced to leave the Ministry of Defence but remained in the government.

In his Tunisian exile, Arafat now had greater autonomy. Though he had lost his Lebanese base after losing the one in Jordan, the Palestinian cause had gained a great deal of sympathy in Arab and international public opinion. Not on a military par with Israel, it was now on the political and moral levels that the PLO would concentrate for the sake of efficiency and realism. Arafat accepted the Fahd Plan presented at the Arab Summit in Fes (September 1982). He reconciled with the Jordanian monarchy, travelling to Amman in October 1982, and alluded to the idea of a Palestinian-Jordanian federation. But Arab attention in the 1980s was primarily focussed on the Iraq-Iran war. Whereas the Arab states supported Saddam Hussein’s regime for obstructing Iranian revolutionary activism, Syria broke the Arab consensus and stood behind Khomeini’s Shiite Iran (Iran is returning the favour today). Saudi Arabia grew concerned about this rapprochement between the Iranian Shiite regime and the Syrian Alawi regime and attempted to establish a “Sunni Axis.” Jordan restored relations with Mubarak’s Egypt on 25 September 1984, and the extraordinary Arab Summit held in Amman from 8 to 11 November 1987 opened the door to Egypt’s return to the Arab family. Only four countries continued to boycott Egypt: Syria, Algeria, Lebanon and Libya.

The war between Iraq and Iran subsided with Khomeini’s death on 3 June 1989. The Lebanese war found a happy end in the Taif Agreement, signed on 22 October 1989 under the aegis of Saudi Arabia.

A popular uprising of unprecedented scale broke out in Palestine. This was the 1987 Intifada. The date was no accident. In fact, from 1967 to 1987, the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza rose by nearly 75%, meaning that nearly one Palestinian out of two was born under Israeli occupation. Since its inception, however, the Palestinian resistance was organized, as we know, from outside of Palestine. Driven back from Jordan, then exiled from Lebanon, the resistance was now dispersed, geographically disconnected. The resistance thus had to be brought into occupied Palestine. As of 9 December 1987, all the occupied territories went into ferment. The mobilization was grass-roots, collective and pacific: Palestinian youth threw stones at Israeli soldiers, who responded with real bullets. Arab peoples protested across the board. In Europe and everywhere, emotions ran high. Israel’s image was tarnished. The
Intifada made the entire world grasp the horror of the occupation, the injustice of the colonization and the disregard of international law. As of 22 December 1987, Resolution 605 of the UN Security Council, passed thanks to the United States' abstention, stated that the Security Council "strongly deplores those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people [...]."

Israel thought it had dismantled the PLO, but not only had it been rehabilitated, but its prestige had been boosted. King Hussein of Jordan took note and announced Jordan's total disengagement from Palestinian affairs in late July 1988. All ties with the West Bank were broken. It was the end of the annexation of the West Bank. Arafat addressed the European Parliament on 14 September 1988 and two months later, the Palestinian National Congress, held in Algiers in November 1988, adopted Palestine's Declaration of Independence, with East Jerusalem as its capital (15 November 1988). Recognition of the State of Palestine came from around the world, with the exception of Europe and the United States. Worse, the US refused to grant Arafat a visa to address the UN General Assembly. The latter was thus held in Geneva from 13 to 16 December 1988 to hear out the Palestinian leader. Arafat asserted his acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 regarding the acceptance of Israel's existence. This time it was the United States that proposed initiating significant dialogue with the PLO (B. Khader, 2017). But Yitzhak Shamir rose to power in Israel in June 1990 and rejected any plans aiming to acknowledge any role whatsoever for the PLO in any possible peace talks.

But for the Palestinians, 1990 was a black year for another reason. On 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein’s army occupied the emirate of Kuwait. Immediately, the US set up an international coalition and, in January-February 1991 launched an operation to liberate Kuwait called Desert Storm. Paradoxically, Arab public opinion, largely hostile to the occupation of Kuwait, expressed anger against the US: "why Kuwait and not Palestine?", Arab protesters around the world chanted.

The Kuwaiti crisis was overcome by force, but anti-American sentiment spread like wildfire. In Kuwait itself, Palestinian expatriates (numbering some 250,000) were unjustly accused of having support-
ed the Iraqi army and the majority of them were expelled. There was a serious break between the Kuwaiti people and Palestinian communities. After Jordan and Lebanon, the Palestinian question had now become an internal issue for Kuwait.

The Palestinian Question in the Oslo Predicament (1993-2010)

The crisis followed by the Gulf War (1990-1991) constituted two tragic episodes: already Lebanized, the Arab regional system broke apart. Not only were states divided, but now there was also a rift among the Arab people. No Arab country ever dared engage again in the minefield of the Israeli-Arab conflict. After the USSR’s implosion, it was the Americans who took all the initiatives. Having been accused of practicing a two-faced policy in the Kuwait affair, the Americans organized the Madrid Peace Conference (October 1991). But neither the PLO nor the Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem were invited, at Shamir’s request. It was thus a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that participated in the Conference (A. Belkaid, 2011).

But the mountain laboured and brought forth a mouse, as they say. The negotiations floundered. Yitzhak Rabin succeeded Shamir in 1992 and adopted a more flexible position. Secret negotiations were held in Oslo between Israeli and Palestinian emissaries. They resulted in an “Interim Accord” called the Oslo Accord, officially signed on the White House lawn on 13 September 1993 by Rabin and Arafat. Arab countries had no say in the matter. No Arab leader went to the signing ceremony. And for good reason: Iraq was under embargo, Syria was embroiled in Lebanon and Mubarak’s Egypt was struggling with internal problems.

The Oslo Accord was a promise of negotiation. The latter would be undertaken under American patronage. This was supposed to result in the creation of an independent Palestinian State by 1999. The process, however, quickly became mired. Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish fanatic in 1994. Shimon Peres replaced him but was beaten by Netanyahu in the 1996 elections. As of that moment, it was complete deadlock. Instead of putting a brake on colonization, the latter was accelerated, sparking the Palestinians’ anger and the incomprehension of Arabs in general.
President Clinton tried to put the Oslo process back on track, organizing the Arafat-Barak talks in July 2000 at Camp David. Negotiations hit a snag on the issue of Jerusalem and finally failed. It was in this sombre climate that Sharon decided to visit the sacred al-Aqsa mosque compound on 28 September 2000 to assert Israeli sovereignty over a reunified Jerusalem. The provocation stirred up a hornet’s nest: this was the outbreak of the Second, or Al-Aqsa, Intifada.

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Succeeding Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon became Prime Minister in 2001, ruthlessly cracking down on the agitated Palestinian territories. Cities under Palestinian authority were reoccupied. Refugee camps were severely punished. Arafat himself was confined to his Mukata’a headquarters in Ramallah until his death in 2004. The Arab states witnessed this surge in Israeli violence without reacting. No collective initiatives were taken, no pressure exerted. Their weakness was now plain to see. The Arab people felt humiliated in the face of such resignation.

Sensing the danger that the definitive stalemate of the peace process represented to regional security, the Arab states attempted to take the initiative. At the Beirut Summit (28 March 2002), they proposed an Arab Peace Plan to Israel that revived the Fahd Plan put forth 20 years earlier. Applauded by Europe and even the US, the plan was rejected by Israel. The American invasion of Iraq on March 2003 postponed it indefinitely.

The geopolitical upheaval caused by the invasion of Iraq diverted attention from the Palestinian question, to the great satisfaction of Israel, who could now continue to colonize the occupied territories unmolested. Though Arafat’s death (11 November 2004) caused a great commotion in Arab countries, the election of Mahmoud Abbas in January 2005 and the January 2006 legislative elections did not generate a great deal of enthusiasm. Many Arabs questioned Western support of the Palestinian democratic process, while the Palestinian Territories continued under the yoke of occupation. We know the rest: Hamas won the elections but was relieved of its victory. It then took possession of Gaza and established a parallel government. Saudi Arabia attempted an intra-Palestinian reconciliation mission (2007), in vain. Each Arab country took sides, supporting either Hamas or the Palestinian Authority, thus aggravating the rift dividing the Palestinian people to the present.

**The Palestinian Question and the Arab Spring (2010-2017)**

The social movements occurring in numerous Arab countries as of 17 December 2010 have taken the entire world by surprise. The “Arab exception” theory postulating that Arabs are rigid, inert and reticent to democratic change was shaken. Though pan-Arabist references to the Palestinian question have been very discreet in slogans chanted by protesters, the fact remains that the succession of events, the role of Arab satellite chains, the recovered sense of pride, all of this outlines a pan-Arab sentiment whose political core is the refusal of a foreign yoke, the aspiration to freedom, and faith in the possibility of change (A. Belkaïd, 2011). For the history of the Arab world since the different independences has been experienced by the Arab people as a litany of successive, multiple humiliations; not only the humiliation of repression and underdevelopment, but also the humiliation inflicted on the Arabs in Palestine. Even if demonstrators are not waving the Palestinian flag, it is clear that for them, Palestine constitutes “the mother of all humiliations” (B. Khader, 2012). Moreover, wasn’t the first Arab Spring Pales-
tinian, when the first Intifada, which was pacific, popular and inclusive, ignited Arab spirits in 1987? Everywhere, Arab peoples were comparing the courage of the young Palestinians with the cowardice of their leaders. A sense of shame gripped all societies, heightened by the second Intifada. When Israeli tanks were destroying the Jenin refugee camp, a Palestinian yelled in anger: “Wen el arab?” (“Where are the Arabs?”). “No one replied,” comments J.P. Filiu, “for the Arab leaders were assembled at the Beirut Summit, in the absence of Yasser Arafat, confined to Ramallah, trapped in his besieged presidency” (J.P. Filiu 2011, p. 179). “Wen el arab” was yelled many a time during the three Israeli offensives against Gaza (360 km² and 1,800,000 inhabitants) in 2008, 2011 and 2014.

The Arab Spring movements have been perverted, diverted, hijacked. Polarization, chaos and war retains all the media’s attention. Since 2014, the spotlights have been focused on Daesh (the Islamic State). One problem eclipses another. Palestine is no longer a rallying point. The Arab states are struggling with their internal problems. The Arab people are distraught, disoriented. Doubt has crept into their minds and pessimism is rampant.

And yet it is at this low point when hope surfaces. In December 2016, a Security Council Resolution (No. 2334) condemned Israeli colonization. The United States, which had used its right to veto 42 times to protect Israel since 1980, abstained this time. On 28 December 2016, John Kerry delivered an uncompromising speech stating he believed the Israeli policy of colonization rendered the “Two-state” solution impossible. On 15 January 2017, François Hollande organized an International Conference for Peace in the Middle East in Paris, with the participation of 75 delegations. In late March 2017, an Arab Summit, held at the Dead Sea in Jordan, put the Arab Peace Plan back on the table, albeit in the knowledge that Israel rejects the very idea of a return to the 1967 borders. In April 2017, President Trump received Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, at the White House.

What does all this gesticulation mean? It simply means that, no matter how much we ignore the Palestinian question, it always returns with force, for it is this issue which will ultimately determine lasting peace in the Middle East and the Mediterranean Region.

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Winds of Change in the Middle East: How Israel Can Retake Initiative in the Palestinian Arena

Twice in the last two decades the Palestinian leadership has proved unwilling to sign a comprehensive peace agreement based on terms offered by an Israeli premier. Instead, they preferred a strategy of "holding out for a better deal" over one of compromise that would entail facing the domestic backlash from making painful concessions; they opted to appeal to the international community to deliver on their demands, and the situation in the arena of conflict has moved further in the direction of a "one-state reality." However, recent changes in regional dynamics and the election of President Donald Trump are heralding in an era in which Palestinian refusal to negotiate in the hopes for strengthening their position in the future will yield meagre results. At the same time, the government of Israel may be more appropriately positioned to make a bold move towards peace than it appears on a superficial level. Therefore, the timing appears ripe to make a new effort to work on multiple tracks to change the trajectory of the conflict towards a two-state reality by using methods that aim to cultivate and utilize Palestinian cooperation, but are not dependent on it.

Palestinian Intransigence and Internationalization of the Conflict

In the anticlimactic culmination of years of interim agreements and negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, Yasser Arafat rejected the forthcoming offer that Prime Minister Ehud Barak made at the Camp David Summit in 2000. According to Middle East hand Rob Malley, Barak had been elected on the platform of maintaining a unified Jerusalem, opposing land swaps, and offering the Palestinians about 80% of the West Bank, and he would eventually make dramatic concessions on all three of those positions; Arafat, however, would not budge on most major issues. President Bill Clinton was enraged that Arafat spoiled his chance for a legacy as the man who made peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and he reportedly yelled at the Palestinian leader saying:

If the Israelis can make compromises and you can’t, I should go home. You have been here fourteen days and said no to everything. These things have consequences; failure will mean the end of the peace process.... Let’s let hell break loose and live with the consequences.2

Instead of an agreement, Clinton left behind a set of parameters³ and strong reason to doubt whether Arafat was serious about signing a deal. The Palestinian Authority’s ultimate response to Barak’s willingness to make concessions did not come via diplomatic cable but through the barrel of a gun – support

¹ This article was finalized on April 2017
for a popular uprising that would last several years and cost a great deal of Israeli and Palestinian blood. Eight years later, after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a concerted effort to restrict settlement construction, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered terms to the Palestinians even more generous than those of Barak.

According to the former Prime Minister:

"The two sides had agreed on key principles: the state of Palestine would have no military; an American-led international security force, not Israeli soldiers, would be stationed on its border with Jordan; Jerusalem would be shared, with its holy sites overseen by a multinational committee; and a limited number of Palestinian refugees would be permitted back into what is now Israel, while the rest would be generously compensated."

Yet President Mahmoud Abbas, like his predecessor Yasser Arafat, failed to seize the historic moment and instead chose not to respond to the Israeli offer. Observers attribute the breakdown of these talks to a variety of possible reasons, including Abbas’s skepticism that Olmert had the ability to execute an agreement while mired in corruption charges (and Tzipi Livni and Ehud Barak are alleged to have whispered as much into his ear), Abbas’s (correct) belief that President George W. Bush would soon be replaced by a US president who was more friendly to the Palestinian agenda, or Abbas was simply unwilling to take the final step and make the concessions necessary to reach an agreement. Since then, little progress has been made in bringing the two sides closer to peace, because the Palestinians have little interest in returning to the negotiating table. The PA has adopted a strategy that seeks to strengthen its negotiating position by bringing the conflict before international bodies.

Although it may have ideological components as well, the Palestinian desire to avoid making concessions on key issues at the present time is probably in line with those of the PA. In turn, the international community will push Israel to make further concessions without demanding comparable steps from the Palestinians. After the Palestinians’ most recent victory in this arena, the 14-0 vote on UN Resolution 2334 which was a possible segue to proceedings against Israel in the International Criminal Court (ICC), a confidant of President Abbas declared this strategy “a war without bullets.” However, even if the international bodies do not succeed in pressuring Israel to make further concessions, the Palestinians believe that their leverage over Israel will increase; this is based on their assumption that failure to reach an agreement will steadily move the conflict in the direction of a one-state reality that would mean the destruction of Israel. They have been convinced of this, in part, by the statements of international leaders, such as US Secretary of State John Kerry, who in their zeal to reach an agreement declare that such is Israel’s future without one. The PA reasons that this impending destruction will force Israel to act with a great sense of urgency to avert this disaster, and therefore will sell its interests in later peace negotiations for pennies on the dollar.

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6 "Abbas confidant: We’ll take ‘hundreds’ of IDF soldiers to ICC this year," Times of Israel, 26 December, 2016, www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-confidant-we’ll-take-hundreds-of-idf-soldiers-to-icc-this-year/.

also based on a realistic assessment of its limitations. Even if the PA could sign a deal with Israel in April 2017, it is not clear that it could survive the public backlash against it because of its tremendous legitimacy deficit; as Palestinian scholar Ghaith al-Omari noted recently, the Palestinian leadership simply does not have the legitimacy in the eyes of its people that previous Arab leaders have needed to reach a peace agreement with Israel.8 If the PA did survive the backlash of an agreement, its ability to implement any such comprehensive deal in both the Hamas-ruled Gaza as well as the West Bank should not be taken for granted. This is unlikely to change for the better, as the causes for the PA’s unpopularity are actually becoming more severe; in his article on the failure of the latest round of talks, Michael Herzog correctly assessed that Abbas’s ability to sign and execute a deal is not only poor but likely declining.9

Changing Regional Dynamics and Trump’s Election: Will the Palestinians Need to Change Their Strategy Accordingly?

Recent changes in regional and global dynamics offer good reason for the Palestinians to reconsider the effectiveness of their strategy of internationalizing the conflict in order to “hold out for a better deal.” In the Arab Middle East, former champions of the Palestinian cause now barely mention it because of their unprecedented interest in cooperation with Israel. In the global picture, President Donald Trump’s entrance into the White House should disabuse the Palestinian leadership of the notion that bringing the conflict before international bodies will serve their interests because it will be opposed by the US, in particular regarding any hopes they may have had for binding UN resolutions against Israel. As it stands, the current trends should worry the Palestinians as they are sinking lower on the international agenda and, thus, they should feel a sense of urgency to reach an agreement.

When it comes to Israel’s recently improved cooperation with Arab states in the region, there are two main motivations. First, the collaboration is based on shared interests between Israel and the Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, and the GCC, in both containing the rise of Iran and defeating ISIS. Second, Washington’s fraying ties with traditional Arab allies in the region, due to President Obama’s actions during the Arab Spring10 as well as subsequent statements11, pushed them to warm up to Israel in an effort to seek both another partner for defense cooperation and an alternative route to the White House. As a result, the wealthy Gulf states and the populous and militarily powerful State of Egypt have sought to work with Israel rather than galvanize public support against it.

The PA reasons that this impending destruction will force Israel to act with a great sense of urgency to avert this disaster, and therefore will sell its interests in later peace negotiations for pennies on the dollar

This has significantly reduced Palestinian leverage because it reinforces the point that the failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot completely block progress in Israel’s relations with the Arab world. An April 2017 article12 by the newly appointed Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Washing-

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10 President Obama’s demand that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt step down after widespread protests against him and calls for democracy sincerely concerned Arab leaders in the Gulf and elsewhere, who not only lost a long-standing ally in Cairo but worried that they would be next. See: Caryle Murphy, “Fall of Mubarak deprives Saudi Arabia of closest local ally,” The National, 14 February, 2011, www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/fall-of-mubarak-deprives-saudi-arabia-of-closest-local-ally.
ton that discussed the region without even mentioning the word “Palestinian” is evidence that the Palestinian cause is holding on to its spot on the Arab Agenda by a thread. Israel’s Peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and the defunct Arab boycott of Israel\textsuperscript{13} demonstrate that Arab solidarity against Israel is being eroded over time by Arab interests in cooperating with it. The fact that economically and religiously influential Saudis are quietly moving towards Israel should suggest to the Palestinians that their leverage as the key to Israel’s relations with the Arab world is declining, though it has not disappeared completely.

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Similarly, even before the elections, Donald Trump’s campaign promised that the US would not allow Israel to be singled out in international forums. Trump Advisors Jason Greenblatt and David Friedman wrote that:

The US should veto any United Nations votes that unfairly single out Israel and will work in international institutions and forums, including in our relations with the European Union, to oppose efforts to delegitimize Israel, impose discriminatory double standards against Israel, or to impose special labeling requirements on Israeli products or boycotts on Israeli goods.\textsuperscript{14}

Since assuming office and appointing Nikki Haley as US Ambassador to the UN, President Trump has abided by his campaign’s promise that his administration would defend Israel before international bodies. In April 2017, Ambassador Haley promised “a new day for Israel” at the UN and rebuked the organization for singling Israel out\textsuperscript{15}; if the Palestinians are hoping for a sequel to UN resolution 2334, they will likely need to wait four to eight years at the very least. In light of that, the PA would be well-advised to consider a new approach towards achieving statehood.

Political Dynamics in Jerusalem

The political situation in Israel, on its surface, is not conducive to progress in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. In terms of electoral politics, the ruling coalition is the most hardline and right-wing in Israel’s history; if Prime Minister Netanyahu is worried about being displaced, he is most concerned by rivals to his right. On the grassroots level, the Israeli population’s desire to achieve a two-state solution is on the decline at barely over 50%, and the percentage of those who believe that it can be implemented is considerably lower. At the same time, Netanyahu and his inner circle are under investigation in numerous anti-corruption probes – similar to those that caused Abbas to question how serious Olmert’s offer was a decade ago. On top of that, all of these worrying factors exist within a context of inertia - a decade of failed attempts to restart peace talks, despite Washington’s repeated and earnest efforts.

However, the situation may not be as grim as it appears.

First, the election of President Donald Trump did not herald in the death of the two-state solution as the presumptuous prophets of Israel’s far-right predicted.\textsuperscript{16} In fact, considering the myriad of problems in the region including campaigns in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, President Trump has expressed a disproportionate amount


of interest in achieving a peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians and has sent his envoy and confidante Jason Greenblatt to the region numerous times over the past several months in order to lay the groundwork. Because of its unpredictable nature and the importance of the support it lends to both parties to the conflict, the Trump Administration is uniquely positioned to pressure both Netanyahu and Abbas to make concessions; while Trump may not be able to use pressure alone to push the two sides into a comprehensive agreement, he can change the conflict’s trajectory by using methods discussed below in order to avoid past pitfalls and preserve the possibility for a two-state solution in the future. He has already taken steps in that direction by successfully pushing to curb Israeli settlement construction and declaring his intention to improve the Palestinian economy and infrastructure.

Second, despite the fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu faces pressure from the right not to concede to Palestinian or American demands, he may decide that it is in his own interest to take a bold step in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As of April 2017, Netanyahu is the second longest serving Prime Minister in Israel’s history, and is likely considering what legacy he will leave behind; he has yet to achieve anything significant in the realms of war or peace, and so he may see the Palestinian arena as one that is ripe for carving out a place for himself in Israel’s history. Though some may interpret Prime Minister Netanyahu’s legal troubles as an indication that no significant overtures towards the Palestinians can be undertaken for the foreseeable future, history has indicated otherwise. Ariel Sharon, for example, is reported to have launched the disengagement from Gaza as part of a successful strategy to protect himself from impending legal investigations.\(^{17}\)

**Looking Forward**

Israel’s vital interests are preserving the Jewish, democratic and morally just components of its character as well as ensuring its national security. Achieving a two-state solution in the context of a final agreement with the Palestinians that ends the conflict with them *may* help Israel in pursuit of the four abovementioned aims depending on the terms and conditions. Inasmuch as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict poses a threat to Israel’s Jewish and democratic character, achieving lasting peace with the Palestinians could help to preserve those elements. However, Israel will not seek an agreement at any cost, especially if it comes at an *even greater expense* to its abovementioned vital interests. The status quo is sustainable far longer than much of the rhetoric about it would indicate, and so, while it is not desirable, it is certainly preferable to a dangerous agreement.

The basic parameters of any realistic final status agreement that results in two states have already been outlined by previous efforts. Israel must relinquish the goal of “greater Israel,” accept a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders plus swaps for settlement blocs and the Jewish areas of Jerusalem, and allow for Palestinian control of some of Jerusalem’s Arab neighbourhoods and the holy basin. The Palestinians will be required to relinquish the “right of return” to Israel, commit to end the conflict with Israel and finality of claims, recognize Israel as a Jewish state, and accept some limitations on Palestinian sovereignty as part of the security arrangement. The offers made by Prime Ministers Barak and Olmert as well as the Clinton Parameters are more or less along these lines, however, the Palestinians have yet to indicate their willingness to accept them. Yet, we should not assume that any sort of negotiations on a final status agreement will yield results simply because we know of a potentially successful formula; rather than seeing Israel’s increasingly generous offers as gestures of goodwill and responding in kind, the Palestinian leadership has seen them as an indication that Israeli “final offers” are actually “false bottoms” and so it should continue to hold out for a “better deal” from the international community. However, the tides have turned against the Palestinians’ internationalization strategy that sees very little opportunity cost in prolonging the conflict, which may cause them to reconsider their goals and methods. Therefore, the field may be ripe for a different approach capable of changing the

trajectory of the conflict for the better, towards an agreement, by learning from past mistakes. In the New Republic’s authoritative postmortem of Kerry’s final efforts at advancing negotiations in 2014, the authors assessed, “nearly everyone we interviewed felt the same way... for any agreement to be reached in the future, something major, something fundamental would have to change.”\(^{18}\) One change that would significantly improve the odds of reaching an agreement would be shifting away from the “all or nothing” single-track approach which has served as an overly ambitious recipe for failure that results in outbreaks of violence during political deadlocks. At the present time, the lack of confidence between the two sides makes a continued stalemate all but a certainty. Instead, the government of Israel should work on multiple tracks to improve the situation on the ground, build confidence between the two sides, and move towards a two-state solution that protects Israel’s vital interests and aligns with the parameters outlined above.

On the first track, there should be an effort to revitalize the bilateral negotiations between Israel and the PA. Israel could present the PA leadership with a proposal based on an updated version of the Clinton Parameters, modified in accordance with both lessons that Israel’s security services have learned from the second intifada and demographic changes that have taken place over the past 17 years. If it is accepted in Ramallah, this could serve as a basis for final status negotiations; if it is not accepted or the negotiations do not lead anywhere, Israel should move to a second track rather than languishing in the status quo.

The second track seeks to include the active participation of regional actors that have an interest in Israeli-Palestinian peace, including countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and aims to develop a resolution to the conflict based on the Arab Peace Initiative. This track would present Arab governments with an opportunity to both prove their worth to the US as critical regional allies (and competent mediators) as well as demonstrate their leadership within the Arab world by championing the Palestinian cause and labouring towards the realization of a Palestinian state. They could do this by providing financial, political, or symbolic support for brave steps towards peace by either side of the negotiating table in order to encourage efforts to bridge the gaps. This could serve to incentivize concessions and shift the dynamics in the Israeli-Palestinian arena away from a “zero-sum” game.

Should the Arab states decide not to cooperate with these efforts or they prove unsuccessful in doing so, Israel should attempt more modest goals by moving to a third track: interim agreements with the Palestinians like the Road Map for Peace announced in 2003. This would entail striking deals that serve the interests of both parties and improve the situation on the ground but do not resolve all of the core issues of the conflict. For example, Israel could commit to gradually increasing PA control of area B and designating more lands in area C for industrial parks and economic development for the Palestinians. Of course, these incremental agreements would be performance-based and thus would demand and incentivize that the PA live up to its commitments. In addition to building confidence between the two governments, the cooperative efforts to improve Palestinian quality of life could diminish the PA’s legitimacy deficit among its people thereby potentially improving its ability to sign and implement an agreement in the future. However, if the past is prologue, the Palestinian refusal to accept incremental progress towards peace in the past casts some doubt on the ability of this track to succeed.

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Finally, if none of the above tracks bears fruits, Israel should move to the fourth track which is one of independent and coordinated action; this option dispels the widespread but mistaken notion that Israel is moving towards an inevitable one-state reality if it

cannot reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Israel should attempt to coordinate with the international community in order to demarcate its own borders and withdraw from 60-70% of the West Bank. By attempting the previous tracks in serious and concerted efforts to make peace, Israel would prove that it is not the spoiler in the peace process and that could serve to restore its declining international reputation. By withdrawing from much of the West Bank, Israel would preserve the possibility for a future two-state solution when conditions will be more conducive.

In the course of independent action, it is important to learn from the mistakes of years past, in particular Prime Minister Sharon’s disengagement from Gaza. Sharon was correct in his belief that Israel would benefit from drawing clear borders and relinquishing control of the millions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, however, he made three major mistakes in executing the move: withdrawing from the Philadelphia Corridor between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, which allowed for the smuggling of weapons into the former; withdrawing from 100% of the territory without an agreement, leaving the other side little incentive to reach a negotiated agreement in the future; and operating with a lack of adequate international coordination. Because of these mistakes and their negative ramifications on Israeli security, such a step in the West Bank may elicit a negative, knee-jerk reaction from the Israeli public. However, if effectively planned by the government, successfully marketed to the Israeli public, and widely support by the international community, the move should be significantly easier to execute and more successful than the disengagement from Gaza.

The tracks laid out in this proposal are intended to promote progress wherever and whenever possible, and as such they are not mutually exclusive, but rather can be alternated between in accordance with the circumstance and opportunities.

In sum, Israel’s positioning in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not doom it to either making unreasonable concessions or facing a one-state reality. The Palestinians believe that because the international community has largely adopted their position, multilateral organizations will deliver Israeli concession and that in the meantime their obstruction of the peace process is essentially a veto they have over Israel’s withdrawal from the West Bank, international recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and Israel’s relations with the Arab world. However, particularly in light of recent global and regional developments, that is probably an overestimation of their leverage. Israel has proven time and again that time plays in its favour – after all, it has been only 100 years since the Balfour Declaration and not only has Israel been established but it has flourished and been recognized either officially or tacitly by most Arab governments. If Israel retakes the initiative by proving its willingness to reach a fair agreement through this four-track approach, it will once more prove that time is on its side and that it is the Palestinian veto which is in jeopardy, and not Israel’s vital interests.
The fact that a question like the one raised in the title of this article can be seriously posed by so many, including some Palestinians, reveals the extent to which doubts about the future of Palestinian independence permeate current thinking about Palestine. These doubts emerge in an unprecedentedly difficult alignment of local, regional, and international circumstances for the Palestinians: Israel’s military, economic, and international standing is at a peak; in contrast, the Palestinians are at a low point in terms of their political power, due to internal divisions, a leadership crisis, and the absence of a well-defined national project; the Arab world is occupied with internal struggles between receding revolutionary, counter-revolutionary, and organized terrorist forces; and many international powers, or more accurately, significant political forces within some of these powers – the US, some European states, and India, for example – are invoking religion and nationalism to guide their domestic and international politics and hence find themselves closer to Israel – a political embodiment of nationalism nurtured by religious underpinnings. These circumstances provide Israel with unprecedented conditions not only to act upon its political plans regarding the future of the occupied Palestinian territories in 1967 and the Palestinians, but also to consider strategies and even ventures that would be less likely under more constraining international conditions.

These circumstances emerge at a time when many among the Palestinian political class – that is mainly the class outside the circles of the Palestinian Authority – believe that it has become impractical and unrealistic to define the goals of a Palestinian national project in terms of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. This is mainly because of Israel’s active undermining of such an option, best represented by settlement activities and the incorporation of more than 700,000 settlers and close to 250 settlements and outposts into Israel’s society, politics, military, and all other institutions. It is also because the Israeli political map has been transformed in ways that give right-wing political forces, including those of the settler movement and religious nationalists, increasing control over Israel’s strategic agenda (see Shindler, 2015). Thus, it is no wonder that under these conditions, Palestinian statehood in the West Bank or the West Bank and Gaza, even when promoted by arguably one of the least biased (in favour of Israel) American administrations (such as during the most recent negotiation phase under Secretary of State John Kerry from 2013 to 2014), would have, in its best-case scenario, provided Palestinians a state that would have redefined both the Palestinian people (as being only Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza) and Palestine (as being limited to the territory on which this new state would have been established). The Palestinian citi-

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1 Nadim N Rouhana is also the Founding director of Mada al-Carmel – The Arab Centre for Applied Social Research in Haifa, Israel.
2 Israel’s Housing Minister estimated the number of settlers in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) at between 700,000 and 750,000 as early as 2014 (Reuters 2014).
3 Peace Now estimated the number of settlements and outposts (including in East Jerusalem) at 240 in 2016. See Peace Now 2017a; Peace Now 2017b.
zens of Israel would have been doomed to constitutional inequality in Israel as a Jewish state and those of them who are internal refugees would have never had their claims addressed; the Palestinian refugees in exile would have been prevented from returning; and the State itself would have been demilitarized and placed under strict Israeli control. Now however, with the end of the Obama Administration, the current hegemonic Israeli political class – the right wing and the religious nationalists represented in the Israeli government – oppose the idea of any independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and champion ongoing settler-colonial policies that have made even such a limited state unlikely to emerge. It has also become clear that for the increasingly insignificant “Zionist left” and for the Zionist centre too, the question of Palestinian statehood is not on the Israeli agenda, even with the impossible conditions that Israel usually imposes (such as requiring Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state).

What we are witnessing in both Palestinian and Israeli politics is a period of transition, at the centre of which is the demise of the idea of an independent Palestinian state in the territories Israel occupied in 1967, and complete disintegration of trust in the “peace process.” On the Palestinian side, this transition is taking the form of an end to an era that started in the mid-1970s – the struggle towards an independent Palestinian state – to a new era, the characteristics of which are still undefined. On the Israeli side, the transition is different – from an era in which some efforts were made – sometimes genuine as under Prime Minister Olmert from 2006 to 2009, and sometimes disingenuous as under Netanyahu since then – to a time when peace efforts are perceived as either futile (see, for example, Alpher, 2016) or as a threat that has to be dealt with. The sense on both sides of being in a transitional period moving towards an as yet undefined phase is similar in two respects: (i) it is not clear what new phase will follow the demise of the two-state solution; and (ii) the belief is widely shared that this conflict will not be settled any time soon. Other than that, the transitional period is fundamentally different on both sides. The Israeli leadership is looking for ways to guarantee the continued incorporation of the largest possible portions of the West Bank into Israel and to guarantee full and permanent domination of the Palestinians in order to thwart their ability to challenge these policies. As for the Palestinians, under the complex international and regional circumstances and given the stagnation of the leadership represented in the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian political and intellectual elites have not been able to define a new vision for a Palestinian national project to replace the disappearing goal based on a two-state solution. Indeed, this is a most challenging task as the alternatives that stand before the Palestinians under the current circumstances are hard even to envision. The transitional phase will be a period of looking for new strategies – anchored in new thinking – to achieve liberation and decolonization in their homeland. As I argue below, there are signs of some stirrings in that direction.

Israel beyond the Two-State Solution

The Israeli discourse on the future of the Palestinians has moved beyond two states. As mentioned above, there is no significant political party in Israel within the Zionist spectrum that accepts full Palestinian independence in a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Palestinian political and intellectual elites have not been able to define a new vision for a Palestinian national project to replace the disappearing goal based on a two-state solution

The questions within the ruling coalition – the hegemonic political class in Israel – are not on the future relations between two states or the shape of a Palestinian state. The new debate in the Israeli ruling circles is whether to annex the whole of the

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4 For some of the security arrangements considered under the Kerry negotiations, see Tibon and Harel 2017.
5 For views of the Zionist Camp (the successor of Labor), see Wootliff 2016; for views of the Zionist centre, represented by Yesh Atid, see Edelman 2017.
6 See Ravid and Levinson (2017) for how Netanyahu explains the need to deal with Trump’s efforts to reach a settlement.
The Arab-Israeli Conflict Revisited

West Bank or just parts - and if so, which parts -, and what future should Palestinians have in it (residents, citizens, autonomy in Bantustans, or even expulsion). The views range from full annexation with civil rights, through annexation of area C (about 60% of the West Bank), to annexation of large tracts of land usually called the “settlement blocs.” As for the future of the Palestinians, views range from giving them the choice between leaving or accepting second-class citizenship, as articulated by Knesset member Bezalel Smotrich (with an implication of killing them all off as a third choice; see Blatman, 2017), to pushing them into Bantustans, or giving them civil rights in a state of the Jewish people, as Israeli President Rivlin would support (Lis, 2017).

The status quo of continued occupation is perhaps the preferred Israeli option for the time being, because beneath it an aggressive colonization project can continue until the regional, international, and local circumstances ripen for one of the options mentioned above.

The Israeli leadership is looking for ways to guarantee the continued incorporation of the largest possible portions of the West Bank into Israel and to guarantee full and permanent domination of the Palestinians in order to thwart their ability to challenge these policies.

Notice that none of the Israeli options offers a genuine partition of the land of Palestine into two independent states. If partition is to be at all considered, the Bennett plan of annexing area C, controlling the borders with Jordan, and concentrating Palestinians in two or three self-rule areas akin to Bantustans with full Israeli security control is more like what an imposed settler-colonial partition will look like. In this regard, Israel will not be any different to other settler-colonial regimes, none of which ended with an agreed-upon partition of the homeland between the settlers and the indigenous population.

Palestinians beyond the Two-State Solution: Re-Conceptualizing the Conflict

On the Palestinian side, a new paradigm for understanding the conflict between themselves and Israel is emerging (or more accurately re-emerging) with far-reaching implications that are yet to be fully examined. Palestinians are increasingly articulating their conflict with Israel as a conflict between the indigenous population of Palestine and a settler-colonial movement represented by Zionism. Such an articulation is becoming possible as a result of parallel developments in Palestinian politics and society in the territories under occupation since 1967 and in Israel, as well as among Palestinian communities in exile. A paradigm shift to redefine the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel as a struggle against a settler colonial project is gaining momentum.

This paradigm is not completely new to Palestinian political thought; Palestinians originally perceived their conflict with Zionism as a conflict between a settler-colonial project and an indigenous Palestinian national movement (see, for example, Sayegh, 1965; Abu-Lughod and Abu-Laban, 1974). This conceptualization, which started with the start of the conflict itself, characterized the popular, intellectual, and cultural understanding of the conflict as well as Palestinian political thought. Within this understanding the Palestinian national movement defined its strategic goals as “Return and Liberation” – that is, the return of Palestinian refugees to their land and the liberation of Palestine – the meaning of which was not clear. It was in the 1970s that the hegemonic Palestinian political leadership within the PLO shifted the political thinking by defining the goal of the Palestinian Movement in terms of establishing a Palestinian state on every part of liberated Palestinian territory. This goal developed gradually into the two-state solution programme articulated in 1988 in the Palestinian National Council held in Algiers. The underlying paradigm of this political pro-

7 For examples of these different options, see Lis 2017; Wootliff and Ahren 2016; and Sharon 2017.
8 “The Ten Points Document” that defined this goal was approved in the 12th meeting of the Palestinian National Council in Cairo on 8 June 1974. (See Gresh 1988.)
The national conflict paradigm peaked in the mid-1990s with the Oslo Accords. The international support, including that of American administrations, for the two-state solution provided face validity to the paradigm. Indeed, during this period – the mid-1970s until very recently –, the intellectual and academic discourse on settler colonialism among Palestinians has faded and almost disappeared from the political statist discourse, although it has never faded from the popular understanding.

There is no significant political party in Israel within the Zionist spectrum that accepts full Palestinian independence in a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza

Many Palestinians now share the revived realization that Zionism is a settler-colonial project that is not only making it impossible for them to have a state, but which, in its dominant ideological manifestations, denies the Palestinians having any authentic relationship to Palestine as a homeland. This realization is common to the various Palestinian communities, including the Palestinian citizens in Israel, who are becoming increasingly aware of the aggressive Zionist claim that the homeland itself—as their motherland and place of national origin—is being denied them, beyond a mere political denial of equal citizenship in a state defined as “the State of the Jews” (see Rouhana, 2015).

This growing awareness among Palestinians of homeland denial is spreading among many civil society activists, youth organizations, cultural and intellectual elites, and political leaders. This is obviously true of the millions of Palestinians in exile, who are told that they cannot return to their homeland, which is now constituted as the homeland solely of the Jews, but is also true of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who experience the physical overtaking of their homeland on a daily basis. Thus, the new Palestinian struggle is being increasingly defined not around statehood, but around reclaiming the homeland and living in it with the human dignity that only equal citizenship can deliver – a claim that is fundamentally incompatible with Zionism itself. Politically, this entails a struggle for liberation from Israel’s settler-colonial regime across Palestine and an attempt to establish instead a new, de-Zionized order in which both colonized and colonizer are liberated from their relations as occupier and occupied, oppressor and oppressed, privileged and underprivileged, and superior and inferior.

Redefining Palestinian Independence

While the settler-colonial paradigm has been increasingly endorsed in academic and intellectual circles (see Busbridge, 2017) and among younger generations of Palestinians, it has not yet found its way to the political sphere. Nor has this paradigm, so far, offered a clear vision of the political future, within its framework, of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and the relationship between them.

Palestinians are increasingly articulating their conflict with Israel as a conflict between the indigenous population of Palestine and a settler-colonial movement represented by Zionism

To become politically relevant, this paradigm has to address the following question: If partition to two states is no longer applicable, and if settler-colonial partition into Bantustans is naturally unacceptable to Palestinians, what should their positive vision be for decolonization and liberation? What would the future of Palestinian independence be? I argue in this paper that Palestinian independence itself has to be redefined in the context of any alternative to the disappearing two-state option. Such redefinition will have to take into consideration the political geographic and demographic realities of both Israelis and Palestinians. My arguments are anchored in thinking within the settler-colonial paradigm.
Even though many Palestinians have come to the conclusion that a two-state solution is no longer feasible, many believe that abandoning the political demand for a two-state solution, even if they know it is unrealistic, will give Israel freer reign in implementing its policies in the West Bank, since they will be giving up on an ideal that is supported, at least on the declaratory level, by the international community. Thus, many Palestinians are trapped within the declared support for a two-state solution.

Palestinian independence itself has to be redefined in the context of any alternative to the disappearing two-state option. Such redefinition will have to take into consideration the political geographic and demographic realities of both Israelis and Palestinians.

The lack of an alternative to a two-state solution is not only an intellectual trap but also a political trap, enabling Israel to continue its current policies, which, paradoxically, will not only make a two-state solution even less likely, but also facilitate the possible realization of a settler-colonial partition in the form of the annexation of major parts of the West Bank and enclosing the population in isolated territories. In the absence of an alternative Palestinian vision, for example a rights-based vision, around which Palestinians can define their national project, and in light of evolving ideas on the Israeli side for the Palestinians’ place in a future Israel that incorporates the West Bank or major parts of it, it will be easier for Israel to design the future geopolitical configuration of its preference. The future of Palestinians’ realization of their self-determination has to be redefined in profound ways. However, the current internal Palestinian dynamics make this difficult to achieve. While Palestinians can agree on the settler-colonial conceptualization to understand their conflict with Zionism, they are unable to use this paradigm to advance a political project that envisions national liberation and that can galvanize the public support of all Palestinian communities.

In effect, all Palestinian communities suffer from the consequences of the Zionist settler-colonial project, albeit it in different ways. The Palestinian refugees in exile have been prevented from returning to their homeland since their exile close to 70 years ago; the West Bank Palestinians have been under direct occupation and continued colonization for 50 years; the Gaza Strip is under indirect occupation; and the Palestinians in Israel are citizens in a settler-colonial system in which their citizenship is constitutionally unequal (Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury, 2014).

For Palestinians to envision their liberation, they need to offer a political project that addresses the liberation of all Palestinians from Israeli occupation and domination. But beyond this, they must also advance a vision for how Israelis and Palestinians will live together in a new shared political order – a new political system. In whatever form Palestinians envision their future with the Israelis, their independence has to be redefined in a way that will include the other. There does not seem to be a political option in which Palestinians can envision independence or liberation without having that defined to include Israelis. Liberation and decolonization for Palestinians as the colonized must include liberation and decolonization of the Israelis – the colonizing. This vision is a major step that most Palestinians are not ready to undertake. The community that is most ready to define such a future are the Palestinians in Israel, who live with the Israelis in a mixed system of settler colonialism but also citizenship. It is therefore no wonder that their leading intellectual-political project of a “state for its citizens” within Israeli borders (Bishara, 2017) emphasized equal citizenship in a decolonized state. If decolonization is applied to all of Palestine and to all Palestinians and all Israeli Jews, this project must be developed. In this case, Palestinian independence will not be defined in terms of a state for Palestinians but a state for Palestinians and Israeli Jews – a de-Zionized political system that guarantees equality and group equality. While such a vision is still elementary, the intellectual and political challenge for Palestinians is to develop it and advance it to Palestinians, Israelis, and the world.
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The Arab-Israeli Conflict Revisited

Israel Regional Strategies: Balancing the Arab Core, the New Periphery, and Great Powers

Yossi Alpher¹
Writer
Ramat HaSharon, Israel

Strategic-Historical Backdrop

Viewed in retrospect, 70 years after the creation of the state, the evolution of Israel's regional and international strategic relations can be divided into several fairly unique time periods. The first three decades, until 1977, witnessed repeated wars with the surrounding Arab states, together with a high degree of international isolation. One exception was Israel's “periphery” alliances with Iran, Turkey, Ethiopia, the Iraqi Kurds and other primarily non-Arab states and ethnic groups on the geographic or demographic margins of the Middle East, including in newly independent Africa.² Another was a close strategic relationship with a global power: briefly, in 1948, the Soviet Bloc, then the UK, France and, since 1967, the United States.

The original periphery doctrine faded away decades ago due to a series of failures and one signal success. The Shah of Iran abandoned the Iraqi Kurds in 1975, thereby cutting their link to Israel. The Shah himself fell in 1979. There then followed the disastrous failure of the relationship with the Lebanese Maronites in 1982-83. In contrast, the peace process with Egypt that commenced in 1977 – meaning the beginning of peace with the Sunni Arab core surrounding Israel – paradoxically constituted a periphery doctrine success. Egypt’s arrival at the negotiating table appeared to fully justify the effort invested for so many years in demonstrating to the Arabs that Israel could survive their prolonged siege and deter them by linking up with countries on the Middle East periphery.

Peace with the Arabs and acceptance by the region was always the primary strategic objective. Egyptian-Israeli peace was followed in due course by the Oslo breakthrough with the Palestinians and peace with Jordan. By then Israel had witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc. This in turn opened the door to relations with a host of major powers led by Beijing, Delhi and Moscow, a radical expansion of Israel’s international diplomatic and commercial reach, the energetic integration of Israel’s robust post-industrial economy into global trade, and massive immigration to Israel from the former Soviet countries – a dynamic deemed by the Arab world to have granted Israel unbeatable demographic critical mass. While Israel-Arab peace was slow to expand, classic Israel-Arab wars appear to have ended in 1973, to be replaced by asymmetric conflicts and by the Iranian nuclear threat.

Fast forward to the new millennium. Peace with Egypt and Jordan, coupled with the increasingly dysfunctional nature of many Arab regimes over the first decade of the 21st century, signalled to Israel that it had little to fear in the foreseeable future from a coalition of Arab states. Accordingly, the Palestinian issue, still festering and very much in the consciousness of the international community, has increasingly taken on characteristics of a painful domestic dynamic within the confines of Israel-Palestine. Thus we are witness to the fading concept of a separate Palestinian state on the West Bank due to a combination of repeated Palestinian rejection of Israel’s negotiating offers, Palestinian political and geographic divisions, and

¹ Yossi Alpher is the former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University.
² For an in-depth analysis of the periphery doctrine, see: ALPER, Yossi. Periphery: Israel’s Search for Middle East Allies. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.
the ramifications of a growing Israeli Jewish settler population. Correspondingly, we confront the drive, willy-nilly, by an emerging and dynamic political majority of right-wing messianic pro-settler elements, to swallow the West Bank and East Jerusalem into some sort of one-state entity – no matter how grievous the strategic consequences for Israel.³

**Netanyahu Leverages the Arab Revolutions to Develop New Strategic Relationships**

The 2011 “Arab Spring” revolutions accelerated the emergence of both political and militant Islam – not only on Israel’s borders but in the former periphery as well. Revolutions in Syria and Egypt generated potential threats to Israel by Sunni Islamists from ISIS, al-Qaeda and other movements in the Syrian Golan region and Egyptian Sinai – threat perceptions that, it quickly emerged, were shared by Egypt and by Jordan, which, like Israel, borders southern Syria. Even Arab revolutions further afield were understood to endanger Israel and its immediate neighbours. Thus, the revolution in Libya caused the dispersal of a huge arsenal of arms not only throughout the African Sahel but to Islamists in Sinai and the Gaza Strip. The civil war in Yemen not only confronted Saudi Arabia with the perception of Iranian infiltration on its south-eastern flank but projected a danger to shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, thereby affecting Israeli and Egyptian interests. In parallel, the emergence of an increasingly Islamist government in Turkey and, particularly, the growing threats posed by Iran – a nuclear threat until the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)/Iran nuclear deal but, even prior to 2015, a threat of radical Shiite power projection as far afield as Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq – persuaded Israel that it could again be surrounded by a ring of hostile states and entities: close to home, Islamists in the Levant, the Gaza Strip and Egyptian Sinai; further afield, Turkey and Iran.

These developments set the scene for our discussion of new and dynamic dimensions in Israeli strategic security policies in 2016: enhanced yet largely clandestine strategic relations with Israel’s Sunni Arab “core” neighbours, a new “periphery” to balance and deter Sunni and Shiite Islamist threats, new military and economic strategic depth in the eastern Mediterranean, and expanded strategic relations with major powers such as China, India and Russia that share Israel’s concerns regarding militant Islam. All this, while the bedrock relationship with the US weathered tensions with the Obama Administration and Israel’s key economic and strategic ties to Europe are tested by the Palestinian issue.

**The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth**

On 8 December 2016, in Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades held their second summit meeting in less than a year. Their discussion agenda had not changed from previous meetings: it ranged from shared security concerns regarding problematic neighbours – Islamizing Turkey, Iran’s Hezbollah proxy force in Lebanon, and, of course, the sparks flying from the war in Syria – to the prospect of exporting natural gas via Cyprus to Greece from Israel’s Leviathan discovery in the Mediterranean. The three also discussed joint military exercises, surely a sign of an intimate strategic relationship.

The anomaly of this meeting lies in its unprecedented nature. Both Greece and Cyprus were traditionally considered pro-Arab states harbouring a cool attitude toward Israel. They needed Arab oil, and by favouring the Arab cause they sought to isolate their enemy, Turkey, from its presumed natural hinterland of Arab Islamic countries. Only in recent years did they readjust their perspective to factor in the chaos generated by Arab revolutions, as well as the availability of ample alternative energy sources.

Because in December 2016 Greece was deeply and grudgingly indebted financially to its European Union partners and Cyprus was scarcely better off, Israel was not about to reap financial benefits from its two Hellenic partners. Nor would Jerusalem enjoy much by way of energy benefits. The logistics of laying a seabed gas pipeline to Greece from Israel’s Leviathan gas deposit, which lies 100 km west of Israel’s Mediterranean coast, are daunting. Moreover Turkey, having patched up relations with Israel in late 2016, wants the

gas, and the logistics of transporting it to the Turkish Mediterranean coast are a great deal easier. For Israel, the benefits of a Hellenic alliance lay elsewhere. After 2011, Greece and Cyprus needed Israel primarily as a buffer against Turkey and the militant Islam generated by the Arab revolutions. Greece in particular was nervous because it had become home to upwards of a million Muslim migrants and refugees from as far afield as Afghanistan. Prime Minister Netanyahu, the primary Israeli architect of the relationship, needed the two European Hellenic states as a trump card in his dealings with Islamist Turkey but also, he hoped, as friendly votes in a European Union that was increasingly critical of Israel’s behaviour toward the Palestinians. Netanyahu’s tactics appear to have been helpful regarding relations with Turkey. By late 2016 Ankara was completing a lengthy reconciliation process with Israel that ended the bilateral crisis engendered by the Mavi Marmara incident of 2010, which involved a Turkish attempt to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza. Six years later, Turkey’s President Erdogan needed Israel more than he needed to support the Palestinians in Gaza.

Interestingly, throughout the years of crisis Turkish-Israeli economic relations never suffered; indeed the two countries, while still beset by a bilateral diplomatic crisis, jointly leveraged Arab chaos for their mutual benefit. Since it was impossible for Turkish goods to be transported safely from Turkey through Syria and Iraq to Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, Turkish container trucks transited Israel between Haifa, where they arrived by sea, and the Israel-Jordan border, from where they proceeded to Gulf consumers. In 2015, some 13,000 Turkish trucks made this journey. Turkey, in return, allowed Iraqi Kurdish oil to transit its territory for passage by sea to Israel. Over the course of 2016, Israel also entered into talks with an increasingly friendly Egypt about marketing its gas. Egypt, fighting ISIS in both the Sinai Peninsula and the Egyptian heartland, needed security cooperation with Israel against militant Islam even more than Cyprus and Greece did.

Then, too, Russia, now firmly implanted on Syria’s Mediterranean coast, was also interested in Israeli gas. If and when war-torn Syria began to heal, it too would explore the Mediterranean for gas, and Russia, now once again its patron power, could play a useful role in ensuring maritime harmony between Israeli and Syrian (and Lebanese) gas fields. By early 2017, the overall effect of this grand confluence of security and energy was the impression that Israel was doing well on its western front – from Turkey via Greece and Cyprus to Egypt and Russia. This was a direct consequence primarily of the need for cooperation against the spillover effect of Arab revolution from the direction of Syria and Lebanon, with gas as a bonus. The eastern Mediterranean was emerging, from Israel’s standpoint, as a region supplying both economic and security strategic depth.

### West Africa and Central Asia

Nor was Netanyahu’s success in leveraging Arab chaos confined to the area west of Israel. In July 2016, he travelled south to East Africa to meet no fewer than six heads of state – from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda and Tanzania – and sign security agreements providing for Israeli support in countering Islamist terrorism, presumably from the direction of Sudan, Somalia and Yemen, all countries in crisis. It was the first African visit by an Israeli prime minister in 30 years.

By late 2016 Ankara was completing a lengthy reconciliation process with Israel that ended the bilateral crisis engendered by the Mavi Marmara incident of 2010. Six years later, Turkey’s President Erdogan needed Israel more than he needed to support the Palestinians in Gaza.

In December, after meeting with Tsipras and Anastasiades, Netanyahu ventured north to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. In Baku, President Ilham Aliyev noted publicly that his country had in recent years purchased nearly five billion dollars worth of Israeli weapons and would soon take possession of the Israeli Iron Dome anti-rocket missile system. Most of these purchases were almost certainly paid for in shipments of Caspian Sea oil. Unlike the Mediterranean instance, this meet-
ing of energy and security considerations linking Israel to a country on the periphery of the Arab and Muslim world did not evolve due to the outbreak of Arab revolutions. Rather, it relates to the two countries’ shared concerns about the threat projected from south of Azerbaijan by Iran’s militant Shiite Islam.

The Arab Core

Moving from the Middle East periphery to the Arab heartland, Netanyahu, in 2016, was increasingly comfortable boasting of Israel’s enhanced strategic ties not only with Egypt but with Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as well. The level of security cooperation achieved since 2011 due to the threat posed by militant Arab Islamists and by Iran and its proxies in the Levant has been unprecedented. For their part, the Saudis and Emiratis have no formal ties with Jerusalem. But by 2017 the strategic relationship had developed sufficient depth for all sides to acknowledge it quite openly – while implementing it very much in the shadows – and to point to the rationale: a shared perception of a militant Islamist threat, Sunni and Shiite, that warranted close intelligence and operational cooperation and overshadowed any lingering considerations of “traditional” enmity.

The Eurasian Powers

To round out the picture, after 2011 Netanyahu was also able to leverage the Islamist threat as a means of developing strategic relationships with three major world powers. Russia, China and India each have issues with militant Islam: Russia in the Caucasus and Volga-Kazan, China in the western province of Xinjiang, and India vis-à-vis Pakistan. All have experienced a rise in Islamist terrorism in recent years. All sought Israeli expertise and intelligence, which involved enhanced economic and strategic ties. One crucial area of cooperation with Russia involved Syria. When the Russians arrived there in September 2015, Netanyahu quickly made the Israeli case to President Putin that the two not get in one another’s way in the skies over Syria. This was not simple: Israel needed freedom of action in the air of southern Syria to continue interdicting Syrian arms shipments to Hezbollah in Lebanon, while Russia had arrived to rescue the very same Syrian regime that, in coordination with Iran, was arming Hezbollah.

Netanyahu was the first foreign leader to meet with Putin to discuss military coordination in Syria. From Israel’s standpoint, in contrast to the Cold War era, Russia was now a friendly country with shared interests. In dealing with the chaos across Israel’s northeastern border in Syria and in adjusting to the Russian military presence there after September 2015, Israel behaved prudently. It avoided military involvement in the Syrian free-for-all and successfully coordinated with the Russians the limited military action it reportedly did take in Syria.

But the Palestinian Issue Would Not Go Away

By 2016 Netanyahu was boasting openly about all these enhanced strategic relationships and linking them to the threats posed by Arab upheavals and Iranian power projection. The message was that on three geostrategic levels – the Arab heartland, the “periphery” surrounding the Islamist Middle East, and the Asian and Eurasian powers – Israel had powerful friends and meaningful ties that enabled it to defend its interests against crumbling Arab neighbours like Syria and militant Sunni and Shiite Islamists.

But that was not Netanyahu’s only message or his only motive for weaving these ties. He had a Palestinian problem that he could not and would not solve. To be sure, as Israel approached the fiftieth anniversary of the June 1967 occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Golan Heights, there was plenty of blame for the absence of solutions to spread around among Palestinian and other Arab leaders as well. Indeed, in the specific case of the Golan Heights, Netanyahu could point to the anarchy in Syria, breathe a sigh of relief that neither he nor his predecessors had done a territories-for-peace deal with the Assads, father and son, and suggest that the world drop this issue from its agenda and recognize Israel’s 1981 annexation of the Heights within the framework of whatever end-game emerged in Syria. Little wonder that Netanyahu was successfully entering into strategic relationships with a host of governments that were so concerned about Iranian power projection, ISIS and al-Qaeda and so grateful for Israel’s intelligence and operational cooperation that they were dropping their traditional condi-
tion for doing so – Israeli-Palestinian peace – and radically downgrading even their lip service to the Palestinian issue. From New Delhi to Cairo, from Athens to Riyadh, the Islamist threat now seemingly justified relegating the demand for a Palestinian state to the diplomatic back burner.

An “Arab Solution”?

For their part, Israel’s newfound strategic partners understood this partly as a necessary exercise in realpolitik prioritizing and partly as an acknowledgement that they were fed up with the Palestinian leadership and its insistence on impossible conditions like the “right of return” to Israel of all five million 1948 Palestinian refugees and their descendants. Netanyahu, however, proceeded to argue that no longer was a Palestinian solution the necessary predeces-
sor to normalization with the Arab world but quite the opposite: he would prove that better strategic ties with the Arab world would make it easier to solve the Palestinian issue, as friendly Arab states would contribute security guarantees and refugee solutions.

In this spirit the Israeli right and many from the political centre as well, despairing of peace and recognizing the increasing irreversibility of the West Bank and East Jerusalem settlement project, where fully 10% of Israeli Jews now resided, proceeded to turn the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative on its head. The Saudi-sponsored and Arab League-endorsed Arab Peace Initiative (API) had offered Israel peace, security benefits and normalization with all Arab states if first it resolved the Palestinian and Golan issues. Now Is-
rael proposed, on the basis of relations that appeared to be improving because of shared threats and despite the absence of a Palestinian solution, that the sequence be reversed. In July 2016, Netanyahu told the Israel National Security College that Israel “used to say that as soon as peace breaks out with the Pal-
estinians, we can achieve peace with the entire Arab world. I am increasingly convinced that the process can work in the other direction too, and that normalization with the Arab world can help us to advance toward peace between us and the Palestinians.”

Yet there were no serious takers for Netanyahu’s new reverse paradigm of Israel-Arab peace. Indeed, in the course of making new friends regionally and globally, Netanyahu had lost the trust of the West. France, Britain and Germany were fed up with his broken promises regarding the Palestinians and his settlement expansion. And then there was the US under President Obama, whom Netanyahu did not trust from the start, whose repeated admonitions to the effect that settlement expansion would doom Israel as a Jewish and democratic state Netanyahu flouted, and the dignity of whose office Netanyahu disparaged when he insisted in March 2015 on appealing directly to Congress to thwart the Iran nuclear deal.

Conclusion: Mixed Results

One challenge was immediate. All this Western anger, coupled with the international community’s ongoing commitment to the Palestinians, came to a head on 23 December 2016 in a unanimous UN Security Council vote (the US abstaining) for Resolution 2334 condemning Israel’s settlement expansion. Israel’s expanding regional and global security cooperation relationships went by the wayside. Netanyahu’s gamble on minimizing the Palestinian issue through cooperation against militant Islam had in this instance failed abysmally. And his reading of the Obama Administration – he prided himself on his understanding of the United States, where he had spent his teenage years and later served as an Israeli diplomat – was wrong.

Thus Netanyahu’s campaign to acquire strategic allies regionally and globally, and to do so at the expense of the Palestinian issue, had by the end of 2016 registered both successes and failures. The enhanced security cooperation and enhanced Israeli arms and cyber sales were undeniable; yet the Palestinian issue remained as problematic as ever.

By 2017 Netanyahu hoped that incoming US President Donald Trump, with his promise of support for the settlements and recognition of Israel’s capital in united Jerusalem, would prove to be the harbinger of a rightist, pro-Israel swing throughout the West. Early indications however were ambiguous and dictated to Netanyahu a more cautious Israeli approach to both the US and the Palestinian issue.

The European Project in Crisis: Myths and Realities

Pierre Vimont
Senior Fellow
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Europe, Brussels

The crisis of the European project is not a new phenomenon. Throughout its existence, the European Union has gone from crisis to crisis. They have even served as a driving force for its progression, each crises providing the opportunity to bounce back once a solution had been found: the “empty chair” decision made by France’s General de Gaulle in 1965 paved the way for the definitive adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy regulations; meeting Margaret Thatcher’s budgetary demands in 1984 allowed European integration to be relaunched through the Single European Act; and the deep divisions between Europeans emerging at the time of the western Balkans conflicts in the 1990s or regarding the 2003 American military intervention in Iraq, once settled, gave way to the Lisbon Treaty (2007).

A Crisis of a Different Nature?

Nonetheless, this time, the crisis seems more serious, some even believe definitive. The sentiment is spreading that the difficulties Europeans have been encountering over the past decade are of a different nature and that they undermine the project at its very core. As proof, one can cite citizens’ disaffection with regard to European integration, deeper divisions between Member States, and solidarity being questioned, as witnessed insofar as the reception of refugees from the Middle East. The culmination of these worrying developments: the British vote on 23 June 2016 to exit the European Union appeared to sound the death knell for a project that may have reached its limits.

However, caution should be exercised in making such a diagnosis and the phenomenon unfolding before our eyes should be gauged more precisely. Two fundamentally different analyses are possible, offering necessarily divergent perspectives.

Two Contrasting Readings

For some, the current crisis represents an irrevocable rejection of the European project, which has failed and should be condemned. Governments have gone astray, embarking on an adventure that ignored the peoples’ sensibilities, produced an economic and monetary policy requiring increasingly intolerable sacrifices and progressively led Europe to a loss of influence in the world. The EU must either be disbanded or its founding principles profoundly modified, eliminating all aspects leading to greater integration and replacing it with a Europe based on nations. This is the position of those advocating a return to more traditional and direct cooperation among nation states, whose most radical form is endorsed by populist movements in France, Italy and the Netherlands.

For others, current difficulties are not due to an error in conception but to faulty construction. The current obstructions have various causes that can, moreover, be cumulative: uncertain choices in the objectives assigned the Union, difficulties associated with the project’s very success, namely, in the wake of the enlargement to 28 Member States, or shortcomings registered over the course of the years in the functioning of the European institutions. Such dysfunctions, according to the proponents of this thesis, do not justify giving up on the project.
On the contrary, they call for a jump start and a profound renewal of methods and objectives. This is the position held by the Brussels institutions and the great majority of governments in the Union. It is likewise in this context that the European Commission, in January 2017, put forth a White Paper containing ideas and reflections for relaunching the European project while retaining the general framework established in the Treaties.1

Growing Criticism Reinforced by Crises

Which of these two diagnoses is right? The matter is far from being theoretical; indeed, the line of action to adopt to get Europe out of the rut into which it has progressively fallen largely depends on the reply. In this regard, one can attempt to better comprehend the current phenomenon by considering the following factors:

− Disaffection with the European Union is not recent. It appeared already, albeit diffusely, during the Maastricht Treaty referendums in 1992. The rejection at that time came from Denmark, but Great Britain had already acted preventively by refusing to follow its partners on the path of monetary union and demanding significant exemptions, whereas France narrowly escaped a negative vote. The warning was clear but it was not truly grasped by European leaders, who would pursue their course without truly determining the extent of this still-nascent anger.

− Disenchantment has grown since then. It corresponds to a rising sense that European leaders are no longer listening to the people and that European integration continues to advance without heeding criticism nor making a minimal effort at self-examination. The reproach is certainly exaggerated, for efforts have been made to reduce the sphere of EU interventions and improve the functioning of the European administration. But the popular judgement remains, that of a process that refuses to question itself, and it is fuelled by numerous examples: the proposed Constitutional Treaty rejected in 2005 by Dutch and French voters, whose stipulations were nearly identically repeated in the Treaty of Lisbon; enlargement negotiations with Turkey, which continue to be pursued to date although European public opinion shows clear reservations; the ceaseless appeals for greater dialogue between the Brussels institutions and the professional sphere or civil society in Member States, appeals which too often seem to fall on deaf ears.

In the face of all these challenges, the European Union seems helpless. It no longer protects, seeming to offer free rein to the in-depth evolution of the globalized world, whose consequences, particularly on the social level, are causing growing political instability. For the people of Europe, the prevailing impression is becoming ever clearer: it is one of transfers of sovereignty to Brussels, at first accepted as an efficient means of safeguarding the European way of life, but that have definitely not borne fruit and today leave citizens helpless, if not angry.

A Europe that No Longer Protects

Although it reflects a profound sentiment felt throughout the EU, this image is misleading. Despite sharp criticism, the majority of European citizens are not calling for an end to the current organization. They do want the system in place to function better and carry out the task of protection expected of it. They are aware of the benefits European cooperation can provide the countries on the continent when they show themselves to the world united. They nevertheless expect this paradigm to translate in fact into concrete consequences, which does not

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The latest opinion polls regularly confirm this state of mind. European integration is not condemned in principle but denounced for its lack of results. This trend has become relatively consolidated after the British decision to exit, which has had a foiling effect. From this perspective, European citizens seem to take the side of those who advocate in-depth reform of EU operation over purely and simply giving up on the project. On the other hand, they do not seem willing to resume moving towards greater integration in the immediate future. A Europe with reasonable ambitions, anxious to listen more to its population and understand its needs, capable of both protecting European interests and defending them on the world stage, this is the project that seems to be favoured by public opinion, according to the polls.

Does this diagnosis suffice to conclude that the European project will rapidly recover if EU leaders are willing to pay a bit more attention to the concerns of their populations? Anyone can see that criticism should delve deeper and that, for the current EU integration crisis to end, the EU must manage to better ascertain the causes of the weaknesses that have led to popular disenchantment.

From this perspective, three essential issues merit particular attention: that of democracy, that is, the capacity to re-establish a link between the centres of power and the people; that of efficiency, that is, implementing work methods rendering EU action more fluid and effective; and that of the project’s ambition itself.

**A Hesitant Democracy…**

The democratic deficit remains one of the recurring themes of the indictment of the EU. The facts are known. In the sixty years of their existence, the Brussels institutions have not managed to create an authentically democratic space specific to Europe. Despite its repeated and worthy efforts, the European Parliament has not truly managed to occupy this terrain, as illustrated by the weak participation every five years in EU elections. It is ultimately in the States themselves that debates find democratic legitimacy, even if their imperfect nature because they are incomplete is immediately obvious. Exchanges about the EU during the last French presidential campaign were highly revealing in this regard, showing the limited nature of proposals that are necessarily unrealistic for not having been perfected through open debate with the rest of the Europeans. The fact remains that the absence of channels between EU institutions and European citizens, capable of contributing ideas and objections characteristic of any democratic exchange, leads to weak political authority. This original flaw affects all decisions made nearly on a daily basis in Brussels.

The new factor introduced by the current European crisis tends to indicate that this weakness, long attributed exclusively to Europe, now extends to the more general crisis of our Western democratic systems. Frustration with the elite coming from a growing part of the electorate both in European countries and the United States and linked to a sense of inability to understand one another and to share the same experiences, today nurtures a gnawing ran-cour against democratic regimes. This can be seen in a variety of behaviours – abstention, voting for extreme parties… – now openly expressing a rejection of past practices.

In this context, though European democracy should receive its fair share of criticism, it is no longer the...
only one to blame. This new situation effectively modifies the debate underway on the European edifice. The latter can no longer focus exclusively on the democratic deficit registered on a European level. It should join in a more general reflection with the European nations on how to renew their democratic systems, shaken by the disaffection of part of their electorate and the rise of populist trends. Not all European countries are affected to the same extent, but the phenomenon is sufficiently widespread to call for serious reflection. For the Europeans, the interest could reside in the lessons learned from the debates underway in Member States and the use to which they could be put on the level of the common institutions.

**Efficiency Sought...**

In criticism of the European Union, reproach of the institutions’ operational methods constitutes another of the themes in the debate underway. It makes use of the usual accusations made against bureaucracies as cut off from reality and far too self-centred. Here also, to better comprehend the nature of the European Union crisis, we must attempt to go beyond this level of analysis to ascertain where the flaw lies within the system. Many observers argue that there is no executive power in the EU institutions, and with reason. If Europe aspires, in particular in foreign policy, to become an “agile power” capable of handling international crises in real time, it must equip itself with the means to do so. The task is immense. In the EU’s external action component, for instance, it would entail a mobile diplomatic network capable of reacting rapidly; means of defence beyond the resources currently available to the EU; and above all, a different approach to crises as well as the will to get involved with full knowledge of the facts. Today, what best approaches the notion of an executive power on the European level is essentially the European Council, as we have seen over the course of the 2015 refugee crisis or in the case of the conflict in Ukraine. But this organism, consisting of the Heads of State and Government of EU Member States, cannot simply turn into a crisis unit at each international rise in tension. New forms of action must be invented to complement the responsibility of European leaders. As in the case of democratic deficit, it is in this precise, targeted area that debate should be launched to clear up current misgivings. Insofar as integration methods, Europe has actually reached a crossroads. The political leaders of Europe have never fully settled matters between those who have advocated from the start exclusive recourse to cooperation among States and those who are willing to entrust EU affairs to federal-type institutions. They have preferred to opt for a mixed system balancing the two variants of power, and over the course of the years, have developed a pragmatic European method capable of employing the best of both approaches.

Has the time come to make a choice? This is far from clear: Member States are profoundly divided on the subject; and citizens do not seem prepared to back new institutional ambitions that are hardly a sign of the times. A better response in this sphere would be an effort to rationalize the empirical method developed and implemented over the years and lend it a more solid foundation. This could also be a useful contribution to come out on top of the current crisis.

**An Ambition to Be Defined...**

One of the most delicate aspects of the crisis in the European Union is the difficulty of EU countries in defining what they plan on doing together in the future beyond the remit already acquired on the European level. This uncertainty is true of both internal and foreign affairs, though admittedly this distinction is increasingly losing its pertinence today. Indeed, an agreement on the new ambitions of the European project seems particularly difficult to reach today. Doubts regarding the added value the EU could contribute in new spheres of action it could be entrusted, the criticism mentioned above on the dysfunctionality of the EU administration, the widespread feeling that

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European citizens do not want any initiatives in this sphere for the time being, all of the above factors combined would seem to indicate we should maintain the status quo, awaiting better days. And yet, the world turns, changing at a pace that is always accelerating, in particular with regard to the balance of powers and the new geopolitical relations developing on the international level. The EU crisis also lends the feeling that the Europeans may not rise to the historic occasion and, in the absence of a common will, pass up the chance to influence the new balances being formed. At a time when uncertainties remain on the new US administration’s goals and Russia, China and other emerging powers are moving to defend their interests, the European project should be reinvented if the EU does not wish to remain on the sidelines.

One of the most delicate aspects of the crisis in the European Union is the difficulty of EU countries in defining what they plan on doing together in the future beyond the remit already acquired on the European level. The components of this idea are relatively simple. If Europe wishes to exercise influence, it must act, and it must do so in a united manner. It must therefore decide whether it wishes to strengthen its internal economic power by consolidating the Eurozone acquis. By the same token, the EU must consider, with its Member States, whether it intends to be ambitious in other spheres of internal action such as support to public or private investment, research and innovation, and fiscal or social harmonization. Nothing is definitive as yet and everything remains open for debate. In any case, the relaunch of the European project requires debate among EU countries on the ambitions they are willing to share. The procedure would naturally be the same for international affairs. Are Europeans willing to act autonomously and maintain a line of conduct in keeping with their interests before their international partners? The answer is not so straightforward: in the immediate future, certain EU countries would prefer to avoid causing the Americans to step back within the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), or to take an even greater step back. Moreover, any European effort in this area requires decisions that will not be easy to make, i.e. significant financial commitment insofar as security, defending liberal principals in international commerce, principles that are now contested even in EU Member States by their own citizens, a capacity to take on responsibilities in the crises overwhelming a number of EU neighbour countries.

A Role for Europe in the New World Order?

Ultimately, the European Union must ask itself whether it wishes to be ambitious, for both itself and the stability of a new world order that is emerging. In this regard, Europeans have a particular responsibility, that of defending a certain conception of economic liberalism based on compliance with market laws and tempered by efforts in social protection. The same inspiration towards balance informs their vision of international political stability. It remains to be seen whether EU leaders are determined to assume this responsibility, and whether they are capable of agreeing amongst themselves on the principles and actions they will be willing to promote outside their borders. The crisis of the European project has its logic. To overcome current difficulties, Europeans need to rediscover the deep reasons that were at the root of the European integration process in the first place. This calls for Europe to regain its self-confidence and assume its ambitions. It also requires it to lend itself the means to achieve these ambitions by operating more efficiently. Finally, the relaunching of the EU project should be done with the support of the citizenry, who should be reconciled to the project. Far from being deadly, this crisis may provide an opportunity to bounce back. But this will require the leaders of the EU institutions as well as those of the Member States to look reality in the face and have the skill to use this moment of profound doubt to regain the political will that has too often escaped them of late.
Challenges Ahead for the European Union

The (Resistable) Rise of Populism in Europe and its Impact on European and International Cooperation

Rosa Balfour
Senior Fellow, Europe Programme
German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

2016 is widely seen as the *annus horribilis* for Europe, and the rise of populism identified as the main culprit for the political crisis following the failure to deal with the refugee influx, the British vote to leave the EU, and several other events which seemed to bring the European Union to the brink. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, key decisions about cooperation in Europe seemed determined by the rise of a variety of populist parties, mostly on the far right of the political spectrum, casting a dark shadow on the health and future of the institutions of cooperation such as the European Union.

Understanding the linkages between the rise of populism and Europe’s crises, however, is less clear. Have populist parties really caused this malaise? What responsibility does “the establishment” have? How can we disentangle the ways in which domestic politics impact foreign policy choices?

In 2017, Brexit and the election in the US of President Donald Trump appear to have vaccinated the rest of Europe against populism, yet its underlying causes will not be wished away by a magic wand. An understanding of the deeper reasons behind the symptoms of populism is needed to guide political and policy choices and to identify alternatives to the nationalist and anti-multilateral course advocated by populism.

What is Populism?

Populism is not a new phenomenon; in Europe it has been a force to be reckoned with at least since the 1980s and an object of extensive study. Scholarly focus has been mostly on the impact of populism on liberal democracy, concerned with parties’ illiberal, anti-pluralist and authoritarian features. This lack of attention to the consequences of international policy reflected the fact that populism, especially of the right-wing genre, is by definition nationalistic; its agenda has been virtually exclusively national; foreign policy issues have hardly featured in any manifesto or in political campaigning; and, until very recently, cooperation between populist parties coming from different countries has been extremely limited.

The definition around which there is most consensus holds populism as “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups – the ‘pure people’ versus the corrupt elite – and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people.”

The key point is that a populist party claims to represent “the people,” while, in fact, it “ventriloquises” them, in Timothy Garton Ash’s words. By definition, populism is exclusive; the “other” can variously be the elite,” “foreigners,” “Eurocrats,” “the establishment,” “immigrants”. This claim to directly represent “the people” enables them to bypass institutions, as Donald Trump shows, demonize opponents, and polarize the debate between “us” and “them,” “the people versus the enemy.”

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2 Timothy Garton Ash, Lecture at the CEPS Ideas Lab, Brussels 24 February 2017.
The populist view of democracy is majoritarian, illiberal and anti-pluralist, which is a necessary corollary of representing “the people.” Hence the risk of authoritarian drift, and the seeming compatibilities and similarities with Putin’s “sovereign democracy” and Orban’s “illiberal democracy.” In pluralist democracies, the outcome of referendums such as the British one on the EU is particularly problematic from this point of view.

Understanding of the deeper reasons behind the symptoms of populism is needed to guide political and policy choices and to identify alternatives to the nationalist and anti-multilateral course advocated by populism

Ideologically, populism is thin and can transcend the left-right political spectrum, though right-wing populism is posing the greatest challenges to the status quo in Europe and in the US. Working on a moralistic rather than programmatic platform, populists tend to manipulate issues instrumentally and thus, unlike mainstream politicians, do not have to deal with the challenge of coherence towards a policy programme. Populists can contradict themselves or change their mind, making them adaptable to capturing the zeitgeist.

Why Populism?

With populism becoming the most fashionable topic of 2016, often ill-informed explanations as to its cause abound. The frequently made correlation between economic crisis and the rise of populism does not stand empirical testing; there are cases in which populism has grown without economic crisis (in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands), and cases in which economic crisis has not facilitated the rise of populism (Ireland and Portugal). Greece saw a populist party grow under economic pressure, but the ongoing migration crisis there has not caused a xenophobic populist backlash beyond a few episodes. Golden Dawn, and extreme right-wing xenophobic, but not populist, party lost attraction with the refugee influx. Here too a widely held correlation between immigration and populism is not corroborated by evidence.

There is much confusion between causes and symptoms. Globalization, inequality, fears of loss of cultural identity are the usual culprits. Hyper-globalization since 1989, especially in terms of dislocation of production and its social consequences coupled with the uncertain impact of rapid technological development certainly provide a challenging environment. Globalization's depth and ubiquity since the end of the Cold War and the narrative of its unilateral unavoidability embraced by the ruling elites, as it has spread unhindered, has no doubt caused a revolt against it and those who appear to represent it. Against this backdrop, inequality has risen in many countries, whereby inequality is intended not just as a social and economic condition, but inequality of opportunity and inequality of access to opportunities, such as education. Culprits are seen in international organizations, the European Union, International Financial Institutions, elites, technocrats and experts, who are all seen to have benefited from globalization at the expense of those left behind.

The cultural dimension of globalization is another frequently examined area to explain the rise of populism, whereby national identity is seen as under threat because of immigration, globalization and terrorism. These are areas in which populists have been very successful in influencing policy and shifting center-right immigration policies closer to restrictive positions, for instance in Denmark in the 2000s when the center-right government needed the support of the Danish People's Party. Italy too under the populist government of Berlusconi, pursued restrictive immigration policies to satisfy the xenophobic junior coalition party Northern League. More recently, the German AfD showed a surge when switching from its original anti-Euro rhetoric to an anti-immigration one during the refugee influx, reaping some short-lived electoral benefits from it during 2016. Indeed, fears of immigration have probably been the easiest sentiment to mobilize and manipulate. Yet this does not mean that cultural identity is the cause of populism; it has merely proven to be an area where rage and anger can be instrumentalized into vocal opposition, and has been
successful at paralyzing policy responses of governments.

One underexplored area that is crucial to understand the rise of populism is the crisis of advanced representative democracies. Especially in the European context, where the EU plays a major role in managing interdependence, the additional supranational or intergovernmental levels of decision-making are contested and seen as illegitimate, as a dislocation of legitimacy and responsibility. It is at the European level that the nexus between internal and external policy plays out the most, and it is seen as far away from the people – “take back control” was the slogan of the Brexitters during the referendum campaign.

**Populism and Foreign Policy**

It is not by design that populists have been successful on international and foreign policy issues. Interdependence and European integration meant the domestic-foreign nexus became far more intertwined. And populists have shown a remarkable skill in capturing the dissatisfaction of large sectors of the population.

Ideologically, populism is thin and can transcend the left-right political spectrum, though right-wing populism is posing the greatest challenges to the status quo in Europe and in the US.

The rise of the salience of international issues – be it European integration, immigration, trade – have provided platforms around which populists have seized their moment. In doing so, they entered a territory uncharted to the parties themselves, anew to international politics, but also novel to the traditional political parties and government representatives, who are more used to managing foreign policy with little scrutiny from the public debate, and to the community of scholars and observers, and were unprepared for understanding the arrival of such new actors.

While confirming an ability to capture the debate, dominate the news cycle, and manipulate public fears in times of crisis, what is less clear is how these parties and movements actually influence policy preferences and decisions in real terms. What pathways of influence have been seen? The first and most visible level is the way in which populists have managed to gain space on the media, not just by contributing to the debate but by shaping it and its vocabulary, with some media (social media, tabloids) functioning as a megaphone to the populist call. But this does not explain the impact on concrete policy choices, especially in foreign policy.

Here the relationship between mainstream or political parties which have traditionally held government and populist parties is key. In the recent past, when populist parties have been in coalition governments (Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Netherlands), they have a track record of influencing policy limited to the key areas of concern, which mostly have revolved around migration policy. But mainstream parties in government have also shifted towards the positions of populist parties. Past coalitions of the right and far right have been behind the shift from the 2000s onwards towards the right on immigration, law and order, austerity and national security. The shift could be a reflection of changes in public opinion influencing government policy, but could equally reflect a preference of mainstream parties which take advantage of the existence of populist parties as a fig leaf to justify policy choices. While the correlation is evident, the causality is less clear.

In other words, there are two possible pathways of influence between mainstream and populist views. Populists may be reacting to a changing political context, putting the mainstream under pressure to take up their agenda, or they can act as “enablers” of decisions which, essentially, are a policy preference of the mainstream government.

The successive European crises of 2015–2016 saw plenty of examples of political leaders from traditional party families mimicking populist style and rhetoric, and governments taking on populist agendas especially during election campaigns. In Slovakia,

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3 The pathways of influence are based on Rosa Balfour et al. The Troublemakers. The populist challenge to foreign policy, Brussels, European Policy Centre: March, 2016.
Social Democratic Prime Minister Robert Fico took on a populist anti-immigration stance to ensure his re-election and then formed a government with the far right. France’s political mainstream right (Nicolas Sarkozy during the contest for presidential candidates within Les Republicains and then Francois Fillon, presidential candidate for the same party) made numerous attempts at taking up policy points from Marine Le Pen in the hope of competing with the Front National.

The copycat tactic of picking up the populist agenda and/or rhetoric is usually not successful, as it is not seen as genuine. Indeed, in France the pendulum swung unexpectedly in the other direction, with the election of Emmanuel Macron, a centrist candidate with a pro-European platform. In the case of Britain, the Conservative party’s embrace of Brexit has ensured the close-to demise of the UK Independence Party which had triggered the whole debate on EU membership despite having only one Member of Parliament (none since the 2017 elections). But UKIP was the trigger of the call for the referendum, not the cause. Had the Conservative party in particular and the Labour party not been deeply divided over EU membership, UKIP’s demand would have fallen on deaf ears. In other words, how mainstream governments chose to respond to populism is key. The mutual manipulation between government and populists, whether in coalition, in opposition or outside parliament, thus represents the relationship that requires closest scrutiny in order to verify the responsibility and accountability of political choices.

Populist pressure has also led governments to choose to defend “there is no alternative” politics, using as justification the existence of populist parties. On migration, in particular, even the left has taken on far more restrictive positions compared to its more liberal ideological grounding. The result has been a narrowing of the range of policy responses to the eurozone crisis or migration influx, de facto strengthening the preference towards policies of austerity and of containment of numbers of refugees entering the EU.4 In turn, if the centre advocates “there is no alternative” politics it contributes to shrinking the space for critique and devising alternative policies.

Until recently, populists had never affected the principles of international cooperation in an existential way; Britain and the US could potentially represent a qualitative leap with uncertain consequences. We do not know how Brexit will evolve; we do not yet know whether the US system of checks and balances will contain the President’s declarations and prevent them from turning into reality. We have seen, however, foreign policy issues being used to satisfy domestic demand, such as with the travel ban. And even the populist governments Poland and Hungary, which until recently had concentrated their efforts in curtailing liberal democracy internally, have started to make choices which affect their foreign policy, again over migration issues and on supranational governance in Europe. It remains to be seen whether this antagonism with the EU will pay the expected political dividends.

One underexplored area that is crucial to understand the rise of populism is the crisis of advanced representative democracies. Especially in the European context

Finally, populists have been making a disproportionate impact by exploiting the failing business model of the media, which sees outrageous statements as a means to survive in a media world where traditional journalism is struggling to stay alive. In Britain and the US, mainstream media and tabloids have facilitated the rise of populism by offering unchecked platforms, backed by the megaphone of social media. Populism has captured the middle ground thanks to the media, even if it does not represent the middle ground of public opinion.

The Impact of Populism on Integration and Cooperation in Europe

Alongside globalization, Europeanization has widened the scope of foreign policy and at the same time domesticized it: external issues have become

4 Balfour et al., 2016.
more relevant at home and domestic issues have become more relevant in foreign policy. The crises of national democracy which have helped the rise of populism in European states reverberates at the EU level because the EU and its external policy is an easy target for populism. Hence the impact on areas which had so far gone largely unnoticed by European publics.

At the same time, Europeanization and cooperation among EU Member States complicates policy-making and its accountability. Not only are national democracies undergoing crises, but their linkages to accountability at the EU level are unclear. Institutional engineering by widening the powers of the European Parliament, strengthening co-decision or improving transparency have not provided sufficient solutions when the malaise is deep. The dislocation of decision-making to supranational levels, albeit carried out by legitimately elected representatives, has made European politics and policies another easy target. In essence, the EU is seen as illegitimate, regardless of the content of the discussions held in Brussels. So populism has an impact on the EU, while the EU is seen as a cause of populism.

The EU system, driven by consensus-building, compromise seeking and avoiding veto situations, makes the impact of populist autocrats more dramatic. A consultative referendum held in the Netherlands in March 2016 on the EU’s agreement with Ukraine risked jeopardizing the country’s future. The kerfuffle over deliberating on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada (CETA) by Belgium’s regional parliament of Wallonia was another case. Not to speak of the chaotic response to the refugee influx in 2016, where populists seemed to hold the whole of the EU hostage to their views, or the Brexit vote, where very slim majorities imposed existential decisions on the whole country.

Yet the focus should not just be on populism. Scepticism about the EU runs deeper and wider than populism. Populism’s force and rage has triggered the end of the permissive consensus which allowed the EU and governments to carry out business with limited challenge from their citizens, especially in those policy domains of less interest or impact on citizens’ lives, such as international relations. Today’s challenge of the basic assumption about foreign policy are being challenged: trade, development aid, immigration and external migration policies, belonging to the international community and its institutions, alliances and organizations are all under the magnifying glass.

Where to Next?

The degree of polarization and conflict in societies which populism has exploited has no silver lining, and there will be no turning back the clocks. The debates about international cooperation, fundamental rights, and all the key tenets of the post-World War II period have all been affected as much as day-to-day policy choices. But it does call politics to address the reasons for which this revolt is taking place.

The EU is seen as illegitimate, regardless of the content of the discussions held in Brussels. So populism has an impact on the EU, while the EU is seen as a cause of populism.

Instead of taking on the solutions advocated by the populists, politics needs to examine whether, beneath their cry, there is scope for better understanding why society has become so divided and with such important consequences for the rest of the world. Questioning whether globalization needs to have such consequences on inequality and whether the quality of our liberal representative democracies is in tune with technological and societal change would be a first step. And policy-makers should rise to the challenge that foreign policy is no longer reserved for the elite: citizens, some angry, some eager to participate, can contribute to the foreign policy debate. It will be challenging to “democratize” foreign policy, but it is likely the only way to address the contemporary evolution of politics and political participation.
Managing the Refugee Crisis: New Approaches

Peter Seeberg
Associate Professor, Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark
Director of Danish–Jordanian University Cooperation (www.djuco.org)

The Refugee Crisis and the EU – New Challenges

The largest refugee crisis since the Second World War became a major challenge for the EU in 2015. The crisis is far from over and the need for managing the difficult tasks seems to be interconnected with a political crisis in the EU. The Brexit referendum can be seen as a symptom of the EU’s own internal crisis, and there is hardly any doubt that the refugee crisis played an important role in the end result of the British vote. Whether the difficult internal political situation in the EU will create insurmountable challenges for EU-27 in tackling the refugee crisis remains to be seen.

In order to handle the challenges, the EU has to realize that it has become more dependent on partner states: Turkey, states in the Arab Mediterranean, and states in Africa and Asia. The EU’s new bilateral, partnership-based policies, launching the concept of Compacts as a key component, seem to be relevant for the purpose. However, as is often the case, the devil is in the detail. Much will depend on the actual content of the migration partnership frameworks, and to what extent the EU-27 can mobilize consensus behind necessary, but also costly and maybe controversial measures in the bilateral agreements.

The tragic development in Syria since the start of the armed confrontations in 2011 has resulted in the displacement of more than five million Syrian refugees to neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This significant number of Syrians has obviously attracted attention in the hosting countries and in the international community, but it is important to underline that the refugee crisis is part of complex and uncontrolled migratory movements in the wider Mediterranean region and beyond (involving countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia as well), sometimes referred to as the Mediterranean migration crisis (Panebianco, 2016 and Jeandesboz, 2016).

Refugees and the EU–Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016

In the course of 2015, according to international organizations, more than one million refugees and migrants arrived in Europe, 300-400% more than in 2014. The number of refugees and migrants arriving in Greece increased dramatically and the eastern Mediterranean route surpassed the central Mediterranean route in numbers. Starting from November 2015, the EU and Turkey held meetings in which the foundation for cooperation related to the crisis was negotiated – and in March 2016 an agreement was reached. The deal was issued by the European Council and became known as the EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016 (European Commission, 2016).

The most significant element of the EU-Turkey Statement was that while all refugees and migrants crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey to the Greek Islands should be returned to Turkey, for every Syrian readmitted to Turkey another Syrian should be resettled from Turkey to the EU. While the number of arrivals in Greece from April to August 2015 was 225,505, in the same period of 2016 it fell to 12,210. In addition to that, the number of people drowning in the Aegean Sea was dramatically reduced.
So even though some argued that the decline in numbers preceded 18 March 2016, the EU-Turkey Statement undoubtedly had a significant impact on the number of refugees arriving in Greece from Turkey. From the side of the EU, the ambition with the Statement was to reduce the inflow of irregular migrants into Greece and to prevent human smugglers from running a major business in the Aegean Sea. Furthermore the EU had political ambitions of promoting human rights standards inherent in international refugee regimes.

It is important to underline that the refugee crisis is part of complex and uncontrolled migratory movements in the wider Mediterranean region and beyond

With the EU-Turkey Statement an indirect link was established between the recent refugee crisis and the EU-Turkey accession negotiations initiated in October 2005. The benefits regarding these aspects of the negotiations seem mainly to have been reaped by the EU. One of the dimensions, accelerating implementation of the EU-Turkey visa liberalization roadmap, remains on hold, and very little progress has been seen when it comes to the opening of new chapters as part of Turkey’s EU accession process. Seen from the Turkish side, and despite these negative realities, the partnership with the EU concerning the refugees lies in Turkey’s foreign policy interest. First of all, Turkey needs the financial aid from the EU to cover the substantial expenses related to hosting almost three million Syrian refugees. Secondly, the refugees endow Turkey with a strong asset in migration diplomacy with the EU, underlining the common interests of the two parties in dealing with the challenges related to the refugee crisis.

The Need for New Approaches

The EU-Turkey Statement constitutes a new and significant element in the international patchwork of regimes and practices attempting to regulate the movements of refugees and migrants in the Mediterranean. Since the EU-Turkey Statement has contributed to reducing the flow of refugees and migrants arriving in the EU, it is relevant to ask if the model can be replicated in other contexts in the Mediterranean. The fact that within a short time the 28 EU Member States were able to find internal consensus behind the agreement emphasizes how seriously the situation in late 2015 and early 2016 was perceived in the EU.

Obviously there are many differences between the situation in Turkey, with the country’s relatively high level of economic development and its accession process with the EU, and the situation in the Arab Mediterranean context, with low growth and cooperation with the EU based on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The need, however, for establishing institutional frameworks for migration management, where the EU works together with the partners south and east of the Mediterranean, is, in some ways, similar.

North Africa and the Sahel Belt are transit regions for large numbers of refugees and migrants, and at the same time, albeit at different levels, are themselves producers of potential migrants for the European labour market. Seen from the EU perspective, future migration diplomacy is about creating trade-offs, where the decisive element is that the partners agree to take back as many as possible of the irregular migrants arriving in the EU.

From the side of the southern and eastern partner states, the interests are about obtaining significant advantages from future talks and agreements. Similar to what was agreed on in the EU-Turkey Statement, the EU and the relevant partner states will initially have to agree on the conditions for the return of irregular migrants. The southern partners will probably be worried that by accepting binding agreements they might lose a strong negotiation asset. Furthermore they will fear that if their neighbouring states do not accept similar agreements at the same time, they will stand in a weakened position in a regional perspective. A precondition for a well-functioning relocation system far from European soil will probably be that the EU Member States should be willing to accept higher numbers of refugees arriving and resettling in Europe. This part of the procedure has not been successful in the EU-Turkey context, partly due to a lack of solidarity among the EU Member States.
To sum up, if the EU-Turkey Statement is going to be implemented with southern partner states, significant financial packages will be necessary from the side of the EU in order to persuade the given states to accept the return of irregular migrants. The fact that the EU-Turkey Statement has been relatively successful gives no guarantee for acceptance or workability of similar agreements elsewhere in the Mediterranean region.

**New Tendencies in Mediterranean Migration**

The Bratislava Summit of 16 September 2016, where the 27 EU Member States as a result of Brexit met without the UK, was devoted to "diagnosing together the present state of the European Union and discussing our common future," as was said in "The Bratislava Declaration." Despite this broad description of the intentions behind the meeting, it was obvious that the challenges from the situation in the Mediterranean constituted the main focus. The ambitions of the meeting were to restore control of the external borders, but also to ensure internal and external security and to fight terrorism.

North Africa and the Sahel Belt are transit regions for large numbers of refugees and migrants, and at the same time, albeit at different levels, are themselves producers of potential migrants for the European labour market.

The roadmap from the summit stipulates that it is a main objective “never to allow return to uncontrolled flows of last year and further bring down the number of irregular migrants” (Council of the European Union, 2016). The “uncontrolled flows” have, as mentioned, had severe consequences for the EU. It is therefore important to keep the EU-Turkey Statement afloat, but at the same time, it is necessary to ensure that the statement is not undermined by new developments in other parts of the Mediterranean. According to the UNHCR, the tendencies concern-
declining only very slowly, is still playing a negative role for the socioeconomic conditions in Europe, in particular for young generations. The relevance of this in the context of refugees and migrants has to do with the fact that the EU Member States are only missing replacement migration for their ageing workforce to a certain extent. The young populations south and east of the Mediterranean, where high unemployment rates have been a reality for decades, would, given higher economic growth rates in Europe, be able to fill the gap of a missing labour force in Europe. However, as long as the labour markets in several of the EU Member States are lacking jobs for young Europeans, the need for labour migration towards Europe is relatively limited.

High unemployment in countries in the south is at the same time one of the root causes for tendencies towards radicalization of the youth. Both north and south of the Mediterranean there is an obvious interest in cooperating to address the negative social and political consequences of youth unemployment. Common interests tend to lead to a growing interdependence between the EU and the Arab Mediterranean states.

In 2017, the effects of the EU-Turkey Statement were consolidated in the eastern Mediterranean. However, in the central Mediterranean higher numbers of refugees and migrants arrived in Italy, primarily via Libya as a transit hub.

Youth unemployment is one of the social problems which the EU has attempted to tackle by launching the so-called Mobility Partnerships, so far resulting in agreements between the EU and Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan – and an agreement on the way with Lebanon (Seeberg, 2017). The Mobility Partnerships can be seen as stepping stones on the way to more elaborate cooperation between the EU and its partners, making it possible in the future – through well-defined partnerships – to control the amount and character of labour migration, young Arabs travelling to Europe for studying purposes, etc.

Managing the Refugee Crisis: A New European Agenda?

With the new Migration Partnership Framework of June 2016, migration has become a fully integrated and decisive part of EU foreign policy. In a short-term perspective, it is the ambition to continue all current efforts in order to counteract human smuggling and trafficking and to prevent deaths at sea. Furthermore, the policies are aimed at increasing the return of migrants without a legal claim to stay in Europe and at the same time support activities enabling migrants and refugees to remain closer to their country of origin, thus avoiding the often dangerous journeys towards Europe. In the longer run, the EU will also attempt to address the root causes of migration through an approach where the partner countries are supported in their social and economic development.

As stated by the European Commission in March 2017, the "Partnership Framework is now established as the EU approach to address the challenge of irregular migration as part of the broader cooperation with third countries" (European Commission, 2017b). In 2017, the EU is focusing first of all on the central Mediterranean route, since this has become the main field of attention following the drastic fall in migration across the Aegean after the launch of the EU-Turkey Statement. The Compacts as the key component of the new partnership-based EU policies have in some cases been developed to a level where relatively elaborate agreements have been formed. This is, for instance, the case in the context of Lebanon and Jordan, where compacts are presented as annexes to Partnership Priorities (see the abovementioned Partnership Framework). In other cases the partnership approach has more of a character of a statement of intent. This is the case in Libya, where the security conditions (still) prevent most activities, and also in Egypt, where a formalized migration dialogue has been underway for years.

Beyond the Mediterranean, in Africa as well as in Asia, the Commission, in cooperation with the EEAS, has initiated a number of activities in order
to work together with relevant partners to address the problems related to the flows of refugees and migrants. In Sub-Saharan Africa, cooperation with Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, and Ethiopia deals with locally relevant aspects of the migration phenomenon, but with a main focus on fighting human smuggling and trafficking. Furthermore, initiatives aimed at fighting illegal migration and opposing radicalization and terrorism stand out as central activities for cooperation between the EU and states in the Sahel region.

The EU also receives a significant number of refugees and migrants from countries in Asia, in particular Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, and Pakistan. Major poverty challenges and political repression constitute the background for the migratory movements towards Europe from these countries, but also significant security issues are attached to the complex realities there. The EU has initiated cooperation with the four countries with an overall focus on preventing illegal migration and developing economic and social partnerships.

**Conclusions and Perspectives**

The EU, in the coming years, will also face challenges related to large numbers of refugees and migrants attempting to reach Europe. As shown, a relevant keyword – both analytically speaking and when it comes to the operational level – is interdependence. The EU has become more dependent on the partner countries in the south, in particular third countries taking care of refugees and migrants from their neighbouring states. For their part, the third countries have become more dependent on financial aid from international donors, the largest of which being the EU.

The launch of the compacts indicates that EU policies are developing in this direction – the central element of the new policies concerning refugees and migrants being partnership. However, when attempting to develop what in optimistic EU jargon has been described as “win-win relationships to tackle the shared challenges of migration and development,” a range of different measures become relevant.

Firstly, the bilateral approach inherent in the compacts will tend to result in trade-offs, where the Arab Mediterranean states, and partners in Africa and Asia, will argue that in order to deliver on agreements where they accept a role similar to Turkey in connection with the EU-Turkey Statement, they insist on receiving funding on a larger scale than what used to be the case – to cover the expenses related to integration on local labour markets, education, healthcare, etc.

Secondly, specific bilateral measures related to economic development will probably become increasingly relevant, like the EU compact with Jordan. The agreements reached at the London conference “Supporting Syria and the Region” (4 February 2016) focused on economic development, and one of the EU commitments according to this framework is to ease customs regulations for specific goods produced in industrial zones, where both Jordanians and Syrian refugees work. The aim is to provide jobs for up to 200,000 refugees. As part of the agreement, Jordan has agreed to provide the work permits.

Furthermore, initiatives aimed at fighting illegal migration and opposing radicalization and terrorism stand out as central activities for cooperation between the EU and states in the Sahel region.

Thirdly, the EU’s ambition of supporting as large a proportion of the refugees and migrants as possible in neighbouring states close to their countries of origin will demand significant amounts of financial aid. Furthermore, a kind of guarantee that the solution is temporary and will not end up as a permanent situation for the involved neighbouring states will also be sought. In connection with this, it is important that these countries are able to ensure the refugees are treated in accordance with international protection regimes.

Fourthly, the question of resettlement appears to be an important element in the partnership frameworks – both in the existing and potential future agreements. In connection with the EU-Turkey Statement, the resettlement plans are lagging, resulting in
strong criticism from the Turkish side. Resettlement schemes inherent in coming partnership frameworks with Arab, African or Asian partners will be controversial in the European context, but at the same time difficult to avoid in order to appear as a credible partner.

Fifthly, the fact that the suggested measures will be based to an increasing degree on the implementation of partnership frameworks between the EU and Arab Mediterranean, African and Asian countries emphasizes the need to establish a higher level of consensus among the 27 EU Member States. Even though the intentions are already written into the EU’s plans for the ongoing and coming work with the southern partners, there is no guarantee of solidarity within this field among the EU-27.

Bibliography


Challenges Ahead for the European Union

Brexit Is an Obstacle Course for the EU, and Potentially a Game-changer Too

Giles Merritt
Founder and Chairman
Friends of Europe, Brussels

Brexit is a truly British invention, yet what has become known as the “Gibraltar Paragraph” in the EU’s negotiating guidelines came as an unpleasant surprise to British diplomats and their political masters in London. The UK government had not expected the centuries-old Gibraltar Question to be included in the agenda of complicated issues it must resolve with the European Union. London’s focus had been on the more obvious problems resulting from the mid-2016 decision taken by a narrow majority of British voters to leave the EU after more than four decades of membership. The Gibraltar Paragraph nevertheless signals a significant shift in the politics of Europe. Brexit will alter the balance of power within the EU as Britain’s departure gives increased weight and influence to Spain and other southern European countries. Madrid’s achievement in getting Gibraltar’s future explicitly mentioned in the guidelines for the Brexit negotiation stands in contrast with the low ebb of Spain’s economic and political fortunes since the global financial crisis of 2008, but is a signpost to the future.

Northern Europe’s dominance within the EU is going to diminish with Britain’s departure, and while the list of problems in its southern neighbourhood is lengthening. The security challenges of the refugee and migrant crisis and deteriorating conditions in the Mediterranean region and in much of Africa are rewriting the EU’s priorities, even though the structural problems of ageing and poor productivity will continue to be Europe’s greatest long-term headache.

Brexit comes as an unwelcome diversion from these urgent priorities, and risks being dangerously disruptive. EU member governments should be concentrating their energies and resources on external difficulties, but instead these are to be diverted inwards. The UK’s withdrawal from the European Union potentially reduces the EU budget by a tenth, and so is creating divisive new tensions between the 27 remaining countries.

More optimistically, it may turn out that Brexit eventually ushers in a new era of European integration and cooperation. This sunnier scenario sees Brexit as a catalyst for the streamlining reforms that should have been introduced around the turn of the new century, but were sidelined by the EU’s hugely ambitious “Big Bang” enlargement from 15 countries to 28, and then by the economic strains of the austerity policies occasioned by the eurozone sovereign debt crisis.

The case for a determined new EU reform drive is overwhelming, even though it is ignored by governments unwilling to stir up controversy. The heydays of Europe’s post-World War II recovery and boom are at an end; the pressures of globalization and the rise of Asia’s economic giants demand a dramatic strengthening of the EU and its solidarity in areas ranging from research and innovation to trade and security. It has become a truism that no single European country can make its voice heard in the clamour of 21st-century geopolitics, but that makes it no less true.

Many analysts now believe that the EU needs a drastic re-think of its institutions, and that national governments should give them increased authority. Today’s European Union is a ramshackle construction built on the foundations of a sixty-year-old free trade area that is also saddled with a dysfunctional common currency; far from converging the econo-
Challenges Ahead for the European Union

Europe’s inability to resist growing international competition from the United States as well as from Asia has seen voters placing much of the blame on the EU. The project of closer European integration promised greater prosperity, so its apparent failure to defend people’s interests has seen calls for “less Europe” drowning out those urging “more Europe.” Brexit has been an especially English phenomenon, but it has also been the expression of a wider mood in Europe.

In the UK itself, many experts see Brexit as a harmful aberration. And even before the UK’s exit negotiations got fully under way it had become evident that Britain’s trade and inward investment interests within the global economy would be threatened. It now remains to be seen whether these awkward truths will begin to influence eurosceptic public opinion not just in the UK but in all the other European countries where populist anti-EU political parties have gained so much ground.

What, then, are the major facets of Brexit in economic and political terms? Arguably, the first lesson to be learned is that the extent of European integration has been both a strength and a weakness. In the 60 years since the signing of the Treaty of Rome on March 25, 1957, Europe has become far more homogeneous. Yet it is precisely this unprecedented social, cultural and political heterogeneity that is now making the EU vulnerable to nationalists’ antipathy.

At the same time, this remarkable achievement has given rise to a counter-culture of jealousy and resentment. In the UK, the Brexit activists’ slogan of “Take Back Control” was able to rally millions of British voters to the idea that their freedoms and living standards have suffered at the hands of “unelected bureaucrats in Brussels.” In short, the EU itself and all those who understand the need for European unity and solidarity have failed to persuade public opinion in sufficient numbers. Although the integration process will continue to be painful and difficult, few EU policymakers doubt that their efforts must be redoubled.

It is a strange paradox that once the negotiations between the UK and the EU begin to spell out the details of the Brexit divorce, these could provide the convincing arguments for EU membership that have so far been absent.

Advocates of the EU like to point to the rising “average” living standards across Europe of recent decades, but that does little to convince unemployed young people or workers whose jobs have moved to low-wage countries. Revelations of Britain’s difficulties in adjusting to economic conditions outside the EU’s single market, and in global markets without the collective clout of the EU’s trade negotiators, look set to be far more persuasive.

Northern Europe’s dominance within the EU is going to diminish with Britain’s departure, and while the list of problems in its southern neighbourhood is lengthening.

So too will the spectacle of service sectors in the UK ranging from banking to aviation and from consulting to education, as they struggle to adapt to norms and standards they have had no part in setting. In the “Information Age” and the “Digital Economy,” it will be increasingly uncomfortable for UK-based companies to be outside the EU’s rule-making mechanisms.

The ramifications of Brexit, meanwhile, will continue to occupy much time and attention. It would be rash to predict how the negotiations between London and Brussels will develop, but it is comparatively safe to set out the topics that will have to be covered. It is estimated that over 20,000 separate pieces of EU legislation must be modified in one way or another. Much of this body of law can probably be tackled at the UK end by using a process of parliamentary rubber-stamping that dates back to the 16th-century English King Henry VIII when toughing it out with the Pope in Rome.
a formidable menu of treaty agreements to be renegotiated on both sides.

The Brexit negotiations are due to come in three distinct phases. The first concerns the “divorce” settlement to be paid by the UK. The second is the framework defining the UK’s future relationship with the EU. A third phase will consist of the transitional arrangements needed for the period of years (some say a decade) needed for the UK to disentangle itself from the Union.

The negotiations may quite possibly never get past Phase One, which concerns the cash that the British government owes for its past, present and future commitments to the EU budget. It is such a staggeringly large amount that in UK political terms its consequence could be a British walk-out and a refusal to pay some or even all of the bill. The amount that has been discussed in Brussels is somewhere between €40 billion and €60 billion. This might seem deliberately punitive, but the EU’s remaining 27 governments are very concerned over the hole that the UK’s departure will leave in the 2021-27 budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework. Longstanding supports like the farm subsidies paid out under the Common Agricultural Policy could well be in jeopardy, creating bitter divisions within the Union. Large as it may seem, the amount of money being demanded from Britain for leaving dwarfs the annual cost of €8 billion that featured prominently in the country’s debate over EU membership.

Assuming that a “Hard Brexit” can be avoided - in which the UK would walk away from any future relationship with the EU - the way would then be open to Phase Two, the meat of the negotiation. This covers the future trading relationship and new structures governing energy, transport and foreign and security policies. As well as the thorny question of whether UK companies will have access to the single market, or are within or outside the EU customs union, this second phase must also focus on institutional arrangements. Will Britain continue to abide by rulings of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, and will it accept the free movement of EU nationals wanting to live and work in the UK?

The signs are that the British government is progressively softening the hardline stance of its “Brexit” ministers. Faced with the reality of managing a national economy whose growth in recent years has been fuelled by migrant labour, and whose earnings from exports and financial services rely heavily on access to EU markets, it seems that London may be less obdurate a negotiator than has been feared. The early stages of the Phase Two talks will open up the question of Phase Three; the need for a transitional arrangement that enables all these complex issues to be discussed beyond the two-year exit period that began in late March 2017 when Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May invoked the EU treaty’s Article 50. It has been widely accepted on both sides of the English Channel that two years will not be enough, not least because the 2017 French and German elections in practice reduce negotiating time to little more than 12 months.

Before May formally triggered Article 50, Brexit had amounted to little more than a “phoney war” of rhetoric and ill-tempered exchanges between politicians and commentators. Brussels was obviously concerned at the outset of the Brexit process that any mishandling on its part could encourage copycat reactions elsewhere in the EU. Instead, a pan-European poll of 15,000 people by Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung soon showed a strong increase in support for the EU. 1 In March, before the Brexit referendum, 57 per cent had backed membership, and by August that had risen to 62 per cent. These are, however, strange and difficult times. It would be rash to forecast the outcome of Brexit, and its effect on Europe and even the wider world. To the unpredictable nature of the Trump Administration in the US must be added uncertainties and tensions within the EU. It is not even a guaranteed certainty that the UK will actually leave the European Union.

The scenario painted by leading figures among the 48 per cent of UK voters who want to stay is that Britain’s deteriorating economy will lead to an abrupt change of heart, and a second referendum that revokes the first. “There is no legal obstacle to the UK changing its mind,” observed Jean-Claude Piris, the distinguished French lawyer who for many years headed the legal services of the Council of the European Union.

1 www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/user_upload/EZ_flashlight_europe_02_2016_EN.pdf
The Future of Islam

The Debate of Ideas within Islam

Abdelmajid Charfi
President
Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts Beit Al-Hikma, Tunis

Before dealing with this subject, it would be appropriate to recall two fundamental truths often ignored or hidden by today's profuse literature on Islam. First of all: it is illusory to separate ideas and culture in general, and religious doctrines in particular, from their general conditions of emergence and development; otherwise, one would fall into an essentialism categorically rejected by human sciences and society as admitted today by the scientific community. This is one of the main lessons taught by modern historiography. Secondly: the notion of Islam is used as a catch-all for dogma, ritual, practices and culture indiscriminately, as if it were a rigid monolithic phenomenon emerging all at once, having experienced neither evolution, nor indecision, nor distortions under the effects of historic and geographic factors. This means we need to know what we mean every time we refer to Islam in its diversity of manifestations.

Historic Debates

This being the case, a brief review of historical context is in order. Since the time of the revelation of the Koran, its reception has given rise to questions and controversy, the traces of which can be noted in the official corpus. Moreover, the new religion could not simply erase ancient ideas and convictions held in the Hijazi milieu of the early 7th century of the current era, as with the wave of a magic wand. Debates of ideas were at times heated and often required the intervention and arbitration of the Prophet. The Hadiths (prophetic traditions) amply attest to this, even if they were only recorded much later and reflect the concerns of later generations in more than one instance.

After the death of the Prophet, what could be more natural than the first generation of Muslims, that of his Companions, discussing problems that had not been posed during the time when the answers and solutions had an incontestable prophetic authority? But the real debates took place above all among the following generation, which had grown in number due to conquests and the conversion of many non-Arabic peoples, when they were attempting to qualify the positions of the great Companions who had been killing one another in the struggle for power. Could they all have erred, or were some right and others wrong? Were they acting on their own, or were they predestined to take antagonistic positions? These were questions with practical repercussions for the experiences of Muslims, but that also served as a foundation for subsequent Muslim theology.

Despite the relatively modest degree of theoretical production over the course of the Umayyad Caliphate, overthrown in 132/750 by the Abbasids, it must be noted that certain figures, such as Jahm b. Safwan (d. 746), so reviled by official Umayyad ideol-

1 In this regard, see the 18 titles we have edited, published by Dar al-Tal’i’a (Beirut, 2006 – 2010) in Arabic on “Islam: One and Multiple” (al-Islam wahidan wa muta’addidan).

2 Jacqueline Chabbi’s supposedly anthropological approach (cf. in particular her latest book: Les trois piliers de l’islam, Paris: Seuil 2016) is unfortunately reductionist. The tribal context, with its intrinsic values, is important, but contrary to what she asserts without evidence, it is inconceivable that the religious ideas debated throughout the Middle East region were ignored and had no effect on the Hijazi mindset in the times of Muhammed.
ology and afterwards by the Sunnis, were against official doctrine, which would have one believe that, if governors did not display irreproachable behaviour, they were acting, not of their own accord, but in application of a divine decision that subjects had to obey. The first rationalist theologians (the Mu'tazila) were, moreover, concerned first and foremost with this issue, with its obvious practical repercussions. Among other things, debate revolved around the limits of human liberty and predestination, namely because the two notions exist in the Koran and the balance of the interpretation of the sacred text had to be tipped towards one of the two. Certain theologians, favouring predestination, wished to safeguard the transcendence of God, his omnipotence and omniscience. Others leaned more toward divine justice, which could not be applied unless humans were free and responsible for their acts, God being unable to compel people to do wrong and then punish them for these reprehensible actions.

Other related problems were likewise posed, particularly concerning harm coming to the innocent, such as children or the infirm. How could its existence be explained in relation to God’s goodness, recognized by all Muslims? How could it be justified according to our human criteria? What is the nature of retribution in the wake of acts and situations beyond human control and which people may experience as fundamentally unfair? Debates on such matters and many others, such as those regarding the status of the Koran, created – and thus different from God and temporal – or not created – and thus consubstantial with God, atemporal and eternal – and the authority lent to the Tradition of the Prophet (Sunna) recorded in the Hadith from the Sunni point of view, or carnally pursued, so to speak, by the imams born of his daughter, from the Shi'ite viewpoint, all of these debates raged on, dividing the intellectuals of the time into schools, clans and sects. At the outset, Abbasid political power did not have a single, definitive stance on these issues. Or rather, there were contradictory tendencies within the very circles of power favouring the advocates of different positions that ended up becoming irreconcilable. Senior Barmakid officials, followed by Caliph al-Ma'amun (813-833) and his two immediate successors, were known for their encouragement of rationalism and translation of the works of Greek, Iranian and even Hindu philosophers and scholars. At the opposite pole, particularly after the about-face by al-Mutawakkil (847-861), against the Mu'tazilites, were the advocates of literalism, enemies of foreign culture in all strictly religious disciplines, supported by people in high places and above all the illiterate masses, and always dragging down thought relating to religion.

Moreover, the Abbasids had another concern directly associated with the organization of social life. They effectively attempted to promulgate a single legal code valid for the entire empire, but the opposition of legal scholars was so strong that they resisted from unifying the law, allowing each region and each legal school the liberty of issuing legal opinions (fatwa), thus tolerating that jurisdiction could change from one geographic and jurisprudential context to another. In this regard, debates and divergences never ceased, sometimes going as far as exclusion and enmity. Nonetheless, though legal scholars were often in disagreement on minor subjects, and sometimes also on matters of extreme gravity relative to life and death or the physical integrity of those concerned due to their beliefs, they were unanimous in believing that the five fiqh legal ruling categories (Ahkam) were applicable to all human acts without exception. In other words, the legal scholars established a straightjacket from which no Muslim could, in theory, escape. This is precisely what was contested by the first mystics (Sufis) of Islam, who felt hemmed in by these rigid rules, applicable in the sphere of worship as well as that of transactions. In this regard, intense debate arose, even leading to momentous trials, as was the case with Hallaj (d. 922) in the 4th/10th century. The mystics rejected the literalist reading of the Koran advocated by the legal scholars, favouring an esoteric reading and a more spiritual, more individualist approach, far removed from legalism.

The debates around these issues and an infinity of others relative to any subject raised by beliefs, culture, reflection and speculation took place at the Caliphs’ courts and in circles of power and ofintel-

3 Recall that the five categories of legal rulings are: 1) mandatory, wajib, 2) recommended, mustahabb, 3) neutral, mubah, all three in the category of licit or halal, followed by 4) reprehensible, makruh, and 5) prohibited, mahzur, which is illicit, haram.
lectuals, such as at mosques or at the madrasa (theological institutes). The work of Tawhidi (d. 1023) provides an example of this discussion activity in Baghdad in the 4th/10th century, where Christian and Jewish philosophers participated in high-quality debates. Other metropoles in the Mashreq and Maghreb were not lagging, not to mention the proliferation of ideas and controversies of all manner in Al-Andalus until the late 6th/12th century.

The mystics rejected the literalist reading of the Koran advocated by the legal scholars, favouring an esoteric reading and a more spiritual, more individualist approach, far removed from legalism.

The period from the 13th to the 18th centuries is known as a time of stagnation and decadence. Although this characteristic cannot be applied uniformly to the ensemble of the Islamic world or all of its domains at the time, since areas such as Moghul India or the Ottoman Empire experienced irrefutable progress and could compete with the most civilized countries of the period, the fossilization of culture was relative, even if original thinkers were somewhat scarce. The authors of this period, feeling the dangers of the decline of their civilization, and in an attempt to preserve the acquis of their predecessors, left posterity remarkable encyclopaedic works in which they compiled the legacy of the past. Any encyclopaedia, however, if not exhaustive (and strictly speaking, this is impossible), entails choices that can only be made as valid responses within the compilers’ particular historical context.

The Nahdha (Renaissance)

The conquest of Egypt by Napoleon in 1798 was considered a turning point between two eras, insofar as it demonstrated to the Arabs the degree of their historic backwardness, not only on the military level, but also in the economic, political, cultural and social spheres. The shock of that conquest, followed by the French occupation of Algeria, then the protectorates imposed on Tunisia and Egypt, gave rise to a movement called the Nahdha (Renaissance), initiated by Syrian-Lebanese authors, particularly Christians, and followed by intellectuals and governors aware of their societies' need to catch up. Under the circumstances, religious thought could not but be affected by the questioning of all phenomena considered a cause of this backwardness.

Hence a debate opened up, limited at first to restricted circles, then increasingly spreading out, regarding the manner of conceiving of dogma and practices considered the most faithful to the spirit of Islam and its founding texts. Three major trends can be distinguished at this point. The first essentially consisted of representatives of the official religious institution. As a general rule, they had a conservative mindset denoting an absence of awareness of the changes occurring in the different spheres of activity, both interior and exterior, in their societies. And even when this awareness existed, they believed the best rampart against the devastating effects of these changes was to cling to solutions that had succeeded in safeguarding Muslim societies from past dangers.

This reading was clearly not shared by those conventionally qualified as reformists or Neo-Salafists. Various central themes emerge from their positions that warrant attention:

− First of all, they believed that the root of the evils Muslims suffered resided in their absolute, mimetic attitude, servile imitation and unthinking conformism. Hence their appeal for Muslims to take charge of their lives and stop being slaves to positions held in very different historic contexts. In other words, they called on people to practice ijtihad once again, an exercise in reflection that had been forsaken during the Islamic civilization’s centuries of decadence. In this manner, they intended to renew their societies using the practices of the salaf, the pious predecessors, who were responsible for advancing this civilization in the first centuries of Islam.

− Maraboutism being predominant in this period, they carried out a fierce struggle against the brotherhoods considered responsible for popular belief in myths contrary to a healthy under-
standing of Islam, and for the propagation of the fatalist mentality they reproved.

− Wishing, moreover, to purify the dogmas prevalent among the majority of clerics, they were led to distrust the sum of the hadiths, upon which were based the outlooks the reformists rejected, for they had been recorded late and they considered them obvious forgeries.

− In addition, two new themes appeared in their writings: the situation of women and the state of education. They actively campaigned for Muslim women to no longer be cloistered and for them to participate in public life, the entire veil enveloping them having no root in the precepts of Islam or the behaviour of the first generations of Muslims. They thus demanded education for girls, just as they deplored the prevailing illiteracy and prioritized reform of the fossilized educational system, advocating an education in keeping with the values they held.

Salafism and Modernism

Naturally, these positions caused a frontal clash, not only between representatives of the official institution but also the collective consciousness, accustomed to ancestral practices and doctrine. The numerous texts from the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries, in the form of informed books or newspaper and journal articles, bear ample witness to the acuity of debate on these subjects. Should new Koranic exegesis be put forth, or the prescriptive nature of the prophetic traditions be disavowed? How far could one go in appropriating the Western lifestyle and thought, particularly on the status of women? Should people’s minds be worked gradually or on the contrary, should a healthy shock be generated by proclaiming a rupture with the past and present? Was there cause to directly confront the narrow-minded despotic powers and attempt to replace them with enlightened despots, or should they begin by raising awareness among the populace? Standpoints on these issues and many others diverged. But it was the abolition of the Caliphate by Atatürk in 1924 that would reveal two antagonistic tendencies in this reform movement that were bound to grow and bring thinkers into opposition, in principle having the same ideals of progress but envisaging different solutions that could hardly be reconciled.

Two figures summarize these two trends in and of themselves: Ali Abdel Raziq (1888-1966) and Rashid Ridha (1865-1935), the former from a large Egyptian family, with an Azharite education followed by studies in Great Britain, and the latter of Syrian-Lebanese origin, living in Egypt and director and founder of the journal Al-Manar, both disciples of Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and claiming to be his heir.

Though the issue of reforming the political system in Muslim countries was constantly on the agenda in the works of reformists, after Riā’ā al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) in Egypt and Hayreddin Pasha (1822-1890) in Tunisia, not to mention the modernizing efforts of numerous Ottoman authors, the merit of having made a clear break between religious and temporal power, following a non-conventional reading of the classic Muslim doctrine on this subject, incontestably belongs to Abdel Raziq and his famous work, Islam and the Foundations of Political Power (Al-Islam wa usul al-hukm, 1925).

By the same token, although many thinkers of the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century, namely the Egyptian Qasim Amin (1863-1908) and the Lebanese Druze Nazira Zain al-din (1908-1976) were activists for Muslim women’s liberation, it was the Tunisian, Tahir Haddad (1899-1935) who, in his book, Our Women in the Sharia and in Society (Imra ‘tuna Fi ‘l-sharia Wa ‘l-mujtama, 1930), went the farthest in the defence of women’s rights and their full equality with men. Heated controversy ensued after the publication of this book, but certain deep political and social currents bore his revolutionary ideas, whose crowning achievement was the promulgation of the Tunisian Personal Status Code in 1956. The latter, in an audacious interpretation of the sacred texts, prohibited polygamy, established a minimum age for future spouses, gave women who were of age the right to marry without a male guardian, established

4 Authored two books that caused a sensation: The Liberation of Women (Tahrir al-mara’a, 1899) and The New Woman (Al-mara’a al-jadida, 1900).
5 Author of the book Unveiling and Veiling (Al-Sufur wal hijab, 1928).
divorce before a civil judge, and granted females the right to inherit their parents’ entire legacy. The only step that the Tunisian legislation failed to achieve, although it was already in Haddad’s programme, was the right for brothers and sisters to equally share their inheritance, a demand that is still on the agenda today among a significant number of intellectuals, civil society activists and even political actors. Other Muslim countries, with the exception of Turkey, which adopted a secular regime and the Swiss Civil Code, did not go as far as Tunisia in family rights, though they did enact provisions for women.

Salafism would never have had the impact and audience it has enjoyed in the Muslim world over the past few decades if it had not had the benefit of the oil bonanza used by the anachronistic Gulf regimes on the one hand, and the humiliation felt by the Arabs in particular and the Muslims in general regarding the West’s political double standards on the other.

The second tendency, also emerging from the reform movement, was squarely to the right and evolved from the 1960s towards extremism under the influence of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). The Muslim Brotherhood movement, representing this trend, was founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) in reaction to the abolition of the Caliphate. In the same vein, just after Abdel Raziq’s book, Rashid Ridha published a thorough defence of the caliphal system. The connection between the Brotherhood and Wahhabism – a rigorist sect linked to the Saud family emerging in the 18th century, revived by the ensemble of Ulama of the time and until then limited to the Arabian Peninsula⁶ – was particularly due to him and the shared reference to the work of Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). The developments of Islamism after the Arab defeat by Israel in 1967 in movements emerging from the Brotherhood-Wahhabi matrix, increasingly sectarian, exclusivist, intolerant and violent, are now known by everyone throughout the world, especially after a certain 11 September and the terrorist actions perpetrated by al-Qaeda and Daesh. Nevertheless, Salafism, in any of its forms, would never have had the impact and audience it has enjoyed in the Muslim world over the past few decades if it had not had the benefit of the oil bonanza used by the anachronistic Gulf regimes to counter modernizing tendencies, on the one hand, and the humiliation felt by the Arabs in particular and the Muslims in general regarding the West’s political double standards and the arrogance and apartheid of the Zionist entity in Palestine on the other.

**Conclusion**

It would be superfluous to dwell on the disastrous consequences of this political Islam. In closing, let us simply note that, though this ideology is the most well-known to the media, it only occupies a limited space in the debate of ideas within Islam, and it is far from representing the general frame of mind of the majority of Muslims. But to eradicate it, or at least limit its damage, it is important not to let oneself be influenced by the commotion it produces, which is but the sign of the difficulties encountered by Muslims, and monotheists in general, in reconciling their religious traditions and the demands of modern civilization, with its cognitive and socio-economic values and constraints. It is incontestable that the adepts of Islam aspire to the same ideals of liberty, equality, justice, dignity and peace as the rest of humanity, but the paths leading there are often tortuous, as demonstrated by events in the Arab region since the onset of what is commonly referred to as the Arab Spring.

⁶ In this regard, see: Hamadi Redissi, *Le pacte de Nadjd* (2007).
Viable Theory of Islamic Reform is Necessary but Insufficient for Political Stability and Social Justice

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im
Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law
Emory University School of Law, Atlanta

Thesis and Analysis

Islamic reform, political and economic development, social justice and related concerns have a long history in the world at large, and around the Mediterranean region in particular. It is futile and irresponsible to discuss Islamic reform without locating its methodology and implementation in the firm historical context of inter-communal and international relations. The main thesis and analysis of this brief exploration of some of the relevant factors and processes, subject to noted caveats and clarifications, can be summarized as follows:

1. Islamic reform is urgently necessary for Muslims throughout the world to achieve political stability and social justice. This is not peculiar to Islam, of course, but it is the immediate obligation of every Muslim to promote reform regardless of what others, whether Muslims and non-Muslims, are doing. What follows is merely trying to understand the context and the process of Islamic reform in practice.

2. In addition to theoretical possibilities of coherent theological methodology, Islamic reform also requires acknowledgement of the need for it, and exploration of pragmatic strategies of its sustainable realization.

3. Concern with Islamic reform should not be limited to Muslims because its consequences are global, and its context and outcomes are influenced by the conduct of colonial powers (especially the US and Russia at present) and current major geopolitical actors like the European Union. In attempting positive engagement, colonial and neocolonial powers must renounce their familiar strategies of reckless and counterproductive neocolonial interventionism.

4. Muslims have the primary responsibility of devising and implementing necessary Islamic reform and addressing other strategies for achieving political stability and social justice, but other regional and global communities must also contribute to this process by providing sufficient safeguards for the rule of international law and protection of human rights.

I will now elaborate and discuss these propositions, and begin with a few cautionary notes and clarifications, instead of attempting to discuss the subject in terms of a categorical struggle of traditional or conservative views of Sharia versus modernist Islamic reform. While I can see the issues in terms of a struggle of ideas in a historical context, it is also clear to me that this approach can be counterproductive among those Muslims who perceive such an analytical approach to the sacred as heretical. It may be helpful to first seek to demystify the subject by considering the impact of metaphor and assumption in the theme and title of this article. Formal discussions and public discourse around the subject of this article tend to speak of “Islam” not only in the singular, but also as if it were an autonomous agent that can think, believe and act as such, independently from its human followers. If we recall that there is neither a monolithic, singular Islam, nor is any perception of Islam an autonomous agent, we can see that we are talking about Muslims, rather than Islam as such. This clarification would immediately indicate that we are talking of people in the historical context of geopolitical, economic and other...
Another caveat should also be noted in view of recent and current (2014-2017) events and concerns with refugees and migration, terrorists attacks, and tensions surrounding and integration of second and third generation Muslim Europeans. I am not attempting to present or discuss a precise diagnosis and treatment for “the Islam problem” in the Mediterranean region, western Europe, and/or elsewhere in the world. I am concerned with the policy implications of a clear and appropriate understanding of the role of Islam in public life, but I do not perceive this as leading to ready a prescription for a resolution of a problem to be acted upon by any Muslim or non-Muslim community or institution. Readers will of course have their respective policy priorities and concerns, but I do not assume any hierarchy or preference among such responses. Muslims and non-Muslims are equally entitled to their own analysis and policy inferences, and all sides to any issue will act on their conclusions and judgement. While this is only to be expected, it would be self-defeating, even suicidal in the long term, for any side to pursue its strategies to the exclusion or at the expense of other perspectives. The role of Islam among Muslims around the world varies, but it is always contextually significant. The influence of Islam also works through the hearts and minds of individual Muslims because of the theological weakness of institutionalized authority. It is necessary, therefore, to focus on perceptions and responses of individual Muslims, instead of expectations of collective or institutional positions. Whatever action or omission occurs, and regardless of its motivation or consequences, it is always taken by individual human beings. Focus should therefore be on religious visions and motivations of the specific Muslims in question, not just any Muslim or all Muslims at large. This should also be done with due regard to other relevant factors which are integral to the views and actions of the Muslims in question. Another perspective to consider here is that the relationship between perceptions and responses of individual Muslims, on the one hand, and the metaphor of collective agency of communities, on the other, should be seen in dialectical rather than dichotomous terms. While individual Muslims are too dependent on the material and emotional support of their communities to exercise totally autonomous agency, the role of communities is being redefined by the impact of the centralized, bureaucratic nation-state in the broader context of a globalized world. Perceptions and concerns about the impact of Islam on political and legal institutions in the modern context is changing and adapting to shifting local, regional and global relationships and alliances. These processes are also facilitated by fast-expanding possibilities of inter-personal and inter-communal relations through public education, media and telecommunication technologies.

At the same time, however, the magnitude and speed of change seems to intensify internal anxieties and tensions over a societal loss of control over traditional systems of socialization. The magnitude and speed of change is perceived by many Muslims to be challenging and redefining the core values of Islamic identities and self-understandings. These tensions can be particularly complex and intense in regions like the Mediterranean, which is the site of historical confrontation and current interaction among Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Many Muslims tend to see the current protracted violent conflicts in the region as predictable outcomes of European colonialism, and that of France and the United Kingdom in particular. These European powers have entrenched structural conditions of political instability and sectarian violence at the foundations of all states in the Middle East and North Africa (herein called MENA). Those foundational “time-bombs” are also blamed by some Muslims today for rationalizing and facilitating persistent intervention by the United States, which prompted counter-intervention by the Soviet Union and now Russia in their own geopolitical struggle over the MENA.

Most importantly, sectarian and ideological regimes of post-colonial MENA and their local constituencies bear the ultimate responsibility for manipulating colonial mischief and relying on neocolonial interventionism in their native zero-sum games of abso-

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2. This article focuses on MENA in line with the publication for which it is intended, but many Muslims would reject such sub-regional differentiations as neocolonial. Yet, calls for pan-Islamic unity has also failed in the post-colonial Muslim world, and Islamists have in practice tended to conduct their politics in accordance with the territorial reality of the post-colonial nation-state.
lute control of the State and its resources to their own ends. While clearly appreciating the destructive role of European colonialism and neocolonial interventionism, focusing on the responsibility of post-colonial leaders and communities is more productive for forward-looking possibilities of sustainably mediating the chronic humanitarian crisis in the region. The prospects of peaceful conflict mediation and sustainable democratic politics require the diffusion of historical hostilities and promotion of religious and ethnic pluralism. Sustainable peaceful conflict mediation also requires fair and inclusive economic and social development. It is from this perspective that I argue that a viable theory of Islamic reform is necessary but insufficient for realizing political stability and social justice in MENA and around the global Muslim world.

**Addictive Intervention and Resentful Dependency**

Despite, or perhaps because of that colonial history, the paradoxical relationship between the states and societies of MENA, on the one hand, and western Europe, on the other, continues to be characterized by what I call “resentful dependency” on the MENA side and “addictive intervention” on the European side. What I mean by this characterization is that MENA societies and their states continue to depend on western Europe for economic, political, security and technological needs. This resentment is often promoted and coordinated by leaders of political Islam to rationalize the reckless and indiscriminate violence against whoever happened to be at the site of a mob riot, women and children, Muslims or non-Muslims alike. With these overwhelming realities MENA societies and their states present a paradox of strident resentment of dependency, without taking effective action to gradually diminish that dependency. This paradox itself affirms and entrenches the realities of dependency, despite the pretense of resentment, especially among leaders of political Islam who falsely glorify reckless and arbitrary violence in the name of “defending” Islam and Muslims. MENA Muslims must dig themselves out of this paradox by appreciating the compelling need for Islamic reform, and exploring viable means for its achievement.

By characterizing the position of the western European side as one of “addictive intervention” I mean that those societies and their states seem unable to wean themselves off the irrational habit of multifaceted intervention in every aspect of public and private life of MENA. While colonial and neocolonial domination and exploitation was rationalized by European powers as “the civilizing mission of the white man,” interventionism is in fact counterproductive in this age of self-determination and effective mass resistance. See, for instance, how the mighty United States, NATO and other allies have failed to subdue the “primitive” force of the Taliban for fifteen years in Afghanistan, and the Sunni insurgencies for some ten years in Iraq. A more subtle point is that failure to diminish arbitrary intervention is in fact part of the cyclical process which is feeding into and drawing from MENA’s resentful dependency. Continuing attempts by European societies and their states to rationalize neocolonialism as “the peacekeeping mission of the white man,” is in fact undermining the fundamental basis of international legality.

The prospects of peaceful conflict mediation and sustainable democratic politics require the diffusion of historical hostilities and promotion of religious and ethnic pluralism. Sustainable peaceful conflict mediation also requires fair and inclusive economic and social development.

The free for all, self-help and vigilante justice we see in the actions of European powers and their MENA allies in Syria and Libya at the time of writing (June 2017) confirm the worst charges of Islamist leaders against Western imperialism and a renewed Christian crusade. Having deliberately created conditions of permanent political instability and sectarian violence, as noted earlier, France and the United Kingdom are now pointing to their own self-fulfilling prophecy of violent sectarian civil war to justify the continuation of their interventions in MENA, this time in the guise of humanitarianism.
The most fundamental consequence of European colonialism and the consequent multifaceted dependencies of MENA on former colonial powers is the territorial concept and institutions of the so-called nation-state. The legacy of colonialism, moreover, continues to shape and reshape the political, economic and social systems of MENA and the Muslim world at large. Colonialism also persists in state ideologies, political visions, and institutions of post-colonial states throughout the global Muslim world. The idea of a territorial state, much like the idea of nationalism, originated and developed in Europe and was then imposed on Muslims and other colonized peoples of the Global South. The inclusion of the concept of the territorial state in Muslim politics and the actual boundaries of Muslim-majority states are both products of colonialism. Colonial authorities drew boundaries but did little to unify the peoples who lived within those boundaries into a national culture. At times colonial administrations did exactly the opposite; namely, sought to maintain control by encouraging competition between ethnic, linguistic, religious, or tribal groupings.

Continuing attempts by European societies and their states to rationalize neocolonialism as “the peacekeeping mission of the white man,” is in fact undermining the fundamental basis of international legality.

This is not to say that ethnic affiliations and national identities were absent in the history of the Muslim world, but ethnic nationalism and its association with the nation-state were imposed for the first time throughout the colonized world during European colonialism. Yet, tensions remained between territorial nationalism as the primary form of political identity, and ideological, Arab and Islamic, identities. The tension between traditional formations of Islamic and ethnic identities, on the one hand, and territorially-based national identities, on the other, clearly underlies current violent conflicts and civil war in several MENA countries. States of Muslim majority countries gained independence in territories that were delineated by the colonial powers, and they largely accepted the shapes in which they were born, as well as the fact that states would be bound by international borders into distinct sovereign entities. Post-colonial states have rarely challenged the division of the territories of the Islamic empires, and, by implication, the Islamic world, by colonial powers or the criteria used by those powers in determining new borders.

The legacy of colonialism in this region has not been free of tensions, however, because many of the divisions were problematic. Some were carried out arbitrarily to accommodate local colonial officials without regard to their impact on peoples and resources. Other divisions reflected the needs of colonial powers to resolve diplomatic tensions among themselves. For instance, post-World War I plans for the division of the Ottoman Empire were made to appease France, Italy, and Greece. The need to protect India from Russia meanwhile led to the creation of Afghanistan, as similar concerns about France after 1798 led to British occupation of Egypt, which in turn warranted British control of Palestine after World War I. Strategic decisions and economic interests finally led to the creation of new colonial territories which became the bases for future states. British interests in Persian Gulf oil led to the creation of Kuwait. France created Lebanon out of Syria to fulfill its desire to establish a Christian-Arab state; and Britain created Jordan to accommodate Amir Abdullah, who had fought on the side of the British in World War I and whose family felt betrayed by the division of the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire between European powers.

New states often appropriated existing ethnic identities, such as “Iraqiness” or “Syrianess,” and at other times contrived nationhood, has happened at the creation of Jordan, Malaysia and Pakistan, to produce nationalist ideologies that could sustain

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The process also resulted in the suppression of competing ethnic identities and preventing them from developing into nationalisms. Iran, Iraq, and Turkey have sought to prevent Kurdish identity from asserting itself as nationalism. The success of experiments with state formation often depended on how successful the development of national consciousness was. That, in turn, depended on the strength of the ethnic identity that formed the basis of nationalism. Over time, ethnic and territorial definitions became the boundaries for national identity formations; they developed as a secular and dominant form of political identity in lieu of memories of a united Islamic world in history. In the final analysis, the apparent rise in Islamic politics, as propagated by fringe groups in MENA and elsewhere in the Muslim world and advertised by fascistic organizations in Europe, United States and Australia, will not lead to any geopolitically or economically coherent notion of “Muslim nationalism.” The incoherence and unsustainability of this oxymoron is confirmed by any sober review of the global scene, as conclusively confirmed by fourteen centuries of Islamic history. Politics has always been and will remain local for Muslims, as it is for all human beings in their communities everywhere. Alliances and solidarities will rise and fall among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims, but that will develop from multiple and interactive political and socioeconomic factors and processes, and not from a monolithic or integrated trans-regional or global “Islamic identity.”

Concluding Remarks: the Theology and Politics of Islamic Reform

Space does not permit a general discussion of the concepts and methodologies of Islamic reform, or the history and prospects of particular approaches. Instead, I am concluding this short article with some reflections on the paradox of the theology and politics of Islamic reform. I will explain and illustrate this paradox with the case of Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha and the Islamic reform movement he established and led in Sudan from the early 1950s until his public execution, the banning of his books and suppression of his movement in January 1985. I have personally adopted Ustadh Mahmoud’s methodology of Islamic reform since the 1960s, and applied it in my own work since the 1980s. Instead of trying to summarize this approach, in comparison to other Islamic reform methodologies and strategies, I will briefly explain the curious paradox of the need for open advocacy and call for the implementation of Islamic reform in the face of the threat of execution for the capital crime of apostasy (ridda) under Sharia, in addition to the risk of ruthless repression by authoritarian regimes. As this case tragically illustrates, assertions of constitutional and human rights freedoms of religion and belief, expression and association, do not mean that these rights are in fact respected and protected in practice.

States of Muslim majority countries gained independence in territories that were delineated by the colonial powers, and they largely accepted the shapes in which they were born, as well as the fact that states would be bound by international borders into distinct sovereign entities

Briefly stated, Ustadh Mahmoud introduced in 1951 his theory that Islam consists of two messages. The first message was revealed in Medina during the last ten years of the Prophet’s life (622-32) but enacted the main principles of what came to be known among subsequent generations of Muslims as Sharia. In contrast to the predominant assumption of Muslims, he believed that the historical understanding of Sharia represented a postponement of the universal and fundamental message of Islam which was revealed to the Prophet during his mission in Mecca (610-622). He further argued that now (20th Century) is the appropriate time for the elaboration and application of the Second Message of Islam,

and abrogation of those aspects of the First Mes-
sage of Islam that are no longer compatible with the
needs of humanity.5

The legitimacy and efficacy of that
prerequisite of Islamic reform is as
much undermined by the continuing
neocolonial interventionism of former
colonial powers, as it is by the
arbitrary violence of political Islam

Ustadh Mahmoud was able to propagate those
views, and develop an active social movement to
spread and practice his ideas in Sudan until 1983
when he opposed the authoritarian imposition of
Sharia by President Nimeiri. As a result, he and
leading members of his movement were detained
without charge or trial for eighteen months. Upon
his release on 19 December 1984, he issued a
statement reiterating his opposition to the imposi-
tion of Sharia as a distortion of the true message of
Islam, and for the resumption of the civil war in
South Sudan. This time, Ustadh Mahmoud was ar-
rested and put on trial on secular charges of trea-
son and undermining the constitution. The Sharia
capital charge of apostasy was subsequently add-
ed to the record after the trial, and he was publically
executed on 18 January 1985. His books were
burned, their publication or circulation banned and
the movement was suppressed.6

Recalling the title of this short article, I believe that
Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha of Sudan pre-
sented a viable theory of Islamic reform which was
suppressed in 1985 by an authoritarian regime of
President Nimeiri, which was able to manipulate the
same principles of Sharia that said theory was in-
tended to reform. Since Ustadh Mahmoud’s theory
of Islamic reform could have prevailed if it was per-
mitted to be propagated and debated openly and
freely among Muslims of Sudan, MENA and the rest
of the Muslim world, the immediate priority should
be the protection of human rights and fundamental
freedoms. Yet the legitimacy and efficacy of that
prerequisite of Islamic reform is as much under-
mined by the continuing neocolonial interventionism
of former colonial powers, including the United
States and Russia, as it is by the arbitrary violence
of political Islam. All Muslim and non-Muslim sup-
porters of Islamic reform must therefore unite in
combating both threats to their common goal.

5 See Taha, The Second Message of Islam, pp. 124-164, for detailed elaboration and substantiation of his views from the Qur’an and Sunna
of the Prophet.

pp. 197-223. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_xWbXTA_LnlY1QLTZTNDRhZIE/view
The Future of Islam

Religious Trends in European Islam

Jocelyne Cesari
Professor of Religion and Politics, University of Birmingham
Senior Research Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University

The atrocities and visibility of the Islamic State (ISIS) beyond Syria and Iraq have shed light on the fact that the battle for the true Islam among Muslims is as radical as the battle between “Islam” and “the West.” This battle however has been ongoing for several decades (if not centuries) and is broader than being “against” or “in favour” of radical Islam. In this respect, the Islamic landscape in Europe reflects global trends of Islamic thinking and at the same time, local adjustments related to the minority condition.

The first strand of Islamic influence in Europe comes from the countries of origin of Muslim immigrants, such as Morocco, Turkey, and Pakistan. In the 1970s and 1980s, states used Islam to maintain connections with their nationals through different kinds of organizations as well as through direct aid, like sending imams for the month of Ramadan. Nonetheless, this type of Islam does not appeal to the majority of the new generations born or educated in the different European countries. There is a cultural gap between the religious expectations of the imams and the Muslim youth. The latter demands for spiritual guidance that takes into account their political and cultural circumstances, which primarily fall in the realm of gender relations and ways of behaving with non-Muslims. Meanwhile, the imams trained in state institutions in Muslim countries do not have the communication skills and cultural understanding of the new generations, and particularly, of young women. During my numerous interviews with Muslims across Europe, I was often surprised by the virulence of the critique of the young women vis-à-vis this kind of leadership. (Cesari 2013)

The second type of Islamic influence comes from religious figures who are not part of the traditional clerical establishment, and who posit themselves as contenders of religious legitimacy in both Muslim countries and Europe. The proliferation of religious authorities is by no means a new phenomenon, and has been the subject of many studies (Pescatori and Eickelman, 1996). Both mass education and new forms of communication have contributed to the increase of actors who claim the right to speak on behalf of Islam in both authoritative and normative ways. Therefore, established religious figures, such as the sheikhs of al-Azhar or Medina, are increasingly challenged by the engineer, the student, the businessman, and the autodidact, who mobilize the masses and speak for Islam in sports stadiums, on the blogosphere, and over airwaves worldwide. This trend predates the Internet, and can be attributed to public education programmes and the increased availability of new technological communicative mediums such as magazines, cassette tapes, and CDs. The most influential forms of these new types of religious figures also tend to be global. Of course, transnational forms of Islam are not new; after all, pan-Islamism – which refers to religious or political transnational movements that emphasize the unity of the Community of Believers (Ummah) over specific cultural, national, or ethnic loyalties – dates back to the 18th century. Today, the various avenues for communication as well as the circulation of people and ideas make the Ummah all the more effective as a concept, especially when considering that most nationalist ideologies have been on the wane.
For this reason, I refer to these movements as "pan-Islamist," although the restoration of the Caliphate is no longer a major goal for most of them (with the notable exception of ISIS and, before that, Hizb ut-Tahrir). The *imagined Ummah* takes on a variety of forms, the most influential of which are fundamentalist in the sense that they place an emphasis on the revealed text and a Muslim unity that transcends national and cultural diversity.

A distinction must be drawn between on the one hand, the Wahhabi/Salafi movements and on the other hand, the Muslim Brotherhood. Both trends dominate global interpretations of Islam but have different positions vis-à-vis modernity.

**Global Fundamentalism**

Wahhabism, as a specific interpretation of the Islamic tradition, emerged in the 18th century in the Arabian Peninsula with the teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abdel Wahab (1703-1792). Wahab’s literalist interpretations of the Qur’an became the official doctrine of the Saudi Kingdom upon its creation in 1932. Wahhabism is characterized by its rejection of critical approaches to the Islamic tradition. Mystical approaches and historical interpretations alike are held in contempt. Orthodox practice can be defined as a direct relation to the revealed text, with no recourse to the historical contributions of the various juridical schools (*madhab*). In this literalist interpretation of Islam, nothing can come between the believer and the Text; customs, culture, and Sufism must all be done away with. Adherents of Wahhabism reject all ideas and concepts that are deemed Western. They contend that the Qur’an and Hadith, when interpreted according to the precedents of the pious forefathers (*al-salaf al-salih*), offer the most superior form of guidance to Muslims. As a stringently revivisit movement, Wahhabism seeks the “Islamization of societies," which entails formulating contemporary ways of life in relation to the conditions of seventh-century Arabia by “returning to the sources” whose “true meaning,” Wahhabis argue, was lost over the centuries following Prophet Muhammad’s death.

The original Wahhabi period and the global Salafi Islam of today have different audiences. Salafi interpretations are no longer limited to the Saudi kingdom but are now followed by Muslims around the world. The *fatwas* of Sheikh Abdal Aziz Ibn Baaz (d. 1999), Grand Mufti of the Saudi Kingdom, and Sheikh Al-Albani (d. 1999) are the shared points of reference for their followers in Europe and the United States, and more generally throughout the Muslim world. The movement has succeeded in imposing its beliefs not as one interpretation among many but as the global orthodox doctrine of Sunni Islam.

Even if most Muslims do not follow Wahhabi dress codes – white tunic, head covering, beard for men; *niqab* for women – the Salafi norm often becomes the standard image of what a good Muslim ought to be. The considerable financial resources of the Saudi State have certainly contributed to this religious monopoly. In the 1970s, Saudi Arabia began investing internationally in a number of organizations that “widely distributed Wahhabi literature in all the major languages of the world, gave out awards and grants, and provided funding for a massive network of publishers, schools, mosques, organizations, and individuals.” In the West, this *dawa* (proselytization) resulted in the building of new Islamic centres in Malaga, Madrid, Milan, Mantes-la-Jolie, Edinburgh, Brussels, Lisbon, Zagreb, Washington, Chicago, and Toronto, to name just a few; the financing of Islamic Studies chairs in American universities; and the multiplication of multilingual Internet sites. As far back as 2002, the official Saudi magazine, *Ain al-Yaqin*, estimated that the Saudi royal family has “wholly or partly financed” approximately 210 Islamic centers, 1,500 mosques, 202 colleges, and 2,000 Islamic schools in Muslim-minority countries. It is important to note that these estimates do not include the number of institutions funded by the

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1 A pan-Islamic political organization whose goal is to reestablish the Islamic Caliphate by peaceful means. The organization was created in Jerusalem in 1953 by Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, a Palestinian Sunni scholar.
Saudi Government in its entirety or other sources within Saudi Arabia that finance Wahhabi proselytizing. According to some estimates, the Saudi Kingdom spent over $80 billion on various Islam-related causes in Muslim-minority countries. King Fahd alone invested over $75 billion dollars in the construction of schools, mosques, and Islamic institutions outside of the Kingdom in the 1970s and 1980s. This massive propagation effort has contributed to the promotion of Wahhabism as the sole legitimate guardian of Islamic thought. They also rely heavily on media to spread their message, whether through the circulation of handouts, the creation of websites, or the airing of satellite television shows.

For example, in 1984, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia opened the King Fahd Complex for Printing the Holy Qur’an in Medina. According to the website of the now-deceased King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, the complex produces between 10 and 30 million copies of the Qur’an each year. Copies of the Qur’an are available in Braille, as are video and audio recordings of Qur’anic recitations. By 2000, the complex had produced 138 million copies of the Qur’an translated into twenty languages.

It is extremely difficult to gauge the precise influence exerted by Wahhabism on Muslim religious practice. In the case of European and American Muslims, the influence cannot simply be measured by statistics. In a minority culture lacking both institutions for religious education and the means to produce new forms of knowledge, the easy access to theology that Salafism offers is one of the main reasons for its popularity. The widespread diffusion of Salafi teachings means that even non-Salafi Muslims evaluate their Islamic practice by Wahhabi standards. Even if most Muslims do not follow Wahhabi dress codes – white tunic, head covering, beard for men; niqab for women – the Salafi norm often becomes the standard image of what a good Muslim ought to be. Despite the strong presence of many different Islamic interpretations at the grassroots level, the Salafi revivalist interpretation of Islam dominates the Internet proselytization.

According to this trend, the world is divided into Muslims and infidels, and the image of the West, automatically associated with moral depravity, is always a negative one. Also common in these movements is a worldview that separates the various aspects of life – family, work, leisure – and classifies everything according to the opposition between haram (forbidden) and halal (permitted). Everything that did not already exist or happen during the time of the Prophet is an innovation, and thus, haram. Khaled Abou El Fadl has called this particular spectrum of interpretation “The Culture of ‘Mamnu’ (‘What is forbidden’)” (Abou El Fadl 2005). Islam as it existed during the time of the Prophet, especially during his stay in Medina, is idealized and essentialized, functioning as an “epic past” and gold standard for life in the present. The smallest aspect of this period serves as the basis for the present day, for “in this era, everything is good, and all the good things have already come to pass.”

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Another characteristic common to all Salafis is their extreme inflexibility regarding the status of women. The rules determining proper dress for women – namely niqab (face covering) and a long loose garment covering the entire body – are presented as absolute and may never be questioned. This puritanical interpretation of female behaviour regulates not only dress, but also female roles as wives, mothers, daughters, and participants (or nonparticipants) in the community. Mixed-gender interactions are forbidden in both public spaces and schools, and male superiority is constantly reaffirmed. Additionally, fundamentalist movements reject political participation, holding that the believer must maintain a separatist stance in relation to public institutions.

Today, the burning question is whether these versions of Islam, based on an anachronistic reading of scripture, have a necessary correlation with the unleashing of violence and the development of jihadi movements, particularly among young Muslims in the West. These versions do in fact contain similarities with jihadi discourse, using the same vocabulary (especially when talking about the West) and
often even the same religious terminology. This may explain the connection many youth feel exists between Salafism and jihadism. One must not assume, however, that all Salafis eventually become jihadis. Other factors, such as the level of political socialization and education of these youths, are more decisive in their attraction to radical groups. We should note that the majority of jihadis – such as Hamas or Hezbollah – are not pan-Islamists. The obvious exception here are al-Qaeda and ISIS, which have brought jihad to the global level. We have deliberately omitted both in this study as they are aimed at political action and not transmission of the Islamic tradition.

The Inclusive Approach of the Muslim Brothers

In contrast to groups like the Wahhabis and Salafis, there is also religious activism that does not require a rejection of cultures. This stance is exemplified, for example, by some of the Muslim Brotherhood. Like the Salafists of today, followers of the Muslim Brothers consider the Salaf – the first generations of Muslims and companions of the Prophet – as their point of reference, and refuse to follow a particular school of jurisprudence. Contrary to Wahhabi-inspired Salafists, however, followers of the Muslim Brothers rely on *ijtihad* – the power to interpret the revealed text – as a way to construct a form of jurisprudence adapted to the circumstances of modernity. From its inception, the Muslim Brotherhood has been a part of the pan-Islamic movement. Its teachings emphasize a return to the revealed Text, the legitimacy of *ijtihad*, and political and social engagement. The movement’s political vision has continually evolved from socio-educative or health-related charity work to political candidacy, and passing through a period of underground activity (like for example during the political repression under Gamal Abdel Nasser). The Muslim Brotherhood has covered a vast spectrum of modes of action, which have been adopted at one point or another, if only temporarily, by almost all other Islamist movements from Egypt, the Middle East and the Maghreb. Political radicalization and the recourse to tactics of violence are by no means the fate of all Muslim Brothers. In fact, the movement has become divided over the question of violence as a means for political ends. Jihadist groups – i.e., those that legitimate the political use of violence (such as the Egyptian-based Jamaat Islamiyya) – developed and became radicalized in their confrontations with the authoritarian regimes of the Arab-Muslim world. The global mobilization of certain jihadi groups, such as al-Qaeda, is a direct consequence of these struggles between nation-states and their jihadi opponents.

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Europe and the United States have become the preferred terrain for the redeployment of this movement’s civically-oriented activities, as there are a number of different organizations who derive their inspiration from the Muslim Brothers. The leaders of all these organizations display a remarkable social and intellectual homogeneity. The first generation of leaders, all from the urban educated middle class of the Middle East or Southeast Asia, received their training in opposition movements within Muslim countries. In the past decade, however, a new, European-born generation from the educated middle class has achieved prominence in organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain. Both generations of leaders are involved in the struggle for official representation of Islam by the respective countries in which they live, and have been at the forefront of discussions with governmental actors for the creation of representative bodies of Islam. In response to their new democratic and pluralistic context, the Muslim Brotherhood has reconnected with its historical origins as an activist movement with a devoutly religious outlook. Its code of behaviour is based on respect for the institutional and political environment of the host country, together with the preservation of its religious and ethical heritage. This “re-evaluative” approach mani-
fests itself, in part, in the organization of various educational, charitable, athletic, and cultural activities. Sheikh Qaradawi is the most prominent religious figure inspiring the followers of this trend who want to reconcile the demands of Islam and secular life, without losing their soul in the process. The author of more than 50 works, including *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism* (1984), Qaradawi became famous for his participation in debates televised on al-Jazeera. Born in Egypt in 1926, his entire education was focused on Islamic Studies; he received his doctorate in jurisprudence from Al-Azhar University in 1973. Along with Sheikh Faysal Mawlawi of Lebanon, he was one of the first to become interested in the minority condition of Muslims living in the West in the early 1980s. He is currently the president of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, created in London in 1997 on the initiative of the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE).

This pan-Islamist elite should be distinguished from ‘parochial’ leaders, whose sphere of influence is limited to the neighbourhood or the town. Parochial leaders usually use cultural models taken from their Islamic home country; they tend to reproduce the traditions of the Muslim countries they come from. The pan-Islamist elite also differs from the bureaucratic leaders sent to Europe by certain Muslim countries, to uphold the ‘doxa’ of their country of origin (e.g., Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, and Tunisia).

**Cosmopolitan Islam**

There are also forms of global Islam characterized not only by inclusiveness but also by hybridization with cultures in different contexts. This outlook characterizes Sufi groups and certain members of the intellectual elite, as well as numerous individual Muslims, and may be identified with the term, “cosmopolitan.”

In this particular context, cosmopolitanism refers to a certain mindset and ability to navigate between supposedly incompatible worlds and cultures. Irony and reflexivity are the two distinctive features of cosmopolitanism at the personal level. The purpose of irony, as both a cultural method and a contemporary mindset, is that of achieving emotional distance. Reflexivity, on the other hand, is defined as the capacity to contextualize one’s own beliefs in order to make room for the values of others. For the individual, then, a cosmopolitan stance implies the relativism of one’s own belief system, as well as a dialogic approach to other cultures. Although a cosmopolitan approach to global Islam is also present in the Muslim world, it is increasingly visible in the West and constitutes a significant part of the secularization of Islamic thinking and practice. Here, secularization means a growing emphasis on individual choice in religious practice. It is important to note however that all current transnational forms of Islam, including fundamentalist ones, emphasize the search for authenticity, emotional identification with the Islamic tradition, and religious choice as an individual matter. In other words, individualization is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of cosmopolitanism. Thus, to meet the criteria of cosmopolitanism, this individualization must be combined with an acceptance, or even an appreciation, of religious and cultural pluralism, which is another component of the secularization process.

There are also forms of global Islam characterized not only by inclusiveness but also by hybridization with cultures in different contexts. This outlook characterizes Sufi groups and certain members of the intellectual elite, as well as numerous individual Muslims.

This cosmopolitanism can be seen in the emergence and development of certain syncretic practices, most notably among Sufi groups. Most of them place an emphasis on the universality of humankind, their proximity to other faiths and traditions, and a praise of syncretism in terms of rituals and philosophies. In the West, this syncretism has gained an even greater force since some of these groups do not require one to be Muslim to become a member. It is important to note however, that these kinds of groups attract more middle-class urban individuals who did not grow up in Muslim families but can convert into these Sufi groups.
Cosmopolitanism is also a feature of a specific segment of the Muslim elite in the West, which is currently creating a space for exchange in which ideas, controversies, and slogans can circulate – at least in their English-language versions. Cosmopolitan leaders are more commonly drawn from the intellectual sphere – students, academics and other intellectuals, as well as activists and converts to Islam – rather than from the world of religious associations or mosque leadership. They are the ones most actively involved in reforming Islamic thought, although it is certainly still very much a fringe movement, and Western Muslims remain, by and large, more conservative and more conformist than one might suspect. But it is nevertheless a significant effort to break the vicious circle of the apologist mindset, which continues to dominate contemporary Islamic thought.

Conclusion

The variety of forms taken by Islamic trends demonstrates that the opposition between “moderates” and “radicals” insufficiently accounts for the complex relationship between religion, society and politics in the West and beyond. It is not difficult to understand how and why Islam can be called upon as a resource for combating a West which has been essentialized as a destructive and oppressive entity. It is in such a context that the more conservative interpretations of the Islamic message (Wahhabism and rigid forms of Salafism) have gained so many followers in Europe and in all parts of the Muslim world. However, a distinction must be drawn between fundamentalists and radicals insofar as a return to the fundamental texts of Islam, or fundamentalism, need not be a synonym for religious extremism that is minimally defined as the systematic rejection of other belief systems. At the same time, however, cultural globalization accelerates the process of the hybridization of Islamic messages with different national and political contexts, including those of Europe and America, by generating a heretofore-unseen reflection on the necessary conditions for tolerance and respect of the Other.

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Nonetheless, the conservative trend seems to prevail over the cosmopolitan one, especially when it comes to transmission and education about Islam. One reason lies in the lack of strong Islamic institutions of education in the West and in the soft power of Saudi Arabia. The second reason is class differences and the fact that the educated Muslim elite is not at the forefront of education or transmission of Islam for the masses. In these conditions, education on religion and especially about Islam in different European contexts is crucial to undermine the appeal of global fundamentalism on which radicalism can grow.

References


Radicalization in Europe

Riva Kastoryano
Research Director, CNRS
Sciences Po – Centre de recherches internationales (CERI), Paris

The spectacular attacks on New York City on 11 September 2001 carried out by 19 suicide bombers belonging to the al-Qaeda network kicked off the century. Other, more recent attacks in different European cities, this time claimed by the Islamic State, have made terrorist acts daily news across the globe. Despite the differences in organization (a network such as al-Qaeda or grouped by territories such as Islamic State), these youth, engaged on the path of violence in the name of jihad, are guided by the force of the singular narrative of membership in the Ummah, the world-wide Muslim community, that lends all its strength to the appropriation of an ideology and the transition to violence. They are fuelled by discourses of “humiliated Islam,” of the war in Iraq and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and by a sentiment of revenge. By the same token, social networks, the main sites for dissemination of radical discourse and recruitment, play an important role in their commitment to the jihad cause. The rush towards Syria since 2011, where the Caliphate has been established, reflects a mobilization that follows the logic of any social movement aspiring to the emergence of a new society, using the rhetoric of “restoring justice” and “obtaining revenge” for the domination suffered.

According to the report published by The Soufan Group in December 2015, some 5,000 young people had arrived from Europe to join the cause, declaring themselves “foreign fighters” in the ranks of the Islamic State in Syria. According to another report from the US Senate Armed Services Committee published in February 2016, over 38,200 “foreign fighters” – 6,900 of them from Western countries – travelled to Syria from about a hundred different countries. In Europe, France and Belgium are the most significant recruitment pools; in the Middle East and North Africa, it is Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia; and in Asia, it is Pakistan, India and Bangladesh from where youth go into action for the Caliphate and its lands, the territory that has become the “land of origin,” the land of the Ummah diaspora, regardless of the national origins of its members.

Radicalization: The Birth of a Concept

The term “radicalization” appears in official and scientific discourse in association with the ‘home-grown terrorists’ who carried out the London attacks of 7 July 2005. To the British authorities, radicalization has become synonymous to jihadization since then. “Homegrown” jihadists are described as individuals living locally, acting alone or in small groups, always autonomously, with limited means and as amateurs, particularly insofar as the manufacture of bombs. Emerging from a decentralized
al-Qaeda organized as a vast network at the time, they are connected to other groups or individuals in other places through networks linking these local cells. According to Robert S. Mueller III, "the information age means [people] don’t need training camps to become a terrorist."\(^5\)\(^6\) Virtual communication allows them to be in contact with the network. A new phenomenon calls for new vocabulary. The process turning this youth to violence is now called "radicalization." The concept specifically refers to a homegrown process, since this radicalization takes place in-country or at home.\(^6\) Most experts associate this process with political, social and religious ideals and aspirations, and with the use of violence to attain these goals.\(^7\) There are other definitions as well: "Radicalization is a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence."\(^8\) One study of this phenomenon divides it into four stages: 1) individuals become aware of a radical ideology; 2) they express an interest in the cause; 3) they end up accepting the extreme beliefs and norms dictated by it; and 4) they begin acting in accordance with these norms.\(^9\) Radicalization can thus be defined as the internalization of a "set of beliefs, a militant mindset that embraces violent jihad as the paramount test of one’s conviction."\(^10\) For Arun Kundnani, a British expert on terrorism, "the concept of radicalisation has become the master signifier of the late ‘war on terror’ and provided a new lens through which to view Muslim minorities."\(^11\) Since the 11 September attacks, homegrown terrorists can be seen taking action here and there in their countries of residence – often also their countries of nationality and citizenship. Sometimes qualified as ‘lone wolves’ because they act individually, they are often actually part of a network that has allowed them to travel to the lands of jihad and prepare their action in their country of residence and/or the land of their citizenship. Using the "al-Qaeda label," which since the 2000s has become a means of legitimizing local organizations and/or groups, they at first often act in groups, in "cliques," to use Marc Sageman’s expression,\(^12\) or in bands spontaneously formed in neighbourhoods, mosques or at associations where they gather. Since 2011, they make return trips from Europe to Syria thanks to their European passport or their double nationality. Lately, the terrorist from Yvelines, outside of Paris, who killed a police couple, those who slit the throat of a priest in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, or Mohamed Bouhlel, the lorry-driving terrorist in Nice, demonstrate that the phenomenon of bands, cliques or groups of friends (as in Madrid and London) or of siblings (such as the Kouachi and Abdeslam brothers) is giving way to radicalized individuals, alone in front of their computer screens, at home, isolated. Their terrorist action is individual, as in the case of Nice, Berlin, London or Stockholm, even if their action is immediately claimed by the Islamic State. In the majority of cases, they are young people with an immigrant background, “Europe’s Angry Muslims,” to use the title of a work by Robert Leiken.\(^13\) Indeed, the 19 jihadists who carried out the 11 September attacks had travelled the world: they had gone to training camps in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen. They were not settled anywhere. Perpetrators in Europe were first-generation (such as the Madrid attackers) or second-generation immigrants (such as the London perpetrators). Having followed the fabric of transnational networks, they had crossed

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paths in hub cities where they had been recruited for jihad.\textsuperscript{14} Ten years after the London attacks, the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015 and those on the Bataclan concert hall, the Stade de France stadium and nightlife venues in Paris in November 2015 have been called the French 11 September, with IS claiming authorship this time, were carried out, as in London, by three young, “homegrown” French terrorists in the case of Charlie Hebdo and eight others in the Bataclan case. According to Leiken, these “homegrown terrorists” in France, Great Britain and Germany, despite different contexts, express their discontent similarly, i.e. through violence, turning old grievances – such as the colonial past – into new aspirations, namely, a will for local and transnational autonomy. Islamic converts join the parade.

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New technologies facilitate recruiting youth to the “army of the Ummah” and operations to draw them into jihad. A great many studies show that they are recruited via Internet sites, and that these sites produce the same effect on the young jihadists as “home-base” socialization insofar as building an “imagined community.” It is through cybercafés that they confirm their engagement. It is on social networks that they share their common experiences of discrimination in Europe, and injustice and suffering in Palestine, Iraq or Chechnya. On the web, they develop communication techniques, invent new programs, continue the discourse of Bin Laden, Azzam, Zawahiri... It is on these sites that they are indoctrinated and express their belonging and loyalty, first to al-Qaeda, then to the Caliphate; it is on these sites as well that they invent new heroes and join networks in social media. It is always on these sites that they assert their loyalty to the cause mobilizing them remotely and that lend them the assurance of belonging to a global community.

More recent studies have focused attention on prisons as places of radicalization of youth jailed for criminal causes.\textsuperscript{15} A study shows that 46 young people out of 76 were in prison before getting involved in jihad. The same study emphasizes that it is at the prisons that the “recruiters” as well as extremist imams find “vulnerable” youth “angry” at their society and attempt to indoctrinate them.\textsuperscript{16} It is also in prisons that networks and solidarities are redefined.

Profiles – Networks – Paths

It is very difficult to define the precise profile of homegrown terrorists and clearly establish their motivations. Numerous studies coincide in emphasizing the diversity of personal backgrounds, nationalities, ages, study levels, professions, socio-economic levels and personalities.\textsuperscript{17} In Great Britain, an official report by the British Secretary of State published in 2011 entitled “Prevent Strategy” examined the social background of al-Qaeda-friendly youth in the UK: 30% were known to be university students or students of higher education, 15% had vocational training diplomas, 10% were students at the time of their arrest. Some of them were drawn to terrorism before beginning higher education, others were radicalized at university or the equivalent.\textsuperscript{18} By the same token, the official report of the 11 September Commission describes the jihadists of that attack as engineers, students, and reveals personal, familial and tribal links among them, and their association with various organizations, NGOs or businesses, as well as with leaders and other mili-

\textsuperscript{14} Riva Kastoryano. Que faire des corps de djihadistes ? Territoire et identité, Paris, Fayard 2015
\textsuperscript{15} Farhad Khosrokhavar, Prisons de France. Violence, radicalisation, déshumanisation : surveillants et détenus parlent, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2017
tants. In contrast, those who perpetrated the Madrid attacks of 11 March 2004 are qualified as grassroots jihadists, that is, a group consisting of individuals who attack their country of residence but ultimately share the strategic goals of global jihad. Their organization type differs from that of the al-Qaeda cells insofar as the members reside in the country where they will perpetrate their attacks. The studies have revealed the great complexity of these networks, characterized by friendly relations and ties with the countries of origin. Scott Atran also used nationalities to establish ties within the network and identify individuals playing the role of “bridges” between the different circles of friends. He notes that family relations, whether close or distant, and neighbourhood relations dating back to the country of origin or nationality constitute mechanisms for the formation of groups. The 11 March networks were the result of relations incubated with a combination of childhood friends, groups of young people, neighbourhood acquaintances, fellow prison inmates, or relatives and personal relations – sisters or brothers, cousins or sweethearts. Another characteristic of 11M is the intertwining of terrorist and petty crime networks. The young perpetrators of the attacks were primarily delinquents involved in drug trafficking. The majority of European jihadists are unqualified migrant workers, in contrast to those of New York. Among them, the proportion of unemployed is higher than the average for European countries. The average age of the youth carrying out the Madrid attack was 27. For Petter Nesser, the process of radicalization varies from one individual to another. His reflection focuses in particular on what motivates their individual choice. Their militancy and their motivation have a primarily ideological basis, to the point where converts are attracted to Salafism because they are seeking an ideology rather than a faith. Foreign fighters, the soldiers of the Caliphate, who have “migrated” (carrying out their Hegira) to Syria since 2011, or who remain put, are presented as youth with a criminal record and often a low level of education who are marginalized in their society or community. The report published by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence establishes a link between criminality and terrorism, indicating the disproportionate number of youth with a criminal past among the foreign fighters in Syria or acting locally. Other reports emphasize the “ghettoes” in European countries that have become hotbeds of jihadism due to unemployment rates, delinquency, and sentiments of social and geographical marginalization experienced by youth, who take refuge in Salafist ideology. Moreover, recruiters' strategies would seem to lie in developing discourse that meets the needs of these young people with a criminal past.

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By the same token, suicide bombings have been replaced by suicidal acts. For perpetrators of suicide bombings, the body is the weapon and bears witness to their sacrifice, to the sense of altruism that leads them to suicide, a way of ensuring they belong to a “community” and gaining the trust of its members. The suicidal act, however, is carried out with weapons of a different nature, ranging from knives to lorries operated by a single individual, who will sooner or later be arrested by the police.

21 Nesser, op. cit.
22 Nesser, op. cit.
26 Riva Kastoryano, op. cit. 2015
The age of the young people also marks a difference between the youth who mobilized for al-Qaeda and those joining the Islamic State. There are many under 20 who have joined the movement, doing their hegira in Syria, becoming foreign fighters and then returning to their countries of citizenship. But the latest attacks in Europe are the work of much older jihadists. The studies also indicate the feminization of the phenomenon. They are “invited” or say they are “attracted” by images promising them heaven on earth if they participate in jihad. The press publishes messages and photos circulating on social networks, images of sumptuous festivities, selfies showing smiling men intended to demonstrate happiness and peace restored. It is important to display the well-being and goodwill reigning there to attract young women as well, who are sought after in marriage, and to recall that the Islamic State grants subsidies to youth who join their organization and their cause, and even more so to ensure the future of the movement.

Imagined Global Diaspora

Homegrown jihadists fight states engaged in war against terrorism, which they redefine as war on Islam. They thus place Islam, a non-territorial affiliation, on the same level as the territorialized states of which they are citizens. Their double nationality means they hold passports allowing them to cross real state borders in order to reach the imaginary Ummah. A homegrown terrorist is thus the product of this multiplicity of references characteristic of plural societies.

When a branch of al-Qaeda, the al-Nusra Front, settled on the border between Syria and Iraq, proclaimed itself the “Islamic State,” indicated it had conquered Baghdad and Mosul, appointed Al-Baghdadi as its caliph, and expanded its land by conquering neighbouring areas, eventually attaining a surface area equivalent to Great Britain, it confirmed the importance of the territory, attesting to its function as a war tactic and expansion strategy, although these conquests have no legitimacy in international law nor for the states concerned. These lands attract youth from the diaspora, but not only: they come from Europe, the Caucasus and Asia, joining local tribes to constitute an “army.”

Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State coincide ideologically, according to Bernard Haykel, insofar as they are both the product of Islamist renewal that seeks to strengthen the power of Muslims vis-à-vis those they define as “enemies of Islam.” Whereas al-Qaeda launched “deterриториализирован” global jihad through networks and a decentralized organization, the propaganda of IS calls on youth to migrate to Iraq and Syria (hegira -migration- to al-Sham, i.e. to Syria), recalling their religious duty to join “the Caliphate” and emphasizing that this migration is done in the name of jihad. Such an organizational difference reveals the different conception of power and of the association between power and territory. As the name indicates, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Al-Sham, referring to Greater Syria in ideological language) expresses the intention of building a state, appointing a Caliph, defining its territory, according to them, following the example of the Prophet, and planting their flag as a symbol of unity of a people and their cause, the Black Flag like the one brandished by the Prophet in his war against the infidels, as their rhetoric goes. Moreover, printing their own currency, creating an army and obtaining weapons and land are at the heart of the self-proclaimed Caliphate’s strategy.

The two organizations also coincide in the force of their discourse and rhetoric on their forming part of the Ummah. Since al-Qaeda, youth have been pre-
paring for jihad through websites, where they become familiarized with the discourse radical Islamic leaders, who are attracting them through a singular narrative of membership in the Ummah, the reimagined global community, where the concepts of belonging to a nation, a religion and a land are merged. The discourses on the Ummah refer to a new “imagined geography” as a delocalized or “deterриториálized,” denationalized representation of the world. The leaders thus address Muslim youth of the diaspora as that of a people who constitute “all parts of the body of the Ummah,” recalling the hadith: “The Ummah is like our body. If part of it is hurt, the whole body suffers.” These youth, who recognize themselves in this imagined transnational community, constitute the Ummah’s army, which is ready for jihad.

Patrick Cockburn asserts that the mobilization for the Islamic State is much more significant and better organized than the one for al-Qaeda. And the author emphasizes that its controlling a territory that was originally much more extensive than al-Qaeda would have imagined constitutes a much more alarming threat. Its recruitment is also more systematic. Its leaders target disadvantaged neighbourhoods in European cities with large Muslim populations, Roubaix, Brussels, Paris and the Seine-Saint-Denis department, and council estates in France. These ethnic enclaves, ghettos, all of these areas where foreignness and poverty combine, where youth unemployment far surpasses national averages, are presented as places of conflict between civil society and the forces of order, between generations and cultures, between national, local and community institutions. IS designates local recruiters to act on site, working closely with networks in Syria or elsewhere. And insofar as the self-proclaimed Caliphate, al-Baghdadi, in Mosul, recalls the duty of jihad as a unifying force of the Ummah and has all his young fighters, thereafter called foreign fighters, “swear allegiance to the Caliphate.” But despite the call to territorial jihad, all reports agree on the threat the organization represents, above all regarding the intentions of these foreign jihadiists in Syria to act anywhere in the world, in particular in their countries of citizenship. According to Bruce Hoffman, the Islamic State prepares operations outside of Syria thanks to its networks in Europe. He believes Syria constitutes a geographic and operational platform that projects its influence and power in multiple directions, which makes territorial jihad, global jihad.

In the face of strikes by the coalition that have reduced the territory of the Islamic State, the soldiers of the Caliphate are pursuing their action in a “delocalized” or “deterриториálized” manner, without the obligatory passage through the “ancestral land,” but rather through attacks wherever they feel appropriate, thus recalling the objective, which is at once territorial, in the “construction of a state” with the territorial Caliphate in the manner of empires, and global, insofar as it implements networks of its imagined diaspora thanks to its foreign fighters. The discourse on the construction of the Ummah as a global nation is based on identifying its members as a unit with multiple affiliations (national, territorial, religious, linguistic), shared experiences (colonization, exile or emigration) and a reference to a denationalized, delocalized “us” established in both so-called diaspora spaces and in national spaces at the same time. The diaspora is represented as the ancestral land and the land of jihad, in the French case the diaspora space does not include the parents’ country but refers to Syria, defined as the land of the Caliphate, now imagined as the ancestral land of resistance, the land to be reconquered and for which one must fight, a land that is not the fighters’ parents’ country of origin allowing diasporic ties to be made, but an “imagined global diaspora” in reference to the Caliphate.

This back and forth between the local – territorial – and the global in radical Islamism, the changing profiles of its dispersed fighters and soldiers, the limitless imagination of war weapons, all of these constitute a new challenge for states in their struggle against radicalization.

33 Patrick Kastoryano, op. cit., Paris, Fayard 2015
35 Patrick Cockburn, op. cit., 2015, p. 42
38 Bruce Hoffman, op. cit., 2016
39 Patrick Kastoryano, op. cit., 2015
Deradicalization: Experiences in Europe and the Arab World

Hamed El-Said
Chair and Professor of International Political Economy,
Manchester Metropolitan University
Senior Advisor, United Nations Counter-Terrorism
Implementation Task Force, New York

Deradicalization, as we know it today, first emerged in the Arab world in the late 20th century. In particular, it emerged in Egypt and Algeria before later spreading to other countries and regions of the world, including Europe and Asia. According to a survey conducted by the author for the United Nations in 2009, at least 34 out of 192 UN Member States claimed to have some sort of deradicalization and/or counter-radicalization policies in place during the first decade of the 21st century. Out of those 34 states, six were Arab states (Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, UAE and Yemen), and, ironically, ten were European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK). Since then, the number of countries claiming to resort to deradicalization policies and measures has evolved. The new emphasis given to deradicalization was part of a larger effort by Member States to undermine appeal to violent extremism and limit the pool of potential recruits by terrorist organizations and groups. With regards to deradicalization, as opposed to counter-radicalization which seeks to counter the appeal of radical ideology in society, it focuses on the prevention of radicalization and recruitment inside incarceration centres. The rise in the number of individuals arrested and charged with terrorist-related activities has increased apprehension about the possibility of turning prisons into a recruitment arena for the terrorist activities and turning incarceration centres into “universities of terrorism” or “universities of Jihadism.” Deradicalization, in theory, therefore seeks to prevent that through a battery of policies that seeks to provide religious rehabilitation for radical prisoners, to facilitate their reintegration back into society, and to create an environment conducive to such a process inside prisons.

However, despite the considerable attention deradicalization policies have received and continue to receive, they are still underresearched, not fully understood and remain controversial. Little is known about how they are being designed, implemented and practiced in the real world and “their effectiveness has not undergone independent scrutiny and its degree is largely a matter of opinion.”

Due to time and space limitations, this paper will not only provide a background to the evolution of deradicalization programmes in recent years, but will also focus mainly on why they have not delivered what has been expected of them in terms of countering violent extremism (VE) and preventing prison radicalization. The former will be discussed in the next section, while the latter in section three. The final section outlines the author’s conclusions.

1 All ideas and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author’s alone. Professor El-Said can be contacted at the following email: h.elsaid@mmu.ac.uk
Deradicalization in Perspective

Egypt and Algeria started such programmes in the late 1990s, albeit in different contexts, places and with different objectives. In Egypt, for example, the process was spontaneous, occurring from within and launched by the top brass of the movement's intellectual leadership, which had in the past provided justification for violence. It also started from inside the prison system. It began when the two then major Egyptian groups, al-Gamma al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group or IG) and al-Jihad Islami (AJ) denounced violence and announced their repentance in 1997 and 2007, respectively. During the process, the leaders of the IG published no less than 25 volumes of exhortations to their followers inside and outside the wire in order to convince them to abandon violence.5 Initially, the Egyptian government played little or no role in this process. Only when Egyptian security officials became convinced of the sincerity of the repentance process did they start to support and facilitate it among the group, by allowing its leaders to conduct a tour of prisons to convince other members to denounce violence on both moral and effectiveness grounds. The Algerian Reconciliation programme, on the other hand, started in the mountains, when more than 5,000 members of the Islamic Salvation Army (ISA), then the largest and most organized fighting group, accepted the reconciliation process after almost 10 years of "dirty war." During this period, key civil society organizations and community members played a crucial role in convincing the State and society to accept reconciliation, which was achieved in 1997.

While the Egyptian repentance process included ideological debate between the key ideologues of the IG and AJ, on the one hand, and members of various groups on the other, the Algerian Reconciliation process was devoid of any ideological debate. It was understood from the very beginning that the Algerian conflict was not over religion, but rather over politics.

Finally, both the Egyptian repentance and the Algerian Reconciliation processes were judged as "successful."6 Although IG and AJ prisoners were subsequently released into Egyptian society, not a single terrorist act has been committed by any individual associated with these two groups since 1997. The Algerian Reconciliation process also ended almost 10 years of "dirty war," during which time between 100-200,000 Algerians lost their lives. It also succeeded in decommissioning the weapons of more than 5,000 former fighters and allowed them to be reintegrated into society. Although some fighting continued, this no longer represented a major security threat to the Algerian State or society.

The first decade of the 21st century saw the emergence of three waves of the so-called deradicalization efforts, between 2002-2004, 2005-2010, and post 2010. Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia were the first to introduce such programmes under different titles. All, however, included extensive religious rehabilitation as a key component.

Despite the considerable attention deradicalization policies have received and continue to receive, they are still underresearched, not fully understood and remain controversial.

During the third wave, the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands were among the first European countries to experiment with deradicalization policies in 2005-2007. The last three countries to introduce such policies during this wave were Jordan, Kuwait and UAE around 2009-2010. The fourth, and final wave started around 2011, following the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, which attracted a large number of Foreign Fighters (FFs), more than 30,000 from over 100 countries around the world. This took place mainly in Germany, with the introduction of the Hayat Programme in January 2012 and the expansion of the Aarhus Programme in the same year in order to accommodate FFs returning from Syria and/or would-be FFs planning on de-

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5 Ashour, 2009, op cit.
6 Kruglanski et al., op. cit, 2014, p. 85.
parting to Syria. It also witnessed the review and introduction of the second version of Prevent in the UK, following the disappointing outcomes of the previous phase.

The Outcome of Deradicalization

Academics, researchers and even policymakers seem to have less confidence in most of the deradicalization efforts implemented since the beginning of the 21st century. In fact, one is tempted to argue that they seem to have made things worse. For example, the Institute for Economics and Peace concluded in its latest 2016 report (p.14) that, despite seemingly large efforts to counter radicalization and introduce deradicalization policies, “there has been only a ten per cent decline in terrorism in 2015,” and “this decline was driven by reductions in Iraq and Nigeria” following the weakening of Boko Haram and ISIL in these countries in recent years. More alarmingly, the decline in the level of terrorism in Iraq and Nigeria has been at the expense of a rise in terrorism in many formerly “moderately affected countries,” which have “experienced record levels of terrorism.” (p.2). Those formerly moderate countries include France, Belgium, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Germany, Sweden and the UK, following the Manchester May 2017 attacks. If Iraq and Nigeria are excluded, terrorism in “53 moderate countries has worsened,” especially in countries, which have experienced very “moderate” levels of terror attacks in the past. This includes many countries known for designing and implementing deradicalization programmes, as mentioned above.

Also, several individuals who were involved in some of the most brutal attacks in recent years in Europe and the Arab world have actually spent some time in prison before committing their terrorist acts. Some even attended and graduated from some of these deradicalisation programmes discussed earlier in this paper. According to one source, no less than a third of FFs in Syria and Iraq were well known to prison and security officials before departure.

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Why have the outcomes of the so-called deradicalisation policies been so disappointing in Europe and the Arab world? The next section attempts to shed light on the answer to these questions.

What is Wrong with Deradicalization?

Time and space do not permit a thorough examination of each programme. Such an exercise has been carried out elsewhere, so as not to warrant repetition here. Suffice it to say that the literature distinguishes between two types of deradicalisation programmes: explicit (or ideological) and implicit (non-ideological), or conservative and secular deradicalization. Over time, the differences between the two tapered to almost emerge as one factor: whether they believe ideology is the culprit or not. Secular deradicalization shows more interest in the behaviour of individuals and seeks to disengage individuals from violence, while accepting the fact that being radical in itself is not illicit. Explicit deradicalization, on the other hand, seeks to bring about a change in ideology (cognitive change), re-

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flecting its basic premise which views ideology as the main cause of radicalization. The argument here is that changing the behaviour of an individual requires changing his/her ideology that motivates that behaviour in the first place.

The debate over whether deradicalization should confine itself to the behavioural and/or the cognitive side remains contentious and unresolved. But deradicalization is not confined to ideological rehabilitation only. In addition to the ideological element, deradicalization policies generally experimented with a wide range of other components. These ranged from providing psychological support to vocational training and education, family rehabilitation, physical and sports programmes, art, and a post-release scheme to facilitate reintegration of released prisoners back into society. The latter also includes an additional battery of incentives, such as financial support, health insurance, assisting released individuals (graduates) finding jobs or return to education. Some even go as far as assisting the graduates in getting married.

Explicit deradicalization, seeks to bring about a change in ideology reflecting its basic premise which views ideology as the main cause of radicalization. The argument is that changing the behaviour of an individual requires changing his/her ideology that motivates that behaviour in the first place. Not all programmes employ the entire battery of incentives or carry the same degree of extensiveness. The most extensive and sustained programme is the Saudi deradicalization programme, known as the Counselling Programme. It includes most of the elements discussed above. The least extensive is the Jordanian programme, which revolves around a newly established and embryonic dialogue policy. Until the time of this writing, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon and Egypt have no deradicalization policies whatsoever. The rest of the programmes lie somewhere between the Saudi and Jordanian programmes.

Only the Algerian Reconciliation and Danish Aarhus policies can be described as secular or liberally oriented. Most other programmes in the Arab world and Europe are of the explicit type, the type that views ideology as the culprit and where everything revolves around ideological rehabilitation. It is here where the Achilles heel of these programmes lies. Sageman (2015)\textsuperscript{10} argues that there is a knowledge gap. We still don't know what causes an individual to become a terrorist. He explains this stalemate in terms of a lack of cooperation between academics and researchers, which have the methodical rigour and skills to conduct sophisticated analysis but lack access to sensitive premises (like prison, prisoners or deradicalized individuals) and information on them which government security agencies possess. The upshot has been an "unbridgeable gap between academia and the intelligence community" on the one hand, and "an explosion of speculations with little empirical grounding in academia," on the other. One such assumption relates to the basic foundation of most explicit deradicalization programmes regarding the role of ideology.

Most European leaders and politicians seem to believe that ideology is the culprit. Rik Coolsaet (2016, p. 47) cites clear examples of statements made by several European leaders openly acknowledging the Islamic ideology as the number one cause of terrorism. From Cameron in London to Manuel Valls in Paris, to the Belgian Prime Minister, Charles Michel, to the ongoing vigorous public debate in the Netherlands on the relationship between Salafism and jihadism, they all endorse the same approach that goes along the following lines:

\textit{“The root cause of this threat to our security is quite clear. It is a poisonous ideology of Islamist extremism, which is condemned by all faiths and faith leaders.”}\textsuperscript{11}

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Equally, most Arab officials also believe the culprit is ideology. In fact, it was Arab officials who promoted the idea that “these individuals are simply mislead, they misinterpreted the Islamic religion.”12 Not surprisingly, most deradicalization policies in Europe and the Arab world start from the same premise: ideology is the culprit. This explains why religious and ideological rehabilitation is the most important and common component of most deradicalization policies.

However, the recent empirical evidence shows very clearly that this particular wave of terrorism, which was inspired and revived by the outbreak of conflict in Syria since 2011, is “even less influenced by religion or ideology” than any other wave in the past, that “it is not the narrative (i.e., the ideology) that eventually lures them into terrorism,” but that terrorists are rather influenced “more by personal motivations and motives.”13 The role of ideology, known in some European official circles as the conveyor belt, has been declining over time since the 1980s. Tightly knit “social networks” that evolve more around social and personal ties replace ideology as the main conveyor belt.

It is a well-known and long-established fact in medical science that if the treatment is wrong, the disease will spread and the patient’s condition will worsen. The problem with treating ideology as the culprit in deradicalization policies, when it is not the root cause, is that not only does it fail to provide a proper solution to individuals who have already crossed the line and become radicalized enough to commit or attempt to commit a terrorist act, but it also fails to prevent others from following the same path. This is mainly because such an approach de-emphasizes and ignores the environment that breeds radicalization and extremism in the first place and fails to take into account the context where the kind of radicalization and extremism that could lead to terrorism is taking place. Deradicalization, in other words, is delinked from its own context and environment. It focuses only on the individual, the symptom, and not the disease, the root cause. It also pins the blame on individuals simply “misinterpreting the Quran” and “misunderstanding Islam,” and absolves the State, state institutions and the environment where these groups and individuals live, grow up and try to thrive, rather unsuccessfully, from any responsibility.

Most deradicalization policies in Europe and the Arab world start from the same premise: ideology is the culprit. This explains why religious and ideological rehabilitation is the most important and common component of most deradicalization policies.

Moreover, given the fact that most information regarding the threat of VE and prison radicalization is monopolized by security apparatuses, there is a tendency to exaggerate the role and influence of deradicalization policies for obvious reasons. Most officials describe their deradicalization efforts as successful!14 Although it is never clear what criteria this evaluation is based on. Such a description is actually problematic for several reasons. First, most academics and researchers have access to neither incarceration centres, nor incarcerated or “deradicalized” individuals, which makes it very difficult to conduct an independent study on the effectiveness of such programmes. It is also problematic because most European and Arab states do not actually have fully fledged deradicalization programmes, but rather small processes and measures inside the prison system, evolving mostly around ideological debates and discussions, which they describe as deradicalization programmes.

It is a well-known fact that inmates arrested for terrorist-related charges in Western, including most European, countries are placed in individual cells for a very long time, sometimes without any activi-

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12 This observation is based on my many conversations with state officials and counter radicalization personnel during my regular visits to the Arab World over the past few years.


14 Again, I noticed this observation during my many conversations with state officials in the Arab World, Europe and Asia during my recent travels there.
ties whatsoever. The belief seems to be that since most of these individuals will be spending very long time in prison, 20-30 years if not life, why should we worry about deradicalizing them in the first place? Not surprising, many European countries do not have any deradicalization policies in place. France, Norway, Switzerland, Romania and Austria are among those countries.

The problem is not dissimilar in the Arab world, except it is ten times worse. Not only do countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon have no deradicalization policies whatsoever, but their prisoners are also incarcerated in largely overcrowded prisons with extremely poor living conditions, characterized by a lack of proper hygiene and medical services, widespread diseases, high crime and drug rates, and corruption among prison staff. In many cases, radical prisoners are left to socialize with other prisoners without any control or mechanism to organize such a socialization process and without any rehabilitation, reintegration or deradicalization process. “We don’t know what to do with them,” I am often reminded by some prison authorities in these countries, and “we do not have the resources anyway.” Such an environment is not only not conducive to any successful deradicalization programme, but is in itself very radicalizing and could end up further radicalizing already radicalized individuals.

Even Jordan’s now widely touted programme, is very small and embryonic, restarted only in January 2016 after a very brief experiment in 2009. It is composed of no more than a simple dialogue process that continues to be rejected by more than 60-70% of inmates. The latter refuse to even speak to the scholars chosen by the government to conduct the dialogue process with the prisoners. Credibility, it seems, is lacking.

To put it another way, very few, if any European or Arab states have fully fledged deradicalization programmes. Their efforts amounted to no more than processes and measures that are totally delinked from the local context and are not incorporated into a holistic approach based on a good understanding of the phenomenon of radicalization, terrorism or even deradicalization.

Equally important, is the idea that deradicalization cannot and should not be seen as independent of developments in society. The continued incarceration of individuals on terrorist-related charges suggests that the root causes lie elsewhere; largely in society. After they spend their time in prison and are assumed to have repented, “deradicalized” individuals will eventually be released and will return back to their families, communities and societies. If any of these people remain radical, the chances of recidivism increase.

In other words, what happens inside the wire affects what happens outside the wire and vice versa. To be effective, deradicalization requires equally good and “soft” counter-radicalization policies and programmes that can stem the appeal of VE in society in the first place.

Such an approach requires reframing the entire debate on radicalization, based on a good understanding for the real factors that motivate individuals to become radicalized. It also requires deepening engagement with society and community members, as well as shifting away from the current top-down formats that characterize most, if not all, de-
radicalization policies in Europe and the Arab world. Such policies and approaches are designed, implemented and in most cases managed by the State and its repressive institutions. Cooperation with some civil society organizations, a prerequisite for success, does exist but on a very selective basis and with conditions determined by the State. Such conditions do not build trust between the State and the different communities. On the contrary, they undermine trust and give the impression that counter-radicalization and deradicalization efforts seek infiltration and even corruption in communities. Such an impression played a key role in undermining most deradicalization policies in Europe and the Arab world, including the UK’s prevent strategy, which:

“received mixed responses as many experts termed it too narrow, partially transparent, being used for monitoring the immigrant community, and which they believe is counter-productive. Muslim communities also have concerns about it. Transparency is another major issue and it is believed that local authorities misuse funds particularly for corrupting the local communities and building human intelligence networks.”

Conclusion

Deradicalization policies in Europe and the Arab world have failed to deliver the expected outcomes of reducing the appeal of terrorism and dealing effectively with prison radicalization and recruitment. On the contrary, they seem to have inflamed and exacerbated the situation. They are built on incorrect assumptions and premises, obsessed with intelligence gathering and take the form of a top-down approach that is highly selective in its dealings with communities. They also seem to lack credibility and competent personnel with sufficient knowledge of the process and able to detect real signs of radicalization. Seen as such, deradicalization divides rather than unites communities. The programmes lack a holistic vision and are perceived with pessimism and suspicion by various community members.

The challenge lies in developing a holistic approach to the phenomenon of violent extremism and terrorism, one that includes all stakeholders from the State, society and even beyond.

There is no one-size-fits-all. Deradicalization policies and programmes need not always look identical, as the early Egyptian and Algerian cases in the late 20th century demonstrated. But they must be based on a good understanding for the motivations for radicalizing groups and individuals in each society. They must also deal with those factors, not only with apprehended individuals and groups. In other words, deradicalization and prevention at the society level are strongly linked and intertwined. The absence of one undermines the other. The challenge lies in developing a holistic approach to the phenomenon of VE and terrorism, one that includes all stakeholders from the State, society and even beyond.

Dossier: Geopolitical Turmoil and its Effects in the Mediterranean Region
The Trump Administration and the Mediterranean

Ian O. Lesser
Vice President
The German Marshall Fund of the United States,
Brussels

The election of President Trump, and the experience of the first months of his administration, raises important questions about the future of American foreign policy. Beyond looming issues of strategy toward China and Russia as geopolitical competitors, and flashpoints on the Korean Peninsula and elsewhere, the new administration in Washington looks to take a different tack on trade, foreign assistance, climate, human rights, alliance burden-sharing and counter-terrorism. All of these elements will have direct implications for the Mediterranean region, north and south. The Mediterranean will offer some critical near-term tests for the Trump Administration – and Mediterranean partners are likely to face some new and unconventional challenges in their relations with Washington.

Rhetoric and Reality

President Trump’s campaign rhetoric suggested a revolutionary approach to foreign and security policy, challenging key elements of the international policy canon. Much of this was simply about candidate Trump’s brash style and direct, Twitter-driven commentary. His mode of communication, while unconventional, is by no means unprecedented. International leaders have increasingly turned to public diplomacy as a vehicle for policy pronouncements. Allowing for vast technical change, it is not so far removed from the Leninist aim of reaching over the heads of governments to speak directly to publics, domestic and foreign. Style does matter in foreign policy, and the style of the new administration has been a striking departure from the measured approach of most, but not all American leaders (George W. Bush was initially seen as abrasive by many in Europe and elsewhere). Personality, and personal relationships also matter, and here President Trump is running true to form. His early meetings with foreign leaders suggest a heavy emphasis on this element. Initial meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egyptian President Sisi were characterized by convergence on counter-terrorism and other policy issues. But a degree of personal affinity also seemed to play a role in these encounters. By contrast, early discussions with Chancellor Merkel and others have been cooler affairs, and the May 2017 meetings in Brussels and Taormina were distinctly tense. How the President will view leading political figures on both sides of the Mediterranean over time remains to be seen, but questions of affinity and trust will not be far from the surface. Where policy differences are significant this could well be a determining factor – the relationship with Turkey and its assertive President will continue to be a key test. The contentious relationship with Russia, an increasingly important factor in the eastern Mediterranean, will be another.

Some months into the new administration, it is clear that American foreign policy retains some of its characteristic contours, even if the style is more assertive and President Trump’s language is a stark departure from that of his predecessor.1 Relations with China

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and Russia have reverted to a more traditional geopolitical form, driven by policy interests and differences that will be hard to bridge, and may well deepen. The April 2017 cruise missile strike on Syrian targets related to the regime’s use of chemical weapons against civilians was arguably the same kind of response that Hillary Clinton might have made, or indeed President Obama if he was able to replay his response to a similar incident during his presidency. In an important sense, the strike had more to do with the structural American interest in deterring the use of weapons of mass destruction than with the situation in Syria per se. But the sheer barbarity of the Assad regime and the perceived unreliability of Russian assurances probably played a role in President Trump’s calculus. Intelligence and surveillance capabilities make atrocities hard to hide, and presented with these realities, American presidents are often spurred to act, even when the appetite for intervention is limited (President Clinton reacted in a similar fashion after being shown satellite photos of the mass graves in Srebrenica in 1995). The prevalence of such conflicts around the Mediterranean Basin suggests that this is unlikely to be the last example of American action along these lines. Even if the gap between campaign rhetoric and foreign policy reality has narrowed, there are some obvious areas of contrast in policy outlook, especially vis-à-vis the Obama Administration, with its rather European sense of global priorities and caution in the use of American power. Many observers have pointed to the more transactional nature of international relationships in the new administration. This implies a sovereignty-conscious, interests-driven approach, with less automatic support for traditional partnerships, and greater emphasis on burden sharing (measured in tangible terms). Questions of democracy promotion, human rights and nation building are unlikely to be high on the new Washington agenda. It is worth recalling that this more critical approach did not start with President Trump. Towards the end of his last term, President Obama was outspoken in questioning the norms and prescriptions of the American foreign policy establishment. A far more cautious attitude toward the use of American power had taken hold among Democrats and Republicans in Congress after the Iraq experience of the Bush years. The democracy promotion so closely associated with the neo-conservative agenda of the Bush years, and pursued as “democratic enlargement” in the Clinton Administration, has always had its critics. The Trump Administration is unlikely to abandon its scepticism about this idealist tendency in American foreign policy. But a purely realist strategy will be difficult to pursue. Important constituencies in Congress and elsewhere will make it hard for Washington to entirely abandon its support for various assistance and reform efforts, even as the Trump Administration endeavours to reduce or eliminate funding for such programmes. Overall, there is probably little risk of American isolationism or withdrawal from the Mediterranean in political and security terms. But the new style of engagement may be far more unilateral than that of its predecessor.

Traditional Interests, New Mental Maps

The US has always had an implicit rather than explicit Mediterranean strategy, and this is unlikely to change in the Trump Administration. Unlike its Europe,

\[\text{Questions of democracy promotion, human rights and nation building are unlikely to be high on the new Washington agenda}\]

2 Questions of religious freedom may be an exception. It is notable that when Secretary of State Tillerson made his first, brief visit to Turkey, his agenda included a visit with the spouse of an imprisoned American missionary.


4 See, for example, Michael Mandelbaum, “Foreign Policy as Social Work,” Foreign Affairs, January/February 1996.
pean partners, Washington has rarely thought in terms of Mediterranean policy per se. Intellectually and bureaucratically, the Mediterranean hardly figures as a unified geopolitical space in American foreign policy. Europe, including southern Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa, are distinct spheres in the American policy debate. This distinction is most apparent in the State Department, and somewhat less so within the military commands, where areas of responsibility in EUCOM and AFRI-COM, in particular, span both shores of the Mediterranean. Despite its growing relevance in a Middle Eastern context, Turkey, as a NATO ally, has generally been treated as a European partner. The Trump Administration reportedly planned to shift Turkey to the Middle East and North Africa, at least within the National Security Council where portfolios are more flexible. This is unlikely to be well received in Ankara, or the State Department, and the plan has been shelved.

Even if the US has had a “recessed” approach to the Mediterranean in recent decades, it has had some clear policy interests, especially in security terms. These have proven durable, even if the relative weight of these interests has evolved over time. This balance is likely to evolve further with a new administration in Washington. First, the US has long been interested in the Mediterranean as a facet of the European security environment. During the Cold War, this was driven by the diplomatic and military competition with Moscow. Elements of this competition are coming back on the American agenda, especially in the eastern Mediterranean, in Syria, Libya, and potentially in Egypt and Algeria. More significantly, the new administration tends to view security risks emanating from the South, including migration, terrorism, and the foreign fighter problem, as a central challenge for European security.

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Second, the US will continue to view the Mediterranean as a critical link to adjacent places of strategic importance, including Sub-Saharan Africa, the Black Sea and the Gulf. The use of air and naval bases around southern Europe, North Africa and the Levant, and secure access to the Suez Canal in order to shift forces rapidly from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean give Washington a structural interest in stable defence partnerships around the region. Within this frame, however, there are likely to be some subtle shifts. Morocco is likely to emerge as an increasingly important partner for security looking south to the Sahel and West Africa. The Obama Administration, while broadly supportive of Rabat, had some ambivalence about the...
Western Sahara issue. The Trump Administration, by contrast, is likely to take a dim view of the Polisario, Algeria’s non-aligned worldview, and the risks posed by ungoverned spaces.

Counter-terrorism, the security of the Suez Canal, and Israeli security will likely drive relations with Egypt. Questions about Turkish stability and persistent policy differences may reinforce longstanding concerns about the use of the Incirlik airbase, despite its proximity to ongoing operations against the Islamic State. Alternative bases in Romania and at Souda Bay in Greece may acquire additional importance as part of a portfolio approach to power projection in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Or, Washington may simply choose to bolster its standing naval presence in the Mediterranean, a presence that has declined sharply in recent decades. This over-the-horizon approach also applies to theatre missile defence, largely based afloat in the Mediterranean, even if oriented largely toward risks emanating from the Gulf.

Third, the Mediterranean will continue to demand a considerable amount of official attention in Washington given the sheer number of crises and flashpoints around the region. The new administration, and Congress, may have little taste for sustained military intervention (“boots on the ground”) or expensive reconstruction efforts in Syria or Libya. And other flashpoints in the Balkans and Maghreb may be seen as places for European leadership.

But this does not mean that the US will be diplomatically or militarily disengaged. Again, the more pressing question for Mediterranean partners is the form of this engagement and, in particular, how unilateral it will be. On some fronts, the new administration may demonstrate a surprising degree of activism. Many observers were surprised by the apparent readiness of candidate Trump to re-engage on the stalled Middle East Peace Process. In office, President Trump has suggested that his policy might not be tied to the pursuit of a two-state solution, and that he could be supportive of any approach the parties themselves would support. It is unclear what this would mean in practice, and whether an administration that has been so outspoken in support of Israel could also garner credibility with the Palestinians. That said, the goal of a comprehensive settlement remains the ultimate diplomatic prize for any American administration, and the Trump Administration would not be the first to engage heavily in the peace process, even against the odds.

It is worth underscoring, again, the prevailing intellectual and bureaucratic fragmentation in the American approach to the Mediterranean. American strategy toward the region tends to be the sum of multiple regional policy decisions, spanning southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa and areas further afield. In this setting, senior officials below the level of cabinet rank, including US ambassadors around the region, can play a key role in shaping policy. The new administration has been unusually slow in filling these positions. Until these positions are filled (and most will be political appointments) the direction of America’s Mediterranean policies will be difficult to know in detail.

The Mediterranean will continue to demand a considerable amount of official attention in Washington given the sheer number of crises and flashpoints around the region.
support to the YPG in Syria, Washington is most unlikely to yield to Turkish requests, as the US military has built a close working relationship with Kurdish forces, and they have proven very effective in the field. President Erdogan’s May 2017 visit to Washington yielded little on this front, or the Gulen question, beyond vague assurances that the US has Turkish security concerns in mind. Moreover, the deterioration of political and economic conditions in Turkey makes it more difficult to envision any major new animating projects for the bilateral relationship. Washington’s traditionally strong support for Turkey’s EU accession process has been rendered essentially irrelevant by the complete impasse in Turkey-EU relations, and presumably, Washington’s lack of interest in EU enlargement.

**Addressing Durable Chaos**

The new American administration brings somewhat different goals and discourse to the Mediterranean agenda. But it also confronts a very different strategic environment. Looming risks elsewhere, with Russia in the East, and with China and North Korea in the Asia-Pacific region, could transform the global equation overnight and lead to a rapid shift away from “optional” problems on Europe’s southern periphery. Even short of this, the prospect of open-ended conflicts and disintegration in the Levant and parts of the Maghreb suggest a future that has less to do with crisis management in the traditional sense, and more about hedging in the face of long-term insecurity – living with durable chaos. This may align with the strain of American strategic thinking that regards many regional problems as simply “too tough to fix.” It is more difficult to reconcile with the American impetus to devote considerable energy and resources in the service of practical solutions, often in the service of values, or simply order. The Trump Administration may incline toward a cautious approach, but it will not be immune to these traditional impulses, as the use of force in Syria illustrates.

**A Net Assessment**

Several months into the Trump Administration, it is unclear that there has been a real movement away from the revolutionary impulses and strident rhetoric of earlier days. Some traditional policy directions have been reaffirmed. But the style of the new administration remains markedly different from its predecessors, and its approach to global, multilateral questions will be vexing to allies and others. President Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement is a dramatic illustration. A more closely measured, interests-based approach prevails, and on this basis there will be no shortage of Mediterranean issues compelling the attention of American policymakers.

The key question is not whether the US will be active – it will be – but whether this activism will be pursued in a more unilateral way.

Whether an unpopular American president can mobilize international partners in support of these interests is very unclear. The essential lines of American strategy and engagement are likely to endure, with some notable shifts, broadly in the direction of hard over soft power instruments. Overall, isolationism is simply not an option, and from a broad foreign policy perspective, the key question is not whether the US will be active – it will be – but whether this activism, and the strategy behind it, will be pursued in a more unilateral way. In a Mediterranean setting, the US can be expected to maintain, or even reinforce, its presence in critical areas such as the eastern Mediterranean. Elsewhere, in the Balkans and the Maghreb, Washington will surely expect European partners to take the lead in political and security terms, a preference that long predates the advent of the Trump Administration.
Dr Igor Sutyagin  
Senior Research Fellow  
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London

The Russian policy in the Middle East and North Africa (hereafter – MENA) region should be understood within the broader context of Russia's foreign policy efforts in general. These are predominantly shaped nowadays by the dramatic mismatch between the Kremlin's ambitions in the international arena, on the one hand, and the actual base of resources needed to carry out its aggressive external policies, on the other. According to Moscow’s 2015 National Security Strategy, the ability of Russia to stand out as “[…] one of the world’s leading powers” in the international arena is a key strategic priority.

Limits of Russia’s Power and the Way to Move beyond Them

However, this stated ambition to create a strong Russia suffers from the reality that Russia is also a declining economic actor. Indeed, while Russia holds the 43rd position in the Global Competitiveness Index, the nation’s industrial production is currently stagnating at best, with Russia’s manufacturing index increasing at an average annual statistical error level of 0.39% between 2007 and 2016. At the same time the depreciation of fixed assets in Russian industry in general is 48.7% in 2016 (49.5 and 51.8% in manufacturing and construction correspondingly) with 15.8% of all assets fully (i.e. 100%) depreciated; the depreciation of fixed assets in Russian infrastructure has exceeded 70% (with an average of below 20% in the US and western Europe). The coefficient of fixed asset renewal stood at 3.9% in 2015, which did not help improve the situation – and certainly did nothing to reverse it – and Russia’s state statistics body has no data published on this key indicator after that time, implying the existence of politically humiliating statistics. The amount of high-performance jobs in the Russian economy in general had dropped by 13.5% by 2017 against the 2014 level. The Kremlin’s geopolitical adventurism in Ukraine has led to economic sanctions being imposed on Russia, obstructing its access to both foreign investments and modern Western technologies, both badly needed to heal the nation’s existing economic difficulties. Taken together, these factors clearly depict a downward trend in the prospects for Russia’s future economic competitiveness and its chances of relying on the Russian economy to secure the position of “one of the world’s leading powers.”

It is evident therefore that, within the framework of the existing world order, Russia is increasingly losing its competitiveness and its status as a “leading world power.” For that reason, one possible Russian solution is to change the very rules and norms by which the world order is “governed.” To that end, the Kremlin is seeking to resurrect the model of the Yalta Accord between the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union in February 1945. According to the Russian worldview, Yalta led to the creation of a firm and stable international system in which there were mutually-recognized “spheres of influence.” This is, one can argue, both the goal of, and the means by which, Russia aims to offset the consequences of contemporary relative decline. In other words, Moscow is seeking the restoration of a Russian sphere of influence or “zone of privileged interests,” as it existed in the Soviet times, to offset Russia’s inability to compete within the existing rule-based framework of international relations. By Moscow’s design, the cre-
ation of such a zone would also lead to the creation of a Russian “orbit,” and by extension an expansion of Moscow’s importance as an international player, increase its “weight” in the international arena, and help re-establish Russia as a great power beyond Europe. That is why Moscow’s desire to re-exert control over countries formerly under its influence is championed at the very top of the Russian State by President Putin himself.

And the closer countries are to the centre of gravity of world politics, the better. That is where the Kremlin’s interest in the MENA region comes from. At the same time, the current Russian leadership is surely opportunistic in a good sense: the Kremlin tends to grab opportunities to promote its plans wherever such opportunities appear. The current instabilities in the MENA region – Syria, Libya and Egypt partially – as well as the transitional situation in Turkey, provide ample opportunity to promote Russia’s influence, on the one hand, and diminish that of the West, on the other. This is especially the case in the “zero-sum” approach to international politics that is typical of Moscow nowadays, in which the balance of power leans towards the states closest to Russia.

Smart Action Planning

In pursuit of that goal Moscow employs certain methods which might be eyebrow-raising, while surely elegant by design from the political standpoint. The Russian operation in Syria designed to force Europeans to accept Moscow’s policy in Ukraine, and make the US a guarantor of Russia’s national interests – all with a minimal use of Moscow’s own resources – is one of the best examples of such designs. Indeed, as the conflict in Syria became complicated by the activities of Daesh/ISIS and led to a substantial increase in refugee flows to Europe, Turkey and the United States envisioned a plan involving US warplanes, Syrian insurgents, and Turkish forces working together to establish a “safe zone” for displaced Syrians in northern Syria. This zone would prevent the mass influx of refugees into Europe from Syria – a primary security concern for NATO’s southern members. Based on the Libyan experience, a proposed “Syrian no-fly zone” resonated in the Kremlin as an attempt at another regime change, this time against Russia’s only remaining ally in the Middle East. Russia rushed to deploy a small force, tailored for air defence and jamming airborne fire-control radars, in the evident pursuit of deterring US and Turkish aircraft from attempting to enforce a no-fly policy over a refugee safe zone by raising the prospect of a Russia-NATO clash. Moscow quite rightly assumed that the prospect of such a clash would force NATO to abandon the no-fly zone idea, eliminating the danger of regime change. This would preserve Assad’s regime and give the Kremlin leverage to force the Europeans to make concessions on Ukraine and other issues in exchange for Russia’s willingness to allow European attempts at resolving the refugee crisis. Indeed, with the deployment of its anti-aircraft assets, the Kremlin could theoretically pull in and pull out of countering the creation of a refugee safe zone, thus trading its non-obstruction to the Europeans’ efforts to solve the refugee crisis for the desired concessions from Europe.

The Kremlin’s geopolitical adventurism in Ukraine has led to economic sanctions being imposed on Russia, obstructing its access to both foreign investments and modern Western technologies, both badly needed to heal the nation’s existing economic difficulties.

Another element of Moscow’s plan was to equip Damascus with adequate firepower to fight rebels attempting to overthrow Assad’s regime. Preserving Assad’s regime would effectively secure Russia’s presence in the Mediterranean and ensure that it remains a significant voice on policy in the region. Indeed, Syria is the only country in the Mediterranean that provides Russia with naval basing rights and an air base for the Russian Mediterranean naval squadron’s air support. The survival of the Syrian regime is therefore vital to Moscow’s aspirations. If Assad’s forces eliminate the moderate opposition groups directly threatening the regime, it would result in a fundamentally different dynamic, leaving only two forces
in the country: the Assad regime and Daesh. Given the unwillingness of Western and Arab countries to put boots on the ground, the Western-led coalition would be forced to support Assad as a source of ground forces to fight Daesh, making the pursuit of his ultimate removal questionable. Should Russia’s plan work as intended, the United States will eventually be compelled to preserve Assad’s regime, which, in turn, guarantees the newly acquired Russian military bases in Syria and secures Moscow’s influence in the Middle East and Mediterranean.

Moscow is seeking the restoration of a Russian sphere of influence or “zone of privileged interests,” as it existed in the Soviet times, to offset Russia’s inability to compete within the existing rule-based framework of international relations.

Russia has deployed, on a rotational basis starting in September 2015, a moderate force comprised of a mixed air brigade, three manoeuvre battalions, two Spetsnaz/reconnaissance battalions, and two to three artillery battalions since 30 September 2015, when the Russian operation was officially announced. These forces wage a mainly contactless war and largely target non-Daesh elements; these are Damascus’ Syrian Army, Iranian-backed Shia militias, as well as Iran’s Qods Force and a limited number of regular Iranian military who bear the brunt of the land campaign. Furthermore, Moscow employs Russian mercenaries, disguised as “private military companies,” to reinforce the land push when necessary, to avoid using Russian troops. Russia persistently refers to Damascus’ official request to send Russian troops to assist in the fight against “terrorists” as the legal basis for its military involvement in Syria thus legitimizing the potential gains in Syria in the eyes of the international community. Neutralizing the “terrorist threat” in distant lands to defend Russian people from the migration of that threat into Russia has also served as a vital Russian domestic propaganda tool too. It allows the Kremlin to boost domestic support for the military operation in Syria and portrays the government as the defender of the Russian people, not the least useful outcome, in view of the unfolding economic crisis in Russia, for diverting the attention of the public away from the government’s domestic failures.

Success – but Difficulties Are Looming

Moscow showed a lack of respect to its client, Damascus, when it made certain moves without the proper consultations. The idea of Syria’s “federalization” (in the form of the establishment of Kurdish Autonomy in an initial phase, with the possibility for other parts of the country to follow this path), publicly promoted by Moscow for a short period of time as the way to resolve the ongoing Syrian conflict in January 2017 when Russia publicized its unsolicited draft of a future Syrian constitution, is probably the best example of such a move. Regardless of the fact that the prospect of the Levant’s partition was furiously rejected by local politicians and the population in 1920-1946 when tried by French authorities, Russia repeated the proposal – quite expectedly infuriating Syrians and revealing its own lack of nuanced understanding of the local political dynamics.

The operation undertaken in Syria has, however, been fruitful for the Kremlin in certain areas – the expansion of the 720th naval rear-support station in Tartus into a fully-fledged naval base is among them. Moscow and Damascus have signed an agreement which secured Russia’s right to deploy to Tartus up to 11 large warships (up to 10,000 tons of displacement), including nuclear-powered ones, implying plans to use Tartus to provide rear support to nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) deployed to the Mediterranean (as just Russian SSNs fall into the described displacement category of nuclear-powered warships). Meanwhile, the Russo-Syrian agreement on Tartus, signed on 18 January 2017, revealed the limits of Moscow’s potential to expand its influence. The Tartus agreement was not defined as indefinite, as was the agreement signed in August 2015 on the lease of the Khmeimim air base, currently used by the Russian air force operating in Syria. Instead, the lease of the naval base is limited to 49 years, with the possibility of an extension after 25 years, although the right of the Syrian side to end
the lease with one year's notice is stated in the agreement. Moreover, the Khmeimim agreement was also modified on the same day the Tartus deal was signed – revoking the indefinite nature of the lease and imposing the same restrictions as used for Tartus. There are reports that such restrictions (which were not originally assumed when the Russo-Syrian talks on Tartus were announced in October 2016) were predominantly the result of Iranian pressure on Damascus. The situational alliance of Moscow and Tehran over Syria is therefore evidently weaker and more controversial than might be perceived at first glance. That is not surprising bearing in mind the deep differences between Russia and Iran in their corresponding attitudes regarding the Syrian conflict. Indeed, the two governments are de-facto competing for the influence over post-conflict Damascus. The Kremlin needs a stable and loyal government for western Syria to secure Russia's gains there (the air and naval bases). It also needs the friendly neutrality of neighbouring Israel as Tel Aviv's diametrically opposed attitude towards developments in Syria would endanger Russia's achievements in the country, thus undermining prospects for using bases on Syrian soil as a powerful outpost of Russian policy in the MENA region. Tehran, meanwhile, is pursuing undisputed influence over Damascus to gain direct access to the eastern Mediterranean and continue its uncompromising fight against Israel. Russia and Iran evidently envisage mutually exclusive roles for post-conflict Syria which inevitably sets the two governments on a collision course in the not-that-distant future.

The same can be said about the recent Russo-Turkish rapprochement. While Moscow and Ankara have become situational allies in the bitter confrontation (albeit of a different nature) with the US and western Europe, both governments currently pursue regional dominance in the Middle East – a recipe for Russo-Turkish competition at best, rather than entente cordiale. It is also highly illustrative how the Kremlin's rigid, uncompromising approach to foreign policy diminishes, rather than improves, Russia's chances of securing its potential gains in the near future. Indeed, the tactics of raising stakes and “cornering” international interlocutors, in the expectation that they would be unable to cope, would give in to Moscow's pressure and make concessions, has been the general trend in Russia's foreign policy since 2007, and especially after Crimea's annexation in early 2014. Recep Erdogan's Turkey has become Russia’s unexpected ally after the attempted anti-government coup in July 2016 was suppressed by the Turkish authorities. One might expect that the Kremlin embracing Ankara would promote an unexpected alliance. Moscow instead displayed unwillingness to completely lift its sanctions imposed against Turkey after numerous violations of Turkish airspace by Russian combat jets operating in Syria resulted in a Turkish F-16 jet shooting down the Russian Su-24M bomber in November 2015. The Russian support for the Kurdish fighters in North Syria – a cause of great vexation in Ankara – remained intact too. The Russian-Turkish background so complicates sincere cooperation between the two countries that any alliance between them is relegated to the category of fragile and situational, rather than reliable and long-term.

MOSCOW NEVER STOPS LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES

The Kremlin meanwhile keeps seeking other opportunities in the MENA region, providing support to Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar in Libya, in opposition to the UN-brokered Government of National Accord (GNA), and building closer ties with Egypt under the President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi. Considered together, these two areas of Russia's Middle Eastern activism reveal a number of Moscow's political preferences. Near universal support to those fighting radical Islamists is evidently one of them. On the other hand, Russia's support to the forces challenging the results of the “colour revolutions” in North African states – Haftar and al-Sisi both fall into this category – is the second evident preference. There are two political interests underlying this. The Kremlin stubbornly views the “colour revolutions” as a Western conspiracy, and their results as a Western gain that belittles Russia's influence in the region – so it is quite natural for Moscow, in its pursuit of promoting Russian influence, and diminishing that of the West in the region, to support those who seemingly aspire to reverse the results of the revolutions. The second interest is aimed at achieving an almost tectonic shift: success in reversing the re-
The results of the “colour revolutions” would “educate” the West and the rest of the world in the way that regime change attempts are ultimately doomed to failure. Recognition of the futility of such attempts should water down the West’s appetite to repeat them thus forcing the West to adopt a passive stance in its perceived crusade against Russian influence. And the MENA region is the perfect location for this sort of “education” as this is precisely the area where the original attempts took place – so their negative outcome would be, by Moscow’s design, the most convincing for the West not to dare repeat them.

It is worth mentioning that the Balkans (above all the former Yugoslavia) is another region where, as perceived by Moscow, the West has nearly completed the extensive regime change attempt between the 1990s and now. The ultimate failure there would, by design, have the same educational effect. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Russia has aggressively pursued policies to reverse the results of peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans, dating back to the Dayton accord of 1995, and re-ignite instabilities in the region. Russian activities with regard to Kosovo, Montenegro, and Macedonia should be mentioned in this respect. These developments have the additional implication for the MENA region as Russia de-facto states its aspiration to shield the Middle East against Western influence using the buffer zone of “neutral” (i.e. submissive to Russia, rather than to the West, as this term is understood in the Kremlin) Balkan countries and thus claiming even broader control of this potential area of Russia’s privileged interests.

Being in the Russian sphere of interests – which, when all is said, is equivalent to being within the Russian sphere of influence – is not a position that comes without strings attached. Those questioning the existence of the Russian threat to NATO’s southern allies surely miss the fact that Moscow is persistently putting southern and southwestern Europe in the cross-hairs of its Kalibr sea-based long-range cruise missiles, which are quite openly announced as a nuclear-capable weapon system. Deployments of Kalibr-capable Russian warships to the Mediterranean are routine practice now, and this will be further extended when construction is completed of the Tartus Russian naval base. As that is not enough, the December 2015 edition of the Russian Federation’s national security strategy postulates that out-of-area actions by NATO (all actions in North Africa or near its shores in the Mediterranean evidently fall into this category), if not authorized by the UN Security Council, are unacceptable from the Russian standpoint, and represent a threat to Russia’s national security, which the Russian government is determined to counter using any means, including military power. This means that the Kremlin is calling for any of NATO’s out-of-area actions, aimed at resolving non-military crises concerning the southern Allies, to be stopped unless given Moscow’s approval (which has the power of veto at the Security Council), otherwise Russia reserves the right to resort to the use of its military power. And that is precisely what the Kremlin understands as standing out as “[...] one of the world’s leading powers”: dictating its will to others who happen to find themselves pulled into areas which Moscow considers its sphere of privileged interests. When all is said and done, that is the ultimate goal of Russia’s current policy in the Middle East and North Africa region.

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The European Union and the Mediterranean Area: Dealing with Conflicts, Tensions and Resets

Marc Pierini
Visiting Scholar
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Europe, Brussels

Long gone are the days when the European Union set itself a foreign policy ambition for the entire Mediterranean Basin, as in the November 1995 Barcelona Conference. Since then, the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Lisbon Treaty and the Arab revolutions have gone by and have drastically changed Europe's policy outlook in the region. This multiplication of conflicts and tensions was matched only recently by a rise in the EU's diplomatic involvement and, for wider motives, by a debate on increased military and border/coast guard capabilities.

In addition, major developments have occurred in the area – such as migration, refugees and human trafficking – while actors such as Russia, the US and Turkey have also drastically reset their posture in recent years and months. Overall, the EU is better equipped today than it was a few years ago, but the changing dynamics in the Mediterranean region and among key actors in the region will require faster and deeper changes in EU policies and methods if it wants to influence the course of history in this crucial neighbouring region.

This article first looks at the two major regional conflicts, then deals with some of the wider issues on which the EU has limited influence and the changes to the international environment affecting the Mediterranean. Finally, the article briefly assesses what future EU policies could aim at.

A Limited EU Role in Active Conflicts

There are many tensions around the Mediterranean Basin but two active conflicts dominate the battle against the organization of the Islamic state (ISIL): Syria-Iraq and Libya. In addition, the protracted Syrian civil war has led to one of the major political, humanitarian and moral crises in modern times' foreign relations, with major spillover effects in Europe. In both cases, the EU's involvement consists primarily of bilateral actions. Several Member States are directly involved with military forces: France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands in Syria-Iraq; at least France and the United Kingdom in Libya. Most of their involvement consists of air force assets with either reconnaissance, refuelling or combat aircraft, as well as training operations. Even fewer EU Member States have special forces on the ground, probably only France and the United Kingdom in both cases. On the diplomatic front, the EU – especially through the High Representative and the European External Action Service – is exerting efforts to influence the debate through a combination of diplomacy and financial support.

Syria: Finding a New Positive Role through the Reaffirmation of Its Own Principles

Diplomatic activities until now have not produced much progress in stopping the bloodshed in Syria. The successive Geneva conferences under the aegis of the United Nations, the Astana talks under the leadership of Russia with Iran and Turkey, and vari-

ous other contacts have produced multiple statements, but no actual progress on the political front and only limited ceasefires because of weak control and incentive mechanisms. The main game changer occurred in September 2015 with Russia’s military intervention in western Syria, which achieved a triple objective: rescuing the fledgling Assad army; establishing a permanent air base in the Middle East; and making its own imprint on the way the international order is discussed and reshaped.

By convening a Syria conference on 5 April 2017 in Brussels, High Representative Federica Mogherini sought to put diplomacy and the EU back on the map. The conference achieved three results: it illustrated the EU’s convening capacity; it demonstrated a reciprocal willingness of the EU and the UN (Secretary General Antonio Guterres attended) to work together; and it put down in a joint declaration a number of principles for future action.

Five main principles stand out in the conference’s declaration. On the humanitarian aspects of the Syrian conflict, international support and the need to guarantee access to refugees in need were reaffirmed, and the link between humanitarian considerations and a political settlement was stressed; the need to educate the young generations among the refugee population was also highlighted; the need to ensure the protection of refugees was reaffirmed; reconstruction needs were identified and the prerequisite of a political process was underlined; finally, the need for a process of reconciliation and transitional justice was clearly mentioned.

Given the immense divergences regarding the way forward between the EU and Western countries on the one hand and Russia and the Assad regime on the other, neither the Brussels conference, nor the enumeration of these principles will solve the Syrian conflict. Yet, a demonstration was made by the central foreign policy institution of the European Union about the need to proceed with negotiations on the basis of principles. In that sense, the EU was true to its founding principles and its own historical memory.

In addition, the High Representative’s initiative to convene this conference, after years of individual initiatives by some EU Member States, re-focused the diplomatic work on the central role given to EU institutions in the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

**Libya: Supporting the Political Reconstruction of a Divided Country**

Diplomatic activities in Libya are essentially driven by the UN system, while the EU plays a supporting role. The situation is particularly complex given the existence of two rival governments in Tripoli and Benghazi. Here too, the EU is basing its policy on well-established principles, such as the Libyan ownership of the political process and the need for an inclusive dialogue and settlement.

On the thorny issue of migration through Libya, the EU has an obvious need to nurture an effective policy based on a few critical elements: capacity building of the Libyan authorities; respect of the rights of and humanitarian support to migrants present in Libya; and implementation of a voluntary return policy. None of these migratory issues are new in Libya: the EU has been discussing them with Tripoli since 2004 with uneven success given the magnitude and sophistication of the trafficking networks. The issue is primarily one of government control over these traffickers, and therefore one of capacity, corruption and rule of law. Bad habits inherited from the time of the Gaddafi regime are still at play, even more so now with a weakened state security apparatus.

Be it in Syria or in Libya, the EU’s limited role can be explained by the current state of integration between EU countries on foreign and defence policies. The state of play can even be described as an EU foreign policy architecture still being tested after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty some nine years ago. The foreign policy role of EU institutions is still being tested.

Yet, the dual paradox illustrated by the two major conflicts on the Mediterranean is clear: a) no single EU Member State, however powerful, has the capacity of nurturing and imposing a given policy to other Member States – hence the crucial role of central EU institutions – and b) any sensible EU policy in this type of situation will inevitably be a combination of diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, and technical assistance in various fields (ad-

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ministration, border control, elections, transitional justice), a complex task which the combined work of EEAS and the Commission delivers best.

Be it in Syria or in Libya, the EU’s limited role can be explained by the current state of integration between EU countries on foreign and defence policies.

The EU will benefit from more demonstrations of its collective capacity. This should be done under a strong lead of the EEAS and the Commission, with the aim of producing fast-tracked analyses and policy proposals and responding in real time to crisis situations that have a profound impact on the Union. This assumes that the European Council of Heads of State and Government is willing to trust again the High Representative and the Commission.

The EU is Directly Affected by Situations in Which It Has No Real Role or Leverage

In the Mediterranean area, the past few years have been dominated by momentous events such as the Arab revolutions, a phenomenon which outpaced diplomacies worldwide and resulted in differentiated, as yet unresolved situations. In the more recent periods, two situations stand out as examples of developments in which, for various reasons, the EU has so far had no decisive leverage, but is directly exposed to their fallout: one is migrations and refugees; the other is the domestic developments in Turkey. In both cases, if the EU cannot find ways to quickly adjust its pre-existing policies, a further degradation of the situation will have the potential of more destabilization within the EU itself. These are situations where, above and beyond the application of EU principles and norms, diplomatic action should incorporate more than ever before the defence of the EU’s own interests. Clearly, the European citizens’ reactions since the 2015 surge in migrations and the 2016 failed coup d’état in Turkey point in that direction.

Migrations and Refugees

This is a case in point: in 2015 and 2016, the EU witnessed a massive surge in asylum requests and arrivals by migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria and Somalia, among other countries. Vast criminal networks specializing in human trafficking have been and remain at work. Such networks have operated in the Mediterranean area for at least three decades, but they have reached a degree of sophistication that often outpaces the reactive capabilities of state institutions. In particular, the crisis of 2015 revealed how efficient their use of social media and telecommunications have been in directing, or even attracting, the huge reservoir of would-be migrants who they consider as their “market.” The FRONTEX Risk Analysis Reports for 2016 and 2015 are particularly telling.5 The huge economic impact of these sudden waves of migration has been felt on both the Aegean track (Syria-Turkey-Greece-Western Balkans) and on the central Mediterranean track (Sub-Saharan Africa, Libya, Italy). EUROPOL estimated the turnover generated by migrant smuggling to and within the EU at around € 5-6 billion for 2015.6

Much like in other illicit activities (drugs, for example), such amounts dwarf the income that any licit activity would bring and therefore trigger vast changes in the normal course of business (sales of rubber dinghies, life vests, clothes, food, land transport services, temporary land accommodation) and elicit corruption and disruption of state controls. Entire regions are affected by these movements: Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey as first recipients; Italy and Greece as countries of first EU arrival; Western Balkans as countries of transit to the EU; Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary as EU countries of transit toward Germany. The impact on local host communities is huge.

Given the intrinsic difficulty to reach a consensus on asylum and migration within the EU and to apply the principle of internal EU solidarity to the refugee situation, two main initiatives were taken. One is the need to reinforce the EU’s border and coast guard capabilities. Work has started and produced some initial results (Rapid Reaction Pool, ini-

tial steps to transform FRONTEX into a European Border and Coast Guard Agency) but much remains to be done.

Another initiative was the agreement with Turkey on Syrian refugees. Despite its initial political flaws (the deal is contravening the EU’s own directive on the application of the Geneva Convention on refugees, and was denounced as immoral) and the absence of an efficient return mechanism, the purely humanitarian aspects work very efficiently, at unprecedented speed (despite claims to the contrary by some Turkish politicians) and it also benefits the host communities whose social and educational infrastructure has been under stress. The political issue will now be whether the Turkish agreement becomes a “model” for relations between the EU and transit countries (e.g. Libya, Niger) or countries of origin.

Vast criminal networks specializing in human trafficking have operated in the Mediterranean area for at least three decades, but they have reached a degree of sophistication that often outpaces the reactive capabilities of state institutions beyond tackling the emergency situations, the EU faces two major hurdles in this domain. One is the need to improve the application of the Geneva Refugee Convention and other elements of humanitarian law in countries where the burden is heavy (Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey) and in countries where the state is failing (Libya).

Equally important is the need to tackle the international criminal networks who have established themselves as genuine “rivals” to states everywhere in the Mediterranean region and beyond. The strong involvement of international criminal networks in human trafficking across the Mediterranean has become a major new feature in the problems confronting the European Union in the region. This is true both in situations of conflict (Syria) or in situations where economic motives predominate (such as with Sub-Saharan migrants). These networks, whose financial capacities and speed of operation often surpass what international diplomacy and individual states (especially in the Sub-Saharan region) can do, represent a massive challenge, not so much because they are something new, but primarily due to the huge size and outreach of their operations. The features of these networks are well documented (cf. the EUROPOL report) but enhanced international cooperation is a must. This is a field in which there is ample room for improvement.

**Domestic Evolution in Turkey**

Turkey is linked in many ways to the EU, especially in economic terms via the Customs Union, and has long held the ambition of forging a political alliance through accession to the EU. The negative developments and instability witnessed in Turkey ever since the Gezi protests in June 2013, therefore, affect the EU, not only because of trade, investment or tourism, but also because a joint ambition (even if challenged by some EU members) has now become a distant prospect, this time because of Turkey’s own orientation toward an autocratic political system.

The degradation of the rule of law has been so vast, especially since the failed coup of July 2016, that the country, by the very choices of its leaders, no longer meets the political criteria for accession.

A political alliance between Turkey and the EU (i.e. accession) will therefore remain impossible if the constitutional reform desired by the Turkish leadership (i.e. an autocratic system with no checks and balances) is implemented. On the other hand, a complete break-up has not been specifically invoked by the EU side (the EP has requested the suspension of accession negotiations, but this is not a compulsory decision) while the Turkish leadership has invoked the possibility of a referendum on EU accession (therefore hinting at a break-up) and repeatedly hinted at joining the Shanghai Cooperation organization. As a result, the realistic way forward in the short and medium term lies in a priority set of actions of mutual interest. For the EU, the issue is now one of political leverage on Turkey’s own governance.

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Apart from the domestic evolution in Turkey, the Turkish leadership has also shown a propensity to bring its own fights onto EU territory. For example, the Turkish government wanted to conduct political rallies in Germany, the Netherlands and other EU countries, taking advantage of the EU’s freedom of expression environment to promote an illiberal new constitution, at a time when campaigning within Turkey was largely denied to opposition forces (some of them jailed, with a state of emergency in force and unequal access to state-controlled media).

When EU governments opposed such political rallies, it resulted in acrimonious comments directed at EU leaders (“Nazis”, “gas chambers”) which left behind extremely negative feelings across Europe. Similarly, Turkey’s decision to prevent Bundestag deputies from visiting German troops involved in the anti-ISIL coalition out of a Turkish base has further escalated the tensions. Similar actions against German and French journalists belong to the same category.

These developments illustrate that, because of the large Turkish diaspora in Europe and because the EU’s values and governance system still represent a beacon of hope for many Turks, the EU is not immune from the sharp degradation of rule of law in Turkey and from the aggressive stance of its leadership. This new reality is very far from the spirit of a strategic alliance and the EU will have to adjust its policies accordingly. Such an aggressive posture from a third country (for reasons pertaining to its internal situation) feed tensions within the EU countries’ political system, with the clear danger of fueling xenophobic and populist tendencies. At this point, it becomes an internal EU problem.

The EU Also Faces Vast Changes in the International Environment

The interaction between the EU and states in the Mediterranean Basin is not happening in a vacuum. There are historical transformations at work in the region which are very largely independent of the EU’s political intentions and means.

The first is undoubtedly the Arab revolutions as a regional phenomenon: when they erupted in December 2010-January 2011, the EU was caught by surprise at the very time it was putting in place the new diplomatic architecture resulting from the Lisbon Treaty (a High Representative, a European External Action Service, new forms of diplomatic coordination in countries in the region). This in itself left only a narrow margin of manoeuvre for the EU.

In addition, the self-engineered Arab revolutions themselves developed in many different directions: Tunisia took the direction of deep structural reforms and patient consensus building in a difficult political context; Morocco and Jordan chose to conduct more modest reforms in order to satisfy the most urgent demands from their citizens; Egypt saw its democratically-elected President overthrown by a military coup in July 2013 and the development of an authoritarian trend; and Syria and Libya fell into a catastrophic cycle of protests and violent repression which resulted in a de facto partition of both countries and are facing a very protracted path toward peace and reconciliation.

As a result, the EU, which was previously equipped to deal primarily with these countries on the basis of a regional policy (same principles, same type of agreements, same type of financial support and trade instruments), found itself hard put to answer very different situations born out of civilian uprisings and often violent armed situations, if not outright war crimes and crimes against humanity. The principled EU policy for the region found itself often ill-equipped to deal with these diverse situations. Only in Tunisia, because of the consensus-based approach typical of the country, does the EU seem to have the means of conducting a substantive dialogue and delivering strong economic and democratic support.

The second major factor is the new Russian policy. Russia intervened in Syria as of September 2015 to simultaneously rescue a collapsing allied regime, establish permanent forward military bases in the Middle East and fill a political vacuum created during the Obama Administration, and finally make a bigger imprint on the world order at the United Nations and through other international negotiations.

The first implication of Russia’s diplomatic involvement in Syria is its willingness to maximize its control over the negotiations toward a political settlement, in

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particular by conducting its own brand of dialogue (the “Astana Process,” with Iran and Turkey), leaving as little a role as possible to the EU and US. The EU initiative to convene a conference on Syria in April 2017 was a welcome step in that respect.

This diplomatic and military move goes together with a strong energy policy implemented with Turkey and Egypt in order to keep as much control as possible of the EU’s external gas supplies, as well as contacts with the Eastern Libya authorities who control most of the country’s oil and gas resources. It takes different forms such as the construction of the “Turkish Stream” gas pipeline or the purchase of 30% of the yet unexploited Egyptian underwater gas fields. In addition, the possible sale of S-400 missiles by Russia to Turkey would create an unprecedented situation within NATO. These factors necessarily affect the EU’s policies in the region.

As of January 2017, the Trump Administration started implementing a new US policy. Policy is perhaps not the most accurate word since, at the time of writing, it is not always very clear what is the real substance and motivation of what is read as “US policy.” For example, the US has decided to side with Saudi Arabia and its allies, with a simultaneously hostile stance against Iran and a confusing one with Qatar. Such abrupt moves are contrary to EU interests. These developments are concomitant with the US President’s hostile or cold attitudes vis-à-vis the EU (for the first time ever) and NATO.9

Finally, the EU itself has been confronted since June 2016 with a major internal transformation following the British referendum on Brexit. While the exit process of the United Kingdom might still take another two or three years to process, the implications on the EU foreign policy outlook are obvious, if only because the Brexit process in itself might create delays, if not a paralysis, in some policies concerning the Mediterranean region.

Confronted with such massive changes and diversified situations, the EU can no longer limit itself to implement region-based policies in its traditional spirit of dialogue and consensus. This typical EU methodology – a replica of its own internal procedures and choices – is not necessarily suited to situations where rule of law has become a remote consideration, dialogue is replaced by weapons, regional cooperation is now a low priority, and international cooperation habits are increasingly disrupted by abrupt changes.

Future Trends for EU Policies in the Mediterranean

The evolutions described in this short article show that the EU’s policy in the Mediterranean area will have to evolve substantially and swiftly in multiple directions. Some of these evolutions have a much wider rationale than handling conflicts and tensions in the Mediterranean, such as for example enhancing the EU’s military capabilities. Other policy areas are more closely linked to the Mediterranean Basin. Here are some examples of how developments in the Mediterranean area should influence EU policies:

− Reinforce the border protection capacities in the region by reaching the objectives set up for the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in October 2016.
− Implement its humanitarian intervention for refugees and migrants as a fully integrated tool in its foreign policy in the region. Strive toward an agreement on an EU migration and asylum policy, including on the crucial issue of legal migration routes.
− Launch an extensive cooperation scheme against international networks involved in trafficking human beings. This should include cooperating with countries of origin and transit and be developed in parallel to an asylum and migration policy.
− Continue to take initiatives aimed at steering the negotiations on the future of Syria in the direction of a sustainable peace accord and political settlement. Involve itself, when the time comes, in the reconstruction of the Syrian State, not just with physical reconstruction or de-mining, but with the rehabilitation of the State’s software: local democracy, elections, transition justice, education, civil society development.
− Engage in a political dialogue with Turkey toward an understanding on a) the way to return to an acceptable level of governance in Turkey itself and b) the unacceptability for Turkey’s internal politics to affect the EU’s own democratic architecture.

Dossier: Geopolitical Turmoil and its Effects in the Mediterranean Region

Libya among Negotiations, Escalation and Chaos

Mattia Toaldo
Senior Policy Fellow
European Council on Foreign Relations, London

For Libya, 2016 was a year of moderate hope with the formation of the Government of National Accord and defeat of Isis. However, the unaddressed problems seem to have come back to haunt Libya in 2017 leading to fears of military escalation and political deadlock. From Europe’s point of view, the situation could still look better today than in the autumn of 2014 when former Spanish diplomat Bernardino Leon started UN negotiations between the different Libyan factions. These eventually led to the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) in Skhirat in December 2015.

Today, the international community can deal with a recognized Libyan government, the UN-backed Presidency Council headed by Faiez Serraj, which sits in Tripoli and is trying to take control of government agencies. Europe has ostensibly found a partner in the fight against the Islamic State, which, by the end of 2016 had lost all its territory in Libya. Similarly, the birth of the Presidency Council has given the EU a legitimate counterpart to deal with migration. But nothing is what it seems, and one only needs to scratch the surface a little to see that things are not headed in the right direction. The coalition that backed the Skhirat agreement subsequently broke up and the Libyan Political Agreement has now lost support from the most significant constituencies in eastern Libya, and its institutions are increasingly weak in the rest of the country. The Presidency Council is undermined by boycotts and personal distrust and it would be fair to say that only a handful of its nine original members are still at work in Tripoli. The Government of National Accord (GNA), the new executive branch established by the Skhirat agreement, never received parliamentary approval and its domestic legal legitimacy is continuously questioned in courts.

Even victory against Isis was just tangential to an outcome of the political process and more the result of efforts conducted by the armed groups of the city of Misrata, with help from US airstrikes and support from intelligence and special operation forces from the UK and Italy. While welcome news, the end of Isis’ “emirate” in Libya has eliminated a buffer between the two largest armed factions: the Misrata-based militias, which mostly back the PC, and the Libyan National Army (LNA) of the UN-backed government’s main rival, Field Marshall Khalifa Haftar. This increases the dangers of escalation in the centre and south of the country with likely repercussions in Tripoli.

Most importantly, the UN-backed government has lost its battle for public opinion. Undermined by the lack of support from the eastern-based House of Representatives, Serraj did not manage to deliver any economic stability and finally broke relations with all relevant economic institutions. Serraj failed to effectively address some key issues which should have been high on his agenda from the beginning, such as the liquidity crisis and the long power cuts, giving the population the sensation that he is not really in charge. This feeling is compounded by his almost complete lack of engagement with the population: Serraj has visited almost every foreign capital with an interest in Libya but has travelled very little domestically.

To understand how we got here and where things may head in the future, we need to look at the roots of the conflict and the situation of Libyan institutions.

How We Got Here

The factions that fought against Gaddafi had already started to divide during the 2011 war. The rift ran
deep between those who were supported by the UAE and advocated some continuity of government with the old regime and those who were supported by Qatar and influenced by Islamist trends, who instead wanted a complete rupture.

A watershed in this sense was the Political Isolation Law approved in May 2013, which banned from public office anyone even loosely connected with the old regime, such as ambassadors who had served in the 1970s. This law was approved by Parliament under heavy pressure from hardline militias and deepened the division that had emerged in 2011. The slippery slope became steeper with the coup in Egypt in the summer of 2013. Libyan Islamists, for fear of ending up like their Egyptian counterparts, retreated within the ever more delegitimized Parliament, the General National Congress, while anti-Islamists gradually coalesced around general Haftar, whose plan was to eliminate by force anything that smelled of Muslim Brotherhood. Haftar attempted a coup in Tripoli on 14 February 2014 and, after its dismal failure, decided to move east where he found solid tribal support and sympathies from all those who had suffered abuse from post-Gaddafi militias, particularly in Benghazi. From this city, in May 2014 he started Operation Dignity, a military operation that, in response, led to the creation of the Benghazi Shura Council, an alliance between all the Islamist and non-Islamist groups opposed to the general.

The factions that fought against Gaddafi had already started to divide during the 2011 war

Amid growing tensions, parliamentary elections were held in June for the new House of Representatives. After the failure of an 11th hour UN mediation, the polls became the trigger for the start of Libya Dawn, a military operation that aimed to drive out of Tripoli all the forces loyal to Dignity. This goal was achieved during the summer when both the government of Abdullah al-Thinni and most Western embassies left the capital. Thinni established himself in the eastern city of Bayda while the House of Representative met nearby in Tobruk, albeit with the boycott of several dozen of its members. At the end of the summer, the forces loyal to Libya Dawn formed a National Salvation Government in Tripoli, effectively in opposition to Thinni’s internationally recognized government, which by that time sat hundreds of kilometres away from government agencies. Since that summer, Libya has not had a single government in charge, but rather executives with no actual control over the government structure. In October 2014, the newly appointed UN envoy Bernardino Leon started a mediation first to end the boycott of the House of Representatives and then to achieve a political agreement between the rival governments. Leon’s negotiations provoked a split within the Dawn camp, between the moderates from the city of Misrata and the hardliners who controlled part of the resurrected parliament that had been elected in 2012, the General National Congress (GNC). To date, the remnants of the GNC faction are still acting as Libya’s third government, alongside the UN-backed government of Abdullah al-Thinni.

Leon’s peace process was an ingenious system of parallel tracks: political dialogue between members of the two rival parliaments; a political parties’ track managed by Algeria; a tribal track managed by Egypt; a municipal track hosted by the EU; and a security track, which never took shape and which should have involved the leaders of the major armed groups. In the end, under pressure from major Western and regional capitals to deliver a deal quickly, Leon and the UN prioritized an agreement between members of the two parliaments. The Libyan Political Agreement was signed in Skhirat by individual MPs because the leaders of the two parliaments, Nuri Abu Sahmain for the GNC and Aguila Saleh for the House of Representatives, would not allow the two assemblies to vote on the agreement. This procedure gave the LPA an extremely fragile base of political legitimacy. The new UN envoy Martin Kobler tried hard to organize a “Libyan Loya Jirga” with major tribal leaders in support of national reconciliation but came up against the doubts of his own UN structure and a lack of enthusiasm from his international partners.

Libya’s Current Institutional System

The LPA created a complex structure. At the top stood a collective presidency of nine members, the Presidency Council (PC). The head of the PC is Faiez Serraj, a Tripoli politician who was a member
of the Tobruk Parliament and was picked precisely because of his lack of a clear profile. The PC also included two representatives of Haftar’s side who boycotted the meetings almost from the beginning, two members closer to the Islamist and GNC camps, two representatives from southern Libya and two powerful Deputy Prime Ministers who represented the city of Misrata and the oil kingpin Ibrahim Jadhran. It took the PC four months to establish itself in Tripoli, where it could count on a loose coalition of militias negotiated by the UN security assistant, the Italian general Paolo Serra. While Serra has been working since the outset on the formation of a Presidential Guard independent from militias and responding directly to the Prime Minister, this is a process that will take many years to take shape, if indeed it ever does. The PC lost members piece by piece until the spring of 2017 when Serraj ended up working mostly with his Misratian Deputy Ahmed Maiteeq and little else. Below the PC, there should have been a Government of National Accord (GNA) but the last two letters of the acronym soon lost any meaning. The first list of ministers was rejected by Parliament in January 2016 and the second list was turned down in August of that year. After that, the assumption by the international community was that the government would carry on without parliamentary approval, pending a more inclusive agreement.

The former GNC was integrated into the system as the High Council of State, based in Tripoli, a consultative senate which was supposed to give a green light to major appointments and reforms of the LPA itself. But at the heart of the LPA system is the House of Representatives (HoR) based in Tobruk, which is the only legislature and was supposed to do two important things for the implementation of the agreement: first, approve a constitutional amendment that included the LPA in the domestic system; second, give a vote of confidence to the GNA. It failed to do either, mostly because the “agreement” of many of its members rested on a fundamental ambiguity: many MPs signed with reservations about article 8 of the final regulations of the LPA, which states that the military leadership will be reappointed by the PC, effectively resetting Haftar’s leadership of the armed forces as voted by the HoR since the autumn of 2014.

This system essentially gave Haftar veto power as long as he could keep the Speaker of the House of Representatives Aguila Saleh on board, who either refused to put the agreement to a vote or did it only when he knew that MPs opposed to it (about 40% of the legislature’s full plenum) were the majority of those attending a specific session.

The “Haftar Issue”

Ultimately, the Skhirat Agreement, because it was based mostly on individual MPs often devoid of any strong link with armed stakeholders, could not effectively address the key issue for most armed factions: the balance of power within the bizarre hybrid security sector created in post-Gaddafi Libya. This hybrid system included the remnants of the official army, which were radically divided between the eastern battalions loyal to Haftar and the mostly inactive but anti-Haftar components in the south and in the west of the country, and an archipelago of militias formally integrated into the government sector. Haftar’s plan is to disarm militias mostly by force, striking tribal alliances where possible and using the air force whenever he can. Militias in western Libya have no intention of disarming and falling under Haftar’s rule, which they consider a remnant of the old regime because of his role in Gaddafi’s war in Chad in the 1980s, despite the fact that he then became an opponent of the dictator. Armed groups have quickly become unpopular in most of Libya because they have been a source of insecurity with their infighting, while receiving generous government salaries and holding elected institutions hostage.

Convinced that he has an historical role in bringing the militia rule to an end, Haftar would like to remain head of the armed forces, under the only oversight of the loyal Speaker of the House of Representatives. He can count on a wide array of international patrons, which includes Egypt and the UAE and, more recently, Russia, though Putin’s support for the Libyan “Field Marshall” so far has not been the same as that for Assad. Domestically, Haftar can count on anti-Islamist public opinion and politicians along with some powerful tribal forces in the east of the country. His support base in the west of Libya is slimmer, and, though he enjoys some popular support there, he lacks the military resources to conquer all of Libya by force. Since Skhirat, US, European and regional diplomacies have tried to come up with creative solutions for
the “Haftar issue”: how to include Haftar and his supporters in the agreement while keeping the principle of civilian oversight over the security sector, which is a red line for many radical anti-Gaddafi factions from western Libya. These creative solutions have mostly focused on the combination of two elements: a military council in which Haftar would play a role but where he would not be the only man in charge; and a collective civilian oversight by the heads of different institutions. So far, Haftar’s push-back has been that his priority remains fighting “terrorism,” his definition of which also includes many of the armed groups that support Serraj, and not striking a power-sharing agreement with those who now control Tripoli. In this sense, he has resisted pressure even from his Egyptian patrons, who would like to portray themselves as the brokers of a new agreement.

An International Solution to the Current Stalemate?

By September 2016, it became clear that the Haftar camp would never play ball with the existing LPA, while Serraj’s government was too weak in Tripoli to continue as it was. The UN envoy Martin Kobler agreed to reopen the agreement but to focus on a limited revision. Ultimately, there is no agreed solution to the Haftar issue and all attempts to come up with creative solutions that the Field Marshall would approve of, have been met with his rejection. It is also true that, should any faction from western Libya accept an agreement giving Haftar a major role in the security sector, it would most likely encounter the armed opposition of the other groups for which the head of the LNA is an existential threat with his plan to uproot anyone he considers too “Islamist.”

On the other hand, there is now a kind of shared consensus, particularly among politicians from different sides, on three elements of a potential deal. First, the reduction of the Presidency Council from nine to three members, one for each of the regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan; second, the separation between the position of the head of the Presidency Council (i.e. head of state) and that of Prime Minister; and third, the need to have parliamentary elections in 2018, possibly with the approval of the draft constitution agreed by the Constitu-}

tional Drafting Assembly, as the necessary political horizon. It is not impossible that Haftar’s strategy evolves into supporting a presidential system in which he could run for the highest office just like his model Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. But it is unclear whether the same armed factions in western Libya who oppose his takeover by force would accept him as President should he win presidential elections.

Even though the contours of the solution are known, there is a lack of credible and recognized mediators. The UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is extremely weak and its credibility has been eroded

Ultimately, even though the contours of the solution are known, there is a lack of credible and recognized mediators. The UN mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is extremely weak and its credibility has been eroded by a combination of mistakes made by some of its representatives and a delegitimization campaign by certain Libyan factions, particularly in the east. The new UN Secretary General has been trying right from his first weeks in office to appoint a successor to Martin Kobler but his first choice, former Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, was rejected in the 11th hour by the US. Even with a new envoy, it is unclear if Guterres is capable of shifting UNSMIL towards new tasks, more in line with Libya’s reality of localized sub-state and non-state actors, where the traditional UN roadmap of negotiating a national ceasefire, then a political agreement and elections to be followed by the management of institution-building and disarmament needs deep changes.

Many regional and world powers have tried to fill the void left by the weakness of the UN. Egypt has mastered its own roadmap based on an agreement between two delegations from the House of Representatives and the State Council. But Egyptian mediation has its limits not just because of the support that Cairo has given to Haftar’s Operation Dignity from the start, but also because it is unlikely that the Egyptian regime, which has crushed Islamists at home, would agree to a political settlement that included them in a neighbouring country. Without
that, the conflict in Libya would be likely to continue even if there was a new political agreement. Algeria and Tunisia have a different idea based on the inclusion of all factions, including the Islamists, but it is hard to see how the stakeholders in eastern Libya will accept an agreement brokered by them which would undermine Egypt’s role.

Nor can Western powers play any significant role in the current situation. The US administration seems to be affected by the President’s disinterest for Libya and the slow appointment of those administration officials that would normally manage any serious engagement with a file like Libya. Large European countries like the UK or France are engulfed with important national elections and there is a lack of focus on North Africa in general among other EU Member States. Italy has been the only exception with a strong domestic focus on Libya and the opening of the embassy in Tripoli, but it cannot manage the mediation alone.

The real news since the summer of 2016 has been the steady rise of Russia’s involvement. Putin has been playing an ambivalent role. On the one hand, supporting Haftar, while on the other, warning that the conditions are not yet right to lift the arms embargo, Haftar’s main request. Russian advisors or special forces have reportedly been supporting the Libyan Field Marshall, though, as of April 2017, there is no major Russian military engagement on his side. On the other hand, Russian diplomats have been constantly engaging with everyone with particular efforts in outreach to Tripoli and Misrata’s factions. The official Russian propaganda portrays Russia’s role as negotiating an agreement to fix the chaos that the West created in 2011, but it is unclear what the relationship between this diplomatic goal and the military support for Haftar is.

**Without Agreement, Escalation or Chaos?**

It is hard to see how any of the foreign actors alone can broker a deal in the absence of a strong UN framework and readiness from the Libyan side. On this last point, the only likely coalition in favour of a new settlement is one that relies on the politicians’ will not to be sidelined by leaders of armed groups. In this sense, certain actors could play a key role: the Speakers of the two houses of parliament, Aguila Saleh for the House of Representatives and Abdul Rahman Swehli for the High Council of State; Prime Minister Serraj; leaders of both Islamist and anti-Islamist political parties; and local political leaders interested in having a national framework that would prop up local ceasefires. But again, it is hard to see which Libyan or foreign actor could bring them together.

At the UN, distrust between Russia and the three permanent Western members of the Security Council, fuelled by disagreements over Syria or other conflicts, could stop any significant improvement in the role of UNSMIL or any endorsement of partial renegotiations of the political agreement.

However, while the prospects for even a limited deal remain limited, the alternatives are highly unattractive. There is no single armed faction that can win the Libyan low-intensity conflict, but escalation is a danger at present, particularly in southern Libya and Tripoli. Military resources currently available to the different factions do not allow for a full-scale escalation, but any increase in fighting would have political repercussions that would increase the chaos, particularly in Tripoli. Offensives by Haftar’s Libyan National Army, while unlikely to bring a military breakthrough, embolden the hardliners in Misrata thus making a political deal even less likely. These hardliners, in turn, support extremist groups both in Benghazi and in Tripoli, and this could lead to further fighting, particularly in the capital, ultimately making the strong presence of both a unified government and of international players increasingly unlikely.

Sadly, Libyans and Libya-watchers could look back at 2015 and 2016 as a missed opportunity to avoid the entrenchment of the de facto partition of the country between east and west and give the country not just peace, but also a government that would look after it. Neither the international context nor the domestic alignments seem set to allow for a similar opportunity any time soon.
Syria in the Aftermath of the Russian Intervention: the Paradoxes of De-confliction

Thomas Pierret
Senior Lecturer
University of Edinburgh

In May-June 2017, US aircraft carried out three attacks against loyalist troops advancing through the Badiya (central desert) towards al-Tanaf, a Syrian-Iraqi border crossing held by Pentagon-backed rebels and Western special forces. It was the first time since the start of the conflict that Washington had provided Syrian insurgents with direct air support against pro-regime forces. This showdown was a paradoxical result of the strategy followed by Russia after its military intervention in Syria in September 2015. To ensure the success of this intervention, Moscow worked towards concluding de-confliction agreements with other state actors involved in the conflict, namely, the United States, Jordan, and Turkey. Yet, precisely because this strategy achieved its main goal, that is, bolstering Assad’s military position in western Syria, it rapidly led to renewed international tensions. As loyalist forces returned to eastern regions in which they had only maintained isolated garrisons after their retreat in 2012, they came into direct contact with rebels operating against the Islamic State (IS) with Turkish support, in the northern Euphrates valley, and backed by the US and Jordan, in the southern Badiya. While in the north, the presence of a quasi-neutral third party – the Kurdish YPG – has constituted a buffer between the two other parties, in the south, the respective expansions of loyalist and rebel forces into formerly IS-held territories has translated into direct confrontation and heightened the risk of escalation between foreign powers.

Loyalist Consolidation in Western Syria

The fall of eastern Aleppo in December 2016 was the coronation of a series of loyalist victories made possible, from October 2015 onwards, by a combination of three main factors. First, the Russian intervention vastly increased the firepower of pro-regime forces through the deployment of several dozen aircraft and the upgrading of the Syrian army’s armoured and artillery components. Second, besides limited Russian intervention on the ground, loyalist manpower has been bolstered by thousands of Shia foreign fighters recruited by the Iranian Pasdaran in Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although such forces had started to operate in Syria in late 2012, they were considerably strengthened in late 2015 by the return to Syria of Iraqi militias that had been scrambled back home in the summer of 2014 to fight the IS insurgency, and by the provision of combat vehicles sourced from the militaries of Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

The third factor that paved the way for loyalist success against the rebels was Russia’s ability to secure deconfliction agreements with key sponsors of the rebels. Although the CIA did not end, and even initially increased, its covert support programme for vetted insurgent factions after the Russian intervention, Moscow and Washington nevertheless negotiated the formalization of their cooperation in Syria through the establishment of a Joint Implementation Group (JIG) in the framework of which they would cooperate against IS and the Nusra Front. The agreement was cancelled two days before its planned start in September 2016 due to an allegedly accidental US airstrike against regime soldiers in Deir ez-Zor, but the outgoing democrat administration nevertheless stood
firm in its rejection of the last-ditch attempt at changing its Syrian policy and engaging in military confrontation with Assad.1

In the south, Russia rapidly succeeded in convincing Jordan to establish a joint coordination centre in Amman and to freeze support for anti-regime operations by the Southern Front rebels,2 whose sole task would now be to fight the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade (known as the Khalid bin al-Walid Army since May 2016), an IS affiliate operating in the western part of the province of Der’a. For the Hashemite kingdom, whose chronic sense of vulnerability had been exacerbated since 2011 by the irresolute behaviour of its American protector in the Syrian conflict, cooperating with Moscow was primarily a matter of protecting the country from the spillover effects (in particular a renewed influx of refugees) of a potential escalation by loyalist forces along its border.

The consequences of Jordan’s backtracking were rapidly felt, and had a profound impact on the dynamics of the war in southern Syria. With fewer fronts to fight on, and weaker rebels, loyalist forces struck devastating blows to their enemies. In January 2016, they retook the town of Sheikh Maskin along the Damascus-Der’a highway, then redirected their efforts towards the suburbs of Damascus. In the spring, they captured the southern half of the rebel-held eastern Ghouta, exploiting a deadly turf war between the area’s main rebel factions, the Army of Islam and the Rahman Corps.

Following the August 2016 seizure of the western suburb of Daraya, whose entire remaining population was forcibly displaced, the regime’s strategy underwent a dramatic shift. Whereas since early 2014 local truces had allowed rebels to maintain control over several besieged localities of the Damascene periphery, the regime now stepped up its military effort against those towns and demanded the complete disarmament of their defenders, or their evacuation to the northwestern insurgent stronghold of Idlib. Truces were thus abrogated west of the capital (Ma’damiyya, Khan al-Shih, Kanakir, and al-Zakiya), north of it (Qudsiyya, al-Hamma, and al-Tell), along the Lebanese border (Barada valley), in Homs’ al-Wa’r neighbourhood, and by May 2017, in the inner Damascene neighbourhoods of Qabun and Berze. In parallel, Islamist factions Ahrar al-Sham and Tahrir al-Sham finalized two-year long Qatar-mediated negotiations with Iran over the simultaneous evacuation of four besieged towns, the opposition-held Madaya and Zabadani, in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, and the Shia, pro-regime Fu’a and Kefraya, near Idlib. In February-March 2017, suicide attacks by Tahrir al-Sham and the Islamic State in regime-held neighbourhoods of Homs and Damascus were a possible harbinger of forthcoming transformations in the insurgency’s modus operandi if the rebels’ territorial control in the region was to fade away entirely.

Military dynamics in the north unfolded in a similar way after the Russian intervention, even though Turkey was harder, and longer, to convince. Ankara initially calculated that by bolstering its support for the rebels (including, most spectacularly, by shooting down a Russian bomber over the Syrian-Turkish border in November 2015), it could turn Moscow’s intervention into a quagmire. By early 2016, however, two major rebel defeats along the Turkish border signalled that such hopes were unfounded: in January, insurgents were expelled from their strongholds of Rabia and Salma in the coastal mountains, thereby losing most of their positions in the province of Latakia; the following month, a joint offensive by loyalist forces and the Kurdish PYD in the northern countryside of Aleppo cut the rebels’ supply lines between the city and the border crossing of Bab al-Salama. Both campaigns increased Turkey’s already considerable refugee burden, as tens of thousands of civilians flocked to the border to escape Russian bombardments.

The Turkish stance on the Russian intervention further changed afterwards because of Ankara’s decision to launch Operation Euphrates Shield in August 2016. The AKP government had announced its intention to establish a “security zone” in northern Syria one year earlier, following the June 2015 capture of Tell Abyad by the PKK-aligned PYD. This development had allowed the Kurdish party to ensure territorial continuity between its self-administered cantons of Cizire and Kobane, a scenario whose repetition Turkey was determined to prevent by seizing the IS-held positions separating Kobane from the western canton of Afrin. As Ankara was initially

During the siege of eastern Aleppo and final loyalist onslaught on the city in the last weeks of 2016, Turkey refrained from encouraging the rebels to make a last stand, acting instead as a mediator in the negotiation of the evacuation agreement. Afterwards, moreover, Turkey agreed to join Russia and Iran in running the Astana Process, a series of conferences which in May 2017 led to the proclamation of four “de-escalation zones” across western Syria. Deconfliction, or outright victory, in the south and the north, left loyalist forces with one main stumbling block in western Syria, that is, the large rural area centred on the province of Idlib and stretching from the north of Hama to the western approaches to Aleppo. This insurgent powerhouse dominated by Ahrar al-Sham and Tahrir al-Sham has served as a launch pad for the major rebel offensives that briefly broke the siege of Aleppo, in August 2016, and came dangerously close to the city of Hama, in the summer-autumn of 2016 and the spring of 2017. Although advances made by the rebels during the latter campaign were rapidly reversed, the fear they instilled in the regime was apparently sufficient to spark the decision to deter a further attack by launching the 4 April sarin bombing of Khan Sheikhoun, a city used by the insurgents as a rear base for the northern Hama offensive.

The US decision to respond to the Khan Sheikhoun attack by launching cruise missiles against the regime’s airbase of Shu’ayrat came as a surprise given previous assumptions that the Trump Administration was exclusively concerned with the anti-IS campaign. However, this unprecedented development did not signal a major shift in Washington’s strategy in Syria, since, in spite of initial ambiguities, the missile strike was strictly defined as a way to deter further use of chemical weapons by Assad. For the regime, the consequences of the US move were negligible from a military point of view, yet they were more serious at the diplomatic level. Before the fall of Aleppo, the regime had started lobbying Western countries, in particular European ones, by highlighting the fact that its increasingly strong military position made it the only credible partner, hence recipient of foreign funding, for the stabilization and reconstruction of the country. Based on implicit blackmailing over further waves of refugees if the regime was not given the economic means to retain its population, this lobbying campaign was met with some success among Western analysts and decision-makers, but it suffered a severe (albeit probably temporary) blow when US Tomahawks reasserted Assad’s status as an international pariah.

Despite the bombing of Shu’ayrat, therefore, loyalist dominance made military developments in western Syrian an increasingly inconsequential source of international tensions. However, by allowing pro-regime forces to return to the east, and to challenge foreign powers operating there, the same trend significantly raised the geopolitical significance of the region.

The Northeastern Front: Entrapping Turkey

Following the Russian intervention, regime forces started to slowly move eastwards from Aleppo into IS-held territories. The first major push towards Raqqah was met with a disastrous setback in June 2016, but the capture of eastern Aleppo in December, and ensuing proclamation of a nationwide cessation of hostilities, allowed loyalist troops to resume operations in
the area and, after four years of absence, to reach the Euphrates river by March 2017. The move was primarily aimed at stopping the advance of the Euphrates Shield forces which, after the capture of al-Bab, announced their intention to push south to take part in the liberation of Raqqa from IS. Turkey argued that in spite of their multi-ethnic character, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces were unfit to retake Arab-majority Raqqa due to their submission to PYD leadership. Now trapped in their northern pocket, Turkish troops tried to force their way to Raqqa through the PYD-held city of Manbij, yet rapidly had to cease their advance due to the deployment of regime, Russian, and US units in the area.³

Regime-PYD cooperation entailed benefits for both partners: the regime could reopen a land connection between Damascus and the northeastern Jezireh, and the PYD did the same between its western and eastern possessions. This cooperation does not necessarily preclude future confrontation, however, the PYD’s project of “democratic federalism” being fundamentally at odds with Damascus’ pretensions to reassert its control over a centralized Syria. Moreover, the Kurdish party’s relations with Assad’s Iranian ally have grown tense over the spring of 2017 due to the progress made by Tehran-backed Popular Mobilization Units on the Iraqi side of the border, which has allowed them to challenge the PKK’s influence in the Iraqi region of Sinjar, as well as to attack IS-held Syrian villages claimed by the PYD in the south of the province of Hassake.⁴

The ambiguity of the PYD’s position has allowed Russia to play a complex balancing act by exploiting Turkish military pressure (for now limited to sporadic bombings of Kurdish positions) to foster collaboration between the regime and the YPG,⁵ while at the same time using the threat of increased support for the Kurdish militia to shape Ankara’s policies in its favour. By sending troops to the western YPG stronghold of Afrin in March 2017, Moscow deterred Turkish attacks against the area while emboldening YPG leaders, who evoked the possibility of moving south to the province of Idlib and seizing the border area from the rebels.⁶ Securing Russia’s restraint in its support for the PYD has been one of the main reasons for Turkish participation in the Astana Process. As part of the latter, Ankara paid lip-service to the idea of joining Russian and US efforts against Tahrir al-Sham, which in turn led to a significant increase in armed incidents between rebel groups: Tahrir al-Sham branded Turkish-backed factions as part of the “Astana conspiracy,” hence as legitimate targets in its attempt at seizing strategic positions across the northwest and ensuring its long-term survival in a hostile international context. Although the PYD’s multiple allegiances have made northern Syria a remarkably complex strategic environment, the Kurdish party’s ambiguity has also allowed it to play the role of buffer, hence to mitigate international tensions for the time being. In the Badiya, however, the absence of such a third-party in the regions abandoned by IS have put the regime and the US-backed rebels on a collision course.

The Race to Deir Ez-Zor

Loyalist campaigns in the central desert (Badiya) are the best illustration of the regime camp’s instrumental approach to ceasefire agreements, whose purpose is not to pave the way for a negotiated settlement, but to allow for the reallocation of manpower to the east. The nationwide cessation of hostilities proclaimed in February 2016 allowed loyalist forces to retake Palmyra from IS, one year after the city fell to the jihadi group. Palmyra was lost to IS once again in December 2016 as loyalist forces were concentrated in Aleppo, but a new cessation of hostilities proclaimed in December 2016 allowed loyalist forces were concentrated in Aleppo, but a new cessation of hostilities at the end of that month paved the way for a new successful counterattack, following which regime forces expanded their control in the central desert. The Russian-Iranian-Turkish agreement on de-escalation zones announced in May 2017 was once again used by the regime to prepare for a large-scale offensive aimed, this time, at re-opening the road from Palmyra to the besieged garrison of Deir Ez-Zor, and further south, to reassert control over the Syrian-Iraqi border.

³ “Syria forces quietly take up buffer between Kurds, Turks,” Daily Mail, 7 March 2017.
Besides the ambition to retake the oil-rich Syrian-Iraqi border area, the desert campaign was primarily motivated by the aim of foiling a parallel offensive carried out against IS by Jordan-backed rebel units operating alongside members of US, British and Norwegian special forces. In late 2015, the Pentagon started to train and equip a “New Syrian Army” (NSA) made up of rebels previously expelled from Deir ez-Zor by IS. In the following March, the NSA took the border crossing al-Tanf, at the meeting point of the Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi borders, and in June, it carried out a bold, but disastrous, attack behind IS lines on the military base of al-Hamdan near Al-Bukamal.

The string of victories won by loyalist forces in western Syria throughout 2016 allowed the regime and its allies to redirect their attention against a retreating IS, hence to cooperate with, or confront, local forces that had been fighting the jihadi group in relative isolation from the civil war’s western theatre.

As IS weakened in the spring of 2017, however, the NSA (refashioned as Jaysh Maghawir al-Thawra) and other US/Jordanian-backed units that had long been operating in the southeastern part of the central desert (Jaysh Usud al-Sharqiyya, the Martyr Ahmad al-‘Abdo Forces) seized large parts of the southern desert, reaching the administrative limits of the province of Deir ez-Zor in May. Accusing the US, the UK and Jordan of preparing a large-scale ground operation towards Al-Bukamal, pro-regime forces spearheaded by Iran-led Iraqi and Afghan Shia militias attacked US-backed rebels on the ground, and bombed one of their bases along the Jordanian border. Loyalist advances towards al-Tanf were met with the May-June US airstrikes, but the regime camp reacted by circumventing the al-Tanf garrison and pushing towards the Iraqi border further north, thereby linking up with pro-Iranian Iraqi militias operating on the other side of the border.

The arrival of loyalist forces on the Syrian-Iraqi borders marked a major strategic turning point in the conflict, not only because it hindered further progress by US-backed troops towards Al Bukamal, but also because it allowed the Pasdaran to establish a land bridge between Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. By mid-June 2017, Washington’s only reaction to this development was a purely defensive one, as HIMARS multiple-rocket launchers were deployed to al-Tanf to deter further loyalist attacks. The US thus seemed unwilling to accept it had been checkmated by the Islamic Republic, but it was also unlikely to engage in a significant military escalation against pro-regime forces, which, given the limited manpower of the al-Tanf rebel units, would require a significant increase in US boots on the ground. The Trump Administration was thus most likely to adopt a wait-and-see policy by keeping a zone of influence that would provide it with a strategic asset in a possible confrontation with Iran in the post-IS era.

Conclusion

The string of victories won by loyalist forces in western Syria throughout 2016 allowed the regime and its allies to redirect their attention against a retreating IS, hence to cooperate with, or confront, local forces that had been fighting the jihadi group in relative isolation from the civil war’s western theatre. Loyalist expansion to the east did not only reconnect previously separate battlefields, but also increased the risk of direct confrontation between the regime camp, on the one hand, and Turkey, the US and Jordan, on the other hand, even though the latter countries had gradually distanced themselves from the conflict’s master cleavage since the Russian intervention. The destabilizing effect of IS’ 2014 blitzkrieg in Iraq and Syria might thus be felt long after the jihadi organization ceases to control any territory: the threat from IS provoked, or facilitated, the direct intervention of foreign powers (the US, Iran, Russia, and Turkey) between which IS initially acted as a buffer, but that are now increasingly facing each other as the “Caliphate” dwindles. Paradoxically, therefore, the end of IS could actually make the Syrian conflict more volatile than ever.

Saudi Arabia: Towards a More Interventionist Diplomacy?

Agnès Levallois
Research Associate
Fondation pour la recherche stratégique (FRS), Paris
Lecturer, Sciences Po, Paris

Saudi Arabia has encountered numerous challenges since the start of the protest movements in the Arab World in 2011 and Iran’s return to the regional stage. At first the government was concerned about the consequences the uprisings could have for the Kingdom – Bahrain is a case in point. Then the evolution of the Syrian case spoiled its policy of support for the opposition. And finally, the intervention of the Saudi Armed Forces in Yemen to counter the advance of the Houthi forces has proven a nightmare, for they are at a deadlock, with no currently foreseeable end to the crisis. Riyadh finds itself propelled to centre stage, having to assume the role of regional power to counter Iranian ambitions, reassure the Sunni populations in the face of an absence of leadership, and counter the rise of radical Islamist groups and the Islamic State.

Saudi Arabia and Iran’s Return

Riyadh considers that Iran’s return to the regional stage thanks to the Iranian nuclear programme agreement between Tehran and the P5+1\(^1\) signed on 14 July 2015 represents a major threat due to the Iranians’ hegemonic goals. Since then, it sees Tehran behind the ensemble of conflicts in the region; it is concerned about Iran’s policy of influence and considers it responsible for destabilizing the Middle East. It is true that certain official Iranian statements are not reassuring for the Saudis. Ali Akbar Nategh-Nouri, former Speaker of the Parliament of Iran, the Majlis, declared in January 2015: “We find that our revolution has now been exported to Yemen, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.” On the previous 16 December, Ali Velayati, councillor to the Supreme Leader, purportedly stated that Iran’s influence currently extended “from Yemen to Lebanon.”\(^2\) This declaration, widely broadcast in the Gulf, heightened the oil monarchies’ sensation of being surrounded, in particular Saudi Arabia.

The rivalry between the two regional powers is old: in the early 1980s, the project to export the Islamic revolution had led the Gulf monarchies to fear action against them through their Shiite communities, and it was this spectre that reappeared in February 2011 when thousands of people, primarily Shiites,\(^3\) gathered at Manama’s Pearl Square. The movement was violently repressed through the intervention of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) forces led by Saudi Arabia.

The Failure of Riyadh’s Syrian Policy

At the onset of the Syrian uprising in March 2011, the Kingdom observed the situation, little inclined to support a popular movement. It took the side of the

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\(^1\) The P5+1 refers to the UN Security Council’s five permanent members – the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia and China – plus Germany.


\(^3\) The dynasty in power is Sunni, whereas the Shiites make up 70% of the Bahraini population and are suspected by the Sunni Saudis of being manipulated by the Iranians. The protest was, however, primarily a movement demanding civil rights and not a destabilization movement initiated by the Iranians.
opposition as of August,\(^4\) considering the Saudi population’s sensitivity towards the protest movement and with the aim of overthrowing the Bashar al-Assad Regime. It hoped to thus weaken the Tehran-Damascus axis and Hezbollah’s position in Syria, because for Riyadh, the Iraqi precedent should not be repeated.\(^5\) Indeed, it would be appropriate to prevent Tehran from gaining a stranglehold over Syria like it has over Iraq.\(^6\) Qatar likewise gave its support to the rebel forces, but the Syrian stage had become an opportunity for competition between the two oil monarchies, to the detriment of the effectiveness of the aid provided to the Syrian opposition, which was to heavily suffer the consequences. Both countries sponsored brigades without accepting the development of a common strategy, which would obviously have been more effective vis-à-vis Iran, which had a clear objective: unconditional support to the Assad regime.

The fundamental difference between Iran and Saudi Arabia in handling the conflicts is that Riyadh has not managed to establish serious proxies upon which to rely and build a strategy in order to safeguard its interests as Tehran does through Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria. The Saudis have spent significant sums to fund groups but have not managed to create loyalties. The fall of the city of Aleppo demonstrates the oil monarchies’ inability to provide support to the rebels significant enough to allow them to reverse the balance of power, which the Russians and Iranians have, thus cementing their role in the Syrian conflict.

Riyadh sees Tehran behind the ensemble of conflicts in the region and considers it responsible for destabilizing the Middle East

With this intervention in Yemen, the new Saudi king, Salman,\(^8\) intended to assert his regional power and send a clear message to the Iranians that “he would not tolerate the presence of a power under Iranian influence in the Arabian Peninsula.”\(^9\) But was Iran really aiming to threaten Riyadh through the Houthis when it was already deeply engaged in Syria? Nothing is less certain, but this military operation also had a domestic political goal, which was the confirmation of Prince Mohamed ben Salman, the king’s young son, as deputy crown prince and Defence Minister, positions to which he had just been appointed. He thus needed to take his first steps and establish himself as a credible minister, though clearly, the results are very mixed.

The Challenge of the War in Yemen

The Houthi rebellion in Yemen is an existential challenge for the Kingdom due to its geographical proximity to that country, because Riyadh has always considered Yemen as its backyard and as a matter of domestic policy. The deployment of the Saudi Armed Forces in “Operation Decisive Storm” as part of an Arab coalition launched in March 2015 was designed to fight against the Houthi rebels\(^7\) because the latter had been militarily occupying the Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, since September 2014 and they had just taken Aden. The Saudi intervention aimed to make the Houthis leave the cities and force them to retreat to their home area, Saada, a city in the north of the country not far from the Saudi border.

Towards Greater Saudi Interventionism?

The Saudi engagement in Yemen marks a deep change in the country’s position, as it now finds itself on the frontline of an armed conflict, whereas until now it had entrusted its security to the United States. But the crisis of confidence between the two countries is deep, for the Saudis took the “dis-

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\(^4\) On 7 August 2011, Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador from his post in Syria.
\(^5\) The Saudis reproach the Americans for having allowed Iran to control Iraq thanks to Washington’s 2003 intervention in Iraq.
\(^7\) The Houthis emerged from the Zaydi minority, which believes in the Shiite doctrine.
\(^8\) He rose to power in January 2015 after the death of his brother, King Abdullah, and three months later, he appointed his nephew, Mohamed ben Nayef, crown prince and his favourite son deputy crown prince.
charge" of Zine al-Abidin Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak as a result of the Arab revolutions very badly, fearing that they could no longer rely on the protection of their ally should difficulties arise. This fear was accentuated by the signature of the Iranian nuclear agreement, which was a priority for US diplomacy – to the chagrin of the Saudis –, not to mention Washington’s announced disengagement from the Middle East.

The Saudis have spent significant sums to fund groups but have not managed to create loyalties

Riyadh has drawn its conclusions from this new situation, realizing the need to be more autonomous insofar as security. And why not establish closer ties with Moscow in order to diversify its foreign policy? This is what it has done by intensifying economic dialogue on oil issues. Beyond economic matters, the Russians hope to take advantage of the new order in the region and their strategic role in the Syrian conflict to regain diplomatic positions. Nonetheless, Moscow’s strong support to the Assad Regime is an obstacle to the strengthening of bilateral relations. Russia’s new foreign relations concept clearly states that “Russia will continue making a meaningful contribution to stabilizing the situation in the Middle East and North Africa.”

The Russians are aware of their capacity to serve as intermediary for certain matters and could attempt to lower the tension between Tehran and Riyadh. Indeed, stabilization of the Middle East will require rapprochement between these two countries, for they are fighting one another by proxy on several battlefields.

Will the latest developments in Syria, with the 4 April 2017 chemical attack on Khan Sheikhoun attributed to the Assad regime, change the order of things? The rapprochement that seemed to be developing between Moscow and Washington is no longer on the agenda and Riyadh, which welcomed Donald Trump’s election, was also glad of the US airstrikes against a Syrian military base as it represented a break with Barack Obama’s non-intervention in August 2013, which had angered the Saudis. The latter seem reassured by Trump’s actions; they share the same analysis of radical terrorism and the new US President has made sure not to include the Saudis on the list of nationalities banned from entering America. In contrast, on the matter of Syria, Riyadh and Moscow’s points of view diverge, the rapprochement between the two countries being primarily economic and relatively fragile.

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10 Document approved on 30 November 2016 by the Russian president, Point 92: www.mid.ru/fr/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCKB6BZ29/content/id/2542248?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_CptlCKB6BZ29&_101_INSTANCE_CptlCKB6BZ29_languageId=en_GB

11 On 27 January 2017, the US President signed an executive order prohibiting entry to the United States for all refugees and foreign nationals from seven countries: Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen in order to fight against terrorism. The San Francisco Court of Appeals blocked the executive order.
Dossier: Geopolitical Turmoil and its Effects in the Mediterranean Region

Iran and Middle East Conflicts: Myths and Reality

Clément Therme
Research Fellow for the Middle East Programme
International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London

The Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979 transformed the West’s perception of Iran. From the watchdog of the Persian Gulf under Shah Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi to an Islamic Republic that has appeared since then as a destabilizing power for its Arab neighbours, the nature of Tehran’s regional policy has been a constant source of controversy. We will attempt to ascertain whether Tehran could be a partner in the struggle against Daesh or if, on the contrary, Iranian aid against Sunni jihadism could hold future danger in and of itself. There are various perspectives for interpreting the role of Iran in the Middle East.

The first view is the one put forth by President Rouhani: a pacific presence in a conflict zone. From this perspective, it would be preferable to use Iran’s network of alliances in the Greater Middle East in order to settle conflicts. This viewpoint is contested in Iran itself by the most radical individuals among the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (pasdaran). The latter believe Iran should get involved in regional wars (Iraq, Syria, Yemen) to shift the frontline of struggle against Daesh far from national borders. There is likewise a debate on the assessment of the “American threat” in Iran: President Rouhani wishes to phase out the slogan “Death to America,” whereas the most conservative consider it an existential threat.

The Iran nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) reached on 14 July 2015 has allowed a military confrontation between Iran and the US to be avoided. The fact remains, however, that, contrary to the “grand bargain” theory, it has not normalized relations between Iran and certain Persian Gulf neighbours, in particular Saudi Arabia. The hypothesis according to which Iran would become more aggressive on the regional level after the nuclear deal went into effect has likewise not proven correct. One can observe a continuity in Tehran’s regional policy that uses the projection of its power in order to boost its national security and emerge as a major regional power.

In any case, the Daesh attack of 7 June 2017 perpetrated by Iranian Sunni jihadists, some from the country’s Kurdish provinces, is the consequence of several factors: first of all, zero risk does not exist, even for an authoritarian regime such as Iran’s, which lends security services primordial importance. Tehran’s spy mania has certainly contributed to reducing the terrorist risk through heightened surveillance, but the other side of the coin has been restriction of individual liberties and increased surveillance of the population. This security atmosphere was, moreover, one of the issues of the presidential campaign in 2013, and again in 2017. Iran’s regional action and the capture of Mosul by Daesh has also been presented for three years within the framework of the struggle against terrorism. Iran’s will to eliminate Daesh, particularly in Iraq, however, has neared its limits today, since Iran, in turn, has fallen victim to regional chaos.

Moreover, there are several dozen Iranian combatants in Daesh, namely in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. The State is struggling against radicalization in Iran’s Sunni community, which represents approximately 15% of the population (co-opting the Sunni elite) and against Salafism. It is precisely this Salafist issue that provides an official justification for prohibiting all Sunni mosques in Tehran. On the other hand, in Kurdish and Baluch provinces, phenomena of radicalization of traditional Islam (particularly under Deobandi influence) can be observed. Nonetheless, in their immense majority, Iranian Sunnis are moderate. This is attested to by Rouhani’s results in the Sistan and Baluchistan Province (at 73.2%, his best results).

Rouhani’s Re-election: The Limits of Presidential Power

On 19 May 2017, in the first round of the Iranian presidential elections, Hassan Rouhani, with 57% of the votes, prevailed over his rival, the conservative Ebrahim Raissi, who obtained 38.3% of the votes. This victory marked the people’s expression of a will to normalize the country’s interior (aspiration to gradual reform) and exterior (détente on the international stage) situations. The Iranian middle class chose a centrist president, expecting a foreign policy of détente and a focus on the country’s socio-economic development. This also reveals a certain fatigue regarding revolutionary slogans among the Iranian population, regarding both interior and regional politics.

The challenges to overcome remain significant until these popular aspirations are met by President Rouhani. In the first place, unelected institutions (the Supreme Leader, the Judiciary Branch and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) will attempt to prevent him from applying his reforms. With regard to human rights, he will have to deal with a judiciary dominated by elderly ayatollahs who fear any political reform. With regard to regional politics, the Revolutionary Guard Corps will oppose any attempt at compromise with the Gulf oil monarchies and will attempt to limit Rouhani’s diplomatic ambitions for détente, in particular his plan for disengagement from regional wars (Syria, Iraq and Yemen). The Supreme Leader will only support him in his policy to revive the economy and will use the ultra-conservatives to preserve both the revolutionary purity of the Islamic Republic and his personal power. This institutional duality fosters concern among Iran’s neighbours. With which Iran should they negotiate? President Rouhani’s Iran, which seeks win-win relations based on economic synergies, or the security-state Iran with ties to non-state groups in the Greater Middle East? This concern is even greater in countries with a considerable Shiite community. From Afghanistan to Iraq, not to mention Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the question of Iran’s religious leadership arises. Such tension is particularly significant in relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. In addition, whereas the Obama Administration attempted to restore Washington-Riyadh relations by establishing a direct dialogue with Tehran, it seems that the Trump Administration has chosen to support the Saudis and Israelis in their regional confrontation with the Islamic Republic.

From Afghanistan to Iraq, not to mention Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, the question of Iran’s religious leadership arises. Such tension is particularly significant in relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia

Although Trump’s US has de facto continued to keep its engagements from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the fact remains that US statements under the Trump Administration concerning Iran close the Obama parenthesis. The conventional American perception of Iran as the premiere cause of Middle East conflict is back. Indeed, since the 1978-1979 Islamic Revolution, the West’s perception of Iran has changed dramatically. From the watchdog of the Persian Gulf under Shah Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi to an Islamic Republic that has since emerged as a destabilizing power for its Arab neighbours, the nature of Tehran’s regional policy has continually been under fire. Today, the Trump Administration qualifies Iranian influence as “evil,” but at the same time, Tehran could be a partner in the struggle against Daesh. In any case, Iranian aid against Sunni jihadism is controversial: for Russia, Iran is an asset in defeating the high-pr-
Military Entente with Russia

Iran’s participation in the Syrian war is increasingly militarily co-ordinated with Russia. At the onset of Russian military intervention in Syria in autumn 2015, Russian military forces launched 26 missiles from the Caspian Sea against targets on Syrian land. It was the first time the Caspian area had served as a base for launching an attack against a Middle East country. This new security connection between the two areas confirms one of the main parameters of the Russian-Iranian partnership in the post-Cold War period: regional co-operation in the former Soviet area. In the 1990s, the two States came to an agreement to stabilize Central Asia, including Afghanistan, and the Caucasus. Since the onset of the Arab uprisings, this entente has spread to include the Middle East. Iran’s contribution to the stabilization of these areas, according to the framework established by Russian diplomacy, was obtained in exchange for bilateral co-operation in strategic sectors such as military, space or civil nuclear co-operation. This entente remained in place after the signature of the nuclear deal in July 2015, for the major Western powers maintain an embargo on military exports and certain (civil and military) dual-use technologies. After Russian military intervention in Syria, it seems that Iran had kept the use of its Shahid Nojeh airbase near Hamadan secret for nearly a year before the revelation by the Russian media regarding its use by Russian aviation in August 2016. When the information became public, Iranian Defence Minister Hossein Dehghan stated that the Russians were not reliable and that they act exclusively according to their interests (bi-ma’refat va khodkhah). He likewise stated that: “The Russians wish to show they are a superpower and can influence all matters of security in the region and throughout the world. They want to demonstrate that they can influence events in Syria and determine them in order to negotiate with the Americans and ensure they play a role in Syria’s future politics. They published [this information] in order to consolidate their interests.” Conversely, the parliamentary speaker, Ali Larijani, attempted to justify the presence of foreign troops on Iranian soil by explaining that it was due to a temporary agreement for refuelling Russian bombers and that this military agreement did not violate the Iranian Constitution. Article 146 forbids the establishment of foreign military bases in Iranian territory even for pacific purposes. Larijani explained that the bilateral Russian-Iranian agreement, which includes stocking Russian military equipment and the presence of Russian military personnel, did not envisage the permanent establishment of foreign forces in an Iranian military base, which would be unconstitutional.

Russian-Iranian new co-operation is presented within the framework of the struggle against terrorism, in particular against Sunni jihadist groups

In fact, this Russian-Iranian military agreement is unprecedented since World War II. The Iranian State did not actually authorize the use of its national territory to attack targets on foreign soil. Even the Shah of Iran, Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi, forbade the installation of US missiles in Iranian territory, a decision which allowed a warming of Iranian-Soviet relations after 1962. The United States wished to establish military bases in Iran, which the Shah rejected, not only to present his country as an independent power on the international stage, but also to soothe relations with its large northern neighbour.

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The internal debate and contradictory statements by Iranian policymakers show that factionalism in the Islamic Republic is often responsible for weakening national unity in a region that is volatile in terms of security. Parallel to the strengthening of the bilateral military entente through the use of a common military base in the Syrian war in 2016, Russia finally delivered the S-300 missile defence system to Iran and the Iranian defence minister met with his Russian counterpart five times between 2014 and 2016. This new co-operation is presented within the framework of the struggle against terrorism, in particular against Sunni jihadist groups that Iran qualifies as takfiri (excommunicators). And finally, the two governments share the vision according to which, since co-operation began between the West and Afghan mujahidin in the 1980s in Afghanistan, there has been collusion between Sunni jihadism and Western countries. According to the Russian account, the proof is in the relations between the US and Syrian opposition groups considered by Moscow as terrorists or jihadists. Insofar as the Iranians are concerned, Ayatollah Khomeini accused Saudi Arabia of being the leader of “American Islam,” and today, the leaders of the Islamic Republic often point out the US’ role in the emergence of Daesh.

**Conclusion: The Trump Challenge**

For President Rouhani, the Trump Administration is a challenge. Indeed, accusations of Iranian support to “terrorism” have intensified since Trump took up office as US President. In any case, Rouhani’s re-election is preferable for reaching diplomatic solutions in the Middle East region. This electoral campaign has allowed, for instance, the lifting of the taboo on Iran’s participation through “proxies” in regional wars (Iraq, Syria, Yemen). Without questioning the fundamentals of regional policy, the incumbent President insists on the need to make Iran a mediating power exercising a stabilizing influence rather than spending Iran’s resources on participation in conflicts. In any case, he is aware that pursuing a regional strategy hostile to Western interests is hardly compatible with a strategy of economic emergence in a conflict zone.

For President Rouhani, the Trump Administration is a challenge. Indeed, accusations of Iranian support to “terrorism” have intensified since Trump took up office as US President. In any case, Rouhani’s re-election is preferable for reaching diplomatic solutions in the Middle East region. This electoral campaign has allowed, for instance, the lifting of the taboo on Iran’s participation through “proxies” in regional wars (Iraq, Syria, Yemen). Without questioning the fundamentals of regional policy, the incumbent President insists on the need to make Iran a mediating power exercising a stabilizing influence rather than spending Iran’s resources on participation in conflicts. In any case, he is aware that pursuing a regional strategy hostile to Western interests is hardly compatible with a strategy of economic emergence in a conflict zone.
Dossier: Geopolitical Turmoil and its Effects in the Mediterranean Region

Security Challenges, Migration, Instability and Violent Extremism in the Sahel

Yahia H. Zoubir
Professor of International Studies & International Management
Director of Research in Geopolitics
KEDGE Business School, Marseille

The Sahel: “the Corridor of All Dangers”

The Sahel, which stretches from Mauritania to Sudan,1 is an immense eco-climatic zone on the southern edge of the Sahara desert; it boasts a scattered population of 150 million (OCHA, 2016). The permeable boundaries have historically been crossed freely by tradesmen who passed through the historic city of Timbuktu in northern Mali. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Sahel dominated the news due to the drought and famine that caused the death of more than 100,000 and affected 50 million people, one million of whom remain dependent on food aid. Today, the Sahel is on the brink of re-experiencing an even worse tragedy due to certain conditions that have been exacerbated, mainly in Mali and Niger, by the consequences of the Libyan civil war and the toppling of the Gaddafi government, following NATO’s intervention in 2011 (Zoubir, 2012). The Sahel, depicted by a senior Algerian official as the “couloir de tous les dangers,” or the corridor of all dangers, (Interview with former Prime Minister, September 2011) has also been dubbed “Sahelistan,” (Laurent, 2013) in reference to pre-2001 Afghanistan, that is, an uncontrolled region where jihadists could undergo military training and prepare terrorist assaults transnationally, mainly against Western interests both on European soil or in the Sahel’s neighborhood or against the governments in the region (e.g., Mali and Algeria in January 2013). The Sahel today presents a gloomy picture, especially when one considers that this expanse has traditionally been a zone of interaction between “Arab/Mediterranean Africa” and “Black Africa” in which all kinds of human, financial, religious exchanges have taken place. This region has now been replaced by smuggling of all kinds and terrorist routes and has thus attracted the attention of many capitals, especially Algiers, Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, London, Madrid, Paris, Riyadh, Rome, and Washington because of the dangers it represents for international security (Zoubir, 2012a).

The Sahel features all the ills of underdevelopment, but it also suffers from the fragility of states, ethnic conflicts, the presence of violent extremist organizations (VEOs), and trafficking. Although analysts do not all agree on a definition of what constitutes the Sahel (the long strip that for some encompasses ten countries from the Atlantic to the Red Sea Basin), the focus in this article will be limited to Mali and Niger, and peripherally to Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania; Nigeria is also added because of its recent role in the southern periphery of the Sahel and the growing linkage between the jihadist group Boko Haram and the VEOs in northern Mali.

The Sahel: État des Lieux

The Sahel states are among the poorest in the world, figuring in the Low Human Development category of the UN Development Programme. On the UNDP Human Development scale, Mauritania, Mali, 1 The Sahel comprises parts of northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, the southernmost part of Algeria, Niger, the northernmost region of Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroon, Central African Republic and the northern reaches of Ethiopia.
Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger rank 157, 175, 185, 186, and 187, respectively. All the development indicators (literacy, nutrition...) are considerably low (UNDP, 2016). This poverty and the dire socioeconomic conditions, such as high unemployment, weak educational and social infrastructures, and precarious agricultural resources, have created a propitious terrain for the expansion of illegal trafficking, such as drugs, irregular migration, cigarettes, gasoline, medicines, light weapons, vehicles, automobile spare parts, and, more recently, the recruitment of young men by VEOs. The illegal arms, drug and human trafficking is said to generate US$ 3.8 billion annually (ICG, 2015).

The instability generated by the various factors enumerated above have obviously prevented the Sahel from attracting foreign direct investments or tourism, which had been an important source of revenue. The kidnapping of foreigners, one of the main sources of revenues of the jihadists, has deterred foreigners from travelling to the region. Ironically, while the Sahel countries are among the poorest in the world, they are very rich in natural resources: iron ore (Mauritania); uranium (Niger, 4th world producer); and potential for oil (Chad, Mauritania, and Niger). However, the revenues from natural resources, including oil and uranium, are used for militarization and rent redistribution among clans in power, thus exacerbating frustrations and claims by marginalized groups. Furthermore, the incapacity of the Sahel states to fight terrorism and drug trafficking effectively provides the justification for foreign intervention under the guise of security, especially from those powers eager to control the mineral wealth of the Sahelian states.

In addition, the Sahel has witnessed a high population growth; the fertility rate in Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Niger is 6.4, 4.7, 6.3, and 7.6, respectively. The result has been the existence of impressively young populations in those countries. These youths do not all have access to education, cannot find jobs, and have no loyalty to their home states, which are perceived as corrupt and neglectful of their citizens. Economic growth in these countries has been slow. For instance, in Niger, economic growth slowed to 3.6% in 2015 (down from 7.0% in 2014). (African Economic Outlook, 2016). Although GDP growth is respectable, this has not translated into wealth redistribution or sustainable poverty alleviation programmes. In addition to all these difficulties, the Sahel states suffer from bad governance at most levels. The authoritarian, repressive governments have often neglected certain areas, e.g., northern Mali, which became so-called “safe havens,” where organized crime and trafficking of all sorts bind with the local populations, thus becoming substitutes for the weak state authorities, often bought off by local criminals. The collapse of the Libyan government and its fallouts resulted in the circulation of light weapons as well as more sophisticated arms (Zoubir, 2012b). The absence of political institutions, authoritarian and inefficient rule, absence of development, and weak infrastructures have exacerbated ethnic conflicts, as is evident in Mali. These conditions have provided the auspicious ground for two major developments: 1. irregular migration to Europe, facilitated by the various criminal networks that have sprung up in the region and on the Mediterranean shores; 2. the rise of Salafism and violent extremism in a region hitherto reputed for the practice of traditional, tolerant Islam.

The Sahel features all the ills of underdevelopment, but it also suffers from the fragility of states, ethnic conflicts, the presence of violent extremist organizations, and trafficking

One other factor that will certainly contribute to conflicts in the Sahel and the resulting migration is climate change. As pointed out in a recent study, “the region is one of the world’s climate change hotspots. Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, more frequent droughts and floods and land degradation threaten the livelihoods of a population in which the majority relies on agriculture for survival. Environmental shocks, insecurity, chronic hunger and malnutrition have a dangerously symbiotic relationship in the Sahel.” (OCHA, 2016). Climate change in the Sahel will inevitably have a major effect on socioeconomic and political developments and will therefore act as a “multiplier of threats,” in that it will exacerbate the strains and contradictions already existing within given Sahel societies, nota-
bly all those linked to access to shrinking resources (Safir, 2016). Climate change will affect food security, aggravated by an impressive demographic growth rate; estimates project a Sahel population of more than 230 million by 2050 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015). This fast population growth in poor areas will make it a daunting challenge for any government to eliminate poverty and disparities, fight starvation and malnutrition, increase education enrolment and health structures, or to ameliorate the delivery of basic services. The nexus between food security and migration, regardless of the nuances, is also a driver of domestic or cross-border migration (Knoll, Rampà, Bizzotto et al. 2017).

Migration: The Inevitable Escape

Undeniably, the socioeconomic, climatic, demographic, and political conditions prevailing in the region, coupled with shrinking resources, largely account not only for the instability in the region, but also for the desire of young and not so young people to migrate to Europe via the Sahara Desert. In recent years, it is estimated that 53% of the refugees to Europe are aged between 18 and 34 years; of those, 80% are male (Pauwels and Parkes, 2017). It has been reported that 106,705 migrants arrived in Europe from Africa and the Middle East in 2015 (IOM, 2015). In 2014, 8,532 Malians migrated to Europe (Murphy, 2014). It is interesting to note the new finding which revealed that “most migrants surveyed in Libya over the course of 2016 had completed up to the secondary or vocational level of education. 77% of them had been unemployed prior to their departure, and 88% reported having left their countries due to economic reasons” (IOM, 2017). This finding and others show that irregular migration is a complicated issue, not least because the origins of the migrants are not always clearly defined, and likewise their motivations (casualties of socioeconomic conditions, asylum seekers, refugees). But, whatever their motivations they all share the same objective, follow the same crossings, and are often under the control and exploitation of the same smugglers. The number of migration seekers has continuously increased, difficulties using the traditional passages notwithstanding. Indeed, while the number of those using the western Mediterranean routes has decreased dramatically (less than 5,000 arrivals in 2014), the central and eastern Mediterranean routes have become more popular. Indeed, between 2015 and 2016, the central Mediterranean route increased by 16% (IOM, 2017). Between 2013 and 2014, the central Mediterranean Route saw an increase of 376% (Altai Consulting, 2015). Although the number of migrants landing in Italy had fallen to 154,000 (lower than in 2014), the central Mediterranean route remained under intense migratory pressure in 2015 (Frontex, 2015). The same year, though, the eastern Mediterranean route became by far the main route of entry to Europe for migrants and asylum seekers (GMDAC, 2015); the eastern Mediterranean route was, for obvious reasons, the preferred route for Syrian and other refugees from the region. But, for migration from the Sahara-Sahel, the central Mediterranean route still remains the most popular, albeit the deadliest route – more than 300,000 people have reached Europe from North Africa through this route since the end of 2013 (GMDAC, 2016). Indeed, since 2014, 17 out of every 20 migrant deaths in the Mediterranean have occurred on the central Mediterranean route. During the same period, one out of 50 migrants attempting to cross has died. The trend has continued as more people have died in the central Mediterranean in the first five months of 2016 than the equivalent period in any other year (GMDAC, 2016).

Climate change in the Sahel will inevitably have a major effect on socioeconomic and political developments and will therefore act as a “multiplier of threats”

Of course, all this is linked to North Africa, in general, which is not only a point of departure for Algerian, Egyptian, Lebanese, Moroccan and Tunisian migrants (Sánchez-Montijano and Girona-Raventós, 2017), but is also the transit point for African migration to Europe through the Sahel. The flow of asylum seekers to Egypt, which doubled between 2011 and 2014 (Altai Consulting, 2015), is not surprising. Libya, for its part, serves as the hub of organized smuggling. Undoubt-
edly, the political instability and near-chaos in Libya have certainly allowed the smugglers to exploit the conditions to consolidate their presence, but also, conceivably, to lure migrants wishing to migrate to Europe. The organization of smuggling does not translate into safer conditions for crossing the Mediterranean. For example, in 2015, over 5,700 migrants perished or disappeared during migration, a growth of about 9% compared to 2014; more than 3,770 of that figure died in the Mediterranean (GMDAC, 2015). The Sahel states serve as transit points not only for Sahelian migrants, (Chad, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, etc.), but also for Sub-Saharan African immigrants (Nigeria). For instance, Mauritania is the main transit place for Senegalese migrants (Altai Consulting, 2015). Undoubtedly, both Europe and the North African states perceive this increasing migration as a political, economic and security threat. For the former, it is obvious that this influx represents a political danger due to the rise of right-wing populism domestically. Politicians in Europe have difficulties explaining to their electoral the welcoming of huge numbers of refugees at a time when Europe itself is facing difficult economic challenges. Although the security threat from refugees is minimal – there is no evidence that a large number of terrorists have infiltrated Europe through migration – the fear persists that such penetration is possible. For the North African states, the wave of migrants from the Sahara-Sahel region has also been problematic because a sizable number of migrants decide to remain in Algeria or Egypt; such migration represents an economic burden difficult to assume in times of serious financial challenges. Furthermore, the sexual and labour exploitation that this migration generates is a particularly difficult question to tackle in Europe and North Africa. Many of the women migrants, particularly those from Nigeria, are trafficked for sexual exploitation (Altai Consulting, 2015). Others are trafficked for the purpose of labour exploitation. The existence of “slave markets” of migrants on their way to Libya has now been documented (IOM, 2017; Molenaar and El Kamouni-Janssen, 2017).

The choice of the central Mediterranean for migration through the Sahel and northern Africa will remain the main route for African migrants. This is mainly due to the closing of the eastern Mediterranean route, which was made possible with the signing and implementation of the agreement between the EU and Turkey, on the one hand, and the relative permeability of Libya’s borders, on the other hand. However, neither the closure of the eastern Mediterranean route nor the life-threatening perils posed by the central Mediterranean voyage will dissuade would-be migrants from seeking to cross to Europe. The continued deaths will raise political and ethical issues for the states on both shores of the Mediterranean. The EU has taken numerous initiatives, the most recent being the EU Migration Partnership Framework (June 2016), to address the issue of irregular migrations. They include migrant relocation, military actions against smuggler networks and vessels, but also the launch of “an ambitious External Investment Plan to help create opportunities and tackle the root causes of migration” and “to increase financial and operational support and to invest in long-term economic and social development, security, rule of law and human rights, improving people’s life and tackling the drivers of migration.” (European Commission, 2016). The plan is to partner with “key third countries of origin and transit” and to initiate further agreements, the so called “compacts,” with Sahel states, such as Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Ethiopia. The EU also intends to increase its engagement with Tunisia and Libya.

Neither the closure of the eastern Mediterranean route nor the life-threatening perils posed by the central Mediterranean voyage will dissuade would-be migrants from seeking to cross to Europe.

Awareness of the nexus between the lack of development, on the one hand, and security and migration, on the other hand, is a positive first step in addressing the numerous challenges in the Sahel. However, increasing “financial allocations devot-
ed to tackling the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement” will certainly not be enough as long as the EU continues to partner with “key third countries” whose responsibility in continued underdevelopment is great. Working with the Sahelian-North African authoritarian, repressive and corrupt regimes, without some degree of conditionality and verifiable assurance regarding the implementation of good governance and the respect of human rights, will not be enough to stem the waves of migration or of violent extremism. Worse still, state authorities, like those in Mali, “are either complicit in migration, such as by providing migrants free passage in exchange for a toll at roadblocks or by issuing false passports, or that they lack the effective presence and/or capacity to counter human smuggling.” (Molenaar and Van Damme, 2017). Furthermore, some EU Member States must recognize their responsibility in the worsening of the conditions in the Sahel and its vicinity due to military interventions and or collusion between European countries and their multinationals in the corrupt and exploitative behaviour in those states. Last, but not least, cooperation with the internationally recognized but ineffective government in Libya before any determined initiative is taken to restore order and stability in the country will fail to produce stability, not only in the country, but also in the entire North Africa-Sahel region.

Instability and Violent Extremism in the Sahel

The rise of violent extremism hardly occurs in a vacuum; its emergence and the security challenges it represents derive from the internal political and socioeconomic dynamics evolving in each state. The correlation between violent extremism and the domestic socioeconomic and political conditions is indisputable whether in North Africa (Zoubir, 2017), the Sahel (ICG, 2015) or elsewhere. The incapacity of the fragile Sahel states to control parts of their territories, coupled with the conditions enumerated above, allow for the emergence of “safe havens” or uncontrolled/ungoverned spaces in which VEOs and criminal groups can operate freely. In the Sahel, VEOs become substitutes for state authorities and even provide some basic services to the impoverished local communities. The revenues generated by illicit activities allow the VEOs and their allies among criminal groups to establish a new type of governance that escapes the control of the State as has happened in northern Mali or northeast Niger, for example. Unsurprisingly, “ancestral trade and migration routes between the Sahel and Sahara communities are now often being used for smuggling drugs, migrants or illicit products filling the space left by conflict, weak governance and lack of cross-border cooperation” (OCHA, 2016). This lucrative illicit business results in fierce, often violent, battles for control of those smuggling routes. It also results in official corruption as governments use organized crime as a political resource by allowing their allies to benefit from criminal activities (Lacher, 2012). Furthermore, the nexus between VEOs and traffickers, though real, is often exaggerated as this does not take into account the religious dimension of some of the VEOs who are totally opposed to the consumption or distribution of drugs.3

The conditions of marginalization and disenchantment among the youth in the Sahel are such that those who cannot migrate to find a better life – because they cannot afford the high costs extorted by the smugglers – end up either joining criminal groups or VEOs as a means of survival. In sum, disillusionment with the secular State, fueled by lack of education and jobs, can lead to radicalization that may be channelled by Islamist organizations or even violent jihadi groups (ICG, 2015). In this environment, the Salafi ideology becomes a substitute for the traditional tolerant Sufi Islam practiced in the region.

The Sahel’s VEO network is so complex that it is hard to accurately understand who’s who, who does what, and who’s allied with whom; this is explained by the fact that changes of alliances are regular occurrences. For instance, the notorious Emir Mokhtar Belmokhtar (MBM) broke away from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2012, then merged his own organization with the Movement of One-

3 According to interviews I conducted with security officials and journalists, the drug traffickers pay for the right of passage and for protection, but the VEOs, in general, would not allow the drugs to remain in the area. The same cannot be said about corrupt state officials.
ness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO in French), giving birth to the powerful Salafi Jihadist Murabitun (Almoravides) organization, whose primary objective is to revive the unity and lost supremacy of the Almoravides dynasty, which had ruled for centuries over the area. In December 2015, the organization reunited with AQIM. What is significant is the ability of AQIM and its affiliates to knit close relations with the neglected local Tuareg, Arab Berabiches, and other ethnic communities in northern Mali to which it provides funds and, seemingly, governance. A plethora of relatively autonomous cells and brigades, most of which are linked to AQIM, operate in the Sahel. One of AQIM’s most important allies is the Tuareg group Ansar-ed-Dine, whose troops had begun marching toward Bamako in 2013 before being stopped thanks to the French intervention. An AQIM/Al-Murabitun dissident group pledged allegiance to IS to become, in 2016, the Islamic State of the Greater Sahara (ISGS) under Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui (Warner, 2017).

All these groups, whatever their religious/ideological leanings, operate in a complicated environment. AQIM and IS affiliates, respectively, are a real nuisance, especially since they carry out attacks against UN personnel, innocent civilians, and French-Malian troops. They also launch attacks in other areas in Burkina Faso, Niger and elsewhere. France’s intervention in Mali has succeeded in weakening the groups but not eradicating them. All the intervention really did was to kill a few of the leaders and disperse the groups, but the root causes that generate such groups are still present. In Mali, failure to implement the peace settlement (Algiers Accords) has worsened conditions, as civilians are caught between various groups; they are forced to pay allegiance either to jihadist groups or to the Malian military whose brutality has added to the intricacy of the situation (Sonner and Dietrich 2015).

Securitization policies and military interventions will not resolve the many issues in the Sahel. The EU’s awareness of the inevitable nexus between security/migration and development and its willingness to act accordingly through development programmes is praiseworthy but not sufficient. The few hundred million euros to support some programmes are simply not enough. There is a real need to deal with the actual roots of the current conditions. One of the roots of radicalization is unemployment and marginalization. Therefore, tackling this issue through genuine development programmes is vital for security in the Sahel-North Africa and Europe. The EU needs to understand that supporting repressive governments as proxies for its security will bring more insecurity.

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Dossier: Geopolitical Turmoil and its Effects in the Mediterranean Region

Turkey: Military Action in a Strategic Void

Soli Özel
Lecturer at Kadir Has University, Istanbul
Richard Von Weizsacker Fellow,
Robert Bosch Academy, Berlin

2016 turned out to be quite a traumatic, transformative and troubled year for Turkish foreign policy. This was particularly true of Ankara’s policies towards the MENA region. In the Mashreq, these were intimately tied to its relations with the United States and Turkey’s overpowering northern neighbour, Russia. Turkish policy in Syria had to take into account the interests of the two powers and bear the constraints imposed by the two on Turkey’s aspirations and actions, at times to the detriment of declared Turkish interests. Under such circumstances, the year saw a further weakening of Turkey’s autonomous power inside Syria and a more assertive stance in Iraq. This, paradoxically, in spite of the fact that Turkey was a signatory to the Moscow agreement of December 2016 and undertook a military incursion inside Syria, ostensibly to clean its border areas from ISIS, but mainly to check the advance of Kurdish forces of YPG (People’s Protection Units) that sought to unite the three disparate cantons where the PKK-affiliated PYD (Democratic Union Party) held sway. In the wake of the attempted coup of 15 July which traumatized the masses and elites alike, a – perhaps exaggerated – sense of existential crisis has driven Turkish policy. This partially explains the inconsistencies in Ankara’s positions that reflected a fixation with Kurdish gains militarily and diplomatically in Syria and caused a succession of humiliations from Washington and Moscow.

As for the rest of the MENA region, not much has changed in Turkey’s relations with the countries of North Africa. Of course, the kind of attention and resource allocation that immediately followed the Arab revolts subsided. In the most problematic case, in relations with Egypt, there was certainly less mutual recrimination, but the anticipated amelioration that would be symbolized by the exchange of ambassadors did not materialize.

Yet, at the beginning of 2017, after a four-year lapse, a business group from Turkey visited Egypt and participated in the Turkish-Egyptian Business Forum and was received by the Egyptian Minister for Trade and Industry. It is clear that a restoration of cordial diplomatic relations will take a while. In the meantime, the two countries find themselves at the opposing ends of issues such as support for Hamas in Palestine or the desired political future of Syria. Increasingly, Cairo is backing the Assad regime, and Turkey, despite the fact that it is a signatory to the Moscow declaration, which implicitly recognizes the legitimacy of the regime, still desires its ousting.

With the Moscow declaration, Russia, Iran and Turkey agreed to take on the role of guarantors to facilitate the process for a ceasefire and safeguard the territorial integrity of Syria. In doing so they also, at least implicitly, recognized the legitimacy of the Syrian regime that Turkey has been rejecting since Summer 2011.¹

Broken Dreams

Turkey fancied itself a regional power that had both the vision and the capacity to shape the fate of the region. This was particularly the case in the wake of the Arab revolts when Turkey was seen as a plausible model for the aspiring democratic movements of the region. This exaggerated self-confidence coupled with a stubborn resistance to assessing the dynamics on the ground in Syria resulted, by 2016, in Ankara finding itself in an unenviable position.

From August 2011 till August 2016, Turkey’s priorities in Syria were: bringing the end of the Assad regime; supporting the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood to bring them to power and “preventing the formation of the PKK-affiliated (...) autonomous Kurdish state in northern Syria.” As of the late summer of 2015, fighting ISIS was finally added to this list and became an earnest goal in 2016. These goals required Turkey to sustain and support the Sunni Arab forces, which included al-Nusra and its other incarnations, that fought the regime no matter how disdainful they may have been ideologically and in their brutality. After August 2016, despite the war against ISIS, the Kurdish forces were the main target of Turkey’s military might, along with its priority to break the ties between the United States and the Kurds of Syria and possibly eradicate the political gains accumulated over the past six years.

By the beginning of the year, many of Turkey’s claims as a regional powerhouse have fallen by the wayside and the “precious loneliness” Turkish authorities prided themselves with only a few years ago turned out to be mainly “loneliness” in strategic terms. Paradoxically, this conclusion can be reached despite the fact that the Turkish military undertook a major operation inside Syria and reached the town of al-Bab and currently controls a swath of territory in the north of that country.

During the first half of the past year the government’s main concern was to break the isolation that Turkey’s policies has brought upon it. One could cite two instances when a tangible change in Turkey’s policy in Syria took place. The first came after the forced resignation of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the architect of Turkey’s foreign policy, as Prime Minister. Operating under the motto of “reducing the number of our enemies and raising the number of our friends,” the new PM Binali Yıldırım’s foreign policy moved to make amends with Russia, took steps to normalize relations with Israel and laid down Turkey’s ambitions.

This was also when the government finally recognized ISIS as the major security threat that it was, following the terror attacks instigated by the organization. ISIS was to a certain extent tolerated by Turkey, particularly while it fought the PYD. But then it began to attack targets within Turkey in the wake of Ankara’s decision to finally open the Incirlik base to allied aircraft, which bombed ISIS targets.

The heinous acts that killed tourists at two of Istanbul’s most prized tourist spots at the beginning of the year, continued with a spectacular attack in Atatürk airport, Turkey’s main gateway to the world and a very important hub in its own right for international passengers. Finally, ISIS organized the New Year’s eve massacre at Reina, a famous nightclub with a significant international reputation and clientele.

Making Amends

Particularly in the wake of the attacks within Turkey and in view of no agreement with the United States on how to relate to the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Syria, Turkey could not afford to continue having tense relations with Russia. In fact, the rapprochement with Russia was seen as a way to draw the attention of a nonchalant Obama Administration, whose relations with Turkey during its last months in power proved to be very acrimonious. So, shortly before the coup attempt, Turkey bent over backwards and managed to start ameliorating its relations with Russia, which had been severely harmed in the wake of the downing of a Russian SU-24 by Turkish Air Force in November 2015.

As Bülent Aras put it, “…Russian and Iranian interventionism cut back Turkey’s self-assigned leadership role in the Syrian transition. (...) the Obama Administration’s wobbling stance against regional crises undermined an assumed Turkish-American

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cooperation to steer the region towards normalization. (...) the changing dynamics of Arab geopolitics put Turkey on a collision course with pro-Western Sunni powers (...) who were apprehensive about Turkish support for political Islam and Muslim Brotherhood. As a result, Turkey found itself embroiled in immediate multi-frontal confrontation against Kurdish, Russian, Iranian, Western and Arab interests. The year’s assessment reveals a number of contradictions. On the one hand, many developments on the ground exposed the vast gap between Turkey’s ambitions and its capacities. The course of events in Syria continued almost independently of Turkey, and the way back into the thick of diplomatic manoeuvres required Russia’s permission or patronage. In order to attain its goal of reaching the town of al-Bab, an ISIS stronghold, alongside its less than competent allies in the Free Syrian Army, Turkey had to abandon the militias that it supported in East Aleppo. The area was ultimately taken by regime forces, aided by Russia, after a brutal bombardment and incursion.

The government finally recognized ISIS as the major security threat that it was, following the terror attacks instigated by the organization. ISIS was to a certain extent tolerated by Turkey, particularly while it fought the PYD

The shadow cast by Iran over both Iraq and Syria, Turkey’s southern neighbours, also played a part in defining Turkey’s actions. Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria, Ankara and Tehran had taken diametrically opposed positions. In Iraq, there was an understated competition between the two. This year, the competition was further accentuated when Turkey declared its presence as permanent in the town of Bashiqa, where its troops are stationed in the contested zones near Mosul, but was kept out of the operation to free Mosul of ISIS. Iran, on the other hand was heavily involved, albeit through the Shi’a militia loyal to Tehran, and raised its stakes and influence in the Kurdistan Regional Government area. It also made a move to be part of the deals involving the oil transported from the contested province of Kirkuk to Turkey.

Yet, paradoxically or perhaps as a result of the lack of a compass in Turkey’s strategic objectives, Ankara has signed an agreement in Moscow with Iran and Russia concerning the future of Syria. It co-hosted a peace conference in Astana, Kazakhstan and, later, in 2017, became the guarantor of the umpteenth cease-fire in Syria.

In fact, Turkey’s paradoxical position vis-à-vis Iran was one of the major dilemmas of its foreign policy. In the wake of Donald Trump’s election as President, Ankara gave signals to Riyadh, Tel Aviv and Washington that if the struggle against Iran intensified, Turkey would join it. President Erdoğan during his last visit to Saudi Arabia warned his interlocutors about rising Persian nationalism and called on them to form a unified front against this. Yet he also cautioned his audience against intensifying the sectarian divide and turning the struggle with Iran into a purely sectarian one. His words and warnings drew a rebuke from Iran which, in turn, was sharply answered by the Turkish foreign ministry.

Driven by the desire to break away from its increasingly unsettling loneliness in international and regional politics, Ankara finally concluded a deal with Israel as well. This was meant to bring to an end the crisis engendered by the Israeli raid against the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara, which resulted in the death of 10 Turkish citizens in May 2010. As a result, the process of normalizing relations with the Jewish State with the exchange of ambassadors also began.

Indeed, the nuclear agreement signed between Iran and the P5+1 clearly gave an inducement in that direction. Turkey was not and has never been viscerally against finding accommodation with the Islamic Republic in the way Saudi Arabia and Israel have been. In fact, along with Brazil, Turkey actively worked to broker a deal with Iran back in 2010. Ankara still felt uncomfortable with the new context in the wake of a nuclear deal that opened enough space for Tehran to pursue its hegemonic aspirations.

Yet as Galip Dalay argues, “Turkey was better equipped to deal with the Arab Spring phenomena when it was mostly about socio-political and socio-economic demands, but Iran was better prepared to deal with the morphing of these Arab uprisings into ethnic-sectarian/ideological wars,
given its decades-old investment into proxy identity groups and Shia militias.\(^3\)

This context explains why Turkey wanted to maintain a presence in the town of Bashiqa, despite objections from the Iraqi government, and wanted to be part of the Mosul operation, although failing to convince the parties involved. Turkey’s activism in the north of Iraq particularly in the Shingal Mountains was also partially to contain Iranian influence. But mainly, that engagement and the occasional aerial bombardments of the region were meant to deny the PKK another stronghold in Iraqi Kurdistan, in addition to its headquarters on the Qandil mountains. Ankara tried to prevent the PKK from consolidating its position in Shingal and being a security threat not just to Turkey, but also to the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The Road to Incursion

The most dramatic development of the year was the launching of Operation “Euphrates Shield” by the Turkish military, which, until then, had been reluctant to engage directly within Syria. The bloody coup attempt of 15 July, arguably prompted or facilitated the launching of the operation whose ostensible goal was to clear Turkey’s borders of ISIS militants. The operation further complicated Turkey’s role in Syria and its relations with the influential powers in that country. Most critics of the operation were concerned with the lack of a clear political-strategic objective and the absence of an exit strategy. Undoubtedly, the undeclared goal of the operation was to deny the advancing Kurdish YPG forces the ability to unify the two “cantons” to the east of the Euphrates River under their control with the westernmost enclave of Afrin near Turkey’s southeastern border.

This was why the Turkish government repeatedly asked the United States for guarantees that the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces would not be allowed to stay on the western bank of the Euphrates river. The pressure exerted on the United States for the YPG to leave Manbij stemmed from that concern. Euphrates Shield may have had a third goal as well. After the failures of its militia allies on the ground, particularly after East Aleppo was taken by regime forces, Ankara wanted to maintain a Turkey-dependent Sunni Arab force that it might use in future operations. The fighting capabilities of these forces, the Free Syrian Army, left a lot to be desired though, based on their near abysmal performance during Euphrates Shield.

The American effort to convince the Turkish government that it was possible to peel the PYD away from the PKK did not resonate with the Turkish authorities, and the fateful decision was taken to treat the two organizations as identical. This, in turn, virtually reduced Turkey’s entire Syria policy to denying the PYD an autonomous zone of its own there. It was as much in pursuit of this goal that Turkey undertook Operation Euphrates.

The operation lasted nearly seven months and Turkey took the city of al-Bab from the Islamic State by the end of February 2017 after three months of grueling fighting. Yet the Turkish urge to deny the PYD control over strategic spots like Manbij, the main supply hub for ISIS in its capital of Raqqa, failed as the US and Russia separately prevented Turkey from moving any further. The two powers that control the eastern and western banks of the Euphrates river respectively forced Turkey to limit its military presence to approximately 2,000 square kilometres in northern Syria.

The Unequal Partner

Both the US and Russia protected the PYD. Russian soldiers went so far as carrying PYD/YPG insignia on their uniforms. It is the debacles this fixation with the PYD/YPG engendered that ultimately led Turkey to signing the Moscow agreement with Russia and Iran. Under this agreement (Moscow Declaration, 2016)\(^5\) Ankara had to accept the legitimacy and durability of Bashar al-Assad, whose ousting was previously a non-negotiable item on its agenda. As

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5 Maria TSEVTIKOVA and Peter HOBBSON. *Russia, Iran, Turkey Say Ready to Broker Syria Deal*, 21 December 2016, http://in.reuters.com/article/mideast-crisis-syria-russia-iran-turkey-idINKBN1491ZQ
such, it effectively abandoned the position it had held since August 2011 in the Syrian conflict. The Moscow summit took place a day after the Russian Ambassador was murdered in Ankara by an off-duty police officer and a couple of days after Aleppo’s resistance fighters gave up and fled the eastern part of the city. Their surrender was a result of the fact that Turkey, which had supplied them throughout their occupation of Aleppo’s eastern neighbourhoods, cut off supplies. The fact that Turkey was then able to move towards the city of al-Bab, which it finally captured after heavy fighting and casualties at the end of February, without Russian objections was widely interpreted as the quid pro quo for its abandonment of the jihadis and other opposition groups in Aleppo, who fled to the town of Idlib.

Despite these deals and Ankara’s acquiescence to accepting the continuation of the al-Assad regime, the tripartite arrangement looked awkward from a Turkish strategic perspective. The three signatories of the Moscow agreement later convened a conference in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, which was seen as an alternative to the Geneva process where the Americans had had the lead. The conference, attended by most opposition or rebel groups, pledged to strengthen a fragile ceasefire and established a “trilateral mechanism to observe and ensure full compliance with the ceasefire.”\(^6\) ISIS and the al-Nusra front were to remain outside the frame of the ceasefire.

Such a grandiose development presented Turkey as the major power broker that it had always sought to become. Yet, the draft constitution that the Russians submitted to the conference included clauses for an autonomous Kurdish zone that is anathema to Ankara.\(^7\) Furthermore, although the PYD was not invited to the conference because of Turkish objections, the Russians briefed the Kurds’ representatives on the deliberations of the conference a few days after it was over. The Russians, just like the Americans appeared not to take Turkey’s grave concerns about the PYD-YPG very seriously. In fact, Ankara was unable to keep the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces from becoming the allies of both the US and Russia. To be fair, the Americans, while wanting to continue their collaboration with the YPG to take Raqqa, also tried to maintain a careful balance in order not to fully alienate Turkey.\(^8\)

Al-Bab was not Turkey’s ultimate destination. The real prize from a military and strategic perspective was to seize the city of Manbij, which was taken from ISIS by the SDF/YPG after a prolonged and bloody fight. Turkish authorities’ repeated declarations that they wanted to move on to Manbij next and then partner with the Americans to capture ISIS’ “capital” of Raqqa came to nothing. As the Americans would make woefully clear just prior to President Erdoğan’s visit to Washington, CENTCOM preferred to have the SDF/YPG as their fighting force in the assault on Raqqa. Cengiz Çandar argues that “Contrary to what the Turkish public has been told, Turkey’s operation in Syria was a poor military performance.”

The draft constitution that the Russians submitted to the conference included clauses for an autonomous Kurdish zone that is anathema to Ankara

Turkey continues to be an important factor in the ongoing Syrian civil war, but is unable to make its own choices prevail over those of the other actors. Still, as the country that has the longest land border with Syria and as a member of NATO, with the important Incirlik base on its territory, it cannot be counted out. So long as its policy choices are fixated on the PYD/YPG, which is a result of Turkey’s own unresolved Kurdish problem and its ongoing war with the PKK, its vulnerability will be exposed and a more consistent strategic outlook will prove difficult to formulate, let alone implement. For the coming year, this will be Turkey’s main challenge and the issue that will determine the nature of its relations with its allies, foes and “frenemies” such as Russia.

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Panorama: The Mediterranean Year
## ALBANIA

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

- Socialist Party of Albania (PSSH, social democrat) 65
- Democratic Party of Albania (PDS, conservative) 50
- Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI, social democrat) 16
- Party for Justice and Integration (PDI, Albanian Chams minority) 4
- Republican Party (PR, conservative) 3
- Unity for Human Rights Party (PBDNJ, Greek minority) 1
- Christian Democratic Party (PKDSH) 1

### Population

- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Tirana (0.45)
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Durrës (0.20); Vlorë (0.14)

### Area km²

- 28,750

### Population (millions)

- 2.9

### Population density (hab/km²)

- 105

### Urban population (%)

- 57

### Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years)

- 75/80

### Average annual population growth rate (%)

- -0.2

### Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive)

- 13

### GDP & Debt

- GDP (millions $): 11,393
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 11,284
- GDP growth (%): 2.8
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 73.7
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -4.0
- External Debt (millions $): 8,269
- Inflation Rate (%): 1.9
- Total fertility rate (births per woman): 1.78

### FDI

- Inflows (millions $): 1,003
- Outflows (millions $): 38

### International tourism

- Tourist arrivals (000): 3,784
- Tourism receipts (million $): 1,614

### Migrant remittances

- Receipts (millions $): 1,047
- Receipts (in % GDP): 8.9

### Total trade

- Imports: 5,069
- Exports: 3,105
- Balance: -1,963

### Main Trading Partners

- Import: Italy (30%), China (9%), Turkey (8%), Greece (8%), Germany (7%)
- Export: Italy (48%), United States (6%), China (6%), Greece (5%), Spain (5%)

### Education

- Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 98.4/96.8
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 96
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 96
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 58
- Mean years of schooling: 9.6
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 3.5
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.15

### Water

- Water resources (km³):
  - 30.2
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):
  - 435
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):
  - 39
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):
  - 18
- Desalinated water production (millions m³):
  - 0

### Security

- Total armed forces (000):
  - 9
- Military expenditure (% GDP):
  - 1.0

### Development

- Human Development Index (Value):
  - 0.764
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking):
  - 75

### Health

- Physicians density (per 10,000):
  - 11.5
- Hospital beds (per 10,000):
  - 26.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):
  - 5.9

### Emissions

- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):
  - 1.3
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):
  - 94

### Protected areas

- Terrestrial (% of total land area):
  - 2.3
- Marine (% of territorial waters):
  - 1.5

### ICT

- Mobile subscriptions (per 100):
  - 105.5
- Households with computer (per 100):
  - 23.5
- Internet users (per 100):
  - 60.1
## ALGERIA

### Official Name:
People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria

### Form of Government:
Semi-presidential republic

### Head of State:
Abdelaziz Bouteflika

### Head of Government:
Abdelmadjid Tebboune

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (National People’s Assembly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Front (FLN)</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rally for Democracy (RND)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Society for Peace (islamist)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally for Hope for Algeria</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennahdha – FJD (islamist)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Front</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Forces Front (FFS, social democrat)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algerian Popular Movement (MPA, democrat)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Party (PT, communist)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Algiers (2.63)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Oran (0.86); Constantine (0.43); Blida (0.42); El Djelfa (0.41)
- **Area km²:** 2,381,740
- **Population:** 39.7 million
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 174
- **Urban population (%):** 71
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 1.9

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP (millions $)</th>
<th>164,779</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP)</td>
<td>14,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP)</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>-15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $)</td>
<td>4,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 1,710
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 357

#### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** ..
- **Receipts in % GDP:** ..

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>63,487</td>
<td>37,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>52,441</td>
<td>33,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>11,046</td>
<td>3,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Economic Sectors

- **Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):** 13
- **Industry, value added (% of GDP):** 39
- **Services, value added (% of GDP):** 48

#### Labour market

- **Labour participation rate, female (%):** 16.8
- **Unemployment rate (%):** 11.0
- **Youth unemployment rate (%):** 26.3

#### Energy

- **Production (millions mt oil eq):** 137.7
- **Consumption (millions mt oil eq):** 47.6
- **Consumption per capita (kg oil eq):** 1,246
- **Import (% energy used):** -189

#### Main Trading Partners

- **Import:** China (16%), France (10%), Italy (9%), Spain (8%), Germany (7%)
- **Export:** Spain (18%), Italy (15%), France (13%), United Kingdom (7%), United States (6%)

### Society

#### Education

- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 86.2/73.1
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 97
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** ..
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 38
- **Mean years of schooling:** 7.8
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** 4.3
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** ..

#### Water

- **Water resources (km²):** 11.7
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 225
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):** 59
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):** 5
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** 615

#### Security

- **Total armed forces (000):** 317
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** 6.2

#### Development

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.745
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 83

#### Health

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 12.1
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 17.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 7.2

#### Emissions

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 2.9
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 79

#### Protected areas

- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 7.9
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 1.2

#### ICT

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 92.9
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 28.2
- **Internet users (per 100):** 18.1
## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**Official Name:** Bosnia and Herzegovina  
**Form of Government:** Federal parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:** Milen Đukanović (Serb); Bakir Izetbegović (Bosniak); Dragan Čović (Croat)  
**Head of Government:** Denis Zvizdić

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (House of Representatives)

| Party of Democratic Action (SDA, centre-right) | 10 | Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ, Croatian nationalist and conservative) |
| Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) | 6 |  
| Serbian Democratic Party (SDS, Serbian nationalist) | 5 | Social Democratic Party (SDP)  
| Democratic Front (DF, social democratic) | 5 | Others  
| Union for a Better Future (SBB, centre-right) | 4 |

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Sarajevo (0.32)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Banja Luka (0.20); Tuzla (0.12)
- **Area km²:** 51,210
- **Population:** 3.8
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 75
- **Urban population (%):** 40
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** -0.2

### GDP & Debt

- **GDP (millions $):** 16,251
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 10,527
- **GDP growth (%):** 3.0
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 45.4
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -0.2
- **External Debt (millions $):** 12,887
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -1.0

### FDI

- **Inflows (millions $):** 249
- **Outflows (millions $):** 21

### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 678
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 702

### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** 1,772
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 11.2

### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>8,662</td>
<td>5,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>8,173</td>
<td>3,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>1,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economic Sectors

- **Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):** 8
- **Industry, value added (% of GDP):** 27
- **Services, value added (% of GDP):** 65

### Labour market

- **Labour participation rate, female (%):** 34.4
- **Unemployment rate (%):** 26.3
- **Youth unemployment rate (%):** 70.6

### Education

- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 99.6/97.4
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** ..
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** ..
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** ..
- **Mean years of schooling:** 9.0
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** ..
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 0.26

### Development

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.750
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 81

### Health

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 19.3
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 3.4
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 9.6

### Emissions

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 5.7
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 241

### Protected areas

- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 1.3
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 8.3

### ICT

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 90.2
- **Households with computer (per 100):** ..
- **Internet users (per 100):** 65.1
## CROATIA

**Official Name:** Republic of Croatia  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic  
**Head of Government:** Andrej Plenkovic

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
- Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ, conservative) 61
- People’s Coalition (Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP)) 54
- Croatian People’s Party - Liberal Democrats (HNS) 13
- Bridge of Independent Lists (Most) 10
- The Only Option Coalition 8
- Independent Democratic Serb Party 3
- Even Stronger Istrian 3
- For Prime Minister Coalition 2
- Other 7

### Population
- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Zagreb (0.69)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Split (0.18); Rijeka (0.13)
- **Area km²:** 56,590
- **Population:** 4.2
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 75
- **Urban population (%):** 59
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** -0.3
- **Population age <15 (%):** 15
- **Population age >64 (%):** 19
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 75
- **Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 1.52
- **Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 75/80
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 4

### Economy
- **GDP (millions $):** 48,676
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 21,684
- **GDP growth (%):** 1.6
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 86.7
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -3.3
- **External Debt (millions $):** ..
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.5
- **FDI Inflows (millions $):** 174
- **Outflows (millions $):** 13
- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 12,683
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 9,018
- **Receipts (millions $):** 2,108
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 4.4

### Total trade
- **in goods and services (millions $):** 23,102 24,415 1,312
- **in goods (millions $):** 19,268 11,904 -7,364
- **in services (millions $):** 3,834 12,510 8,676
- **in goods and services (% GDP):** 47.7 50.4 2.7

### Main Trading Partners
- **Import:** Germany (16%), Italy (13%), Slovenia (11%), Austria (9%), Hungary (8%)
- **Export:** Italy (13%), Slovenia (12%), Germany (11%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (10%), Austria (7%)

### Society
- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 99.7/98.9
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 88
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 99
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 62
- **Mean years of schooling:** 11.2
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 0.85
- **Water resources (km³):** 105.5
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 147
- **Public expenditure on education (% of GDP):** 4.2
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** 1.6
- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.827
- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 28.4
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 54.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 7.8
- **Total armed forces (000):** 20
- **Total mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 104.4
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 70.1
- **Internet users (per 100):** 68.6
**Country Profiles**

**CYPRUS**

**Official Name:** Republic of Cyprus  
**Form of Government:** Presidential constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Nicos Anastasiades  
**Head of Government:** Nicos Anastasiades

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**Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)**  
(House of Representatives)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Coalition (DISY, conservative)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL, socialist)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (DIKO, liberal)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Social Democracy (EDEK)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens’ Alliance (SYPOL)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity Movement (KA)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological and Environmental Movement (ecologist)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Popular Front (ELAM)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Name</td>
<td>Republic of Cyprus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of Government</td>
<td>Presidential constitutional republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of State</td>
<td>Nicos Anastasiades</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Government</td>
<td>Nicos Anastasiades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Coalition (DISY, conservative)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL, socialist)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (DIKO, liberal)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Social Democracy (EDEK)</td>
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<td>Citizens’ Alliance (SYPOL)</td>
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<td>Solidarity Movement (KA)</td>
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<td>Ecological and Environmental Movement (ecologist)</td>
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<td>National Popular Front (ELAM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population (millions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults &lt;15 (%)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults &gt;64 (%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth, Men/Women (years)</td>
<td>78/82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $)</td>
<td>19,570</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP)</td>
<td>33,616</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP)</td>
<td>107.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%)</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI Inflows (millions $)</td>
<td>4,534</td>
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<td>FDI Outflows (millions $)</td>
<td>9,718</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000)</td>
<td>2,659</td>
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<td>Tourism receipts (million $)</td>
<td>2,489</td>
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<tr>
<td>Migrant remittances</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (millions $)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Receipts (in % GDP)</td>
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<td>Total trade Imports</td>
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<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
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<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
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<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
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<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (% GDP)</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (% GDP)</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import: Greece (25%), United Kingdom (9%), Italy (8%), Germany (7%), Israel (6%)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export: Greece (11%), Ireland (9%), United Kingdom (7%), Israel (6%), Egypt (4%)</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import (% energy used)</td>
<td>94.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP)</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure of GDP</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%)</td>
<td>99.5/98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP)</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure of GDP</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Water**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water resources (km³)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita)</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% industry)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desalinated water production (millions m³)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Security**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total armed forces (000)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military expenditure (% GDP)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (Value)</td>
<td>0.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (Position in ranking)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicians density (per 10,000)</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds (per 10,000)</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Emissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger cars (per 1,000 people)</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

** Protected areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial (% of total land area)</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine (% of territorial waters)</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**ICT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile subscriptions (per 100)</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with computer (per 100)</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users (per 100)</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**EGYPT**

**Official Name:** Arab Republic of Egypt  
**Form of Government:** Unitary semi-presidential constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Abdel Fattah el-Sisi  
**Head of Government:** Sherif Ismail

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (House of Representatives)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free Egyptians Party</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation's Future Party</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Wafd Party</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guards of the Homeland</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican People's Party</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Party</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of the Light (Al-Nour)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative Party</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

**Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Cairo (18.42)* [including the population of Giza (4.03) and Shubra El-Khema (1.61)]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria (4.86); Port Said (0.68)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
<th>Population age &lt;15 (%)</th>
<th>Population age &gt;64 (%)</th>
<th>Total fertility rate (births per woman)</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth, Men/Women (years)</th>
<th>Average annual population growth rate (%)</th>
<th>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,001,450</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>69/73</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

**GDP & Debt**

| GDP (millions $): | 332,075 |
| GDP per capita ($, PPP): | 12,041 |
| GDP growth (%): | 4.2 |
| Public Debt (in % GDP): | 88.5 |
| Public Deficit (in % of GDP): | -11.4 |
| External Debt (millions $): | 46,585 |
| Inflation Rate (%): | 11.0 |

**FDI**

| Inflows (millions $): | 6,885 |
| Outflows (millions $): | 182 |

**International tourism**

| Tourist arrivals (000): | 9,139 |
| Tourism receipts (million $): | 6,897 |

**Migrant remittances**

| Receipts (millions $): | .. |
| Receipts (in % GDP): | .. |

**Economic Sectors**

| Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): | 11 |
| Industry, value added (% of GDP): | 36 |
| Services, value added (% of GDP): | 52 |

**Labour market**

| Labour participation rate, female (%): | 22.8 |
| Unemployment rate (%): | 12.8 |
| Youth unemployment rate (%): | 33.9 |

**Employment in**

| Agriculture (% of total employment): | 25.8 |
| Industry (% of total employment): | 25.1 |
| Services (% of total employment): | 49.1 |

**Energy**

| Production (millions mt oil eq): | 80.4 |
| Consumption (millions mt oil eq): | 74.8 |
| Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): | 835 |
| Import (% energy used): | -7.4 |

**Trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total trade</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>67,504</td>
<td>37,362</td>
<td>-30,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>50,051</td>
<td>18,760</td>
<td>-31,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>17,453</td>
<td>18,602</td>
<td>1,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Trading Partners**

- **Import:** China (15%), Germany (6%), United States (6%), Russia (5%), Italy (4%)
- **Export:** Saudi Arabia (9%), Italy (8%), United States (6%), Turkey (5%), Germany (5%)

### Society

**Education**

| Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): | 83.6/68.1 |
| Net enrolment rate (primary): | 98 |
| Gross enrolment rate (secondary): | 86 |
| Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): | 36 |
| Mean years of schooling: | 7.1 |
| Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): | 3.8 |
| R&D expenditure (% of GDP): | 0.68 |

**Development**

| Human Development Index (Value): | 0.691 |
| Human Development Index (Position in ranking): | 111 |

**Health**

| Physicians density (per 10,000): | 28.3 |
| Hospital beds (per 10,000): | 17.0 |
| Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): | 5.6 |

**Emissions**

| CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): | 1.9 |
| Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): | 44 |

**Protected areas**

| Terrestrial (% of total land area): | 11.2 |
| Marine (% of territorial waters): | 13.2 |

**ICT**

| Mobile subscriptions (per 100): | 111.0 |
| Households with computer (per 100): | 47.3 |
| Internet users (per 100): | 37.8 |
## FRANCE

**Official Name:** French Republic  
**Form of Government:** Semi-presidential constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Emmanuel Macron  
**Head of Government:** Édouard Philippe

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (National Assembly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La République En Marche! (REM, centrist-liberal)</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Republicans (LR, liberal conservative)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Movement (centrist liberal)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party (PS)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Democrats and Independents (centre-right)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La France Insoumise (left wing)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous left</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Communist Party</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Front (Far right)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Paris (10.93)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Lyon (1.62); Marseille-Aix-en-Provence (1.62); Lille (1.03); Nice-Cannes (0.97); Toulouse (0.95)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
<th>Urban population (%)</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years)</th>
<th>Average annual population growth rate (%)</th>
<th>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>549,190</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80/86</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

- **GDP (millions $):** 2,420,163
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 41,431
- **GDP growth (%):** 1.3
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 96.2
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -3.5
- **External Debt (millions $):**
- **Inflation Rate (%):** 0.1

#### FDI

- **Inflows (millions $):** 42,883
- **Outflows (millions $):** 3,506

#### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 84,452
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 54,003

#### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** 22,982
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 1.0

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>766,205</td>
<td>752,292</td>
<td>-13,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>537,577</td>
<td>511,856</td>
<td>-25,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>228,628</td>
<td>240,436</td>
<td>11,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Main Trading Partners

- **Import:** Germany (15%), United States (9%), China (8%), Italy (6%), Belgium (6%)
- **Export:** Germany (14%), United States (8%), Spain (6%), United Kingdom (6%), Italy (6%)

### Society

#### Education

- Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): ...
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 99
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 111
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 64
- Mean years of schooling: 11.6
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 5.5
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 2.26

#### Water

- Water resources (km²): 211.0
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 476
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 10
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 71
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): 12

#### Security

- Total armed forces (000): 312
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 2.1

#### Development

- Human Development Index (Value): 0.897
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 21

#### Health

- Physicians density (per 10,000): 31.9
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 69.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 11.5

#### Emissions

- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 4.3
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 480

#### Protected areas

- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 25.3
- Marine (% of territorial waters): 62.9

#### ICT

- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 102.6
- Households with computer (per 100): 81.5
- Internet users (per 100): 84.7
**GREECE**

**Official Name:** Hellenic Republic  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Prokopis Pavlopoulos  
**Head of Government:** Alexis Tsipras

**Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)**
- Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) 144
- New Democracy (ND, conservative) 76
- Democratic Coalition (PASOK) 18
- Golden Dawn (XA, far-right xenophobic) 17
- Independent Greeks (AE, right) 9
- Democratic Coalition (PASOK) 18
- Union of Centrists 8
- Independents 6

**Population**
- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Athens (3.05)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Thessaloniki (0.74); Patras (0.26); Herakliom (0.17); Larissa (0.16); Volos (0.14)
- **Area km²:** 131,960
- **Population (millions):** 10.8
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 84
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** -0.6
- **Population %:**
  - <15: 15
  - >64: 21
  - Urban: 78
  - Life expectancy at birth (Men/Women years): 79/84
  - Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 4

**Economy**

**GDP & Debt**
- **GDP (millions $):** 194,958
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 26,304
- **GDP growth (%):** -0.2
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 179.0
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -3.4
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -1.1
- **FDI**
  - Inflows (millions $): -289
  - Outflows (millions $): 379
- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 23,599
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 17,260
- **Migrant remittances**
  - Receipts (millions $): 429
  - Receipts (in % GDP): 0.2

**Total trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>58,809</td>
<td>58,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>46,620</td>
<td>27,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>12,189</td>
<td>30,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Sectors**
- Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 4
- Industry, value added (% of GDP): 16
- Services, value added (% of GDP): 80

**Labour market**
- Labour participation rate, female (%): 43.9
- Unemployment rate (%): 24.9
- Youth unemployment rate (%): 49.2

**Employment in**
- Agriculture (% of total employment): 13.2
- Industry (% of total employment): 14.9
- Services (% of total employment): 71.9

**Energy**
- Production (millions mt oil eq): 8.8
- Consumption (millions mt oil eq): 23.1
- Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): 2,124
- Import (% energy used): 62.0

**Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**
- Inflows (millions $): -289
- Outflows (millions $): 379

**Main Trading Partners**
- Import: Germany (11%), Russian Federation (8%), Italy (8%), Iraq (7%), China (6%)
- Export: Italy (11%), Germany (7%), Turkey (7%), Cyprus (6%), Bulgaria (5%)
## ISRAEL

**Official Name:** State of Israel  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary democracy  
**Head of State:** Reuven Rivlin  
**Head of Government:** Benjamin Netanyahu

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Type</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likud (neo-conservative)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zionist Union (centre left)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint List (Arab parties)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah Atid (centre, laics)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulanu (centrist)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jewish Home (religious far-right)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shas (ultraorthodox Sephardis)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Torah Judaism (ultraorthodox Ashkenazis)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yisrael Beiteinu (far-right ultranationalist)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Population**

| Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):  | Jerusalem (0.85)  |
| Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):   | Tel Aviv-Jaffa (3.66); Hadera (1.11) |
| Area km²:                                            | 22,070 |
| Population (millions):                               | 8.4   |
| Population density (hab/km²):                        | 380   |
| Urban population (%):                                 | 92    |
| Average annual population growth rate (%):            | 2.0   |
| Population age <15 (%):                              | 28    |
| Population age >64 (%):                               | 11    |
| Total fertility rate (births per woman):              | 3.05  |
| Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):          | 80/84 |
| Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):         | 3     |

**Economy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP &amp; Debt</th>
<th>Economic Sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $): 299,413</td>
<td>Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP): 34,054</td>
<td>Industry, value added (% of GDP): ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%): 2.5</td>
<td>Services, value added (% of GDP): ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP): 64.1</td>
<td>Labour market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -2.7</td>
<td>Labour participation rate, female (%): 58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $): ..</td>
<td>Unemployment rate (%): 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%): -0.6</td>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (%): 9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FDI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflows (millions $): 11,566</th>
<th>Outflows (millions $): 9,743</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $): 6,061</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Migrant remittances**

| Receipts (millions $): .. |
| Receipts (in % GDP): .. |

**Total trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $): 83,727</td>
<td>92,239</td>
<td>8,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $): 61,318</td>
<td>57,765</td>
<td>-3,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $): 22,409</td>
<td>34,474</td>
<td>12,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP): 29.2</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Trading Partners**

| Import: United States (13%), China (9%), Switzerland (7%), Germany (6%), Belgium (5%) |
| Export: United States (28%), Hong Kong (8%), United Kingdom (6%), China (5%), Belgium (4%) |

**Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): ..</td>
<td>Human Development Index (Value): 0.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary): 97</td>
<td>Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 102</td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 66</td>
<td>Physicians density (per 10,000): 33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling: 12.8</td>
<td>Hospital beds (per 10,000): 35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 5.9</td>
<td>Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure (% of GDP): 4.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Water**

| Water resources (km³): 1.8 |
| Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 282 |
| Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 58 |
| Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 6 |
| Desalinated water production (millions m³): 140 |

**Security**

| Total armed forces (000): 185 |
| Military expenditure (% GDP): 6.0 |
## ITALY

### Official Name:
Italian Republic

### Form of Government:
Parliamentary constitutional republic

### Head of State:
Sergio Mattarella

### Head of Government:
Paolo Gentiloni

#### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (social democrat)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Star Movement (M5S, populist movement)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forza Italia - The People of Freedom (FdI, conservative)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 1, Democratic and Progressive Movement (social democratic)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Area (centre-right)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):</th>
<th>Rome (3.74)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):</td>
<td>Milan (3.10); Naples (2.20); Turin (1.77); Palermo (0.85); Bergamo (0.85)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area km²:</th>
<th>301,340</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions):</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km²):</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (%):</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual population growth rate (%):</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP &amp; Debt</th>
<th>1,825,820</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $):</td>
<td>1,825,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP):</td>
<td>35,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP):</td>
<td>132.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP):</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $):</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%):</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### FDI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflows (millions $):</th>
<th>20,279</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>27,807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### International tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist arrivals (000):</th>
<th>50,732</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
<td>39,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Migrant remittances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts (millions $):</th>
<th>9,517</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (in % GDP):</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in goods and services (millions $):</th>
<th>491,413</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $):</td>
<td>390,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $):</td>
<td>100,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP):</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>549,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>51,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>-38,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Main Trading Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Import:</th>
<th>Germany (15%), France (9%), China (8%), Netherlands (6%), Spain (5%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export:</td>
<td>Germany (12%), France (10%), United States (9%), United Kingdom (5%), Spain (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):</td>
<td>Human Development Index (Value): 0.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary):</td>
<td>Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure (% of GDP):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water resources (km²):</td>
<td>191.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desalinated water production (millions m³):</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total armed forces (000):</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military expenditure (% GDP):</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ITALY Country Country Profiles

Mediterranean Yearbook 2017

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## Jordan

**Official Name:** Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

**Form of Government:** Parliamentary constitutional monarchy

**Head of State:** King Abdullah II

**Head of Government:** Hani Al-Mulki

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front (Islamists, Muslim Brotherhood)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamza, (Islamists moderate)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Centrist Party (ICP, Islamists)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Current</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Reform Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Socialist Ba’ath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Awn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Amman (1.16)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Zarqa (0.48); Irbid (0.31); Russiefa (0.41)

### Area
- **km²:** 89,320
- **Population age <15 (%):** 36
- **Population age >64 (%):** 4
- **Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 3.51
- **Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 72/76
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 15

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

- **GDP (millions $):** 37,570
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 12,134
- **GDP growth (%):** 2.4
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 93.4
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -4.1
- **External Debt (millions $):** 25,746
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.9

#### FDI

- **Inflows (millions $):** 1,275
- **Outflows (millions $):** 1

#### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 3,763
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 4,997

#### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** 5,348
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 14.7

### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in goods and services (millions $)</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22,705</td>
<td>13,981</td>
<td>-8,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>18,039</td>
<td>7,829</td>
<td>-10,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>4,666</td>
<td>6,152</td>
<td>1,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>-24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education

- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 98.5/97.5
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 97
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 82
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 45
- **Mean years of schooling:** 10.1
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** ..
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** ..

### Water

- **Water resources (km³):** 1.0
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 163
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):** 65
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):** 4
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** 10

### Security

- **Total armed forces (000):** 116
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** 4.2

### Development

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.741
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 86

### Health

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 25.6
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 18.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 7.5

### Emissions

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 3.6
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 127

### Protected areas

- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 2.1
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 30.1

### ICT

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 179.4
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 47.0
- **Internet users (per 100):** 53.4
### LEBANON

**Official Name:** Lebanese Republic  
**Form of Government:** Confessionalist parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:** Michel Aoun  
**Head of Government:** Saad Hariri

#### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
- March 14 Alliance (Future Movement [35]; Lebanese Forces [8]; Kataeb Party [5]; Hunchack [2]; Murr Bloc [2]; Democratic Left [1]; Jamaa al-Islamiya [1]; National liberal [1]; Rangavar [1]; Independents [1]) 60

#### Population
- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Beirut (2.26)  
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Tripoli (0.5); Sidon (0.2)  
- **Area km²:** 10,450  
- **Population (millions):** 5.9  
- **Population age <15 (%):** 24  
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 88  
- **Urban population (%)** 88  
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 4.2  
- **Population age >64 (%):** 8  
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 572  
- **Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 1.72  
- **Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 78/81  
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 7

#### Economy
- **GDP & Debt**
  - GDP (millions $): 50,800  
  - GDP per capita ($, PPP): 18,277  
  - GDP growth (%): 1.3  
  - Public Debt (in % GDP): 138.4  
  - External Debt (millions $): 30,896  
  - Inflation Rate (%): -3.7  
- **FDI**
  - Inflows (millions $): 2,341  
  - Outflows (millions $): 619  
- **International tourism**
  - Tourist arrivals (000): 1,588  
  - Tourism receipts (million $): 7,087  
- **Migrant remittances**
  - Receipts (millions $): 7,481  
  - Receipts (in % GDP): 15.5

#### Total trade
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>31,573</td>
<td>17,068</td>
<td>-14,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>18,864</td>
<td>3,525</td>
<td>-15,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>12,708</td>
<td>15,343</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>-29.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Society
- **Education**
  - Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 96.0/92.0  
  - Net enrolment rate (primary): 82  
  - Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 61  
  - Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 39  
  - Mean years of schooling: 8.6  
  - Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 2.6  
  - R&D expenditure (% of GDP): ..  
- **Water**
  - Water resources (km³): 4.5  
  - Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 321  
  - Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 60  
  - Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 11  
  - Desalinated water production (millions m³): 47  
- **Security**
  - Total armed forces (000): 80  
  - Military expenditure (% GDP): 4.1

#### Main Trading Partners
- **Import:** China (12%), Italy (7%), United States (6%), France (6%), Germany (6%)  
- **Export:** Saudi Arabia (10%), United Arab Emirates (10%), Switzerland (8%), Syria (8%), Iraq (6%)
**LIBYA**

**Official Name:** State of Libya  
**Form of Government:** Provisional parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:**  
**Head of Government:** Fayez al-Sarraj

**Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)**

Uncertain state due to the collapse of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 2011. During the month of March 2016, UN-backed Prime Minister-designated, Fayez al-Sarraj, came back from self-exile with the task of uniting the country after an ongoing civil war between the Council of Deputies in Tobruk and its supporters, the New General National Congress in Tripoli and its supporters, and various jihadist and tribal elements controlling parts of the country.

### Population

**Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Tripoli (1.13)  
**Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Benghazi (0.76); Misrata (0.70); Zawiya (0.20)  
**Area km²:** 1,759,540  
**Population (millions):** 6.3  
**Population age <15 (%):** 30  
**Population density (hab/km²):** 4  
**Population age >64 (%):** 5  
**Population growth rate (%):** 0.3  
**Average annual population growth rate (%):**  
**Urban population (%):** 79  
**Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 69/75  
**Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 11

### Economy

**GDP & Debt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP (millions $)</th>
<th>29,763</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP)</td>
<td>9,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>-75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FDI**

| Inflows (millions $) | 726 |
| Outflows (millions $) | 354 |

**International tourism**

| Tourist arrivals (000) | .. |
| Tourism receipts (million $) | .. |

**Migrant remittances**

| Receipts (millions $) | .. |
| Receipts (in % GDP) | .. |

**Total trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in goods and services (millions $)</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>22,881</td>
<td>9,369</td>
<td>-13,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>-33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Trading Partners**

- **Import:** China (15%), Italy (13%), Turkey (12%), France (6%), Tunisia (8%)  
- **Export:** Italy (33%), Germany (11%), France (9%), China (8%), Spain (6%)

### Society

**Education**

| Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%) | 97.0/85.8 |
| Net enrolment rate (primary): | .. |
| Gross enrolment rate (secondary): | .. |
| Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): | .. |
| Mean years of schooling: | 7.3 |
| Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): | .. |
| R&D expenditure (% of GDP): | .. |

**Water**

| Water resources (km³): | 0.7 |
| Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): | 928 |
| Water withdrawal by sector (percent agriculture): | 83 |
| Water withdrawal by sector (percent industry): | 5 |
| Desalinated water production (millions m³): | 70 |

**Security**

| Total armed forces (000): | 7 |
| Military expenditure (% GDP): | 7.3 |

**Development**

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.716  
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 102

**Health**

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 19.0  
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 37.0  
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 5.0

**Emissions**

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 7.7  
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 329

**Protected areas**

- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 0.3  
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 4.3

**ICT**

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 157.0  
- **Households with computer (per 100):** ..  
- **Internet users (per 100):** 19.0
MALTA

Official Name: Republic of Malta
Form of Government: Parliamentary republic
Head of State: Marie Louise Coleiro Preca
Head of Government: Joseph Muscat

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
- Malta Labour Party (MLP, social democracy): 37
- Democratic Party (PD, centre-left): 1
- Nationalist Party (NP, centre-right): 29

Population
- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Valletta (0.39)
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Birkirkara (0.02); Qormi (0.02)

Area km²: 320
Population (millions): 0.4
Population age <15 (%): 14
Population age >64 (%): 19
Population density (hab/km²): 1,350
Urban population (%): 95
Average annual population growth rate (%): 1.0
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 5

Economy
- GDP (millions $): 10,293
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 37,871
- GDP growth (%): 6.2
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 60.6
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -1.4
- External Debt (millions $): ..
- Inflation Rate (%): 1.2

FDI
- Inflows (millions $): 9,532
- Outflows (millions $): -215

International tourism
- Tourist arrivals (000): 1,791
- Tourism receipts (million $): 1,367

Migrant remittances
- Receipts (millions $): 173
- Receipts (in % GDP): 1.8

Total trade
- Imports: 12,955
- Exports: 13,614
- Balance: 660

Economic Sectors
- Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 1
- Industry, value added (% of GDP): 16
- Services, value added (% of GDP): 83

Labour market
- Labour participation rate, female (%): 38.8
- Unemployment rate (%): 5.4
- Youth unemployment rate (%): 11.6

Employment in
- Agriculture (% of total employment): 1.3
- Industry (% of total employment): 22.4
- Services (% of total employment): 76.3

Energy
- Production (millions mt oil eq): 0.0
- Consumption (millions mt oil eq): 0.7
- Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): 1,735
- Import (% energy used): 98.7

Main Trading Partners
Import: Italy (13%), China (11%), Russian Federation (11%), Republic of Korea (10%), Germany (8%)
Export: Egypt (12%), Germany (8%), Hong Kong (6%), China (6%), France (6%)

Society
- Education
  - Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 92.5/95.6
  - Net enrolment rate (primary): 98
  - Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 86
  - Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 47
  - Mean years of schooling: 11.3
  - Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 8.3
  - R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.89

- Water
  - Water resources (km²): 0.1
  - Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 108
  - Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 64
  - Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): ..
  - Desalinated water production (millions m³): 19

- Security
  - Total armed forces (000): 2
  - Military expenditure (% GDP): 0.6

Development
- Human Development Index (Value): 0.856
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 33

Health
- Physicians density (per 10,000): 34.9
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 45.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 9.2

Emissions
- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 5.5
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 622

Protected areas
- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 23.1
- Marine (% of territorial waters): 4.7

ICT
- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 129.3
- Households with computer (per 100): 81.9
- Internet users (per 100): 76.2
**MONTENEGRO**

**Official Name:** Montenegro  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:** Filip Vujanović  
**Head of Government:** Milo Đukanović

**Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)**
- Democratic Party of Socialists (centre-left) 35
- Socialist People’s Party (SNP, social democrat) 3
- Bosniak Party (BS) 2
- Social Democrats 2
- United Reform Action 2
- Democratic Alliance (Demos) 8
- Others 3

**Population**

- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Podgorica (0.20)
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Niksic (0.07); Pljevlja (0.03)
- Area km²: 13,810
- Population: 0.6
- Population age <15 (%): 19
- Population age >64 (%): 14
- Population density (hab/km²): 46
- Total fertility rate (births per woman): 1.71
- Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years): 74/78

**GDP & Debt**

- GDP (millions $): 4,022
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 16,058
- GDP growth (%): 3.2
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 69.3
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -4.8
- External Debt (millions $): 2,665
- Inflation Rate (%): 1.2

**FDI**

- Inflows (millions $): 699
- Outflows (millions $): 12

**International tourism**

- Tourist arrivals (000): 1,560
- Tourism receipts (million $): 947

**Migrant remittances**

- Receipts (millions $): 381
- Receipts (in % GDP): 9.5

**Total trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>2,451</td>
<td>1,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>1,981</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>1,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Sectors**

- Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 10
- Industry, value added (% of GDP): 20
- Services, value added (% of GDP): 70

**Labour market**

- Labour participation rate, female (%): 42.0
- Unemployment rate (%): 17.5
- Youth unemployment rate (%): 38.4

**Employment in**

- Agriculture (% of total employment): 7.8
- Industry (% of total employment): 17.6
- Services (% of total employment): 74.7

**Energy**

- Production (millions mt oil eq): 0.7
- Consumption (millions mt oil eq): 1.0
- Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): 1,538
- Import (% energy used): 27.6

**Main Trading Partners**

- Import: Serbia (28%), China (10%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7%), Italy (8%), Germany (6%)
- Export: Serbia (22%), Italy (13%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (9%), Turkey (7%), Germany (8%)

**Society**

**Education**

- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 99.4/98.0
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 93
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 90
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): ..
- Mean years of schooling: 11.3
- Public expenditure jn education (% of GDP): ..
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.36

**Water**

- Water resources (km³): ..
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 258
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 1
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 39
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): ..

**Security**

- Total armed forces (000): 12
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.6

**Development**

- Human Development Index (Value): 0.807
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 48

**Health**

- Physicians density (per 10,000): 21.1
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 40.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 6.4

**Emissions**

- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 3.6
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): ..

**Protected areas**

- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 4.1
- Marine (% of territorial waters): 0.0

**ICT**

- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 162.2
- Households with computer (per 100): 51.3
- Internet users (per 100): 68.1
### Country Profiles

#### MOROCCO

**Official Name:** Kingdom of Morocco  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary constitutional monarchy  
**Head of State:** King Mohammed VI  
**Head of Government:** Saadeddine Othmani

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Development Party (PJD, Islamist)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM, liberal)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istiqlal Party (PI, centre-right, nationalism)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rally of Independents (RNI, centre-right, liberal)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Movement (MP, conservative)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Union of People’s Forces (USFP)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Union (UC, centrist)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS, communist)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic and Social Movement (royalist)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Rabat (2.00)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Casablanca (3.54); Fez (1.20); Marrakech (1.17); Tanger (1.01); Meknes (0.74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area km²</td>
<td>446,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population age &lt;15 (%)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population age &gt;64 (%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km²)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fertility rate (births per woman)</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth, Men/Women (years)</td>
<td>73/75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

**GDP & Debt**

- **GDP (millions $):** 100,593
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 8,180
- **GDP growth (%):** 4.5
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 64.1
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -4.2
- **External Debt (millions $):** 42,989
- **Inflation Rate (%):** 1.5

**FDI**

- **Inflows (millions $):** 3,162
- **Outflows (millions $):** 649

**International tourism**

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 10,177
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 7,765

**Migrant remittances**

- **Receipts (millions $):**..
- **Receipts (in % GDP):**..

**Total trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>40,706</td>
<td>32,717</td>
<td>-7,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>32,738</td>
<td>18,484</td>
<td>-14,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>7,968</td>
<td>14,234</td>
<td>6,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Sectors**

- **Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):** 29
- **Industry, value added (% of GDP):** 58
- **Services, value added (% of GDP):**

**Labour market**

- **Unemployment rate (%):** 20.4
- **Youth unemployment rate (%):**

**Employment in**

- **Agriculture (% of total employment):** 20.5
- **Industry (% of total employment):** 45.9
- **Services (% of total employment):**

**Energy**

- **Production (millions mt oil eq):** 18.9
- **Consumption (millions mt oil eq):** 564
- **Consumption per capita (kg oil eq):** 90.1
- **Import (% energy used):** 91.0

**Total trade Imports Exports Balance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Import: Spain (14%), France (13%), China (8%), United States (7%), Germany (6%)</td>
<td>Import: Spain (14%), France (19%), India (4%), United States (4%), Italy (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Society

**Education**

- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 81.9/62.0
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 98
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 69
- **Mean years of schooling:** 28
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** 5.3
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 0.71

**Water**

- **Water resources (km³):** 29.0
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 316
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):** 88
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** 2

**Security**

- **Total armed forces (000):** 246
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** 3.2

**Development**

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.647
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 123

**Health**

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 6.2
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 11.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 5.9

**Emissions**

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 1.6
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 71

**Protected areas**

- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 33.6
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 1.3

**ICT**

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 126.9
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 66.5
- **Internet users (per 100):** 57.1
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Name (UN use): Occupied Palestinian Territories
Form of Government: De jure parliamentary democracy operating de facto as a semi-presidential system
Head of State: Mahmoud Abbas
Head of Government: Rami Hamdallah

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (Palestinian legislative council has been unable to meet and govern since 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamas (Islamists)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatah (nationalists, socialists)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, nationalists, Marxists)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Alternative (socialist alliance)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Palestine (centre-left)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Way (centre)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population

Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Ramallah (0.08) [Administrative capital]
Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):
- Gaza City (0.65)
- Hebron (0.22)
- Nablus (0.15)
- Jenin (0.15)
- Khan Yunis (0.18)

Area km²: 6,020
Population: 4.4
Population age <15 (%): 40
Population age >64 (%): 3
Population density (hab/km²): 735
Urban population (%): 75
Average annual population growth rate (%): 2.9
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 18

Economy

GDP & Debt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%)</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FDI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflows (millions $)</th>
<th>120</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $)</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000)</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $)</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrant remittances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (millions $)</td>
<td>2,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (in % GDP)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>8,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>5,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>1,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Sectors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry, value added (% of GDP)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services, value added (% of GDP)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labour market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour participation rate, female (%)</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture (% of total employment)</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry (% of total employment)</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (% of total employment)</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Energy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production (millions mt oil eq)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption (millions mt oil eq)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption per capita (kg oil eq)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import (% energy used)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Trading Partners

Import: Israel (68%), Turkey (4%), China (4%), Jordan (3%), Egypt (2%)
Export: Israel (85%), Jordan (6%), United Arab Emirates (2%), Saudi Arabia (1%), Kuwait (1%)

Society

Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%)</td>
<td>98.5/94.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure (% of GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water resources (km²)</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (agriculture)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (industry)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desalinated water production (millions m³)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total armed forces (000)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military expenditure (% GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (Value)</td>
<td>0.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (Position in ranking)</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicians density (per 10,000)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds (per 10,000)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger cars (per 1,000 people)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Protected areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial (% of total land area)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine (% of territorial waters)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile subscriptions (per 100)</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with computer (per 100)</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users (per 100)</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Portugal

**Official Name:** Portuguese Republic  
**Form of Government:** Semi-presidential constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa  
**Head of Government:** Antonio Luis Santos da Costa

## Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (Assembly of the Republic)

- Social Democratic Party (PSD) 89
- Socialist Party (PS) 86
- Left Bloc (BE, socialism / Trotskyism / communism) 19
- Democratic and Social Centre - People’s Party (CDS/PP, Christian democracy) 18
- Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) 15
- Ecologist Party “The Greens” (PEV) 2
- People-Animals-Nature 1

## Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Lisbon (2.90)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Porto (1.30); Braga (0.18); Guimaraes (0.16)
- **Area km²:** 92,225
- **Population (millions):** 10.4
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 113
- **Population age <15 (%):** 14
- **Population age >64 (%):** 21
- **Population age <15 (%):** 21
- **Population age >64 (%):** 21
- **Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 78/85
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 3

## Economy

### GDP & Debt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP (millions $):</th>
<th>199,222</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (PPP):</td>
<td>28,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP):</td>
<td>129.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP):</td>
<td>-4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $):</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflows (millions $):</td>
<td>6,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>8,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism arrivals (000):</td>
<td>10,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
<td>15,819</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Migrant remittances

- Receipts (millions $): ..
- Receipts (in % GDP): ..

### Total trade

- in goods and services (millions $): 78,809
- in goods (millions $): 64,498
- in services (millions $): 14,311
- in goods and services (% GDP): 40.1

## Development

- Human Development Index (Value): 0.843
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 41

## Health

- Physicians density (per 10,000): 41.0
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 33.0

## Emissions

- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 4.1
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 429

## Society

### Education

- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 96.9/94.1
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 99
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 116
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 87
- Mean years of schooling: 8.9
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 5.3
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 1.29

### Water

- Water resources (km³): 77.4
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 867
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 79
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 13
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): 2

### Security

- Total armed forces (000): 78
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.9

## Main Trading Partners

### Import:

- Spain (33%), Germany (13%), France (7%), Italy (5%), Netherlands (5%)

### Export:

- Spain (25%), France (12%), Germany (12%), United Kingdom (7%), United States (5%)
SERBIA

Official Name: Republic of Serbia
Form of Government: Parliamentary republic
Head of State: Tomislav Nikolic
Head of Government: Aleksandar Vučić

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (National Assembly of Serbia)
- Serbian Progressive Party: 131
- Socialist Party of Serbia: 29
- Serbian Radical Party: 22
- For a Just Serbia: 16
- Enough is Enough: 16
- Coalition for a Better Serbia: 13
- DSS-Dveri: 13
- National minorities: 10

Population
- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Belgrade (1.69)
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Novi Sad (0.34); Nis (0.26); Kragujevac (0.18); Subotica (0.14)
- Area km²: 88,360
- Population: 7.1 million
- Population age <15 (%): 16
- Population age >64 (%): 17
- Population density (hab/km²): 81
- Average annual population growth rate (%): -0.5
- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 6

Economy
- GDP (millions $): 37,160
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 13,790
- GDP growth (%): 0.8
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 76.0
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 3.6
- External Debt (millions $): 30,804
- Inflation Rate (%): 1.4
- FDI Inflows (millions $): 2,706
- FDI Outflows (millions $): 387
- Tourist arrivals (000): 1,132
- Tourism receipts (million $): 1,322
- Receipts (millions $): 3,371
- Receipts (in % GDP): 7.9

Total trade
- Imports: 21,037
- Exports: 18,458
- Balance: -2,580

Main Trading Partners
- Import: Germany (12%), Italy (11%), Russian Federation (10%), China (8%), Hungary (5%)
- Export: Italy (16%), Germany (13%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (9%), Romania (8%), Russian Federation (9%)

Development
- Human Development Index (Value): 0.776
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 66

Health
- Physicians density (per 10,000): 21.1
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 54.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 10.4

Emissions
- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 5.3
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 252

Protected areas
- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 6.8
- Marine (% of territorial waters):

ICT
- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 120.5
- Households with computer (per 100): 64.4
- Internet users (per 100): 65.3

Society

Education
- Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 99.1/97.0
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 96
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 97
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 58
- Mean years of schooling: 10.8
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 4.2
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.78

Water
- Water resources (km³): ...
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 469
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 3
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): ...
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): 0

Security
- Total armed forces (000): 28
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 2.0
## SLOVENIA

**Official Name:** Republic of Slovenia  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary constitutional republic  
**Head of State:** Borut Pahor  
**Head of Government:** Miro Cerar  

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

- **Modern Centre Party (SMC)** (Social liberalism) 35
- **Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)** (Conservative) 19
- **Democratic Pensioners’ Party of Slovenia (DEUSUS)** (Single-issue) 11
- **Social Democrats (SD)** 6
- **United Left (ZL)** (Social democracy) 5
- **Group of Unaffiliated Deputies (NP)** 4
- **Minorities (Hungarian and Italian minorities’ interests)** 2
- **New Slovenia - Christian People’s Party (NSi)** 2
- **Democratic Pensioners’ Party of Slovenia (DESUS)** (Single-issue) 1

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Ljubljana (0.28)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Maribor (0.10); Celje (0.05); Kranj (0.05)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area km²</th>
<th>20,270</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km²)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (%)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual population growth rate (%)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population age &lt;15 (%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population age &gt;64 (%)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fertility rate (births per woman)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years)</td>
<td>77/84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

- **GDP (millions $):** 42,798
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 30,918
- **GDP growth (%):** 2.3
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 83.1
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -3.3
- **External Debt (millions $):** ..
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.5

#### FDI

- **Inflows (millions $):** 993
- **Outflows (millions $):** -65

#### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 2,707
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 2,697

#### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** 758
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 1.8

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>29,230</td>
<td>33,312</td>
<td>4,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>24,885</td>
<td>26,690</td>
<td>1,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>4,345</td>
<td>6,622</td>
<td>2,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economic Sectors

- **Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):** 2
- **Industry, value added (% of GDP):** 33
- **Services, value added (% of GDP):** 65

#### Labour market

- **Labour participation rate, female (%):** 52.2
- **Unemployment rate (%):** 9.0
- **Youth unemployment rate (%):** 16.4

#### Energy

- **Production (millions mt oil eq):** 3.7
- **Consumption (millions mt oil eq):** 6.7
- **Consumption per capita (kg oil eq):** 3,236
- **Import (% energy used):** 44.5

### Total trade

- **Import (millions $):** 24,885
- **Export (millions $):** 26,690
- **Balance (millions $):** 1,805

### Main Trading Partners

- **Import:** Germany (15%), Italy (13%), Austria (7%), China (6%), Croatia (4%)
- **Export:** Germany (17%), Italy (9%), Austria (7%), Croatia (6%), France (4%)

### Society

#### Education

- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 99.7/99.7
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 98
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 111
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 83
- **Mean years of schooling:** 12.1
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** 5.5
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 2.39

#### Health

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 25.2
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 46.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 9.2

#### Emissions

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 6.2
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 522

#### ICT

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 113.2
- **Internet users (per 100):** 73.1
Official Name: Kingdom of Spain
Form of Government: Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Head of State: King Felipe VI
Head of Government: Mariano Rajoy

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
People’s Party (PP, conservative) 134
Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE, social democrat) 84
United We Can - In Common We Can - En Masse (left wing) 67
Citizens - Party of the Citizenry 32
Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC, independentist regional) 9
Catalan European Democratic Party (independentist regional) 8
Basque Nationalist Party (Christian democratic nationalist) 5
Commitment Coalition (left wing, environmentalist) 4
EH-Bildu (far left, Basque nationalist) 2
Others 5

Population
Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Madrid (6.26)
Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):
- Barcelona (5.31)
- Valencia (0.81)
- Seville (0.70)
- Zaragoza (0.71)

Area km²: 505,940
Population: 46.4 million
Population age <15 (%): 15
Population age >64 (%): 19
Population density (hab/km²): 93
Average annual population growth rate (%): -0.1
Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years): 81/86
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 4

Economy
GDP & Debt
GDP (millions $): 1,193,556
GDP per capita ($, PPP): 3,451
GDP growth (%): 302.0
Public Debt (in % GDP): 99.8
Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -5.1
External Debt (millions $): ..
Inflation Rate (%): -0.5
FDI
Inflows (millions $): 9,243
Outflows (millions $): 34,586
International tourism
Tourist arrivals (000): 68,215
Tourism receipts (million $): 56,426

Migrant remittances
Receipts (millions $): ..
Receipts in % GDP: ..

Total trade
Imports
in goods and services (millions $): 367,650
in goods (millions $): 302,702
in services (millions $): 64,948
in goods and services (% GDP): 31.0
Exports
in goods and services (millions $): 395,984
in goods (millions $): 277,940
in services (millions $): 118,044
in goods and services (% GDP): 33.4
Balance
in goods and services (% GDP): 2.4

Main Trading Partners
Import:
- Germany (12%), France (11%), China (9%), Italy (6%), United States (5%)
Export:
- France (15%), Germany (11%), Italy (7%), United Kingdom (7%), Portugal (7%)

Society
Education
Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 98.8/97.5
Net enrolment rate (primary): 99
Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 130
Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 90
Mean years of schooling: 9.8
Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 4.3
R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 1.28

Water
Water resources (km³): 111.5
Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 801
Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 68
Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 18
Desalinated water production (millions m³): 100

Security
Total armed forces (000): 200
Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.2

Development
Human Development Index (Value): 0.884
Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 27

Health
Physicians density (per 10,000): 49.5
Hospital beds (per 10,000): 32.0
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 9.0

Emissions
CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 5.0
Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 474

Protected areas
Terrestrial (% of total land area): 28.0
Marine (% of territorial waters): 7.5

ICT
Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 108.2
Households with computer (per 100): 78.2
Internet users (per 100): 78.7
**SYRIA**

Official Name: Syrian Arab Republic  
Form of Government: Dominant-party semi-presidential state  
Head of State: Bashar al-Assad  
Head of Government: Wael Nader al-Halqi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)</th>
<th>People’s Council of Syria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Progressive Front (NFP, coalition led by the Baath Party)</td>
<td>Independents 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):</th>
<th>Damascus (2.59)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):</td>
<td>Aleppo (3.64); Homs (1.69); Hamah (1.30); Latakia (0.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area km²:</td>
<td>185,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions):</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km²):</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (%):</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual population growth rate (%):</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Population age <15 (%): | 37 |
| Population age >64 (%): | 4 |
| Total fertility rate (births per woman): | 3.03 |
| Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years): | 64/7 |

Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 11

**Economy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP &amp; Debt</th>
<th>Economic Sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $):</td>
<td>Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP):</td>
<td>Industry, value added (% of GDP):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>Services, value added (% of GDP):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP):</td>
<td>Labour market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP):</td>
<td>Labour participation rate, female (%): 12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $):</td>
<td>Unemployment rate (%): 14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%):</td>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (%): 32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>Employment in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflows (millions $):</td>
<td>Agriculture (% of total employment): 17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>Industry (% of total employment): 38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International tourism</td>
<td>Services (% of total employment): 44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant remittances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (millions $):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (in % GDP):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total trade</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $):</td>
<td>7,504</td>
<td>2,409</td>
<td>-5,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP):</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Trading Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Import: Saudi Arabia (10%), China (10%), Turkey (10%), Italy (6%), Russian Federation (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export: Iraq (69%), Saudi Arabia (8%), United Arab Emirates (6%), Libya (6%), Kuwait (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 91.8/80.7</td>
<td>Human Development Index (Value): 0.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary): 67</td>
<td>Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling: 5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure (% of GDP):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water resources (km³): 16.8</td>
<td>Physicians density (per 10,000): 14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 863</td>
<td>Hospital beds (per 10,000): 15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 88</td>
<td>Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desalinated water production (millions m³): 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Emissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total armed forces (000): 281</td>
<td>CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military expenditure (% GDP):</td>
<td>Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected areas</th>
<th>ICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial (% of total land area): 0.7</td>
<td>Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine (% of territorial waters): 0.6</td>
<td>Households with computer (per 100):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet users (per 100): 30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FYROM

**Provisional reference:** the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:** Gjorge Ivanov  
**Head of Government:** Zoran Zaev

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>(Assembly of the Republic)</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) (Conservative)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besa Movement (social conservative)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for The Albanians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) (Social democracy, Third way)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Albanians (PDS/DPA, Albanian minority interests)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Union for Integration (BDI/DUI, Albanian minority interests)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Skopje (0.50)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Bitola (0.11); Kumanovo (0.11)
- **Area km²:** 25,710
- **Population:** 2,178
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 82
- **Urban population (%):** 57
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 0.1
- **Population age <15 (%):** 17
- **Population age >64 (%):** 12
- **Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 1.5
- **Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 73/78
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 5

### Economy

**GDP & Debt**
- **GDP (millions $):** 10,054
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 14,083
- **GDP growth (%):** 3.7
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 38.2
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -3.5
- **External Debt (millions $):** 6,942
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.3

**FDI**
- **Inflows (millions $):** 174
- **Outflows (millions $):** -15

**International tourism**
- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 486
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 270

**Migrant remittances**
- **Receipts (millions $):** 307
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 3.1

**Total trade**
- **Imports**: $6,532
- **Exports**: $4,891
- **Balance**: -$1,641
- **Imports**: $5,392
- **Exports**: $3,372
- **Balance**: -$2,021
- **Imports**: $1,139
- **Exports**: $1,519
- **Balance**: $380
- **Imports (in goods and services):** $66.8
- **Exports (in goods and services):** $50.0
- **Balance**: -$16.8

### Main Trading Partners

**Import:**
- Germany (13%), United Kingdom (10%), Serbia (8%), Greece (8%), China (6%)

**Export:**
- Germany (44%), Serbia (9%), Bulgaria (6%), Italy (4%), Greece (4%)
## TUNISIA

### Official Name:
Republic of Tunisia

### Form of Government:
Semi-Presidential Republic

### Head of State:
Beji Caid Essebsi

### Head of Government:
Youssef Chahed

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for Tunisia (NT) (Secularism, Social democracy)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennahdha (Islamist)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Patriotic Union (UPL) (Secularism, Liberalism)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Front (FP) (Secularism, Socialism)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisian Aspiration (Secularism, Liberalism)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress of the Republic (CPR) (Secularism, Social liberalism)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Current (Pan-Arabism)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Destourian Initiative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Movement (Secularism, Socialism)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population
| Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): | Tunis (2.01) |
| Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): | Sfax (0.73); Sousse (0.67); Kairouan (0.57) |
| Area km²: | 163,610 |
| Population: | 11.3 |
| Population age <15 (%): | 23 |
| Population age >64 (%): | 8 |
| Urban population (%): | 67 |
| Average annual population growth rate (%): | 1.1 |

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt
- GDP (millions $): 43,156
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 1,148
- GDP growth (%): 1.0
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 57.2
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -4.4
- External Debt (millions $): 27,363
- Inflation Rate (%): 4.9

#### FDI
- Inflows (millions $): 1,002
- Outflows (millions $): 33

#### International tourism
- Tourist arrivals (000): 5,359
- Tourism receipts (million $): 1,869

#### Migrant remittances
- Receipts (millions $): 2,347
- Receipts (in % GDP): 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total trade</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>21,965</td>
<td>17,116</td>
<td>-4,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>19,069</td>
<td>13,947</td>
<td>-5,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>2,896</td>
<td>3,170</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>-11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development
- Human Development Index (Value): 0.725
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 97

### Health
- Physicians density (per 10,000): 12.2
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 21.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 7.0

### Emissions
- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 2.3
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 84

### ICT
- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 129.9
- Households with computer (per 100): 33.2
- Internet users (per 100): 48.5
**Country: Turkey**

**Official Name:** Republic of Turkey  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:** Recep Tayyip Erdoğan  
**Head of Government:** Binali Yıldırım

### Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Development Party (AKP, Islamist, conservative)</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, Turkish nationalist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican People’s Party (CHP, Social Democracy, laicist)</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Independents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP, Democratic Socialist, anti-capitalist)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Ankara (4.85)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Istanbul (14.37), İzmir (3.09), Bursa (1.97), Adana (1.88), Gaziantep (1.57), Konya (1.23)
- **Area (km²):** 783,560
- **Population (millions):** 78.7
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 102
- **Urban population (%):** 73
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 1.5
- **Population age <15 (%):** 26
- **Population age >64 (%):** 8
- **Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 2.10
- **Life expectancy at birth, Men/Women (years):** 72/79
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 12

### Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP &amp; Debt</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $):</td>
<td>859,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP):</td>
<td>24,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP):</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP):</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $):</td>
<td>397,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%):</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FDI</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflows (millions $):</td>
<td>16,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>4,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International tourism</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000):</td>
<td>39,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
<td>35,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrant remittances</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (millions $):</td>
<td>1,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (in % GDP):</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total trade</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>222,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>199,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>22,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Sectors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry, value added (% of GDP):</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services, value added (% of GDP):</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labour market</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour participation rate, female (%):</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%):</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (%):</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment in</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture (% of total employment):</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry (% of total employment):</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (% of total employment):</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production (millions mt oil eq):</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption (millions mt oil eq):</td>
<td>121.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption per capita (kg oil eq):</td>
<td>1,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import (% energy used):</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%):</td>
<td>98.6/92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary):</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary):</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling:</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D expenditure (% of GDP):</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water resources (km³):</td>
<td>211.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desalinated water production (millions m³):</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total armed forces (000):</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military expenditure (% GDP):</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>199,922</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>22,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emissions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protected areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial (% of total land area):</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine (% of territorial waters):</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile subscriptions (per 100):</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with computer (per 100):</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users (per 100):</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

- **Population age <15 (%):** 26
- **Population age >64 (%):** 8
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**Conclusion**

Turkey, officially known as the Republic of Turkey, is a parliamentary republic located in Asia Minor. It has a diverse economy with a significant focus on agriculture, industry, and services. The country faces challenges in health, education, and security, including high rates of youth unemployment and limited access to clean water. Despite these challenges, Turkey continues to be a significant player in the global economy.
Ten years after the Paris Summit and the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, does France still intend to play leader in strategic Mediterranean affairs? Can its latest President propose a new path for French foreign policy in this sphere? Should it contribute to rebuilding Euro-Mediterranean relations just as it intends to influence EU construction? What if Africa supplants the Mediterranean on the list of priorities?

A Polarizing Election

In May 2017, the election of a new President of the Republic in France did not fail to attract international attention. After a campaign full of twists and turns, the second round of the election placed two diametrically different projects for France in opposition. On the one hand, the programme proposed by Marine Le Pen, leader of the Front National since 2011, who positioned herself, unsurprisingly, on the extreme right of the political spectrum by advocating a series of strong nationalist attitudes, and promising the impossible to vulnerable sectors of the population, unfortunately susceptible to such populist discourse. On the other hand, Emmanuel Macron, a perfect stranger to the country until 2014, when he became minister of Economy, Industry and the Digital Sector before leaving the post in the summer of 2016 to found En Marche!, his own political movement. He stood out for expressing a centrist political vision for inland politics, removing himself from left-wing or right-wing partisan logic, and a profoundly European conviction open towards globalization.

During the second round of the presidential election, against all odds and progressively capitalizing on the errors or affairs of his competitors, Emmanuel Macron won by a fairly significant lead (66% of the votes cast) over Marine Le Pen on the evening of 7 May 2017. In short, he projected a message of confidence in France’s strengths and in world developments, in contrast to his rival’s divisive and alarmist discourse.

A New President, Renewed Expectations

The 25th President in the history of the Republic of France, Emmanuel Macron is, at 39, also the youngest to take up office in the Élysée Palace. Although he unquestionably embodies the generational renewal of the political class awaited by a large percentage of French society, Emmanuel Macron did not generate general enthusiasm during the campaign or in the wake of his election. It is clearly too early to judge his actions at the head of the country, especially since high-stake national issues are not lacking for this President, whose performance will be evaluable at mid-term, that is, at the 2020 horizon. He has promised various reforms during his five-year term and has embarked on a process calling for dialogue and coherence at each stage of his programme. In both form and substance, the French are finally curious to know more about this unprecedented political figure who is Emmanuel Macron. And this share of unknowns already has the merit of regenerating the political debate in France.

But it is on the international level that President Emmanuel Macron causes the greatest excitement at this stage. During the electoral campaign, the French
probably did not quite realize what the arrival of this new actor on the political scene could mean abroad. That the Americans could elect Barack Obama in 2008 or the Canadians, Justin Trudeau in 2015 – why not? But that the French, in their "old" country, once revolutionary but turned so conservative, could put such an inexperienced young man in the Presidency of the Republic – what a shock!

Since he took up office, Emmanuel Macron has garnered a great deal of attention from international commentators, and he is well served by a busy diplomatic schedule and the complicity of a quickly-established rapport with numerous world leaders. The smiling, dynamic face of the French President is subconsciously changing perceptions on the state of the country, which many formerly described as paralyzed and in decline. Above all, this French election has brought a breath of fresh air to an international political sequence of events marked over the past few months by the EU crisis and the Brexit vote, the tensing of Russia, the victory of Donald Trump in the US and a certain tendency to reject the rules of multilateralism. In sum, Emmanuel Macron, through his discourse and programme, refutes the scenario of a resurgence of nationalism in world affairs. Will he truly have the means to influence this global trajectory? Beyond the inevitable media frenzy of the first few months, will he simply be a source of attraction abroad? Will he manage to go beyond the stage of promised action by progressively turning the confidence his voters have placed in him into concrete acts?

Questions for the Mediterranean

All of these questions also concern the Mediterranean Region. As all of his predecessors, the new French President is expected. The Mediterranean is a strategic region for France. This is nothing new and a well-known foreign policy component of this European power. The reasons are historical, socio-cultural, geographic and economic. France's past often draws it back to this region, which was once the centre of the world. France's demographic composition nurtures multiple human and social ties between it and countries along the Mediterranean seaboard, namely, the countries to the south of France, which itself has a coast along the Mediterranean. In any case, trade relations are dynamic between the French power and North African countries, but also with those of the Middle East.

How can Macron act differently to former presidents regarding the Mediterranean Region, considering that issues in the region are rapidly changing? What are the opportunities and risks in this area, which Macron knows will be among the relations to maintain and the strong tensions to manage during his term? Shouldn't he first focus on relaunching Europe before attempting to influence the affairs of a much more complex southern neighbourhood?

The President has always emphasized his attachment to European integration and his will to rebuild the dynamics of trust that allowed the countries of the continent to co-operate in the past.

The President has always emphasized his attachment to European integration and his will to rebuild the dynamics of trust that allowed the countries of the continent to co-operate in the past. Emmanuel Macron well knows that such a political relaunch of the EU requires in part the efficiency of the France-Germany duo. It was no coincidence that his first trip abroad, on 15 May, the day after he took up office, was to Berlin. To reassure public opinion on the role of the EU and demonstrate that protection of populations is greater on a European-wide scale, according to Macron, concrete actions are needed, made possible by long-term projects. When proceedings and short-termism prevail to the detriment of ideas and strategies, Europe is not being built: it is moving backwards, like a crayfish. The unpredictability of an America headed by Trump has surely given Europe cause to reflect on its strategic autonomy. Any goal of rebuilding necessarily requires new projects. To restart itself, Europe needs to know what direction to go. Emmanuel Macron clearly wishes to contribute to reorienting the slightly rusty European compass. It is therefore certain that foreign policy priority for France during the Macron Administration will be Eu-
rope, first and foremost. This does not entail indifference towards the Mediterranean Basin, however. On the contrary, in both Paris and Brussels, as well as in numerous capitals on the continent, everyone agrees on the geopolitical importance of this southern neighbourhood. A turbulent Mediterranean area constitutes a major handicap on the road to EU renewal. But the answers lie neither in closing oneself off behind walls, nor in the wishful thinking of a “Mediterranean Union.” Ten years after the Paris Summit, which had established its premises, the regional panorama has changed profoundly. Worse, it has deteriorated. Multilateralism in the Mediterranean only works with concrete initiatives adapted to people’s real needs or capable of uniting states along the Mediterranean seaboard on issues that have become so complex that only collective responses have any real effect. Such issues include matters of climate, water, food security and infrastructure, not to mention employment, in particular youth employment.

In this regard, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), based in Barcelona, tenaciously maintains this truly fragile multilateral dynamic. By working more with other international and regional institutions in order to bolster synergies and maximize the impact of the actions implemented, the UfM should remain a major instrument of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. The new French President, adept at speeches seeking to reassure and present things in a more positive light, could perhaps make a case for the UfM becoming a soundbox for good news and innovative projects in the area.

In its Neighbourhood Policy regarding the Mediterranean area, the EU will have to make thematic choices and no longer attempt to deal with everything. Budgetary resources are limited. Moreover, certain issues cannot be considered without taking into account power struggles going far beyond European actors. Regarding the war in Syria, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the handling of instability in the Sahel, the EU, and much less so France, cannot act in isolation. But they should partake of this collective responsibility, consisting of finding solutions to ease the tensions gripping this vast region. This should not, however, lead to blind conformism regarding American or Russian policies. The EU and France, as was the case in the 1990s, presumably have assets to bring to the table to differentiate their strategy in the area from the other major powers and appear as credible partners to the population of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

React or Anticipate?

This poses the problem of the stance to adopt vis-à-vis this Mediterranean space in constant effervescence. Over the past few years, shaken by the popular revolts in many Arab countries and by terrorist threats, Europe and France have primarily acted in reaction to events. The Libyan episode likewise demonstrated the dangers of an overly spontaneous military intervention without a long-term political project for that country. The result is that French foreign policy towards the Mediterranean Basin is tending more and more towards segmentation of approaches according to country. Pragmatic bilateralism is fully functioning, thus reducing the legibility of a hypothetical French strategy for the Mediterranean.

Over the past few years, shaken by the popular revolts in many Arab countries and by terrorist threats, Europe and France have primarily acted in reaction to events

Everything would seem to indicate that President Macron, likely with a change in orientation and in his particular style, will continue to carry out French action in a manner adapted to the specific circumstances of each country and thus the reciprocal interests comprising bilateral relations. This will particularly be true for the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). The two major unknowns are ultimately the position he will adopt regarding Turkey, considering the authoritarian excesses taking place in this Middle East giant, and his will to take an active role in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, if he is indeed invited to participate.

In any case, beyond the bilateral dynamic that will prevail, Emmanuel Macron’s France will likely be strongly inclined to propose the development of a post-2020 Euro-Mediterranean agenda focussing on action to be taken during the coming decade on
several specific topics. This calls for greater cohesion in EU positions towards the region and greater synergy between statements and actions. A single example of coherence can be found: maximizing support to countries undergoing reform and progressing in their democratic transitions. Regarding topics, as stated earlier, limited resources require making sound choices and prioritizing matters affecting people’s daily lives and geared towards the needs of Mediterranean countries. On the geographic level, it would perhaps be appropriate to consider as well certain advantages often provided by the 5+5 dialogue format in the western Mediterranean, not to mention the matter of synergies with the neighbours of EU neighbours, whether they be the Gulf States or countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In order to rebuild, Europe should seek progress insofar as stability, growth and respectful dialogue in its Mediterranean neighbourhood. Emmanuel Macron should contribute to lending visibility and means to those who, from civil society to institutions, not to mention companies and scientists, are working towards a positive and open Mediterranean region.

Africa at the Heart of Foreign Policy?

The French President, armed with his pro-European message, can thus likewise bring renewed hope for Mediterranean solidarity. In any case, we should consider the fact that France’s extra-European foreign policy has gradually shifted towards Africa. The immense challenges of the African continent certainly demand such a strategic approach by both Europe and France. Emmanuel Macron is interested in Africa and the possibilities of renewing ties with countries that have been growing more distant in recent years. He observes, as do many, the changes taking place in Africa insofar as trade flows, investments and innovation, convinced of the opportunities offered by this colossal area with a growing population. Francophone African populations are expected to reach approximately 500 million by 2030. But the French President likewise views the risks threatening development in Africa with concern and undoubtedly some fear. Climate change, exponential growth of shanty towns and the terrorist movements that are prospering in marginal territories are all issues threatening the security of populations. Future migration issues could be immense. In an interview in the newspaper Le Monde from 23 April 2017, Emmanuel Macron stated the following: “When I look at Africa, I see the continent of the future […] This is why I want to establish an ambitious partnership between France, Europe, the Mediterranean region and Africa to foster our mutual interests in the spheres of: climate, trade, employment and innovation, but also security and stability.”

Whatever the stakes represented by Sub-Saharan Africa, it would be difficult to “skip” the countries of the southern Mediterranean seaboard, since they are naturally African as well.

France, as the rest of Europe, is thus looking to “the Africas,” with situations as highly contrasting as they are diverse, with so many “possible futures.” Is this an opportunity for resituating the Mediterranean in the centre, between a Europe to be rebuilt and an African continent to be developed? Whatever the stakes represented by Sub-Saharan Africa, it would be difficult to “skip” the countries of the southern Mediterranean seaboard, since they are naturally African as well. After all, serving as an “interface” between continents and not a “neighbourhood” or “periphery” is the true geopolitical history of this region.
The Historical Reasons behind Italy’s Instability

Giulio Sapelli
Research Associate
Fondazione ENI Enrico Mattei, Milan

One cannot understand the Italian crisis of recent years, primarily during the period from the 2014 Renzi government to the present, without focusing on the specifics of Italy or what I prefer to call Italian exceptionalism (to borrow a term from the famous book American Exceptionalism. A Double-Edged Sword by Seymour Martin Lipset). This “exceptionalism” is, ultimately, simply the outcome of Italy’s anomalous situation in world processes of state building; an anomaly that emerges dramatically today, against a backdrop of radical upheaval in international power relationships.

Italy is a fragile and unstable nation due to its historical instability and historical position in the international division of labour. The country was economically fragmented and divided and subject to the external dominion of UK and French capitalism initially and then US capitalism after World War II. Nowadays, the fast-shifting international order explicitly reveals the fact that North America’s security and financial dominance export model has encountered serious military and diplomatic defeats in recent years and left Italy exposed to an increasingly crucial dependency on external agencies.

A snapshot of Italy’s position in the balance of power was revealed by the Libyan crisis in the Mediterranean, which destroyed an almost hundred-year relationship, which started out as a hateful colonial power and gradually evolved into a relationship based on the trading of oil resources in return for security resources and infrastructural capital goods. The Arab Springs and their dire consequences have risked and continue to risk destroying such trade, thus endangering the Italian presence in Libya and Egypt, thanks to direct French and British pressure aimed at expelling Italy from North Africa, just as happened at the end of the 19th century.

Both European states resorted to every means to ensure that Italy was excluded from Egypt as well as Libya, thus preventing the still existing Italian production potential from being used in the upcoming reconstruction of Mesopotamia, which could have been made possible by the drawing up of an international pact between the US, Turkey and Arab Sunni powers.

The growing deinstitutionalization that afflicts Italy has arisen out of the geopolitical vacuum created by the decline of Europe in the world. We are well into the era of European deinstitutionalization, of which BREXIT is merely the beginning, as soon the states of central Europe will embark on a process of polyarchic (not democratic) deinstitutionalization, as is already happening in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Albania, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

The economic policy of the last two dramatic years, 2016-2017, must be seen in the specific context of Italian monetary matters, which have always been determined by fluctuation and a continuous interweaving of fiscal dominance and foreign dominance, with a growing loss of sovereignty.

The pinnacle of this loss was represented by the Monti government of 2011, which marked the ousting from power of Silvio Berlusconi. This occurred without any vote of no confidence against Berlusconi’s government but due to strong French and German pressure that, significantly enough, found an institutional basis in the ECB. This pressure was not supported by the US under Obama’s presidency.

Italian political and institutional history of recent years cannot be understood without remembering that the Italian party system was again subject to
increasing disintegration in the wake of the destruction that took place in the early 1990s, at the time of the “clean hands” campaign: Europe’s very own version of the more recent Brazilian “operation car wash.”

The current crisis thus began in 2011, after the Deutsche Bank dumped huge quantities of Italian government bonds on international markets, causing a deep-seated public debt crisis. US pressure to prevent this pro-German attack on European stability was in vain. The unconstitutional role performed by Italian President, Giorgio Napolitano enabled top ranking Eurocrats to take a decision to go ahead with setting up the Monti government. This was done without the aid of political elections and thus was not legitimized by popular will, but only by exceptional arrangements of a financial nature.

The growing deinstitutionalization that afflicts Italy has arisen out of the geopolitical vacuum created by the decline of Europe in the world

This regime was reminiscent of the Roman dictatorship that prevented the Roman Senate from unraveling due to external threats up until the time of Sulla and Caesar. After Caesar, it became a despotic regime that laid the foundations of imperial rule, taking power from the Roman people. After the political disintegration of the Monti government, which no longer had the confidence of the parliamentary right, the 2013 elections set Italy on a course to overcome the exceptional arrangements, effectively reconstituting the parties that had been destroyed by the judicial enquiries of the 1990s. Instead, the 2013 elections gave rise to a party machine that was unable to organize a government, plunging Italy into a crisis very similar to that experienced in Spain and Portugal. The latter two countries have, however, found a solution that, though precarious, is very different from what happened and is still happening in Italy.

Due to an electoral system that makes it impossible, even today, to establish a virtuous balance between members elected to the House and members elected to the Senate, the Democratic Party was unable to form a stable majority when no longer held to ransom by the Senate, which had been unable to achieve a majority for want of a few votes. The Five Star movement ploughed on and ruled out the alternative option of a coalition government with the Democratic Party. Hence the crisis in the party machinery and the start of the deinstitutionalization meltdown.

A deep gulf opened up between Parliament, which was unable to come to an agreement over the creation of a new electoral law, and the Constitutional Court, which declared the law under which the 2013 elections were held to be unconstitutional, opening up confrontation and conflict between the parties that has yet to establish a compromise. The increasingly significant role that Giorgio Napolitano, the Italian President, assumed during that period meant that we were really faced with a political and social disintegration worthy of Caesar and Bonaparte: effectively dominated a Republic that was and still is parliamentarian. To this was added the devastating transformation (from the beginning of the 1990s to the present day) of the judicial order, with the judiciary becoming an autonomous power that encroaches on politics and on the economy with anomalous and anti-constitutional force.

This was the scenario in April 2013 when Giorgio Napolitano brought into being the government of Enrico Letta, a government that represented a decisive shift in Italian political life: a return to an approach based on a major coalition that is political rather than technical, strongly focused on securing the support of party secretaries. Once the ministers had been appointed on 28 April, however, the government remained in office for a total of just 300 days, in other words nine months and 25 days. It stood down on 14 February 2014, the day after the leadership of the Democratic Party stated: “the need and urgency – in the words of the official press releases – to open up a new phase, with a new government.”

The fall of the Letta government, which was excessively lukewarm towards the German-style austerity policy opposed by the US, fully revealed the degree of increasing deinstitutionalization that continued to envelope the movement of the Italian political classes. The problem lay in the fluctuating movements of the political classes in the Democratic Party. This should be the government’s parliamentary mainstay
and instead is proving to be its most determined opponent. There is a clear gap between parliamentary legitimacy and party discipline: the factional spirit calls into question the very foundations of parliamentary democracy and thus depends more and more on external conditioning influences. This is the new face of the Roman dictatorship that emerged with Mario Monti in 2011. Five years on, this changed into a factional dictatorship and overturned all the institutional balance, at the same time sending the visceral waves in the factional power relationships spinning straight into the parliamentary sphere, thus continually threatening the stability and democratic legitimacy of the nation.

There is a clear gap between parliamentary legitimacy and party discipline: the factional spirit calls into question the very foundations of parliamentary democracy and thus depends more and more on external conditioning influences.

On Sunday 8 December 2013, the primary elections of the Democratic Party were held to choose the national secretary and members of the Democratic Party national assembly. With 67.55% of the votes, the consultation was won by the Mayor of Florence Matteo Renzi, who was thus proclaimed national secretary. The Renzi government is emblematic of the transition that has taken place in Italy in recent years between personal parties and parties made up of confederations of factions that are not distinguished by their strong policy differences but by the diversity of their personal affiliations: a shift from mono-despotic parties to multi-despotic parties. Such parties can be very unstable, because politics as policy does not act as a long-term amalgam in such parties in the same way as in strongly ideological and policy-based parties.

The instability increases when these multi-despotic parties must surround themselves with parties that are much weaker than the dominant multi-despotic party in order to form a government, with a multiplicity of personal affiliations that are continually in danger of breaking down, as Mauro Calise so ably documented in his studies.

The members of government belonged to eight different Parliamentary groups but the Democratic Party appointed the Prime Minister and nine ministers, while all the other parties were represented by one or two ministers and a few undersecretaries. The government majority in the Senate could count on the support of the moderate right-wing Forza Italia, which thus continued to affect the Italian political game. This was useful to Renzi because he did not have to depend entirely on the internal minority of the Democratic Party, which was deeply divided over the constitutional reforms that were gradually taking shape, amidst division over the role to be attributed to the electoral majority premium and the state’s re-centralization that Matteo Renzi aimed to fast-track by removing more and more power from the regions, primarily in the areas of energy and transport.

As with the process of government formation, the appointment of the President followed a non-institutional path. Giorgio Napolitano had been re-elected “by popular demand” by Parliament as a whole, given the impossibility of coming to an agreement over the new President, over the profile of the new electoral law and over the constitutional reforms that everyone considered urgent but had led to very deep divisions between and within the parties.

The government majority in the Senate could count on the support of the moderate right-wing Forza Italia. This was useful to Renzi because he did not have to depend entirely on the internal minority of the Democratic Party, which was deeply divided.

The natural expiration of Giorgio Napolitano’s second term was 22 April 2020, but, as widely anticipated in previous months, the Italian President, who was nearly 90, resigned on 14 January 2015, at the end of the Italian Presidency of the European Union. The election of Mattarella with the votes of the Democratic Party and the tiny centrist and moderate
groups that had broken with Berlusconi marked the beginning of a rebalancing of state power. This restored to the Italian President the dignity of a Republican referee that had been trampled over by Napolitano’s pro-German European activism.

Following the outcome of the 2016 constitutional Referendum, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and the executive he presided over stepped down.

Matteo Renzi announced a referendum on constitutional reform in a forceful move designed to reaffirm his own personal power (Renzi’s referendum battle cry hinged on his promise to step down if he did not win the YES vote in favour of constitutional change). The outcome was catastrophic for the government, with 60% of votes against and only 40% in favour, causing a dramatic social schism in the nation: the young and poor and low-income wage earners and pensioners voted No, with a very strong and clear class cleavage that was socially and anthropologically very similar to what happened in the United Kingdom with Brexit.

Following the outcome of the 2016 constitutional Referendum, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and the executive he presided over stepped down. On 11 December 2016, after consulting with delegations of various parliamentary parties and groups, Italian President Sergio Mattarella gave the task of forming a new government to Paolo Gentiloni, former Foreign Minister of the Renzi Government. On 13 December, the government won a confidence vote in the Chamber of Deputies with 368 votes in favour and 105 against. The Five Star Movement, Northern League, ALA, Forza Italia and Civic Choice left the House at the time of the vote while Brothers of Italy members protested against the Government by waving banners bearing the wording “Vote Now!”

On 14 December, the government won a confidence vote in the Senate with 169 votes in favour and 99 against. The economic crisis continues, parliamentary stability is still far away because no agreement has been reached over the electoral law, but the Italian Presidency is now a firm bastion of constitutionality and offers the potential for rebuilding the political stability that a state such as Italy can consolidate, which is strongly dependent on international relations and still lacks a party machine that encourages rather than weakens the authority of the democratic polarchy.

Bibliography

The Impact of the Migration Crisis on Political Dynamics in the Western Balkans

In the course of 2015 and the first quarter of 2016, an estimated 920,000 migrants and refugees – primarily from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq – passed through the Western Balkans region on their way to EU Member States further north.\(^1\) The “Western Balkan route” became a well-known term for public debates throughout the EU. With the EU-Turkey deal in March 2016, under which the EU and Turkey agreed to curb irregular migration across the Aegean Sea, the number of migrants passing through the Western Balkans has been significantly reduced. According to Frontex data, irregular border detections decreased from around 60,000 in January to less than 2,000 detections in September 2016.\(^2\)

This article will deal with the changing nature of migratory processes along the Western Balkan route, as well as the political responses to it. Migration management along the Western Balkan route has become a less salient topic in the EU, although this may change again at any moment. The recent crisis highlights the vulnerabilities deriving from a lack of political coordination and unilateral action in a region still struggling with ethnic nationalism and unstable bilateral relations.

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therefore, are still seeking to cross the Balkans undetected although this now happens in lower numbers and by using more diversified routes. Human smuggling is a booming business, with security agencies estimating that the smuggling business is worth around €2 billion a year.3 The official “closure” of the Western Balkan route has also left a number of migrants trapped, especially in Serbia and Macedonia. According to EU and UNHCR estimates, there are around 8,000 migrants stranded in Serbia (as of early 2017).4 A particular challenge has been that around 10 percent of these migrants have been unaccompanied minors. The actual numbers may be higher as many migrants hide and refrain from starting asylum procedures in the Western Balkan states. They often shelter in abandoned warehouses, for instance, in the area of Belgrade’s main train station.

The Migration Crisis and Regional Politics

Migration has become a salient issue around the world. The Western Balkans is no exception, only here this significant and, by default, transnational issue interrelates with weak and contested state relations. The Western Balkans governments and political elites still have weak communication and coordination channels with one another, and there are unresolved constitutional issues, such as Serbia’s contestation of Kosovo’s independence, and conflictual bilateral relations. Since 2005, Macedonia’s EU and NATO membership process has been blocked by Greece because of a dispute over the country’s name. The migration crisis provided the region’s politicians with an opportunity to galvanize ethnic tensions and play a nationalistic card. However, the closure of the Western Balkan route was not initiated from within the region. In early 2016, Austria and the Visegrad countries (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) started to actively work towards a closure of the route. This was done in close cooperation with Western Balkan governments but against the priorities of the Greek government. Hungary was particularly outspoken and started early on to fortify its borders with Serbia. It also conducted an explicit anti-immigration and anti-Islam campaign. Hungary’s restrictive approach had spillover effects on the political dynamics in the Western Balkan states. The fence along the Serbian-Hungarian border diverted the Western Balkan route to Croatia. The Croatian government reacted by accusing Serbia and Hungary of orchestrating the re-direction of the migrant flow. In consequence, Croatia closed its borders with Serbia to trucks. Serbia reacted with countermeasures at the Croatian border (such as a temporary ban on imports of Croatian goods). In addition, Serbia – and further south, Macedonia – sought to stop migrants even before they entered their territory. New fences were put up at the borders and additional police and army troops were also deployed. In spring 2016, migrants stranded at the Greek border outpost of Idomeni clashed with Macedonian border police forces while demanding a re-opening of the Balkan route. In effect, Greece as an EU Member State was cut off from the rest of the EU by the Western Balkans and northern EU Member States keen to keep migrants out of their territory. However, the EU sought to assist Greece by relocating migrants directly from Greece (and, for that matter, Turkey) into other EU Member States in accordance with a predefined quota system. The implementation of this plan has proceeded, albeit at a slow pace.


The EU, in particular the European Commission, has always been keen to avoid or end unilateral responses in the context of the migration crisis. It endeavoured to conceive of a coherent response. In 2016, special “Western Balkans Summits” were conducted in Paris and Vienna gathering the prime ministers of the southeastern countries and their EU counterparts and senior officials of the Commission. The July 2016 Paris Summit delivered a “roadmap” on how to strengthen regional cooperation and coherence. The EU reiterated its commitment to the Western Balkans eventual accession to the EU. The EU has also supported Serbia and the other Western Balkan countries financially and operationally. It helped to improve reception capacities, drafting new asylum laws and developing border surveillance systems and closer cooperation with Frontex and Europol.

Migrants, therefore, are still seeking to cross the Balkans undetected although this now happens in lower numbers and by using more diversified routes. Human smuggling is a booming business.

A consequence of the migration crisis has not only been that the EU has again become more aware of and interested in the region. It also provided individual politicians and governments with an opportunity to present themselves as anchors of stability and reliable international partners. This could be particularly observed in the case of the Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, who was under considerable domestic pressure due to revelations of wiretapping, mass surveillance and high-level corruption. Due to these allegations, his government was forced to step down in early 2016 and to accept a new election. The European Commission was very critical of Macedonia’s development in terms of compliance with rule of law and spoke openly of “concerns” about the government’s “state capture” in its 2016 country report. Yet the migration crisis provided Mr Gruevski with a welcome opportunity to gain support from individual EU Member States. Sebastian Kurz, Austria’s Foreign Minister, attended an election rally in support of Mr Gruevski’s ruling party and emphasized his support and role during the migration crisis. While Mr Kurz defended his attendance claiming he was there only in his “capacity as a member of the European People’s Party,” he highlighted that Macedonia has become a “key partner in managing the migration crisis” due to its efforts in closing the Western Balkan route. The open support of an EU Member State for a Balkan government under investigation for severe misconduct and failing to respect democratic standards received harsh criticism by domestic observers and fellow EU politicians.

Conclusions

This article has analyzed the impact of the migration crisis on the Western Balkans, focusing on the events of 2016 and early 2017, a period marked by the “closure” of the Western Balkan route. While this step reduced the number of migrants crossing through southeastern Europe on their way further north, it has left many migrants stranded in Greece and some Western Balkan countries and/or revert to smuggling networks. Politically, the migration crisis has temporarily heightened bilateral tensions. It has also provided regional politicians, such as the Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, with an opportunity to present themselves as strongmen and to divert attention from domestic allegations of wrongdoings and corruption. Overall, the “crisis” modus operandi in relation to migration issues has come to an end in this region of southeastern Europe. The question still remains, however, as to whether the region’s politicians and elites have learned their lessons and are better prepared for future crises that require a transnational and coordinated response.

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The term Salafism comes from the Arabic salaf (predecessors or ancestors), describing the early Muslims who, adherents believe, provided the essence of Islamic practice. As Robert Lacey has explained, Salafism calls on Muslims to follow the example of the first three generations of Muslims, known as the salaf. The development of Islam in this direction began in its early period and continues to this day, under various names, such as the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia or the Muslim Brotherhood in many Muslim countries including Egypt, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, etc. It should be noted that Wahhabism is another name for Salafism, and it concerns the same movement within Islam. The term Wahhabism is usually used by people outside the movement, while followers prefer to define themselves as Salafists.

The founder of Wahhabism, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), began with the assumption that most of the intellectual history of Islam was a history of heresy, unacceptable innovations and external influences. In order to return to the genuine message of Islam, one had to reduce it to a very literal and puritan understanding of the Quran and hadiths. The outcome was therefore a reductionist and anti-rationalist movement postulating the recreation of the social conditions of 7th century Arabia and the understanding of the world at that time. A natural consequence of this approach is an interaction with “others” in an attempt to dominate or isolate them. In their fatwas, leading Wahhabi religious authorities recommend social contact with non-Muslims and Muslims considered to have "strayed" only for the purpose of conversion. Those for whom there is no hope of conversion should be avoided. Needless to say, this understanding of Islam is a hotbed for all sorts of extremisms.

After years of relative isolation within a communist system, Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) were unprepared in axiological terms to deal with a variety of Islamic ideas, ideologies, sects and other social phenomena introduced to them in the 1990s. Furthermore, poor socio-economic conditions ever since the war ended in 1995 (such as unemployment and poverty, migration from rural to urban areas, inadequate infrastructure, and demographic growth) made them vulnerable to rebellion and religious radicalization. Bosnian Muslims are not the only target for Salafists. For decades Salafism has been seeking a way to evolve into a global movement and force itself into traditional Muslim communities in areas of crisis, such as Kashmir, Palestine, Kosovo, Chechnya and Iraq. In areas where the social and economic structures have been destroyed by conflicts and poverty, the strict value system that Salafism offers often becomes the only refuge able to instil strength and give hope.

It should be emphasized that an individual’s right to choose a lifestyle according to an understanding of his or her faith, regardless of how conservative it might be, is not under dispute. That cannot automatically be taken as evidence of radicalization or something dangerous. The controversy arises when the impact of that understanding results in exclu-

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2 Hadiths (الحديث): reports describing the words, actions and habits of the Prophet Muhammad.
sive, militant, radical views, mostly inadequate to the specificity of Islam in, for example, B&H.
Salafi Islamic teachings first came to B&H during the war, in 1992, with the arrival of foreign volunteers - mujahedeen from Islamic countries. They formed the El-Mujahid unit and were put under the command of the Bosnian Muslims' Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The unit, which mostly consisted of Muslim volunteers, was joined by local Muslims as well. According to some estimates, between 2,000 and 5,000 such volunteers fought in B&H before the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. After the war, most were expelled under strong US pressure on the government of B&H. However, some settled permanently in the country, where they became a growing internal and foreign policy problem. According to Esad Hećimović, a journalist from Sarajevo, “The volunteers and missionaries from Islamic countries were convinced that Muslims in B&H were brought to a position where they had to fight for their survival precisely because they had abandoned the foundations of their faith. For them, there was no difference whatsoever between religious identity and earthly status. (...) They were trying to persuade Bosnian Muslims that only a return to faith would give them the power they needed to survive. So their belief was that strength lies in faith, not arms.”

Although the global Salafi movement has never been homogeneous (consisting of many different, sometimes competing groups), a similar situation gradually emerged in the Salafi community in B&H. After 1995, the Active Islamic Youth (AIO), a group of former Bosniak members of the El-Mujahid unit, and their magazine Saff became the most important heirs of the Salafite doctrine. AIO worked for almost a decade on a religious “awakening” of Bosnian Muslims, embracing the earliest Islamic teachings and practice and rejecting “novelties” in Islam. People connected with the organization participated in a series of public protests and often used rhetoric against other ethnic and religious groups in B&H, as well as against local Muslims who did not share their views. As a result of various investigations connected with terrorist activities and the bad reputation it acquired, foreign donors eventually stopped sending money. AIO ultimately disbanded in 2006, due to a lack of funds.

Poor socio-economic conditions made Bosnian Muslims vulnerable to rebellion and religious radicalization

Recent years have seen other Salafi groups in B&H, as well as in the Bosnian Muslim diaspora (mostly in western Europe). Three major currents have been identified. They differ primarily in terms of their attitude towards the Islamic community in B&H and the global jihad movement. The first group, headquartered in north-eastern B&H in the village of Gornja Maoča, was led by Nusret Imamović. He and his followers opposed the secular concepts of law, democracy, free elections and any law not based on Sharia law. Imamović has publicly and repeatedly supported violence and the global jihad movement. In late 2013, he and some of his followers went to Syria to join the Al-Nusra Front for the People of the Levant. As a result, he was included on the UN Al-Qaeda Sanctions List. He was succeeded by Hussein “Bilal” Bosnić.

5 AZINOVIC, Vlado; BASSUENER, Kurt and Weber, Bodo. Procjena potencijala za obnovu etničkog nasilja u Bosni i Hercegovini: Analiza sigurnosnih rizika [Assessing the potential for renewed ethnic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A security threat assessment], Sarajevo: Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo, 2011, p. 176.
6 “Nusret Imamovic was listed on 29 February 2016 pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 4 of resolution 2161 (2014) as being associated with Al-Qaeda for participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of Al-Nusrah Front for the People of the Levant (QDe. 137).” See: SECURITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO RESOLUTIONS 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) CONCERNING ISIL (Da'esh) AL-QAEDA AND ASSOCIATED INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS UNDERTAKINGS AND ENTITIES, “Narrative Summaries of Reasons for Listing,” at: www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/individual/nusret-imamovic (last accessed: 1 March, 2107).
7 However, Bosnić was accused of having publicly incited other people to join the organizations of the so-called Islamic State in 2013 and 2014. Thus, on 5 November 2015, he was sentenced to seven years in prison for public incitement of terrorist activities, recruitment of terrorists and organization of a terrorist group. See: TOE, Rodofo. “Bosnia Jails Salafist Chief for Recruiting Fighters,” BalkanInsight, 5 November 2015, at: www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-jails-imam-for-recruiting-islamic-state-fighters-11-05-2015 (last accessed: 1 March, 2017).
The second largest Salafi group is based out of Vienna and led by Muhamed Porča, the imam of the Tawhid mosque in the Austrian capital. He and his followers in Salafi communities in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Serbia and Montenegro also claim they follow and practice what they call “the authentic Islam.” Since 2007, he has been embroiled in a severe conflict with the Islamic community in B&H, which he claims is full of corruption and religious disbelief (kufr, كفر). He nevertheless remains very influential in Sarajevo and has the support of the paramilitary service. According to some sources, his contacts lead to the highest political structures in the Federation of B&H.8 Porča preached in Austria and Germany and was considered to be close to the German Salafist Pierre Vogel, as well as to Nusret Imamović before the latter left for Syria. Following Imamović’s departure, Porča’s contact person in B&H was Bilal Bosnič, until Bosnič’s arrest. Porča has been the beneficiary of vast funds for the creation of a Salafi “umbrella” organization in Europe called the Jama’at Salafi ud-Dawa Union, whose ultimate goal was to win over Muslims faithful to the Islamic community in B&H. It is important to note that Arab-sponsored “charity organizations” such as Jama’at ud-Dawa were the link between religious leaders and local Muslim communities. In order to evade restrictions and sanctions, it has diversified its portfolio of charitable organizations into separate branches around the world. However, all are believed to be branches of Jama’at ud-Dawa.9 Although it is suspected that the money from the Middle East is funnelled to Vienna via Amsterdam, the Austrian authorities have never allowed Jama’at’s bank accounts to be monitored. Thus, despite the numerous internal diplomatic notes sent by the US State Department to the Austrian government since 2001, the Salafis’ money in Austria has been protected and remains under Porča’s control.

The third and probably most extreme Bosnian Salafi group also operates out of Austria. Its leader, Nedžad Balkan (also known as Abu Mohammed), is a Vienna-born Muslim from the southern Serbian province of Raška (Sandžak). Balkan is considered a religious authority of the Kelimetul Haqq (the Word of the Truth), a Muslim organization in B&H and Raška (Sandžak), and a source of inspiration for several radical groups in the region.10 The group is highly supportive of the use of violence not only against “infidels,” but also against other Muslims who do not share their views. Balkan’s followers allegedly promote armed jihad. It thus seems justified to associate them with the movement Takfir wal-Hijra (Arabic تكفير والهجر, “Excommunication and Exodus”), which has members or supporters in several countries and is allied with Al-Qaeda.11 However, intelligence sources believe that Balkan’s influence in B&H is rather limited.12

Salafi Islamic teachings first came to Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war, in 1992, with the arrival of foreign volunteers - mujahedeen from Islamic countries

In addition to the three most influential Salafi groups in B&H, a number of small, fairly isolated groups simply aim to live in a more orthodox manner, cite the tradition of the Prophet and think their faith is the only authentic one, complete in form and content, and fully inherited from the Prophet. Nevertheless, recent years have witnessed the clear emergence of a new generation of Islamist radicals, or Salafists, in B&H. This new generation of young Muslims does not accept the state of B&H or its

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12 AZINOVIĆ, Vlado; BASSUIENER, Kurt and WEBER, Bodo, op. cit., p. 178.
laws. It is an enormous shift compared to the “war solidarity” of previous generations of Islamists who fought the 1992-1995 war for the sake of the State of B&H. In the name of their beliefs, these youngsters are prepared to go so far as to start an armed conflict between Bosnian Muslims themselves.13

Nevertheless, recent years have witnessed the clear emergence of a new generation of Islamist radicals, or Salafists. This new generation of young Muslims does not accept the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina or its laws. Salafism has attracted many young people because it is a great substitute for subcultures. Ten or twenty years ago, most young people looking to express their nonconformity would have participated in various youth subcultures (in most cases non-existent today). Important elements of such subcultures include underscoring otherness, an original identity, and a radical utopian ideology that gives members a sense of participating in something important. Today's Salafism in B&H meets all these criteria. It moreover offers uncomplicated religiosity, eliminating any doubts, providing simple answers and, in a way, exempting adherents from the need to face the complexity of the contemporary world.

Can the Bosnian Muslim ulema in the Islamic community in B&H offer reasonable and effective answers and make the community attractive again to young believers? This is an important question, as the Islamic community should be one of the main factors preventing these ideas from becoming mainstream within the Muslim community. Some prominent Muslim intellectuals14 see the problem with Salafists as being the imposition of an interpretation of religion as religion itself. Yet each interpretation is limited by time, space and experience. In other words, religious thought is and must be dynamic. Unfortunately, today the Bosnian Muslim ulema in its entirety is characterized by dogmatism and intellectual and cultural aversion. There seems to be no understanding that spiritual and cultural identity are dynamic categories, as is religious thought, which is an integral part of them. Identities are not something acquired at birth and not subject to change or development. Thus, in B&H we are witnessing a sort of repressed religiosity or “reduced” Islam, consisting of historically worn out cultural paradigms. In order to suppress Salafi beliefs (and any other radical Islamic beliefs opposed to traditional B&H Islam) and offer this new generation of young Muslims a better paradigm of Islam in the new century, the Islamic community will need to change. The Salafi influence is directly proportional to changes and reforms conducted within the Islamic community. For now, Salafism remains just a challenge, not a problem. However, if it is not dealt with properly, it could grow into a serious problem, for the Islamic community in B&H first of all.

13 I am referring to the June 2010 Bugojno bombing of a police station that killed one police officer and wounded several others. Six Salafists were charged with the bombing, three under terrorism laws. Haris Čašević, their leader, was sentenced to 45 years in prison. See: www.reuters.com/article/us-bosnia-verdict-attack-idUSBRE9BJ14L20131220 (last accessed: 1 March 2017).

14 For instance, Mustafa Spahić, Prof. Fikret Karčić or Prof. Adnan Silajdžić.
The Limits of Morocco’s “Exceptional” Stability: Post-election Deadlock, Contestation on the Periphery and Foreign Policy Dilemmas

Irene Fernández Molina
Lecturer in International Relations
University of Exeter

Moroccan politics in 2016 were marked at the institutional level by developments leading up to and following the 7 October legislative elections, the last quarter, therefore, seeing the year’s most decisive events. The deadlock in negotiations to form a government after the country had gone to the ballot boxes coincided with another two crises with far-reaching consequences and potentially long trajectories. The first was connected with the country’s territorial governance and relations between the centre and the periphery, and the second, with the balance between the two structural priorities of Rabat’s foreign policy, managing the Western Sahara conflict on the international level and maintaining privileged relations with the European Union (EU). There was a certain sense of ratification about the October 2016 elections, as the second legislative elections after the region was shaken by the “Arab Spring” and the accelerated constitutional reform pushed through by King Mohammed VI in 2011 to deactivate the Moroccan version of this protest wave, led by the February 20 Movement. The previous legislative elections in November 2011 brought the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) and its leader Abdelilah Benkirane to power for the first time, a result of the new constitution’s provision to assign a representative from the largest party as the head of the cabinet, together with the “spring” tide sweeping through the region at the time. Five years later, however, the winds of regional and domestic politics were blowing in a very different direction. With the Islamists ousted from power in Tunisia and Egypt, and politics in Rabat thrown into disarray by rifts between government coalition members and Benkirane’s shifting compliance with the palace, the King and his entourage felt that the PJD had served its subordinate function – to help contain political discontent by staging change – and reached the end of its line. It was now time for life to settle back to normal with an election victory for the official Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM), which had lagged behind the PJD in second place in the September 2015 local and regional elections.

Bipolarization and Unintended Consequences

From the end of 2015, political debate had been dominated by the idea – or rather the question or attempted self-fulfilling prophecy – of the “bipolarization” of Morocco’s historically crowded party system, in light of the PJD and PAM’s growing dominance over the other parties. Most pundits connected this bipolarization with political fractures regarding territory (cities vs the rural world) and ideology (conservatism vs social, not economic, liberalism), the PJD and PAM embodying the first and second of these two poles respectively. The PJD preferred to talk about bipolarization between the parties with long-established “democratic” credentials, such as itself and the successors of the old opposition (Istiqlal Party [PI], Socialist Union of Popular Forces [USFP], Party of Progress and Socialism [PPS]), and the palace-friendly “administration parties” set up at different times in history (Popular Movement [MP], National Rally of Independents [RNI]), of which the PAM would be the most recent embodiment (Desrues, 2016).

In any case, bipolarization was the premise for Morocco’s different political actors ahead of the new
electoral cycle in 2016. The first and most powerful of these actors was the state administration itself, which, at the behest of the monarchy, leaned towards the PAM. For example, the extensive restructuring which saw the Interior Ministry relocate more than twenty provincial governors in March was interpreted as an attempt to favour victory for the PAM in rural areas, against the interests of the PJD and bypassing Benkirane. The organization and overseeing of the elections themselves produced tensions between the Justice and Interior Ministries, showing how the latter was now beyond the Prime Minister's control. With the campaign approaching, in mid-September, a demonstration was called against the “Islamization of the State,” Benkirane and the PJD, which had all the hallmarks of being orchestrated from above (Orient XXI, 4/10/2016). The PJD responded to the administration’s lack of neutrality launching diatribes against the so-called at-tahakkum (remote control), a new formula to oppose the persistent authoritarianism verging on the politically incorrect which became a rallying cry during the campaign.

However, in October, the PJD emerged victorious from the elections once again, thwarting the palace’s plans as it had in 2011. Furthermore, the PJD improved its 2011 results, increasing its 22.8% share of the votes to 27.1% in local constituencies and winning 125 seats (31.6% of a total 395) in the House of Representatives (lower house), up from 107. It also took a clear lead over the PAM, which, despite doubling its representation, finished with 102 deputies. This was indeed, in relative terms, a parliamentary bipolarization, with considerable seat losses for the traditional parties such as: the PI (from 60 to 46), the RNI (from 52 to 37), the MP (from 32 to 27), the PPS (from 18 to 12) and, especially, the USFP (from 39 to 20). Nonetheless, the discursive strategy seeking the bipolarization of Moroccan politics, designed at the highest level to catapult the PAM as an anti-Islamist and "liberal" opponent to the PJD, had the unintended consequence of bolstering the latter by allowing it to present itself to its voters as the victim of at-tahakkum.

What stood out in these elections was, yet again, the extremely low turnout, well below the official figure of 43%. The actual turnout would have been around 29.5% (López García and Hernando de Larramendi, 2017).

Sabotage in the Formation of the Government

The next episode was the troubled negotiations to form a coalition government with which the King tasked Benkirane, as the leader of the most voted party. From the outset, there were signs that the maths for reaching a majority were not going to be straightforward, as the PAM’s self-exclusion and the other parties’ scant parliamentary representation meant PJD had to form pacts with more members than in the previous legislature, in which its two coalitions were quadripartite (PJD-PI-MP-PPS and PJD-RNI-MP-PPS). What did not enter into Benkirane’s calculations was that some of the former government members, despite having lost considerable weight in terms of seats, set him impossible conditions to revalidate their alliance. This was particularly the case of the RNI and its new leader Aziz Akhannouch, the Agriculture Minister, millionaire businessman and known confidant of Mohammed VI.

His first demand was for the PI to be excluded from the budding coalition, a request made easier to accept by the untimely and shocking statements made by the leader of this party, Hamid Chabat, in which he made claims for the territory of neighbouring Mauritania against Morocco’s official stance and any kind of diplomacy. The second and least viable economic measures, such as the removal of fuel subsidies or the pension system reform. Votes and seats aside, what stood out in these elections was, yet again, the extremely low turnout, well below the official figure of 43%, misleadingly calculated from the number of voters registered on an electoral roll (15.7 million), from which roughly a third of Moroccans with a right to vote (22.9 million) were absent. The actual turnout would have been around 29.5% (López García and Hernando de Larramendi, 2017).
of Akhannouch’s conditions, the integration of the USFP into the cabinet, which was no longer mathematically necessary and flatly rejected by the PJD, was the last straw for Benkirane, who threw in the towel in January 2017.

The widely accepted reading of events was that Akhannouch was sabotaging negotiations to form a government on behalf of the palace and that the five-month deadlock caused by his demands was nothing more than an underground “lopsided struggle” (Monjib, 2017) between the monarchy and the PJD, or at least Benkirane’s PJD. The outcome of what some were quick to brand as a “white coup” (Ali Anuzla in Al-Arabi al-Yadid, 22/11/2016) would arrive in March 2017 from the hand of the King, who officially sacked Benkirane as head of government and replaced him with his coreligionist Saad Eddine el-Othmani. PJD’s number two, soon revealed his more accommodating profile giving in to Akhannouch’s demands and forming a six-party coalition, in the midst of a major crisis and split in his own. In perspective, the monarchy’s undisguised efforts to again impose its own political rules on the government and parties pointed towards an unabashed consolidation of authoritarianism in Morocco, at a time when the official discourse was laying decreasing emphasis on the idea of the “democratic transition.” The old slogan of the “Moroccan exception” was being reduced to the areas of security and stability.

Crisis on the Periphery and in Foreign Policy

Meanwhile, on the country’s northern periphery, political calm was thrown into disarray at the end of October 2016, sparked by an incident involving a police officer in Al Hoceima which ended with the gruesome death of a fish vendor, Mohsen Fikri, who was crushed in a rubbish compactor while trying to rescue confiscated wares. The feeling of hogra or humiliation at such an abuse of power triggered a wave of protests the likes of which had not been seen since the February 20 Movement protests in 2011. However, although the initial demonstrations spread to Morocco’s major cities (Rabat, Marrakech, Casablanca, Tangier), the response soon adopted an Amazigh ethnic and Rifian regionalist identity. The cycle of demonstrations continued for months in the epicentre of Al Hoceima demanding, aside from justice for this and other cases of police violence, an end to the “militarization” of the Rif, the curbing of corruption, economic development and improvements to the region’s “neglected” public services. On a deeper level, the young activists questioned the role of the new Rifian elite, co-opted by the regime – overwhelmingly dominated by the presence of the PAM as a party – and the region’s “reconciliation” as promised by Mohammed VI, decrying that, in reality, “this has only happened (...) with certain individuals” (interview with Nasser Zafrani in El Español, 9/1/2017). They thus revealed “the Moroccan State’s continuing problem to govern over the periphery and the limited changes introduced to its form of governance” (Suárez-Collado, 2017).

The monarchy’s undisguised efforts to again impose its own political rules on the government and parties pointed towards an unabashed consolidation of authoritarianism

Looking to the south, and the deadlocked dispute over the Western Sahara, in 2016 the authorities in Rabat gave two timid – and perhaps misleading – steps to liberalize their domestic management of the occupied territory, but saw their international management complicated by new diplomatic crises with the UN and EU. The advances heralded the first opening of a Sahrawi pro-independence association in Laayoune, verbally authorized the previous year, the Sahrawi Association of Victims of Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed by the Moroccan State (ASVDH) (EFE, 19/5/2016), and saw the repeal of sentences handed down by a military court to 25 Sahrawis, for incidents that took place during the 2010 Gdeim Izik protests, who would now have to be retried by a civil court. Putting an end to military trials of civilians and legalizing these kinds of Sahrawi associations were two of the three conditions laid down by the US President Barack Obama to Mohammed VI in November 2013, in exchange for not requesting the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) mandate be extended to human rights monitoring, a secret verbal
agreement that was later revealed in leaked documents (Fernández-Molina, 2016). However, these conciliatory gestures coincided with a sharp rise in tensions with the UN, with which relations had already been thorny since 2012. In March, Morocco expelled civilian MINURSO personnel, angrily responding to statements made by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his visit to the Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria, in which he spoke of the “occupation” of the Western Sahara. But the most far-reaching external crisis in the long run was to arrive in December with the European Court of Justice’s ruling that no EU-Morocco cooperation agreement could be applied to the above-mentioned non-autonomous territory. By setting a precedent and legally requiring the EU to distinguish between products and economic activities from the internationally-recognized Morocco and disputed Western Sahara, the ruling fired the starting gun for a lengthy legal battle.

The most far-reaching external crisis was to arrive with the European Court of Justice’s ruling that no EU-Morocco cooperation agreement could be applied to the Western Sahara

Rabat’s foreign policy was about to enter uncharted territory and one plagued with dilemmas, as for the first time the two guiding roles of the State since independence as champion of territorial integrity and Europe/the EU’s model student (Fernández-Molina, 2016), were in danger of colliding head-on. The unexpected “anti-colonial” and “anti-West” turn taken in 2015-2016, at least in terms of discourse and gestures – Mohammed VI’s visits to Russia, China and Sub-Saharan Africa and an official request to join the African Union – was seemingly supportive of this direction.

References


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Algeria on the Road towards the End of the Bouteflika Presidency

Aurèlia Mañé Estrada
University of Barcelona and University of East Anglia, Norwich

Since Tunisia triggered the so-called Arab Spring, which has dashed so many hopes and caused so much misfortune throughout the Arab and Muslim world, Algeria seems to be on standby. As oil prices fall – with no credible indication of a rise in the medium term – and the health of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika deteriorates, there is mounting anxiety and fear among analysts of a fresh escalation in social discontent and violence in the country. Such is the extent of these feelings, that some analysts are predicting that before negotiations begin on Brexit, the European Union may have effectively collapsed because of Algeria’s hypothetical implosion. Nonetheless, recent months have seemingly been like the months before them and perhaps those to come will continue in the same vein; but, this year, one factor has become clear: a change in the presidency cannot be far off. On 4 May this year, further proof came in the form of images of a wheelchair-bound Bouteflika, apparently unable to speak and making only slight gestures with his arm, to the extent that one of the family’s children had to put his voting paper in the ballot box. This pathetic display is also a sign that le Pouvoir is yet to find a suitable candidate for his replacement.

Signs of the End of an Era

Two recent events stand out, which indicate that the Bouteflika era is coming to a close. The first and most evident is the constitutional reform adopted on 7 February 2016. This, notably, included limiting presidential terms to two years, after this same limitation was dropped in 2008. It is also significant that, for the first time, the Parliament has been given the job of choosing a Prime Minister. The first of these measures clearly indicates that Bouteflika’s leadership is as good as over, and the second could be interpreted as the President’s attempt at getting some kind of compensation or retaining a degree of control, should the future candidate not be to the liking of le Pouvoir. The second is the reform of the security forces, which culminated, at least officially, in December 2015. It began in 2013, sparked by the tragic incidents at the In Amenas gas facility, when the brutal and blunderous operation by the Department of Intelligence and Security (under the French acronym, DRS) internationally discredited the security forces, which, since 2001, had weaved a solid network of relations with Western intelligence services. The presidency’s response to the botched operation was to restructure the DRS, which eventually led to the creation of a new replacement service, the Security Services Department (DSS). With this process, the security services were placed under the “civilian” guardianship of the Presidency of the Republic.

The interpretation of a large part of the Algerian press and many analysts is that this all conspired to giving victory to the presidential clan and, therefore, strengthening civilian power with respect to military power. However, there are also those who believe the opposite is the case, and claim that the whole process is the result of a reconfiguration designed by army generals themselves, to adapt to modern times.

1 This article is the result of work carried out in the framework of the I+D+I research project “La dimensión internacional de las transformaciones políticas en el mundo árabe” (CSO2014-52998-C3-3-P) and is based on Working Document 82/2016 of the Fundación Alternativas, titled: Argelia en la encrucijada: condicionantes, tendencias y escenarios.
In a context such as Algeria’s, both interpretations are possible, but what cannot be ignored is that the reform has taken place. 2016, therefore, began with one issue resolved: the hierarchical status of the security services within the framework of the power structure. We do not know whether or not the reform has been considered successful internally, although from an international perspective it seems to have reinvigorated the regime. A good example of this can be found in the last EU-Algeria Joint Working paper, in which it was said that the Algerian government has positioned itself for several years now as a leading security exporter to the region [and that the security professionalism, facilities and officers [...] that Algeria now has enable the country to effectively counter threats, particularly regarding terrorism and cross-border crime. The external hypothesis of a newly strengthened regime is further corroborated by the near total absence of critical commentary surrounding the elections, which displayed clearly visible signs of irregularities and banned the presence of major foreign media, like Le Monde. This improvement of the regime’s external image has once again strengthened its reputation abroad, but in other areas things have not gone quite so well.

The End of the Founding Myths

President Bouteflika undertook a policy of national reconciliation which began in 1999 with the Civil Concord Law, followed in 2005 by a law on national reconciliation, which was ratified in a referendum. Significantly, this element also appears in the preamble to the new Constitution in 2016. Furthermore, throughout this year, and with deliberate insistence from levels close to the presidency, celebrations were held for the 60th anniversary of the Soummam Conference (1956). Within Algeria’s nationalist mythology, this event is seen as the constituent process for a national, unified organizational structure, which paved the way to the country’s independence and laid the foundations for the creation of the new Algerian State in 1962. However, it is unclear whether this reconciliation has been achieved; at least in terms of what was expected.

It is true that, during the year, the divide between radical Islamist parties and regime supporters has narrowed. But the hoped-for reconciliation has not been accomplished.

2016, therefore, began with one issue resolved: the hierarchical status of the security services within the framework of the power structure.

The clearest evidence of this is the widespread disaffection of the vast majority of the population when it comes to any political initiative driven by the regime’s leadership, as became clear with the low turnout for the last legislative elections. Despite the intense campaign to encourage people to vote, turnout stood at 35.37%; a figure very similar to that of 2007, but lower than in 2012. The most significant aspect of this abstention, however, is not the high percentage, but rather what it tells us about the year. For the first time, this was a militant abstention aimed at creating an alternative political organization away from the “values” and historical forms of the “revolutionary family.” Furthermore, to these new parties, led by young people, such as, for example Jil Jadid, must be added the increase in social protest movements, which reveal the discontent of all those who have been gradually excluded from the system. These are gathering strength and are set up around autonomous unions or “single-cause” movements, organized to accomplish specific objectives (salary hikes, job creation, halt shale gas prospection...). Although, for the time being, they neither converge with the demands of the new parties nor seem to be integrated with them, they do share two characteristics: they are formed by young people – thereby demonstrating a generational divide with the country’s leaders – and do not share the values of the “revolutionary family.” The distance is becomingly increasingly clear, therefore, between the “old” financial-military oligarchy and the new forms of political activism, in which the old forms of governance and precedents for political legitimation, based on a mythical past, are no longer valid.

It is in this context that the country’s economic situation is of growing concern, as, since 2014, oil prices have either fallen or remained at low levels; 2016, in this respect, being a very poor year which began with a price of roughly $30 per barrel and ended at around $50. Although at the end of 2016, Algeria had reserves for 22 months of imports and a practically non-existent foreign debt (2.5% of GDP), the situation of the hydrocarbon sector implies that, from now on, the regime will find it increasingly hard to “buy” social peace and keep power rivals at bay through the redistribution of hydrocarbon rents.

The End of the Hand of Plenty

Beyond the global evolution of oil prices, which show no sign of recovery in the medium term, the situation of the hydrocarbon sector in Algeria is nothing like it was a few years ago, thanks to the sweeping transformations that have taken place in the international energy industry. A few statistics suffice to illustrate this phenomenon: Algeria has lost export markets such as oil to the US, where in 2010 it exported 53% of its oil, and in 2014, just 7.5%. It has also seen reductions in the amount of gas exported to Europe, as, in the last five years, Algeria’s gas pipelines have transported 80% less than in the past. In another area, while they could be construed more as threats than reality, CEPSA announced in September 2016 that it would sell its stake in the MEDGAZ gas pipeline, and ENI, in the spring of 2017, declared that instead of renegotiating the contract with the Algerian company SONATRACH it would draw up a new one with the Azerbaijani company, SOCAL. It therefore appears that, beyond the evolution of international hydrocarbon prices, Algeria’s financial lung is not in its best moment.

It is in this context that the Algerian regime, while not explicitly mentioning austerity, has begun announcing measures that reveal fears that its foreign-exchange reserves may run out and that recovery will not be easy. In September 2016, a new Finance Law was passed that foresaw a reduction in public spending (9% in relation to the 2015 budget), but in January 2017, bolder measures were announced: on 1 April 2017, restrictions were announced on industrial and agricultural goods and on 10 April, the Finance Minister published a document titled The New Growth Model, which, surprisingly, was written in July 2016, but which contemplates a structural transformation of the Algerian economy.

The “tune” of most of the measures under consideration is nothing new in the history of the Algerian economy. It could be likened to that of the end of the 1980s, when the economic situation was particularly dire and the only solution was to initiate reforms – which, as the black decade demonstrated, bore no fruit. The situation today, however, while more stable in economic terms, raises more doubts than before, as at the end of the 1980s a return to the previous – energy – situation was a feasible possibility. In 2017, however, it is not. The oil and gas world has undergone major transformations with the appearance of new markets and new types of contracts; OPEC is falling apart at the seams, the European Union has no clear gas policy and many of the economies that buy Algerian hydrocarbons are moving to replace fossil fuels.

All in all, this points to 2017 as being the year when Algeria’s long-awaited reforms may finally have begun. So, as we have seen elsewhere, it may be Algeria’s difficult times which lead to the implementation of measures, which, although unpopular, have been pending for a long time. Nonetheless, the pessimists among us might say that behind these measures is, once again, a power play in anticipation of the imminent presidential replacement. In Algeria, where political discussion is always held in the language of economics, to say, as The New Growth Model says, that the spending of the last 15 years – i.e. practically Bouteflika’s entire mandate – to create economic and social infrastructure has been ineffective, inefficient and anti-economic, is, beyond a simple analysis of the situation, an attack on the presidential clan and those who have profited from the million-dollar infrastructure and service contracts of recent years. It therefore remains to be seen whether or not 2017 will be the year of reforms or continuing power struggles.

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6 Algeria Oil & Gas Report Q3, 2016
Tunisia, Five Years On: Has It Changed Regime?

Jérôme Heurtaux
Senior Lecturer, Paris-Dauphine University, PSL Research University, CNRS, (UMR 7170), IRISSO, Paris, France
Research Fellow, Institut de recherche sur le Maghreb contemporain, Tunis

In 2016, five years after the start of the Tunisian revolution, the time for an initial assessment seems to have arrived. Colloquiums, special journal editions and commemorations have thus punctuated 2016, at the risk of producing an artefact, since 2016 is not, in and of itself, a significant year in the history of the Tunisian “transition.” In any case, one can consider whether Tunisia has actually changed political regimes or not, a question posed by many on this five-year anniversary. In any case, this question is only legitimate under the double condition of, naturally, not considering year five as a particular cut-off point – the question already arose in 2011, moreover, and has been posed regularly since then – and not offering an appraisal, whether early-stage or definitive.

What is at stake here? This tends to expand, at least since the 2014 elections won by Nidaa Tounes, the party of Bourguiba follower Beji Caid Essebsi, with a critical discourse denouncing the “return of the old regime,” if not its continuation. This discourse, particularly flooding social networks, comes from various segments of society, from a section of the political scene and from the spokespersons of the revolutionaries. They base themselves on vaguely identified indicators: some put forth the recycling of “people from the old regime,” others the continuation or upgrading of the most misguided practices from the past, such as collusion between enterprise and politics, corruption – presented as generalized – and above all the persistence of multiple violations of basic rights (freedom of expression and human rights). Arbitrary police and judiciary behaviour or the use of torture are regularly reported, the symbols of a “deep state” as suggestive as it is mysterious. Attacks against the transitional justice process and the Truth and Dignity Commission, which is its emblematic expression, are likewise copious. And finally, it is the continuation or even aggravation of factors that sparked the revolution, such as social and territorial inequality, that could be considered the best criteria for establishing the absence of a true change in the political regime. These arguments are a way of enunciating a political viewpoint that is diametrically opposed to the transitional enthusiast discourse of those who, conversely, hold that Tunisia is truly on its way towards democratization, which has not yet been fully reached but is irreversibly on the horizon. The latter opinion is shared by political personnel, State institutions, Western diplomatic circles and international organizations.

A New Regime in Tunisia?

Ascertaining whether the 2010-2011 uprising was followed by a change in political regime therefore requires identifying what has changed (or not) according to a certain number of strictly defined criteria. A strictly juridical approach would lead to the assertion that Tunisia has completely changed regimes by adopting a new constitution on 27 January 2014. But the indicator of regime change is not always the adoption of a new constitution, contrary
to what specialists – above all jurists – have long believed, particularly considering institutional practice by politicians.

The aggravation of factors that sparked the revolution could be considered the best criteria for establishing the absence of a true change in the political regime

Tracking the decrease or, conversely, enhancement of indicators of authoritarianism (limitation of pluralism, depoliticization of society, personalization of political leadership, absence of ideology) leads at first to an analogous but more qualified finding.

**A limited plurality?** Far from it, given that the number of party undertakings have multiplied since 2011: legalization of numerous parties hitherto banned, such as the Islamist Ennahdha party or the Tunisian Workers’ Party (PTT), the creation of new parties (Afek Tounes, etc.), reactivation of legal opposition parties, etc. Though the trend is towards a reduction of the number of truly competitive actors, this narrowing of effective pluralism is not due to manipulation by the government: it is above all a result of the disproportion of economic resources, capacity for action and media connections of the different political forces. It is also true that the two parties heading the last elections, Nidaa Tounes and Ennahdha, far ahead of their competitors, are governing together. Though this pairing can seem unnatural, it is not, in and of itself, a sign of a return to the “unanimism” of the times when Bourguiba and Ben Ali sought to annihilate all opposition, nor is the frequent recourse to “consensus” in Tunisian politics. Germany is frequently governed by a “major coalition” revolving around its two main parties. Tunisia is no longer governed by a mini-clique legitimized by a party of claqueurs. Moreover, the alliance between Ennahdha and Nidaa Tounes by no means precludes conflict, which is expressed behind the scenes in negotiations and even internally, within parties.

**A depoliticized society?** Here we would have to agree on what a politicized society is, considering the difficulty of measuring politicization in a single individual. But if we define depoliticization as a policy aiming to orchestrate the withdrawal of “citizens” from politics or their indifference towards it, and incite them to dedicate themselves to their private lives, this is clearly nowhere to be found in post-Ben Ali Tunisia. True, the abstention rates in elections remain high and a whole sector of the population has been durably “side-lined.” But this is more due to the mediocrity of representatives, the limits of public policies in quickly resolving problems revealed through the revolution and the shortcomings of public communication, which generate rejection of politics. Otherwise, the revolution has given rise to the engagement of a great number of Tunisians, perhaps less so in politics strictly speaking than in the sector called civil society, whose activities (mobilization, solidarity, advocacy) have an effect on politics.

**A personalized leadership?** Of the three presidents succeeding Ben Ali, none of them has managed – did they even have the intention? – to prevail as an uncontested leader. Foued Mebazaa reprised his position as President and anti-hero, limiting himself to humbly signing the statutory laws that paved the way for the transition to democracy. Moncef Marzouki never succeeded in selling the storyline he had imagined, which was the fabulous story of the outcast dissident turned consensual President of the young Tunisian democracy. Rejection of his presidency did not cease to grow over the course of his three years in office: under his rule, mockery became a regular form of political dissent. And finally, the Habib Bourguiba glasses that Beji Caid Essebsi sported during his campaign apparently rendered him blind to background movements working on his own constituency, such that he went into the alliance with Ennahdha with a strong headwind. Bourguiba’s former minister did propose a “presidentialist” understanding of the Constitution, but he had to scale down quite a few of his ambitions, beginning with his difficulty in imposing his son as his successor at the head of the party, a sign that the Carthage Palace is no longer identified as the cardinal point of power. But how can we fail to recognize the rapid

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exhaustion of charismatic strategies in a context where the accelerated discrediting of people in positions of power seems to be a rule of political transition? What if this “revolution without leaders” had given birth to a democracy as “a power vacuum,” as professed by Claude Lefort? An absence of ideology? Here again, the vigour of the parliamentary debate that marked the constituent process – note, in particular, the tense debate on the introduction of Koranic law in the first draft of the Constitution or on the complementary nature of men and women – shows that certain contradictory conceptions of societal coexistence have engendered many divisions. Some will miss the discretion of economically-oriented controversy regarding the legitimacy of liberalism in the role of the State, as opposed to the “overkill” of societal debate, but soft consensus on what is considered essential in post-revolutionary public debate has absolutely nothing to do with what it was in Ben Ali’s Democratic Constitutional Rally, where dismal slogans on the pursuit of economic development or support for youth or the Tunisian woman peppered party conventions, placed alternately under the auspices of such meaningless abstractions as “Perseverance” (1993), “Excellence” (1998), “Ambition” (2003) or “Challenges” (2008).

And Yet…

And yet, these latest refutations of a return to the former regime will not dispel the doubts of some and the convictions of others. There is, in fact, a subjectivity of criticism not entirely corresponding to any “objective” argument, especially since the elements on which this discourse is based are just as real. Let’s take a look at these arguments.

Recycling of the “people of the old regime”? No one can contest the fact that senior political and administrative officials of the former regime have been reinstated in politics. But though qualitatively highly visible, this phenomenon seems quantitatively small, with former senior officials who have not stopped working entirely having primarily gone into other sectors, mainly entrepreneurship and consultation. The absence of a monopoly of the “mauves” in post-revolutionary politics is moreover accompanied in large part by an adjustment of practices to the rules of pluralist competition: in the 2014 elections, former Ben Ali ministers competed for the votes of a now divided electorate.\(^2\)

The revolution has given rise to the engagement of a great number of Tunisians whose activities have an effect on politics

Updating of past practices? The attributes of the former regime have certainly not all disappeared along with it. Collusion between politicians and certain economic agents was rearranged but did not disappear and corruption apparently grew worse after 2011.\(^3\) The security forces continue to evade democratic control: the main difference with the former regime is their ambition to independence from the political authorities.\(^4\) But the triad at the heart of Ben Ali power (Carthage, the security forces and business circles) has given way to a fragmented structure with multiple influences that do not necessarily converge towards a stabilization of the situation to the benefit of those in power. And the latter can no longer count on the support of the Tunisian General Labour Union, the powerful national trade union centre, which now clearly asserts its independence.\(^5\)

As for persistence of multiple violations of basic human rights, that of torture is the most emblematic example. The report by thirteen Tunisian NGOs submitted at the 57th session of the United Nations


Committee Against Torture established that torture is an institutionalized police practice in Tunisia. The revolution has not ended it: “Torture is widespread, in all its manifestations, and its practice tends to increase after each terrorist attack.” Moreover, it remains little penalized: torture cases are among those the judiciary handles slowest. Insofar as the systematic criminalization of smokers of cannabis (zatla in Tunisian) which the preceding regime used to repress youth, this practice has remained after 2011. In 2015, drug-related offences represented 28% of the prison population, by virtue of the unilateral application of “Law 52.” The only significant change since the revolution is that these phenomena have been emphatically publicized by activists in civil society organizations with many liaisons among politicians and diplomatic circles.

The security forces continue to evade democratic control: the main difference with the former regime is their ambition to independence from the political authorities.

This is how mixed the situation is. And finally, if we measure the persistence of social and economic factors that made the popular uprising of 2010-2011 possible, one cannot fail to notice the aggravation of the social situation in inland regions. In the Kasserine Governorate alone, the poverty index and unemployment rate have increased over the past five years, and whereas numerous economic projects (focussing on production, education, health and infrastructures) with a cumulative value of a billion dollars were programmed for this period, many of them have been interrupted for various reasons.

To Conclude

Unequivocally answering the original question is ultimately a tall order. There has indeed been an institutional regime change and many of the attributes of a classic democratic political configuration have substituted the structures of authoritarian regime. At a time of multiple restructuring, indisputable infringement of the principles of the rule of law demonstrate the relevance of the heritage of authoritarianism, as well as the social and territorial marginalization of part of Tunisia. In the face of this contrasting situation, sociologists cannot but note the plurality of assessment operations, all equally legitimate. The subjectivity of perception is just as significant as a rational demonstration based on objective criteria. The factors demonstrating a “return to the former regime,” which can be understood as a state of affairs or a process underway and liable to grow, must thus be seriously taken into account in the analysis.

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8 “Kasserine, un milliard de dinars en suspens,” Inkyfada.com, 18 October 2016.
Egypt: The Continued Transition

Eman Ragab, PhD.
Senior Researcher
Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS), Cairo

Egypt is still undergoing a prolonged complex transition that affects the trajectory of political reform in the country. Even though the road map that was announced on 3 July, 2013 has been implemented, with the exception of holding municipal elections, the political practices in the country are still moving slowly towards a democratic pattern. Evan Hill called this pattern in his piece published in the *New York Times*, a “managed democracy,” where the executive authority is strong enough to keep political life under control.1

It could be argued that throughout the period covered by this report, Egypt has given priority to economic reform and countering terrorism rather than pursuing political reform. This is due to the economic and security challenges created by the prolonged transition the country is still going through. By the end of 2015, tourism had declined by 15%,2 foreign currency reserves had dropped to some $15.6 billion as of July 2016,3 and the GDP growth rate was below the target of 5%. Also, the US Global Terrorism report of 2015 indicated that during 2015 “Egypt faced an increase in terrorist activity, threats, and security challenges.”4 This situation has shaped the public opinion in Egypt. The Human Development Report of 2016 shows that Egyptians, like citizens from other Arab nations, are concerned with two main issues, the economy and security.5

In this context, this article examines the main political, economic and security developments in Egypt during 2016 and the first half of 2017.

Less Politics in the Street

The political sphere in Egypt during the period covered in this report, is no longer dynamic, as it was during the 2011 and 2013 revolutions. Two main features can be underlined. First is the depoliticized youth. The government has broadened the scale of the empowered youth to stretch beyond the well-known names that played important roles in both the 2011 and 2013 revolutions.6 It has launched two initiatives in this regard. The first is the Presidential Leadership Programme (PLP), that trains youth between 20-30 years old for 8 months on a wide range of skills and socializes them politically. One batch of 500 young Egyptians have so far graduated. The second initiative is the National Youth Conferences, the first round of which was held in October 2016. This forum gathered around 3,000 young Egyptians along with President Ab-

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6 Chief among these groups were the 6th of April group and Tamarod group.
delfattah Al-Sisi, and his ministers, and provided two days of sessions to discuss issues of youth representation in the Parliament, the reform of the educational system, economic reform, freedom of expression and social media.\footnote{Fathy, Magdy. “The First National Youth Conference” (in Arabic). State Information Service web portal. Retrieved 13 June, 2017: http://sis.gov.eg/section/0/9764?lang=ar} One of the main outcomes of this conference was the formation of a committee to pardon young people imprisoned without conviction.\footnote{“Egypt’s Sisi pledges reviews of protest law, detentions.” Reuters. 27 October, 2016. www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-sisi-politics-idUSKCN12R2MX} Accordingly, the President pardoned 82 people on 18 November 2016\footnote{“Egypt’s committee to pardon youth prisoners submits new names for presidential review,” Al-Ahram Online, 19 January, 2017: http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/1/256400/Egypt/Egypts-committee-to-pardon-youth-prisoners-submits.aspx} and decided to pardon a further 203.\footnote{“The Pardon of 203 prisoner” (in Arabic).} Similar conferences were organized in Aswan in January 2017\footnote{“The Second National Youth Conference in Aswan (27-28 January, 2017)” (In Arabic). State Information Service web portal. 28 January, 2017: www.sis.gov.eg/section/9899/9863?lang=ar} and in Ismailia in April 2017. Regarding the Parliament, since its election in 2015, it has become the only platform through which politics is practiced in the country. During the period October 2016 - June 2017, the Parliament has raised 1,024 questions, and 498 requests for briefing.\footnote{“The Performance of the Parliament during the Second Legislative Session” (in Arabic), The Egyptian Parliament Web portal, 6 July, 2017: http://www.parliament.gov.eg/home/Parliament_Reports_main.aspx?flag=3} However, according to experts, during this period, the Parliament did not practice its authority of supervising and monitoring the government effectively, and instead acted as a rubber stamp. For instance, it passed the civil society law drafted by the government without responding to the concerns of civil society organizations. According to many experts this law strengthens the government’s control over NGOs.\footnote{“Egypt: Draft Law Bans Independent Civil Society Groups.” Human Rights Watch web portal, 28 November, 2016: www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/28/egypt-draft-law-bans-independent-civil-society-groups} Also, there is no opposition group inside the Parliament that adopts a genuine opposition discourse or an alternative to the policies of the government. The role of the “25/30 bloc”\footnote{“Final court ruling declares Egyptian sovereignty over Tiran and Sanafir islands.” Mada Masr, 16 Jan, 2017, www.madamasr.com/en/2017/01/16/news/u/final-court-ruling-declares-egyptian-sovereignty-over-tiran-and-sanafir-islands/} as an opposition bloc is confined to criticizing the economic policies of the government,\footnote{“Parliament divided on economic reforms.” Al-Ahram weekly, Issue 1319, (10-16 November 2016).} and never proposes a bill or prevents the passing of any bill drafted by the government.\footnote{This is formed by 30 members of the Parliament. See: Salama, Hassan. “The Performance of the Bloc and Political Parties in the Parliament” (in Arabic), Parliamentarian Issues, Issue 53, October 2016, pp.46-48.} However, many sectors in the society are still politically active and protest government policies even though the protest law has been in effect since 2013. For instance, the April 2016 protests against the agreement with Saudi Arabia over the islands of Tiran and Sanafir was organized in violation of the protest law and is considered the largest demonstration since the election of Al-Sisi.\footnote{“Parliament divided on economic reforms.” Al-Ahram weekly, Issue 1319, (10-16 November 2016).} Other small protests were organized in Alexandria and other...
recovering the economy is the priority

by the end of 2015, the need for receiving a loan from the international monetary fund (IMF) was necessary to spur the economy. This required having a government capable of adopting the economic reforms needed to meet the conditions of the IMF, which led to two government reshuffles during this period, one in march 2016,22 and the second in february 2017.23 since then, a number of economic reforms have been adopted. These reforms include the devaluation of the national currency by 50%, the cutting of fuel subsidies and the implementation of value added tax (VAT). The government is also adopting gradual subsidy reform policies in order to dedicate subsidies to the disadvantaged in society.24

It has also launched a number of mega economic projects in order to resuscitate the economy. These projects include expanding the Suez Canal, the 1.5 million feddan land reclamation project,25 establishing new cities (East port said, New ismailia, New alamain, a new administrative capital, and the integrated city on the Galala plateau ), the Golden Triangle Project that creates an economic zone through connecting the industrial centers of Qena, Safaga and al-Quseir, and the national project for developing 4,800 km of roads. It also adopted a developmental project in Sinai aimed at establishing fish farms, 15 marble factories, two lines for cement production, industrial zones, agricultural areas (not less than 200,000 feddans), and two sewage water treatment plants at the Sarabium and El-Salam canals.26

According to many economic experts, such projects will only yield positive impacts in the medium and long terms. For instance, the Suez Canal project is expected to create 1 million new jobs, expanding industrial production and increasing revenue by 2023.27 Also, the reforms adopted by the government in order to meet the IMF’s conditions are having a negative effect on the middle class and has not yet led to any positive change in the economic indicators. For instance, the GDP growth rate during the first half of 2017 decreased to 3.4%. According to the World Bank, the “growth was constrained by severe shortages in hard currency, an overvalued exchange rate and sluggish growth in Europe, Egypt’s main trading partner.”28

Terrorism is the main challenge

Terrorism continues as a threat to national security in Egypt. However, the capabilities of the security forces to prevent terrorist attacks are developing on a slow scale, which explains why the terrorists are still capable of carrying out attacks not only in Northern Sinai but on the mainland as well.

22 “the governmental reshuffle” (in Arabic), Al-Wafd News Portal, 23 March, 2016: https://alwafd.org/
24 It was adopted in 2012, but not implemented until the election of Al-Sisi. See: “Egypt’s Impending Subsidy Crisis.” Egypt Oil and Gas web portal, July 2012: www.egyptoil-gas.com/publications/egypts-impending-subsidy-crisis/
The main terrorist organization active in Northern Sinai is the Ansar Bit al-Maqdis. This group announced its loyalty to ISIS in November 2014 and since then has been labelled Wilayat Sinai. On the mainland, there are many terrorist cells and groups, the best known examples being the Armed Hilwan Brigade Kata’eb Hilwan al-Mosalaha, Ajnad Misr, the Revolutionary Punishment, the Popular Resistance, Hasm, and the Revolutionary Brigade. The resilience of the groups and their ability to survive in the face of Egypt’s counter-terrorism measures varies. The life cycle of some cells is defined by carrying out or planning one attack, and then having its members arrested. The Armed Hilwan Brigade is an example. On 15 August 2014 a video announcing the existence of this group was leaked to the media. It showed 15 masked gunmen, one of whom warned police forces active in southern Cairo that they were a target for the group’s violence. The investigations led to the arrest of 215 men suspected of being members of this brigade. Other cells are more resilient. The Revolutionary Punishment, established on 25 January 2015 is an example. In its official founding statement it designated the “Egyptian police, army and dictatorial regime,” as well as infrastructure as the main targets for its violent activities. In June 2015, it announced that it is active in 16 governorates, and that it managed to carry out 248 operations in six months. What is important in this regard is the total number of terrorist attacks these cells are carrying out in Northern Sinai and on the mainland and the type of targets it is attacking. In general, the total number of attacks is decreasing. During the period January 2015 - December 2015, 642 attacks were counted by the Cairo Index developed by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies in Cairo. On average there were around 13 attacks per week during this period. During 2016, the total number of terrorist attacks stood at 199. On average there were four attacks per week.

Terrorism continues as a threat to national security in Egypt. However, the capabilities of the security forces to prevent terrorist attacks are developing on a slow scale.

However, regardless of the number of the attacks, the significance of the targets being attacked is a key indicator that the terrorists still have the capability and resources. These targets range from civilians, infrastructure, police and army officers, to foreign embassies. For instance, Wilayat Sinai claimed responsibility for the attacks on the El-Botroseya church in December 2016, and for the attack on the Alexandria and Tanta Churches in April 2017. They also claimed responsibility for the assassination of Adel Ragai, commander of the Egyptian army’s Ninth Armoured Division, in front of his house in October 2016, which was the first of its kind since the assassination of Hesham Barakat in 2015. Wilayat Sinai is still capable of carrying out attacks that kill large numbers of army personnel. On 7 July, 2017 an attack on a checkpoint in Rafah left 26 army personnel dead or injured. This was considered the first attack of its kind in 2017 and since the Karm Al-Qawadees attack in Oct 2016, which claimed the lives of 31 army personnel.

30 Ibid., p.15.
34 AL-ANANI, Khalil. "The era of assassinations in Egypt." Middle East Monitor. 31 October, 2016 www.middleeastmonitor.com/20161031-the-era-of-assassinations-in-egypt-
36 The video of the Karm Al-Qawadees attack in Oct 2016 is available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNnY5EPj0E
Jordan: Negotiating Political, Economic, and Social Minefields

Kristen Kao
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
The Program on Governance and Local Development
University of Gothenburg

More than a decade ago, Schirin Fathi (2005) began an article by noting how “Jordan has often been characterized as being in a perennial state of uncertainty.” Jordan, an oasis of political stability surrounded by volatility, remains for the most part, unscathed six years after the Arab Spring shook – and even overthrew in some cases – its neighbours. Yet, the same question lingers on the lips of observers today: “For how long can the monarchy hold on?” The regime is constantly engaged in a game of brinksmanship in the political, economic, and social realms. Mounting political frustration and economic distress among the population has led to a burgeoning of radical sentiment bubbling underneath the seemingly smooth surface of Jordanian society.

Elections as a Political Pressure Release Valve

Maintaining an atmosphere of controlled liberalization, the regime held parliamentary elections in September of last year (2016), initiated the formation of popularly elected governorate councils, and called for elections at both the municipal and governorate levels to be held later this year (2017). But will these initiatives amount to meaningful change? It is doubtful. Analysts of the region’s political environment have long portrayed elections as amounting to nothing more than a quick release valve for mounting political pressure (Schirin, 2005; Buehler, 2012), allowing the regime to distract the public’s attention from their everyday hardships and focusing it on electoral competition among tribes, while garnering incentives in the form of promises of future favours or even outright cash payments from local elites for their votes.

Yet, such elections can be expected to have little effect on shifting the power balance within the kingdom. In Jordan, a layer of central government appointees similarly restrains each level of government that is popularly elected. For instance, although voters determine who occupies the seats of the lower house of Parliament, the institution is kept weak, unable to enact meaningful national policies of its own accord and serving simply as a rubber stamp on legislation sent to it from above. Legislation initiated by members of the lower house must make it through the government-appointed upper house and cabinet as well as survive the King’s veto. Since parliamentarians are unable to provide legislative outcomes for their constituents, they concentrate on more tangible goals – the predominant one being the redistribution of state resources through clientelistic channels (Lust-Okar, 2009).

Constant amendments to the electoral law keep voters and political elites befuddled by the shifting rules of the game, representing another means by which the regime prevents Parliament from becoming a serious check on its power. Since elections were re-initiated in 1989 following a 20-year hiatus, major reforms to the electoral law were implemented for the polls in 1993, 2003, 2010, and 2013. In contrast to the majoritarian systems of the past, the 2016 electoral law introduced proportional representation for the first time in the kingdom, requiring the formation of electoral lists of three or more candidates. The law reduced both the number of electoral districts and seats in the Parliament from 45 to 23 and from 150 to 130, respectively. The new sys-
tem was likely confusing for voters and parties or lists competing for seats, with just 37% of Jordan’s 4 million eligible voters casting a ballot. Moreover, despite the regime’s attempts to move to a more party-based system, only about 18% of the candidates who ran were affiliated with a formal political party (Al Hayat Centre, 2016).

Elections can be expected to have little effect on shifting the power balance within the kingdom

In response to long awaited electoral reform, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to participate in the elections. Yet, after recent regime crackdowns on the organization’s activities including the raiding and closure of its offices in Amman and refusal to renew its license under the political parties law adopted in 2014, the list supported by the Brotherhood won just 16 of the 130 seats (Sweiss, 2016). Their poor performance in the elections may also have been partly due to internal splintering within the group. A number of its offshoots, such as Zamzam, also participated in the elections. Despite all this, the largest and most powerful bloc in Parliament is the one led by the Muslim Brotherhood.

More recently, the regime set about adding an extra layer of semi-elected bureaucracy between municipal councils and the Parliament in the form of governorate councils. Elections for both municipalities and these new governorate councils are expected to be held simultaneously later this year. Although the decentralization law is not yet finalized, the preliminary plans in place for the governorate councils mimic the weak power structure accorded to municipalities. Decisions concerning the law are made using a “secretive process” and the current draft lacks clarity, assigning the governorate councils roles and responsibilities that overlap with those already accorded to other governmental departments and institutions (SOFRECO, 2017). Furthermore, it is a costly measure for an already overstretched budget. The creation of these councils may help the regime release some political tension by creating new jobs and allow them to hold more elections to make the citizenry feel as though they have some amount of power over and stake in their government. However, in reality, the regime will appoint 25% of their members and the entire institution will likely lack independence from the central government as well as meaningful power. For instance, elected sections of the governorate and municipal councils will lack control over their own funding, due to their inability to directly tax the population. Instead, they will receive budgets, agendas, and recommendations from the central government for amendment only, with final decision-making power remaining in the hands of appointed figures such as ministers and governors.

Reliance on a Virtual Foreign-Funded Credit Card

From its founding, the nation-state of Jordan and its rulers have relied on a virtual credit card to finance the government. The only difference over time is which creditors are funding the card’s expenses, having shifted over time from the British Empire to the United States and Europe, to currently including additional funding from the Arab Gulf oil states, aid from international organizations like the United Nations, as well as bailouts from the International Monetary Fund. Even with all this financial help, the Jordanian economy continues to struggle.

In 2016, the King created an Economic Policies Council in an attempt to find ways to stimulate the economy. At about the same time, in view of its expectations for the Jordanian public debt to reach 95%, the International Monetary Fund signed an extended fund facility for the country of $723 million (Oxford Business Group 2016). Unemployment hovers at around 16% of active job seekers, with the labour force participation rate remaining dismally low with about 59% of males and just 13% of women participating (World Bank, 2016).

The reasons for the glum economic outlook in Jordan are plentiful. With oil prices sinking, aid from Gulf oil states as well as trade with them have substantially decreased. The tourism industry continues to suffer from fear among tourists generated by instability in the region as well as attacks within the kingdom (further discussed below). Moreover, the cost of hosting over a million Syrian refugees has surpassed $2.5 billion in recent
years according to the World Bank, equivalent to 6% of Jordan’s Gross Domestic Product, and has not been fully covered by donors.

The tourism industry continues to suffer from fear among tourists generated by instability in the region as well as attacks within the kingdom.

To solve an impending energy crisis stemming from the blockage of the Egyptian oil upon which the kingdom used to rely, the National Electric Power Company entered into a politically fraught deal with Israel to purchase gas in 2016. Currently, the kingdom survives on liquefied natural gas arriving from the Gulf to the port in Aqaba in shipping tankers, but this solution was only ever meant to be temporary. Many citizens were against the deal with Israel though, and thousands demonstrated in protest of it. In order to complete the deal, a pipeline from Israel will have to be built that will likely require funding from international donors, demonstrating once again, the regime’s reliance on outsiders for its survival.

**Survival in a Threatening Environment**

Beyond economic concerns, fears over radicalization and support for terrorism spurred by recent outbreaks of violence in the kingdom continue to mount. These fears stem from two major sources, the first originating from within the Jordanian host population and the second from the scores of Syrian refugees currently residing within the kingdom. Among the local population, widespread corruption, a severe lack of jobs for youth and the educated, and a lack of social cohesion inflame tendencies towards radicalization. Jordan has the highest number of foreign fighters per capita in Syria and Iraq. The country experienced about half a dozen terrorist attacks within the last year, including the assassination of a Christian journalist by a local extremist imam and a shooting spree by supporters of Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) in the south of the country, which left more than a dozen dead, including a Canadian tourist. The youth unemployment rate is more than double that of the overall rate for the country, and it is close to 40% among those with a college degree (World Bank, 2014). Recent work on the ground in Jordan links corrupt, ineffective local governance with an increased attachment to an identity of rebellion, which radical groups offer young people (Yom & Sammour, 2017). The recent regime crackdowns on the more moderate Muslim Brotherhood movement could potentially allow more space for extremist groups, such as Jordan’s underground Salafist movement, whose attachment to Islamist ideology is stronger than most others (Larzière, 2012).

Jordan has long been host to fleeing populations of the region and beyond. During the numerous Palestinian-Israeli clashes over the years, Jordan accepted waves of Palestinian refugees and even offered many of them full citizenship, to the extent that, today, they make up a majority of the population (Fathi, 2005). Iraqis flowed into the country, particularly after the outbreak of sectarian violence in 2006. And now, an estimated 1.4 million Syrians, equivalent to about 10-13%, of the country’s population have flowed into the country. Although the regime originally pursued a formal encampment system for Syrian refugees, four of every five Syrian refugees currently live outside of camps (Amnesty International, 2016). Less than 50% of the refugees are registered with the UNHCR, meaning that many face substantial barriers to obtaining access to public services such as healthcare and education. If the past can provide lessons for the future, concerns over refugees as sources for recruitment in cross-border attacks should be taken seriously (Sude, Stebbins & Weilant, 2015). Things may be looking up though. A trade agreement with the European Union in July of last year encouraged Jordan to allow permits for 200,000 Syrians over the next five years, and by last month (April 2017) 40,000 permits had been issued.

**Conclusion: Moving Forward through the Minefield**

Among Arab leaders, Jordan’s King Abdullah II was the first to meet with the newly-elected American President, Donald Trump. Trump’s recent statements in support of moving the US embassy in Is-
rael to Jerusalem and reported debates within his administration of designating the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization were likely among top priority items for the Jordanian monarch in their meeting. Such moves would be expected to spur widespread protests across the region, risking instability as well as a rise in support for Islamist movements that are more radical than the Brotherhood movement. Additionally, the movement is currently a participating partner in Jordan’s Parliament, seriously complicating US-Jordanian relations if it should become a terrorist organization. For now, the Trump Administration seems to be backing away from these threatening manoeuvres, but one can only hope that Jordan will be able to continue to successfully negotiate the political minefield.

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The year 2016 was a turning point for the consecutive and dramatic events that had engulfed Lebanon following the eruption of the civil war in Syria in 2011. Although the country is usually subject to heavy foreign intervention in the engineering of power sharing agreements between domestic parties, this time it was able to orchestrate a compromise which led to the election of a President after two years of vacancy with limited external involvement. Lebanese parties, as is well known, are closely connected with external players. Hezbollah, the main Shiite party in the country, has woven a robust alliance with Syria and Iran and is now fighting with the Syrian regime against the armed Syrian opposition. The Future Movement, the main Sunni party, for its part, is known for its close alliance with Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf states. Another positive development in 2016 was the ability of the Lebanese government to successfully organize municipal elections in over 1,000 municipalities.

During the last year, the country has not witnessed major terrorist attacks as a spillover effect of the Syrian conflict as compared with the previous year. Hezbollah’s intervention in Syria led to the expulsion of terrorists from the borders, making the Lebanese border Syria’s most secure, as compared to those it has with its other neighbours (Jordan, Iraq and Turkey). Also, the Lebanese security forces’ efforts led to capturing and dismantling several terrorist networks and cells.

Lebanon’s Political Challenges in 2016

Nevertheless, the challenges the country is facing are critical to political and security stability. The Syrian conflict and its repercussions represent the country’s most critical challenge since the Syrian withdrawal in 2005 and the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on 14 February 2005. The Lebanese parties’ reliance on its outcomes and the Syrian refugee crisis caused severe implications on political, economic and social levels. The Syrian regime built strong alliances with domestic parties, in particular Hezbollah. If the Assad regime is toppled, its domestic allies will be severely weakened. So, Hezbollah’s domestic opponents were counting on it being overthrown to weaken its significant influence over domestic politics.

Nevertheless, Lebanon was able to elect a President and form a government after a two-year presidential vacancy and absence of an effective cabinet. The former Prime Minister Saad Hariri was

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1 This article was submitted in April 2017 before the Lebanese parties agreed on a new electoral law. Abbas Assi is the author of Democracy in Lebanon: Political Parties and the Struggle for Power since Syrian Withdrawal (I.B. Tauris, 2016) and several academic and non-academic articles (Arabic and English). He previously worked as associate director of studies at the Center for Arab Unity Studies.
4 The assassination of Hariri was followed by deep sectarian division and conflict between Sunnis’ and Shiites’ political representatives, punctuated by episodes of sectarian violence, and encouraged heavy foreign intervention from states like Saudi Arabia, Syria, the US and France.
5 The presidential term of Michel Sleiman (2008-14) ended in May 2014. Until October 2016, this position was vacant and the government was almost paralyzed due to the objections of the Christian parties to powers entitled to it during the vacancy period in the presidency position.
able to return to government after reaching an implicit deal with the current President, the head of the Free Patriotic Movement Michel Aoun. Hariri’s government was forced into resignation in 2011 after the resignation of the March 8 Coalition ministers who represent a third of all cabinet ministers. This dramatic deal caused a reshuffling of existing political alliances. The major division that Lebanon has witnessed since 2005 between the March 8 and March 14 coalitions has coincided with new alliances. The Free Patriotic Movement, previously a staunch opponent to the Future Movement, paradoxically altered its position and approached the latter to secure victory for its leader Michel Aoun in the presidential elections. In return, the Future Movement secured the Free Patriotic Movement’s approval to nominate its leader Saad Hariri for the position of Prime Minister.

Lebanon’s Economic Challenges in 2016

At the economic level, the paralysis in state institutions and the absence of political stability led to a decline in economic growth for 2016 to about 2%, while for the years 2007-2010, the economy recorded an average 9% growth in GDP per annum. In addition, the country was unable to provide revenue streams to cover its public deficit, which is one of the highest in the world as a percentage of GDP. It rose from 138% in 2015 to 144% in 2016. The decline in economic growth can be traced back to several factors, such as, for instance, the absence of a state budget since 2005. Although the current government has approved the first budget in 12 years, MPs will most likely fail to debate and approve it due to the proximity of the parliamentary elections. The lack of state budget led to undisciplined spending and, in turn, an increase in the public deficit. Lebanon also suffers from an aging infrastructure. The country suffers from electricity supply interruptions, an absence of a sewage network, a rubbish crisis, water supply problems and pollution.

Hezbollah’s intervention in Syria led to the expulsion of terrorists from the borders, making the Lebanese border Syria’s most secure, as compared to those it has with its other neighbours.

One of the most controversial economic problems that plagued the country in the last few years was the rubbish crisis, which went unresolved, despite Lebanon’s election of a new President and formation of a new cabinet. The crisis started when the country’s main landfill site (Nahmeh) was closed due to pollution concerns, leading to the suspension of garbage collection and piles of rubbish clogging the streets of Beirut. However, the government failed to find a permanent solution through the construction of recycling plants. Instead, it suggested temporary solutions by distributing the garbage into small landfills until such time as a permanent and environmentally-friendly plan can be put into action. This has led to massive protests which have threatened the stability of the current political class. The most controversial economic reform in the past few years was the salary scale bill, which has not yet been endorsed by the Parliament, even though several years have passed since it was submitted to cabinet for discussion and approval. The cost of the bill is set at around $800 million, capital for the State to use to secure further revenue streams and,

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6 The two coalitions were formed after the assassination of Hariri in February 2005. The March 8 coalition was headed by Hezbollah and involved several parties (like the Free Patriotic Movement and Amal Movement) and the March 14 coalition was headed by the Future Movement and involved parties like the Lebanese Forces and Kataeb.


10 “Lebanon calls in hunters amid Beirut airport gull infestation: Rubbish at nearby dump a symbol of wider political malaise,” Financial Times, 13 February 2017, www.ft.com/content/5c3b0d7a-e88a-11e6-893c-082c54a7539.

in turn, cover the aforementioned costs.\(^\text{12}\) This factor has been the main obstacle to the bill’s parliamentary approval so far. Lebanon has been witness to several protests calling for economic reforms and denouncing corruption in the state bureaucracy to provide funding for the bill and which is a considerable drain on the state treasury.

The Syrian refugee crisis represents another challenge to the Lebanese economy and society. It is estimated that the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon at the end of 2016 was about 1,011,366,\(^\text{13}\) equal to almost 25% of the Lebanese population. Although the number of refugees is decreasing, they have had a dramatic influence on the economy. The conflict cost Lebanon about 5 billion dollars in lost economic activity over the period 2012-14,\(^\text{14}\) and also affected the poverty level. The unemployment rate rose from 9% in 2012 to 12% in 2014 due to the influx of Syrian workers.\(^\text{15}\) At the societal level, tensions between hosting villages and cities and Syrian refugees are mounting to worrying levels, prompting questions about the long-term effects of their presence on social stability.\(^\text{16}\)

There has been one positive economic policy worth noting during the past year, which was the cabinet’s enactment of oil and gas decrees that had been stalled since 2013.\(^\text{17}\) This is considered to be an essential step for oil and gas exploration in the sea around Lebanon,\(^\text{18}\) which the government hopes will generate revenues to help cover its public deficit and resolve its power shortage.

**Conclusion**

In short, although during the last year Lebanon has been witness to dramatic developments at the political level, there are several challenges that should be addressed. The main challenge that is facing the Lebanese political class is the formulation of a new electoral law that provides a better representation of the Lebanese people. The selective formulation of consecutive electoral laws in the wake of the civil war in 1990, was aimed at securing the victory of the political class which dominated the political scene at the time. The parliamentary elections were postponed twice in 2013 and 2014 sparking public fury towards the Lebanese political class and triggering several protests calling for a new electoral law and the running of elections as scheduled. The debate between political parties now revolves around the need to formulate a new electoral law to replace the one adopted for the 2009 parliamentary elections (known as the 1960 electoral law).\(^\text{19}\)

The Christian parties believe the 1960 law misrepresents their community in the Parliament since most of their MPs were elected by Muslim voters, which brought them under the influence of the Muslim parties.

Another challenge is the Syrian refugee crisis, which should be addressed as soon as possible. The different Lebanese governments have failed to provide proper refugee camps, leading to the uncontrolled settlement of refugees in different villages and cities of the country, thereby causing a host of problems for both refugees and Lebanese. At the economic level, the Parliament needs to approve the budget which is essential for regulating the implementation of the State’s financial policy. Oil and gas exploration should begin as soon as is possible to provide revenue streams to cover the public deficit and salary scale bill, as well as make the necessary improvements to the aging infrastructure.


\(^{15}\) Ibid.


\(^{17}\) ‘New Lebanese government OKs oil decrees to start stalled tender process,’ Reuters, 4 January 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-economy-oil-idUSKBN14P03E.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) The elections were postponed because the Lebanese parties were not able to agree on a new electoral law. For further details see: Assi, Abbas & Worrall, James, ‘Stable Instability: The Syrian Conflict and the Postponement of the 2013 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections,’ Third World Quarterly, Vol. 36, No. 10, pp. 1944-67, 2015.
Turkey began 2017 with great political momentum. In January a constitutional reform package was signed off aimed at substantially modifying the semi-presidential system and replacing it with a full-blown presidential one. This granted broader powers to the President, thus giving him control over legislation and the judiciary, as well as the most senior posts in the state administration.

Having failed to attain the absolute majority needed for passing constitutional reforms in Turkey’s Grand National Assembly (TBMM), these reforms were sanctioned by the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and a referendum was scheduled for 16 April, in which the Turkish people would have to decide if they were in favour or not of the proposed legislative changes. The lead-up to the parliamentary debate (which was both polarized and heated) had been preceded by a politically tumultuous year, marked by a failed coup attempt which, although neutralized, would have major aftershocks in the political and social spheres.

The Road towards Presidentialism

A previous referendum, held in 2007, had transformed the parliamentary regime that emerged from the 1982 constitution into a semi-presidential system, through which, the Turkish people could elect their President directly, for the first time in the Republic’s history. In 2014, the first presidential elections were held in the framework of this new political system. In an electoral race against two other candidates,Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (the candidate proposed by the centre-left Republican People’s Party, CHP and ultranationalist Nationalist Movement Party, MHP) and Selahattin Demirtaş (member of the pro-Kurdish Democratic People’s Party, HDP), Erdoğan won the elections with an outright majority, taking 51.79% of the votes.

Right from the outset, Erdoğan was clear about his intention to impose a strong presidency, as well as push forward the constitutional changes needed to guarantee such a role. In his election campaign, he had promised the dawn of a new era, of a “New Turkey.” Erdoğan ushered in the new era with a new presidential palace, complete with over 1,000 bedrooms and built in a protected natural reserve, thereby contravening a court ruling. The complex was to replace the Çankaya Mansion in Ankara, which had served previous presidents as their official residence. The symbolic nature of the new palace came with a reorganization of the presidency, increasing the number of general directorates from four to 13. Furthermore, although the 1982 Turkish constitution contemplated the president’s right to preside over the Council of Ministers, the two predecessors in the post did not exercise this prerogative. Erdoğan, however, as of 2015, has chaired the Turkish cabinet.

In election terms, 2015 was to be a key year thanks to the general elections, in which the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the party governing the country since 2002, would run with the aim of gaining a par-
Erdoğan was clear about his intention to impose a strong presidency, as well as push forward the constitutional changes needed to guarantee such a role.

The elections held in June 2015, however, did not give the AKP an absolute majority, for the first time since 2002, and so it was forced to enter into talks for a coalition government. When these broke down, Erdoğan refused to offer the main opposition party, the CHP, the option of joining negotiations to form a government and immediately called new elections, which took place in November 2015. These were held in a climate of violence, marked by a resurgence of the conflict between the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and Turkish security forces in the country’s east, following the breakdown in negotiations between the government and Kurdish guerillas, which led to the tragic death of hundreds of civilians, according to reports written by international human rights organizations. Terrorist attacks attributed to Daesh would also have their tragic effect on the campaign, and security fears forced the pro-Kurdish HDP party to cancel political rallies. The PACE (European Council) electoral report concluded that the terms under which the campaign had been led were unequal and unfair for the different political parties.

The substantial differences between the new Turkish Premier and the President led to the replacement of Ahmet Davutoğlu, as leader of the AKP and Prime Minister.

For its part, the MHP underwent internal strife with Devlet Bahçeli’s leadership contested by the charismatic Meral Akşener, a woman who would eventually be expelled from the party in September. Akşener not only posed a challenge to Bahçeli, but was seen as a potential rival to the AKP, as she was widely thought to be the only candidate capable of revitalizing her party, following the previous year’s disastrous November elections, by galvanizing votes from major ultranationalist sectors. The media highlighted suspicions that Bahçeli had joined forces with Erdoğan and the AKP to try to prevent Akşener from seizing the MHP leadership, through an extraordinary congress. This has been suggested as one of the possible reasons behind the subsequent support Bahçeli was to eventually give the establishment of Turkey’s presidential system.
A Context of Violence

Throughout 2016, the spiral of violence between the state security forces and the PKK continued in major urban centres in the southeast of the country. Entire neighbourhoods were destroyed and hundreds of civilian deaths were reported. The inhabitants of the conflict-affected areas suffered cuts in water, electricity and supplies during the curfews imposed in the region. It is calculated that this conflict has forced the displacement of between 350,000 and 500,000 people. The United Nations Human Rights office issued a report published in March 2017 in which it urged the government to allow an impartial investigation to clarify concerning reports arriving from the area related with human rights violations and civilian deaths.

From January to December, there were also several major terrorist attacks in cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakır, and Gaziantep, attributed to Daesh, the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks, TAK (a splinter group of the PKK) and the PKK itself.

In the months that followed, a purge was carried out without precedent in the most recent decades of the country’s history. The purges did not only affect people that were directly related with the attempted coup, but were also applied to sectors critical of the government.

In July 2016, an attempted coup was thwarted with the help of the Turkish people, who stood up to tanks deployed by the military. The President urged the population to take to the streets in a message transmitted through Face Time on the CNNTürk television channel. The resulting clashes left more than 250 people dead. The declaration of the coup in the name of the “Peace Council,” as it was denominated by the coup leaders, was not delivered by one of the army officials involved in the uprising, but instead was read out by a television presenter from the national broadcaster TRT. The government and Turkish President accused the movement of the religious preacher Fethullah Gülen based in Pennsylvania, in the United States, of having orchestrated the coup.

For its part, a report leaked from the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) suggested that the coup could have been driven by senior army officials to avoid a predicted military purge by the government. This purge would have affected Gulenists, secularists and those opposed to Erdoğan’s politics with respect to the Kurdish conflict. This report declared not to have found any grounds for accusing Fethullah Gülen of being behind the coup. The president of Germany’s Federal Intelligence Service (BND) Bruno Kahl expressed a similar sentiment.

Even columnists from pro-government newspapers drew attention to imprisonments based on false accusations

After the coup attempt, a state of emergency was declared. In the months that followed, a purge was carried out without precedent in the most recent decades of the country’s history. Around 100,000 civil servants were fired from their positions or suspended from duty, around 47,000 people were placed under preventive detention, more than 150 of journalists jailed. The purges did not only affect people that were directly related with the attempted coup, but were also applied to sectors critical of the government, including figures from the academic world who had signed a letter in January 2016 urging the Turkish government to resume peace negotiations with the PKK. The purges have been carried out with no kind of legal security for those affected and have led to the confiscation of private property. A government minister declared in September that Gulenist assets to the value of 4 billion dollars had been transferred to the state coffers. Even columnists from pro-government newspapers drew attention to imprisonments based on false accusations and the harsh situation families were having to deal with after being stripped of their economic resources.
The political opposition was also hit hard by the detention and imprisonment of thousands of HDP members, including its two leaders Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, who, along with 11 other deputies, were jailed in the wave of mass purges.

A Referendum under the State of Emergency

The referendum called on 16 April 2017 was carried out during the state of emergency. Election observers sent by the OSCE reported that during the campaign, supporters of the “yes” vote were backed by significant state resources and given wide media coverage, unlike the opposition, which suffered selective censorship as its campaign unfolded. The international observers also indicated that on referendum day there were serious irregularities in the vote counting, the most relevant being in reference to the Supreme Electoral Council’s decision to consider ballot papers that had not been officially stamped as valid. At least a million and a half votes were therefore called into question. Although the “yes” camp won 51.3% and the “no” 48.7%, the CHP and HDP opposition parties refused to accept the election results due to the reported irregularities.

The result of the referendum has left a country polarized and in the midst of major political upheaval

If, as requested by the European Commission, a transparent investigation is not undertaken into the election results, the shadow of illegitimacy will be cast over the new Turkish presidency. The result of the referendum has left a country polarized and in the midst of major political upheaval. The report published by the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission in March 2017 highlighted the “dangers of degeneration of the proposed system towards an authoritarian and personal regime.”

Bibliography


The Mediterranean in the EU’s 2016 Global Strategy: Connecting the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa

Erwan Lannon
Professor
University of Gent

Since 2007, the EU has developed a continental, and thus pan-African, approach, based on an Africa-EU Strategic Partnership that also covers the African Mediterranean. The June 2016 EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) has also directly linked the Mediterranean to the Middle East and Africa, following the “Neighbours of the EU’s Neighbours” approach. It is therefore time to assess the potential implications of these progressive, strategic reorientations, as 2017 will also be remembered as the year Morocco returned to the African family through the African Union (AU).

The June 2016 EUGS and the Mediterranean: The EU’s “Surrounding Regions,” the “Arc of Crisis” and the “Resilience” Concept

This article concentrates on the parts of the EUGS directly linked to the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa, but one should keep in mind that there are many other specific thematic chapters of interest for the region, such as the one on “A More Effective Migration Policy” or another entitled: “An Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises.”

“State and Societal Resilience to our East and South” is the EU’s second external action priority (point 3.2) identified in the EUGS, after the “The Security of Our Union” (point 3.1). What is interesting here, is the broad geographical coverage: the EU’s eastern and southern “surrounding regions” and the use of the “resilience” concept. To the east, reference is first made to the need for the EU to “invest in the resilience of states and societies (...) stretching into Central Asia, and south down to Central Africa”. The “neighbours of the EU’s neighbours” or “the EU’s broader neighbourhood” approach is thus clearly taken into consideration as a priority, with the arc of crisis remaining in the background. Then, the concept of “resilience” is defined as being: the “ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises.” Therefore, the EU will, with its partners, “promote resilience in its surrounding regions,” since a “resilient state” is a “secure state, and security is key for prosperity and democracy.”

According to the EUGS, resilience encompasses “all individuals and the whole of society,” and a “resilient society featuring democracy, trust in institutions, and sustainable development lies at the heart of a resilient state.” Thus, resilience is the new keyword in the area, and might be considered as a more realpolitik approach based on the stabilization of the EU’s neighbours, compared with the promotion of the (too) ambitious economic, legal, institutional and political reforms, including “deep democracy” criteria, promoted until recently under the ENP. The arc of crisis is clearly in the background and EU’s interest in the stability of its neighbours is

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4 Ibid.
the first priority given the current development of transnational threats, especially terrorism.

Then, the enlargement policy of the EU is mentioned with references again to the “challenges of migration, energy security, terrorism and organized crime” that are “shared between the EU, the Western Balkans and Turkey.” Resilience is therefore also valid within the pre-accession framework, whereas, as stressed in the EUGS, EU policy towards the candidate countries will continue to be based on a “clear, strict and fair accession process.” In fact, with the Juncker Commission, the new DG NEAR (Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations) was created to reflect the so-called enlargement fatigue, whereas the activation of Article 50 TEU for BREXIT has launched an unprecedented process of narrowing the EU. The re-establishment of the death penalty in Turkey, regularly mentioned by President Erdogan, would also stop this country’s accession process.

In the subsequent part of the EUGS entitled: “Our Neighbours,” state and societal resilience is again identified as being the “strategic priority in the neighbourhood.” Reference is made in this regard to Tunisia and Georgia, therefore considered as the current ENP frontrunners and as “prosperous, peaceful and stable democracies” that could “reverberate across their respective regions.” The incentives are, however, the usual ones: Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs), the creation of a still undefined “economic area with countries implementing DCFTAs,” the extension of “Trans-European Networks and the Energy Community,” and also “enhanced mobility, cultural and educational exchanges, research cooperation and civil society platforms.”

Last but not least is the “full participation in EU programmes and agencies.” What is more innovative is the reference to a “strategic dialogue with a view to paving the way for these countries’ further involvement in CSDP.” It is interesting to note that Morocco or Ukraine, that were previously considered as the ENP frontrunners, are not mentioned in this part. Surprisingly there are only two references to Ukraine in the whole EUGS linked of course to Russia’s “violation of international law and the destabilization of Ukraine,” and to “Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea.” Morocco and Egypt are not mentioned at all in the EUGS, which is worth noting.

The EUGS is also focusing on the idea of developing a “multifaceted approach to resilience in its surrounding regions” and “pursuing tailor-made policies to support inclusive and accountable governance, critical for the fight against terrorism, corruption and organized crime, and for the protection of human rights.” Differentiation between the EU’s neighbours will be increased and a multi-layered (bilateral, multilateral, state and non-state actors) approach will be developed, as the EU will support “different paths to resilience” in its broader neighbourhood. The risk here is to go too far with differentiation, which can lead to discrimination and promote a double-standard approach. Another clear trend is to better associate the EU Member States to the EU actions in certain specific areas. In this regard the EU will adopt a “joined-up approach to its humanitarian, development, migration, trade, investment, infrastructure, education, health and research policies” and improve “horizontal coherence between the EU and its Member States.” The development-security nexus approach has already been adopted in the Sahel strategy and to some extent in the Horn of Africa and will now be extended. However, clear evaluations, good practices and lessons must be drawn from these experiences.

Connecting the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa: towards a More Geopolitical Approach Vis à Vis the EU’s Broader Neighbourhood “Cooperative Regional Orders”?

A specific section (3.4) on “Cooperative Regional Orders” has been introduced in the EUGS. This is where the linkage between the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa is made under the theme: “A Peaceful and Prosperous Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa.” The first link between the “Mediterranean, Middle East and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa” is that they “are in turmoil.” Therefore, “solving conflicts and promoting development and human rights in the south is essential to addressing the threat of terrorism, the challenges of demography, migration and climate change.” A quite vague reference to “the opportunity of shared prosperity” is then made at the end of the section. The fact that the strategy is security-oriented is normal in the sense that the EUGS is a product of the High Representative, in charge of CFSP/CSDP issues, but one should also
think about the perception such an approach may have in the abovementioned regions.

At the level of the institutional actors, the EU will reinforce its “support for and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa and the Middle East, as well as functional cooperative formats in the region.” The institutional actors of interest for this article, and which were explicitly mentioned by the EUGS, are: the Arab League, the Union for the Mediterranean, the African Union, the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community and the G5 Sahel. However, the strategy is based on “flexibility in helping to bridge divides and support regional players in delivering concrete results.” Moreover, the EU’s “bilateral and multilateral policies and frameworks” will be used as well as “partnering with civil societies in the region.” This functional and flexible approach, relying also on civil societies, will not be easy to implement given the complexity of the interrelationships among and between the different institutional and civil society actors. A lot of pragmatism will therefore be required and informality should be privileged, at least at the start of the process.

Among the five lines of action identified in this part, the first one is the “Maghreb and the Middle East” where the European Union will “support functional multilateral cooperation.” What is striking is how the document reflects the “US'-MENA” approach to the region. It is neither the “Euro-Mediterranean” nor the ENP that are referred to. The general objective is to “back practical cooperation” and to do so “including the Union for the Mediterranean.” A number of sectors are identified: “border security, trafficking, counterterrorism, non-proliferation, water and food security, energy and climate, infrastructure and disaster management.” Dialogue and negotiation is also envisaged regarding regional conflicts (Syria, Libya and Palestinian- Israeli). At this level, it is of course the Quartet and the Arab League that are mentioned as key partners.

The second line of action is related to “sectoral cooperation with Turkey;” reinforcing the feeling that the “strict and fair accession conditionality” mentioned in the EUGS highlights a clear “negotiation fatigue” with respect to Turkey. In other words, Turkish stabilization and the role of this country as an actor in the externalization of the EU’s border controls are now more important than its democratization process according to the Copenhagen Political Criteria. The migration crisis and the adoption of the EU-Turkey statement on 18 March 2016 on the migration issue, just two months before the publication of the EUGS, have certainly played a role in this respect.

Turkish stabilization and the role of this country as an actor in the externalization of the EU’s border controls are now more important than its democratization process

The third line of action is the “Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and individual Gulf countries.” Iran’s “nuclear deal and its implementation” is also mentioned as well as the “dialogue with Iran and GCC countries on regional conflicts, human rights and counterterrorism.” In other words, it seems that the EU is trying to profile itself as a potential mediator regarding the conflict in Yemen, for example, where the humanitarian situation is worsening every day.

The fourth line of action is more innovative as it is about “interconnections between North and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East.” The idea to support cooperation across sub-regions derives again from the Neighbours of the EU’s Neighbours approach. A second point is, however, a bit more difficult to understand. It is the idea of fostering “triangular relationships across the Red Sea between Europe, the Horn and the Gulf to face shared security challenges and economic opportunities.” This might be linked to the fact that Yemen, which is not a GCC member, is increasingly linked to the other fragile states of the Horn of Africa (Sudan and Somalia) as massive refugee flows are connecting the zone and many transnational destabilizing factors, such as terrorism and human trafficking, have to be taken into consideration. In addition, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia are all Red Sea riparian, so this might well be another bridge across the EU’s traditional, geographical administrative silos.

While it is good news that the “cross-border dynamics in North and West Africa, the Sahel and Lake Chad regions” will be systematically addressed
through “closer links with the African Union, the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the G5 Sahel,” no clear methodology has yet been identified. The dialogue should thus produce recommendations soon for new innovative instruments to work at cross-border and transnational levels. For the time being, the Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) track of the ENP has generated poor results because of the reluctance of Russia to be an actor in the Eastern Partnership and northern dimension, but also because the EU instruments were too EU-inspired (EU structural funds). In other words, new specific instruments of cooperation created on the basis of partners’ requirements still have to be designed.

The last line of action is “African peace and development,” which implies an intensification of the “cooperation with and support for the African Union, as well as ECOWAS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa, and the East African Community.” In this respect, the progressive creation of a network of free trade areas, in the form of (regional/interim) Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) is mentioned. It will be important, in the coming years, to connect the EPA network to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements and to other FTAs concluded recently by the EU in Asia (notably with ASEAN members). However, the emphasis is clearly and logically placed on the trade/development-security nexus. The first priority of the EU-African partnership is to “support peace and security efforts” in Africa and to assist African organizations in working on “conflict prevention, counterterrorism, organized crime, migration and border management.” This includes working at the diplomatic, CSDP and trade/development levels and reinforcing the sub-regional strategies (including Sahel, Horn of Africa, Great Lakes and Gulf of Guinea). But now an interesting novelty to note is that Morocco is to be taken into consideration in implementing the Africa EU Strategic Partnership, and this is of particular interest to the Mediterranean at large.

**Conclusion**

One can conclude that the 2016 EUGS is, for the time being, a diplomatic success, as its endorsement by, at that time, 28 Member States was not a foregone conclusion. Although the result of numerous compromises, the Strategy goes beyond a simple threat list and is much more detailed compared to the 2003 European Security Strategy and its 2008 update. There are, for instance, more developments in methodology and the general approach. It is, therefore, a real medium-term “Strategy” but not yet an EU Security/Defence “Doctrine.” Moreover, the fact that, for the time being, there is no real supplementary financial means is of course a major issue. We are currently in the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, meaning that it would be very difficult to mobilize supplementary financial resources before the next three years, and one should not forget the impact of BREXIT at the financial level, regarding the EU’s internal and external policies.

While in 2011, in the aftermath of the so-called “Arab Spring,” the key words for the ENP were: “deep and sustainable democracy” and the “more for more” approach, in 2017, stabilization, resilience, pragmatism and the “EU’s interests first,” characterize the new approach. The resilience concept might be well received by partners confronted with unprecedented security challenges. For instance, Tunisia will certainly benefit from an increase in Security Sector Reform assistance. But the consequences of developing a more flexible approach in terms of relations with authoritarian regimes should be evaluated very seriously.

What is striking is that the Mediterranean has been mentioned in the EUGS, but at the same time almost replaced by “North Africa or Maghreb and the Middle East,” thus coming closer to the MENA-US concept. It is, however, clear that the Mediterranean is increasingly fragmented given the recent crisis and wars. Could we witness the end of the (EEC) EU Mediterranean policies developed since 1972 with the “Global Mediterranean Policy,” followed by the renewed Mediterranean Policy” (1992) and the “Euro-Mediterranean Partnership” (1995)? Today, the ENP and the Union for the Mediterranean are the two main frameworks for cooperation, but at the strategic level, the Mediterranean is included in a broader African/Asian Neighbourhood. Of course, the ENP and the Union for the Mediterranean are the two main frameworks for cooperation, but at the strategic level, the Mediterranean is included in a broader African/Asian Neighbourhood. Of course, the ENP has already changed the framework for cooperation while the Union for the Mediterranean includes 43 members. However, it is clear that we are entering a new phase in Euro-Mediterranean relationships.
At a time of political divisiveness, challenge to multilateralism and global disbandment, the co-presidency of the Union for the Mediterranean successfully managed to convene a foreign affairs ministerial conference for the second consecutive year, in Barcelona, early 2017, in the context of a broader Regional Forum that gathered public decision-makers and regional stakeholders.

From the initial launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), nine years ago in Paris, to the third UfM foreign affairs ministerial conference in Barcelona in 2017, the UfM has undergone considerable changes, which have substantially modified its physiognomy and refined its political significance. More importantly, drastic political and economic events have completely altered the landscape of both the northern and southern Mediterranean countries in which the UfM operates.

The Union for the Mediterranean was born as a balloon that had lost its air, amidst a pompous Summit of Heads of State and Government in Paris, the only one so far that has gathered all 43 Euro-Mediterranean countries. Indeed, the headlines that (former French President) Sarkozy’s project managed to grab were transformed by the politics and diplomacy of negotiations into a downsized project of much lesser impact and tainted with a strong flavour of intergovernmentalism. The previous Barcelona Process had been underpinned by a set of principles regarding human rights, good governance and international law that had been subscribed by all the parties involved. In contrast, the UfM abandoned the pursuit of political and legal reforms in the region, which mirror the EU’s mission, and instead is focused on the political dialogue among “equal” partners and on the implementation of concrete projects. The latter appears to be in line with classical functionalist thinking: the belief that flexible and transnational institutions with clear practical functions can ameliorate international economic stagnation and security tensions.

Yet the first three years after the Summit were witness to a political stalemate due to the crisis in Gaza and the endurance of the Arab-Israeli conflict. So it was business as usual in the region, with the consequence that the main institutional provisions laid down in the Paris Declaration (biennial UfM Summits and ministerial meetings) could not be brought into play.

It was not until 2012 that the general environment started to change and factors of both an exogenous and endogenous nature were able to propel the UfM:

1. The wave of uprisings in the Arab Mediterranean countries triggered a first rethinking of the ENP in 2011. The EU better understood the additionality that the UfM could bring into the reviewed strategy towards the southern Mediterranean countries in pursuing state and societal resilience through economic and social development.

2. The decision that the UfM co-presidency would be taken over by the EU and Jordan was extremely positive. Whilst Jordan is a relatively stable country that provides ownership of the initiative vis-à-vis the Arab group of UfM countries, the EU (notably the EEAS, but also the EC

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and the EIB) plays a pivotal role in steering the organization and ensuring visibility and the inclusion of the UfM in the EU strategy towards the southern Mediterranean countries.

3. The consecutive appointment of two Moroccans at the helm of the UfM Secretariat in Barcelona was also reassuring. In particular, the decision, in March 2012, to appoint Fathallah Sijilmassi as UfM Secretary General was a blessing for the institution, not least because it offered fresh evidence of Morocco’s commitment towards the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

Is the Union for the Mediterranean Experiencing a Spring Mood?

Between 2012 and 2016, the Union for the Mediterranean expanded considerably: feasibility studies were prepared and countless high-level meetings and seminars were regularly held to discuss a wide range of issues. To these manifold activities, one has to add the project-oriented conferences, and the identification, appraisal, labelling and promotion of regional pilot-projects. Under the dynamic leadership of Secretary General Sijilmassi, the Secretariat has undergone severe and deep transformations, both at strategic and structural levels, strengthening its capacities, partnerships and achievements. This has yielded concrete results and given new momentum to the regional cooperation.

The first three years were witness to a political stalemate with the consequence that the main institutional provisions laid down in the Paris Declaration could not be brought into play.

The aforementioned expansion came with the recognition of the catalytic role that the UfM plays in regional cooperation and integration processes. A number of high-level official documents of the EU and other multilateral organizations, reassert this role and mandate the UfM to undertake certain actions, as shown in Table 2.

Between 2012 and 2016, the Union for the Mediterranean expanded considerably: feasibility studies were prepared and countless high-level meetings and seminars were regularly held to discuss a wide range of issues

The years 2015 and 2016 emerged as a turning point for the short history of the UfM: the first UfM projects were effectively implemented thereby delivering on the core mandate for which the UfM had been established; the EU took public account of the value that the UfM entails in its policy towards the southern neighbourhood; and, most importantly, the UfM managed to convene, albeit on an informal basis, a Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the first one in this format of the 43 member countries since November 2008. In the course of the latter, Member States requested that the UfM Secretary General prepare a UfM Roadmap for action with a view to broadening the organization’s thematic scope, which would be discussed throughout 2016 and eventually adopted at the beginning of 2017.

Indeed, it was not an easy exercise for the UfM co-presidency to resume the Ministerial Conferences on Foreign Affairs, having proven impossible since January 2009, when the then-Egyptian co-presidency had indefinitely postponed all political meetings of the UfM, namely Summits and Ministerial meetings of Foreign Affairs. At that time, the group of Arab countries considered it self-evident that the Arab delegations, and especially the Palestinian Authority, could not attend political meetings in which an Israeli delegation was also taking part.

2 See further references in Table 2 on the Joint Communication “Review of the Neighbourhood Policy” and the adopted strategy “A Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign Affairs and Security Policy”
3 26 November 2015 in Barcelona
### TABLE 2

**List of References to the UfM in High-Level Documents**

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Source: prepared by the author from personal archive
In this lengthy time-lapse, a few weeks after the last Israeli legislative elections in March 2015 and taking advantage of the fact that the government formation was still under negotiation, HRVP Federica Mogherini seized the opportunity to hold consultations with the foreign ministers of the southern Mediterranean countries on the review of the ENP. During the meeting that took place at the UfM headquarters in Barcelona, with both Arab Mediterranean and Israeli delegations in attendance, the need to reinforce the UfM at the political level was explicitly expressed. Six months afterwards, UfM ministerial meetings on foreign affairs were successfully resumed. Table 3 shows the list of UfM ministerial meetings held since the launch of the UfM by competence area.

### Conclusion

**Concluding Remarks: the Union for the Mediterranean at a Crossroads**

Multilateralism is not in fashion nowadays. The UfM was conceived to upgrade the political level of EU relations with the southern Mediterranean countries. The main problem is that the Mediterranean region as a political construct is under question. The European Union has underpinned a “core-periphery” (EU toward neighbours) policy that works primarily on a bilateral track, instead of reaffirming, in practice, that common (regional) pressing challenges need further regionalization as regards debates, policies and decision-making. Moving from the technocratic floor to the political arena. The UfM as the other EU policies toward the region have been de-politicized in recent years. Whilst the latter follows a logical path with a view to softening some of the relations with certain southern Mediterranean partner countries, there are growing demands to enhance regional dialogue on political and stability related issues. Considering that Summitry remains unattainable for the time being, one could thus envisage the possibility of densifying the political strategic dialogue at the Senior Official Meetings, convening Joint Strategic Permanent Committee meetings in Brus-
sels⁵, strengthening the mandate of the PA-UfM and holding informal ministerial meetings on the margins of the UNGA in order to lever political debate and decision-making.

The years 2015 and 2016 emerged as a turning point for the short history of the UfM: the first UfM projects were effectively implemented thereby delivering on the core mandate for which the UfM had been established.

A UfM Roadmap for action, as a hammer to break the glass ceiling of 2008. The regional landscape at the time the Paris and Marseille Declarations were adopted has little in common with the one of 2017. The endorsement of the Roadmap by the last ministerial meeting in Barcelona constitutes a significant leap forward in the alignment of UfM priorities with those laid down in the EU Global Strategy, and more specifically in the ENP review of 2015. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of the Roadmap as regard to fields such as migration, mobility and prevention of extremism and terrorism is to be carefully monitored in order to avoid the Roadmap becoming an empty marketing shell rather than an effective political propeller.

Smooth transition of generals in the Secretariat. The most critical institutional turning point for the UfM in the short term is the replacement of its current Secretary General, whose mandate ends before the summer 2018. There is no room for eventual failure and it will not be easy to find a replacement as skillful and competent as the current Secretary General, and who complies with the political criterion. The post is still up for grabs.

It is no secret that a fully-fledged operational Secretariat with 47 labelled regional projects requires a better equipped infrastructure

An underfinanced and understaffed Secretariat in Barcelona. While considerable progress has been made in this endeavour, for instance the recent announcement that the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) had allocated a €6.5-million multiannual fund to support UfM core activities, it is no secret that a fully-fledged operational Secretariat with 47 labelled regional projects requires a better equipped infrastructure. Hence, the creation of a dedicated financial mechanism (i.e. Trust Fund) that enables funds to be pooled from interested contributors is of paramount importance to be able to reward the UfM label, alongside a more flexible set of rules to hire long-term expert personnel.

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⁵ Envisioned in the Paris Declaration (2008), the Joint Permanent Committee is a body that brings together Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to the EU with the mission to react rapidly if an exceptional situation arises in the region that requires the consultation of Euro-Mediterranean partners.
Saudi Arabia’s International Religious Activism: The Case of the Mediterranean Countries

Pierre Conesa
Former Senior Official
Ministry of Defence, Paris

It is always surprising to see how little even the best-informed sites and studies on Saudi Arabia discuss its religious diplomacy, as if this country were an international actor like any other, essentially concerned with its dynastic struggles and its relations with the United States. Nonetheless, since its birth as a country in 1932, the political-religious regime consists of an alliance where the Royal House of Saud and the Al ash-Sheikh religious family, descendants of Abd al-Wahhab, have been sharing power. The two parties collaborated to conquer the peninsula, the religious leaders declaring jihad against the other Arab tribes and against the Ottoman Empire, which controlled the Holy Places before the First World War. The establishment of the new State provided the opportunity to publicly proclaim their ambition of propagating Islam (the Wahhabi version, naturally) across the planet. The religious leaders, moreover, rejected the qualifier “Wahhabi” connecting them to Abd al-Wahhab, because like all the radicals, they qualify themselves as Salafists (imitators of the Prophet’s companions). The Salafism we know today is a purely Saudi product. This is, moreover, the country’s structural contradiction: the ruling dynasty, which signed the Quincy Agreement with Roosevelt in 1945, needs Western countries for its survival (1979, 1991, today’s struggle against Daesh). The religious authorities criticize these appeals to the “infidels,” denouncing them all day long on local radio and television stations, but they always find the right theological arguments to support the regime in exchange for greater power over the society and the means for their religious diplomacy. Every crisis thus ends in “more religion,” both nationally and internationally. “Reform” does not mean what Westerners think it does at all.

The young Kingdom’s first difficulties came from the Mediterranean area. In the 1950s and ‘60s, Gamal Abdel Nasser was the great leader of the Arab world and of secular pan-Arabism. Dissension did not take long, emerging during the Yemen crisis, when in September 1962, Colonel Abdullah al-Sallal, with the support of Egypt, led a coup against Imam Muhammad al-Badr ben Ahmad Hamid ed-Din, King of (North) Yemen, who had Saudi Arabia’s support. The war that broke out lasted four years. Riyadh’s religious diplomacy at the time aimed to counter the influence of Arab socialism gaining ground in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Algeria. Sub-Saharan Africa was particularly targeted (the effects are still felt today in Mali, Niger, Senegal and the Central African Republic, whose religious leaders are all alumni of the Islamic University in Medina). But also, and above all, by offering asylum to Muslim Brothers oppressed by Nasser, the Kingdom gained its administrative and intellectual leaders and political themes in its power struggle with the Egyptian Head of State. The system established is a mirror of the organizations sought by Nasser: the Saudis responded to pan-Arabism with pan-Islamism — in the face of the Arab League, thoroughly under Egyptian influence, they created the World Islamic League in 1962; and they countered the Islamic University of Al Azhar, considered “too progressive,” with the Islamic University in Medina (1961). The Nasser threat disappeared with the Six-Day War. The Kippur War, on the other hand, through the oil crisis, offered Riyadh the budgetary means for

its diplomacy. The year 1979 was pivotal for the Kingdom, shaken by the Shiite revolution in Tehran in February, the occupation of the Great Mosque by radical young students and finally, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December. The latter allowed the Kingdom to export its turbulent religious activists and lend itself greater international importance in the eyes of the Muslim world and the West. In 1989, when the defeated Red Army left Afghanistan, the former fighters, dubbed “Afghans,” returned home. The most deeply affected of the Mediterranean countries was Algeria. During the ten years of its civil war, the country experienced all the horrors that the Wahhabis/Salafists had practiced everywhere they had won, first in Saudi Arabia, then in Afghanistan with the Taliban: first of all, the takfir ideology of excommunication of “hypocrites,” according to which any Algerians not actively fighting the government could be killed with all impunity, destruction of religious sites of Malaki rite; banning of other Islamic practices and their imams; massacres of entire villages; imposition of invented Koranic rules; oppression of women and murders of young women not abiding by their rules; girls banned from education... The Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) were a prototype for today’s Daesh, as the Taliban had been before them, practicing extreme violence as a revolutionary rite of purification before the triumph of their conception of Islam. How many casualties in Algeria? from 60 to 150,000?²

Where Are We Now?

The Arab Revolutions have profoundly destabilized the region as well as the Saudi regime, which is seeing the Muslim Brotherhood triumph at the urns in Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia. Riyadh had expelled them in 1991 for having dared to criticize the royal decision to call on America to defend the “Land of the Holy Places.” The Saudi regime preferred Colonel Sisi over Mohamed Morsi, thus finding an alliance, whether witting or not, with the jihadi Salafists fighting against the regime. The latter are numerous in Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria, with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and different groups, either affiliated or not with the Islamic State.

In March 2016, the Council of Arab Interior Ministers condemned Hezbollah’s “terrorist practices and acts,” which it accused of wishing to “destabilize certain Arab countries.” The pressure exerted by the six monarchies of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), obsessed with Shiite Iran and the Lebanese party’s support of the Assad regime, worked. But in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, this communiqué provoked an outcry. In this Sunni region of the Arab world, Hezbollah, although Shiite, remains very popular since its war against the Israeli army in 2006. “It’s Daesh that should be dubbed terrorist, not Hezbollah. Its combatants are heroes!” one Internet user stated. On 11 March, the Arab League also classified Hezbollah as a “terrorist group.” The Tunisian National Bar Association, many left-wing parties, the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and even certain personalities close to the president criticized the government, which they accused of “alignment with Saudi positions.”

The nuances of the different Salafist movements in the Maghreb, whether quietist or jihadist, seem quite intellectual when compared with the local situation in general. The originality of Salafist preaching is that it is politico-religious and not just religious, because even if the quietists advocate obedience to the Prince (as long as he is Muslim), how his power conforms to Sharia still needs to be validated. And what about relations with the Magrebi democracies and the local intellectuals defending them? Although they are different, all of these movements are not only opposed to the West, but also to the legitimacy of the popular vote, accused of being anti-Islamic. The Salafists likewise denounce the Muslim Brotherhood, whom they reproach for their concessions concerning Koranic references, political openness and the use of Islam in a partisan practice.

In each country, Salafist pressure can be felt in all spheres. In Tunisia, the feast of the Prophet’s birthday on 24 January (Mulud) was denounced by Salafist imams as an idolatrous celebration, including the associated food rituals. In a year, seventeen mau-

² Today no one knows precisely how many people were killed in the “dark years.” The figures range from 60,000 (at the lowest) to 150,000 (at the highest) but neither of the two figures can be given credit. Should the disappeared be included? If so, how many are there? Remember that even for the War of Independence, the Algerian Administration’s official figures range from 1.5 to 2 million dead. Historians such as Benjamin Stora speak of 800,000.
soleums were burned orpillaged. They have also occupiedcertain mosques to impose their prayer ritual by example. “If weekly collective prayer does not unite believers and is not a source of peace and contemplation, one may as well stay at home,” says Mourad, a pharmacist who henceforth carries out the Friday ritual at his office. Democratic intellectuals are particularly targeted in all countries. Kamel Daoud, an Algerian journalist and novelist, was the target of a fatwa (that is, a call for his death) issued by Abdelfattah Hamadash, imam of a mosque in Oran. Algerian intellectuals already paid a heavy price from 1993 to 1998, and not just the francophone ones, considered the heritage of the French colonial presence, but also the Arab-speaking non-Islamic ones, qualified as “communists.” Tunisia has also been hit. The opposition and Tunisian civil society have for months been demanding the dismantlement of the Ansar al-Sharia group led by Abu Iyadh, an al-Qaeda veteran in Afghanistan already accused of having organized the September 2012 attack on the US Embassy in Tunis. The February 2013 assassination of the left-wing opponent, Chokri Belaïd, and the MP, Mohamed Brahmi, complete the sinister picture. Belaïd’s assassination led to the downfall of the first Ennahdha regime, which refused to ban the group. The Tunisian authorities now accuse the jihadists of preparing some twenty plots to assassinate public personalities and attacks to complete the country’s destabilization. Cultural activity has also been the object of strong-arm tactics. At the premiere of the play by Lotfi Abdeli, “Fabriqué en Tunisie, 100% halal” (“Made in Tunisia, 100% Halal”), hundreds of Salafists occupied the open-air theatre where the play was to be performed, considering it blasphemous of Islam, and started praying. The performance had to be cancelled. All of the countries in the region are also now faced with citizens returning from combat in Syria and Iraq, the Tunisian contingent presently being the largest of all of these foreign fighting groups in the Daesh ranks. No one among the Maghrebi intellectuals has any doubt as to the Saudi origins of the propagation of Salafism. The money assisting the most destitute families and the implantation of Koranic schools and mosques has led these families progressively towards Salafism, here as in the rest of Africa. In October 2015, Algeria refused to join the “Sunni” coalition of 34 Muslim countries launched by Saudi Arabia to “combat terrorism with military and ideological means.” In retaliation against this refusal from the only country having real anti-terrorist military experience, the Kingdom drew up a blacklist of 11 countries that were supposedly not making enough effort in the struggle against the funding of terrorism. According to the Saudi newspaper, Mekkah, which apparently managed to consult royal diplomatic documents, Riyadh established two categories on its blacklist: Iran and North Korea, who are not struggling against money laundering and terrorist financing, and eight other countries, among them Algeria, who do not abide by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) rules.

One is therefore rather shocked at the cowardly silence of Western diplomatic circles regarding the Saudi responsibility for the Salafist risk which has already caused so many deaths. The WikiLeaks site, The Saudi Cables database, which has declassified 60,000 Saudi diplomatic documents, provides interesting information on the Kingdom’s strategy regarding different countries on the North Shore. The support of the French authorities to this Saudi-influenced policy is complete: Legion of Honour awarded to the head of Saudi diplomacy; deafening silence on the human rights flouted in Saudi Arabia; total disinterest in the massacres in Yemen until the past few months. Several months ago, the Kingdom entrusted four publicity and press relations agencies – Publicis, Image 7, Edile Consulting and another whose name was not leaked (with strong ties to Israel according to some sources) – with the mission of “improving Riyadh’s image in France,” revealed the monthly, Challenges. Money truly eases the conscience!

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3 Cited by Akram Belaïd, Le monde diplomatique.
4 It should be noted that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an international organization designed above all to combat the laundering of dirty, i.e. criminal, money. However, terrorist money is clean money (voluntary donations such as the Zakat) that is dirtied by the end receiver (the terrorist group). The FATF is not in the least equipped to struggle against terrorist money. This is why the Saudi initiative against Iran can be considered a publicity move.
5 Elisabeth Badinter, Chair of Publicis’ Supervisory Board, recently called for a boycott of companies engaging in the Islamic fashion market.
As the conflict in Yemen enters its third year, the human toll of the political tragedy continues to mount. Rough estimates of civilian casualties since fighting began in March 2015 may now exceed 10,000 killed with over 40,000 injured, according to press reports. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that over three million of Yemen’s 27.5 million citizens have been internally displaced by the conflict, while over half the population is considered food insecure. Famine and epidemics of disease may be on the near horizon. Five years after Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi’s election as interim President started the clock on the only negotiated political transition of the Arab Spring, the future survival of Yemen hangs in the balance. The reemergence of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its success in establishing roots with Sunni tribal elements underscores the potential threat to regional and global security and stability should Yemen continue its descent into chaos and anarchy.

Regrettably, the optimism last year that the parties were moving closer to agreement on the outlines of a political deal has faded, despite a months-long, UN-led negotiation in Kuwait, followed by desperate attempts by the international community to broker a ceasefire late in the year. Yet the fighting remains stalemated as neither side appears capable of achieving a military victory. The government, with its coalition allies, is strengthening its hold on the southern part of the country, while the Houthi/Saleh forces are firmly in control of the north, including the capital, Sana’a, and reaching to the border of Saudi Arabia.

A Tale of Two Conflicts

To understand the state of the conflict in Yemen, it’s important to keep in mind that there are actually two parallel wars: 1) a civil war that pits the legitimate government of Yemen against an insurrection led by the Houthis, a small, Zaidi Shia clan based in the far northwestern corner of Yemen, supported by former President Ali Abdullah Saleh; and 2) a regional component to the conflict that draws in Saudi Arabia, in support of the government, and Iran, in support of the insurgents.

Civil Insurgency

Although not without shortcomings, the overall implementation of the GCC Transition Agreement and the Implementing Mechanism signed in November 2011 by the parties to the Yemen political crisis, and supported by the US and the international community, was moving toward a successful conclusion by early 2014. That spring, the key step in the transition process, the National Dialogue Conference, was concluded and its final document was signed by all parties, including the Houthis. A constitutional drafting committee was impanelled and worked through the summer of 2014 to complete recommended revisions and amendments to Yemen’s Constitution to be submitted to the National Dialogue for final approval. Few steps remained before the Yemeni people would be able to go to the polls and elect a new government, completing a peaceful transition of power. Frustrated by their inability to achieve their objectives through the political process, however, the
Houthis and former President Saleh, placed increasing military pressure on the government through the summer and autumn of 2014. Eventually, they were able to take advantage of the weakness of the transitional government and Yemen’s security forces to move aggressively into Sana’a and overthrow President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and his government.

Even in the event that the parties agree on a political framework for governance in Sana’a, their capacity to bring a halt to the fighting in the countryside is going to be extremely limited in the near-term. The international community has sought to mediate the crisis through political dialogue, allowing the parties to return to Sana’a and restoring essential government functions. But the conflict has metastasized and even success in the negotiations will not bring a near-term resolution to the fighting and instability. In the 2011 negotiations between former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his political opponents, Yemen’s preeminent statesman and former Prime Minister, the late Abdul Karim al-Iryani, warned the parties that, if their dispute became a fight, armed conflict once started would not be easily stopped. That, indeed, appears to be the case as conflicts around the country increasingly take on the coloration of tribal vendettas and the resurrection of ancient rivalries. Thus, even in the event that the parties agree on a political framework for governance in Sana’a, their capacity to bring a halt to the fighting in the countryside is going to be extremely limited in the near-term.

Moreover, the two Yemeni coalitions that are parties to the conflict are, themselves, internally fragile. Support for President Hadi, even among his allies, is weak and there are significant doubts about his ability to re-establish his position as leader of the legitimate government. Meanwhile, the Houthi-Saleh alliance is a marriage of convenience rather than a true partnership and is unlikely to survive in a political arena. Long years of enmity between Saleh and his followers and the Houthis have been pared over, not resolved. And both sides have political aspirations that will be difficult to reconcile when it comes to a real political process. Signs of tension between the two sides abound.

Saudi-Iranian Competition

The precipitous collapse of the Hadi government in early 2015, and the power grab by a group closely associated with the Government of Iran and hostile to key US goals and objectives, alarmed the Obama Administration as well as its friends and partners in the region. For Saudi Arabia, in particular, developments in Yemen were perceived as an existential threat to its security. Thus, the Saudis, the US, and Yemen’s other international partners agreed that intervention in Yemen was both necessary and legitimate, based on achieving four key objectives:

- Restoring the legitimate government in Yemen to complete the implementation of the GCC Initiative and the National Dialogue Conference consistent with UNSCR 2216;
- Preventing a Houthi/Ali Abdullah Saleh takeover of the government through violence;
- Securing the Saudi-Yemeni border; and
- Defeating Iran’s efforts to establish a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula threatening Saudi and Gulf security.

The coalition found itself in a situation familiar to US forces fighting asymmetric conflicts: confronting a low-tech insurgency where their massive advantage in sophisticated weapons is neutralized.

While there was optimism initially that a Saudi-led coalition could quickly stabilize the situation in Yemen, this has not been the case. Given the Coalition’s reluctance to establish a large ground presence in Yemen, the Hadi government and its international partners were in a weak position to contest the Houthi/Saleh forces for control of territory. The coa-
lition found itself in a situation familiar to US forces fighting asymmetric conflicts: confronting a low-tech insurgency where their massive advantage in sophisticated weapons is neutralized. The situation for the insurgents, on the other hand, is entirely different: they are fighting on their own turf; they blend in with the local population, making identification of legitimate targets difficult and the potential for civilian casualties high; and they are willing to pay a heavy price to avoid defeat.

The resolution of the political crisis rests in the hands of the Yemeni parties, but larger regional developments can influence the course of the negotiations

For the government of Iran, the coalition’s inability to defeat the insurgents and restore the legitimate government in Yemen is a significant win. Iranian support for the Houthis comes at very little cost. A number of IRGC personnel and their Hezbollah allies have been killed or captured in Yemen but, compared to the toll in Syria, the losses have been negligible. The Iranians have provided primarily low-tech weapons (although there has been a recent increase in the sophistication of Iranian-provided weaponry, including surface-to-surface and anti-ship missiles that have been used successfully against targets in Saudi Arabia and against shipping in the Red Sea). By contrast, the political and financial cost of the conflict has been heavy for the Saudis and their coalition partners. Saudi Arabia’s inability to either defeat the Houthi/Saleh forces or adequately defend its borders has been an embarrassment to the Saudi military. Perhaps the greatest, and most unanticipated, benefit of the conflict to Iran has been the strain it has placed on Saudi Arabia’s relationships with its key Western partners, principally the US and the UK. The reputation damage to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners is substantial. Accusations of war crimes levelled against Saudi and coalition armed forces and threats to end arms sales to the Saudis have the potential to inflict long-lasting damage to these relationships that go well beyond the scope of the Yemen conflict and could undermine the international community’s resolve in confronting Iran’s regional threats.

Is Lowering the Temperature of Saudi-Iranian Competition the Key to Ending the Yemen Conflict?

At this juncture, the political negotiations being managed by UN Special Envoy Ismail Ould Chaikh Ahmed offer the only viable prospect for achieving progress in Yemen. There will not be a military conclusion to the Yemen conflict. Only a political arrangement can end the fighting, allow for the re-establishment of a degree of governance in Sana’a, and focus attention on the deepening humanitarian crisis. If successful in achieving that limited objective, priority can be placed on completing the remaining steps of the Yemeni transition plan and enabling elections. Ultimately, only through the establishment of a new, credible government can Yemen begin the process of repairing damaged infrastructure, restarting economic activity, and restoring security and stability, particularly in ending tribal conflicts and pursuing the fight against AQAP.
For Iran, the calculation is different. While it has benefitted from Saudi difficulties, and it does have ideological reasons to support its “Shia brethren” in Yemen, Iran has no significant national security interests there. Therefore, assisting in ending the conflict in Yemen could be a bargaining chip for Iran if it determines that playing it will offer greater benefit on other fronts.

**Assisting in ending the conflict in Yemen could be a bargaining chip for Iran if it determines that playing it will offer greater benefit on other fronts**

Iran does, in fact, have good reason to want to lower the temperature in its confrontation with Saudi Arabia and the GCC. By all estimations, the Rouhani government is fearful that a more robust US challenge threatens its regional interests. The prospect of expanded US-Saudi-GCC security cooperation underscores the dimensions of that threat. While ultimate decision-making about Iran’s relations with its neighbours is in the hands of Ayatollah Khamenei and the hardliners around him, Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif have taken steps recently aimed at softening GCC resolve to confront Iran. Outreach through Kuwait and Oman has signaled to at least some of the GCC partners that Iran is open to reducing tensions. The apparently successful Saudi-Iranian talks to resolve differences over the hajj suggest that even there, there is some prospect for reducing tensions, albeit marginally.

**Conclusion**

Thus, there is quite possibly a convergence of interests and a growing consensus between Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbours that the time has come to end the conflict and support a return of Yemen’s warring parties to the negotiating table. Even with that convergence, there are undoubtedly going to be, within both camps, hardliners who will prefer to continue the battle in search of complete victory. But it is possible that 2017 will be the year that regional dynamics and internal exhaustion will shift the balance of forces within Yemen towards accommodation rather than confrontation.
The Return of Morocco to the African Union

Miguel Hernando de Larramendi  
Research Group on Arab and Muslim Societies  
(GRESAM)  
University of Castilla-La Mancha

Beatriz Tomé-Alonso  
Research Group on Arab and Muslim Societies  
(GRESAM)  
Loyola University Andalusia

Morocco’s joining the African Union in January 2017 rectified the empty-chair policy that led Rabat to withdraw from the Organization of African Unity in 1984 after full membership was extended to the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Its absence from this multilateral forum prevented Morocco from participating in the refounding of the organization in 2001, when it was transformed into the African Union (AU). It also meant it could not take part in regional development initiatives for Africa like NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development). Moroccan diplomacy opted for a proactive approach in an attempt to minimize the impact of its absence and to compensate for this through selective bilateralism with “friendly” countries from French-speaking Central and West Africa.

The Limits of African Politics

Since the arrival to the throne of Mohammed VI in 1999, relations with Sub-Saharan Africa became a foreign policy priority, in which attempts were made to reassess Morocco’s role as a continental power capable of leading Africa’s South-South cooperation and acting as a bridge between the continent and the European Union. This position was evidenced in 2000 when the monarch announced, at the EU-Africa summit, that he would cancel the foreign debts of Africa’s least developed countries. This aspiration, however, ran contrary to a policy that conditioned bilateral cooperation on the positions held by the different African countries regarding the Western Sahara issue, thereby limiting Morocco’s capacity for action in West and Southern Africa.

The usefulness of decoupling these issues has, as of 2014, been dealt with in reports drafted by think tanks close to the royal palace, such as the Amadeus Institute or the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies, which reflected upon Morocco’s African policy.1 The strategy followed until then, based on seeking support from allied countries that did not recognize the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) and influencing the African Union’s decision-making through them, was brought into question, as it failed to neutralize Algeria and South Africa’s capacity to orientate the positions of the African organization on the Western Sahara issue (for example, 2014’s appointment of the former President of Mozambique Joaquim Chissano, known for his pro-Sahrawi stance, as the AU’s Special Envoy for Western Sahara). The limits of this strategy justified its replacement with a more proactive and realistic diplomacy that would allow relations to be stepped up with all African states regardless of their positions on the Western Sahara issue. This opening towards “hostile” countries was aimed at helping to overcome the “uncomfortable” absence from the African Union at a time when the organization was increasingly being seen by the international community as an unavoidable actor for upholding peace, preventing conflicts and economic development.2

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The End of the Empty-Chair Policy

The notion that its absence from the decision-making bodies of the AU was weakening Morocco’s position, both regionally and internationally, was the main argument for justifying a pragmatic decision that implied crossing certain red lines. Membership of the AU meant breaking the taboo of cohabitating with the SADR, under equal conditions, in an international organization in which the Sahrawi Republic was a founding member and whose Founding Charter did not contain mechanisms for expelling its members. The plan to return to the AU was announced by Mohammed VI in July 2016 in a letter sent to the 27th Summit held in Rwanda, in which he justified his decision declaring that “quand un corps est malade, il est mieux soigné de l’intérieur que de l’extérieur.” Although the monarch’s message did not set the SADR’s suspension as a condition for his country’s return, Moroccan diplomacy suggested that the 28 member states table what turned out to be an unprosperous motion during the summit to freeze the Sahrawi Republic’s presence in the pan-African organization.

The formal request for membership was made in September, although the aim of recovering “Morocco’s natural place in the African continent” was not achieved until four months later during the organization of the 28th summit of the AU held in Addis Ababa in January 2017, when the pan-African organization approved Morocco’s entry with the backing of 39 of its 54 members.

Diplomatic Action: a Snapshot of Rabat’s Soft Power

Morocco’s return to the AU has been marked by a frenetic and intense diplomacy which has seen Mohammed VI travel to a number of African capitals during the last quarter of 2016 and first of 2017. It is worth noting that this tour around the continent has coincided with the country’s political paralysis during the five months following the October 2016 legislative elections. In effect, the difficulty in forming a new coalition government has led to an impasse interrupted only for Parliament to open on 16 January, faced with the need to ratify the law pertaining to the AU’s constituent act. The royal initiative could therefore be seen in this renewed Africanist mission and the prominent role of certain royal advisors; ministers with a more technocratic, rather than partisan, profile – Interior, Foreign Affairs and Islamic Affairs – and businessmen close to the Palace, as compared with the internationally invisible (acting) cabinet chief, Abdelilah Benkirane, or other members of his party (Justice and Development Party, PJD).

Membership of the AU meant breaking the taboo of cohabitating with the SADR, in an international organization in which the Sahrawi Republic was a founding member

In a break from the past, the tour of Mohammed VI and his entourage included countries from East Africa which recognize the SADR, like Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and South Sudan. Following in this logic was the opening of five new embassies in the continent (Rwanda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius and Benin) and the Alawite kingdom’s reception of African leaders accustomed to visiting Maghrebi countries, like Paul Kagame, and its rapprochement to Kigali. As well as the classical, diplomatic tools, Rabat’s approach to this area, outside of its traditional comfort zone, has revolved around two main axes: economic cooperation and religious and cultural diplomacy. Indeed, Mohammed VI’s tour has delivered numerous cooperation agreements, promises and an increase in investments, as well as setting the stage for the launch of several joint projects, such as the gas pipeline between Morocco and Nigeria or the

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3 “Discours de SM le Roi adressé à la nation à l’occasion du 41ème anniversaire de la Marche Verte,” available at www.maroc.ma/fr/discours-royaux/discours-de-sm-le-roi-adresse-la-nation-loccasion-du-41eme-anniversaire-de-la-marche

4 The royal party travelling around Africa is made up of the following advisors – Fouad Ali El Hima and Yassir Zenagui, ministers ± Salaheddine Mezouar (Foreign Affairs Minister), Nasser Bourita (Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister), Aziz Akhannouch (Agricultural Minister), Mohamed Hassad (Interior Minister), Mohamed Boussaid (Economy Minister) and Ahmed Toufiq (Habous and Islamic Affairs Minister); and members of civil society ± Brahim Fassi Fihri (Amadeus Institute).
construction of a mega fertilizer plant in Ethiopia. Besides hydrocarbons and agriculture, the telecommunications, finance and insurance sector also form part of Morocco’s interests in the region.

To support the development of these projects, and as a new tool in the service of economic diplomacy towards the African continent, Morocco set up the Ithmar Capital sovereign investment fund in November 2016. This initiative can be added to the actions of the Mohammed VI Foundation for Sustainable Development, created in 2008 and tasked with channelling assistance and cooperation with African countries in the areas of health, education and socioeconomic development. As explained by the monarch at the year’s beginning, the logic of foreign actions is built on South-South cooperation and on promoting development in the region. In this regard, to build a broader cooperative and relational fabric, it is not only public institutions that need to be activated but also privately owned enterprises. Hence, led by the president of the General Confederation of Moroccan Companies (CGEM), Miriem Bensalah Chaqroun, several Moroccan business people with interests in the continent followed in the wake of the royal party. This economic offensive has contributed to Morocco becoming the second African investor in the continent behind South Africa.

Religious Leadership and Public Diplomacy

The reconnection with the African continent has not been undertaken on solely economic and financial terms. As a cornerstone of this renewed policy, Mohammed VI is bolstering his religious leadership. To this end, the Mohammed VI Foundation for African Ulema was created in July 2015 to “promote, disseminate and consolidate the values of tolerant Islam.” By fostering a “modern” religious vision and training imams from different African countries, like Mali or Burkina Faso, Rabat offers security expertise. In fact, at a time when the continent’s leaders are looking on with concern at the Sahel and the mounting challenges of jihadism, Morocco is capitalizing on its anti-radical model: that of a country committed to the fight against terrorism, not just through cooperation in security (testimony to which is its military intervention in Mali), but also through education and the promotion of “the true image of the noble Islamic religion and its tolerant values.”

At a time when the continent’s leaders are looking on with concern at the Sahel and the mounting challenges of jihadism, Morocco is capitalizing on its anti-radical model

Lastly, Rabat is also mobilizing its tourism potential, cultural heritage and aspirations to become a leader in education within Africa. According to an IRES report, the aim of Moroccan public diplomacy and its target public is twofold. On the one hand, it seeks to attract “the middle classes of the emerging [African] countries,” i.e., possible occasional visitors and potential students who may extend their stays in the country. In this regard, on 8 February 2017, the Moroccan National Tourist Office (ONMT) opened its first African office in Dakar and announced plans to increase the number of offices in the continent to promote African tourism in Morocco, which has increased by 17% in the last year. In addition, public and private universities are increasingly offering training in English, with the aim of extending bridges to the English-speaking part of the continent. This is indeed fertile ground, as, according to the latest published statistics, 88.43% of foreign students in Morocco...
come from African countries. On the other hand, think tanks, which are taking on a new relevance in promotion abroad, are pushing to have an impact on public opinion and influence the elite classes.

**African Connection at Home Too**

To prepare a complete and effective strategy, Moroccan soft power needs not just to act abroad, but also to have a coherent domestic counterpart. In this regard, one needs to understand the second phase of immigrant regularization driven forward and declared by Mohammed VI on 12 December, 2016. The announcement, which especially affected the Sub-Saharan population, sought to place Morocco as an antithesis to Algeria in the region, a country accused of carrying out a policy of “discrimination and violence” against Sub-Saharanas.

To this legal decision are added other initiatives of an economic and cultural nature that complete the Alawite kingdom's strategy of Africanization. Festivals and exhibitions focused on Africa have turned Rabat into a leading capital of culture, and Casablanca into a business and development hub within the region. At a time when the appeal of the continent’s traditional leaders – the US and European countries – is in decline and that of other actors – such as China or India – is on the rise, Morocco is seeking to position itself as a model of economic, cultural, social and also religious and political development. A response to this goal was the presence of observers from African nations like Niger, Togo and Senegal at the 2016 legislative elections, as well as the banning of the burka in public spaces.

**Challenges and Uncertainty**

Once back in the AU, Morocco is facing the challenge of how to conciliate the defence of its “sacred cause” with its condition as a member of the organization, committed to the continent’s shared challenges. Only time will tell if the defence of the Moroccanness of Western Sahara will prevail, thereby transforming the pan-African organization into a stage for confronting the Polisario Front and its allies, or if a pragmatic and realistic vision will win out, contributing to strengthening Morocco’s condition as a regional power and a bridge between the African continent and Europe. The latter is the motivation for Morocco's request to join ECOWAS, submitted by Mohammed VI in February 2017.

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Security Sector Reform and the Struggle against Terrorism: State of Affairs, Issues and Challenges

Haykel Ben Mahfoudh
Professor of International Law
University of Carthage
Expert in Security Sector Reform

The changes occurring in the Arab world in 2011 certainly presaged instability, all the more so since the security-based regimes were no longer capable of reacting to the dangers threatening the transitions in the countries of the so-called Arab Spring. Quickly, signs of weakness perceptible in the management of the security situation appeared: waves of refugees, irregular migration flows, crumbling of state structures, in particular security apparatuses, penetration of violent extremist groups, the large quantity of arms in circulation in the region and the porosity of borders — these are some of the indicators of disturbance and dysfunctionality of the systems in place.

The political and economic shortcomings of the new political elite and institutions ushered in by the 2011 revolts fuelled a strong sentiment of disaffection and frustration among local populations, in particular among youth. Tunisia and Libya, but also Europe, have become areas of recruitment for the Islamic State (Daesh) and other violent extremist movements. The Libyan and Malian crises and the conflict in Syria have exacerbated insecurity in the Mediterranean Region. Europe itself is no exception. Migratory flows and waves of refugees have doubtless acted as transmitters of the terrorist threat. EU countries have reacted to these threats by strengthening borders and more strictly controlling migration. In any case, the epicentre of terrorism is no longer only in Iraq or Syria, for tragedy has struck in the heart of Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin and Manchester. Underlying aspects put factors inhibiting violent extremism also associated with the European context on the agenda.

High Cost of the Terrorist Threat

It is difficult to measure the real cost of terrorism, since the human cost is very high for both individuals and societies. There is a direct impact on human rights. But terrorism also aims to destabilize governments, erode civil society, compromise peace and security and threaten social and economic development.

Apart from the social cost, the measures adopted by countries to fight terrorism have often posed serious problems with regard to human rights and the rule of law (summary interrogations, torture, personal data breaches, summary trials, etc.). New anti-terrorist laws are passed under this pressure. This means that the mandate, means and techniques of intelligence services are strengthened. The operational capabilities of security forces are stepped up, while defence mechanisms are oriented towards direct involvement in the theatre of operations.

The resources normally allocated to social programmes, education and development are thus di-
verted towards the security sector, affecting the population’s economic, social and cultural rights, above all in countries whose capacities are already scarce and insufficient.

These practices, in particular when taken together, have a corrosive effect on the rule of law, good governance and human rights. They are likewise counterproductive to national and international efforts to fight terrorism.

Corrosive Effect of the Security Sector on the Rule of Law and Good Governance

In societies experiencing complex, violent security challenges, reform of the security sector no longer corresponds to the concept of developing public policy in the spheres of security, defence and justice, but has become an essential tool used to enhance the operational capabilities of the sector, with no regard to the democratic tension caused by these choices.

Just as the rules of operation of the democratic system are often jeopardized by countries’ political and security choices when internal or border security is threatened. For instance, the transparency of defence and security budgets is directly affected. The theory of the “reserved domain” is another example of democratic tension in the fight against terrorism. Because “the nation is in danger,” national solidarity closes ranks around the government. Is it thus justifiable to question the principle of policymakers’ accountability in this domain in particular? There is no doubt that political action and respect for democratic principles are inseparable. The principle of accountability is fundamental.

The executive branch’s freedom of action in its political choices is easy to understand, or the need to enhance the operational capabilities of security structures. A case in point is that of the “Train & Equip” programmes aimed at countries undergoing democratic transition or in a post-conflict period. But we all know under what conditions such programmes have been implemented, what their goals have been and above all, their costs in relation to the expected benefits. From Iraq to Mali, including Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, international assistance programmes always raise the same issues, namely to study the implications of security sector reform and evaluate their contribution to preparing altogether fragile security apparatuses for true institutional transformation.

No one is entitled to further the dividends of peace to the detriment of those of democracy.

Anti-Terrorism as a Support for Processes of Security Systems Reform

State structures are more involved than ever in the struggle against terrorism. The institutions most involved are the armed forces, internal security forces, intelligence services and the judicial branch. Due to political and security changes occurring over the past few years, the roles and responsibilities of the authorities, enforcement agencies and other structures must be redefined to respond to emergencies and adapt to new needs in terms of security.

The resources normally allocated to social programmes, education and development are thus diverted towards the security sector, affecting the population’s economic, social and cultural rights, above all in countries whose capacities are already scarce and insufficient.

In this context, the issues associated with security sector reform (SSR) should be given very concrete applications within the framework of developing and implementing national or regional anti-terrorism strategies. This entails integrating all structures, mechanisms, laws, procedures and resources at the disposal of the security forces and the justice administration into a global approach and not go about it in a piecemeal logic, as is unfortunately often the case in recent experience.

In considering the necessarily long time needed to attain the changes in mindset essential for reform to take root in institutional culture and regulations, reform of the security sector should thus be placed in the perspective of respect or enhancement of the will for harmonious coexistence, clearly expressed in the values of democracy and
freedom, more important today than ever. The struggle against terrorism should meet these expectations, not only on the national but also on the regional scale, since collective action in this sphere is of capital importance.

Of course, action in this framework should revolve around spheres of complimentary intervention, such as enhancement of operational capacity and support for personal data protection or for the judicial system. However, policies and strategies cannot be effective unless they address the root of vulnerabilities, weaknesses and shortcomings of governance in security systems.

Strengthening institutions of the rule of law and maintaining all measures of struggle against the progression of the terrorist threat within legality should remain the primary pillar of the rule of law in democracies.

Priority Actions and Spheres for Reform

First of all, countries facing threats with a complex structure should keep their responses within a clear and coherent legal framework. Action by defence and security forces involved in the anti-terrorist struggle should be subject to requirements that are both ethical and legal. Measures should be adopted to ensure that defence and security forces eliminate arbitrary arrests, interference in people’s private lives and extra-legal judiciary procedures from their methods of intervention.

Secondly, intelligence service activities should be strictly controlled. These structures play too central a role in the struggle against criminal and terrorist organizations to be subject to only closed controls with very little transparency. Coordination and exchange of information are the key to transforming intelligence services. It is therefore essential to urge states to ensure their activities are strictly defined. Special investigation techniques should be the principal concern in this context, considering their intrusive nature, as well as the risks of abuse of their security purpose to serve interests incompatible with democratic principles.

Thirdly, the main challenge for the security forces in the fight against terrorism is effective border management and control. It is thus essential to step up their capacity to manage borders and entry points professionally in order to struggle effectively, not only against terrorist activities, but also the circulation of other threats. Let us note, however, that border control improvement does not justify the tension arising with regard to migration and mobility policy expressed by EU Member States. It is this same tension that has led in the past to closing off Southern populations, whereas Europe, for its culture and economy, has always represented a door to a better world.

The consolidation of peace in the Mediterranean requires the establishment of a programme for shared governance of peace and security. Populations should have their say in the conception of a new model for development, peace and security in the region.

These three points for reform action remain identical for any other change in the security apparatus: a civil and democratic constitutional order, institutions governed by law and a firm political will capable of directing the reform process. All of these challenges are in fact associated with the construction and consolidation of any rule of law.

There is one last factor that should not be overlooked in the struggle against terrorism: the need to strengthen legal and judicial cooperation between countries by fostering regulatory development within the states concerned. The fight against terrorism is not an individual responsibility, nor a residual problem to be handled by threat-exporting countries to the benefit of the others. On the contrary, it is a shared responsibility whose terms should be defined through frank agreements and acknowledgement of mutual responsibilities.

The consolidation of peace in the Mediterranean requires the establishment of a programme for shared governance of peace and security. Populations should have their say in the conception of a new model for development, peace and security in the region, as well as its implementation. It is simply a matter of being consistent with the commitments undertaken as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, in this case, renewing the terms of human security.
The Evolution of Terrorist Financing Methodologies and Responses

Katherine Bauer
Blumenstein-Katz Family Fellow
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington DC

Although the cost of an individual terrorist attack may be small, terrorist organizations rely on a steady flow of funds to support operational costs, including salaries, training, transportation, recruitment and even propaganda. Terrorist organizations are funded in a variety of ways including by wealthy backers, through crime – whether fraud, extortion or narcotics trafficking – as well as state sponsorship. As jihadist terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaeda and more recently the so-called Islamic State (IS), have established global networks of affiliates, their methods of financing have also diversified. A number of dynamics underlie these changes, including counterterrorism efforts broadly and counterterrorist financing efforts specifically, but also the breakdown of political systems and the proliferation of weak and ungoverned spaces that have allowed terrorist organizations to increasingly hold territory, tax and extort the local population, and even control natural resource extraction and sales.

The Islamic State

When the Islamic State took over vast swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq in the spring and summer of 2014, it posed an unprecedented and nontraditional counterterrorism financing challenge, due both to the size of its budget – reportedly close to $2 billion in 2014 – and its ability to derive the vast majority of its revenues from the territory it controls. The Islamic State did not develop this expertise overnight. Over a decade, its predecessors, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the Islamic State in Iraq, developed a sophisticated system of financial management, even taking the strategic decision in 2009, according to documents recovered in Iraq\(^1\), to derive revenues locally to avoid foreign dependence and direction. During the second part of the last decade, AQI resembled an organized-crime organization, engaging in sales of stolen goods, black market fuel sales and later, large scale extortion.

In Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State effectively took advantage of multiple preexisting dynamics to enrich itself quickly after taking territory. These included a high concentration of natural resources and established smuggling networks needed to monetize them; a sizable population and sufficient economic activity to tax and extort; and opportunities to loot valuable goods, including machinery and weapons, as well as bank branches, from which it is reported to have taken as much as $500 million.

Despite the Islamic State’s early prosperity, its considerable expenses created vulnerabilities that the US-led Counter ISIS Coalition, along with the government of Iraq, have effectively exploited. For example, in August 2015, the Iraqi government cut off salaries to employees in ISIS-controlled territories, thereby cutting ISIS revenue from the taxation of the salaries and reducing liquidity in IS-controlled territory. In late 2015, the Coalition also began to use airstrikes to target and degrade ISIS-controlled oil extraction, refining and transportation. However, perhaps the greatest impact on IS’s bottom line has been, and will continue to be, territorial losses which

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mean fewer local resources—including people—under its control to tax and extort.

As the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq loses additional territory and reverts to an insurgency, it will likely return to many of the fundraising methodologies deployed by AQI, including potentially a renewed focus on kidnapping for ransom as journalists and humanitarian workers return to recently liberated areas. Likewise, as IS backs away from the mantra of “remaining and expanding,” it encourages followers to undertake attacks locally rather than travelling to fight in the Levant. Small cells, like foreign terrorist fighters, often self-fund through legitimate sources such as employment income, social assistance or family support as well as through illicit sources such as fraudulent bank loans or other forms of fraud. Despite recognizable typologies, such transactions can be hard for law enforcement to spot with specific intelligence due to the relatively small amount of funds being moved. Likewise, exploitation of related financial intelligence can be a valuable source for network analysis.

### Islamic State Provinces

The Islamic State’s recognition of franchises in eight countries across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia in November 2014, raised concerns that the so-called IS core in Syria and Iraq would share both its wealth and its fundraising expertise with its new affiliates. The groups that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, most of which were preexisting organizations, already had pre-existing funding mechanisms. The provinces’ forerunners were primarily locally financed through crime, smuggling, extortion, and kidnapping for ransom; they generated significant revenue but were unable to support and sustain a state-building project like that of the Islamic State.

Some of the IS provinces were undoubtedly motivated to affiliate themselves with the Islamic State based on the perception (and sometimes the promise) of additional resources. There is limited public evidence that IS in Syria and Iraq has been able to share funds with such provinces. What is available points to the important role of the IS province in Libya in acting as a regional hub, prior to IS being pushed out of Sirte in December 2016. Notably, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, a suspected organizer of IS attacks in France and Belgium, is reported to have had contacts with IS members in Libya related to financial and travel issues on behalf of the “Verviers cell,” which was disrupted by Belgian police in early 2015.\(^2\)

### Al-Qaeda

The Taliban in Afghanistan was an important source of support and safe haven for al-Qaeda in the late 1990s. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda’s primary source of funds was external donations funnelled largely through charitable fronts. While external donations continue to play a role in financing for a number of al-Qaeda affiliates, most have pursued more diverse funding streams and are increasingly deriving funds locally. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, for example, is estimated to have received close to $100 million in ransoms through kidnapping for ransom between 2008 and 2014.\(^3\)

Al Qaeda in Iraq resembled an organized-crime organization, engaging in sales of stolen goods, black market fuel sales and later, large scale extortion

The primary exception is al-Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, also known as Fateh al-Sham or Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which has likely become more reliant on external financing since its split with what was then the Islamic State of Iraq in April 2013 and lost access to oil fields in the east and northeast of Syria when they were taken over by the Islamic State in 2014. The group’s budget could be in tens of millions of dollars a year, according to the US Treasury,\(^4\) with as much as a few million dollars a year coming from private networks.

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in the Gulf. In recent years, Nusra has also received millions of dollars in ransom payments, with some payments reportedly facilitated by Qatar.

**Iran, Hezbollah and Crime**

Iran is considered the most active state sponsor of terrorism and is estimated to provide hundreds of millions of dollars a year in support to terrorist proxies, primarily in the Levant, but increasingly across the Middle East. One line of effort of the US-led financial constriction campaign against Iran beginning in the mid-2000s involved financially sanctioning Iran’s state enterprises involved in terrorism support, including banks. In 2007, the US Treasury Department sanctioned Iran’s state-owned Bank Saderat for transferring “$50 million from the Central Bank of Iran through its subsidiary in London to its branch in Beirut for the benefit of Hezbollah fronts in Lebanon that support acts of violence.” More recently, in February 2017, Beirut-based QF official Hasan Dehghan Ebrahimi was called out for facilitating millions of dollars’ worth of cash transfers to Hezbollah, including through the US-designated Hezbollah construction firm Wa’ad Company.

In addition to substantial Iranian support, Hezbollah has for decades helped fund its terrorist and social service initiatives through a diverse portfolio of criminal and commercial activities, relying on a worldwide network not only for financial, but also logistical and even operational support. This includes from large Lebanese diaspora communities, especially in West Africa and South America. In the tri-border area of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil, for example, supporters have taken advantage of loosely regulated territory to engage in a range of illicit activities including fundraising and money laundering on behalf of Hezbollah. Separately, in 2016, the US Drug Enforcement Agency announced that, in cooperation with European authorities, it had uncovered a dedicated Hezbollah unit for drug trafficking and drug proceeds laundering, resulting in the arrest of members of the network’s European cell. The consequent proceeds were used to finance arms purchases for Hezbollah use in Syria.

**Responses**

As terrorist financing typologies evolve, responses from the international community to counter such threats must also adapt. And as we take actions, the terrorists also adapt; like squeezing a balloon, it expands elsewhere. In the decade following the 9/11 attacks in the US, counterterrorist financing efforts focused on identifying and disrupting so-called “deep-pocket” donors, primarily located in the Arab Sunni states in the Gulf, and protecting charitable organizations from exploitation and diversion of funds to support terrorist causes. Considerable efforts were made to establish and gain adoption of international best practices designed to make the international financial system a hostile environment for terrorist support and other forms of illicit finance. Part of this effort involved raising awareness of the risks of terrorist financing and facilitation; bringing governments in high-risk jurisdictions around to implementing such standards despite concerns of retaliation. Furthermore, by sharing actionable information - either confidentially or through public notification of sanctioning actions - governments strove to disrupt terrorists’ means to raise, store and move funds. The rise of the Islamic State and its almost complete reliance on funding derived locally has highlighted the need to not just disrupt terrorist access to the financial system, but also find ways to cut them off from their means of raising funds. Together with the trend towards criminal sources of funds, there is also a greater focus on the role of law enforcement in disrupting terrorist financing and even the role of military in blocking terrorists’ access to revenue.

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Regional Integration and Creation of Youth Employment in the Mediterranean Region

Rym Ayadi
HEC Montreal & Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association

Raul Ramos
Regional Quantitative Analysis Group AQR-IREA
University of Barcelona & IZA

The Challenge of Youth Unemployment

Unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa region, encompassing several southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, is the highest in the world. Even before the crisis, the expansion of employment opportunities lagged behind economic growth in the region. Unemployment in this region remains, by and large, a phenomenon affecting young people between 15 and 24 years old and, more particularly, young women (International Labour Organization, 2015). Demographic pressures have been a leading cause of the high youth unemployment rates in the region, with large declines in infant mortality rates and high fertility rates over the past fifty years leading to high population growth rates. These rates translated into high labour force growth rates, a phenomenon which started in the 1970s in the northern Mediterranean countries but currently reaching its tipping point in the southern Mediterranean. These demographic pressures are bringing an increasing number of young job seekers into a labour market unable to provide sufficient job opportunities to absorb this wealth of new entrants. Chart 1 shows the ratio between youth and adult unemployment rates in 2015 for southern Mediterranean UfM countries. The lines represent the number of times when youth unemployment rates are above adult unemployment rates. While considering the very few exceptions, youth unemployment rate is more than three times higher the adult one. Young individuals have greater difficulties accessing jobs than the adult population during their transition from school to work. The main reason is their lack of experience (what is known in the literature as the “experience gap”), but there are several factors that can improve or even worsen this transition (European Training Foundation, 2015a).

These very high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth, have important economic and social consequences. On the one hand, labour market conditions is one of the most relevant pull factors to explain migration flows from certain countries to others with better labour prospects, not only to the European Union but also to other parts of the world. In fact, immigration among youth is clearly increasing and the destination areas are also changing from the traditional ones, EU countries no longer being the only main destination (United Nations, 2016). On the other hand, high unemployment rates are also discouraging youth from participating in the labour market (European Training Foundation, 2015b) in a region where NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) rates are also very high. For instance, and according to the latest estimates of the International Labour Organization with available Eurostat statistics for 2014, the NEET rate for the 15-24 age group is 23% in Algeria, 28% in Egypt, 16% in Israel and 25% in Jordan and Tunisia, while in the European Union it stands at around 12.5%.

1 This article summarizes part of the findings in the forthcoming IEMED-EMEA report “Youth Employment and Regional Integration in the Euro-Mediterranean Region. Qualitative and Quantitative Economic Analysis on Whether and How Regional Integration Could Lead to Youth Employment” by Ayadi, R.; Kostas, F.; Paroussos, L.; Panagiotis, K.; Ramos, R.; Sessa, C.; Sessa, E.; Apprioual, A. and Albinaya, R.
Skill Mismatches and Insufficient Labour Demand

A striking feature of this phenomenon specific to the region is that education is not a guarantee against unemployment. Data suggest that the youth unemployment rate in the region increases consistently with the level of education attained. In countries such as Egypt, Jordan or Tunisia, young people who have completed their tertiary education are found to be two to three times more likely to be unemployed than those with primary education or less (ILO, 2015). The opposite is the case in more developed and developing regions where unemployment decreases as the level of education rises. The main reason for these high unemployment rates for more educated workers is the existence of skill mismatches in labour markets across the region. In order to improve the situation, governments could reform education and training systems in order to develop adequate skills (UNESCO, 2016). Moreover, intermediation systems can also be improved to achieve more efficient job matching.

Putting aside the factors described above, which are mainly related to labour supply, labour demand remains the prime determinant of how many and what types of jobs are created, and most labour markets in northern and southern Mediterranean countries have important constraints as regards this area. First, macroeconomic conditions and the institutional frameworks are not supportive of business development and job creation, as regularly highlighted in the World Bank Doing Business reports or by the World Economic Forum (2016). Labour market regulations are identified as an important impediment to employment creation and, more broadly, a core constraint to business expansion. The negative effects of a rigid regulatory framework and the resulting risk-averse behaviours of employers are particularly severe for first-time job seekers. Second, the high share of the public sector in terms of employment (Behar and Mok, 2013) and the high presence of informal firms and jobs (OECD, 2009) also represent an important limit to the creation of high quality jobs and to greater growth in productivity, as previously noted.
Regional Integration and Job Creation

As highlighted by the UfM’s ad hoc work group on job creation (2016), labour market policies should not only concentrate on the supply side but they should be designed as a comprehensive package of measures involving supply and demand policies and looking to establish positive synergies between them. The main policy objectives should be to improve workers’ employability and achieve better matches, as well as create more and better opportunities for employment by means of a sustained and inclusive growth in demand. Governments should increase resources devoted to more efficient active labour market policies (ALMPs), and focus on vocational and educational training, orientation, intermediation and career guidance.

Regarding employment creation, more and better jobs can be generated by improving competition in product markets through deregulation, but also by investing in infrastructure and adopting smart specialization strategies that would bring more benefits from further regional integration. In fact, better coordination between countries in the region through deeper regional integration could boost employment through different channels. It is widely accepted that providing better access to markets through the elimination of trade barriers could create new opportunities for competitive firms which, in turn, would increase labour demand and contribute to generating new jobs in the region. The elimination of tariffs on imports could allow domestic prices to fall to the lowest in the region. Initially, domestic production falls, but domestic consumption increases and total imports also increase. Larger markets as a result of regional integration may allow firms to exploit economies of scale, thus driving down costs and prices to local consumers. It may also increase the range and variety of products which are available to consumers. The reduction in tariffs leads to trade creation among the participants in the liberalized region.

The effects of tariff reduction on economic welfare can be broken down into three parts: the gain to consumers from lower domestic prices, the loss of profits to producers and the loss of tariff revenue to the government. Under standard assumptions, consumer gain exceeds the losses for producers and governments from reducing tariffs and there is an overall gain in national welfare as a result of such a policy change. Similar results are obtained for non-tariff barriers. A part of trade creation, trade diversion, also occurs: imports from a third external country are now displaced by imports from partners that are now cheaper in relative terms, and this also contributes to job creation. However, although the effects of further integration would be positive in the medium and long run, there could be an initial displacement of workers. In particular, trade liberalization induces an expansion of export-related sectors, but, at the same time, there is a reduction in the local demand for import-competing sectors that displaces workers in these sectors to non-tradable activities or alternatively to newly created sectors. In fact, further economic integration can generate clear productivity gains. Importing, in theory, creates more competition forcing domestic firms to become more efficient or, if not, to disappear, and it also provides better access to new technologies and knowledge transfer. Those firms that ride the wave of continuing transition toward higher productivity in tradable activities typically pay higher wages to their workers, and these workers tend to have greater skills and be in less routine occupations; but low-skilled workers and workers undertaking routine jobs could be put at risk. This is why policy efforts should take these dynamics into account and be devoted to minimizing the negative effects of this transition.

Better coordination between countries in the region through deeper regional integration could boost employment through different channels

If closer integration via competition improves the efficiency with which factors are combined it is also likely to induce greater investment. While this additional investment is taking place, countries may experience a medium-term growth effect. If such investment is associated with faster technical progress or accumulation of human capital, long-run growth rates may also be improved. Lastly, other economic aspects can also be added to the trade effects al-
ready described. In particular, infrastructure development could be improved, providing better access to markets through more efficient transport networks that could also attract more foreign direct investment, thereby reinforcing the positive effects of labour market integration.

Using a Computable General Equilibrium model, Ayadi et al (2017) have quantified the impact on youth employment creation of deeper regional integration among Mediterranean countries. If the current regional integration is maintained and countries take action to reduce public budget deficits, to improve their trade balance and to upgrade their infrastructure, youth unemployment rate is predicted to fall from 25.7% in 2015 to 17.6% in 2040 (amounting to the creation of no fewer than 4.4 Million jobs). This situation has been compared with a scenario of deeper regional integration considering two different layers: the gradual abolishment of tariff and non-tariff barriers, and process harmonization among countries and increased governance. Under this alternative scenario, an additional 570,000 youth jobs are created, as compared with the shallow integration scenario. This positive impact is due to the improvement in overall economic activity (lowering the investment risk supports economic growth more effectively than removing tariff barriers) and a better alignment of skilled labour with capital. The main assumption underlying this vision is that enhancing the position of the Mediterranean countries would require a stronger, accelerated and deeper regional integration process using a multidimensional, comprehensive and novel policy agenda regarding infrastructure, innovation and industry (underlined in a co-development strategy) implemented across several sectors: transport, energy and de-carbonization, water, digital economy, blue economy and sustainable urban development. It would also require strengthened cooperation on innovation, R&D, education, employment and youth employability programmes, as well as developments in social agenda issues (e.g. youth and women empowerment). The guiding principles and targets of this new policy for the region will develop a new constructive dynamic, which will boost investment, regional projects and infrastructure development. This, in turn, will have a multiplier effect in terms of economic growth and job creation.

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Mediterranean Women in Rural and Agricultural Communities: Double Jeopardy, Multiple Opportunities

Yasmine Seghirate
Head of Communication
International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Paris

In the Mediterranean Region, the gaps between countries in natural, financial and human resources are significant, but in considering the economic, socio-political and environmental challenges the region must overcome, a common destiny emerges in which women are a lever for development, provided that their potential is acknowledged and released and that the struggle against gender inequality occupies a central position in public and private policy. Although participation in economic, social and political spheres remains unequal insofar as gender on a planetary scale, it is more intense in the Mediterranean Region, particularly in the south Mediterranean. Women from rural and agricultural areas, as everywhere, often have the lowest-quality jobs and are less well paid (if at all). In addition, they must deal with compounded difficulties, inequalities and discriminations. First of all, they experience the effects of the marginalization of rural areas (limited access to services, training, socio-medical and cultural facilities, etc.). Moreover, depending on the country, they may also be victims of gender-related discrimination ranging from sociocultural pressure – fostering the isolation of women relegated to the domestic space – to legalized discrimination, namely with regards to inheritance and access to real estate. In addition to these factors, there are constraints of an environmental order that make these women particularly vulnerable. Although they are the object of compounded inequalities and discriminations and bear a “double penalty,” they remain a key element for the stabilization of territories. They are at the heart of the resilience of rural societies and constitute an element of response to Mediterranean challenges insofar as food security and the preservation of rural ecosystems. Whether in the struggle against the waste of natural and human resources or the creation of sustainable employment, the participation of women should be fostered and greater investment should be made in building their capacities.

Food Security and Climate Change

The south Mediterranean is characterized by both its significant arid and semi-arid areas with low agricultural potential and its demographic growth. Although climate constraints have always marked rural societies, which have had to develop agricultural production systems capable of absorbing shocks to a greater or lesser degree in order to survive, this “resilience” is now being called into question. The increased temperatures, the decreased precipitation and its irregularity, desertification and declining soil quality now have a serious impact on agricultural activity, at a time when the region requires greater and better production. In the North Africa/Middle East (MENA) region, the population went from 139 million inhabitants in 1961 to 496 million in 2011, making meeting food needs the region’s primary challenge.

Despite significant progress in agricultural production, the countries in this area rely heavily on international markets to meet their needs. The five North African countries alone have accounted for a total annual average of 20 to 25 billion in agricultural imports since 2010. The recent rise in agricultural raw

materials prices, the decrease in natural resources and climate change, which directly affects the state of crops, render these countries even more vulnerable. In this context, the role of small-scale farming has strategic importance and small-scale farms have become leading actors in the resilience of food and agriculture systems. In the MENA region, nearly 80% of agricultural production comes from small-scale farming, but the work of women is underestimated because it is often unpaid. As a general rule, women’s work is socially little known or discredited. However, women’s tasks are the most time-consuming and difficult in the agricultural sector (production, storage, processing the harvest, animal husbandry...). This less visible time spent working, often without pay or with very little pay, is interrupted by domestic and household tasks, which puts women at a disadvantage on various levels. Agricultural work at staggered hours or part-time does not allow recognition of a status entitling them to all social protection rights, it limits optimal access to infrastructures in rural areas and does not allow women to be well represented in labour unions. These women have less options on the educational and professional levels and they have less mobility. They are thus more territorially attached than men. Due to this anchorage to the territory, they are particularly affected by climate variation and ongoing environmental deterioration. The reduced quality and availability of land and the decreasing biodiversity not only complicates their work, but also exposes them to heightened risk when social tension arises regarding access to natural resources. As women constitute an important agricultural labour force in the Mediterranean Basin, empowering them and boosting their skills is advantageous for families, rural communities and, more generally, for national agricultural and economic production. For women to become acknowledged agents of food security, prevention and adaptation to climate change, technical training alone is not enough. It is likewise important to consider the quality of their participation on decision-making levels. They should be present in greater numbers in institutions of public negotiation and local government and should be in a position to defend value-added proposals for local areas.

The Mediterranean Diet and the Struggle against Waste

The globalization of trade, changes in lifestyles and major urbanization are progressively modifying the food consumption habits in the Mediterranean Basin. The region is undergoing an accelerated nutritional transition that is distancing it from its former eating habits, namely the “Mediterranean diet,” consisting mainly of vegetable oils, cereals, green vegetables and pulses, and characterized by moderate to low consumption of fish, meat and dairy products. Whereas undernourishment continues to affect the most fragile populations in the Mediterranean, the countries in the region are increasingly faced with the scourges of excess weight and obesity, which lead to diet-related disorders such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, etc. In the Mediterranean, it is women who are mainly responsible for selecting and preparing food. They are thus at the heart of food security for families and stakeholders in health prevention. They are likewise custodians of an ancestral Mediterranean culinary heritage which could disappear due to a lack of adequate transmission to new generations.

As women constitute an important agricultural labour force in the Mediterranean Basin, empowering them and boosting their skills is advantageous for families, rural communities and, more generally, for national agricultural and economic production. Primarily based on plants, the Mediterranean diet has a low impact on the environment since, in contrast to animal husbandry, it requires less natural resources. A definitive asset for food security, it can likewise contribute to diminishing the region’s strong dependence on food imports. The Mediterranean diet recommended by the medical establishment for its nutri-
tional qualities thus also affords economic and environmental advantages that can benefit women once they become recognized, valued central actors. The continuity of the Mediterranean diet requires putting a stop to wasting not only food and natural resources, but also human capital. Although in the MENA countries, more women attend university than men and fertility rates have diminished over the past twenty years, women’s economic integration remains low. It is estimated that the region loses the equivalent of 27% of its revenue because of women’s low labour force participation rates. This non-participation is akin to a true waste of human resources and skills.

Poverty and migration are challenges, but they can likewise constitute economic and social opportunities for women.

In rural areas where there is a great deal of poverty, women have always worked but are considered the familial labour force (domestic labour is not taken into account in calculating market GDP). According to the little data available, it seems that the number of women in the agricultural labour force in the region has nonetheless grown, going from 34% in 1995 to nearly 45% in 2011. Men’s contribution, however, sank considerably during the same period (from 66% to 55%).

The relegation of rural women, whose recognition and status enhancement would contribute to sustainable territorial development, likewise threatens the knowledge and know-how developed by women in subsistence farming, botany and the culinary domain with disappearance. Without seeking to box them into the role of custodians of tradition, women can be more mobilized to participate in the appreciation of endogenous cultural varieties and the institutionalization of a Mediterranean gastronomic culture.

The recognition and promotion of a Mediterranean diet model in which women would be transmitters and innovators calls for strong support from public policies on the national scale, and on the regional scale wouldn’t hurt either.

Rural Women: “Double Jeopardy,” Multiple Opportunities

Women in the rural and agricultural spheres in the Mediterranean suffer compounded discriminations and inequalities associated not only with their geographic immobility but also their status as women, such that one can speak of “double jeopardy.” Nonetheless, with regard to the challenges in the region, women can be a lever for sustainable, responsible and more socially equal growth. 43% of the MENA population lives in rural areas and, despite efforts made by the countries in this region, poverty is widespread and higher among farming populations. Territorial imbalances and poverty result in the progressive emptying of rural areas of their young, qualified male populations. Poverty and migration are challenges, but they can likewise constitute economic and social opportunities for women. Poor populations represent a potential market that can be harnessed once economic operators manage to adapt to the specificities and needs of this type of consumer. A “poverty-friendly” economic approach could foster lower-cost products and services benefitting the majority, for which women would be a link in the value chain (processing of agricultural products, marketing, sales, etc.).

Men in search of better standards of living often leave behind women who must ensure the family’s wellbeing. This increased workload could allow them to gain new skills and expand their decision-making power, an opportunity that can be boosted by the simultaneous elimination of the restraints existing insofar as access to infrastructures, land, property, financial resources and training.
There are very few women who own land in this region. Only 6.4% of real estate owners in Tunisia are women; 4.4% in Morocco; 4.1% in Algeria; 4% in Egypt and 3% in Jordan. In 75% of cases, this real estate consists of small-scale farms. As a general rule, for reasons of strenuousness, social norms or safety, when a woman owns land, she has a tendency to cede her rights to it in exchange for a percentage of the farming revenue. Women have a harder time travelling than men and managing farms can become a problem that is accentuated by the distance of plots. Studies have demonstrated a strong link between a lack of transport infrastructures, girls dropping out of school and women’s low access to quality jobs. In these conditions, the development, not only of roads and collective transport, but also of public spaces more inclusive of women should be considered strategic matters.\footnote{Agence Française de Développement (AFD). Accès des femmes à des emplois de qualité au Maroc, Tunisie, Turquie : Dans quelles conditions le travail des femmes devient-il un facteur d’autonomisation ? May 2015.}

The low percentage of women landowners in the MENA region is largely due to succession laws and social customs in effect. Women experience even greater difficulties than men in obtaining credit because the husband’s consent is generally required. Illiteracy is another barrier to obtaining credit. This particularly affects older women or women from ethnic minorities who do not speak the country’s administrative language very well.

The MENA countries are currently reforming the status of public land and instituting individual farming rights within the framework of agricultural reform. These policies have a great deal to gain by adopting a gender-specific approach and involving women in engineering these new measures. They should also involve men, since they strongly influence the success or failure of women’s empowerment programmes. Their inclusion is fundamental for debunking certain stereotypes relegating women to secondary roles, helping them to get more deeply involved in places of learning as well as in decisions outside the domestic sphere, and rethinking rural professions in terms of gender.

Driving home the shared benefits of such changes is undoubtedly the central challenge in these dynamics of transition.

Finally, one cannot seriously address the matter of women’s empowerment without considering the issue of preschool childcare. Indeed, early childhood services, like other services, are rare in rural and farming areas, and even more so in the south Mediterranean region. They are, however, a prerequisite to any enhancement of women’s capabilities. By consensus, collective preschool childcare meets different sustainable development challenges as expressed by the UN in its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Collective preschool childcare contributes to a balanced development of children in basic education (SDG 4), can raise children and parent’s awareness of sustainable natural resource management (SDG 12), facilitates the implementation of health programmes (SDG 3) and fosters partnerships between civil society actors (SDG 17). It also allows the creation of decent employment by giving social rights to women who to date are working in the informal domestic labour sector (SDG 8). And finally, it breaks mechanisms of reproduction of inequalities from one generation to another (SDG 10). Collective childcare services also provide an opportunity to start children on a healthy, quality diet such as the Mediterranean one.

The creation of out-of-school childcare options can maximize the chances for success of capacity-building programmes but require strong involvement of labour and professional organizations in the agricultural sphere.

Rural women demonstrate on a daily level their capacity for resilience and adaptation in the face of constraints. They are bearers of solutions and innovations, greatly contribute to the stability of territories and are agents of transmission of knowledge and expertise that are difficult to match. With regard to the rural and agricultural issues specific to the Mediterranean region, rural women’s central role should be promoted, since they are at the heart of sustainable, responsible development. In any case, there is a great deal yet to be done to allow rural women to realize their full potential and be able to apply their skills. Though women’s empowerment calls first of all for training and capacity-building, there is another dimension that should not be neglected, namely, transitioning from informal to formal employment. Indeed, empowerment also requires the capacity to turn women’s economic activities, which too often remain informal in rural areas, into recognized, valued activities entitling women to social protection schemes.
Between Patchwork Peace and Splintered Reconstruction: Assessing Post-War Challenges in Fragmented Syria

Giovanni Pagani
Researcher in Urban Development and Reconstruction, Barcelona

This March, Syria entered its seventh year of war with over 300,000 human fatalities, 6.5 IDPs, 4.5 external refugees and an estimated $250 billion in economic losses. The economy has contracted in real terms by 57% since 2010 and experts envisage that if the war ended in the next year, it would take at least two decades to recover the pre-war GDP figures (Gobat & Kostial, 2016). While housing and physical infrastructure are the most damaged sectors, no segment of the country’s economy has been spared by the war; whose devastating effects pose monumental challenges not only in terms of economic and urban/rural re-development, but also concerning social reconciliation and community resilience. Moreover, given the unprecedented proportions of physical destruction and the tremendous impacts on human capital, Syria features as a country to be entirely re-developed, lacking the indispensable economic and human resources to fulfil the task.

Against this background, post-conflict reconstruction in the country – and the Middle East in general – has been a rather popular topic in recent months; raising the interest of institutional figures, commentators and political analysts, both from within and outside the region. Nonetheless, the debate has developed more as an array of speculations over who should pay for rebuilding war-torn countries in the MENA, rather than as a fruitful discussion about the challenges to be faced in each post-war context. This attitude towards the subject – often toying with the idea of a regional “Marshall Plan” for Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen – also seems to wrongly conceive post-conflict reconstruction as a neutral practice, linked by a cause-effect relationship to pacification. Yet, while it is safe to assert that inclusive and sustainable re-development strategies are inherent preconditions for long-term reconciliation and durable peace, an excessively normative and sequential link between the two may overlook the contextual complexities of each crisis.

In an ideal peace-building scenario, the reconstruction should reflect the outcomes of a nationwide political settlement; one that accounting for all the actors involved succeeds in delivering a comprehensive framework for recovery. However, given the unprecedented territorial disintegration experienced by these countries, and the reiterated international community’s failure to overcome divergences, such a scenario is unlikely to materialize in the upcoming months; nor is there any sign that this could happen anytime soon. Indeed, as political and social fragmentation becomes more entrenched across the entire Syrian territory, the most realistic development is that of a patchwork peace with a splintered reconstruction; matched by increasing foreign interferences and deeper internal divisions. Although analogous considerations could be made for Libya, Iraq and Yemen, the Syrian crisis provides a rather unique case in this regard.

Civil Strife and Its Socio-Spatial Impacts

The Syrian Civil War officially broke out in March 2011 but began as an escalation of widespread popular protests violently repressed by the government. While external actors have played a prominent role in fuelling the conflict since its earliest stages, rapidly turning a popular uprising into one of the worst geopolitical quagmires of recent history,
the bulk of the rebellion’s popular base was constituted by the impoverished rural communities and by the disenfranchised inhabitants of the urban and peri-urban areas. The fact that these clusters of population were mainly Sunni represented an igniting factor only at a second stage – namely when foreign-funded jihadist groups started recasting the struggle in a religious framework, yet it did not constitute in itself a motivation for them to join the protests. On the other hand, the patterns of adherence to the loyalist cause were largely modulated according to the clientelistic networks created by the regime. These power practices have penetrated Syrian society at various levels for decades: on the one hand exploiting sectarian, ethnic or tribal identities to build loyalty and support, and on the other providing Assad cronies with better chances of investment, job opportunities, access to state services or positions in the coercive apparatuses. Finally, since these patterns of inclusion and exclusion had inherent socio-spatial reflections – particularly at the urban scale –, a deeper understanding of their structure and logics can provide fruitful insights into the roots of the hostilities, as well as into the urban fault lines emerging throughout the war.

With this in mind, and as a result of six years of conflict, Syria is now fragmented into four territorial entities. Namely the regime-controlled areas – Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, together with the coastal region; the rebel-held zones – reduced to the Idlib region and other scattered pockets of resistance in the country’s west; the Kurdish region in the north; and the self-proclaimed Islamic State. In this context, the only legitimate political actor remains the Syrian regime; which, although considerably weakened by six years of conflict and economically buttressed by Russian and Iranian support, is the sole actor able to stage a reconstruction effort with the current state of affairs as they are. Furthermore, since Western powers seem now to be exclusively focused on eradicating the Islamic State from “Syria,” the regime and its backers are about to enjoy broader leeway on “useful Syria,” both in terms of military action and any reconstruction plans.

**Between Recovery and Power Consolidation**

The scenario depicted above is directly linked to the aforementioned prospect of patchwork reconstruction and introduces one of the most urgent challenges in this respect. Namely how to accommodate the need for economic, physical and social recovery in stabilized areas – stabilized here meaning “recaptured by loyalist forces” – without subordinating the redevelopment process to current warlogics, and to the regime’s agenda in particular.

In an ideal peace-building scenario, the reconstruction should reflect the outcomes of a nationwide political settlement; one that accounting for all the actors involved succeeds in delivering a comprehensive framework for recovery.

From the Syrian government’s perspective, detaining a virtual monopoly over the reconstruction is both a guarantee of legitimacy and an essential tool for political control. Since the beginning of the crisis, Assad has always been concerned with maintaining an outward appearance of a functioning state; hence, his capability to launch targeted redevelopment pro-

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1 As of 2010, almost 40% of the Syrian population lived in informal settlements. Although these areas were not just the product of rural-urban migration and unplanned urbanization – many informal neighbourhoods were in fact provided with basic services –, they largely suffered from social exclusion, high unemployment and difficult access to economic opportunities (Clerc, 2014). On the other hand, rural communities, which mainly relied on farming, had been both largely penalized by the economic liberalization policies of the early 2000s and severely hit by protracted droughts (2007-10).

2 The extent to which confessional identity contributed to fuelling hostilities in Syria has been a largely debated issue since the earliest stages of the conflict. Here, while acknowledging the importance acquired by sectarianism at certain junctures of the war – for instance in Homs, between Sunni and Alawite communities, the crisis is analyzed as a more complex patchwork of political, economic and societal rifts; wherein sects represent a critical component, but only one part of the equation.

3 The term “useful Syria” has gained wider currency over the last year, to describe the country’s western region – and particularly the government-controlled areas – feeding off the assumption that the regime is now predominantly concerned with strengthening its grip on Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo and the coastal region, to the detriment of the country’s northern and eastern regions.
jects in key symbolic urban areas⁴ represents a critical opportunity to both strengthen his domestic grip and to polish up his international image.

**From the Syrian government’s perspective, detaining a virtual monopoly over the reconstruction is both a guarantee of legitimacy and an essential tool for political control**

On a different note, urban development and planning were tools for political control well before the beginning of the conflict and turned out to be essential auxiliary weapons when war broke out. In this regard, although the narrow links between pre-war spatial policies and the regime’s power networks would require deeper unpacking for each Syrian city, it is safe to argue that the regime has always been aware of how to fracture the social body, acting on the urban space's socio-spatial configuration. This included both direct planning measures, taken either by the government or by state-owned companies, and a subtler array of strategies geared towards creating areas of influence or buffer zones across the urban fabric, and exploiting the religious identity and socio-political position of different communities.⁵

In this light, when the country was plunged into civil strife, the regime started making extensive use of targeted demolitions, forced expropriations and land and property rights systems in general, in order to complement its military action. This becomes particularly clear looking at the recent stages of the conflict: when the population swaps proposed by the government in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo are clearly part of a broader regime’s strategy to repopulate formerly hostile areas with loyal populations. Moreover, these attempts to re-engineer the demographic composition of certain cities have also been accompanied by the destruction of HLP records in every retaken area, in order to prevent claims by displaced owners – if and when they ever return (Unruh, 2016). Some commentators have gone further, arguing that Iran would be actively encouraging these moves: pushing to displace Sunni Syrians towards the country’s north, relocating Shia Iraqi or Afghani families in the freed parts of southwestern Syria and planning a confessionally homogeneous corridor that would thus stretch from southern Iraq to Lebanon (Ghaddar, 2016). It goes without saying that if these population reshuffles should eventually sediment – and the current regime’s capability to monopolize the redevelopment process is likely to shape this trend –, territorial reintegration and social reconciliation would be considerably hampered, especially since any linkage between urban and social fabrics is being deliberately torn apart. Concomitantly, the massive destruction affecting Syrian cities is already setting the case for major investment opportunities in real estate and construction, which the regime would keenly outsource to its foreign backers; notably Iran, Russia and to a lesser extent China.

**When the population swaps proposed by the government in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo are clearly part of a broader regime’s strategy to repopulate formerly hostile areas with loyal populations**

On a higher national scale, this socio-political landscape also poses a monumental challenge of political reorganization; particularly concerning the compounded issue of decentralization and how this relates to the undesirable prospect of a country’s partition. In over forty years of Assad rule, the concentration of political power and economic opportunities in cities – mainly the capital – produced large economic inequalities both between urban and rural areas and across regions. This was particularly marked in the country’s northeast, on which Damascus was heavily dependent for oil, gas, phosphate, wheat and cotton, yet where very little revenues were eventually allocated. As it is no coincidence that the fault lines criss-crossing Syria are partially reflective of these deep-rooted imbalances, com-

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⁴ See for instance the Baba Amr neighbourhood in Homs or Aleppo’s eastern quarters.
⁵ Ismail, 2013; Khedour, 2015; Balanche, 2016.
mentators have rightly pointed at political and economic decentralization as a viable way to meet the demand for power redistribution and greater accountability (Yazigi, 2016). Nevertheless, given the emergence of ethnically and confessionally homogeneous enclaves across the country, any centripetal move in governance will have to accommodate power redistribution – especially at the district and municipal scale – with national integrity; without recurring to power-sharing agreements on a confessional/ethnic basis, for which both Lebanon and Iraq already provide dubious examples.

Conclusion

To conclude, while both external actors and the Syrian government have poured considerable economic resources into the military effort, very few redevelopment measures have been taken. With the exception of Iran – which might engage in short-term recovery projects to seek power consolidation, similarly to what happened in south Beirut after the 2006 war –, the majority of international stakeholders are unlikely to invest big amounts of money in economic or physical redevelopment, as long as the security situation remains volatile. On the other hand, while international organizations have been constantly delivering humanitarian aid since the beginning of the crisis, their involvement in long-term recovery projects remains highly curtailed by the regime. And although the latter has recently admitted that almost 50% of the state budget is being funded externally – especially by the UN –, it still staunchly opposes outsourcing any activity that could potentially erode its legitimacy to international organizations.

This not only jeopardizes social reconciliation in the long run, but also considerably hampers the capacity to reconstruct and tackle the conflict’s social and economic root causes. For instance, the exclusively urban focus of the regime’s reconstruction projects would leave the pre-war urban/rural divide largely unaddressed, which was a major factor of confrontations in Aleppo. Similarly, since 40% of the Syrian population lived in informal settlements in 2011 and given the targeted destruction of HLP records in the majority of hostile areas, the complicated issue of land will be key in any discussion about the after-math. However, despite the very limited room for action and the uncertainty surrounding the political situation at the country scale, international efforts have to continue focusing at the local level, in order to: tackle the proliferation of war economy structures; avert further waves of displacement; increase the resilience and cohesion of communities and invest in small-scale economic projects, both in urban and rural environments. Finally, refraining from conventional state-building approaches and acknowledging that conflict and recovery will simultaneously unfold in mutual interdependence for many years, all these efforts have to reconnect challenges and priorities with both the roots of the hostilities and the morphing patterns of confrontation. Without this awareness, and given the current state of affairs, any discussion about recovery is destined to either reinforce current war geographies or await a Marshall Plan that is unlikely to be delivered.

Bibliography

Understanding the influence of globalization and technology on North Africa and the Middle East requires an optimistic approach to a puzzle with infinite solutions, to which pieces are continuously being added. Constant and quick transformations trigger systemic and interconnected challenges on the political, economic and social levels. Given this complex context, any foreign policy towards the region must be endowed with tools that can respond effectively to new challenges as well as to the speed with which they spread.

The Arab Spring has shown us that promoting political reforms and human rights must be accompanied by a strategy aimed at improving the living conditions of the population, and in particular, offering prospects of progress and prosperity. One of the keys lies in acting on the 60% of the population of North Africa and the Middle East that are under 30 years of age. The increasingly educated and trained swath of young people aged between 15 and 29 make up more than 30% of the working-age population, amounting to over 105 million people.\(^1\) The accumulation of uncertainty, frustration and social discontent resulting from a job market incapable of offering enough quality employment in uncompetitive economic systems constitutes a threat to the stability of these countries. It is estimated that the region will need to create more than 100 million jobs between now and 2020, both to respond to this demographic challenge and to address the issue of a large part of the population being trapped in the informal economy or suffering from the effects of thousands of jobs eventually disappearing due to the impact of technology. The United Nations have warned that the number of people in Arab countries at risk of suffering conflict will increase from 250 million in 2010 to 350 million in 2020.

The digitalization of the economy and support for entrepreneurs and innovation is a means and an opportunity for the region to board the train of economic modernization in a competitive global market characterized by a complex system of interdependence.\(^2\) An approach to Arab and Muslim countries in terms of assistance and cooperation that does not contemplate this situation is overlooking an increasingly key factor. With this vision, a strategy of promoting entrepreneurship as one of the available diplomatic instruments raises a country or multilateral organization’s foreign policy to the level of effort and sophistication called for in the North Africa and Middle East context. Its mainstreaming of fundamental issues like empowerment, sustainable and sustained economic growth and democratization leads to fair and stable societies. It fosters collaborative relations and trust and strengthens social capital by creating opportunities and through effort and merit-based recognition. It favours the inclusion of women in the workforce,\(^3\) the attraction of human capital, talent and investment. It brings with it the legal reforms needed to allow com-

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companies emerging from the technological revolution to establish themselves and grow; companies which, because of their disruptive nature, require a streamlined and efficient public administration.

Data on the potential entrepreneur from the MENA region portray an encouraging dynamic that contrasts with the perception of disorder and chaos we have come to associate with the region after decades of unending conflicts. As an open global platform for innovation, trade and the exercise of human rights, the Internet is used on a daily basis by 83% of young people in the region. According to the International Telecommunications Union, mobile phone subscriptions have increased from 26.8% in 2005 to 109.9% in 2016. Between 2010 and 2015 the number of entities supporting ecosystems of entrepreneurship at the regional, national or local levels, such as Wamda or the Palestine Internship Program, have increased fivefold. In 2016 more than 200 events have been organized with entrepreneurs, 50% more than in the previous year – in some, such as Start-up Istanbul in 2016, up to 500 start-ups competed with the number of attendees reaching 4,000. The MIT Enterprise Forum Arab Competition alone has brought together 80,000 individuals in its nine calls –. In March 2017, Amazon bought souq.com, the region’s largest e-commerce platform, an investment estimated at around 800 million dollars, a similar figure to the 759 million dollars invested in 480 startups between 2013 and 2015. In addition, cities from all over the region are being transformed into smart cities or technological hubs and open spaces that foster collaboration are growing (Collaborative Open Innovation, Innovation Spaces, Living Labs, Digital Fabrication Laboratories or FabLabs) where children, young people or adults can turn up and learn new skills for making products with 3D printers, for example, or the basics of robotics. Traditional gas and oil exporting countries like the United Arab Emirates, Qatar or Saudi Arabia are looking to diversify their economies, attract better talent and bring their education systems into line with the needs of the market. It is estimated that a 10% improvement in its Global Entrepreneurship Index, will enable the Mediterranean region to increase its Gross Domestic Product by 592 million dollars.

It is true that neither military force nor entrepreneurship can resolve the problems North Africa and the Middle East are currently suffering. Nor can young people be forced to be entrepreneurial and not all can have the capacity or the skills to achieve success. However, as Barack Obama warned, a foreign policy towards the region aimed solely at isolating and controlling destructive and murderous fanatics and which is not capable of listening and helping individuals who want to create value, is losing perspective. Today, no government, by itself, has the knowledge or the capacity to respond to major global challenges, such as climate change, poverty, water scarcity, food security, pandemics, growing urban agglomerations, inequality or terrorism. On the contrary, they have to cooperate and seek alliances with other stakeholders – states, international organizations, the private sector – and allow and encourage the creativity, imagination and ambition of young people empowered by technology, so they can become disruptive agents of change. Each war that breaks out reduces the chance of an individual’s innate talent being put to an innovative and creative use and thereby having a positive impact on their country or community’s welfare.

The Obama Administration’s interpretation of the world and the situation in North Africa and the Middle led Washington to placing the entrepreneur in the centre of its foreign policy, as a driver of prosperity and freedom. During his term, Obama followed a strategy grounded in the transformative power of technology and in the culture of entrepreneurship as a factor of national power that is more relevant than ever in the knowledge era. The US administration banked on the appeal and need for Arab and Muslim countries to learn from its successful technological sector to reform and diversify their economies. This has been its initial aim. Thanks to its experience, credibility and prestige – thereby making it better connected – the United States occupies a central position in the structure of transnational networks of productive enterprise. By themselves, these networks have the capacity to promote and expand positive narratives and behaviour that counters messages of violence and despair. The centrality of the United States allows it to influence

– using a form of soft power – the social connections that form these networks, both to right the region’s image and detect and capture talent there. Entrepreneurship is also a way to internationalize a country’s economy and open new growth markets. The US is, therefore, involved in the exponential growth of the digital economy in the MENA region – 30 billion dollars in 2018 – and the data and information flows generated by the region – a 33% growth since 2012 in e-commerce – as an increasingly educated population with greater purchasing power, has access to broadband and mobile technology. The economic impact and creation of quality jobs in the region may lead to better expectations regarding these countries’ political and financial stability. With this goal in mind, the promotion of entrepreneurship would be a modern and transparent bottom-up, positive-sum instrument of public diplomacy (attraction) and economic diplomacy (digital economy), which is strategic, inclusive and long-term in its outlook (strategic patience).

The United States occupies a central position in the structure of transnational networks of productive enterprise. These networks have the capacity to promote and expand positive narratives and behaviour that counters messages of violence and despair.

One of the keys to the design of this strategy is that it has not been improvised nor decided on without collaborating with countries in the region. Instead, it has emerged from a broad reflection among different political, economic and social spheres from the United States on the root causes of what is happening in the MENA region, the impact of its foreign policy and diplomatic action, the overall situation and the potential of communication and information technologies. During George W. Bush’s second term, the deterioration of the US’ image in the eyes of Muslim countries and communities following the former’s response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to the development of a new concept of diplomacy known as transformational diplomacy, which followed on from the vision outlined in the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). This put forward a non-paternalistic way of doing diplomacy, focused on empowerment and improving the lives of the citizens, to whom the decisions regarding their countries’ futures falls. Stability in the region could not be achieved at the cost of sacrificing democratic progress in the countries there. Moreover, the essence of a report by the Council on Foreign Relations6 was recovered, which emphasized the demands of young Arabs and Muslims for help from the United States in reforming their legal, health and education systems and modernizing their economies, only without political meddling. Finally, during Hillary Clinton’s time as State Secretary, further efforts were made to adapt US diplomacy to a world in continual change, with multiple actors and where the technological revolution facilitates instant and free access to information for thousands of young people, wherever they live. The first and second Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) and the economic strategy known as 21st Century Statecraft – foreign policy as economic policy – have defined the fundamental pillars upon which Barack Obama based his presidency, i.e., people-focused, idealist and without excessive interference, providing clear support for entrepreneurship and innovation. The fact that this vision was included in the last US National Security Strategy7 demonstrates the firm resolve behind this policy. Barack Obama’s speech at the University of Cairo in 2009 (A New Beginning) was a display of this new constructive form of commitment with Muslim countries and communities. It was also the moment chosen to announce the first summit on entrepreneurship, aimed at and at the request of the countries in the region.

There is widespread consensus that the political and institutional reforms in the MENA region must be accompanied by the transformation and modernization of their economies, with an oversized public sector, bureaucracy, labour market rigidity, monopo-

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6 Craig Charney and Nicole Yakatan: A New Beginning: Strategies for a More Fruitful Dialogue with the Muslim World, Council on Foreign Relations 2005
lies of power and excessive dependence on fossil fuels. However, there are limits to how much an economy can expand within national borders in a globalized world. It will only continue to grow if it opens to the outside. And this can be done by: allowing entrepreneurs to access networks of global knowledge, education or funding (venture capital, private equity, business angels...); creating forums and competitions that inspire, mobilize and promote collaboration, make ideas visible and celebrate success stories; facilitating access to broadband networks and freedom of information; and creating a labour force with skills adapted to the demands of the market, with quality education in the sciences, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). With this vision, the foreign policies of both the US and the European Union have set up different instruments that follow the specific aim of supporting and connecting entrepreneurs from Arab and Muslim countries and communities with each other and with interlocutors from outside the region.

The United States has launched Partners for a New Beginning (NPB), Global Innovation Through Science and Technology (GIST), Women’s Entrepreneurial Centers of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE), Presidential Ambassadors for Global Entrepreneurship (PAGE), Partnering to Accelerate Entrepreneurship (PACE) Initiative, Development Innovation Ventures (DIV), Entrepreneurship & Innovation Programs (EIP), Global Entrepreneurship Program (GEP), Stevens Initiative, The Resilient, Entrepreneurial, And Dynamic Initiative (READY) and the Global Entrepreneurship Summit, with annual editions in Washington (2010), Istanbul (2011), Dubai (2012), Kuala Lumpur (2013), Marrakech (2014), Nairobi (2015) and Silicon Valley (2016). The European Union, through the Union for the Mediterranean, has launched programmes such as the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs or Med4Jobs. The ministerial declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean on the Digital Economy (2014) and the subsequent creation of the Working Group on the Digital Economy and Internet Access are signs of the readiness to further enhance this strategy.

Today, foreign policy is synonymous with economic policy, just as the economy increasingly means the digital economy. While it waits to see how the new US administration will act, Europe is in a privileged position for positively influencing the region’s vibrant ecosystem of entrepreneurship. Without doubt, a security and foreign policy strategy towards North Africa and the Middle East that brings development, diplomacy and defence up to the same levels is the right track to be on. However, this strategy must be adapted to a world of fast-spreading networks with positive and negative interactions that mutate between the physical and the virtual. Moreover, we must cease to measure the region’s future through the prism of terrorist alerts. It will be determined by the capacity and creative talent of its human capital. Promoting constructive and collaborative spaces and synergies through instruments that support entrepreneurs – validated by the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 – is a useful effort with a real impact; something demanded today by millions of young people in a region where things are already starting to happen.

As the main commercial, investment and cooperation partner in the area, the European Union has to contemplate the eventual structuring of a policy that incentivizes entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on innovation and digital technologies.

**Recommended Reading**


Inward Foreign Direct Investments to Morocco: Competitiveness and Dynamics

Kaku Attah Damoah
University of Trento and University of Florence

Investments are likely to enhance economic growth and promote job creation. The mechanisms highlighted by different growth models may be different, but there is always an emphasis on the importance of investment. In many ways, foreign direct investment (FDI) complements local savings and investment, as well as being a source of job creation. In particular, for emerging and developing countries, foreign direct investment may have an added advantage of transferring technology from advanced countries (Grossman & Helpman, 1991). There is also the potential for technical know-how to disseminate into local economies through a process of knowledge spillover (Javorcik, 2004).

In this era of fragmented cross-border production networks, a country’s capability to attract foreign direct investment can increase its export trade through participation in the global value chain. In addition, through the process of knowledge spillover, productivity dispersion tends to be reduced in sectors with a high penetration of foreign firms (Mona, 1993). Foreign direct investment can also have positive externalities by fostering the development of local industries through inter-firm linkages (Barrios, Görg, & Strobl, 2005).

Not surprisingly, various countries have undergone reforms in their bids to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). However, Africa still receives less than 5 percent of global FDI inflows (UNCTAD, 2016). Many factors influence delocalization and investment decisions of multinational firms. Morocco has performed remarkably well in attracting foreign investment over the last decade. In December 2016, Morocco was the second highest destination market of FDI projects in Africa, behind South Africa.

This article discusses inward foreign direct investment in Morocco from 2003 to 2016. It first highlights the policy actions and strategies that have increased Morocco’s competitiveness compared to its North African neighbours, Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia. The following section then presents key trends in FDI, the origins of FDI projects, as well as destination activities and locations.

Attracting FDI: Morocco in Perspective

Prior to the 1990s, the Moroccan economy was highly protected and mostly based on import substitution industrialization and agricultural self-sufficiency (Currie & Harrison, 1997). A series of economic reforms were undertaken by the government in the 1990s to modernize the Moroccan economy. In particular, one of these reforms was specifically aimed at reforming the Moroccan investment charter to attract foreign investment (World Bank., 1993).

Besides the reform of the investment charter, the government undertook a massive privatization of state-owned enterprises to attract foreign investment. For example, in 2001, the government sold 35% of its stake in Maroc Telecom to Vivendi (a French company). Another significant action undertaken by the government to attract foreign investment were targeted Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with major trading partners to enhance trade and investment. In particular, the Agadir Declaration signed between Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan; the Association Agreement, signed with the European Union; and a free trade agreement with the United States, were all important policy agreements for subsequent foreign investment in Morocco.
Correspondingly, the taxation system in Morocco was also considerably simplified in the late 1990s. Aware that low profit taxation can be correlated with inward FDI, the Government of Morocco simplified the country’s tax code through the introduction of the General Tax Code. In particular, the adoption of the “investment charter” in 1995 provided Value-Added Tax exemption for five years for new investors. To put the comparative advantage of Morocco over its North African neighbours into perspective, Chart 2 compares the profit tax rate and number of procedures required to start a business from 2005 to 2016, using data from the World Bank’s Doing Business Report (World Bank, 2017). It can be observed from the left panel that Morocco comes second to Egypt in terms of low profit tax rate. The right panel shows that Morocco has had the least number of procedures to undertake before potential investors start new enterprises.

Note: Dotted line indicates missing data for Tunisia between 2009 and 2015.
Using data from the Global Competitiveness Index published by the World Economic Forum, we can compare the competitiveness performance of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (World Economic Forum, 2016). Chart 3, shows that, Morocco has also taken steps to improve its infrastructure development and quality of institutions. In particular, port infrastructure was considerably improved following extensive investment in the Tangier-Med port. Undoubtedly, having quality infrastructure and protected property rights is likely to boost investor confidence.

Lastly, Table 4 shows that the potential of the domestic market to register growth following a series of reforms is the number one motive for investment as reported by firms undertaking investments in Morocco. Its proximity to markets, (particularly Europe), the business climate, and availability of skilled workforce are next in line as the main determinants of choosing Morocco as a destination market.

| TABLE 4 | Determinants of FDI Destination Choice |
| Motives | Projects | % of FDI Projects | Companies | % of Companies |
| Domestic market growth potential | 51 | 40.1 | 48 | 41.7 |
| Proximity to markets or customers | 37 | 29.1 | 34 | 29.6 |
| Regulations or business climate | 31 | 24.4 | 28 | 24.3 |
| Skilled workforce availability | 30 | 23.6 | 28 | 24.3 |
| Lower costs | 20 | 15.7 | 19 | 16.5 |
| Infrastructure and logistics | 12 | 9.4 | 11 | 9.6 |
| IPA or government support | 8 | 6.3 | 7 | 6.1 |
| Industry cluster / Critical mass | 8 | 6.3 | 8 | 7.0 |
| Attractiveness / Quality of Life | 5 | 3.9 | 4 | 3.5 |
| Language skills | 5 | 3.9 | 5 | 4.3 |
| Other motives | 11 | 8.7 | 11 | 9.6 |

Source: fDi Markets (www.fdimarkets.com)

CHART 4  FDI Dynamics in Morocco

Trend in FDI Amount, Jobs, and Projects (2003=100)
Dynamics of Morocco’s Inward FDI

Morocco recorded 817 FDI projects from 2003 to 2016; bringing in capital investments of €55.3 billion, as well as creating 231,747 jobs (Financial Times Ltd, 2017). Chart 4 presents a summary of the dynamics of key FDI indicators, with 2003 set as the base year to track variations in the indicators. It can be observed that the three indicators registered a generalized increase almost throughout the period, with the exception of a few cases, which registered an overall decrease with respect to 2003. Surprisingly, in the midst of the global financial crisis in 2008, Morocco registered its highest peak in FDI capital investments, with a growth rate of 970 percent with respect to 2003. On a year-on-year basis, FDI capital investments increased by approximately 208% in 2008, as compared to 2007.

The close economic relation between Morocco and its Mediterranean neighbours is underscored by the share of capital investment originating from Mediterranean countries, as well as the share of the number of FDI projects. Out of the total €55.3 billion invested, approximately €21.1 billion originates from: France, Spain, Italy, Algeria, and Tunisia.

TABLE 5 Composition of FDI by Business Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Activity</th>
<th>No of projects</th>
<th>Jobs Created</th>
<th>Capital Investment</th>
<th>Capital/Employment Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Average (€ m)</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>119,196</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>17,017.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales, Marketing &amp; Support</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>6,159</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2,157.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>6,473</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>63,487</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>19,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics, Distribution &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8,104</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>3,646.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Contact Centre</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11,264</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>233.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Development &amp; Testing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6,711</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>1,681.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>196.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5,740.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,472</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other business activities</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6,371</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3,895.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>817</strong></td>
<td><strong>231,747</strong></td>
<td><strong>283</strong></td>
<td><strong>55,300.80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spain, Italy, and Turkey, accounting for 38.12% overall. Within this group, France is the largest contributor to FDI capital investment with €11.54 billion, accounting for 54.71% of the Mediterranean group of countries and 20.86% of the total amount. In the same way, out of the total 817 projects, 407 – accounting for 49.82% - originates from the Mediterranean countries.

Middle East countries – United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar – come next in terms of capital invested, although they make up roughly 8 percent of the total number of projects. As can be observed in panel (b) of Chart 5, this translates into a higher investment intensity for Middle East countries as compared to other regions. Non-Mediterranean European countries, made up of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Denmark and Portugal, are the third highest contributors of capital investment to Morocco. The United States and Canada make up 7.91% of capital investment, but with a diverse portfolio in 115 FDI projects. Lastly, China, India and Japan (CIJ) collectively invested €4.9 billion accounting for approximately 9 percent of total FDI. The total number of projects the CIJ group of countries was engaged in makes up 6% of the total number of FDI projects. China is the biggest investor within this group.

Table 5 presents the breakdown of FDI by business activity. Inward FDI to Morocco is generally concentrated in five business activities, with the top five accounting for 82.50% of all projects. The manufacturing sector accounts for 28.8% of all FDI projects, with a total capital investment of €17 billion generating the highest number of jobs. Among the top five, construction accounted for the highest capital investment, generating the highest average number of jobs per project. Surprisingly, electricity, which is outside of the top five sectors, registers the highest capital employment ratio for each unit of capital invested.

It is not only destination sectors that are concentrated, but also destination states (or cities). Casablanca state alone accounts for 37.94% of all FDI projects, representing 44% of all firms undertaking FDI in Morocco. Tangier-Tetouan is the second highest state with 129 FDI projects out of 817. The two leading states account for 53.73% of the FDI projects. At the city level, Casablanca and Tangier account for 48.23% of all FDI projects, indicating little dispersion between the two states.

To conclude, without the pretext of drawing statistical inference, this article compares the relation between the competitiveness score and the number of inward FDI projects for years where variable data were available. A simple sample correlation between the overall infrastructure quality score and number of FDI projects yields 0.87, while the correlation between property rights and FDI projects yield 0.85. Whilst it is important to stress that correlation does not mean causality, the analysis confirms a correlation between inward FDI and competitiveness.

**Conclusion**

This article discussed Morocco’s competitiveness to attract foreign direct investment and the dynamics of its inflows from 2003 to 2016. The rise of Morocco to become Africa’s second largest recipient
of FDI owes to a combination of factors. Among the group of North African countries, Morocco has implemented a series of economic reforms to gain competitive advantage.

High monetary and non-monetary barriers are likely to discourage prospective investors, inhibiting FDI inflows to any economy. Likewise, infrastructure quality, as well as private property rights, influence a foreign investor’s choice of destination country. Given the high levels of foreign investments, putting the necessary steps in place to reduce barriers and increase a country’s competitiveness is likely to boost investor confidence.

The growing number of FDI projects in Morocco rightly suggests that investors respond to competitiveness. The concentration of FDI sources from Mediterranean countries also highlights the importance of commercial relations between Morocco and its Mediterranean neighbors. Furthermore, the concentration of FDI projects in Casablanca and Tangier-Tetouan states recalls the correlation between infrastructure quality and FDI projects. Therefore, if infrastructure quality was improved in other parts of the country, this would reduce the skewness of FDI project distribution within Morocco.

References


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Challenges of Sustainable Tourism Development in the Mediterranean

Zoran Klarić
Associate Professor / Senior Research Advisor
Institute for Tourism, Zagreb

The two most significant global events of the last decade, the 2008 financial crisis and the 2010 Arab Spring, left their greatest mark in the Mediterranean region. When we add the global drop in oil prices in 2014 and the European migrant crisis of 2015, and take into account that the Middle East remains the world’s key crisis flashpoint, we can conclude that the Mediterranean is the region most exposed to turbulent events in the last ten years. Many Mediterranean countries, especially those that are EU Members States, have yet to completely recover from the crisis, and the countries that have experienced the least economic growth are also located in the Mediterranean. The most significant economic declines since 2008 have taken place in Greece and war-ravaged Syria and Libya, while other Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, Italy, Croatia or Cyprus, figure prominently among other countries facing various economic issues.

The Arab Spring left no Arab Mediterranean country untouched, and its consequences are still strongly felt in Tunisia and Egypt, as well as in Syria and Libya, which have descended into still unresolved civil wars. Both Tunisia, despite its democratic political system, and Egypt, which is ruled by the army, have been buffeted by terrorist activities, and in both countries conservative Islamic forces show signs of growing stronger. Neighbouring wars and terrorist activities have also had a negative impact on the economic situation in Turkey, while Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories have been in a state of constant instability for decades in spite of their nominal economic growth. Even the relatively peaceful region of south-eastern Europe has, since 2016, shown evidence of increasing ethnic tension, primarily in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia.

These turbulent events have had a strong impact on tourism, one of the most important industries throughout the Mediterranean, especially in those countries in which it is the main economic activity, such as Malta, Cyprus, Croatia, Montenegro and Greece. This has consequences for tourism sustainability from an ecological standpoint, as well as in terms of sociocultural and economic aspects. Therefore, it would be interesting to determine how these changes may affect the sustainability of tourism development in the near future, although the events of the last years make it exceptionally difficult to make accurate predictions. Given that many important processes for tourism sustainability changed course in the escalating turbulence after 2008, the following analysis also took into account the period between 2000 and 2009. For the purposes of simplification, three crucial years were taken into consideration: 2000, the start of the new millennium; 2009, the year marking the beginning of the new turbulent period; and 2016, the most recent year, with the caveat that the tourism data used were from 2015 due to the lack of newer data.

Key Features of Demographic and Economic Trends in the Mediterranean in the New Millennium

The data in Tables 7 and 8, which show the population and per capita GDP figures for Mediterranean countries in 2000, 2009 and 2016, reveal major differences between the countries in terms of both population and economic growth. Three basic groups of countries can be established:
TABLE 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Area in sq km</th>
<th>Population in 000</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Population per sq km 2016</th>
<th>Change %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>28,748</td>
<td>3,490</td>
<td>3,640</td>
<td>3,039</td>
<td>105.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>2,381,741</td>
<td>31,194</td>
<td>34,178</td>
<td>40,264</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>51,197</td>
<td>3,836</td>
<td>4,613</td>
<td>3,862</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>-16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>56,594</td>
<td>4,282</td>
<td>4,489</td>
<td>4,314</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>9,251</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>130.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1,001,449</td>
<td>68,360</td>
<td>83,083</td>
<td>94,667</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>551,695</td>
<td>59,330</td>
<td>62,151</td>
<td>62,814</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>131,957</td>
<td>10,602</td>
<td>10,737</td>
<td>10,773</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel(^1)</td>
<td>20,770</td>
<td>5,664</td>
<td>7,047</td>
<td>8,175</td>
<td>393.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>301,338</td>
<td>57,834</td>
<td>58,126</td>
<td>62,008</td>
<td>205.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>89,342</td>
<td>4,999</td>
<td>6,343</td>
<td>8,185</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>10,452</td>
<td>3,578</td>
<td>4,017</td>
<td>6,238</td>
<td>596.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya(^2)</td>
<td>1,759,540</td>
<td>5,115</td>
<td>6,310</td>
<td>6,542</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>25,713</td>
<td>2,041</td>
<td>2,067</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>1,313.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro(^3)</td>
<td>13,812</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>446,550</td>
<td>30,122</td>
<td>34,859</td>
<td>33,656</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories(^4)</td>
<td>6,242</td>
<td>3,330</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>4,837</td>
<td>774.9</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>92,212</td>
<td>10,048</td>
<td>10,708</td>
<td>10,834</td>
<td>117.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia(^5)</td>
<td>77,474</td>
<td>7,498</td>
<td>7,379</td>
<td>7,144</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>20,273</td>
<td>1,928</td>
<td>2,006</td>
<td>1,978</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>505,370</td>
<td>39,997</td>
<td>40,525</td>
<td>48,564</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>185,180</td>
<td>16,306</td>
<td>20,178</td>
<td>17,185</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>-14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>163,610</td>
<td>9,593</td>
<td>10,486</td>
<td>11,135</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>783,562</td>
<td>65,867</td>
<td>76,806</td>
<td>80,275</td>
<td>102.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,714,388</strong></td>
<td><strong>446,444</strong></td>
<td><strong>497,831</strong></td>
<td><strong>530,855</strong></td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td><strong>11.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Including the population of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.\(^2\) Population data are for the year 2015 instead of 2016.\(^3\) For the year 2000, population data were taken from the 2003 census.\(^4\) Including Israeli settlers in the West Bank.\(^5\) For the year 2000, population data were taken from the 2002 census.


a) Western European Mediterranean EU Member States, primarily Spain, France and Italy: These countries have, for the most part, experienced modest, but constant economic growth based on very low or negative population growth, which, in turn, is the consequence of higher economic development and immigration, mostly from other EU Member States and non-EU Mediterranean countries. The somewhat higher population growth in some countries, especially Spain, is largely due to the conversion of holiday homes into permanent residences for older people from developed European countries, primarily Germany and the United Kingdom.

b) Eastern European Mediterranean countries: These countries have mostly seen their populations drop as a result of rising living standards and the corresponding decline in the number of children per family. Another reason is emigration due to the lack of quality employment, mostly to developed countries in the EU. This is especially true for poorly developed countries that are not EU Member States and have not started the accession process: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Kosovo. However, other countries have also seen a decrease in the number of inhabitants or minimal population growth, including the three most developed EU Member States in the region, Greece, Slovenia and Croatia.

c) Asian and African Mediterranean countries: These mostly moderately developed countries have for the most part experienced strong population growth based on high birth rates, with the highest overall growth being registered in Lebanon and Jordan, countries that have received an influx of refugees from neighbouring regions scoured by war. Somewhat lower growth is seen in those countries that have witnessed robust economic growth in the new mil-
lennium, but also intensive emigration to Europe: Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia. Libya and Syria are a case apart, having registered negative population growth despite very high birth rates due to the exodus of their populations as a result of war.

The economic processes do not correlate with the demographic processes. This is because practically all developed European Mediterranean countries, including Israel, were badly hit by the 2008 economic crisis, and most have not fully recovered. At the same time, all moderately developed countries, except for Syria and Libya due to their wars, have experienced notable economic growth, especially Asian and African Mediterranean countries. However, significant economic growth can also be found in moderately developed eastern European Mediterranean countries, which have seen negative population growth and emigration, although this growth was much slower in the 2009-2016 period than in the preceding period after 2000. Rapid economic growth in many south-eastern European countries after 2000 was partly due to the improvement in the security situation following the end of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 and the NATO intervention in Serbia in 1999. Although data on per capita GDP growth needs to be taken with a grain of salt due to differences in currency exchange rates, it is interesting that the greatest growth in the 2000-2009 and 2009-2016 periods occurred in Turkey and all the Arab Mediterranean countries except for Syria and Libya. Algeria, Jordan, Egypt and Turkey registered the highest growth, while growth in Tunisia was much lower, largely because of the Tunisian economy’s much greater dependence on tourism. According to recent data, only Algeria, Turkey and Malta registered real GDP growth rates consistently higher than 3% in the last three years, with the latter being a special case due to the recent growth of its financial and IT sectors.

### TABLE 8 GDP per Capita in Mediterranean Countries in 2000, 2009 and 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>160.0</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>296.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>108.3</td>
<td>172.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>288.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>547.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>17,700</td>
<td>22,400</td>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>286.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>21,300</td>
<td>34,400</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>145.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>12,100</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>101.7</td>
<td>236.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>24,400</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>42,400</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>73.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>17,200</td>
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<td>83.1</td>
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<td>55.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
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<td>29,000</td>
<td>34,800</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>84.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>30,300</td>
<td>36,300</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
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<td>5,200</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>113.5</td>
<td>217.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>13,300</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>166.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>270.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>14,200</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>9,300</td>
<td>14,500</td>
<td>111.4</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>229.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>14,300</td>
<td>24,700</td>
<td>37,900</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>165.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro¹</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>334.8</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>439.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>8,400</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories²</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>4,300</td>
<td>123.1</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>230.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>15,800</td>
<td>22,800</td>
<td>28,500</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Serbia¹</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>10,700</td>
<td>14,200</td>
<td>365.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>517.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>133.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>166.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>29,800</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>102.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria³</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>-38.3</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>9,300</td>
<td>11,700</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>21,100</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>210.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ For the year 2000, data for GDP per capita refer to the whole state of Serbia and Montenegro. ² GDP per capita data are for the year 2014 instead of 2015. ³ GDP per capita data are for the year 2015 instead of 2016.

Tourism Development Processes in the Mediterranean and Consequences for Sustainability

Like the demographic and economic processes, the data on tourism development point to three similar groups of countries. However, the trends are significantly different and there are numerous discrepancies, mostly due to political and security aspects. Based on the data on the number of foreign tourists and tourism revenue shown in Tables 9 and 10, the countries can again be divided into three groups in keeping with three characteristic trends in tourism development:

a) Growth in tourism in the western part of the European Mediterranean, which includes the three countries with the strongest tourism sectors (Spain, France and Italy), has been moderate in the last six years, although still significantly higher than the economic growth in these countries. The comparatively small number of registered foreign tourists in 2009 compared to 2000 signifies that tourism in all three countries, as well as in neighbouring Portugal, was hit hard by the 2008 economic crisis. Information on tourism revenue shows comparatively higher growth between the years of 2000 and 2009, followed by a decline in the 2009-2015 period. This is partly due to disturbances in currency exchange rates with the euro, but it can also be attributed to the drop in tourism service prices as a result of the crisis. Somewhat similar trends can be seen in Cyprus, Israel and, to some extent, Malta, which is the only Mediterranean country in the EU to have fully recovered from the crisis. Another interesting fact is that Spain, the western Mediterranean country most affected by the financial crisis, exhibits significantly higher absolute and relative tourism growth.
than both Italy and France, which were less significantly hit by the crisis.

b) The eastern part of the European Mediterranean has also seen proportionally high growth in tourism, especially in those countries that started at very low levels in previous periods, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia. Tourism also grew strongly in other south-eastern European countries, including Turkey and three EU Member States: Greece, Croatia and Slovenia. The most impressive growth was registered in Albania, where the number of foreign tourists is now twelve times higher than at the turn of the new millennium, such that the country is now a respectable tourism destination. Indeed, when tourist numbers are taken into account, it outperforms states that it previously lagged far behind, such as Cyprus and Israel. Strong tourism growth can also be found in both Turkey, a country that has experienced significant demographic growth since 2000, and those countries that have seen rapid declines in their populations and strong emigration. Additionally, tourism growth rates are positive in both countries where the entire economy is growing, such as Montenegro and Albania, and Greece and Croatia, countries that were hit hard by the 2008 economic crisis.

c) With the exception of Morocco, Arab countries in the African and Asian Mediterranean experienced a large drop in the number of tourists after significant growth in the 2000s. This is especially the case in Egypt and Tunisia, the strongest tourist destinations in the African Mediterranean, where the number of tourists fell by more than 20 per cent between 2009 and 2016, as well as in Syria and Libya, where tourism has virtually disappeared due to the wars. The decline in tourism is also evident in other Arab states, both in Lebanon and Jordan, which have some-

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**TABLE 10 Tourism Receipts in Mediterranean Countries in 2000, 2009 and 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tourism receipts in mill. $</th>
<th>Change %</th>
<th>Expenditure per tourist 2015 $</th>
<th>Receipts per inhabitant 2015 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>2,012</td>
<td>1,614</td>
<td>405.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>296.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>333.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>2,871</td>
<td>9,224</td>
<td>9,018</td>
<td>221.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>2,459</td>
<td>2,489</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>4,657</td>
<td>11,757</td>
<td>6,897</td>
<td>192.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>30,081</td>
<td>58,543</td>
<td>54,003</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>9,262</td>
<td>14,796</td>
<td>15,662</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>4,571</td>
<td>4,332</td>
<td>6,061</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>28,706</td>
<td>41,938</td>
<td>39,805</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>3,471</td>
<td>4,997</td>
<td>271.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>7,157</td>
<td>7,087</td>
<td>864.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya1</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>163.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Malta</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>1,367</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>...</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
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<td>2,844</td>
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<td>7,534</td>
<td>249.4</td>
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<td>226</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>6,027</td>
<td>12,315</td>
<td>15,721</td>
<td>104.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Serbia2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>1,016</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>2,697</td>
<td>169.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>33,833</td>
<td>59,539</td>
<td>56,484</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>3,781</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>249.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1,977</td>
<td>3,526</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>7,636</td>
<td>24,601</td>
<td>35,413</td>
<td>222.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

140,581 274,870 272,805 95.5 -0.8 94.1 805 514

1 Data for the number of tourism receipt are for the year 2008 instead of 2009. 2 For the year 2000, data for the number of tourism receipt refer to the whole state of Serbia and Montenegro.

what developed tourism industries, and in Algeria, which has just begun to open up to tourism. Seeing that, with the exception of Syria and Libya, these countries are experiencing high demographic and economic growth, it is clear that this decline is primarily due to the Arab Spring. In this regard, it is worth noting that Morocco, despite registering the greatest tourism growth of all the Arab Mediterranean countries, is following unfavourable demographic and economic trends, not only compared to Algeria, where tourism has never played a significant role, but also Egypt, where the tourism sector is experiencing major problems.

In light of the listed differences, it is clear that over the entire period from 2000 to 2015, tourism in the Mediterranean grew the most in the north-eastern part of the region. The strong tourism growth in the eastern European Mediterranean is partly due to the redirection of tourists who previously went to Egypt and Tunisia, but also to improvements in the security situation in the aftermath of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. In recent years, most south-eastern European countries generally became safer than western Europe, especially France and Germany, which have been exposed to terrorist attacks and problems with large immigrant populations from Islamic countries in Africa and Asia. Another significant pull factor for tourism in south-eastern Europe is the more competitive prices, which have emerged as an important consideration given the economic crisis in the EU, the main tourist market for the whole Mediterranean region.

Turbulent events have had a strong impact on tourism, one of the most important industries throughout the Mediterranean, especially in those countries in which it is the main economic activity.

The consequences of these trends for the sustainability of tourism development in the Mediterranean are also different for each of the three groups of Mediterranean countries, although the numerous specificities of individual states and areas within them must be taken into account. In this context, special importance should be given to countries primarily oriented towards beach tourism on the Mediterranean coast, including most of the eastern European Mediterranean, as can be seen in Table 10. It is especially the case in Greece, Croatia, Albania, Cyprus and Montenegro and, to a lesser extent Turkey, while in the other Mediterranean states, tourism is highly concentrated on the coasts only in Malta and Tunisia and, to a lesser extent, Spain, Italy and Israel. However, problems of tourism concentration in coastal areas can also be found in countries in which tourism is not primarily focused on the Mediterranean coast, such as Egypt or France, as well as in countries that have very short coastlines, such as Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Egypt and Tunisia, the number of tourists fell by more than 20 per cent between 2009 and 2016.

One important indicator of the growing pressure on the natural environment in the Mediterranean is the increase in airplane passengers, as shown in Table 11. In the last ten years, this growth has also been highest in the eastern European Mediterranean, especially in Croatia and Montenegro. A significant increase in the number of airplane passengers was also seen in Morocco, as well as in certain Asian and African Mediterranean countries that did not register significant growth in tourism as a whole, such as Egypt, Lebanon or Algeria. The growth of low-cost airlines and the renovation of airports, such as the one in Alexandria in Egypt, should also be taken into account. Although the growth in airplane traffic in the western part of the Mediterranean was significantly weaker, there were differences in specific areas. The highest growth was registered in regions that have historically been less developed in terms of tourism, such as the southern Adriatic coast of Italy, while air traffic increased the least in the two main French tourism
regions of Provence and Occitanie, as well as in the Balearic Islands, the area with the highest tourism concentration in Spain.

In line with these developments, since 2000, the state of environmental sustainability has declined the most in countries in the eastern European Mediterranean.
nean, and much less in countries with more developed tourism industries, such as Spain, France and Italy, although a proportionally larger share of the Mediterranean coastline is filled with tourism infrastructure in these three countries than in most of the eastern European Mediterranean ones. Unfortunately, in Turkey, Greece, Croatia, Montenegro and, especially, Albania, insufficient sensitivity has been shown towards the environmental aspects of the rapid expansion of tourism. As a result, in the last twenty years these countries have been exposed to very intense and, for the most part, unplanned development of tourism infrastructure and secondary residences along a substantial proportion of their coastlines, repeating the numerous mistakes made by western European Mediterranean countries in the past.

Special importance should be given to countries primarily oriented towards beach tourism on the Mediterranean coast

The widespread perception that tourism has an overwhelmingly positive impact on the sociocultural and economic spheres, the other two primary pillars of sustainability, has led to declines in its environmental sustainability. This is especially true in Albania, Montenegro and Turkey, which are currently undergoing processes of very strong demographic and economic growth in coastal areas as a result of tourism, with the corresponding demographic and economic decline in inland regions. In these countries, tourism jobs are still considered more desirable than most other types of jobs, despite the relatively low salaries compared to developed European countries and the seasonal nature of the employment. In recent years, this has also been the case even in comparatively more developed countries, such as Greece and Croatia, where the economic crisis led to job loss and a drastic decrease in salaries in almost all basic types of jobs other than tourism. It is to be expected that sensitivity to the negative impacts of tourism would be even less pronounced in the African part of the Mediterranean, where many tourism jobs were lost due to the Arab Spring, and doubt has been cast on the continued profitability of existing tourist businesses due to the drastic price cuts implemented to stay in business.

Challenges of Future Sustainable Tourism Development in the Mediterranean in Light of the New Circumstances

Although tourism continues to grow in the Mediterranean in the new millennium, especially in the eastern European part, compared to other regions of the world, this growth is much weaker. For example, the number of foreign tourists in the Mediterranean in the 2000-2015 period increased by 44%, a rate similar to that found in the regions of western Europe, North America and the Caribbean, with the lowest growth being registered in countries in which sustainability was jeopardized in many areas due to intensive development in the past. At the same time, in areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Far East, Southeast Asia and Central America, tourism more than doubled, although it should be borne in mind that many destinations carried out large projects of dubious environmental sustainability, which were only moderately resisted due to the economic benefits of tourism.

Excessive development of tourist infrastructure has not been stopped, despite widespread awareness of the numerous negative consequences of this form of development, primarily, low utilization and occupation of large and valuable tracts of coastline

Significant resistance to the expansion of tourism in the Mediterranean occurred mainly in specific areas of extremely high pressure, mostly consisting of exceptionally attractive urban areas. This was especially true in cities exposed to large numbers of cruise ships, such as Barcelona in Spain, Venice in Italy, Dubrovnik in Croatia or Rhodes in Greece. In-
creasingly, there is resistance to the development of tourist apartments and secondary residences in coastal areas, which are seen as an especially aggressive form of endangering the environment that has been too often ignored in the past. However, excessive development of tourist infrastructure and apartments, such as on the Costa del Sol or in the Balearic Islands in Spain or on the Adriatic coast of Italy, continues on the Mediterranean coast of Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Egypt and other countries, often in even worse forms due to unplanned expansion and poor-quality buildings. Unfortunately, this has not been stopped, despite widespread awareness of the numerous negative consequences of this form of development, primarily, low utilization and occupation of large and valuable tracts of coastline, as well as the fact that excessive development of such infrastructure and overestimation of its value were one of the causes of the economic crisis in Mediterranean EU Member States in the first place.

In light of the above, it can be concluded that these processes will continue, but that increased awareness of environmental issues and even greater awareness of their negative economic effects will partially mitigate them. It is also to be expected that the overall demographic and economic trends in the European Mediterranean will result in slower tourism growth compared to other regions of the world. Finally, there is a danger that the political situation could worsen, especially in the hitherto fastest-growing area in terms of tourism, the eastern European Mediterranean, due to increasing ethnic tensions, especially in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia, along with the existing problems in Turkey due to the effects of the wars in neighbouring Syria and Iraq. However, this does not mean that these countries, like any other Mediterranean country, should ignore the negative impact of tourism, especially excessive construction in coastal areas, the primary tourism resource for the whole Mediterranean.

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Michael Werz
Senior Fellow
Center for American Progress, Washington DC

Max Hoffman
Associate Director
Center for American Progress, Washington DC

Previously relegated to academic and policy circles, the issue of Mediterranean migration sprang dramatically to the public attention in 2015, as Europe faced an unprecedented influx of migrants from the Middle East, the Maghreb, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The migrant crisis has led to widespread human suffering, severely strained European institutional capacities, and sparked tensions between and within countries across the Mediterranean and Europe. The influx of migrants continued in 2016, albeit at reduced levels, and indicators point to the possibility that the region is facing a “new normal” of human mobility. While securitized border responses were quickly cobbled together, less attention has been paid to the underlying drivers of these migratory flows, among them climate change and its complex secondary effects in migrants’ countries of origin. While climate is far from the only factor driving migration – or even the most important – it is undeniably playing a role in shaping the conditions that lead people to migrate. This article will discuss these underlying trends and sketch the contours of what the future may look like along the Mediterranean littoral.

A “New Normal” in the Mediterranean?

The migrant crisis has become a fact of life for governments and societies throughout the Mediterranean. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) registered 363,348 migrant and refugee arrivals to Europe via the Mediterranean in 2016, down dramatically from over 1,000,000 arrivals in 2015 but still higher than previous years. The 2016 arrivals were split almost evenly between Greece and Italy - referred to as the eastern and western routes, respectively. The reduction from 2015 is due to a large drop in migrants along the eastern route through Turkey to Greece (from 853,650 to 173,561). But this overall decline in the number of arrivals should not overshadow the fact that larger numbers of migrants attempted the more dangerous western route across the open sea to Italy and Malta. Migration along this route increased by 15% to 181,436 – with a corresponding increase in mortality rates for migrants. Italy’s 182,000 arrivals in 2016 was the highest total ever recorded, driven by an increase from West Africa and the Horn of Africa – particularly from Nigeria and Eritrea. Over 5,000 migrants died at sea in 2015, despite the efforts of Frontex – the European Border and Coast Guard Agency – which managed to rescue some 90,000 migrants.

1 The International Organization for Migration defines a “migrant” as “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.” This is the definition we will use in this chapter, though with a specific focus on those migrants who have crossed the Mediterranean into Europe through one of the major international routes. The International Organization for Migration, Key Migration Terms, (accessed March, 2017), available at: www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

Frontex attributes the drop in migration along the eastern route to the EU – Turkey migrant deal – wherein Turkey agreed to do more to prevent illegal crossings into Greece in exchange for financial aid, and in which a mechanism was set up to allow for the return of migrants to Turkey from Greece – and the heavily securitized border response in the Balkans, which contributed to the partial breakdown of the Schengen Area. The legality of the EU – Turkey deal has been questioned by human rights and international law experts and has contributed to a broader crisis in EU – Turkish relations. More broadly, the political fervor around migration has contributed to the rise of far-right political parties across the continent and led to deep tensions between EU Member States. With the domestic political stakes so high around Europe and in Turkey – host to an estimated 3,000,000 refugees (2,750,000 from Syria alone) – vulnerable migrants have been essentially used by all sides as a bargaining chip.

Setting aside the legal, political, and human rights concerns – a securitized response is simply unworkable. Caught off-guard in 2015, European governments and the EU quickly expanded and strengthened enforcement efforts in a systematic way. But efforts on the enforcement side alone will never get ahead of the challenge: Frontex oversaw 10,000 returns from EU to non-EU countries in 2016, up from 3,500 in 2015, but there is no way these efforts can keep up with the pace of migration. Meanwhile, the EU-Turkey deal and other bilateral arrangements are vulnerable to shifting political currents. Put simply, these responses are unsustainable and far from ideal. The one-dimensional and regressive response is typical of crisis decision-making, but over time it should give way to a more cooperative and forward-looking response.

It would be the wrong response to focus only on building barriers to migration. The EU has begun efforts to address the root causes of migration, but not yet at the scale the problem will likely require.

But environmental change – including the effects of climate change – represents another important underlying driver among many. Wide swathes of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel – particularly northern Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Mali – face extreme water-stress and are heavily dependent on seasonal rains to maintain subsistence farming, herding, and fishing. This water scarcity and reliance on basic rural livelihoods leave these areas

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Exercising Root Causes

The eastern and western migratory routes are often considered together; there are good reasons for this, as routes are flexible and do shift to some extent in response to conditions, including enforcement mechanisms. But looking at the countries of origin along the two routes and thinking about root causes, important distinctions emerge. The eastern route is truly a “war route” dominated by refugees and migrants from the war zones of Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (though there is a growing body of scholarship on the climatic drivers of the initial unrest in Syria).

The western route is more varied in its composition and its causes; it is dominated by migrants from a broad swathe of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel. The primary drivers of this flow are economic underdevelopment and demography. Countries like Nigeria, Niger, and Mali are extremely poor and rank among the fastest growing populations in the world – indeed, Niger has the highest fertility rate in the world. The desire to escape extreme poverty and seek economic opportunity in North Africa and, possibly Europe, is undeniably the biggest factor driving migrants from these countries.

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very vulnerable to climate change (as well as natural seasonal variation and non-climate change related environmental issues like contamination).

Indeed, the effects of climate change are already being felt in these areas; average temperatures across the Sahel have increased by almost 0.7 degrees Celsius since 1975. The rains on which people rely have become more unpredictable and extreme (both droughts and seasonal flooding), and Lake Chad – on which some 25 million people rely to survive – has shrunk to one-twentieth of its 1960s size. Desertification has slowly pushed the line at which rainfall and groundwater can support agriculture further south in recent decades, rendering whole villages and thousands of square kilometres unsuitable for human habitation.4

Undoubtedly, differentiating the exact impact of man-made climate change from natural fluctuations is extremely difficult. The causality of migratory decisions is also deeply complex, making detailed analysis of the climate’s exact role difficult. But the anecdotal evidence is overwhelming, and the scholarly research is rapidly fleshing out the picture.5 Furthermore, climate change influences numerous other push factors and often “masquerades” under other guises – for example, a farmer’s economic desperation due to unpredictable rains is the result of many factors, among them climate.6 Despite this complicated causality, it is clear that demography and environmental changes – including climate change – are combining with insecurity and poor governance to undermine rural livelihoods and contributing to decisions to migrate. These factors squeeze the margins of life at the family, community, and often regional level. In places with extremely weak governance and limited state capacity to react to crises or organize adaptive responses, people are left with few good options – many turn to the ancient adaptive mechanism of migration.

In places with extremely weak governance and limited state capacity to react to crises or organize adaptive responses, people are left with few good options – many turn to the ancient adaptive mechanism of migration. These trends also interact with and are worsened by conflict. Persistent droughts have ravaged farmers and herders across the region. But it is no coincidence that the most acute food insecurity is currently found in northern Nigeria, the Lake Chad basin, Somalia, and South Sudan – areas which have faced both dire environmental conditions and persistent conflict. Indeed, conflicts across the Middle East and North Africa have left 30 million people facing food insecurity, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

In parts of Nigeria, Mali, and Sudan (as well as Syria) the climate–migration nexus has contributed to tensions over resources and undermined the socio-economic pillars of communities, overwhelmed state responses, and exacerbated political, ethnic, and religious tensions. Neither climatic factors nor demography or migration “explain” these conflicts – there are no simple causal connections to be made in complex crises like that facing Nigeria or

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Darfur – but these underlying trends undeniably deserve greater attention.7

**Western Tools – Rusty and Out of Date**

Unfortunately, these underlying drivers go largely unaddressed, and developed countries too often focus on managing the consequences. In fact, the tools to address the root causes of such complex crises are being weakened in many areas. The new administration of President Donald Trump has sought deep cuts to the budget of the State Department, USAID, and wants to reduce US contributions to the UN and other international organizations. Trump also has sought to reverse US commitments on carbon emissions and fuel standards and questioned continuing adherence to the Paris Climate Agreement. With the full effects of a changing climate coming to bear and the Mediterranean littoral facing unprecedented humanitarian crises, these cuts could not come at a worse time.

Of course, both the US and Europe have numerous aid efforts and pilot programmes aimed at helping vulnerable communities adapt to climate change and at providing basic economic viability in marginal areas. But even without further cuts these efforts are hampered by budget shortfalls and a complete inadequacy of scale. Without yielding to Malthusian alarmism, the demographic and climate indicators – of young and rapidly growing populations with few economic options and increasingly inhospitable rural conditions – are very concerning.

Yet the margins to alleviate the most desperate suffering, extreme poverty, and stark climate vulnerability are actually quite small and can be addressed with a sustained devotion of resources. By focusing on root causes, coordinating programmes, and shifting to cash giving enabled by technology rather than in-kind aid, big improvements can be made. On the question of migration and Europe’s response, border enforcement is not a sustainable solution. The efforts to address root causes must be bolstered by moves to improve the economic and social integration of migrants; after all, remittances far outweigh government assistance to developing countries (furthermore, these cash transfers are the most effective form of assistance).

**The margins to alleviate the most desperate suffering, extreme poverty, and stark climate vulnerability are actually quite small and can be addressed with a sustained devotion of resources**

In reality, given the political stakes, the EU must take an all-of-the-above approach. And, given the political context in the United States, Europe must lead the way. While governments and civil society should understand the political and security implications if these trends go unaddressed, state responses and the corresponding public discourse should be de-securitized. With luck, a coordinated response focused on root causes and integration can get ahead of the worrying trends facing the Mediterranean community.

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One of the most pressing issues of the 21st century is the management and allocation of limited freshwater resources in the world, as they become increasingly scarce. OECD projections show that 40 percent of the world’s population currently lives in water-stressed river basins, and that water demand will rise by 55 percent by 2050 (OECD, 2012). The degree of water scarcity and its political, economic and social implications are felt much more severely in regions like the Mediterranean. Almost every factor linked with water crises globally is present in the region, including: scarcity and variability of freshwater resources; rapidly growing population; changing levels of economic development; misuses as well as poor water management and allocation practices; and burgeoning uncertainties coupled with climate change. An important number of these water resources, particularly in the southern rim of the region, are transboundary in that they cross political boundaries of more than one nation. This increases the complexity of the problem, as it has now become an issue at an international level (Kibaroglu, 2016).

Hence, in order to fully comprehend the water situation in the Mediterranean region, it is necessary to review water challenges at national and regional levels, and set a priority ranking for the problems of a physical, technical, institutional, social and economic nature, which affect the development, management and use of water resources.

### Water Quantity and Quality Challenges

The Mediterranean region displays significant contrasts in its demographic and hydrological features, which have shaped the water management policies of its regional countries. The population of the Basin is 427 million; this accounts for seven percent of the world’s total population. Water stress is a high concern, where a large portion of the world’s “water-poor” population lives in the region (Benoit and Comeau, 2006).

Water resources are unevenly distributed in the Mediterranean region with 72 percent of resources in the north, 23 percent in the east, and five percent in the south.1 Thus, the shortage of water is mainly focused in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. However, the severe droughts experienced between 1990 and 2005 have marked the vulnerability of the water supply even in the industrialized northern Mediterranean countries (Burak, 2008).

Water availability will decrease, particularly in the southern Mediterranean countries, since the regulating capacity of dam reservoirs has decreased under the effect of siltation. Moreover, permanent flow from upstream riparian countries may not be ensured due to drought conditions.

The shortfall in quantity has been compounded by a decrease in quality due to the contamination of surface and groundwater resources in the region (Hamdy, 2001). In the last 50 years, the total water demand has doubled as a result of demographic pressure and from the development of water-intensive activities, such as tourism and manufacturing. Indeed, most of the water is used in the agricultural

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1 Northern Mediterranean countries are Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Monaco, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Cyprus and Malta. Southern Mediterranean countries are Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Eastern Mediterranean countries are Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian Territories.
sector, which presents high rates of inefficiency. In the near future, availability of water will be the “main constraint to agricultural development of arid” and semi-arid countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean. Without efficient control and proper water management, self-sufficiency in food and energy will continue to be a challenge for most countries in the region.

Impacts of Climate Change

The shortage of water in the region has been affected by the impact of climate change through increasing temperatures and variations in precipitation. Once again, the impacts have different consequences in the region: the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are exposed to desertification, increasing soil aridity and exhaustion of water sources. Meanwhile, due to the lack of an efficient soil management policy, the northern shores of the Mediterranean appear more vulnerable to the increase in floods and landslides, as well as the resulting damage to infrastructure.

In the last 50 years, the total water demand has doubled as a result of demographic pressure and from the development of water-intensive activities, such as tourism and manufacturing.

Under the impacts of climate change, there will be less water available for irrigation, energy production, and domestic and industrial use. In many parts of the region, agriculture will continue to be the main consumer of water resources. In terms of food security for the developing countries of the region, the water gap will be around 50 percent; the result of a growing population and deterioration of productivity due to poor water management. For sustainable agricultural development, large amounts could be made available to meet new agricultural demands by improving efficiency in this sector through better systems of on-farm water management, reducing irrigation water-distribution losses, changing cropping patterns, improving irrigation scheduling, and adopting irrigation-efficient technologies. These policies should be supported
by participative irrigation management and water use practices, whereby equitable irrigation water charges are introduced (Hamdy, 2001).

**Technical solutions alone cannot provide the increasing population with a safe water supply and proper environmental protection**

Technical solutions alone cannot provide the increasing population with a safe water supply and proper environmental protection. Integrated water-resources management including technical, managerial, institutional, social and economic aspects constitute the first priority among the range of actions included in the adopted strategy. New dams, river diversions and overexploitation of groundwater resources rarely offer sustainable solutions. The key challenges are to establish priorities and policies for allocating water among competing uses and users, to encourage more efficient and productive use of water, and to reshape institutions to better suit the water constraints. Increasing efficiency by reducing losses and wasteful use is expected to help stabilize water demand in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries (Burak and Margat, 2016).

**Challenges of Transboundary Water Management in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean**

The transboundary water resources shared among the countries of the region or with countries outside the region constitute the majority of the water resources, including both surface and groundwater bodies. Moreover, major transboundary river basins in the Mediterranean, namely the Jordan, Nile and the Euphrates-Tigris are in sub-regions that have experienced severe political tensions. These political circumstances have aggravated past water disputes, which otherwise might have been solved had the political climate been more favourable. In other words, water disputes were overlaid, or at least influenced, by multifaceted interstate conflicts involving other disputes over security, borders, and other issues.

In this context, the water dispute in the Jordan basin is a distribution conflict embedded in a protracted political (Arab-Israeli) conflict, displaying all the characteristics of a zero-sum game, whereas the water dispute in the Nile basin is intimately related to unfair clauses in historical, bilateral sharing agreements. Additionally, the increasing ability and desire of the upstream states, namely Ethiopia, to challenge Egypt’s status as hydro-hegemon and the overall status quo constitute contemporary reasons for tensions over water. In the Euphrates-Tigris basin, the water dispute arose from the competitive, uncoordinated and unilateral water development projects of the riparians, however the political linkages established between transboundary water issues and non-riparian security issues also exacerbated the disagreements over water sharing and allocation.

Despite the numerous water sources disputed between different countries, no conflict in the area has been exclusively caused by water, although this natural resource has played a crucial role in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the disputes around the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile basins.

**Major transboundary river basins in the Mediterranean are in sub-regions that have experienced severe political tensions**

The competing demands for water in the absence of a conflict resolution mechanism may lead to severe consequences in the water-scarce zone. There is an obvious and urgent need for regional water cooperation in the region. Concerned countries should realize that without cooperation they cannot address the issues of each country and the only way out is through cooperation. This can only be achieved through recognition of the interests and the concerns of all riparians through the comprehensive, integrated and environmentally-sound water management of the entire water basin.
In this respect, one productive approach to the cooperative development of transboundary waters in the region should be to take a regional view of the benefits to be derived from the river basins. When negotiations focus solely on water sharing, upstream and downstream differences will be exacerbated, thereby giving greater prominence to water gains and losses. This has regularly required the riparian states to see water as more than just a commodity to be divided—a zero-sum, rights-based view. Instead, they need to develop a positive-sum, integrative approach that ensures the equitable allocation not of the water but of the benefits derived from it. Adding development opportunities in other sectors may enlarge the area of possible agreement and make implementation more manageable. In addition, inter-sectoral linkages may offer more opportunities for the generation of creative solutions, allowing for greater economic efficiency through a basket of benefits.

Bibliography


Mediterranean Cities: Actors or Factors of Development?

Oriol Barba
Director
MedCities, Barcelona

The second ministerial conference of the Union of the Mediterranean on urban development, which was held in Cairo on 21 and 22 May, 2017, has brought the issue of urban development in the Mediterranean back onto the agenda. Following the Habitat III Conference last October in Quito and the establishment of a new urban agenda, the conference in Cairo could be understood as an attempt to adapt this agenda to a regional level. It seems an unlikely coincidence, however, that there were so few Mediterranean mayors in Ecuador in 2016; a fact which, beyond the physical distance, could be interpreted as the Mediterranean’s shortcomings in promoting the urban agenda in the region and its considerable difficulties in projecting the concept as a coherent whole.

The Mediterranean is a territory undergoing rapid urbanization. Between 2000 and 2025, its population will have increased by more than 100 million and 90% of this increase will come from countries in the south and east of the region.1 In recent years, however, we have seen how tackling the challenges of the region exclusively from an urban dimension means leaving out a major part of the story. The concept of territorial cohesion, which includes not just impoverished urban areas, but also l’arrière-pays and, even more relevantly, the interaction between these two realities has a fundamental role to play, especially in countries on the southern shore. We need not mention here the territorial tensions inside cities and between cities and rural areas, which led to the uprisings that began in 2011. An assessment of the current situation, six years later, reveals how, while these tensions may have changed the contexts that frame them – and that is only the case in certain countries – they still remain very much alive and unresolved.

Local Elections as Factors that Consolidate Local Governance

2017 is an important year for Mediterranean cities, as it has been witness to a series of milestones that could have implications for the region at large. Firstly, the aforementioned ministerial conference in Cairo which, from its Declaration,2 could be understood as yet another starting point rather than a space for assessing what has been carried out until now and renewing lines of action. The role of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, after recovering from its confusing start, could be significant in developing an agenda for the Mediterranean, although much remains to be done and any optimism should be tamed by prudence.

Secondly, 2017 is an election year at the local level in two major countries: Tunisia and Jordan. In the former, these are unexpected municipal elections, the first since the 2011 revolution. They will be held on 17 December 2017, following years of waiting and three postponements. The approval of the election law and territorial partition into municipal areas, representing the municipalization of the whole of Tunisia’s national territory (découpage) for the first

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time, have been excessively lengthy processes that, from the local level, have shaken the stability of the entire country. It is worth highlighting the role played by the so-called “special delegations,” or provisional municipal councils, in managing the daily workings of the cities during these years. Despite their instability and lack of democratic legitimacy, the future is likely to offer enough perspective for these municipal councils and those who formed them to be recognized as key stabilizing factors for the country’s definitive, eventual democratization.

In the case of Jordan, the municipal elections set for 15 August will be the first held under the new local administration, approved in 2015, which, while not completely eliminating the central government’s oversight of town councils, does grant broader powers to local authorities for developing policies.

In Jordan, the town councils have played a fundamental role in receiving refugees from Arab countries, albeit not at the same level as Lebanon, a country in which the non-existence of refugee camps has meant that dealing with those displaced by the conflict in Syria has largely fallen to the local administration. A year on, we can look back on the 2016 local elections in Lebanon as a factor that gave the country a certain level of stabilization, and which, following the extension of the Parliament’s mandate in 2013, has helped bolster democratic legitimacy. This, together with the election of President Aoun in October 2016, has contributed to ending the country’s recent political deadlock.

In light of this relative optimism regarding local governance, albeit limited to certain countries, Mediterranean cities, especially on the southern shore, now face certain challenges which will be key in determining their role in the region’s stabilization and development.

Mediterranean cities now face certain challenges which will be key in determining their role in the region’s stabilization and development. The Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI) is especially paradigmatic, promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean together with the French Development Agency (AFD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). It promotes major urban projects in the different countries of the southern Mediterranean Basin. The launch of this initiative has raised questions over the role of local authorities in the development of these projects, in which they often have a less than secondary role both in their design and implementation. It has become increasingly evident that, once these major projects are set in motion, it will be down to the municipalities to manage them on a day-to-day basis, provide them with the basic services they require and, above all, integrate them with the city as a whole, which is often in a state of relative impoverishment when compared with the new developments these projects promote.

Territorial Cohesion and Urban Development (aménagement)

Municipalities’ capacity to position themselves at the centre of development in cities has been seen, in recent years, as one of the main issues of territorial development in Mediterranean countries. The existence of major urban development projects, promoted by development agencies with the backing of investment funds and international donors, and agreed upon by ministries, has demonstrated the potential viability of long-term municipal management, once these initiatives have been carried through.

There are many challenges to which Mediterranean cities must now rise. For this article, we have chosen three which are particularly pertinent regarding cities’ roles as either actors or factors of development. According to our analysis, these challenges are fundamental, not just in themselves, as they encompass key areas of development, but also because they determine the role of cities in Mediterranean governance.

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3 http://iec.jo/sites/default/files/5MunicipalitiesLaw2015EN.doc%20%281%29_0.pdf
Worth highlighting in this regard, is the conference, “Mediterranean cities facing major territorial projects” held in Tetouan on 1 December 2016 in the framework of the MedCities general assembly. Ensuring that local governments have the capacity to rise to these challenges is fundamental for urban development to be carried out with cities and not just on them, particularly in the context of the new globalized economy, in which cities have become the playground for international financial and investment capital. This phenomenon, which is taking on new dimensions – large construction projects in the south and east, unbridled tourist developments in the north –, is common to the whole region and will determine the capacity of cities to govern their own futures. The extent to which urban development is driven by the cities will play a leading role in the influence of local authorities in the region, sustainable growth in the medium and long term being hard to imagine without the active participation of the former.

Climate Change and Environmental Challenges

The link between the day-to-day lives of cities and the environmental challenges facing the Mediterranean region have been a firm feature on the regional agenda in recent years. Beyond each city’s ability to address these issues, is the collective response capacity of local authorities in the face of this common challenge. In the context of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference, the MedCOP was held in Marseille in 2015 and Marrakesh in 2016, and focused on local responses to climate change in the Mediterranean region.

Despite the launch of numerous programmes to deal with this reality, notably including the European programmes SUDEP and CES-MED, which have enabled the development of tangible and replicable initiatives, it is worth noting the cancellation of the MEDCOP conference in 2017, scheduled for the spring in Palermo. This development confirms that the attempt to orchestrate a regional response to climate change on the local level falls perhaps too heavily to the initiative of two countries, Morocco and France, thereby generating doubts about the capacity to put together a truly collaborative response. Moreover, there is also the incipient project of creating a Mediterranean “maison climat” against climate change, whose establishment in Tangier is currently under study. This may shed light on an issue whose level of local involvement still leaves a great deal to be desired.

Security and Social Inclusion

Thirdly, the link between the fight against marginalization and the security dimension of Mediterranean cities continues to be one of the main battlegrounds of development and stabilization in the region. In this area, a weak labour market and high unemployment rates, especially among youth, continue to be the main stumbling block for inclusive urban development.

The drop in tourism, as a result of the wave of terrorist attacks in Europe in recent years, has only made matters worse for the fragile local economies of most countries on the southern shore, which today are desperately trying to put together sustainable growth strategies that can give hope to the large youth populations. This continues, above all else, to be the biggest challenge cities are facing, where a lack of economic activity negatively affects local authorities’ capacities to raise revenues. This, in turn, leads to spiralling stagnation, which is hard to turn around in the short term.

Conclusions

2017 has brought with it a few positive developments on a local scale. However, these have been only partial and moderate, and the region’s growing fragmentation has further deepened, making it increasingly difficult to analyze from a single regulatory framework. The role of cities as actors of development is focused on three major challenges: the capacity to position themselves at the centre of local development, the fight against climate change and the difficulties in generating inclusive growth that strengthens security. Only through transversal strategies that strengthen the links between municipalities and their role in proposing regional responses to these problems will Mediterranean cities become true actors – and not just factors – in the region’s development and stabilization.
Impact of the Decline in Hydrocarbon Prices on the Macroeconomic and Macrosocial Balances of the Algerian Economy: The Urgency of a New Economic Policy

Dr Abderrahmane Mebtoul
University professor, international expert

Oil Prices in the Face of the New Global Energy Changes

As a result of unstable fossil fuel markets and the need to protect the environment and reduce gas emissions, countries around the world must review their energy strategies with a view to ending the hegemony of oil and gas. The energy transition – which could be defined as the shift from a human civilisation predominantly powered by cheap, abundant, dirty fossil fuel to one in which energy is scarce, renewable, expensive and cleaner – is intended to replace stock energies (oil, coal, gas, uranium) with flow energies (wind, solar). This poses the problem of a new growth model, as it affects all households and economic sectors, including transport, construction, industry and agriculture. Today’s technical choices are long-term societal commitments. To ensure a coherent energy transition, it will be necessary to strengthen grid interconnections and optimize their management (smart grids) in order to facilitate energy efficiency, industrial development, and the shift towards a new growth model that fosters the emergence of an energy industry conducive to economic integration. In this context, national and international public-private partnerships should be established to promote competition, as monopolies inevitably result in higher costs.


Overall, in 2016, Algeria had a foreign trade deficit of $17.84 billion, 4.8% higher than that registered in 2015. Algerian imports fell 9.62% compared to 2015. Hydrocarbons accounted for the bulk of exports in 2016, with a share of 93.84% of the total volume of exports. Algeria’s hydrocarbon sales totalled $27.66 billion in 2016, with an average price per barrel of $45. That is a decline of more than $5 billion in one year, despite a 10.6% increase in the volumes exported, according to the Bank of Algeria. Due to this decline in receipts, especially Sonatrach’s, tax revenue from oil fell to 1,805 billion dinars (down from 2,273.5 billion dinars in 2015). Total foreign exchange inflows between 2000 and 2016 stood at $798.36 billion, of which more than 97% was directly or indirectly (derivatives) from hydrocarbons. The level of external debt remains historically low, at 2.45% of GDP, or $3.85 billion, according to data from the Bank of Algeria published on 12 April 2017. This is down from an estimated $23.203 billion as of 31 December 2003. The estimated foreign-exchange reserves between 1999 and 2016, 97/98% of which come directly or indirectly from oil and gas receipts, were as follows:

The value of a currency depends on confidence and a productive economy. However, Algeria has a fun-
### TABLE 12  
**Evolution of Oil Prices (in €/barrel)**

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### TABLE 13  
**Imports, Exports and Hydrocarbon Exports**

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<td>2011</td>
<td>40.47</td>
<td>57.05</td>
<td>55.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>45.19</td>
<td>44.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>39.47</td>
<td>79.29</td>
<td>77.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27.63</td>
<td>60.16</td>
<td>58.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>21.45</td>
<td>54.61</td>
<td>53.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>20.35</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>45.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18.30</td>
<td>32.08</td>
<td>31.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>13.53</td>
<td>24.61</td>
<td>23.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>18.82</td>
<td>18.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>19.13</td>
<td>18.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>9.17</td>
<td>22.03</td>
<td>21.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Customs statistics from the Algerian National Statistics Office (ONS) and the National Centre for Customs Statistics (CNIS) of the Algerian Ministry of Finance.

### TABLE 14  
**Foreign Exchange Reserves and Price of the Dinar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Level of Foreign Exchange Reserves (Billions of dollars)</th>
<th>Price of the Dinar (Dinars per dollar)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>77.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>79.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>77.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>72.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>73.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>70.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>72.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>69.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>110.2</td>
<td>64.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>143.1</td>
<td>72.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>147.2</td>
<td>74.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>162.2</td>
<td>72.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>182.2</td>
<td>72.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>190.6</td>
<td>77.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>194.0</td>
<td>79.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>179.9</td>
<td>80.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>144.1</td>
<td>100.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>144.1</td>
<td>110.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bank of Algeria/IMF and ONS
damentally rentier economy, and rentier economies contradict the basic laws of economics, whereby, for instance, any devaluation of the currency should, in principle, boost exports.

At the budgetary level, according to the IMF, in 2016 Algeria needed an oil price of $87.6/barrel to balance its budget, down from $109.8/barrel in 2015. This is consistent with the Bank of Algeria report presented by the bank’s governor in late January 2017, according to which foreign-exchange reserves fell $29.9 billion between 2015 and 2016 and the country’s external debt stood at $3.3 billion. At this rate, the foreign-exchange reserves could melt away in three years. Thus, the Algerian dinar holds steady as a result of the foreign-exchange reserves from hydrocarbons. Any decline in the foreign-exchange reserves will automatically lead to a gradual devaluation of the dinar, as is the case of many large oil-producing countries. Were the foreign-exchange reserves to trend towards zero tomorrow, the gov-
The government would be forced to sharply devalue the dinar (to 200 dinars per euro); the exchange rate on the parallel market would be 250 dinars per euro.

### The Impact of the Decline in Hydrocarbon Prices on the Real Economy: GDP, Employment and Inflation

**Evolution of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Current Prices**

Algeria’s nominal GDP stood at $166 billion in 2016, down from $172.3 billion in 2015, according to the IMF’s projections in its report on the growth outlook for the Middle East-North Africa-Afghanistan-Pakistan (MENAP) region. Table 15 shows the evolution of the GDP growth rate (%) from 2000 to 2015.

The unemployment rate for university graduates climbed from 13.2% to 17.7%. Furthermore, the breakdown of unemployment by qualification held shows that the 44.9% of the total unemployed population, hold no qualification at all.

This downward trend in the GDP deflator is mainly due to the changes in the export prices of hydrocarbon products and in the price of oil per barrel discussed above.

### Impact on Unemployment

From an economic perspective, unemployment is the result of a mismatch between supply and demand in the labour market. According to the ONS, in 2016, the unemployed population, as defined by the ILO, was estimated at 1,272,000 people, with a national unemployment rate of 10.5%. The employed population was estimated at 10.845 million people in September 2016. Of the 1.271 million unemployed, 792,000 were men and 479,000 women. By gender, unemployment is higher amongst women (20%) than men (8.1%). Unemployment amongst young people between the ages of 16 and 24 is 26.7%. Significant disparities can be found by age, education and qualification held. The evolution of unemployment by level of educational attainment shows that the registered increase has been fairly pronounced amongst university graduates. The unemployment rate amongst unskilled labour fell from 8.3% to 7.7% between April and September 2016. The rate for university graduates climbed from 13.2% to 17.7%. Furthermore, the breakdown of unemployment by qualification held shows that 570,000 unemployed, or 44.9% of the total unemployed population, hold no qualification at all. Holders of vocational
qualifications account for 27% of the unemployed population, whilst university graduates account for 28.2%. Meanwhile, in September 2016, the population defined as falling within the “unemployment halo” stood at 797,000 people. This population is characterized by its low level of educational attainment; 68.8% hold no qualification, whilst 61.3% have not gone beyond secondary school. However, the survey’s most important finding was that 71.6% of the unemployed accept jobs below their professional skill level, 68.4% accept jobs that do not match their profile, 28.7% accept tedious or strenuous jobs, and 73.1% accept poorly paid ones.

**Impact on Inflation**

Inflation accelerates the excessive concentration of national income in the hands of a rentier minority to the detriment of productive profits and fixed incomes, with the consequent erosion of the purchasing power of the majority. The question is thus: how can an Algerian living on the guaranteed national minimum wage (€200-250 a month when a kilo of meat costs €10) cover his or her essential expenses, i.e. food, transport, healthcare and education? With the housing crisis, the family unit (pooled costs) and the informal economy act as temporary safety valves. To guard against this depreciation, which inevitably leads to inflation and, thus, a weaker dinar, Algerians not only put their assets in land, real estate or gold, but also put some of their savings in foreign currencies. This is a security-based choice in a country in which the evolution of oil prices plays a decisive role.

**What about Per Capita Income?**

According to the ONS, by late 2015, the average monthly net salary, understood as gross salary less the various withholdings (income tax, social security and pension), was 37,800 dinars, with relatively high wage differentials depending on skill and industry for activities linked to hydrocarbons and banking compared to the national average. This is because per capita income, as well as per capita GNP, is an overall rate that blurs the concentration of national income. Without the poorly targeted

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**TABLE 17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Inflation</th>
<th>Wage Bill %</th>
<th>Income of the Self-Employed Billions of dinars</th>
<th>Per-capita Income Dinars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>136,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1,048</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>114,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>1,356</td>
<td>164,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>189,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>1,673</td>
<td>229,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td>1,862</td>
<td>253,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>2,017</td>
<td>274,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2,134</td>
<td>2,340</td>
<td>319,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td>2,743</td>
<td>282,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2,907</td>
<td>3,049</td>
<td>333,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3,863</td>
<td>3,487</td>
<td>397,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>4,287</td>
<td>4,007</td>
<td>432,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4,391</td>
<td>4,569</td>
<td>434,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4,674</td>
<td>4,955</td>
<td>440,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4,928</td>
<td>5,293</td>
<td>415,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total wage bill as share of GDP (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>22.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>25.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>26.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>26.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>26.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>27.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>29.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and poorly managed subsidies, which benefit the poorest in equal measure as the rich and encourage trafficking at the borders, making Algeria one of the world's largest importers of grains, thanks to hydrocarbons, inflation would be much higher than the official rate. Of course, the perception of inflation is different for a household receiving the guaranteed national minimum wage of about €200, which must spend more than 70% of its modest income on basic necessities, than for a household with a net monthly income of €10,000 or more.

General Conclusions

The future actions of the Algerian government that call for political and social consensus will require the courage to reform quickly and on a massive scale. Far from mere cyclical patches, this will mean deep structural reforms at all levels in keeping with a strategic medium- and long-term vision. Algeria can accomplish this within a reasonable amount of time. To do so, it must relearn to look to its future with confidence, to secure in order to protect, to prefer risk to rent, and to unleash initiative, competition and innovation, for the main challenge facing the country in the 20th century will be time. Putting off the reforms will only lead to slow disintegration, impoverishment, and a loss of confidence in the future, for once the oil and gas revenues dry up, Algeria will no longer have the means to prepare these reforms and will live under the grip of fear, seeing threats all around where others see opportunities.

This growth requires everyone to commit, not just the government. Solidarity should be organized to combine economic efficiency and equity with civic engagement and permanent productive dialogue. Putting off the reforms will only lead to slow disintegration, impoverishment, and a loss of confidence in the future.

Algerian power has long lived under the illusion of eternal rent. The majority of Algerians, whose income depends more than 70% on rents from oil and gas, must know that the future of employment and their purchasing power no longer lies in the civil service, just as that of companies no longer lies in recurring subsidies. The bulk of the action is in the hands of Algerians, who will have to want change and share a desire for the future, to learn more, adapt, work more and better, create, share and dare. The nature of power must also change. This will require a gradual overhaul of the government through a true decentralization around major regional economic hubs, which, in turn, will involve a transition from a management state to a regulatory state, reconciling social costs with private ones. To be part of global growth, Algeria will have to create a true growth economy, developing the entire population's knowledge, from computer skills to teamwork, from Arabic and French to Chinese and English, from primary school to higher education, from nursery to research. It will then have to facilitate business competition, creation and growth by introducing modern means of financing, reducing the cost of labour and simplifying employment rules. It will have to foster the development of key new sectors, including digital, healthcare, biotech, environmental industries, and personal services for an aging population. At the same time, it will need to lay the conditions for social, geographic and competitive mobility, to enable everyone to work better and more, to change jobs more easily and with greater security. To successfully carry out these reforms, the state and local authorities will need to be dramatically reformed as well.

Putting off the reforms will only lead to slow disintegration, impoverishment, and a loss of confidence in the future.

Algeria has been experiencing a crisis of governance for decades, if the structural reforms are slowed, the current governance crisis is likely to morph into a financial crisis by 2018/2020.

Algeria has been experiencing a crisis of governance for decades. However, the current situation is different from the impact of the 1986 crisis, which had economic, social and political repercussions between 1989 and 1999. Despite the country's considerable, albeit declining, foreign exchange re-
serves, if the structural reforms are slowed, the current governance crisis is likely to morph into a financial crisis by 2018/2020.

Algeria, which could become a pivotal and stabilizing country for the Mediterranean and African region, must adapt to the new global changes.

In spite of the unprecedented monetary expenditures, economic performance is mixed and could lead to socio-political crises in the long run should spending continue unchecked, which points to the urgency and inevitability of the structural changes to be made. Algeria can once again see strong growth, but it will involve a combination of factors: a dynamic labour force, knowledge, a taste for risk and the latest technological innovations, resistance to any form of harmful monopoly, effective competition, a renewed financial system capable of attracting capital and an opening up to the outside world. These reforms are primarily driven by a thriving democracy, legal stability and equity: politicians will talk of social justice. The implementation of all these reforms cannot be delegated to any particular minister or placed in the hands of any particular authority. They will only be possible if, at the highest level of government, a strong political will (which can only emanate from the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister) is able to lead Algerians and convince them of their importance; hence, the need, in the Internet age, for active, transparent and permanent communication. Each minister will then need to be given a personal “roadmap,” supplementing his or her letter of appointment and covering all the decisions falling under his or her jurisdiction. Given the importance of the measures to be taken and the urgency of the situation, the government will have to choose the most appropriate means of implementing each decision: the acceleration of existing projects and initiatives, a law accompanied, from the moment it is presented to Parliament, by the implementing decrees needed to enact it, or, for emergencies only, the use of decisions by order. Algeria, which could become a pivotal and stabilizing country for the Mediterranean and African region, must adapt to the new global changes by analysing the impacts of the Association Agreement with Europe, which entered into force on 1 September 2005, and its eventual accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and by integrating itself into the Maghreb, the bridge between Europe and Africa, its natural social space.
The Energy Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Cyprus Problem

Dr. Theodoros Tsakiris
Assistant Professor of Geopolitics and Energy Policy, University of Nicosia
Energy Programme Director, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Athens

The discovery over a period of seven years, (2008-2015) of approximately 2.56 trillion cubic metres (tcm) of natural gas1 beneath the waters of the Exclusive Economic Zones of Cyprus, Israel and Egypt, has concentrated international attention on the potential emergence of the region as an important gas producer and potential exporter. Since then, various political and economic stakeholders from the region and beyond have tried to evaluate the significance of this newfound wealth and whether it would stabilize or destabilize the eastern Mediterranean.

Some of the conventional thinking which resulted from their evaluation is that the region will have a major impact on Europe’s gas diversification strategy, helping it to measurably diminish its dependence on Russia by exporting to the EU anywhere between 20-50 bcm/year,2 while at the same time contributing to solving the Cyprus problem.3 These perceptions over-emphasize the perceived “capability” of these discoveries to either restructure regional geopolitics or limit the EU’s imports from Russia, which is and will most likely remain Europe’s primary gas supplier well into the late 2020s. The discoveries, which until the early 2020s will be mainly directed to markets inside the eastern Mediterranean, tend to reconfirm and not fundamentally alter the geopolitical status quo.

In other words, there is no “peace pipeline” in the eastern Mediterranean that could provide an important enough driver to change the cost/benefit analysis of the parties involved in the region’s entrenched conflicts, such as the Arab-Israeli dispute or for that matter the Cyprus conflict. The discovery of the Gaza Marine field in the EEZ of the future Palestinian State in 1999 did not move Israel or the Palestinians closer to peace. The discovery and monetization of Leviathan in Israel as well as the contested claims between Lebanon and Israel over an 854 km² portion in their respective EEZ did not seriously worsen their bilateral relationship nor did it stop Lebanon from moving forward with its own exploration round scheduled for 2017.

The proposed linkage of the Cyprus Question with the monetization of Cypriot Gas reserves boils down to the erroneous understanding that the potential revenues generated by the export of these gas reserves can act as a “peace incentive” for Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots since it would:

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1 820 bcm were discovered between 2008-2012 in Israel, in Tamar (238 bcm), Leviathan (500), Dalit (21 bcm), Tanin & Karish (60 bcm). Around 100 bcm were discovered inside Cyprus’ EEZ, the Aphrodite field, and 1,645 bcm in the Egyptian EEZ, 548 bcm between 2010-2014 in various fields in the offshore Nile Delta, 182 bcm in the Attol-1 field discovered by BP in North Damietta license area in March 2015 and 914 bcm in the Zhor field discovered by ENI in August 2015.


(a) limit Turkey’s own dependence on Russian gas and further diversify EU gas imports from Moscow via Turkey, (b) give a positive incentive for Turkish-Cypriots to share the Republic of Cyprus’ (RoC) prospective wealth after a solution is found and (c) provide a major means of financing the cost of reunification thereby facilitating an overall settlement.

Let’s Talk Turkey: Facts vs Perceptions

Unfortunately, all these perceptions are flawed if one considers that:
(I) The volume of potential gas exports Turkey could realistically import, not only from Cyprus, but from Cyprus and Israel as a whole, are too limited to generate a major shift in Turkey’s policy of continued military occupation and colonization. If Cyprus were to sign a standard 15-year contract in order to sell 7.5 bcm/y this would amount to around 11% of Turkish demand, expected, according to the projection of the Turkish Energy Ministry, to reach around 65 bcm/y by 2023. It would also represent 100% of Cypriot exports tied to one market, exported via one route and linked to one price.

There is no “peace pipeline” in the eastern Mediterranean that could provide an important enough driver to change the cost/benefit analysis of the parties involved in the region’s entrenched conflicts, such as the Arab-Israeli dispute or for that matter the Cyprus conflict.

Even if Turkish-Israeli relations returned to a level of mutual trust similar to before the Marmara incident of 2010, Israel cannot logically commit more than 50% of its entire export capacity estimated at 18-20 bcm/y over a 20-year period to only one market, linked to one price and transported via only one pipeline, such as the 600 km Leviathan-Ceyhan project. Given the technical characteristics of such a long and deep pipeline project, a minimum of 10 bcm/y have to be committed for this pipeline to make economic sense and become “bankable.” These 10 bcm/y, however, represent 50% of the entire net export volume of the Israeli State, leaving it with only two additional market options, Jordan and one of the three LNG trains currently sitting idle in Egypt. At the same time, Turkey has longstanding strategic gas partnerships with five alternative suppliers (Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Algeria and Nigeria) and the international spot LNG-market, through which it can cope with any major disruption in supply. If Israel loses or is cut off from the Turkish market how easily can it find alternative buyers?

Even in cases when the bargaining power relationship is reversed, as is partly the case between Russia and Turkey, Ankara is highly unlikely to make key foreign policy concessions in order to get cheaper and/or more diversified gas imports. If Turkey, which is dependent on Russia for almost 60% of its gas demand, would shoot down Russian military jets for allegedly violating its airspace for 17 seconds in December 2015; what kind of concessions could the Israelis and Greek Cypriots, for whom the situation would be even more precarious, expect to get before selling Ankara, respectively, 50% and 100% of their net export capacity?

There are those who claim that Israeli/Cypriot gas would merely transit to Europe via Turkey, but Ankara is unable to play the role of a transit state for East Med gas to Europe, especially in ways that are inimical to Russian interests after the Russian-Turkish agreement in October 2016 for the construction of the Turkish Stream pipeline system. The proponents of Turkey as a transit state for Israeli gas fail to note that there is no free capacity in the existing Turkish Natural Gas System to transport the gas from the Ceyhan region to the Turkish-EU border, with the exception of 5 bcm/y in the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP).

More importantly, they also disregard the fact that there is no pipeline connection between Ceyhan and TANAP and that, since the Trans Adriatic Pipeline will be used to serve the current (10 bcm/y) and future (+10 bcm/y) export needs of Azeri producers, such as SOCAR and BP, there is no pipeline system available to carry the gas from Eastern Thrace to its Central European destination.
No Easy Wealth: Can Cypriot Gas Exports Pay for the Costs of Reunification?

(II) The policies of Mr. Akinci, the leader of the Turkish-Cypriot community, and those of his predecessors are identical to those of Turkey when it comes to the critical issues of who should control the licensing process for the issuing of exploration/exploitation permits, and what the optimal export option is. The Turkish Cypriots are more focused on securing equal rights with the RoC in granting the licenses to the International Oil Companies (IOC) and in sharing the gas profits – even in the absence of a solution – than constructively engaging the Greek Cypriots in issues of critical importance to Nicosia and Athens, such as Turkey’s rights of military intervention and the presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus even after a settlement is reached. Turkish Cypriots would essentially prefer for Nicosia to stop all hydrocarbon-related activities, which they deem as illegal and unilateral, although such claims are not recognized by any other state in the world save, of course, Turkey.

There are those who claim that Israeli/Cypriot gas would merely transit to Europe via Turkey, but Ankara is unable to play the role of a transit state for East Med gas to Europe

(III) The potential net profits generated by Aphrodite’s monetization will be – although significant – too limited to allow the RoC to self-finance the majority of its reunification costs that could reach anywhere between €20-25 billion. The current basic scenario Cyprus is working on is based on a price of $6.5/MMBtu (million British thermal units) for gas sold to Egypt’s idle LNG terminals that would create a gross revenue stream of $23-25 billion for all Block 12 partners (BG/Shell, Noble, Avner, Delek Drilling, CHC), of which $10 billion would need to be returned to the IOCs for expenses already incurred. From the remaining $13-15 billion, anywhere between 40-50% will be given to the RoC, resulting in a net revenue of approximately $6.3 billion over a 15-year period equal to $420 million/year or an average of €370 million/year for the duration of the period, if the current euro-dollar exchange rate remains at a ratio of 1:1.13. These €370 million/year must be compared against a 2013 GDP of €18 billion for the RoC and will be far less in the early years of the export contract’s execution, since most of the revenues will be given to the IOCs in order to recoup their investment costs. Even if the contract were signed today it would take until 2021 for the exports to start and until 2024-2025 for any serious revenue to begin flowing into Cyprus’ coffers, whether reunited or not.

Turkey’s attempts to stop the development of Cyprus’ potential hydrocarbon wealth will only mean that the Turkish Cypriots will have nothing to gain from such a development if Ankara succeeds in its efforts to block further exploration and exploitation in the Cypriot EEZ

Aphrodite’s gas sales would represent only 2% of the RoC’s 2013 GDP at a time when the island’s tourist industry is generating more than €2 billion, equal to 11.5% of GDP. This is hardly enough to cover a substantial cost of reunification expenses, including compensation for refugees, which must be available during the first post-settlement years, in order for any settlement plan to have a real chance of being accepted by the majority of Greek Cypriots in a referendum. Turkey’s attempts to stop the development of Cyprus’ potential hydrocarbon wealth will only mean that the Turkish Cypriots will have nothing to gain from such a development if Ankara succeeds in its efforts to block further exploration and exploitation in the Cypriot EEZ. In April 2017, ExxonMobil, Total and ENI did not seem to be intimidated by Ankara’s
reactions and threats, since they signed new exploration contracts with Nicosia granting exclusive rights over blocks 6, 8 and 10 of the Cyprus EEZ, while in July 2017 Total is expected to start drilling on Block 11 where many geologists believe the beginning of a Zhor-sized discovery may lie.

Cypriot and Israeli gas exports to or via the Egyptian LNG facilities are the shortcut for EU gas imports from the eastern Mediterranean and the beginning of an intra-regional pipeline network.

If Turkey succeeds in bullying Cyprus into accepting a moratorium of its exploration strategy then there will also be no benefits for the EU; and these benefits are significant to EU energy security, although they do not come close to constituting a serious alternative to Russia. If, by 2020-2021, Cypriot and Israeli gas is fed to Egypt’s existing idle LNG facilities that are able to liquefy up to 15.86 bcm/y, then the EU will be importing East Med LNG in significant volumes for the first time since the beginning of the Arab Revolts in early 2011. For this to happen, Cyprus needs to sign a gas sales and purchasing contract in 2017. For every year the signing of such a contract is delayed there is a 4-5-year delay in its eventual execution.

Egypt’s LNG facilities that were commissioned in 2005 reached their peak utilization rate in 2010 with a total liquefaction volume of 9.71 bcm. 48.6% of that LNG (4.72 bcm) was eventually consumed in the EU, primarily in Spain which at the time imported 2.62 bcm. Under such a scenario, the EU may import anywhere between 30-50% of the combined Damietta/Idku export capacity amounting to 5.23-7.93 bcm/y.

The East Med can make a contribution to the EU’s energy security that is comparable to the 10 bcm/y of Azeri gas the EU expects to receive from TANAP/TAP by 2020. There is an important difference though. Aphrodite and Leviathan were discovered in 2011 and can reach Europe by 2021. Shah Deniz was discovered in 1999 and is expected to reach the EU by 2020. Cypriot and Israeli gas exports to or via the Egyptian LNG facilities are the shortcut for EU gas imports from the eastern Mediterranean and the beginning of an intra-regional pipeline network that will complement the structured cooperation between the region’s status quo powers, Cyprus, Greece, Egypt and Israel. If more reserves are discovered in either Egypt or Cyprus’ EEZ in the coming months and years, or if a discovery is made in the Lebanese EEZ, then both a regional LNG export terminal in Vassilikos and the East Med Gas pipeline project could easily become viable export options.

To put it into perspective, according to the 2016 BP Statistical Review of World Energy, Russia exported more than 131 bcm to the EU in 2015 covering around 32% of its gas consumption. Around 70% of these exports are bound to long-term export contacts which are set to expire between 2025-2027 and cannot be unilaterally broken on the side of the importer due to the existence of “take or pay” clauses that oblige the importer to pay for up to 70-85% of the contracted gas volume regardless of whether or not this is consumed.
Media Coverage of the Migration Crisis in Europe: a Confused and Polarized Narrative

Dina Matar
Senior Lecturer
Centre for Media Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London

There is no doubt that what has been termed the migration or refugee crisis in Europe has been framed in the public and media discourse as the defining phenomenon of the second decade of the 21st century. And there is no doubt that the media coverage of the mass movement of people escaping continuing violence and wars in the Middle East and persecution elsewhere into Europe has deflected attention from the continuing phenomenon of mass displacement – internal displacement and population movements within nation states due to persecution and natural disasters – and the flight of Syrians into Jordan, Turkey or Lebanon since the Syrian uprising began in March 2011.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 65.3 million people were forced out of their homes in 2015, of which 21.3 million were refugees and more than one million crossed into Europe in that year, sparking a crisis as various countries in Europe struggled to cope.1 The vast majority arrived to European shores by sea, but some migrants made their way overland, principally via Turkey and Albania. Most of the refugees came from Syria, but ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, abuses in Eritrea, as well as poverty in Kosovo, also contributed to forcing hundreds of people to look for new lives elsewhere. While the number of refugees arriving in Europe has steadily fallen since its peak in 2015, media attention to the refugee situation remains high and greatly polarized, not least because of associations (irrespective of whether these are true or false) between refugees and terrorist incidents in France, Brussels and Germany and, by implication, with militant jihadist parties such as Islamic State, and because of the instrumentalization of the migrant crisis by various political parties in Europe as a question of national interest and security in a changing environment.

It is beyond the scope of this article to provide a detailed analysis of the media coverage of the crisis over time; rather it intends to reflect on general trends culled from a variety of published studies and interpretations of trends and issues. It is also beyond the remit of this paper to discuss the divergent ways in which political parties, particularly those on the far right in Europe, have used the refugee and migrant crisis in the form of a “moral panic”2 to stoke up support and legitimize their exclusivist nationalist policies, or the ways in which mainstream media have been complicit in normalizing such “moral panic” discourses while conflating migration with terrorism and with rising Islamophobic tendencies and attitudes on the continent.

As ideological processes, “moral panics,” as Stuart Hall has argued, represent a way of dealing with what are diffuse and often disorganized social fears and anxieties, not by addressing the real problems and conditions underlying them, but through projections which are then displaced onto an identified social group.3

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1 See www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.html for further details and updated information on the refugee situation.
2 Moral panics have been defined in terms of threats to societal values and interests and presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media. See Stanley Cohen, Folk Devils and Moral Panics: Creation of Mods and Rockers, MacGibbon and Kee, 1972.
The Media – Divisive and Problematic Trends

The use by political elites and media entities of “moral panic” discourses to construct divisions and differentiations along lines of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or other modes of difference within national or international boundaries and in relation to migration is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, critical cultural thinker Stuart Hall has consistently discussed concerns around the growing number of migrants from former British colonies, particularly the Caribbean, in the 1960s and 1970s. Writing from a different perspective and specifically in the context of the Western media’s coverage of Islam and Muslims, Edward Said, too, has argued that “sensationalism, crude xenophobia, and insensitive belligerence are the order of the day, with results on both sides of the imaginary line between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that are extremely unedifying.”

In terms of the current refugee crisis, it is not an exaggeration to say that media coverage of what has been termed “the migration” or “refugee” crisis in Europe and elsewhere has followed similar trends, and has been as politically divisive and inconsistent as have official policies regarding the phenomenal increase in the number of people seeking refuge in Europe. While policy and political divisions about how to cope with the large number of refugees arriving in Europe due to war, internecine conflict and persecution are not surprising, what is worrying are the ways in which mainstream media coverage of the refugees or migrants in Europe and in the Middle East and North Africa have tended to repeat stereotypes and frames that construct the refugees as a collective “other” that is different from “us,” and as a humanitarian or security problem, and in the process silencing, dehumanizing and marginalizing those represented and talked about.

Furthermore, the word refugee, often used interchangeably with the words migrant or asylum seeker, has been essentialized as a fixed and rigid category in which refugees have been delineated as those who are “worthy” or “unworthy,” or those “who qualify” for protection and those who “fail to qualify,” or, in other words, those who deserve our compassion and sympathy or those whom we should be afraid of, ignoring the diversity of their experiences, journeys and the historical contexts that led them to leave their homes. Even a cursory survey of mainstream media coverage of the refugees reveals that the migration story is often told as a story of human loss made visible through iconic images and visual representations of human suffering, or a story of massive movements of populations that have the potential to disrupt the living conditions, security and welfare of host communities, underlining how the media have been implicated in the reproduction and dissemination of narratives constituted by geographies of power and control.

What is worrying are the ways in which mainstream media coverage of the refugees or migrants in Europe and in the Middle East and North Africa have tended to repeat stereotypes and frames that construct the refugees as a collective “other” that is different from “us,” and as a humanitarian or security problem, and in the process silencing, dehumanizing and marginalizing those represented and talked about.

Even before the current crisis, research conducted by the European Commission in 2011 found a range of attitudes towards migration, although overall public perceptions have been negative, particularly because the public debate on migration in many European countries has been heavily influenced by populist anti-immigration politicians and negative media framing of the refugees. The research also showed that the repetition of particular divisive terms (us and them, for example) and the construction of differences along racial, ethnic or religious lines have had a negative impact on public

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attitudes toward the refugees. The report suggested that the “negative migrant stereotypes are a result, at least in part, of negative press coverage” (2011: 9), which was further compounded by inflammatory and dehumanizing language about migration and migrants, also used in the language of populist anti-immigration political parties, as well as mainstream political figures.  

In a recently published report, commissioned by the UNHCR, researchers at Cardiff University, however, reported variations in how the mainstream media in five European countries covered asylum and immigration issues. According to their findings, Sweden came across as the country whose media coverage was the most positive towards refugees and migrants, while the UK was reported as having the most negative coverage and the most polarized, though this was more evident in the right-wing media, which was reported to be uniquely aggressive in its virulent campaigns against refugees and migrants and in stoking Islamophobic attitudes. The report noted in its findings that in most media, negative commentary on refugees and migrants usually only consisted of a reported sentence or two from a citizen or far-right politician – which was often then challenged within the article by a journalist or another source. In the British right-wing press, however, anti-refugee and migrant themes were continuously reinforced through the frames used in the coverage as well as in editorials and comment pieces.

Broadly speaking, the research found that the various media in the countries studied differed widely in terms of the predominant frames they used in their coverage. For instance, the use of humanitarian frames to describe the refugees was more common in Italian coverage than in British, German or Spanish press, while the use of securitization frames (understood as perceived threats to the welfare system, cultural beliefs and values of the country concerned) was more prevalent in Spain and the UK. The research also showed that media coverage tended at first to reflect empathy, solidarity and goodwill towards migrants fleeing war zones or those who are victims of tragic events, but in time, the tone changed to become more concerned and even hostile towards migrant communities as the media used stereotypes or focused on crime, threats of terrorism, radicalization and anti-social behaviour.

Indeed, in the British media, over time, the securitization frame became more dominant, with migration talked about as “uncontrolled” and as a security threat and the migrants as a burden to British society – to the labour market, to border security and to welfare – thus serving to legitimize measures such as restricted asylum and tougher border control. However, British television news reporting, which often focused on the plight of the refugees at Calais or in the Mediterranean features some of the most empathetic coverage of the refugees themselves. Conversely, the broadcast news reports also tended to frame the crisis as a problem of illegal migration, rather than settlement of the refugees, thus inadvertently deploying the securitization frame in referring to how the UK should respond. In Germany, in contrast, securitization discourses were used to refer to rising xenophobia as a security threat, and nationalism and fragmentation as a threat towards European values.

The MENA Region

Broadly speaking, coverage of the refugee crisis in Arab media generally tended to repeat the narratives of the European media. Interestingly, however, the media in some countries, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, sometimes deployed a “blame” frame for the crisis, suggesting that it could have been averted if the US and its Western allies had intervened in the unfolding militarized conflict in Syria and acted against its President Bashar al-Assad. Such frames were also instrumentalized to support or legitimize the geo-political interests and policies of these countries, which have supported the insurgency against the Syrian regime in various ways. For example, well-known political analyst and former Qatari diplomat Nasser Al Khalifa, who often uses his personal Twitter feed to elicit support for particular policies, accused Western officials of “shedding crocodile tears” over the crisis and that they

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6 In July 2015, former British Prime Minister David Cameron described the refugees seeking to reach European shores as “swarms of people coming across the Mediterranean.”

7 See the full report on www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.html.

8 It is worth noting that the two countries oppose Syria’s President and have supported opposition groups allied against him.
“watched Syrians being killed by Assad’s chemical weapons and barrel bombs for five years.” In Egypt, the refugee crisis was used by some media commentators to legitimize the military rule under General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, warning Egyptians of conflict and war, and therefore a similar fate to that of Syria, if they did not rally behind the President. The use of the legitimating frame was often juxtaposed with a negative portrayal of the refugees as burdens on society. One such association was made by a popular Egyptian presenter through a video of Syrian refugees in Lebanon on Al-Nahar TV, a private Egyptian channel. In the video, she called the refugees “disrespectful, lost and ruined,” and urged Egyptians to support the army if they didn’t want to end up like the people in Syria.

Coverage of the refugee crisis in Arab media generally tended to repeat the narratives of the European media

Interestingly, media in those countries hosting Syrian refugees, such as Jordan and Lebanon, have also deployed the securitization frame in their coverage of the refugee crisis, expressing concerns about possible terrorism. These frames were also used by the pro-Syrian regime media in order to legitimize the regime’s ongoing war against its opponents. For example, some of the headlines in the major state-run newspapers al-Watan, al-Thawra, al-Tishreen and al-Ba’th include: “Terrorists Make Their Way into Europe in Guise of Refugees;” “The West Creates Terrorist Organizations to Achieve Its Plans in the Region, A British Doctor Incites to Join ISIS, and Austria Stops Accepting Refugees;” and “Germans Arm Themselves Fearing Refugees.” A few other interesting themes emerged as well, such as reports on provocative Western rhetoric against migrants. An article from arabianbusiness.com reported comments by an American politician about her desire to shoot Syrian refugees. Few news outlets focused on the lives of Syrian refugees in their adoptive countries, with media focusing on the crisis rather than on personal narratives of survival and coping in difficult situations.

Conclusion

The role of media in supporting, enhancing or legitimizing particular frames and narratives has been amply discussed in media and cultural studies, but the debate about whether this role can be ascribed to the power of media institutions, to global capital, to the relationship between political entities and the media, or the ability of some entities to cement their control through the media remains open and unresolved. Clearly media power is not a tangible reality, but a social process organized around distinctions between a manufactured “media world” and the “ordinary world” of ordinary people. Essentially, this means that the media influences the way we come to understand the world as a web of narratives in which power and knowledge are part of one system. In the context of the refugee crisis, there is no doubt that how much we see or how much we hear about it through the mainstream Western media is inextricably linked to the ways in which particular narratives produce common assumptions and construct ideologically-driven divisions along racial and religious lines, which embed themselves in the media, academia and other places. What is troubling though is that these assumptions and divisions become naturalized, normalized and taken for granted, thus becoming acceptable explanations and descriptions of the crisis and those who are experiencing it. Indeed, how refugees are described, categorized and represented matters because news not only reflects the events taking place and views that are already “out there,” but also actively contributes to, and constructs, our understanding of what those events mean. It is in this way that the media shapes the range of possibilities for understanding what the story is on migration, and the way we perceive migrants and refugees.
Rural Migration: Agriculture and Inclusive Development for a Resilient Mediterranean

Cosimo Lacirignola
Secretary General
International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Paris

As the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and current Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres once said, “The 21st century will be the century of people on the move.”1 While humankind has been moving for millennia, the phenomenon has intensified over time due to population growth, increased inequality, globalization, frequent conflicts and national disasters.

A Migrating Planet: The Mediterranean at the Heart of the Phenomenon

The Mediterranean has long been a major migratory region, but the factors responsible for this mobility have gradually become more diverse. It is simultaneously a region of origin, destination and transit for Mediterranean populations and the populations of peripheral regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa. Mostly internal to each country, migration generally takes place from inland rural areas to cities. Although the migratory dynamics of the Mediterranean are historical and polymorphic, they have taken on an increasingly complex geopolitical configuration in the region’s current context. Notwithstanding the many southern Europeans who have left their countries in recent years as a result of the economic crisis, it is important to underscore the extent to which this international migration primarily concerns the countries on the eastern and western shores of the Mediterranean. These countries have become areas of transit and even settlement, with massive arrivals in the Near East and North Africa of people fleeing war or seeking better living conditions. Several million people have been displaced or have migrated to the region in recent years, driving large populations into Mediterranean countries that are themselves experiencing economic difficulties, rendering the allocation of budgetary and logistical resources to assist the influx of new arrivals and facilitate their integration into society even more complex.

The Root Causes of Migration

The globalization of trade, increased social and economic disparities within and between countries, demographic growth, the anarchic development of certain areas, the inherent tensions caused by the scarcity of vital resources such as water, land and food, and even the growing constraints due to climate change have all contributed to intensify the migratory phenomenon. In rural areas, issues related to the status and condition of farmers and fishermen (labour conditions, informal employment, low income, precariousness and lack of long-term visibility, low expertise of the actors, insufficient social protection, etc.) are particularly likely to lead to migratory flows. Within the Mediterranean region, salinization, soil erosion, water scarcity and increasingly frequent droughts are all risks that are expected to increase over the course of this century. The agricultural sector is also the most affected by shocks associated with climate change. When extreme climate events

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occur, agriculture bears most of the costs. The side effects of climate change, including increasingly frequent health crises and the resurgence of certain pests, likewise place considerable burdens on the agricultural sector. When rural populations depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihood and are no longer able to carry it out following these types of disasters, they have no choice but to migrate to cities or other countries. Water, financial, climate and food insecurity are all catalysts for this distress migration from rural areas to urban ones or abroad.

In recent years, the classic Mediterranean model of migration to Europe has undergone profound changes: the socio-political crises that have plagued the region since 2011 have given rise to the development of new forms of migration, such as environmental and climatic migration, as well as exponential growth in the number of asylum seekers and refugees. The phenomenon of environmental migration affects the poorest countries in the Mediterranean and the most marginalized rural populations, which are both the most vulnerable to climate change and the least equipped to cope with it.

Enhancing the Value of Rural World Solutions: Agriculture as a Tool for Resilience

In the face of these multiple and interdependent challenges, agriculture seems to offer keys for understanding, but also for action. It is important to consider the role of agriculture and rural development in preventing the exodus to cities, but also to address some of the challenges that migration poses. More generally, these reflections are part of an approach aimed at strategically reclassifying rural regions and agriculture as major determinants for the stability of the region’s countries.

A profound change in agricultural practices is needed to improve agricultural productivity, enable more sustainable food production, and prevent migration to cities. To this end, it is important not to neglect the fundamentals underpinning better agricultural and rural development: improved living conditions and logistics in rural regions, good natural resource management, adaptation to climate change, food and nutritional security for the people, and promoting the resilience of agricultural and fishing communities to crises (whether related to the market, prices or health or due to natural disasters, conflicts, etc.). In this regard, in the Mediterranean, agriculture and rural regions clearly remain a source of resilience for many families in the face of economic shocks. The development of triple-performing agriculture – at the economic, environmental and social levels – is, in this sense, a mobilizing project for Mediterranean countries, bringing together the traditional knowledge, innovation, and highly diversified local specificities that make up the Mediterranean’s richness.

Agriculture can be a tool for preventing the risks and managing the tensions related to migration. The development of appropriate agricultural policies can be viewed as a means of fostering rural welfare. The FAO estimates that investment in the agricultural sector is eleven times more effective for reducing poverty than investment in any other sector. Agriculture should thus be viewed as a lever of social and economic development for rural areas and, consequently, a means of reducing the number of people seeking to leave the countryside or their countries due to the lack of attractive prospects. Although far from a miracle solution, agriculture has enormous potential as a tool for development, resilience and peace.

The Contribution of Diasporas: Shared Benefits

Migration can lead to shared benefits for both the host society and the society of origin. These benefits are not only economic: they can be political, social or cultural… Throughout history, the intermingling of populations has helped to consolidate state structures. Several nations have turned this diversity, this melting pot, into a major strength, leveraging it to maintain their capacity to stimulate innovation and openness. Diasporas the world over play a key role in the different levels of shared benefits, across both time and space. Lying at the crossroads of three continents, the Mediterranean is a region of permanent, multidirectional migration that exemplifies these shared benefits. Since the dawn of civilisation, Mediterranean populations have been on the move. Indeed, it is one of the hallmark traits of the region, which has been characterized for centuries by the flow of human, economic and cultural exchanges. This constant mixing has gradually formed a sort of social mosaic, in which
identities intertwine and cosmopolitanism grows ever stronger.

In the Mediterranean region, agriculture in particular has multiple ancient ties to population movements. It is worth noting that historically agriculture has been a geographical reference point for moving populations. It was through agriculture that mobile populations settled over time: when the first crops and animals were domesticated several millennia ago, as wheat was in the Fertile Crescent along the eastern shore of the basin, people gradually settled in the region, abandoning their nomadic way of life. Agriculture in the Mediterranean also highlights the shared benefits resulting from successive population flows. The existence of highly diverse cuisines (that nevertheless share many cultural and culinary traits), encouraging the emergence of the Mediterranean diet, a lifestyle and sustainable approach to consumption that cuts across eras and borders, is an example.

The side effects of climate change, including increasingly frequent health crises and the resurgence of certain pests, likewise place considerable burdens on the agricultural sector.

Migrants from rural areas represent a segment of agricultural skills to be maintained, particularly in future integration processes in their host countries. In many countries of the EU and the Mediterranean Basin, it is migrants who ultimately revitalize rural and mountain areas, strengthen the agricultural labour force and meet the need for skilled agricultural workers. Thus, in addition to improving the working conditions of migrant agricultural workers, it is worth weighing the advantages to be gained from seasonal agricultural migration as long as it is well-organized. Likewise, efforts should be made to establish educational and training pathways, particularly agricultural ones, for migrants when they reach the host country. The issue of education and training for these populations is a major challenge, especially for forcibly displaced populations. Language training has to be supplemented with technical training tailored to the knowledge of these populations and to the job opportunities the host countries are likely to offer them, particularly in rural areas.

Furthermore, the influx of investment and knowledge transfer to the migrants’ rural areas of origin plays a fundamental role in the rural development of their home countries. According to the FAO, 40% of international money transfers are sent to rural areas and international remittances are three times the size of official development assistance. This reinvestment is a real asset and an opportunity to reduce rural poverty and implement a more inclusive development model.

**Inclusive Development to Address the Causes of Distress Migration**

Mediterranean countries have strong human, economic and agricultural assets. Despite the existing inequalities, several economic, social and demographic indicators show an overall improvement in living standards, albeit in a context of sharp disparities between and within countries. As a result, Mediterranean countries share a common problem: youth migration. This translates to a true waste of human resources throughout the region. Inclusive development ensuring social and territorial cohesion is an absolute priority for Mediterranean countries. Agricultural and rural worlds must thus be assigned greater value as strategic sectors for economic growth and political stability. In addition to providing food, agriculture also creates jobs and stability in fragile rural areas where more inclusive social and economic policies need to be implemented. The often untapped potential of young people, their employability and their active participation in rural life are a major via for reflection and action to prevent rural exodus, for they are a vital component that is unlikely to be replaced. The crux is therefore to offer them decent living conditions in rural areas. The aging populations of rural areas and the agricultural sector will pose challenges if current trends hold. It is thus necessary to work to create decent and viable, but also attractive and innovative jobs, for example, by stimulating entrepreneurship or the social economy in rural areas. Rural regions should be made more attractive from a cultural point of view for those young people seeking a more urban lifestyle. It is likewise necessary to think of inclusive develop-
ment models that involve all communities in local policy and the organization of social life in rural areas. Technical and economic responses alone are not enough. They must be complemented by meaning, an ideal to be attained, and by political responses and a social contract to which people adhere. Participatory initiatives based on dialogue and co-development can help lift young and rural populations out of their threefold marginalization: geographic, economic and social. They are ramparts of the most radical ideological currents, which feed on feelings of frustration, injustice and despair. The stakes are staunching the outflow of the life force of rural areas and cultivating a feeling of belonging to a community of interest. Countering the “rural brain drain” and “radical withdrawal” requires greater inclusion of inland and agricultural areas in countries’ development and economic growth dynamics and providing local youths with high-value and diverse employment opportunities with a high social impact.

The Indispensable Europe-Mediterranean-Africa Dialogue: Linked Fates

A constructive dialogue between Europe, the Mediterranean countries and Africa is today an indispensable tool to strengthen food security, foster more inclusive development and prevent distress migration. It is to this end that CIHEAM has strengthened its partnership with the European authorities, which have become aware of the importance of the stakes of food security and rural development to achieving greater stability in the region. Food and climate issues must be high on the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. In the wake of the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris climate agreement, Europe has an unprecedented opportunity to regain a certain geopolitical clout on food and agricultural issues, especially by maintaining the CAP at the heart of its mission. Co-development must be a priority, and Europe can take concrete action to reduce uncertainty and contribute to food balances and agricultural development in Northern Africa and the Middle East. In the context of this constructive exchange, the Mediterranean is a key player and a link between Europe and Africa to increase regional integration. The Mediterranean region holds several world records in terms of conflict, unemployment, food dependency, natural resource depletion and the expected impacts of climate change. Migration has always played a fundamental role in its development dynamics. As a result of the stakes involved, political action and cooperation tend to target the effects and consequences of these dynamics, obscuring the policies that could be put into place to prevent or better manage them. There can be no peace without food security, no food security without agricultural production, and no agriculture without development dynamics in rural areas. Food security and agriculture are closely linked to peace and stability in these areas and should be considered priority issues to prevent forced displacements and migration.

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Deconstructing Migration and Refugee “Crises” in the Mediterranean. The Need for a Broader Temporal and Geographical View for a Policy Reorientation in Europe

Lorenzo Gabrielli
Researcher at GRITIM-UPF, Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona
IEMed Associate Fellow, Barcelona

During the last decade, the issue of migrant and refugee arrivals on European shores in the Mediterranean has undoubtedly been a constant key topic on European political agendas, as well as in the media and as a civil society concern. Nevertheless, since the Arab Spring, different “crises” related to border crossings by refugees and migrants at different points of the Mediterranean (Lesbos and other islands in Greece; the islands of Lampedusa and Sicily in Italy; Ceuta and Melilla in Spain) have further increased the issue’s political relevance. The arrival of refugees, mainly Syrians, in Europe since 2015, has raised further concerns in the European capitals and also in Brussels. Critical voices in Europe and elsewhere have underlined that the “refugee crisis” of 2015 was, in reality, a political crisis of Europe, unable to deal with the limited number of arrivals, if compared to refugee figures in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan (Achilli et al., 2017), and also if considered in relation to the EU population. Therefore, it is important to note that the management of migration in the Mediterranean is being constantly developed and upgraded under the pressure of a specific border “crisis” or “emergency” (Gabrielli, 2015). This fact has serious consequences both on the policies being developed, and on peoples on the move.

Since the end of the 1990s, the main actions implemented by European countries towards migrant and refugee arrivals in the Mediterranean have been related to the “external dimension” of migration policies, namely externalizing the task of controlling flows towards third countries (Gabrielli, 2011). However, research into the interactions between control externalization and human flows in the Mediterranean region have already shown the flexibility and “autonomous character” of migration flows to reroute their terrestrial and maritime paths towards Europe (Gabrielli, 2011; Casas-Cortes et al., 2015), largely thanks to the journeys being so fragmented (Crawley at al., 2016). The fast adaptation of flows to migration controls in the Mediterranean push European countries to continuously extend and deepen the externalization process (Gabrielli, 2016).

The same reactive and short-term paradigm also characterizes the recent political initiatives carried out by European actors during the last few years: increased externalization of control towards neighbouring third countries, following an ubiquitous logic of providing a quick answer to a border “crisis,” without even considering alternative policies. In this regard, we could mention the EU-Africa Valletta Summit on Migration, on 12 November 2015, where the EU Trust Fund for Africa (“EU Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa”) was launched. This framework of cooperation with 23 countries in North Africa, in the Sahel/Lake Chad region, and in the Horn of Africa, seeks to foster a larger and deeper extension of the externalization of control, even if partially disguised as development aid to enhance third countries’ “capacity building” in the field of border and mobility control. Another key piece of the European political architecture to outsource migration and, in this case,
control refugees is the “agreement” between the EU and Turkey of 18 March 2016, outsourcing to Turkey the control of border crossings into Europe.

A further step in this direction is represented by the EU Commission communication “Towards a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration” presented on 7 June 2016, following the proposal of the former Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi. This new partnership explicitly links the delegation of migration control toward third countries, on the one hand, and development and trade policies, on the other. The geographic focus of this framework is an attempt at bypassing cooperation with Libya, which has become more difficult due to the country’s unstable situation, developing the externalization of control for migration flows towards surrounding Sub-Saharan countries, like Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Chad, Niger, as well as towards Mali and Senegal (Gabrielli, 2016). Nevertheless, the buffering of mobility outside Europe planned in this document is not limited to Africa, but also implies cooperation with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

We should also mention the deepening of cooperation with Tunisia, as proved by the negotiations on readmission and visa facilitation opened at the end of 2016, following the Mobility Partnership already signed with the EU in March 2014. Moreover, in order to fully understand the policy paradigm driving European action in the Mediterranean we should recall the declaration of the German Interior Minister, Thomas de Maizière, in November 2016. He explained publicly that people intercepted in the Mediterranean Sea, be they refugees or not, must be sent to “processing centres” in North Africa, mainly Tunisia and Egypt, where they will eventually apply for asylum and wait for an answer.

The last European initiative in this sense is the deepening of cooperation with the Libyan government of Fayez al Sarraj, settled in the informal summit of La Valletta on 3 February 2017 and set up to provide training and equipment for Libyan coastguards in order to prevent crossings to Italy. However, as previously underlined, if we take into account long-term interactions between migration policy in the Mediterranean, on the one hand, and migratory flows and paths, on the other, a desperate need emerges to change the paradigm of current policies. Understanding the real results of such policies and underlining which of their elements are counterproductive are basic steps for developing a new proactive, evidence- and ethic-based policy framework of migration and mobility in the Mediterranean. To do so, it is crucial to consider a broader temporal and geographic framework concerning irregular crossings and human flows in the Mediterranean.

Firstly, analyzing a longer time frame than the usual short-term “crisis”-based one will help to fully understand the dynamic character of migration flows and the evolution of the interactions with restrictive policies. In this regard, it will become evident that the ongoing “crisis” related to irregular border crossings in the Mediterranean is a constant, structural feature of the region, since the introduction of visa obligation for citizens of non-EU Mediterranean countries, as well as for other third-country citizens (Gabrielli, 2015). Migrant and refugee arrivals on Mediterranean shores in European countries can no longer be considered as unexpected, and even the aforementioned “crisis” related to Syrian refugees’ arrivals of 2015 was in many senses unsurprising (Spijkerboer, 2016).

Secondly, considering interactions in the entire Mediterranean space will allow us to overcome the narrow analysis focused on the policies of a single European receiving country, on a specific migratory route or on a single “crisis.” This will also lead to an understanding of the limitations of current European externalization in the Mediterranean and to moving on from emergency or “crisis”-based logic (Gabrielli, 2015). Indeed, beyond apparent short-term decreases in crossings, or in the use of a single route, current political measures are incapable of stopping irregular crossings in the long term, across the entire Mediterranean (Andersson, 2016). Even in the case of the

EU-Turkey deal, the decline in arrivals came prior to the signing of the agreement (Crawley et al., 2016), and while deportation numbers have been limited, safe corridors have not been established and refugees are piling up in Greece in dire conditions (Garcés-Mascareñas & Sanchez-Montijano, 2017). This cooperation framework aimed at buffering mobility outside Europe is also amplifying the market possibilities for smugglers and traffickers (Achilli, 2016) and, at the same time, displacing migratory paths to riskier routes.

The fast adaptation of flows to migration controls in the Mediterranean push European countries to continuously extend and deepen the externalization process

Besides the ephemeral effects of these policies versus the adaptability of the flows, the current migration policies in the Mediterranean are worsening the already existing harmful consequences on human rights and physical integrity of refugees and migrants. In particular, the European externalization of migration control towards neighbouring countries has raised serious concerns about the violence to which refugees and migrants are exposed on their journeys. The aforementioned renewal of cooperation with Libya is, unfortunately, particularly illustrative of the risks this type of collaboration entails for the safety of migrants and refugees, as well as for the respect for their human rights, due to the worrying track record the Libyan authorities have in “managing” migrants and refugees in the country.\(^5\)

At the same time, this growing exposure to violence in transit spaces is also related to the rise in deaths in the Mediterranean space. Despite the political narrative linking the reinforcement of border control and cooperation with neighbouring countries with the need to reduce the risks related to irregular crossings of migrants and refugees, the number of people dying while attempting to reach Europe is constantly growing (Last & Spijkerboer, 2014; Fargues & Di Bartolomeo, 2015). The latest data provided by IOM on dead or missing persons in the Mediterranean clearly confirm this trend: 3,279 persons in 2014, 3,784 in 2015, 5,098 in 2016, and 666 in 2017 (by 13 April 2017).\(^6\)

Finally, we should also remember the limitations on human rights and the right to asylum resulting from these migration control practices (Andrijasevic, 2010; Hyndman & Mountz, 2008; Gabrielli, 2014). This combination of a strengthening of policies to control flows, a growth in border fatalities and the degradation of the human rights of peoples on the move clearly indicates that there is a crucial need for a comprehensive reorientation of the paradigms and tools of the current policy framework. There is, then, a deep ethical need to reconcile state interests with the protection of humans on the move and to reverse the current European migration policy framework in order to prioritize the safety of people over that of states (Zapata-Barrero & Gabrielli, 2017).

Furthermore, to develop a new proactive, evidence- and ethic-based policy framework of migration and mobility in the Mediterranean we need to go beyond the “crisis” framework and acknowledge that irregular crossings are a structural feature of the Mediterranean. Opening “safe channels” for refugees, as well as formal channels for recruiting foreign workers in the region will, therefore, become legitimate options for reconciling the effective protection of the rights of people on the move, their safety and the effectiveness of their right to asylum, as well as becoming a factor smoothing the path towards more symmetrical relations between Mediterranean countries.

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Civil Society in the Mediterranean: An Indispensable Actor between the North and South Shores

Giovanna Tanzarella
Institut de recherche et d’études Méditerranée Moyen-Orient (iReMMO), Paris

It was the end of one world and the beginning of another. The 1990s, symbolically, opened with the fall of the Iron Curtain, inaugurating the end of the Cold War and the bipolar world. The reunification of the European continent was on the horizon, as was peace in the Middle East. Another world seemed possible, even in the Mediterranean Basin. Indeed, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP, Barcelona 1995) aimed to create a framework of new relations between European and South Shore countries, under the sign of peace, shared prosperity and fostering the decisive role of civil society organizations (CSOs) to lend this new policy substance. An unprecedented mobilization of civil society was encouraged, supported and funded. New ties were created between European and Arab civil society, in particular through the Euromed Civil Forums, regular meetings scheduled around EMP ministerial conferences. Numerous networks, platforms and groups were formed covering the entire spectrum of fields: conflict prevention, development, environment, culture, education, youth, women, human rights and many other topics. At the heart of this mobilization of energies were two main goals: first of all, the desire to influence and, if necessary, correct the policy priorities of the EU and its partners, already dominated by free trade and security concerns; secondly, the solidarity of European democratic movements with their counterparts to the south who suffered repression and persecution, with the aim of boosting the forces of democratic change. Naturally, within European civil society, there were rifts between the sectors more active on the highly “political” issues of civil rights and human rights, and less politicized groups that did not hesitate to co-operate with authoritarian governments. In retrospect, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was considered an extremely fertile period for Europe and the Mediterranean, and a political framework fostering the emergence of sustainable forms of co-operation, mentoring and exchange between civil society on both North and South shores of the Mediterranean.

After 2003, the question emerged of guaranteeing the independence of Euromed Civil Forum processes, including with relation to the European Commission and the governments in the area. In 2005 in Luxembourg, a Euromed Non-Governmental Platform (ENGP) was created to provide a space for the majority of civil networks active in numerous domains, becoming the preferred intermediary of national and EU institutions as well as the organizer of the Euromed Civil Forums. The aim was to establish permanent mechanisms of dialogue between civil society and institutions in (particularly European) public policy decision-making processes.

The main lesson to be learned from this innovative period is that the new general political framework – the EMP – played a positive role in the emergence and structuring of social and civil forces in societies in the Mediterranean macro-region. The political support the Platform enjoyed effectively boosted the voice of civil society and contributed to building strong ties and joint work habits between the two shores. Naturally, a non-negligible, more radical part of the social movements of countries in the area kept itself on the margins of this process, preferring to use bargaining power rather than dialogue in their relations with public institutions.

By 2005, the conclusion was unanimous: the EMP had run out of steam. In an attempt to relaunch the
process, the Union for the Mediterranean was founded in 2008, which de facto left no room for civil society and to boot, marginalized the European Union, which lost its leadership. At the same time, the economic, financial and political crises in Europe contributed to drying up the sources of public funding allocated to Euro-Mediterranean civil society. The end of the Barcelona Process had a critical effect on the dynamics involving Euro-Mediterranean civil society, with repercussions on the main non-governmental organizations and civil platforms, which have since been struggling to function without a political liaison framework or sufficient resources.

The Arab uprisings of 2011 reshuffled the cards. The movements spontaneously arising in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Libya all had a strong presence of young activists from the world of associations and NGOs, the latter playing an essential role, especially in the constitutional stage following the uprisings in some cases.

In certain countries, the uprisings had a direct positive influence on individual and collective liberties (freedoms of association, assembly and expression, for instance), creating an environment much more conducive to deploying the work of NGOs and trade unions. But nearly everywhere, these achievements were accompanied by constant attempts by governments to roll back the clock (as in Egypt as of 2013). In this new, changing context, we are witnessing an effervescence of expressions of civil society in all its forms: in addition to classic associations, there are new forms of engagement, namely informal, unconventional forms via internet; moreover, where laws have been modified, thousands of associations, parties and trade unions are emerging. The new forms of citizen association bear witness to an explosion of social and workplace demands.

Nonetheless, a renewed focus on the national agenda and on pressing national social and political concerns are making the reference to the Mediterranean disappear from discourse and from people’s spirits. The “Euromed” is progressively giving way to the “Euro-Arab.” This change of focus, still ongoing today, has led to a geographic narrowing of the neighbourhood on the Europe-Arab world axis.

More deeply, it is the attitude towards Europe that is changing: its policies are increasingly deemed supportive of the reviled former regimes. The new sense of restored dignity leads to the belief that the EU should respect the priorities expressed by the countries themselves and not impose its agenda through bilateral relations.

The Arab revolutions have undoubtedly had repercussions on civil society organizations in both North and South. In Europe, new associations have appeared as a result of renewed interest in South shore countries, and the emergence of these new actors, including in Arab countries, challenges “historic” organizations to open themselves to change. Insofar as Arab civil networks, they face political differences associated with the latest developments: How to politically interpret the fall of President Morsi in Egypt – was it a military coup or a popular movement? Was it the beginning of a counter-revolution, or the continuation of the revolution that began on 25 January? Another point of controversy, still very topical, was already being discussed in 2012, relating to positions on the Syrian revolution: Can Bashar Al-Assad be considered a repressive dictator or should he be considered a champion of anti-imperialism and defender of the Palestinian cause? These political debates, though not entirely new, carry the mark of the highly complex Near East context dividing the CSOs in the region.

For European institutions, the Arab revolutions initiated a phase of redefinition of political priorities that would lead to a revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (in 2015) with a renewed focus on the role of civil actors. In this framework, ‘Structured Dialogue’ (SD) was launched in 2014, on the initiative of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission, by Enlargement and Neighbourhood Commissioner Štefan Füle. The SD, a space for exchange, discussion and dialogue between the EU and the southern neighbourhood CSOs, was punctuated by regular meetings (Forums in Brussels from 2014 to 2017) and focused on three priority topics: mobility (migration, refugees, freedom of movement), inequality (poverty and exclusion, economic and social issues, employment) and the constriction of civil society’s space (rights and freedoms of association, civil dialogue on the national level, access to economic, social and cultural rights).

Note that the most significant organizations in the area greeted this new channel for dialogue with interest, at least the sector of civil society that considers the work of advocacy before the government a priority. European civil society, for its part, had to
demand its presence in the process, which at first only envisaged a bilateral, European Commission – south shore civil society setup.

After three years of meetings, the process is supposed to lead to the creation of a “regional hub for structured dialogue” during the course of 2017, a sort of civil society hub aiming to “promote citizen engagement and political participation of young women and men, empowering them to assume a central and visible role in addressing common social challenges in partnership with peers to the South and North of the Mediterranean.”

The new forms of citizen association bear witness to an explosion of social and workplace demands.

This dynamic, at first inspired by a real will to be open to ideas of “Southern neighbourhood country” societies, nevertheless showed its limits, considering the power relations between CSOs, weakened by the return of authoritarianism, and European institutions determined to call the shots. The initial European will was to create a space for political dialogue that, in time, would involve not only the EU and civil society, but also national authorities of southern countries. But progressively, these ambitions were watered down. In addition, “top-down” method of operation characterized the test phase of the “Structured Dialogue” over the course of 2014-2016, with an insufficient degree of transparency and co-decision on important choices (organizations involved, agenda, schedule).

This is regrettable, considering the quality of the stakeholders, particularly the highly professionalized, independent Euro-Mediterranean civil society, both in the South and the North, which is capable of producing qualified proposals, alternative analyses and a critical discourse on the ensemble of challenges crucial to the future of the countries in the region.

As a last remark, one could likewise question the absence of connection between the Structured Dialogue process and the organizations or movements involved, on the innovative topic of “climate justice,” another recent dynamic emerging in the wake of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

And finally, this panorama would be incomplete without mentioning the extremely difficult situation the NGOs, association leaders and human rights defenders are experiencing today. Indeed, in this area as everywhere, we are witnessing a phenomenon that has been intensifying for several years: the massive, unprecedented decrease in space for civil society. These difficulties take different forms and are often compound, first arising from the promulgation of new laws limiting freedoms of association, assembly and protest, as well as the freedom of expression. These violations of freedoms are accompanied by very severe restrictions on the funding of CSOs by foreign sources, as well as administrative harassment driven by increasingly complex new procedures and ranging from closing down association headquarters to blocking websites and freezing bank accounts. And finally, new measures required of banks, supposedly for security reason or as part of the struggle against money laundering, have now made obtaining vital subsidies impossible. These practices affect both NGOs and social movements, but they hit individual activists the hardest: harassment, prohibition of personal movement, freezing of personal assets and all sorts of intimidation, and even arbitrary arrest, disappearance and murder.

This attack against the freedom of action of civil society – unprecedented in scale – often finds a pretext in the struggle against terrorism. More globally, it is associated with the regression of democracy accompanying the rise of populisms and a tendency towards national retrenchment experienced by many countries, some of them even in the heart of Europe. The alarm was loudly sounded by Civicus in its 2014 annual report: nearly 70 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, six people out of seven live in a country where freedoms are severely endangered.

Euro-Mediterranean countries are facing a major democratic challenge. Civil society is a stakeholder and a key actor, and is also counting on European support in order to take up this challenge.

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1 `Guidelines for Grant Applicants, Call for Proposals: Budget Line(s) BGUE-B2016-22.040101-C1-NEAR Reference: 155559 (page 5).`
Cultural Diplomacy and Cooperation in the Mediterranean: a Constant Investment

Damien Helly
Visiting Professor
College of Europe, Bruges

Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Cooperation and Cultural Relations Five Years after the Arab Spring

The cultural dimension of international relations in the Mediterranean has been researched quite extensively. Cultural diplomacy experts tend to distinguish cultural diplomacy from cultural relations. While cultural diplomacy primarily involves state apparatuses, cultural relations unfold beyond the State and flourish among people and societies. This distinction matters in the Mediterranean region where international relations between states have, in the last five years, been marked by two main conflicts in Syria-Iraq and Libya – and the consequent increase in migration flows, the return of debates on the role of political Islam (Turkey and Egypt), repression policies in Egypt and Turkey and the EU’s difficulty in effectively managing migration shocks.

The Syrian and Libyan conflicts are closely linked to a wider Muslim jihadist phenomenon to which not only southern Mediterranean citizens contribute, but also northern Mediterranean or EU citizens (the so-called foreign fighters of Daesh). Recent crises have created tensions among Arabs (in the case of Daesh), between Arabs and non-Arabs (Syrian-Turkish tensions), among Muslims and between some Muslims and non-Muslims (as demonstrated by anti-Muslim moves taken by President Trump). Conflicts have also provoked large refugee flows that host countries have struggled to deal with. This context might explain contradictions between, on the one hand, support for religious diversity (around 80% in the region according to 2012 polls) and, on the other, fear of cultural diversity as a threat to a society’s stability (between 46% and 48%).

In such a context, cultural relations and diplomacy in the region have to be understood as a mix of cultural relations taking place in the framework of a space created from four angles: states, society, markets and knowledge producers. Of course, cultural relations and diplomacy also have to be understood in a wider context and in a historical perspective, but the length of this article does not allow for such an assessment.

While some 2008 studies started by stating that Western-Arab relations were grounded in deep mistrust, this article looks at the conditions under which cultural diplomacy and relations in the Mediterranean region have evolved in the last three years, without making a clear-cut judgment on where they stand. Since the very idea of a “Mediterranean cultural region” is not shared, perceived or experienced homogeneity-

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4 For a historical overview of Euro-Mediterranean relations, see YOUNGS, Richard. http://carnegieeurope.eu/2015/05/18/20-years-of-euro-mediterranean-partnership-pub-60337
5 BERGERS, Maurits et al. Mind the Gap or Bridge the Gap? Culture in Western Arab relations, Clingendael, 2008
ecessarily, the shapes cultural relations have taken in recent times vary greatly.

**The Main Actors and Levels of Cultural Relations**

Cultural practices and habits in the Mediterranean have been influenced by the globalization of new communication technologies and the Internet as much as by internal societal dynamics. On the societal level, cultural relations go far beyond cultural diplomacy in the region: people-to-people contacts through migration flows, educational exchanges, city twinning, cultural trade or gastronomy outweigh government-led initiatives.

Polls run between 2009 and 2012 show that there is a convergence among societies regarding the importance attached to family values, suggesting that “basic and intimate human relations associated with kindness, solidarity, mutual care and respect count more in the region than ideological or theological positions.”

Statistics reveal that in the southern Mediterranean, around half of the population was under 25 in 2011 (only 27% of the population in the EU-28) and 20% of the population was between 15 and 24. These populations make widespread use of social media, although in different ways. For instance, research has shown that the role of the Internet during the Arab Spring varied from one country to another (eg. strong role in Tunisia and much less so in Egypt). The diffusion and consumption of music and films online is increasing across all Mediterranean societies, with specific connections to global networks or publics organized according to diaspora, language (in the case of Turkish speakers) or other community factors.

In the “South,” some cultural professionals and organizations have developed international cooperation, sometimes espousing Mediterranean geography, but not always. The re-granting Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) receives funding from Arab but also US (and Asian & European?) sponsors. Cultural research organizations have developed regional programmes. Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, in partnership with Ettijahat and the European Cultural Foundation and Mimeta, have managed an open platform on cultural policy in the Arab region, with new online dissemination tools. In the Maghreb, some organizations have decided to join Pan-African cultural networks such as Arterial, which organized its 2014 annual conference in Rabat. Relations between cities across the Mediterranean Sea are essential links and drivers of cultural diplomacy, even more so when diaspora groups are involved.

Until 2014, the Arabic book sector was still dominated by Lebanon and Egypt. In the Maghreb some intellectual property rights still belong to French organizations and publishing houses are connected both to France and to other Arab countries.

**Cultural relations and diplomacy in the region have to be understood as a mix of cultural relations taking place in the framework of a space created from four angles: states, society, markets and knowledge producers**

Although international cultural relations policies also vary greatly from one country to another, governments (except those busy with internal conflicts and instability) have kept investing in cultural relations to pursue national interests. Such investments usually focus on heritage and tourism policies (Egypt, Algeria), but also on cinema (Morocco, Algeria) and create co-funding opportunities for the European Union and its Member States.

Because of its magnitude, the EU still represents the lion’s share of cultural cooperation in those sectors. Its co-financing of the Anna Lindh Foundation targets cultural relations between civil society organizations. The whole range of the EU’s Euro-Med pro-

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6 Silverstri, Sara, op. cit. p. 40.
8 SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.
grammes covers cultural heritage and tourism, youth, media and audiovisuals, performing arts as well as cultural policies. While the amounts spent may be impressive, they are never enough to address regional challenges such as pre-Arab Spring societal tensions, socio-economic hardship and domestic turmoil and regional conflicts since the uprisings.

Relations between cities across the Mediterranean Sea are essential links and drivers of cultural diplomacy, even more so when diaspora groups are involved.

Bilateral cooperation managed by large cultural institutes (Spanish Cooperation, British Council, Goethe Institute, Institut Français) provide large shares of cultural diplomacy in culture and the arts (performing arts, visual arts, design) and cultural management training sectors. There is still a tradition of archaeological cooperation, despite long-lasting disagreements on the restoration of cultural property by former European colonial or conquering powers.

In response to the destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, as well as the illegal trafficking of cultural heritage goods, international organizations have developed new modes of cooperation.

Relations in Times of Crisis and in Times of Peace

Cultural diplomacy and cultural relations in the Mediterranean have taken a different shape in areas affected by conflicts compared with in peaceful countries. War in Syria and Libya has made it extremely difficult for governments to maintain cultural diplomacy channels. Cooperation efforts have focused on supporting artists in exile, particularly in the case of Syria. The organization, Ettijahat, was created by Syrian artists. Because of the conflict, many creative professionals have fled to Lebanon or Europe. Some residencies have hosted artists, such as Aley in Lebanon, while specific projects, such as “Miniatures: a month for Syria in 2013,” have been funded by Arab and European (for instance, the British Council) organizations.10

Other initiatives have targeted Syrian refugees. Al Mawred al Thaqafy launched “Action for Hope” in refugee camps with Arab volunteer artists, and similar initiatives took place in Jordan and Turkey. The European Union Trust Fund for Syria also funded education programmes in Jordan and Lebanon to help these countries to deal with large refugee flows from Syria. Exhibitions, performances and shows by Syrian artists have been organized in several European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway). Following Daesh’s brutal destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, cultural diplomacy evolved towards heritage rescue and protection. The trafficking of cultural goods has been identified as one of the funding sources of Daesh. In the EU, it is now being addressed by a new regulation on the import of such goods. The EU is funding a €2.4-million programme in cooperation with UNESCO on the emergency safeguarding of Syrian cultural heritage.11

The EU’s inability to find effective responses to an upsurge of refugee flows in 2015 raised questions about the readiness of European societies to cope with intercultural differences. The so-called “refugee crisis” as well as incidents of sexual harassment in 2015 in Cologne, Germany on New Year’s eve stirred domestic debates in Europe on the challenges related to the integration of Syrian (and other Mediterranean) refugees. Migration issues are not part and parcel of the new cultural relations in the Mediterranean. They will require well-documented and evidence-based policy approaches toward xenophobia prevention as well as the integration of southern Mediterranean migrants into European societies.

In Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Israel, cultural relations with the Mediterranean region vary largely depending on the evolution of governments’ cultural policies. In Algeria, cultural relations remain mostly state-funded and controlled.12 Morocco has developed cultural relations in combination with tourism

10 Galeazzi, Greta. Syria note, EU preparatory action on culture in external relations, 2014. p. 6. On other initiatives, see also Isar, Yudhishthir Raj et al., op. cit.
11 More information is available on the official website of the project at http://en.unesco.org/syrian-observatory/.
12 Country reports and documents can be found for instance on the MedCulture website at www.medculture.eu/fr.
and value-creation strategies. The country is famous for its numerous festivals that have become a symbol of its cultural diplomacy. In Tunisia, the democratic transition has created an era of uncertainty as well as opportunities for renewed cooperation with the region. In Israel, cultural relations in the region originate mostly from the private sector and civil society. The constraining impact of Middle Eastern conflicts on Israel’s cultural relations in the Mediterranean has become a structuring factor in the region’s cultural diplomacy.

Priorities for Cultural Diplomacy and Cooperation in the Mediterranean

As described above, states, markets, societies and knowledge producers in the Mediterranean region have all played very different roles in regional cultural diplomacy and relations, mostly because of very diverse societal, geopolitical and national policy trends. Hence this moving and heterogeneous cultural environment is worth monitoring on a regular basis. In this respect, the role of knowledge production and research on cultural dynamics will be instrumental to ensure that sufficient space for exchanges between states, markets and societies is maintained. National and regional cultural policies do not always have a strong Mediterranean feature and often rely on multilateral bodies (such as the Anna Lindh Foundation, the EU or the Arab League’s Education Cultural and Scientific Organization – in the case of Arab capitals of culture) or non-governmental organizations or foundations to nourish cultural relations. In the wake of recent migration shocks in the region, more explicit policies clearly linking domestic cultural strategies and policies with regional, intercultural objectives and challenges (conflicts, migration) could help regional diplomacy and relations flourish.

Research and policy recommendations of all kinds constantly emphasize the need to support cultural mobility in the region, and while more initiatives have been taken in this direction, strict visa policies in the EU and political instability in the South may contradict mobility objectives. The contribution of culture to local development in the Mediterranean also requires sustainable cultural structures of production, protected from global providers that dominate the supply side of cultural markets. Such protection and sustainable support for local and regional cultural markets are still to be developed. Therefore, long-term investment in cultural relations is certainly a way forward to prevent violence, deal with conflict-related trauma and build harmonious and integrated multi-identity societies while contributing to their economic development.

The more recent technology factor is having a lasting effect on cultural diplomacy and relations in general. Combined with demographic trends (not to mention the use of mobile phones by migrants) and the role of youth in southern Mediterranean societies, there is a need to better grasp and shape the increasingly widespread use of cyber-based facilities in cultural relations. Web-based technologies offer tremendous opportunities for peaceful and mind-changing cultural relations in the region. This requires massive investment in skills enhancement as well as the production of content that feeds the

18 Researcher Catherine Cornet’s Twitter account is one example of online sources on Mediterranean cultural relations, quoting many other sources from both sides of the Sea. [https://twitter.com/catherinecornet?lang=en](https://twitter.com/catherinecornet?lang=en)
development of multicultural and mutually respectful identities in the Mediterranean. Obviously, cultural relations and the Internet alone will not solve Middle East conflicts, but multilingual content produced by and with local cultural professionals working toward cross-cultural understanding and dialogue are a necessity.

Cultural cooperation programmes developed in the last few years have largely targeted young publics, while generating fresh knowledge and research into youth in societal dynamics.

Demographic realities demand that cultural relations focus on young people, tomorrow’s adults. Cultural cooperation programmes developed in the last few years have largely targeted young publics, while generating fresh knowledge and research into youth in societal dynamics. For over a decade, the EU and the Council of Europe have invested in youth cooperation programmes. Initiatives such as SAHWA, Power2Youth or the Anna Lindh Foundation’s programmes have involved thousands of young people in various forms of intercultural dialogue.

This has to continue, deepen, and hopefully lead to more intense educational, scientific, sports and professional exchanges.

Interreligious relations and dialogue have become a renewed challenge for the EU in light of the bloody and perceptual impact of jihadist terrorism on societies, on both shores of the Mediterranean. The new motto is “counter-radicalization” and radicalization prevention. Cultural diplomacy and relations have not proved very effective in countering violent extremism in the region, especially since the establishment of Daesh. Alternative and attractive narratives and policies (including new ones addressing the EU’s existential crisis or the lack of opportunities for youth in the South) still have to be designed or delivered. In this domain the cultural sector has a strong role to play, together with academics and (local) policymakers, in creating new forms of economic, societal and aesthetic value.

Investing in intercultural communication, relations and competences will enhance people’s self-awareness and skills to cope with their cultural differences. A better understanding of mutual perceptions, once they are uncovered by rigorous research, will help policymakers (including local authorities) and societies (including cities) to design sound, realistic and tangible cultural initiatives inserted into wider economic and political dynamics.

Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy in the Mediterranean is not the only cultural cooperation game in town. As a matter of fact, cultural relations are shaped by interactions between states, societies, markets and knowledge. Euro-Med frameworks are still operating along cultural relations and cultural diplomacy lines and the EU and its Member States have invested massively in people-to-people contacts. However, trust-building in the region has become increasingly difficult in an age of conflicts, violent extremism and migratory pressure. Mediterranean cultural diplomacy requires the constant maintenance and development of networks and communities that gather cultural professionals and entrepreneurs, policymakers, civil society activists and academics to resist crises and shocks: forms of cultural resilience.

Promotion of the Amman Message in the Euro-Mediterranean Region

Dr. Majeda Omar
Director
Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, Jordan

In promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, we contribute to enhancing peace and stability in society, strengthening effective communications, building awareness and acceptance of differences and promoting peace, tolerance and coexistence. It can be argued that collaboration between faith-based organizations in the Euro-Mediterranean region furthers interreligious and cross-cultural understanding. Positive grassroots relations in the region can be an unexpected but valuable by-product of faith-based work (Kessler, 2017).

The Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies has increased the number of collaborative projects with regional, European and international partners. In addition to building upon the work that the Royal Institute has done on the promotion of the Amman Message through organizing training workshops for youth, imams and preachers. These events are aimed at furthering interfaith dialogue that can, in turn, lead to better relations in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The need to continue the promotion of the Amman Message has become evident. It is vital to work together in order to promote the values of this message in the region. This two-year project (2012-2014) was funded by the European Union, contracted by the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Jordan and a consortium of local, regional and European academic and civil society organizations. Under the umbrella of this project events were organized in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, UK, Germany, Italy, Greece, and Denmark.

The Amman Message: an Overview

The “Amman Message” was launched by HM King Abdullah II in 2004, and sought to expound a vision characterized by flexibility and openness based on Islam in terms of the values of tolerance, mutual respect and humanism. Its goal was to clarify to the Modern world the true nature of Islam, and to bridge relationships between Islamic and international communities.

In view of the challenges related to the distorted image of Islam, the importance of learning about and revealing the true side of Islam is a great global concern. The Amman Message is a relatively short message that contains the most significant characteristics of this religion. Also, it must be stated that the Holy Qur’an shares the messages of tolerance and love with Abrahamic religions, which make the Amman Message universal.

The main target groups of the Amman Message are youth, imams, preachers and believers. It is crucial to clarify the need to work for intercultural communication and tolerance with the goal of enhancing the values of understanding and comprehension.

Promotion of the Amman Message

This project laid a significant base for the work of the Amman Message in Jordan, the Arab Region and across the Euro-Mediterranean region. The implementation of this project by the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, which was established in 1994 in Amman, under the patronage of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, a non-profit, non-governmental organization, built on the institute’s experiences in providing a platform for the interdisciplinary study of intercultural and interreligious issues with the aim of
defusing tensions and promoting peace, regionally and globally.
In Europe, the Amman Message has found some traction at the national and governmental levels and has been well-received by civil society, academics and media representatives.

Engagement in interreligious dialogue must be followed by action beyond the words and concepts shared

Through the course of the project, meetings were held that included a number of local, regional and international partners, who are delivering related activities within communities. This two-year project has opened up a powerful interfaith dialogue locally, regionally and internationally which has provided support for the implementation of the Message and its key themes. The project itself aims to promote the content of the message not the text itself, in order to contribute to good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to counter the root causes of terrorism.

Key Challenges

These events have been followed up by a number of training sessions, workshops and seminars to help tackle the challenges that confront interfaith dialogue. Some of these key challenges can be listed as follows:

- To avoid all negative comparisons and distortions, compromises, conversion attempts, settling of rigid coexistence, as well as all defensive and confrontational stances and revenge;
- To focus on family upbringing of children based on the acceptance of the other and cultivating affection, good behaviour and forgiveness, not for a limited time, but constantly;
- To concentrate on the Qur’anic verses that call for peace and respect for the followers of different religions;
- To insist on good citizenship and equality among all, regardless of religion, colour and gender;
- To resolve conflicts by peaceful methods and good treatment of the other.

Hans Küng, a Swiss Catholic priest, theologian, and author, says that there cannot be peace in the world in the absence of interfaith harmony. Let us think of harmony as the natural consequence of difference. Harmony is firmly based in the values of mercy, equality, humility, justice, generosity and charity. In strengthening interreligious dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region, the significance of the relationship between faith-based communities and civil society organizations cannot be underestimated. This partnership requires an increase in the levels of learning about each other and a better understanding of the complexity of religious beliefs and worldviews and ultimately better project results. These projects can contribute to a better understanding of the contextualization of specific topics within religious traditions and within secular society and can further enhance greater openness of all sides involved.

Interreligious dialogue inspires us to work together in order to shape a culture of peace and harmony through our respective religious traditions

The implementation of “The Promotion of the Amman Message” project has increased awareness of the values of the “Amman Message” (in Jordan, the region and the EU) through conducting and collating surveys in Europe, and through research, educational programmes, awareness-raising campaigns and partnerships between different Jordanian and European stakeholders. It has enhanced coordination mechanisms among the key stakeholders towards further promotion of the Amman Message content through dialogue with different partners in Jordan and Europe to provide guidance to the project and establish a research committee aimed at gathering scholarly contributions and research papers, prepared by credible,
enlightened and well-informed intellectuals from both the Arab world and Europe. It has created partnerships and links amongst schools, universities and Islamic and community organizations leading to the creation of platforms for dialogue among different groups to help eradicate stereotypical images of Islam. More effective, consistent data collection in relation to Islam is needed throughout, for which the Amman Message Project could provide advocacy support. There is also a need for more research into the aims and achievements sought from national immigration and integration policies. The project highlighted the need for leaders of Islamic communities to engage in dialogue with other religious leaders in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Triumphalism, as the belief which assumes the primacy of one’s own values and the right to rule others, has no place in interreligious dialogue

The aims of the seminars held in five European countries (UK, Germany, Greece, Italy and Croatia) can be stated as follows:

− To enhance the understanding and awareness of the Amman Message and its promotion through presentations by key speakers and the opportunity to discuss with experts in the field;
− To provide opportunities to discuss the Amman Message and its relevance to Europe;
− To provide an overview of the challenges faced by Islam and Muslims in the abovementioned European countries and Europe as a whole and to facilitate a discussion about how the Amman Message can address some of these challenges;
− It is vital to foster interfaith dialogue inside schools and universities and find ways to educate citizens to be able to accept dialogue. Also, we have the responsibility to educate the media while focusing on the positive use of social media.

A network of key organizations, institutions and individuals working primarily at international and national levels have been engaged and have shown strong support for the work of the Amman Message. The Amman Message states the profound principles needed for the good of humanity: “unity of the human race, equal rights and obligations, peace, security, social equality, the honouring of pledges, good neighbourliness and respect for others, and the protection of belongings and property.”

Shared Values and Areas for Future Focus

A shared system of ultimate values is a crucially important element in any society. Balancing unity and diversity is a continuing challenge for multicultural nation states across the world. Unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression; diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the nation state (Banks, 2004). Partner institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region can meet in the context of “interfaith” or “tolerance,” a practice that is directly related to the diversity of our societies. The values of “tolerance” and “respect” for the other have their place in the central values of the socio-political system in which we live. We must remember that shared values are only one factor which permits action to be integrated.

The Amman Message has unfolded new and wide horizons for constructive interreligious dialogue and reconciliation between Muslims and other Euro-Mediterranean, Western and oriental communities. It is paramount to encourage citizens to be more actively involved in dialogue over the issues of concern that affect them all. Hence, the need to continue the “promotion of the Amman Message” in the hope of building a better world for current and future generations.

References

MAP A.1 | Eurobarometer: Trust in Institutions

Eurobarometer 461. Trust in Institutions (in %)

- Data unavailable
- More than 70%
- From 60% to 70%
- From 50% to 60%
- From 40% to 50%
- From 20% to 30%
- Less than 20%

From 50% to 55%
From 55% to 60%
From 60% to 65%
From 65% to 70%
Data unavailable

Own Production. Source: EUROPEAN COMMISSION. Special Eurobarometer 461 "Designing Europe’s future” Report, April 2017.

MAP A.2 | Turkish Constitutional Referendum, 2017

16 April 2016

Results in each Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 65% to 70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 60% to 65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 55% to 60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 50% to 55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Referendum to Approve 18 Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of Turkey

- NO: 23,779,141 votes (48.59%)
- YES: 25,157,463 votes (51.41%)
- Invalid or blank votes: 862,251 (1.73%)

MAP A.3a | Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Internally Displaced People in Mediterranean Countries

Total Refugees and People in Refugee Like Situations by Country of Asylum

Asylum Seekers (Pending Cases) by Country of Asylum

Countries of Asylum. Refugees to 1,000 Inhabitants (End 2016)

World Top Countries in Number of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (end 2016)

Own Production. Source: UNHCR, Global Trends. Forced Displacement in 2016 and UNRWA.

* For UNHCR Data: Excluded Asylum seekers. For the UNRWA Data: Registered Refugees. The UNHCR provides assistance and protection to Palestine refugees outside UNRWA’s areas of operations. UNRWA deals specifically with Palestine refugees in its five areas of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

** Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244
MAP A.3b | Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Internally Displaced People in Mediterranean Countries

Refugees* from Mediterranean Countries Breakdown 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ref. (thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
<td>230.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia &amp; Kosovo**</td>
<td>105.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>144.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>648.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For UNHCR Data: Excluded Asylum seekers. For the UNRWA Data: Registered Refugees. The UNHCR provides assistance and protection to Palestine refugees outside UNRWA’s areas of operations. UNRWA deals specifically with Palestine refugees in its five areas of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

** Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244

Evolution of Refugees, Asylum Seekers, IDPs and Returnees under the UNHCR Mandate between 2006-2016

Countries of Asylum. Refugees per millions $ (GDP), End 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Refugees per millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. Sudan</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia &amp;**</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Own Production. Source: UNHCR, Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2016 and UNRWA.
MAP A.4 | Legislative Elections in Croatia

District XI Croatians Living Abroad

Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)
Independent List Željko Glasnović

District XII National Minorities Electoral District

Independent Democratic Serb Party (Serbian minority)
Democratic Union of Hungarians of Croatia (Hungarian minority)
Union of Albanians in Croatia (Albanian and other former Yugoslav minorities)
Independents (Italian minority)
Independents (Czech/Slovak minority)
Union of Roma in Croatia “Kali Sara” (Other Europeans minorities)

Legislative Elections 11 September of 2016

National Summary of Votes and Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coalition or Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HDZ “Coalition”</td>
<td>694,904</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Coalition</td>
<td>636,602</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge of Independent Lists (Most)</td>
<td>187,277</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Only Option Coalition</td>
<td>117,208</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Stronger Istria Coalition (only in VIII District)</td>
<td>40,725</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Prime Minister Coalition</td>
<td>76,990</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDSSB Coalition</td>
<td>23,573</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent list led by Željko Glasnović (Independent)</td>
<td>5,211</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National minorities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results by District

Winning Party/Coalition and percentage of votes won:

- More than 50%
- From 40% to 50%
- Less than 40%
- Draw (the difference between the first two coalitions is fewer than 1%)

Draw (the difference between the first two coalitions is fewer than 1%)

HDZ Coalition
People’s Coalition

District XI Croatians Living Abroad

Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ)
Independent List Željko Glasnović

National Summary of Votes and Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coalition or Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<th>Seats</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Only Option Coalition</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Stronger Istria Coalition (only in VIII District)</td>
<td>40,725</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Prime Minister Coalition</td>
<td>76,990</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDSSB Coalition</td>
<td>23,573</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent list led by Željko Glasnović (Independent)</td>
<td>5,211</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National minorities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP A.5 | Trade in Goods in Mediterranean Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Trade Partners</th>
<th>Total Trade in Goods (millions $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports/Exports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% over total imports/exports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- More than 250,000
- From 10,000 to 20,000
- From 100,000 to 250,000
- From 50,000 to 100,000
- From 20,000 to 50,000
- Less than 2,000

Own Production, Source: UNCTAD
To permit comparison between the data on such deliveries of different weapons, SIPRI has developed a unique system to measure the volume of international transfers of major conventional weapons using a common unit, the trend-indicator value (TIV). The TIV is based on the known unit production costs of a core set of weapons and is intended to represent the transfer of military resources rather than the financial value of the transfer. SIPRI TIV figures do not represent sales prices for arms transfers. They are best used as the raw data for calculating trends in international arms transfers.
SIPRI Trend Indicator Values* (TIVs) of Arms Exports (2011-15)

Evolution of Military Expenditure (in Million $) 1988-2015

Trend Indicator Values* (TIVs) of Arms Exports (2011-15) of Mediterranean Countries by Country of Destination

Top Importers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Other Med Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>16,358</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>964</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>9,932</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>6,525</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>6,516</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8,142</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>1,445</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>5,053</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>4,823</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4,071</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>3,927</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>3,556</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>225</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>54,255</td>
<td>2,490</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>1,892</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Egypt    | 3,351 | 769    | 192   | 28    | 13     |        |                     |
| Morocco  | 2,922 | 694    | 73    |       |        |        |                     |
| Israel   | 1,539 | 187    |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Greece   | 1,131 | 167    |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Syria    | 1,114 | 70     |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Italy    | 1,048 | 143    |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Jordan   | 898   | 13     |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Spain    | 886   | 15     |       |       |        |        |                     |
| France   | 291   | 11     |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Libya    | 260   | 13     |       |       |        |        |                     |
| Other Med Countries | 680 | 15 | 75 | 1 | 8 | 18 |                     |
| Total    | 141,273 | 8,101 | 4,908 | 3,960 | 2,546 | 664 | 318               |

*To permit comparison between the data on such deliveries of different weapons, SIPRI has developed a unique system to measure the volume of international transfers of major conventional weapons using a common unit, the trend-indicator value (TIV). The TIV is based on the known unit production costs of a core set of weapons and is intended to represent the transfer of military resources rather than the financial value of the transfer. SIPRI TIV figures do not represent sales prices for arms transfers. They are best used as the raw data for calculating trends in international arms transfers.

Own Production. Source: SIPRI

Map A.7 | Industry Sector. Manufacturing Value Added in Mediterranean Countries

Manufacturing, Value Added (% of GDP) & Share of Manufacturing in Industry* Value Added

- Red: More than 20%
- Orange: From 15% to 20%
- Yellow: From 10% to 15%
- Light Yellow: Less than 10%
- Gray: Data unavailable

Industry* value added comprises value added in mining, manufacturing, construction, electricity, water, and gas.

Own Production. Source: WB
MAP A.8 | Female Labour Force in Mediterranean Countries

Female Labour Force Participation Rate by Age

- Data unavailable
- More than 80%
- From 70% to 80%
- From 60% to 70%
- From 50% to 60%
- From 40% to 50%
- From 30% to 40%
- From 20% to 30%
- Less than 10%


Own Production, Source: ILO
Fishery Captures by Country in Fishing Areas of the Mediterranean and Black Sea

- Turkey
- Tunisia
- Palestine
- Spain
- Italy
- Croatia
- Algeria
- Russia
- Maroc
- Ukraine
- Greece
- Libya
- Egypt
- France
- Lebanon
- Other

Total Captures in the Mediterranean and Black Sea 2015 (in tonnes)

- More than 100,000
- From 2,000 to 5,000
- From 50,000 to 100,000
- From 1,000 to 2,000
- From 5,000 to 50,000
- Less than 1,000 t


Top Species Captured in the Mediterranean and Black Sea in 2014 (in tonnes)

- European anchovy 208,446 t
- European pilchard 194,767 t
- European sprat 56,717 t
- Marine Fishes nei 52,858 t
- Sardinellas nei 43,068 t
- Striped venus 36,095 t
- Jack and horse mackerels nei 24,462 t
- Atlantic bonito 23,397 t
- Bogue 21,146 t
- European hake 20,377 t
- Gobies nei 18,638 t
- Mediterranean horse mackerel 17,258 t
- Red mullet 14,788 t
- Deepwater rose shrimp 14,454 t
- Mullets nei 13,036 t
- Marine molluscs nei 12,181 t
- Chub mackerel 11,720 t
- Natantian decapods nei 11,406 t
- Whiting 10,864 t
- Bluefish 10,313 t

nei: not elsewhere included
Treenuts Production (2014) (in tonnes)

- More than 800,000
- From 200,000 to 250,000
- From 100,000 to 150,000
- From 50,000 to 150,000
- From 20,000 to 50,000
- From 10,000 to 20,000
- From 1,000 to 10,000
- Less than 1,000

Treenuts Production by Type:

- Almonds, with shell
- Chestnuts
- Hazelnuts, with shell
- Nuts, Nes
- Pistachios
- Walnuts, with shell

Own Production. Source: FAO
MAP A.11  Mediterranean Airports

Passengers in the Airports* Located less than 100 Kilometers from the Mediterranean Coast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change 2009-2016 in %</th>
<th>Less than 10%</th>
<th>From 10% to 30%</th>
<th>From 30% to 40%</th>
<th>From 40% to 60%</th>
<th>From 60% to 80%</th>
<th>More than 80%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolution of Number of Passengers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Airports with 100,000 or more passengers

MAP A.12 | Internet and Telecommunications in Mediterranean Countries

**Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet**

- **2000**
- **2005**
- **2010**
- **2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North Med</th>
<th>South &amp; East Med</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>132.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>162.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Active Mobile-Broadband Subscriptions per 100 Inhabitants, in Mediterranean Countries**

**Evolution of Mobile-cellular Telephone Subscriptions in Mediterranean Countries (2000-15)**

- **Mobile**
- **Fixed**

**Evolution of Broadband Subscriptions in Arab States (in millions)**

- **2010**
- **2011**
- **2012**
- **2013**
- **2014**
- **2015**

**Own Production. Source: ITU**
MAP A.13 | Population Pyramids and Fertility Rates

Total Fertility Rates (2010-2015) (births per woman)
- More than 4.0
- From 3.0 to 4.0
- From 2.5 to 3.0
- From 2.0 to 2.5
- From 1.5 to 2.0
- Less than 1.5

- Male
- Female

Own Production. Source: UNPOP
MAP A.14 | Population Movements between Mediterranean EU Countries and Other EU Countries

People from EU Mediterranean Countries Living in Other EU Countries
- Croatia
- Greece
- Portugal
- Cyprus
- Italy
- France
- Malta

People from EU Countries Living in EU Mediterranean Countries
- Portugal
- Italy
- Spain
- Germany
- Belgium
- Poland
- Romania
- NL
- BG
- SE
- HU
- GR
- AT
- HR
- LU
- LV
- LT
- DK
- IE
- CZ
- SK
- CY
- SI
- FI

*Numbers lower than 1,000 are not represented

Appendices

Maps

IE Med. Mediterranean Yearbook 2017

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MAP A.15a | Official Development Aid. Flows from and to Mediterranean Countries

Mediterranean Donors. Total Official Flows (ODA+OOF*)

In Millions $

Total Official Flows: 254,706.78 M$

From Multilateral Donors: 99,890.53 M$

From Bilateral Donors: 154,810.25 M$

From which Med Donors: 15,406.08 M$

From 5,000 to 60,000

From 1,000 to 5,000

From 500 to 1,000

From 100 to 5,000

Less than 50

More than 60%

From 5% to 10%

From 20% to 60%

Less than 5%

From 10% to 20%

Top Destination Countries of Official Flows from Main Mediterranean Donors

France; 8,003

Turkey; 4,233

Italy; 1,925

Spain; 22

Portugal; 193

Israel; 178

Spain; 18

Portugal; 13

Official Flows from Top World Donor Countries and Top Countries of Destination

United States

United Kingdom

United Arab Emirates

*Other official flows (OOF). Consist of: i) Grants or loans from the government sector not specifically directed to development or welfare purposes; and ii) Loans from the government sector which are for development and welfare, but, which are not sufficiently concessional to qualify as ODA.

Own Production. Source: OECD.
MAP A.15b  Official Development Aid. Flows from and to Mediterranean Countries

Mediterranean Recipients. Total Official Flows (ODA+OOF)

In Millions $

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Flows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>2,397</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Korea</td>
<td>1,044</td>
</tr>
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<td>France</td>
<td>1,086</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>9,524</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Korea</td>
<td>194</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
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Syria; 4,889

<table>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>887</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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Jordan; 2,932

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>294</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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Palestine; 1,891

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<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>181</td>
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Lebanon; 1,296

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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRWA</td>
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Albania; 499

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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Fyrom; 397

<table>
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<td>United States</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>13</td>
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Algeria; 194

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Flows</th>
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<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Korea</td>
<td>43</td>
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</table>

Percentage of Flows to Mediterranean Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 60%</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 20% to 60%</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 10% to 20%</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2%</td>
<td>Kosovo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Origin of Official Flows to Mediterranean Countries. Top Five Bilateral and Multilateral Donors (in millions $)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Flows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>EU Institutions</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>World Bank Group</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244
MAP A.16 | Education. Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Pupil-Teacher Ratio in Primary Education (2014-2015)

- Data unavailable
- More than 25
- From 20 to 25
- From 12.5 to 15
- From 15 to 17.5
- From 17.5 to 20
- From 10 to 12.5
- Less than 10

Percentage of Female Teachers by Level of Education

- Primary
- Lower secondary
- Upper secondary
- Tertiary

Own Production. Source: UNESCO

MAP A.17 | Ecological Footprint in Mediterranean Countries

Ecological Footprint per capita 2013 (global hectare per person)

- More than 5.0
- From 4.5 to 5.0
- From 4.0 to 4.5
- From 3.5 to 4.0
- Less than 2.0
- From 3.0 to 3.5
- From 2.0 to 2.5

Evolution of Ecological Footprint per capita 2003-2008 and 2008-2013

- 2003-08
- 2008-13
- 2003-08
- 2008-13

Own Production. Source: Global Footprint Network www.footprintnetwork.org/
MAP A.18 | Tourism in the Mediterranean

Concentration of Tourism near the Mediterranean Coast
- Very High (over 90%)
- Undeveloped Tourism
- High (60%-80%)
- Low (5%-25%)
- Not on the Mediterranean

% Change in Tourism Arrivals and Receipts (2009-2015)

World's Top Tourism Destinations (Arrivals in Millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Russian F.</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Arbitration Process. Since their independence in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia have made several bilateral efforts to delineate their common sea and land border. In 2001, the Račan-Drnovšek Agreement represented the first major attempt to define the entire border but the agreement did not enter into force since Croatia never ratified it. In November 2009, both countries finally signed an agreement to submit all the disputed segments of their boundaries to the Permanent Court of Arbitration of The Hague, after Slovenia blocked the Croatian EU accession process from December 2008 to September 2009. In July 2015, the press reported that a Slovenian judge on the arbitration panel, Jernej Sekolec, had been in collusion with a representative from the Slovenian government, Simona Drnec. Both of them resigned and according to an internal investigation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, no leak of information had occurred.

However, in July 2015, the Croatian Parliament voted for the withdrawal of Croatia from the arbitration process alleging that the arbitration had suffered irreparable damages because of the Slovenian breach. The court issued a final award on 29 June 2017. This award establishes the land boundary based on the *uti possidetis* principle, cadastral documentation and historical evidence/effectivités provided by the parties. In the case of the sea border, the Court grants Slovenia three quarters of the Bay of Piran and a 2.5 nautical-mile wide and approximately 10 nautical-mile long corridor through Croatian waters to give Slovenia direct access to international waters. While Slovenia has accepted the ruling, the Croatian government assures that the decision is not legally binding and that Croatia has no intention of implementing it.

Mura River Region. According to Slovenia, the border should follow the course of the Mura river as a natural boundary between the regions of Prekmurje (Slovenia) and Medjimurje (Croatia), following the division between the Dravska (Slovenia) and Savska (Croatia) banates defined in the 1929 Act on the Name and Division of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Croatia focuses on the *uti possidetis* principle and refers to the Austrian-Hungarian administrative borders defined in 1860 and observed by the Treaty of Trianon (1920) for those areas gained by Jugoslavia from Hungary after WWI in the Mura region, in which the cadastral district boundaries overlap significantly.
According to Slovenia, the boundary should follow geographical features, mainly the course of the rivers Drava, Sava, Brežice, Soča, Kamenica, Kupa/Kolpa and Čabranka or the Trdinov Vrh/Sveta Gera mountain in line with the 1929 banate system of Yugoslavia that modified the previous Austro-Hungarian boundaries. Croatia focuses on the uti possidetis principle, and the cadastral district boundaries in force until 1991, arguing that the 1929 Act confirmed by the 1931 Yugoslav Constitution, did not modify the historical borders between Croatia, Styria and Carniola set in 1860 by the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

ISTRIA REGION. The parties agree that no historical boundary ever existed in Istria before WWII. In the Eastern part of Istria, the disagreement mainly focuses on cadastral overlapping and at the Tomšič Plots on the interpretation of the boundary based on the former border between Italy and Yugoslavia (Treaty of Rapallo, 1920). In the western part, Croatia applies the uti possidetis principle and contends that in 1944 a de facto agreement was reached to set a border along the Dragonja River that was applied when the Zone B of the Free State of Trieste was transferred to Yugoslavia. However, Slovenia claims that the border is south of the river while Croatia claims that the border is on the river itself (St. Odorik channel). Slovenia bases its position on the principle of equity and historical rights and contends the 1944 agreement was a mere practical and provisional solution.

BAY OF PIRAN AND SLOVENIAN ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL WATERS. Slovenia appeals to the uti possidetis principle and claims the integrity of the bay, alleging that it had the status of internal waters under the former Yugoslavia. Croatia claims the Bay was part of the territorial sea of Yugoslavia so Art.15 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) must be applied to divide the bay along an equidistant line.

Slovenia also claims a continental shelf in a junction area granting Slovenia free access to high seas. Such a claim is contrary to international maritime delimitation laws, according to Croatia.
Chronologies

Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events

January 2016

Portugal holds presidential elections. In France, the Minister of Justice resigns. Italy urges the EU to apply quotas for accepting refugees. Croatia forms a new government. The political crisis continues in Montenegro. The Serbian Defence Minister is sacked. In Kosovo, protests intensify against the agreements to normalize relations with Serbia. The Prime Minister of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) resigns. New negotiations begin in Geneva to find a solution to the war in Syria and the advance of the Islamic State (Daesh). Greece continues between Turkish security forces and the terrorist organization the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). New forces and the terrorist organization the Nusra Front enter the country. Montenegro. The Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) is formed. Slovakia.

Portugal

• On 24 January Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, former leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD, right-wing) wins the presidential elections with 52% of the votes.
• On 29 January there is a public sector strike in protest against the Socialist Party’s decision to delay restoring certain entitlements until 1 July, which were removed as part of austerity measures taken by the previous government of Pedro Passos Coelho. The delay has not been agreed by the other members of the left-wing coalition government.

Spain

• On 11 January the mayor of Girona, Carles Puigdemont (Democratic Convergence of Catalonia, CDC, separatist, liberal), is elected President of the autonomous government after an agreement between the parties that support Catalonia’s secession from the rest of Spain.
• On 13 January the former Basque President and MP of the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), Patxi Lopez, is elected President of the Congress of Deputies (lower house). In the Senate, Pio García Escudero from the People’s Party (PP, centre-right) is re-elected.
• On 28 January the PP dissolves the leadership of the party in Valencia following arrests made as part of Operation Taula, a corruption probe into Valencia’s City Council and provincial government while PP was in power.

France

• On 7 January a man is shot down in Paris after entering a police station armed with a knife in the name of Daesh.
• On 25 January clashes break out in Calais when a group of 50 irregular immigrants try to storm a ferry in an attempt to enter the United Kingdom.
• On 27 January the Justice Minister Christiane Taubira resigns over a fallout with the President François Hollande regarding a constitutional reform allowing dual nationals charged with terrorism to be stripped of their French citizenship.

Italy

• On 8 January Italy expresses its fear at having to deal with most of the refugees arriving on its coasts with so many states failing to meet the relocation targets ordered by the EU.
• On 26 January the leader of the populist Five-Star Movement (M5S), Beppe Grillo, announces that he is leaving politics to return to the theatre.
• On 29 January the police arrest ‘Ndrangheta (Calabrian mafia) bosses Giuseppe Crea and Giuseppe Ferraro after two years in hiding, in Maropati, Reggio Calabria.

Slovenia

• On 21 January Slovenia and Serbia announce that they will refuse entry to refugees who are not planning to apply for asylum in Austria or Germany.

Croatia

• On 22 January the Sabor (Parliament) swears in the 13-member government of the new Prime Minister Tomislav Orešković. The centre-right cabinet is formed by the Patriotic Coalition led by the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the Bridge of Independent Lists party (MOST).
• On 28 January the recently appointed War Veterans’ Minister Mijo Crnja (HDZ) resigns, amid accusations published in the press of tax evasion.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 12 January the European Commission urges Bosnia to publish the results of the 2013 population census before submitting its application to join the EU.
• On 25 January businessman Fahirudin Radonic from the Alliance for a Better Future (SBB, conservative), member of a federal government coalition, is arrested for obstructing justice as part of an investigation into corruption and organized crime. The arrest comes after, on 11 January, the secretary of the Defence Ministry and SBB member Bakir Dautbasic is arrested for interfering in a drug-trafficking trial.

Montenegro

• On 27 January Milo Djukanovic and his Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) government survives a vote of confidence tabled by the Democratic Front (DF, conservative, Serbian pro-unionist) following the country’s formal invitation to join NATO in December 2015.

Serbia

• On 26 January the Parliament adopts the new Police Law, which increases the Interior Ministry’s control over senior police officers.
• On 30 January the Defence Minister Bratislav Gasic is sacked over sexist comments he made to a female journalist. The Finance Minister Dusan Vujovic is appointed as the interim Defence Minister.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 9 January around 60,000 people gather in Pristina in the largest demonstration to date to demand that the government repeals the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro and the agreement to normalize relations with Serbia, which would allow the Kosovo Serb municipalities to achieve greater self-governance, a move declared unconstitutional by Kosovo’s Constitutional Court in December 2015.
• On 21 January Oliver Ivanovic, member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and former Serbian Secretary of State for Kosovo, is sentenced by the EU’s European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to nine years in prison for war crimes against Albanian citizens in 1999. The sentence sparks Kosovo Serb protests in Mitrovica.

• On 27 January Serbia and Kosovo agree to begin talks on direct air and rail connections as part of the negotiations for the normalization of relations.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

• On 15 January the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski steps down, as part of an agreement made with the opposition to hold early elections.

Greece

• On 16 January, the country’s main trade unions bring thousands out in protest against the pension reform the government has negotiated with international creditors and which includes raising the retirement age and increasing social security payments.
• On 22 January at least 21 people are killed when two boats carrying immigrants are shipwrecked off the coasts of Farmakonisi and Kalymnos.

Turkey

• On 12 January a Daesh bomb attack in a square in Sultanahmet, Istanbul leaves at least 11 dead.
• On 14 January at least five people are killed by a car bomb in an attack by the PKK terrorist organization on a police station in Çinar, Diyarbakir.
• On 15 January security forces arrest 12 academics for supporting terrorism after they sign a critical declaration urging the government to renew efforts to end the violence between the State and Kurdish separatists.
• On 25 and 26 January at least 20 PKK members and three Turkish soldiers are killed in fighting in Cizre, Sur and Diyarbakir.

Cyprus

• On 12 January the European Commission approves extending Cypriot and Portuguese plans to provide guarantees for lending institutions, as part of both countries’ financial bailout.
• On 21 January the Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and the leader of northern Cyprus Mustafa Akinci, pledge their commitment at the Economic Forum in Davos to reach an agreement in 2016 for Cypriot reunification.

Syria

• On 12 January after the first trucks of a humanitarian aid convoy arrive in Madaya, some 300 people are evacuated from the area, which has been under siege from government troops for more than half a year. The United Nations estimate there are more than a million people either starving or at risk of starvation due to military sieges.
• On 12 January pro-government forces enter Salma, Latakia, as part of an offensive aimed at eradicating rebel groups from the west of the country.
• On 18 January at least 400 civilians, mostly relatives of Syrian regime fighters, are kidnapped by Daesh in Deir az-Zor, hours after the terrorist group launches an attack that leaves hundreds dead amid intense fighting for control of the city.
• On 21 January Mohammed Alloush, leader of the Salafi militia Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam), is elected, together with the chief negotiator Asaad Zoubi, to head the Syrian opposition in the Geneva peace talks.
• On 29 January the US calls upon NATO to provide effective support for the international coalition fighting against Daesh.
• On 29 January a new round of talks between the regime and the opposition begins in Geneva, brokered by the United Nations. On 31 January the opposition groups announce that they will not actively participate in the talks until UN Security Council Resolution 2254 is effectively implemented, which demands access be given throughout the country to humanitarian agencies and an end to attacks on civilians.
• On 31 January at least 50 people are killed in three suicide bomb attacks near the Shiite sanctuary Sayyida Zeinab.

Lebanon

• On 11 January security forces announce the arrest in Tripoli of Abu Talha, the alleged mastermind behind the double bomb attack on 12 November 2015 in Beirut.
• On 31 January the leader of the Marada Movement Suleiman Franjieh commits to withdrawing his candidacy to the Lebanese Presidency, announced on 17 December 2015, if the leader of the Future Movement and former Prime Minister Saad Hariri backs the nomination of the leader of the Change and Reform bloc Michel Aoun.

Egypt

• On 3 January the army announces that at least 26 terrorists have been killed in different operations in the Sinai.
• On 10 January the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, inaugurates the new unicameral Egyptian Parliament that, on 17 January, approves the reform of the anti-terrorism law which establishes sentences for acts of terrorism ranging from five years to the death penalty, shields the army and police force in cases of "proportionate use of force" and establishes fines for anyone contradicting official versions of militant attacks.
• On 25 January the country marks five years since the outbreak of the Egyptian Revolution with discreet celebrations and in the context of the current government’s inflexible security policy and restrictions on freedoms.

Libya

• On 9 January Daesh launches an attack on a power plant in Benghazi days after attacks are reported on several various fuel storage tanks in Es Sider and Ras Lanuf.
• On 19 January Libya’s UN-backed Presidential Council names a 32-minister national unity government, led by businessman Fayez al-Sarraj, with an initial task of being recognized by the Tobruk and Tripoli parliaments.
• On 28 January sources linked to Daesh report that the terrorist organization is to transfer dozens of its senior officials to Libya, where it controls Sirte, Nofaliya, Harawa, Bin Jawad and parts of Benghazi and Derna.

Tunisia

• On 11 January the Islamist Ennahdha party gains a parliamentary majority after more members of Nidaa Tounes resign faced with the possibility of the President’s son Beyi Caid Essebsi taking control of the party.
• On 22 January the Interior Ministry imposes a nationwide curfew after violent social protests erupted in the country’s main cities.

Arab League

• On 10 January the Arab League closes ranks around Saudi Arabia in an emergency meeting in Cairo, in which it condemns Iran’s interference in the Arab world a week after the execution of the Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr in Riyadh, which has escalated tensions with Iran, and attacks on Saudi diplomatic delegations are reported in Tehran and Mashhad.

February 2016

In Spain, the socialist leader Pedro Sanchez holds talks with other parties to form a government. France approves the inclusion of the state of emergency and the possible removal of citizenship in its constitution. Changes are made in the governments of Monaco and Albania. Bosnia applies for EU membership and Montenegro begins accession negotiations with NATO. In Kosovo, there are new anti-government protests. In the FYROM, there is unrest over the migration crisis, which also ignites a dispute between Greece, which is at the limit of its capacity, and Austria, which is pushing for Greece to close its border. Tensions rise on the Turkish-Syrian border and in southeastern Turkey. In Syria, a ceasefire agreement is reached. In Egypt, death sentences against 149 members of the Muslim Brotherhood are overturned. Libya unveils its new Government of National Accord. In Tunisia, the ruling party Nidaa Tounes remains in crisis. The Algerian Parliament approves the constitutional reform. Morocco suspends contact with European institutions.

Portugal

• On 5 February the European Commission accepts Portugal’s draft budget that foresees cuts of 845 million euros for 2016.
• On 23 February the former public prosecutor Orlando Figueira is arrested for accepting bribes in a large-scale investigation into money laundering.
Spain

- On 2 February Felipe VI asks the PSOE leader to form a government after the outgoing President and PP leader Mariano Rajoy had declined the same offer due to a lack of support following the party’s victory in the December 2015 elections.
- On 14 February Esperanza Aguirre resigns as President of the PP in Madrid, following fresh corruption cases in the Púnica police investigation.

France

- On 9 February the National Assembly votes in favour of including the state of emergency and stripping citizenship from dual nationals charged with terrorism in the constitution.
- On 10 February the Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announces his departure from the cabinet, following the arrest of his son Thomas, accused of committing fraud in Las Vegas.
- On 10 February the former socialist party member and current co-president of the Left Party (PG) Jean-Luc Melanchon announces that he will run in the 2017 presidential elections.
- On 16 February the former President and leader of The Republicans (LR, centre-right) Nicolas Sarkozy is charged with illegally funding his 2012 presidential campaign.
- On 17 February French police raid the headquarters of the ultra-nationalist National Front (FN) in Nanterre as part of an investigation into an alleged misuse of European funds.
- On 29 February there is unrest in the “Jungle” migrant camp in Calais during its partial dismantlement under a court order.

Monaco

- On 1 February Serge Telle succeeds Michel Roger as Minister of State.
- On 24 February Monaco and the EU sign a major agreement to fight against tax evasion.

Italy

- On 10 February 109 members of the Laudani Mafia clan are arrested in Catania.
- On 25 February the Senate approves civil unions for gay couples.

Slovenia

- On 17 February the Parliament approves the government’s proposal for the Armed Forces to participate in border control.

Croatia

- On 19 February Tomislav Duic, former commander in the Croatian armed forces during the Balkan War, is arrested in Split after 11 years on the run.
- On 23 February the media shows a video from 2012 in which the Culture Minister Zlatko Hasanbegovic laments the defeat in 1945 of the pro-Nazi regime of the Independent State of Croatia.
- On 26 February the former police officers Frano Drijo and Bozo Krajina are cleared of committing war crimes during Operation Storm in 1995.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 9 February Jovan Tintor, former advisor to the former Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic, is arrested for war crimes in Vogosca.
- On 7 February around 2,000 people protest in Sarajevo against the ban on wearing the hijab in courts and legal institutions.
- On 15 February Bosnia and Herzegovina apply for EU membership.

Montenegro

- On 15 February Montenegro’s NATO accession negotiations begin.
- On 27 February a protest led by the Serbian pro-unionist Democratic Front calls for the resignation of the Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic for corruption, abuse of power and electoral fraud.

Serbia

- On 17 February eight former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) are sentenced in Nis to 15 years’ imprisonment for acts of terrorism against the Yugoslav army in Kosare in 1998.
- On 18 February a demonstration in Presevo calls the government to hand over Kosovo-Albanian textbooks, withheld by customs authorities as they are not in line with the Serbian education system and teach a reality about Kosovo that contradicts Serbia’s official stance.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 2 February, under public pressure, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare decides to review 3,400 applications for UÇK veteran status, which were initially rejected.
- On 15 and 16 February four members of the opposition party Vetëvendosje (Self-determination) are arrested for crimes against EULEX in 2009.
- On 17 and 24 February demonstrations led by Vetëvendosje call for the government to resign for violating the constitution in the agreement for the normalization of relations with Serbia and in the border demarcation agreement with Montenegro.
- On 26 February Hashim Thaçi from the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK, centre-right) is elected to be President following the agreement between the PDK and Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK, conservative) in December 2014.
- On 29 February the President Atifete Jahjaga signs an agreement with the Netherlands that enables the creation of a special court for crimes committed by the UÇK during the conflict in Kosovo.

FYROM

- On 23 February, in line with recommendations from Brussels and Washington, the Parliament postpones early elections scheduled for 24 April to 5 June, in accordance with an agreement reached between the government and the opposition.
- On 29 February groups of migrants held in Idomeni destroy a stretch of the border fence with Greece to enter the FYROM.

Albania

- On 16 February Arben Ahmetaj is appointed Finance Minister to replace Shkelqim Cani.
On 24 February the National Chamber of Advocates begins three days of strike against hikes in social security contributions.

On 25 February the opposition boycotts parliamentary activity over the return to the house of the socialist MP Armando Prenga, released on bail for his involvement in a fight in September 2015 over properties. The centre-right opposition calls for the law to be tightened that prevents anyone who has received a court sentence from taking public office.

Greece

On 4 February a national strike is staged in protest against the pension reform that Athens is negotiating with international creditors.

On 11 February Alexis Tsipras defends the need to continue with reforms needed for the release of a new tranche of the country’s third bailout package worth 86 billion euros, despite farmers threatening to bring Greece to a standstill if substantial tax cuts are not imposed.

On 11 February Greece and Turkey ask NATO to set up a specific mission in the Aegean Sea to monitor the flow of refugees.

On 16 February the government announces that four of the five migrant and refugee registration centres that it had told the EU it would set up are ready, after Brussels gives Athens three months to adopt tangible improvements in its border control.

Turkey

On 10 February a Turkish soldier is killed in clashes with Kurdish militants in Syria, hours after Ankara summons the US ambassador for Washington’s support of the Syrian Kurds.

On 17 February a car bomb leaves 28 soldiers dead in Ankara. The government blames the People’s Protection Units (YPG), which denies involvement.

On 26 February following a Constitutional Court ruling, the journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül are released, after being in prison since November 2015 accused of spying, plotting against the government and terrorism following the publication of an article on an illegal shipment of arms to Syria.

Cyprus

On 15 February the former MP Antonis Papadopoulos announces that she will not run in the parliamentary elections in May for the Democratic Party (DIKO, centrist) due to its ideological shift, in the third major dissension following those of Athina Kyriakidou and Marios Garoyian.

On 25 February Cyprus reduces compulsory military service from 24 to 14 months.

On 29 February the Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades asks for Turkish to be included as one of the EU’s official languages.

Syria

On 2 February Russia agrees to the Salafi militias Jaysh al-Islam and Ahrar ash-Sham participating in the Geneva peace talks.

On 3 February the army takes Har-datin, ends its siege on Nubul and Zara and takes control of three districts of Aleppo. This advance leads to the temporary suspension of talks in Geneva.

On 5 February the Syria donors conference ends with a practically unanimous agreement against Russia over its bombing of Aleppo and a 9-billion-euro pledge in humanitarian assistance in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

On 4 February Saudi Arabia offers to deploy ground troops in Syria.

On 7 February Turkey closes the Oncupinar border crossing to thousands of people fleeing the attacks on Aleppo, which have left hundreds dead and 31,000 displaced. Turkey, which hosts 2.5 million refugees, insists that it is at the limit of its capacity.

On 22 February a chain of Daesh attacks on the Shia community leaves more than 100 dead in Homs and Damascus.

On 22 February the US announces an agreement with Russia reached at the International Security Conference in Munich for a ceasefire in Syria. On 23 February Damascus accepts the agreement, from which Daesh and al-Qaeda are excluded.

Lebanon

On 2 February Hezbollah militants kill at least four members of the Jabhat al-Nusra (Victory Front) in Arsal.

On 23 February Saudi Arabia adopts economic sanctions and calls its citizens to leave Lebanon following Beirut’s refusal to condemn the attacks in January 2016 on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran for the execution of the Shia cleric Nimr Baqr al-Nimr.

Egypt

On 3 February the Court of Cassation overturns the death sentences on 149 members of the Muslim Brotherhood for the murder of 11 police officers in Kerdasa in August 2013 and orders a retrial.

On 4 February Giulio Regeni, the Italian PhD student who went missing on 25 January in Cairo, is found dead in the 6th October district with signs of torture.

On 7 February, in Cairo, the police kill four suspected members of Ajnad Misr, a radical group that was founded in January 2014.

On 14 February the Court of Cassation orders the retrial of the police officer Yasin Mohamed Hatem, who, on 24 January 2015, killed the activist Shaima esh-Sabag during a march of the Socialist Popular Alliance in Cairo.

On 20 February a military court sentences a four-year-old boy to life imprisonment for four counts of murder, eight homicide attempts, vandalism and threatening the security forces, together with a further 115 people who participated in a demonstration on 3 January 2014.

On 25 February three Christian teenagers that participated in a satirical video against Daesh are sentenced to five years in prison for blasphemy against Islam.

Libya

On 14 February the Presidential Council announces the new Government of National Accord led by Fayez al-Sarraj.
• On 25 February the Daesh leader in Sabratha, Mohammad Saad al-Tajouri, is arrested.

Tunisia

• On 1 February Ridha Belhaj steps down as head of the presidential cabinet a month after the Nidaa Tounes congress -9 and 10 January amid fighting for the party’s leadership.
• On 21 February Tunisia announces that the state of emergency in force since November 2015 will be extended by a month.

Algeria

• On 2 February the Sonatrach trial is brought to a close. Rulings are made against fifteen people and four companies for corruption.
• On 7 February the Parliament approves the constitutional reform presented by the government in January with an absolute majority.
• On 22 February Algeria tightens control of its border with Libya to defend against the growing threat of armed groups entering the country.

Morocco

• On 6 February the Ministerial Council adopts the law on the Regency Council.
• On 6 February Mohammed VI appoints Nasser Bourita as the Minister Delegate to the Foreign Affairs Minister.
• On 20 February a protest in Rabat marks the fifth anniversary of the February 20 Movement.
• On 25 February Morocco suspends contact with European institutions for the European Court ruling on 10 December 2015 that invalidates the agriculture and fishery trade agreement signed in 2012 because it includes the Western Sahara.

Mauritania

• On 5 February 11 people are arrested for drug trafficking, among them the son of the former President Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla.
• On 9 February the President announces a cabinet reshuffle, proposed by the Prime Minister, which affects the main portfolios.

EU

• On 19 February the EU reaches an agreement with London to avoid Britain's departure from the EU, the so-called Brexit. In exchange for the Prime Minister David Cameron defending Britain’s remaining in the Union in June’s referendum, London can limit the entry and rights of its foreign workers.
• On 25 February Vienna hosts a summit in which Austria and the Balkan states—with the exception of Greece—call for the migrant flow across the Balkans to be halted. The European Commission condemns the initiative for being unilateral. Greece recalls its ambassador in Vienna and warns that it will veto European policy if the established refugee relocation quotas are not implemented.

March 2016

In Spain, the Parliament rejects the investiture of Pedro Sanchez as Prime Minister. In France, there are protests against the labour reform. In Italy, the Economic Development Minister resigns. In Malta, the government has to deal with the Panamagate case. In Bosnia, the former Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic is sentenced by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The refugee crisis in southeastern Europe continues. Turkey and the EU sign an agreement for the return of refugees arriving in Greece to Turkey. Talks resume in Geneva on Syria, where Kurds in the north of the country declare a federal system. In Egypt, there is a government reshuffle. In Libya, the Government of National Accord arrives in Tripoli. In Tunisia, there is fierce fighting against Daesh in Ben Guerdane. Brussels is shaken by a triple terror attack. The Arab League elects a new secretary general and declares Hezbollah terrorist group.

Spain

• On 1 March Arnaldo Otegi leaves Logroño after serving a six-and-a-half-year sentence for attempting to reconstruct the separatist party Batasuna, banned by the Supreme Court, which considers it an instrument of the terrorist group Euskadi ta Asanitasuna (ETA).
• On 2 and 4 March the Parliament rejects the investiture of socialist party leader Pedro Sanchez as President.

France

• On 3 March the President François Hollande asks the British Prime Minister David Cameron for a substantial increase in payments to France to ensure control of the French-British border across the English Channel and in Calais, where the controversial dismantling of the refugee camp known as The Jungle continues.
• On 8 March a week of strikes begins against the Labour Code reform presented by the Labour Minister Myriam el-Khomri, widely considered as alarmingly restrictive on social rights. On 30 March a large-scale demonstration calls for the reform’s withdrawal.
• On 30 March the President François Hollande drops constitutional reform plans that would allow dual nationals convicted of terrorism to be stripped of their citizenship.

Italy

• On 31 March the Economic Development Minister Federica Guidi resigns after it is revealed that she passed insider information to her partner, the businessman Gianluca Gemelli, that would benefit him in the Tema Rossa oil extraction project.

Malta

• On 6 March the Nationalist Party (PN, conservative) leads a demonstration against the Labour Party (PL) government over the Panamagate corruption scandal, uncovered in February by the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, and which involves the Energy Minister Konrad Mizzi and Keith Schembri, the chief of staff to the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat.
Slovenia

- On 9 March Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia begin applying restrictions on the entry of migrants.

Croatia

- On 4 March Switzerland and the EU agree to include Croatia in the agreement on the free movement of workers.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 4 March the new party Civic Force - created following the 2014 anti-government protests - announces that it will run in the local elections in October in Tuzla to initiate a movement of national change.
- On 4 March the State Court orders Fahrudin Radonic, leader of the Union for a Better Future of BiH (SBB BiH, conservative) to be returned to prison for violating the terms of his house arrest.
- On 24 March Radovan Karadzic, the former President of the Republika Srpska is sentenced by the ICTY to 40 years’ imprisonment for genocide in Srebrenica, where 8,000 Muslims were murdered in 1995, and for the siege of Sarajevo, where 12,000 people died between 1992 and 1996.
- On 31 March 10 people are arrested for embezzling 63 million euros in false loans from the defunct Bobar Bank.

Montenegro

- On 9 March Montenegro extradites the Serbian general Bosilaj Djukic to Croatia to be tried for crimes against Humanity in Bosnia.

Serbia

- On 2 March the Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic calls early elections scheduled for 24 April to strengthen his support in view of European accession.
- On 4 March a demonstration in Nis demands that the government hold a referendum on NATO membership.
- On 7 March the former Bosnian police officer Ilija Jurisic is cleared of participating in the attack on Yugoslav troops as they were withdrawing from Tuzla in 1992 and overturns his 12-year prison sentence.

Turkey

- On 2 March three soldiers and 10 PKK members are killed in fighting in Dargecit, Mardin, and in the south, Diyarbakir. The fighting continues throughout the month.
- On 3 March two members of the banned Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP-C, Marxist) are shot dead by police in Istanbul after attacking a group of officers.
- On 4 March a court sentences two Syrians to four years in prison for human trafficking in connection with the death of five migrants, among them Aylan Kurdi, the Kurdish boy whose photograph lying dead on a Turkish beach shocked the world.
- On 4 March the police arrest four managers from the company Boydak in Kayseri accused of belonging to the network of Islamist cleric Fethullah Gülen.
- On 7 March a court in Istanbul appoints a group of administrators to manage the private news agency Cihan, which, like the newspaper Zaman, belongs to the Feza Group, which was taken over by the government on 4 March because of its links with Fethullah Gülen.
- On 13 March at least 37 people are killed when a car bomb explodes, planted by the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK) in Ankara.
- On 19 March a Daesh suicide bomber of Turkish nationality kills three Israelis and an Iranian in Istanbul.
- On 23 March 13 people are arrested in Istanbul and Gaziantep for belonging to Daesh.
- On 31 March at least seven people are killed by an explosion near the Diyarbakir bus terminal.

Greece

- On 10 March the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publishes a report that reveals that a third of the world’s population falls beneath the poverty line.
- On 21 March the EU begins closure of transit camps for refugees in Lesbos (Moria and Ka Tepe) and transfers asylum seekers to mainland Greece. The NGOs working in both camps are asked to leave. Meanwhile, migrants continue to arrive in their thousands in Lesbos and in the north of the country 12,000 people continue to wait in Idomeni to cross to other countries.
• On 29 March Nicos Anastasiades becomes the first Cypriot President to testify before a court in the corruption case involving the former deputy attorney-general Rikkos Erotokritou.
• On 31 March Cyprus officially concludes its international financial assistance programme.

Syria
• On 2 March the Kurdish YPG militia reports the death of 43 of its members, 33 civilians and 140 jihadists following a Daesh attack in Tel Abyad.
• On 4 March Abu Omar al-Shishani, "the Chechen," a Daesh commander, is believed to have been killed by the US airstrike in al-Shaddadi. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), al-Shishani was seriously injured and taken to al-Raqqa.
• On 5 March in the small window offered by the ceasefire between the government and opposition, around a hundred people gather in Syria to protest against the government and jihadist fundamentalism.
• On 14 March the peace talks resume in Geneva while attacks continue throughout the month in Jisr al-Shugur, Eastern Ghouta, Duma, and Aleppo despite the ceasefire. The future of Bashar al-Assad is still the main stumbling block in the negotiations, in which there are hopes for presidential and parliamentary elections to be held within 18 months.
• On 14 March the Russian President Vladimir Putin orders the withdrawal of Russian troops from Syria saying their mission has been accomplished.
• On 16 March the Kurdish-controlled northern areas declare the establishment of a federal system, partly in reaction to the exclusion of representatives from the Democratic Union Party (PYD) from the peace talks in Geneva, at Turkey’s request.
• On 27 March the army’s offensive to take control of Tadmor and Palmyra from Daesh reaches its successful conclusion.

Lebanon
• On 28 March two people are killed in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp during clashes between rival factions.

Jordan
• On 2 March at least one police officer and four supporters are killed in fighting in Irbid.

Egypt
• On 6 March Egypt accuses Hamas of being responsible, together with the Muslim Brotherhood, of the murder of the Egyptian public prosecutor Hicham Barakat in June 2015.
• On 13 March the Justice Minister Ahmed al-Zend was sacked after, during an interview, in which he was asked about the case of various journalists tried for defamation following accusations that he acquired state land at below-market prices, al-Zend responded that he would have them imprisoned “even if they were Muhammad.”
• On 19 March 15 police officers are killed in the Sinai in a Daesh attack.
• On 23 March, after the Central Bank devalues the Egyptian pound by 14.4%, ten new ministers are sworn into their posts as part of a partial government reshuffle aimed at relaunching the economy.
• On 28 March Abdel Fattah el-Sisi sacks the head of the Central Auditing Organization Hisham Geneina -appointed in 2012 by the overthrown President Mohamed Morsi- for spreading “inaccurate” information when he declared at the end of 2015, that corruption in public institutions cost the country around 76 billion dollars between 2008 and 2012.

Libya
• On 12 March the Presidential Council declares the entry into operation of the Government of National Accord despite resistance from the authorities in Tobruk and Tripoli.
• On 31 March the EU sanctions three Libyan political leaders for obstructing the establishment of the new Government of National Accord and the UN Security Council extends until 31 July 2017 sanctions on illicit oil exports that escape the authority of the new government.
• On 31 March the head of the new government Fayez Sarraj arrives in the Libyan capital from Sfax, defying resistance from the authorities and Islamist militants in Tripoli.

Tunisia
• On 1 and 8 March clashes between the army and Daesh leave more than 60 dead in Ben Guerdane. The fighting continues throughout the month.
• On 17 March the former President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, is handed down another sentence in absentia: 10 years’ imprisonment for abuse of power in a public tender.
• On 23 March Tunisia extends the state of emergency imposed on 24 November following a terrorist attack on a Presidential Guard bus by three months.

Algeria
• On 17 March Chakib Khelil, former Energy and Mines Minister, returns to Algeria after three years in exile following court accusations of his involvement in the Sonatrach 1 corruption case. The opposition claims that Khelil has negotiated an acquittal.
• On 30 March more than 17 opposition parties meet in Zeralda to demand an effective transition process.

Mauritania
• On 14 March Mauritania signs up to the UN’s anti-slavery protocol that modernizes the Forced Labour Convention of 1930.

EU
• On 18 March the EU heads of state and government conclude the agreement negotiated at the EU-Turkey summit on 7 March under which Ankara commits to accepting the return of refugees arriving in Greece from Turkey after 20 March, in exchange for 6 billion euros in aid to be used for this purpose, EU visa liberalization for Turkish citizens and progress in the accession talks.
• On 22 March Daesh carries out an attack at Zaventem airport and Maalbeek metro station in Brussels that
leaves 32 dead and 340 injured, three days after the arrest in Brussels of Salah Abdelslam, one of the perpetrators of the attacks in Paris in November 2015.

Arab League

- On 10 March the Arab League unani-

mously elects Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Hosni Mubarak’s last Foreign Affairs

Minister, as the new Secretary-General.

- On 11 March the Arab League de-

clares Hezbollah a terrorist group, fol-

lowing the same decision taken by the

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on

2 March.

April 2016

Ministers resign in Portugal and Spain.

The anti-government protests continue in France. The Maltese government sur-

vives a confidence vote. Croatia vetoes advances in European accession nego-

tiations with Serbia. Hashim Thaçi is

sworn in as President of Kosovo. The

Albanian President vetoes the Public

Security bill. Turkey responds to re-

peated Daesh attacks on Kilis. The op-

position to the Syrian regime abandons

the Geneva peace talks. In Lebanon

and Egypt, two ministers are handed

over to the Government of National Ac-

cession negotiations.

Portugal

- On 8 April the Culture Minister João

Soares resigns after threatening to slap

two journalists for questioning his com-

petence.

Spain

- On 13 April the PP suspends the

mayor of Granada Jose Torres Hurtado,

arrested in connection with a corruption

scandal involving the city council.

- On 14 April five members of Ekin,

ETA’s political apparatus, arrested in

January 2011, accept prison sentence

reductions from 10 to two years in ex-

change for renouncing and condemning

the use of violence, after reaching a

similar agreement with the public pros-

cutor to that made with 35 Batasuna

members on 13 January.

- On 15 April the Minister of Industry,

Energy and Tourism Jose Manuel Soria

resigns after being named in the inter-
national tax evasion case known as

Panama Papers or Panamagate.

France

- On 7 April the Nuit Debout (Rise up

at night) protests against the policies of

the President François Hollande and

Prime Minister Manuel Valls reaches its

seventh night. The movement has

spread to other French cities and Brus-

sels. On 12 April Valls announces 500

million euros in subsidies to help young

job-seekers.

Italy

- On 12 April the Chamber of Deput-

ies approves the constitutional referen-

dum on the reform limiting the powers

of the Senate.

- On 15 April the International Or-

ganization for Migration reports that at

least 6,000 migrants have tried to

reach Italy and Malta from Libya in the

last three days.

Malta

- On 18 April the PL government sur-

vives a vote of no confidence tabled by

the PN following the refusal of the Prime

Minister Joseph Muscat to sack the En-

ergy and Health Minister Konrad Mizzi,

named in the so-called Panama Papers.

Croatia

- On 5 April the ICTY indefinitely post-

pones the trial for war crimes and crimes

against humanity of Goran Hadzic, the

former leader of the Republic of Serbian

Krajina, due to the terminal cancer he is

suffering from.

- On 5 April the national police direc-

tor Vlado Dominic resigns following the

robbery of 400,000 dollars from the

Organized Crime Unit.

- On 26 April Balkans War veterans

announce the end of their protest camp,

which began in October 2014 to de-

mand the dismissal of the Veterans Min-

ister Predrag Matic and the constitu-

tional protection of their rights.

- On 29 April the government passes

a package of 60 reforms to reduce the

national debt and public deficit and boost

the economy. They include an increase in

the retirement age to 67, incentives for

civil servants, a fund to promote foreign

investment and a real estate tax.

Montenegro

- On 21 April Montenegro extradites

the former Yugoslav People’s Army of-

ficer Pavle Pantic to Croatia to stand

trial for the bombing of Split in 1991.

Serbia

- On 7 April the European accession

talks are blocked by a Croatian veto de-

manding that Belgrade offers Croa-

tians living in Serbia a better deal and

a reform to Serbia’s war crimes legis-

lation.

- On 24 April the Serbian Progressive

Party (SNS, conservative pro-Euro-

pean), of the Prime Minister Aleksandar

Vucic wins in the early parliamentary

elections with 52% of the votes.

Kosovo under United Nations Security

Council Resolution 1244

- On 1 April the Stabilization and As-

sociation Agreement between the EU

and Kosovo enters into force.

- On 3 April a grenade explodes in

Zubin Potok hours before the Serbian

Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic’s visit

to northern Kosovo, as part of his elec-

tion campaign for the Serbian elections

on 24 April.

- On 9 April Vetëvendosje boycotts

the presidential inauguration ceremony

Hashim Thaçi by firing tear gas in pro-

test against the agreement to normalize

relations with Serbia.

FYROM

- On 1 April the Democratic Union for

Integration (DUI, Albanian nationalist,
Turkey

- On 5 April the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan proposes stripping PKK supporters of their Turkish nationality.
- On 5 April a curfew is imposed in Silopi after a PKK terrorist attack.
- On 12 April Turkey shells Daesh positions in Syria in response to two days of attacks on the Turkish town of Kilis. The shelling continues throughout the month.
- On 15 April the 13th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) ends with the approval of a communiqué accusing Iran of supporting terrorism and interfering in the internal affairs of the other members of the OIC.
- On 26 April the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) condemns Turkey for what it considers to be its “unjustified difference in treatment” of the Alevi community.
- On 28 April a suicide attack perpetrated by the TAK terrorist group leaves at least 13 injured in Bursa.
- On 28 April the journalists from the newspaper Cumhuriyet, Hikmet Cetinkaya and Ceyda Karan, are sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for republishing Charlie Hebdo’s cartoons of Mohammed.

Albania

- On 4 April the President Bujar Nishani refuses to ratify the public security bill approved by the Parliament in March saying that it violates citizens’ privacy.
- On 25 April the Supreme Court overturns the appeal made by the public prosecutor asking for prison sentences to be handed down to members of the Republic Guard cleared of killing four participants in the anti-government protests in January 2011.

Cyprus

- On 3 April delays in signing a new economic protocol with Turkey for 2016-2018, cause the collapse of the coalition government of the Republican Turkish Party (CTP, pro-reunification, social democratic) and the National Unity Party (UBP, Turkish nationalist, conservative). On 4 April the Prime Minister Ömer Kalyoncu (CTP) resigns. On 16 April Hüseyin Özgürün (UBP) is named Prime Minister.

Syria

- On 3 April Abu Firas al-Suri, one of the leaders of Jabhat al-Nusra, is killed in shelling in Kafar Jales.
- On 3 April the army enters al-Qaryatayn, controlled by Daesh since the summer of 2015.
- On 7 April the FSA takes control of al-Rai, Aleppo.
- On 8 April the Free Syrian Army (FSA) takes control of Tasil in Dera, from Daesh.
- On 13 April the parliamentary elections called by the regime in territories where is has control unsurprisingly give Bashar al-Assad victory.
- On 20 April the Syrian opposition suspends its attendance at the Geneva peace talks following the previous day’s airstrikes, which left 44 dead in Idlib.
- On 22 April at least 50 people are killed in al-Qamishli after three days of fighting between Kurdish forces and the Syrian army.
- On 25 April at least five people are killed in a Daesh attack in Sayyidah Zaynab, Damascus.
- On 27 April Daesh takes control from the FSA of several districts of Azaz, a town on the border with Turkey.
- On 29 April the SOHR estimates that at least 202 civilians have been killed in a new offensive waged by the regime in April aimed at taking control of Aleppo.

Lebanon

- On 1 April a group of demonstrators attack the Beirut office of the Saudi newspaper Asharq al-Awsat and the Saudi television station al-Arabiya closes its offices in Lebanon due to the mounting political tensions between Riyadh and Beirut.
- On 4 and 6 April Hezbollah shells Jabhat al-Nusra positions in Baalbek and Arsal.
- On 8 April Michel Samaha, the former Information Minister and ally of Bashar al-Assad, is sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment for terrorism.
- On 28 April the army says it has killed Fayez al-Shaalaan, an influential member of Daesh, on the Syrian border.

Jordan

- On 13 and 14 April the police shut down Muslim Brotherhood offices in Amman, Jerash, Madaba and Karak as relations crumble between the monarchy and the Brotherhood, divided between supporters of maintaining the link with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and followers of the splinter Association of the Muslim Brotherhood, supported by the crown.
Egypt

- On 8 April at least six soldiers and a civilian are killed in two Daesh attacks in the Sinai.
- On 11 April Salah Halil, the former Agriculture Minister, appointed in March 2015 and arrested six months later following his resignation, is sentenced to ten years in prison for accepting bribes.
- On 15 April thousands of Egyptians demonstrate in Cairo and Alexandria against the policies of the current government and the transfer of the islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia, announced on 8 April during the official visit of King Salman. The demonstrators are dispersed and numerous arrests are made.
- On 23 April security forces make dozens of arrests in Cairo two days before thwarting an anti-government demonstration led by the April 6 Youth Movement.

Libya

- On 6 April the Islamist government in Tripoli leaves the power in the hands of the UN-backed Government of National Accord. The Tobruk Parliament, however, still does not have the quorum needed to transfer power.
- On 11 April four oil fields in Merada are evacuated because of a risk of Daesh attacks, coinciding with a strike staged by workers at the Zelten oil field to demand tighter security measures.
- On 19 April the US widens its sanctions against Libyan political figures opposed to the establishment of the new Government of National Accord.
- On 23 April the Vice-President Ahmed Maiteeq proposes that the EU negotiates an agreement with Libya similar to the one it has signed with Turkey to halt the migrant flow.

Tunisia

- On 6 April three people are arrested in Tataouine for belonging to a terrorist cell linked with Daesh. On 12, 14, 17 and 27 April Tunisia announces it has dismantled other cells in different parts of the country, such as Rad Yebal, Kasserine and Mahdia.
- On 9 April clashes erupt in Tunis between the police and demonstrators demanding effective measures be taken against unemployment.
- On 12 April Raoudha Mechichi resigns, the legal advisor to the President and confidante of Ridha Belhaj, the current director of the Political Committee of Nidaa Tounes, who in February also resigned as the President’s chief-of-staff. The resignations come amid internal rifts in the governing party.
- On 18 April clashes break out in Kerkennah between the police and workers from the oil company Petrofac demanding better working conditions.

Algeria

- On 27 April security forces disperse a student demonstration in Buira, Kabila, protesting against police brutality during the Amazigh spring.
- On 29 April the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika returns to Algeria after six days in Geneva for “regular medical checkups.”

Morocco

- On 7 April the Democratic Alternative is constituted, a new party led by Ali el-Yazghi, following a splinter of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP).

Mauritania

- On 1 April the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz reshuffles the cabinet for the second time in less than two months.
- On 1 April the government advocates a constitutional revision to allow Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz to run for a third presidential term. The National Forum for Democracy and Unity (FNDU) breaks all contact with the government until the proposal is withdrawn.

EU

- On 12 April the European Parliament adopts a resolution advocating the centralized asylum system proposed by the Commission to improve the management of refugee flows and asylum applications.
- On 13 April the European Commission presents an emergency aid package of 700 million euros to support refugees stuck in Greece and the Balkans.
- On 14 April the European Parliament approves the creation of a European passenger name record.

May 2016

Spain calls early elections. Demonstrations continue in France against the Labour Law reform. Italy reports a sharp rise in refugee arrivals. In Montenegro there is a government reshuffle. Anti-government protests continue in FYROM. In Greece there are also large-scale protests against the new cuts approved by the government. In Turkey, Binali Yildirim is appointed Prime Minister. Cyprus holds legislative elections. The chief negotiator for the Syrian opposition in the Geneva peace talks resigns. Lebanon hold municipal elections. In Jordan, the constitutional amendments are approved which give the King more power in appointing senior officials. In Libya, the Government of National Accord begins a campaign to recover territory taken by Daesh, in competition with Khalifa Haftar’s forces loyal to the Tobruk Parliament. In Tunisia, Ennahda votes in favour of separating its political and religious activities. In Algeria, the head of the central bank is dismissed.

Spain

- On 3 May Felipe VI calls early elections scheduled for 26 June; the political parties having failed to reach an agreement to form a government since the 20 December 2015 elections.

France

- On 10 May Denis Baupin (Europe Ecology - The Greens, EELV) resigns as Vice-President of the National Assembly after being accused of sexually harassing several women.
- On 11 May the government invokes article 49.3 of the constitution to approve the Labour Law reforms without a parliamentary vote, which has given rise to the social movement Nuit Debout which, together with the trade unions,
continues to stage large-scale protests throughout the month.
• On 18 May the National Police demonstrate in Paris to denounce inadequate government orders for controlling demonstrations and the growing climate of hatred against the police.
• On 19 May the National Assembly approves extending the state of emergency imposed following the jihadist attacks of November 2015 until 26 July, in view of the Euro 2016 Football Championship.

Italy

• On 6 May 1,800 refugees are rescued in 24 hours while attempting to reach Italy.
• On 12 May the Parliament passes the law allowing same-sex civil unions.
• On 26 May the coast guard coordinates more than 20 operations in the Strait of Sicily in which more than 2,600 migrants are rescued.
• On 30 May according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the last week 13,800 migrants have disembarked on Italian soil. In the same time period, Greece has received just 180 migrants, confirming Italy as the alternative following the closure of the Balkan route.

Malta

• On 26 May to rectify the vote counting error for the 2013 legislative elections, the Constitutional Court gives the PN two additional parliamentary seats.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 13 May the police seize a large number of weapons following the previous day’s arrests of five people suspected of supplying arms to Islamists in Sweden.
• On 21 May the Citizens Union holds its founding congress, a party created by Reuf Bajrovic and Emir Suljagic, former members of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Democratic Front (DF) respectively.

Montenegro

• On 9 May Montenegro signs the NATO accession protocol.
• On 17 May Svetozar Marovic, the former President of Serbia and Montenegro, is released from custody after agreeing with the public prosecutor to serve a prison sentence of three years and eight months for his involvement in a criminal network that stole 15 million euros from the Budva municipality.
• On 19 May the Parliament approves the government reshuffle agreed by the main parties on 4 April which sees the opposition take control of five ministries and several public bodies. The agreement also sets early elections for October.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 7 May the Parliament speaker Kadri Veseli is unanimously elected chairman of the PDK.
• On 16 May the Pristina Appeals Court upholds its 2013 acquittal of Fatmir Limaj and another nine former UCK members of charges of crimes against civilians in the Klecka prison in 1998.

FYROM

• On 10 May chanting slogans in support of “Great Albania,” more than 20,000 Albanians throughout the country and Kosovo demonstrate in Skopje to mark the Kumanovo clashes in May 2015, in which the UCK attempted to take the city. The demonstrators protest the DUI’s (Albanian nationalist) support of the VMRO-DPMNE in the government demand more rights for the Albanian population and the creation of a special court for crimes against Albanians.
• On 19 May the deputies in the government coalition gain enough votes to approve the replacement of the Justice and Social Policy Ministers Oliver Spasovski and Frosina Remenski, from the opposition SDSM.
• On 19 May the Parliament votes to postpone the early elections scheduled for 5 June, following the boycott of most parties and the Constitutional Court ruling that the dissolution of the Parliament was unconstitutional.
• On 19 May the Parliament modifies the law under which the President Gjorge Ivanov pardoned more than 50 public figures linked to the government wiretapping scandal.

Albania

• On 9 May the socialist deputy Koco Kokedhima is stripped of his mandate by the Constitutional Court for influence peddling.

Greece

• On 9 and 23 May, while protests take place in the streets, the Parliament approves the new measures demanded by the creditors for the release of the next tranche of the third bailout package.
• On 24 May the eurozone reaches an agreement to release 10.3 billion euros of the third Greek bailout package, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announces it will also join.
• On 27 May the eviction of the Idomeni refugee camp, which began four days ago, comes to an end. Part of the more than 8,000 inhabitants will be sent to Turkey under the readmission agreement between Brussels and Ankara and the rest relocated in Greek reception centres.

Turkey

• On 3 May the ECHR condemns Turkey for its ineffective investigation into the murder in 1994 of Sefer Cerf, member of the defunct People’s Democracy Party (HADEP, Kurdish nationalist).
• On 4 May a PKK attack in Derik, Mardin, leaves a soldier dead coinciding with the Turkish airstrikes on targets of the terrorist group that leave at least 20 dead. The fighting in the southeast of the country and terrorist attacks continue throughout the month.
• On 19 May the Transport and Communications Minister Binali Yildirim, a close ally of the Prime Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is elected as the only candidate to replace Ahmet Davutoğlu at the head of the government, at the extraordinary congress of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). On 22 May with the support of 1,405 of the 1,411 members of the AKP, Yildirim is confirmed as the new Prime Minister. On 29 May Binali Yildirim’s new government survives a confidence vote in the Parliament.
• On 24 May the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warns that the migration
deal reached with the EU will not be put through the Turkish Parliament if Brussels does not grant the visa exemption it promised Turkish citizens in the Schengen area. European reticence comes after Erdogan’s refusal to reform the Turkish anti-terror law, one of the European Commission’s requirements for lifting visa restrictions.
- On 31 May Turkey designates the movement of the Islamist cleric Fethullah Gülen as a terrorist group.

Cyprus
- On 22 May the ruling Democratic Rally (DISY, centre-right) wins in the legislative elections (30.68% of the votes) ahead of the Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL, 25.67%). In third place is DIKO (14.49%).

Syria
- On 4 May the US and Russia extend the ceasefire in the province of Aleppo on the same day that fierce fighting takes place in the city between rebels and the Syrian army which continues throughout the month.
- On 5 May shelling attributed to the Syrian regime leaves at least 30 dead in the displaced people’s camp of al-Kamouneh, Idlib.
- On 23 May a chain of explosions that shakes Tartus and Jableh leaves at least 154 people dead.
- On 25 May the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announce a coalition of armed groups to oust Daesh from al-Raqqa.
- On 29 May the Turkish army kills at least 28 Daesh members in an airstrike on 58 targets of the terrorist group in Aleppo, as part of the Turkish reaction to the Jihadist attacks on the city of Kilis.
- On 29 May the chief negotiator of the Syrian opposition Mohammed Al-loush resigns citing the failure of the Geneva talks and the regime’s continued bombing of rebel-held areas.

Jordan
- On 4 May following parliamentary authorization, the constitutional amendments approved by the Council of Ministers on 18 April are published, which increase the King’s power to appoint senior officials.
- On 5 May Jordan estimates that around 2,000 Daesh members have infiltrated refugee camps in the country.
- On 29 May Abdullah II appoints Hani Al-Mulki, the chief commissioner of the Special Economic Zone in Aqaba, as the new Prime Minister to replace Abdullah Ensour.

Egypt
- On 1 May the Egyptian police raid the journalists’ trade union and arrest two journalists accused of inciting the organization of anti-government demonstrations.
- On 8 May a Daesh attack leaves eight police officers dead in Helwan.
- On 14 May 51 anti-government demonstrators are sentenced to two years in prison for participating in the recent protests against the return to Saudi Arabia of the islands of Tiran and Sanafir.
- On 19 May Egyptian flight MS804 crashes into the Mediterranean on its way from Paris to Cairo after sending out a distress signal. All 66 occupants are killed.

Libya
- On 3 May against orders from the Government of National Accord, two military factions, the Revolutionary Militias of Misrata and the Libyan National Army of general Khalifa Haftar announce their respective troop movements towards Sirte, Daesh’s stronghold in Libya.
- On 6 May five people are killed in Benghazi when a howitzer is fired into a demonstration supporting the armed forces loyal to the Tobruk government.
- On 16 May the US State Secretary John Kerry, together with other international powers meeting at the international conference on Libya held in Vienna, advocates for the partial lifting of the arms embargo to facilitate the Government of National Accord’s fight against Daesh.
- On 25 May 540 migrants ship-wrecked off the Libyan coastline are rescued by the Italian Navy.
- On 31 May the Petroleum Facilities Guard, loyal to the unity government and in control of the oil ports of the eastern coast, captures Ben Jawad from Daesh.

Tunisia
- On 11 May at least four police officers are killed in a suicide bomb attack during a raid in Tataouine, which follows another carried out in Mnihla, in which at least two terrorists were killed.
- On 11 May a general strike is staged in Ben Guerdane to protest against the blockade on commercial traffic across the border with Libya, on which the city’s economy depends.
- On 20, 21 and 22 May the 10th Ennahda Congress takes place. Rachid Ghannouchi is re-elected at the head of the Islamist party, which also votes in favour of separating its political and religious activities.

Algeria
- On 31 May the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika sacks the head of the central bank Mohammed Laksaci and appoints Mohamed Loukal to replace him. Laksaci had been increasingly criticized for his evaluation of the dinar and his management of the economic crisis sparked by the drop in oil prices.
Morocco

- On 15 May the Moroccan and Spanish security forces stop 150 migrants from storming the border fence in the Spanish city of Melilla.
- On 18 May Morocco summons the US ambassador in Rabat to denounce manipulations in the US State Department’s report on Human Rights in Morocco.

Mauritania

- On 17 May the Supreme Court orders the release of anti-slavery activists Biram Ould Dah Abeid and Brahim Ould Bilal Ramdane, who were given a two-year jail sentence in January 2014.

EU

- On 4 May the European Commission presents a new proposal for the management of the refugee crisis in which it proposes reforming the Dublin Regulation to include an emergency mechanism that would calculate when a country is being overwhelmed by asylum applications. It also includes a 250,000-euro payment from governments that do not want to participate for each refugee not accepted. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia declare they will join forces to fight against the proposal.

June 2016

Spain holds early legislative elections. Widespread protests continue in France against the labour reform and maximum security measures are taken for the Euro 2016 Football Championships. Italy holds local elections and continues to report mass migrant arrivals. In Croatia, the government coalition falls apart. Bosnia publishes the 2013 population census. Anti-government protests continue in the FYROM. A diplomatic crisis is sparked between Germany and Turkey over the recognition of the Armenian genocide. Daesh carries out an attack at Atatürk Airport in Istanbul. In Syria both the rebel forces and the army continue their advances on Daesh positions. Jordan declares its border with Syria and Iraq a military zone. In Egypt the former President Mohammed Morsi is handed down another life sentence. In Libya, the Government of National Accord enters Sirte and the United Nations gives the EU authorization to control the country’s arms embargo. The Tunisian parliament establishes electoral gender parity. Algeria reshuffles the government.

Spain

- On 8 June members of the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP, far-left, pro-independence) vote against the regional budget for 2016 submitted by the Catalan government, preventing its approval and breaking the governability pact with the pro-independence coalition Junts pel Sí.
- On 26 June the Spanish city of Melilla reports yet another mass attempt by migrants to cross the border, the twelfth of the year.
- On 26 June Spain holds early legislative elections in which the PP of the President Mariano Rajoy wins with 137 deputies (33% of the vote). Pedro Sanchez’s PSOE comes second with 85 seats (22.66%). The left-wing coalition Together We Can led by Pablo Iglesias obtains 71 seats (21.26%) and Albert Rivera’s centrist Citizens takes 32 seats (13%).

France

- On 1 June an indefinite national train strike begins, as part of the widespread mobilization against the reform of the Labour Law, proposed by the government, which continues throughout the month.
- On 13 June after a Daesh terrorist with French nationality and a criminal record slits the throats of a police officer and his wife in Magnanville, France steps up its already raised security measures in the face of major anti-government protests, as well as unrest between fans of different countries during the Euro Football Championships.
- On 22 June the police announce the ban on the demonstration against the labour reform called by the trade unions for the following day.

Italy

- On 5 June Italy holds municipal elections for the first time, a woman will become the mayor of Rome, after Virginia Raggi, from the populist M5S party, by 67.2%. In Turin, after 23 years with a centre-left government, Chiara Appendino (M5S) wins with 56%. The elections are a setback for the Democratic Party (PD, social-democratic) of Matteo Renzi, which, in the major cities, only retains Milan, with the victory of Giuseppe Sala with 51.7%.
- On 8 June the coast guard reports the rescue of 1,091 refugees in the Mediterranean and on 15 June the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex) affirms that the number of migrant arrivals in Italy in May more than doubled the figures reported for April, reaching 19,000 and exceeding for the second consecutive month the number of arrivals in Greece.
- On 26 June the mafia boss of the ‘Ndrangheta Avignone-Zagari-Viola clan Ernesto Fazzalari is arrested in Molochio, after being on the run since 1996.

Malta

- On 20 June Malta introduces an eco tax of 0.50 euros per night that tourists will have to pay to offset their environmental impact.

Croatia

- On 1 June Croatia takes over the Presidency of the South-East European Cooperation Process from Bulgaria.
- On 20 June the Parliament votes in favour of holding early elections in September after the collapse of the government coalition led by the independent technocrat Tihomir Oreskovic and formed by the HDZ and MOST.
- On 21 June Tomislav Karamarko resigns as HDZ president following the fall of the government coalition.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 8 June negotiations break down between the federal government and the two entities to adopt an inter-insti-
tutional coordination mechanism, which is vital for advancing in the European accession process.

- On 30 June the state statistics agency publishes the complete results of the 2013 population census, the first since the Bosnian War, despite opposition from the Statistics Institution of the Republica Srpska due to methodological differences. According to the study, the distribution of the three majority groups is 50.11% Bosniaks, 30.78% Serbs and 15.43% Croats.

Montenegro

- On 6 June the Interior Minister orders a massive deployment in Kotor to deal with new clashes between criminal gangs.
- On 30 June Montenegro opens two new chapters in accession negotiations - Food Safety and Fisheries.

Serbia

- On 11 June the civic movement Ne Davimo Beograd (Don’t drown Belgrade) protests against Aleksandar Vucic’s government and the Waterfront real estate development project.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 14 June the European Council extends the EULEX mandate to 14 June 2018.

FYROM

- On 14 June the deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Zoran Stavreski resigns due to health reasons.
- On 20 June a new anti-government demonstration called by the Protestiram (I protest) movement as part of the so-called Colourful Revolution calls for the government’s resignation and early elections and expresses its support for the special public prosecutors investigating the illegal wiretapping, presidential pardons and corruption affecting the government of Nikola Gruevski.
- On 21 June a parliamentary majority rejects a motion tabled by the social democrats to investigate the President Gjorge Ivanov for pardoning 56 politicians in the government wiretapping scandal.

Greece

- On 3 June the coast guard recovers four bodies and rescues at least 340 refugees in Crete.
- On 17 June Greece announces that it will return 8,400 refugees from Lesbos and other parts of the country to Turkey within 90 days.
- On 17 June the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) approves the second 10.3-billion-euro tranche in of the third Greek bailout.

Turkey

- On 2 June Germany declares the slaughter of one and a half million Armenians between 1915 and 1917 by the Ottoman Empire as genocide, sparking a diplomatic crisis with Turkey.
- On 7 June the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signs a bill approved by Parliament on 20 May that allows immunity of lawmakers under legal investigation to be lifted.
- On 8 June TAK claims responsibility for a car bomb that explodes in Midyat, Mardin, leaving three dead.
- On 14 June the head of the EU’s delegation to Turkey Hansjorg Haber resigns.
- On 16 June Greece protests against Turkey’s decision to allow Muslim prayer during Ramadan in the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, which since 1934 has had museum status.
- On 20 June the Istanbul Criminal Court of Peace orders the arrest of at least 37 activists and journalists under investigation for a symbolic action in support of the pro-Kurdish newspaper Özgür Gündem.
- On 19 and 26 June police use tear gas to disperse several unauthorized gatherings to mark Transgender Pride and Gay Pride respectively in Istanbul.
- On 28 June a Daesh suicide bomb attack at Istanbul airport leaves at least 43 dead and 237 injured. On the following days dozens of arrests are made.
- On 29 June Russia and Turkey agree to re-establish good bilateral relations following Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s public apologies for the Downing of a Russian bomber by the Turkish army in November 2015.

Cyprus

- On 13 June as reunification negotiations intensify, Elizabeth Spehar, appointed on 30 March as the new UN Secretary-General representative and Head of United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) arrives in the country.
- On 20 June Cyprus asks for assistance from the European Civil Protection Mechanism to put out massive fires that have broken out on the island.

Syria

- On 7 June Hadiya Khalaf Abbas becomes the first woman speaker of the People’s Assembly (Parliament) in Syria.
- On 8 June at least 15 people are killed in airstrikes in Aleppo. Bombing and civilian casualties continue throughout the month in Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, al-Raqqa and Idlib.
- On 19 June at least eight Syrians are shot dead by Turkish border police while attempting to enter Turkey. According to SOHR, 60 Syrian refugees have been killed by Turkish forces in similar circumstances.
- On 20 June two weeks after penetrating the area the government forces are ousted from the al-Raqqa province by Daesh.
- On 24 June the SDF, supported by the US military, enter Manbij.

Lebanon

- On 27 June a suicide bomb attack leaves at least six dead in Qaa, in the Bekaa Valley. On 29 June 103 Syrians are arrested in connection with the attack.

Jordan

- On 6 June five members of the intelligence service and security forces are killed in an attack on a checkpoint in the Baqaa Palestinian refugee camp.
- On 21 June six soldiers are killed in an attack in al-Rukban, a town that plays host to a large refugee camp. On 22 June Jordan closes its borders with...
Syria and Iraq and declares the area a military zone.

• On 29 June the New York Times and al-Jazeera reveal how Jordanian intelligence officers became rich from systematically selling arms on the black market, which had been sent by the US and Saudi Arabia to the Syrian opposition.

Egypt

• On 18 June an Egyptian court hands down another life sentence to the former President Mohammed Morsi in an espionage trial which sees a further six defendants sentenced to death.
• On 21 June the Supreme Administrative Court rules against the transfer from Egypt to Saudi Arabia of the islands Tiran and Sanafir. The government says it will appeal the ruling.

Libya

• On 2 and 5 June the bodies of 250 migrants are found washed up on the shores of Zuwara.
• On 11 June after three weeks of fighting, the Government of National Accord forces reach the centre of Sirte, under Daesh control. The fighting continues throughout the month.
• On 15 June the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts a resolution authorizing the EU to oversee the arms embargo imposed on Libya.

Tunisia

• On 11 June the former Transport Minister Abdelkarim Harouni is elected in Hammamet as chairman of the Ennahdha party’s consultative council.
• On 13 June the President Beji Caid Essebsi begins a round of consultations with different political actors to study the formation of a national unity government.
• On 15 June the Parliament passes a law establishing gender parity among candidates in elections and public consultations with 127 votes in favour, three abstentions and four votes against.

Algeria

• On 6 June the Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal announces that the government is preparing a reform of the Pensions Law to set the mandatory retirement age at 60, thereby replacing the current regulations, under which Algerians can retire after 32 years of contributions into a pensions fund.
• On 11 June the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika orders a partial reshuffle of the government with changes in the two ministries most affected by Algeria’s economic crisis.
• On 14 June the National Education Ministry announces that more than 300,000 baccalaureate exams of the 800,000 that were done in June in Algeria will have to be retaken after various questions were leaked on Facebook before the exams were sat. The Islamist parties call for the dismissal of the Education Minister Nouria Benghebrit, whose management has clashed with Islamists who question her policies, especially her push to introduce primary school teaching in Algerian Darja.
• On 20, 21 and 27 June changes are made in the leadership of Algeria’s main state-owned companies.

Morocco

• On 2, 13 and 24 June the police dismantle cells linked to Daesh operating in Casablanca, Tétouan, Martil, Oujda and Tendara.
• On 17 and 20 June the Moroccan authorities ban various activities supported by the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD), which, paradoxically, leads the current government coalition, as they are considered by the Interior Ministry as dangerous.

EU

• On 1 June the European Commission warns Warsaw regarding rule of law in Poland over the proposed controversial reforms, one of which affects the Constitutional Court.
• On 7 June the European Commission presents the New Migration Partnership Framework to the European Parliament, which proposes a wider negotiation with Maghreb countries; the mobilization of 8 billion euros to encourage investment; and adapting financial aid and trade policies in line with efforts to halt migration to Europe.
• On 23 June the United Kingdom holds the referendum on its exit from the EU, which sees 51.9% of the votes in favour of so-called Brexit, most of which are cast in England and Wales and by older voters. Scotland, London and Northern Ireland, as well as younger voters in general mostly choose to remain.
• On 28 June the High Representative Federica Mogherini presents the EU’s Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy to the European Council after a year of consultations with the different European Member States and civil society representatives.

July 2016

The European Commission cancels the fines imposed on Spain and Portugal for their excessive deficit. In France, a terrorist attack is carried out in Nice, for which Daesh claims responsibility. The Slovenian Foreign Affairs Minister resigns. Serbia opens two negotiating chapters in the accession process. Albania approves the judicial system reform. Turkey undergoes an attempted coup d’etat. The Syrian war continues with advances and retreats from the different sides and fighting escalates for control of Aleppo. In Egypt, the former head of the Central Auditing Agency is jailed. The Libyan Government of National Accord continues to assert its authority. In Tunisia, the government loses a confidence vote in Parliament. Morocco announces its intention to rejoin the African Union. In Mauritania, the anti-slavery leader Biram Ould Abeid announces that he will run for the country’s presidency again.

Portugal

• On 27 July the European Commission cancels large fines imposed on Spain and Portugal on 12 July for failing to reach the budget deficit targets laid out in the Stability and Growth Pact.

Spain

• On 19 July the acting Public Works Minister Ana Pastor (PP) is elected president of the Congress of Deputies (lower house) to replace Patxi Lopez (PSOE).
**France**

- On 2 July Michel Rocard dies, the French Prime Minister between 1988 and 1991.
- On 5 July the Prime Minister Manuel Valls announces that he will invoke article 49.3 of the constitution to push through the labour law reform without a parliamentary vote.
- On 14 July the Tunisian resident Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel drove a truck on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice killing 86 people and ramming the crowd celebrating the French National Day. Daesh claims responsibility for the attack.
- On 26 July two armed men are shot down by police after taking five people hostage in a church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, Normandy, in the name of Daesh and slitting the throat of an assistant priest.
- On 28 July François Hollande announces the future formation of a National Guard.

**Monaco**

- On 16 July the EU and Monaco sign a transparency and bank information exchange agreement.

**Italy**

- On 13 July the Interior Ministry presents a statute for Muslim prayer centres that establishes that sermons be carried out in Italian and that imams take training courses on Italian culture and the country’s constitution.
- On 18 and 19 July more than 3,300 people are rescued attempting to reach Italy, putting the number intercepted since the beginning of the year at 79,800. The mass arrivals continue throughout the month.
- On 27 July the government announces a decree as part of the public administration reform that eliminates additional pay for seniority and indefinite posts for civil servants and increases controls on absenteeism and requirements for entering the civil service.
- On 27 July the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi backs Stefano Parisi to lead Forza Italia.

**Slovenia**

- On 1 July the Foreign Affairs Minister Karl Erjavec announces his resignation after the Court of Arbitration for the border dispute with Croatia decides to continue its work, despite Croatia’s withdrawal from the process after it was revealed that private conversations had taken place between a Slovenian judge of the court and Ljubljana.
- On 7 July the European Central Bank (ECB) threatens Slovenia with legal action for seizing information from the ECB during a police raid on the Slovenian Central Bank, as part of an investigation into the bailout of a banking entity in 2013 when Slovenia injected more than 3 billion euros into its banks.

**Croatia**

- On 12 July Goran Hadzic dies, leader of the Croatian Serb rebels during the Yugoslavian dismemberment, whose trial for war crimes in The Hague was suspended in view of the terminal cancer he was suffering from.
- On 14 July hundreds of journalists protest in Zagreb against the wave of sackings in state broadcaster HRT, which they see as being politically motivated.
- On 27 July a crisis erupts between Belgrade and Zagreb sparked by a Croatian court’s decision to pardon the Catholic cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, convicted in 1946 by Yugoslavia for collaborating with the Axis powers.
- On 28 July on appeal, the Supreme Court orders the retrial of former general Branimir Glavas for war crimes in 1991 against Serbs in Osijek, after the Constitutional Court, in January 2015, annulled the Supreme Court’s 2010 eight-year prison sentence, and orders the Supreme Court to review the sentence.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

- On 11 July thousands gather for the burial of 127 of the 8,000 victims of the Srebrenica massacre, which Serbian representatives are not allowed to attend.

**Montenegro**

- On 26 July the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Seselj announces that it will run in the Montenegrin elections in October, with a campaign against entering the EU and NATO.

**Serbia**

- On 16 July Serbia announces the deployment of border patrols to avoid illegal entries, which according to Belgrade, have exceeded 100,000 in 2016, despite the closure of the Balkan route.
- On 18 July Serbia opens two new chapters in its accession negotiations -Judiciary and Fundamental Rights; and Justice, Freedom and Security- after Croatia raises its veto.

**Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244**

- On 19 July a court in Pristina hands down prison sentences to five defendants accused of having links with Daesh.

**FYROM**

- On 9 July four people are arrested and a search warrant is issued for a further three for having ties with Daesh.
- On 20 July 19 people, including five police officers, are arrested suspected of migrant, arms and drug trafficking.

**Albania**

- On 18 July the former Labour Minister Spiro Ksera is sentenced to three years’ imprisonment for abuse of office.
- On 20 July following 18 months of negotiations, the Parliament unanimously adopts the judicial reform, which is key to progressing in the European accession process.

**Greece**

- On 1 July the Parliament confirms the acquisition of 67% of the Port of Piraeus by the China Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco).
- On 25 July the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras calls for dialogue for constitutional reform.
Turkey

- On 15 July hundreds of soldiers in Ankara and Istanbul detain the army chief of staff and take over the state broadcaster, declaring a coup d’etat to combat the AKP government’s “drift to authoritarian rule.” The President Recep Tayyip Erdogan calls upon the population to reject the coup attempt, which ends hours later leaving 290 people dead. The international community declares its support for the government and the four main parties condemn the attempt. A large-scale purge is automatically set in motion, in which tens of thousands are arrested or dismissed and hundreds of educational institutions and media outlets are shut down for having links with the Islamist preacher Fethullah Gülen, who the government accuses of orchestrating the coup. Gülen accuses Erdogan of staging the coup. The EU and US urge Ankara to exercise restraint in its widespread campaign of reprisals, especially after Erdogan announces the possibility of re-introducing the death penalty in Turkey.
- On 21 July the deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus announces the temporary suspension of the European Convention on Human Rights after the government declares a state of emergency.
- On 24 July a large-scale demonstration in Istanbul, called by the CHP, condemns the coup attempt and the government’s drift towards authoritarianism.
- On 23 July Hail Hanci is arrested in Trebisonda, considered to be Fethullah Gülen’s right-hand man, hours after the arrest of Mohamed Sait Gülen, the Islamist cleric’s nephew.
- On 28 July Recep Tayyip Erdogan formalizes his intention to reform the constitution bringing the armed forces under the control of the head of state.
- On 31 July Recep Tayyip Erdogan orders the incorporation of his deputy Prime Ministers and Justice, Interior and Foreign ministers in the Supreme Military Council.

Cyprus

- On 18 July the AKEL expels two long-time party members Androulla Gurov and Andreas Fantis, for not toeing the party line.
- On 26 July the Bangladeshi general Mohammad Humayun Kabir replaces the Norwegian general Kristin Lund at the head of the UNFICYP.

Syria

- On 1 July the Jabhat al-Nusra and other rebel forces take Kansaba, Latakia, from control of the army, which captured the town in February.
- On 6 July the army announces a 72-hour unilateral ceasefire which it breaks the following day with an offensive that takes control of the Castello Road, the only supply route to rebel-controlled areas of Aleppo, which comes under constant attack throughout the month.
- On 9 July the Daesh currency the Gold Dinar goes into circulation in Deir az-Zor.
- On 23 July four hospitals in Aleppo are shelled by the army endangering the healthcare of some 200,000 civilians.
- On 27 July two bombs planted by Daesh leave at least 31 dead in Qamishli.
- On 27 July the army takes Hosh al-Fara, in Damascus.
- On 28 July Jabhat al-Nusra (The Victory Front) changes its name to Jabhat Fatah al-Sham (Front for the Conquest of the Levant) and its leader Mohammed al-Golani announces its break from al-Qaeda.

Lebanon

- On 2 July Hezbollah militants kill a local Daesh leader in Ras Baalbek.
- On 4 July the army raids various Syrian refugee camps in Qaa and arrests 35 people for their involvement in the bomb attack in the village at the end of June.
- On 12 July the parliament speaker Nabih Berri reiterates his opposition to extending the Parliament’s mandate and assures that the next elections will be held in the spring of 2017, regardless of whether an agreement has been reached on the new electoral law.

Jordan

- On 13 July Jordan allows the entry of food and water to thousands of refugees trapped in Syrian territory, near the shared border, a day after the bombing of the Hadalat refugee camp.
- On 21 July the EU announces that it will ease trade regulations with Jordan in exchange for Jordanian companies employing Syrian refugees.

Egypt

- On 10 July six supporters of the former President Mohammed Morsi are sentenced to life imprisonment.
- On 14 July Egypt extends its state of emergency in the Sinai by three months, which has been in place since August 2013.
- On 27 July the head of Egypt’s Central Auditing Agency Hisham Geneina, sacked after declaring that the country lost 68 billion dollars in four years due to corruption, is sentenced to prison for spreading false news.

Libya

- On 1 July the Government of National Accord accepts the resignations of four ministers from Cyrenaica who failed to fulfill their duties because of the political conflict with the Tobruk government.
- On 4 July the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and its rival based in Cyrenaica, announce their merger, thereby putting an end to two years of division and destabilization in crude oil supplies.
- On 12 July protests break out in Tripoli over the constant power cuts and climate of violence imposed by militias operating outside of the Government of National Accord, just three months after the latter took control.
- On 20 July France admits that it has special forces in Libya, sparking protests in Tripoli and a crisis with the Government of National Accord.
- On 24 July the NOC shows its opposition to the agreement between the Government of National Accord and the Petroleum Facilities Guard to reopen key ports in exchange for higher salaries, saying that it sets a precedent that will encourage other groups to disrupt oil operations.

Tunisia

- On 25 July, Republic Day, the group Manich Msamah (I will not forgive) leads demonstrations throughout the country.
saying the draft economic reconciliation bill currently under debate in the Parliament is a cover for giving amnesty for people charged with misusing public funds during the regime of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali.
• On 30 July amid divisions in the governing Nidaa Tounes and the economic crisis affecting the country, the Prime Minister Habib Essid loses the parliamentary confidence vote he asked to be held on 20 July, a week after the signing of the Carthage Agreement between different political parties to form a national unity government.

Algeria
• On 22 July a military operation in Boutermedes, Kabylia, leaves the influential jihadist Abu Chihab dead.

Morocco
• On 17 July Morocco announces its intention to rejoin the African Union, which it left in 1984 when its predecessor, the Organization for African Unity, allowed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) to join.
• On 27 July 52 people are placed under preventive arrest in a large-scale operation against Daesh, launched on 19 July.

Mauritania
• On 2 July Biram Ould Abeid, leader of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA-Mauritania) released by the Mauritanian authorities in May, announces that he will run for President again.
• On 3 July the authorities arrest six members of IRA-Mauritania after they participated in an anti-slavery demonstration in Nouakchott.

EU
• On 1 July Slovakia assumes the European Presidency with five priorities: economic growth, the digital single market, the construction of the energy Union, the migration crisis and the expansion of the EU.
• On 1 July the EU-Georgia and EU-Moldova association agreements enter into force.
• On 20 July the United Kingdom renounces its EU Presidency for the second six months of 2017, in view of the Brexit results. Estonia therefore assumes the responsibility six months ahead of schedule.
• On 28 July the European Commission agrees to mobilize 1.415 billion euros of the 3-billion-euro assistance package pledged to Turkey for supporting the Syrian refugees.
• On 29 July the European Commission awards 11 million euros from the Internal Security Fund in emergency funding to help Greece and Italy respond to the refugee crisis.

Arab League
• On 25 July Nouakchott hosts the 27th Arab League Summit, with a focus on the security crisis in the Arab world. The final declaration condemns Iran’s interference in the internal affairs of Arab countries.

August 2016
Portugal has to deal with large-scale fires, Italy a serious earthquake and the FYROM major floods. In Spain, Mariano Rajoy loses a parliamentary confidence vote for his investiture. In France, Michel Sapin, the Finance Minister, takes over as Economy Minister. In Bosnia, an agreement is reached on an inter-administrative coordination mechanism. The Serbian Parliament votes in the new government of Aleksandar Vucic. Kosovo agrees with Serbia on opening the bridge in Mitrovica. In the FYROM, political leaders agree to hold elections. Greece again urges the EU to accelerate the refugee relocation process. In Turkey, the purges continue of thousands of people accused of being involved in July’s coup attempt and Turkey’s intervention in the north of Syria intensifies. In Syria, where Daesh suffers major retreats, fighting continues between the FSA and the regime for control of Aleppo. In Egypt, the Parliament approves a police law reform, new sentences are handed down against Muslim Brotherhood members and other opponents and the chairman of the human rights committee resigns. Libya’s Government of National Accord is still not recognized by the authorities in Tobruk. In Tunisia, a new unity government wins parliamentary approval.

Portugal
• On 7 August the government describes the situation is critical regarding the wave of more than 230 forest fires that have broken out since the beginning of the month, especially in Madeira in the north of the country.

Spain
• On 30 August Mariano Rajoy, the acting Prime Minister and PP candidate, the party that won most votes in the June 2016 elections, fails to win the parliamentary support needed to form a government.

France
• On 26 August the State Council annuls the decree imposed by the Villeneuve-Loubet town hall banning the use of the burkini, the full-body bathing suit for Islamic women.
• On 30 August Michel Sapin, the Finance Minister, takes over as Economy Minister, following Emmanuel Macron’s resignation.

Italy
• On 4 August the Parliament passes the Public Administration reforms approved by the government on 27 July, which gives the State greater transparency and simplifies bureaucratic procedures.
• On 8 August the Court of Cassation authorizes the holding of a referendum on the constitutional reform proposed by the government.
• On 24 August an earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale affects Marche, Umbria and Lazio and leaves 294 people dead.
• On 30 August the coast guard says it has rescued 6,500 immigrants rescued Strait of Sicily and off the coast of Tunisia and Libya.
Croatia

- On 15 August tensions increase between Zagreb and Belgrade after the Interior Minister Vlaho Orepic announces that the “false Serbian residents” will be removed from the census and that Serbian and the Cyrillic alphabet will be abolished in Vukovar.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 17 August the federal governments and entities agree on a coordination mechanism for the country’s administrative levels, a positive decision regarding the country’s European accession process.
- On 31 August Bosnia and Europol sign a major anti-terror collaboration agreement.

Montenegro

- On 30 August the Interior Minister Goran Danilovic calls for sanctions to be imposed on the chief of police Slavko Stojanovic for failing to inform him of a police action to disperse former workers from the KAP aluminium smelter, who were protesting outside Parliament to demand 5.4 million euros in severance pay.

Serbia

- On 11 August the Parliament approves the new cabinet of the Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic.
- On 18 August the Serbian authorities say they have arrested more than 3,000 illegal immigrants in the last month despite the border closure.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 5 August Serbia and Kosovo reach an agreement to reopen the Mitrovica Bridge in January 2017.
- On 7 August the judoka Majinda Kelendi wins Kosovo’s first Olympic medal -gold- in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games, the first in which Kosovo has participated.
- On 9 August Driton Caushi, a member of the Vetëvendosje, triggers a tear gas canister in the Parliament in protest against the border agreement between Pristina and Belgrade.

FYROM

- On 7 August the government declares that the state is in crisis following the major floods the country has suffered.
- On 31 August the country’s main parties set 11 December as the new date to hold early elections, which have been twice postponed, after agreeing on the formation of a caretaker government.

Greece

- On 21 August Greece bans blood donations in 12 districts following reports of Malaria cases, a disease which has been eradicated from Europe, due to the influence of migrants from countries where the disease is endemic.
- On 23 August Athens again calls the EU to accelerate the relocation of migrants and refugees through the system agreed in 2015, under which a total of 160,000 asylum seekers are to be sent from Greece and Italy to other countries in the Union.

Turkey

- On 5 August 167 investigators from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (Tubitak) are suspended as part of the purge carried out by the government in the wake of July’s attempted coup.
- On 5 August the government announces plans to abolish the military courts.
- On 11 August the police arrest 17 people in Istanbul in various offices of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) after a double bomb attack on 10 August in Diyarbakir attributed to the PKK, which leaves nine people dead.
- On 12 August Turkey announces that it is seeking 32 Turkish diplomats that refused to appear before the Foreign Ministry as part of the investigations into July’s failed coup attempt.
- On 17 August more than 2,000 police officers and hundreds of members of the Information and Communication Technology Authority (BTK) are sacked in connection with the coup attempt on 15 July.
- On 18 August some 200 businessmen are arrested for their connections with the Fethullah Gülen movement.
- On 18 August three people are killed and a further 217 injured in a PKK suicide attack on a police station in Elazig.
- On 20 August the Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım announces the centralization of all the country’s interior and foreign intelligence agencies.
- On 21 August at least 51 people are killed in a suicide attack during the wedding of a militant from the pro-Kurdish HDP party in Gaziantep.
- On 23 August Turkey calls the US to extradite Fethullah Gülen on charges of plotting the attempted coup in July.
- On 30 August the authorities arrest Husein Çapkin, the former Istanbul police chief, as part of the investigations into July’s failed coup attempt.
- On 30 August the Interior Ministry announces that Turkey has arrested 865 people suspected of belonging to Daesh, since the beginning of 2016.
- On 31 August the Labour Minister Süleyman Soylu replaces Efkân Ala as Interior Minister, amid widespread criticism over the failing of the security services in relation to July’s coup attempt and the recent PKK and Daesh attacks.

Cyprus

- On 31 August Cyprus and Egypt reach an agreement for the construction of a gas pipeline to export gas through Egypt.

Syria

- On 4 August Russian planes bomb two camps for internally displaced people west of Aleppo.
- On 12 August Kurdish-Arab forces backed by the international coalition take Sirib, the last district in Manbij with a Daesh presence.
- On 12 August the Daesh leader Jamal al-Jaburi is killed in an attack by the international coalition in Qaim.
- On 15 August Daesh claims responsibility for the previous day’s suicide attack on a bus close to the Atme crossing on the Turkish border, in which at least 32 people were killed.
• On 16 August fighting breaks out in Hasaka between Kurdish militias and troops of the Syrian regime. On 19 August the Kurdish forces evacuate the city.
• On 16 and 17 August Russian planes bomb Daesh positions in Deir az-Zor, flying from the Hamadan airbase, which Iran has allowed Russia to use at Syria’s request.
• On 22 August at least 38 civilians are killed by army airstrikes on areas east of Aleppo.
• On 23 August the regime and Kurdish rebels announce a truce in Hasaka.
• On 24 August the FSA, backed by Turkey and the US, take control of Jarablus from Daesh.
• On 25 August at least 15 people are killed in an airstrike launched by the Syrian regime in Aleppo.
• On 25 August the army and FSA reach an agreement to evacuate civilians from Daraya, under siege by the regime since 2012.
• On 29 August the US urges Turkey to focus on Daesh and stop attacking Kurdish targets in Syria, after it is reported that Ankara has launched a total of 61 attacks in 24 hours on Kurdish positions.
• On 30 August Daesh announces that its spokesman Taha Subhi Falaha has been killed.

Lebanon

• On 21 August Hezbollah shells Jabhat Fateh al-Sham positions in Arsal, two days after Hassan Nasrallah declares that the army has the capacity to expel the jihadists but lacks “political will.”

Jordan

• On 16 August Abdullah II says that Jordan has reached its limit for taking in refugees and condemns the scant international support it has received.

Egypt

• On 1 August the journalist Ahmed Amer is sentenced to one year in prison for “spreading false news” and his chief editor Hisham Younis is fined 1,000 euros. Both worked for the state-owned newspaper al-Ahram.
• On 4 August, in al-Arish, the army kills Abu Duaa al-Ansari, the Daesh leader in the Sinai Peninsula.
• On 5 August Ali Gomaa, Egypt’s former Grand Mufti, survives an assassination attempt by the terrorist group Hasm in Cairo.
• On 9 August the Parliament approves a reform of the Police Law that bars officers from providing information to the media.
• On 24 August it is revealed that Egypt will receive financial assistance from the IMF to the sum of 10.7 billion euros in support of the economic reforms programme to stimulate growth and lower the deficit and public debt.
• On 25 August the Supply Minister Khaled Hanafi resigns after the publication of a report on corruption in the figures for wheat production produced by a parliamentary commission.
• On 25 August Amnesty International condemns the Egyptian authorities’ refusal to release Islam Khalil, filing new charges against him, despite a ruling by the court of Alexandria ordering the release on bail of the activist, who was arrested on 24 May 2015.
• On 26 August a military court sentences seven members of the Muslim Brotherhood to 15 years’ imprisonment for attacking different police stations in Assiut in August 2013, following the armed dismantlement of the protest camps in Rabaa al-Adawiya and Nahda. A further 11 members of the Brotherhood are sentenced to 25 years in prison in absentia.
• On 28 August the government proposes tougher sentences for female genital mutilation.
• On 30 August the chairman of the Parliament’s human rights committee Mohamed Anwar as-Sadat resigns, accusing the authorities of allowing thousands of people to suffer abuses at the hands of the security forces.
• On 31 August a two-thirds majority votes in a law regulating the construction and renovation of churches in the country to meet the demands of the Coptic population, which has denounced the bureaucratic and social difficulties it has had to face.

Libya

• On 1 August at the request of the Government of National Accord, the US bombs Daesh positions in Sirte.
• On 4 August the EU extends the mandate of its Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM) to August 2017.
• On 20 August the army announces new advances in Benghazi against Daesh.
• On 25 and 29 August respectively, Omar al-Aswad and Ali Gatani, members of the Government of National Accord and close to the Tobruk authorities, announce that they are abandoning their boycott of the government and will resume their duties.
• On 29 and 30 August 6,500 migrants are rescued off the Libyan coast by ships from EUNAVFOR Med, also known as Operation Sophia.
• On 30 August Libya sends its final shipment of chemical weapons to Germany, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2298.

Tunisia

• On 15 August the State orders the banning of the Islamist party Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), which advocates the establishment of a caliphate in Tunisia, for “infringements of decree 2011 on associations.” On 29 August the court accepts the party’s appeal, on the grounds of procedural flaws in the suspension.
• On 27 August a parliamentary majority backs the government of Youssef Chahed, appointed Prime Minister on 3 August as a result of an agreement between Ennahda and Nidaa Tounes following the 2014 elections, which includes seven different parties.
• On 29 August three soldiers are killed in an ambush carried out by the al-Qaeda-affiliated Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade on Mount Sammana.

Algeria

• On 24 August the army drives the Soldiers of the Caliphate, a group loyal
to Daesh, out of the mountains east of Algiers.
- On 27 August Algerian security forces arrest three people suspected of terrorism in Jijel and dismantle eight homemade bombs in Skikda.

Morocco
- On 16 August a Daesh cell preparing attacks in Casablanca is dismantled.

Mauritania
- On 19 August the NGO Freedom House calls for the release of various anti-slavery activists serving prison sentences of between 3 and 15 years for participating in a demonstration in June which sparked unrest.

EU
- On 16 August the European Commission warns Turkey that it must meet all the requirements for visa-free travel for Turks wanting to enter the EU, as a reaction to Turkey threatening to suspend the migration agreement if Brussels does not implement the visa exemption by October 2016.

September 2016

In Spain, Mariano Rajoy is unable to gain the support needed to be invested as Prime Minister. In France, fresh protests are staged against the labour reform. Croatia holds parliamentary elections. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska holds a referendum that has not been authorized by the Constitutional Court. Turkey continues its purge following July’s failed coup attempt. The Cypriot reunification negotiations enter a crucial phase. In Syria, the US and Russia agree on a ceasefire that is broken after 10 days by an army offensive to take complete control of Aleppo. Jordan holds parliamentary elections. In Egypt, the majority of members of the Salafi Party of The Light (al-Nour) call for a boycott of the municipal elections. In Libya, Khalifa Haftar’s forces take three oil ports. Algeria hosts an OPEC summit that agrees to limit crude-oil output. In Morocco, two important draft laws are adopted.

Portugal
- On 30 September the President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa vetoes a government decree under which banks would have to give the tax authorities information on all accounts holding over 50,000 euros, saying it is unjustified.

Spain
- On 2 September Mariano Rajoy fails to gain the parliamentary votes necessary to be invested as Prime Minister.
- On 16 September the Valencian Parliament unanimously agrees to ask Rita Barbera, the former mayorress of Valencia accused by the Supreme Court of money laundering, to give up her seat in the Senate, which she currently holds as a member of the mixed group after being pressured by the PP to leave the party.
- On 25 September Galicia and the Basque Country hold elections. In Galicia the PP maintains its overall majority, while in the Basque elections the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) wins a comfortable victory.

France
- On 8 September the trade unions protest against the government’s planned labour reform.
- On 10 September the police arrest three members of a Daesh commando in Paris, which was planning attacks on the Notre Dame cathedral and Gare de Lyon train station.
- On 21 September a two-month campaign begins ahead of the primary elections to elect the leader of the Republicans.

Italy
- On 6 September the police announce the dismantlement of a criminal network smuggling Syrian refugees into Western Europe through the Balkans.
- On 10 September the coast guard announces it has rescued 2,300 immigrants and refugees in 18 missions in the Mediterranean.

Slovenia
- On 15 September Slovenia sues Croatia for the loss of around 360 million euros in unpaid debts that Croatian companies had at Ljubljanska Banka when both countries formed part of Yugoslavia.

Croatia
- On 11 September Croatia holds legislative elections which are won by the coalition led by Andrej Plenkovic’s conservative HDZ, which gains 59 of the 151 seats in the Parliament. The People’s Coalition, led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of the former Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic, wins 54 seats.
- On 12 September Zoran Milanovic announces that he will not run in the SDP primary elections in 2017 to elect a party leader.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
- On 25 September Bosnian Serb entity holds a referendum to declare the unilateral proclamation of the Republika Srpska as a national day ignoring the Constitutional Court’s ruling that said it could not be held as the day discriminated against non-Serbs. According to Banja Luka, 99.81% supported maintaining 9 January as a national day, a result questioned by Sarajevo and numerous analysts. The federal public prosecutor summons Dodik to give an explanation.
- On 26 September the public prosecutor Goran Salihovic is sacked for abuse of power, in a decision that Salihovic links to investigations into Milorad Dodik over conflicts of interests, obstruction of justice, the holding of a referendum on 17 September and questionable ties with Russia.

Montenegro
- On 5 September the mayor of Kotor, Aleksandar Stijepcevic, urges the authorities to put an end to the criminal activity and frequent clashes between drug-trafficking gangs.
- On 20 September Montenegro’s three main Albanian parties announce that they will run together in the October elections.
Serbia

• On 14 September the ICTY accuses Serbia of a lack of cooperation in arresting and transferring three members of the Serbian Radical Party Vjerica Radeta, Jovo Ostojic and Petar Jojic to The Hague to be tried for war crimes, in compliance with the Serbian Supreme Court ruling on 18 May.
• On 26 September the election of Dragan Sutanovac as leader of the Democratic Party (DS, social democrat) prompts his predecessor Bojan Pajtić to announce his resignation as leader of the party’s parliamentary group, due to disagreements with the new cabinet.
• On 29 September the Ne davimo Beograd movement protests against the Waterfront development project financed by the United Arab Emirates.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 1 September the government withdraws the draft law to incorporate the border agreement with Montenegro following its violent rejection by Vetëvendosje and other opposition parties.
• On 25 September a protest in Mushtishit/Mustiste calls the Kosovo war crimes court to investigate the deaths and disappearances in the village in 1999 at the hands of the Serb army, after, on 28 August, a group of Kosovo Serbs was stoned while trying to visit the village’s Orthodox church. At the end of the Kosovo war, all the village’s Serb inhabitants were forcibly expelled. On 28 September the public prosecutor announces the opening of an investigation.
• On 28 September Nehat Thaci, Kosovo’s police director in Mitrovica and former UÇK member, is arrested by Serbia under charges of terrorism.

FYROM

• On 1 September Oliver Andonov is appointed Interior Minister to replace Mitko Cavkov.
• On 26 September thousands protest as part of the Colourful Revolution movement in support of the special prosecutor Katica Janeva, who is investigating the government for abuse of power.

Albania

• On 1 September the public prosecutor shows his concern for the lack of an interim arrangement for investigating court cases against senior officials after the judicial reform of 22 July transferred this power to the new special prosecutor, which is pending creation.
• On 2 September Albania begins the legalization process of unregistered mosques.
• On 30 September the former minister Ben Blushi leaves the Socialist Party due to his disagreement with the management of Edi Rama’s government.

Greece

• On 23 September the IMF asks the EU to further reduce the Greek debt, describing the budgetary targets that have been set as unrealistic.
• On 27 September the Parliament approves the reforms demanded by creditors for the release of the next 2.8 billion-euro tranche of the third bailout package.

Turkey

• On 1 September more than 540 judges and public prosecutors are sacked as part of the great purge following the failed coup attempt of 15 July, or because of links with the PKK or Hizmet (Service), the network connected with Fethullah Gülen. The purge continues throughout September with the dismissal of 28,000 teachers and 87 members of the intelligence agency, the replacement of 28 mayors and closure of 20 radio and television stations.
• On 14 September, 118 important Turkish public figures condemn what they describe as a witch hunt. On 15 September Turkey announces the construction of 174 jails after announcing the release of 33,838 prisoners to make room for the “unanticipated increased number of convicts.”
• On 25 and 26 September 16 soldiers are killed in fighting with the PKK in the province of Sinak.
• On 28 September government sources announce that the construction of a 900-kilometre wall along the Syrian border to halt illegal immigration is expected to be finished by February.

Cyprus

• On 25 September the Cypriot president and the leader of northern Cyprus meet in New York to talk about the island’s reunification, which, with the launch on 25 August of a new round of intensified negotiations, enters a critical phase. Sticking points do remain however, such as the formula of the rotating Presidency, criteria of territorial adjustments or the role of Greece and Turkey as guarantor countries.

Syria

• On 4 September the FSA drives Daesh out of the last enclaves it controlled on the Turkish border, between Azaz and Jarablus. This Turkish-backed victory, coincides with a warning from Ankara that it will never allow the formation of a Kurdish “artificial state” in Syria.
• On 19 September the attack on a humanitarian convoy from the Red Crescent in Aleppo causes the United Nations to temporarily suspend its operations in Syria.
• On 22 September the army launches a major offensive to regain total control of Aleppo definitively breaking the ceasefire agreed with the US and Russia on 12 September.
• On 26 September a large part of the YPG Syrian militias withdraw from Manbij to the east bank of the Euphrates, under pressure from Turkey to keep away from the border.

Lebanon

• On 5 September the speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri suspends the process of national dialogue established in August after the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), one of the main Christian parties, leaves the talks describing them as pointless.
• On 28 September the Parliament fails on its 45th attempt to appoint a new president. The rivalries between the March 8 Alliance, which backs the candidacy of Michel Aoun (Free Patriotic Movement), and the March 14 Alliance,
which supports the candidacy of Suleiman Franjeh (Marada Movement), have left the country without a president since May 2014.

- On 29 September the Defence Minister Samir Moqbel announces that he will extend the mandate of the army commander Jean Kahwaji, to settle the disputes over the leadership of the armed forces.

**Jordan**

- On 20 September Jordan holds parliamentary elections, the first since August’s new electoral law that introduced a system of proportional representation. The political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Action Front, which boycotted the 2010 and 2013 elections, wins 16 seats.
- On 25 September the Christian writer and columnist Nahed Hattar is murdered by an Islamic preacher while entering the courthouse in Amman, where he was to be tried for his posting of a caricature considered blasphemous because it represented Allah.

**Egypt**

- On 19 September the Salafi al-Nour Party holds a referendum in which 80% of its militants vote in favour of boycotting the upcoming municipal elections.
- On 21 September a boat carrying at least 600 migrants is shipwrecked off the coast of Egypt, leaving at least 200 dead. The government announces that it will accelerate parliamentary approval for tougher sentences for human traffickers.
- On 29 September the assistant prosecutor general Zakaria Abdelaziz survives an attack in New Cairo, for which the terrorist group Hasm claims responsibility.

**Libya**

- On 1 September the Pentagon declares that the advances of the Libyan forces in Sirte have succeeded in pushing back the terrorists to just three neighbourhoods of the city.
- On 8 September two car bombs explode without causing any damage outside the headquarters of the Government of National Accord in the first attack in the Libyan capital since the new government took over.
- On 11 September the forces of general Khalifa Haftar capture the oil ports of Ras Lanuf, Brega and Sidra, until now in the hands of the Government of National Accord. Haftar returns the functioning and management of these ports to the national oil company but the forces of General Haftar will continue their surveillance.

**Tunisia**

- On 16 September the governor of Jendouba and delegate and secretary-general of the municipality of Femana are sacked following the persistent protests in recent months against the lack of socio-economic improvements.
- On 17 September the Parliament adopts the new Investment Law, one of the IMF’s requirements for releasing 311 million dollars of the loan it approved for the country in April 2016.
- On 28 September the Investment Minister Fadhel Abdekefi affirms that Tunisia is in an economic state of emergency due to the country’s slow economic growth, the fall in GDP from 2.5% to 1.4% and a public deficit of 6.5%.

**Algeria**

- On 28 September Algiers hosts an informal OPEC summit in which it is agreed, from November, to limit oil output to 32.5 million barrels per day, in order to end the surplus on the world market and push prices back up.

**Morocco**

- On 18 September a protest is staged in Casablanca against the policies of Abdelilah Benkirane’s government.
- On 20 September around a hundred Moroccan public figures from different areas address a letter to the general secretary of the Unified Socialist Party (PSU), Nabila Mounib, asking her to lead a viable alternative to the PAM and PJD.
- On 20 September Justice and Charity calls for a boycott of the legislative elections scheduled for 7 October.
- On 27 September the draft laws on the right to strike and the status of amazigh as an official language, are adopted by the Council of Ministers, thus concluding the constitutional reform launched by Mohammed VI in 2011.

**Mauritania**

- On 28 September 15 of the country’s main newspapers go on strike against the government’s decision to ban public administrations to publish advertisements in the press.

**EU**

- On 8 September the European Parliament appoints the former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, chief negotiator for Brexit.
- On 9 September Athens hosts the first summit of the EUMed group -Greece, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Cyprus- seeking to organize a united front within the EU on the subjects of austerity, the migration crisis and security.
- On 19 September the Commission and Council approve the appointment of the next and last British commissioner Julian King, at the head of the Security Union portfolio, to replace hitherto Commissioner for Financial Services and Capital Markets Union Jonathan Hill, who resigned on 25 June after the Brexit victory and whose responsibilities will be transferred to the Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis.
- On 15 September Bratislava hosts a summit of EU Heads of State and Government, without Britain present and with the urgent need to overcome the worst crisis since the birth of the European Communities.

**October 2016**

The Portuguese politician Antonio Guteres is appointed the new Secretary-General of the United Nations. In Spain, Mariano Rajoy is invested as Prime Minister. France evacuates the migrant camp in Calais. Italy carries out mass rescue operations in the
Mediterranean. Croatia unveiling its new government. Bosnia holds municipal elections and Montenegro parliamentary elections. The Albanian constitutional court suspends one of the main texts of the judicial reform. In Greece, Alexis Tsipras is re-elected as the Syriza leader. In Turkey, the purges continue in the wake of July’s failed coup attempt. In Syria, the siege of Aleppo continues. Lebanon elects a new President. Relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia come under strain. In Libya, a failed attempted coup fails. In Algeria, Amar Saadani resigns as leader of the FLN and there are widespread protests. Morocco resigns as leader of the FLN and there are widespread protests. Morocco holds legislative elections. Mauritania undertakes a process of national dialogue.

Portugal
- On 13 October the former Prime Minister Antonio Guterres is appointed by the United Nations General Assembly as the organization’s new Secretary-General to replace the South Korean Ban Ki-moon.

Spain
- On 1 October the PSOE leader Pedro Sanchez resigns over his disagreement with the decision made by the party’s Federal Committee to allow Mariano Rajoy (PP) to be invested as Prime Minister.
- On 6 October the Catalan Parliament approves a proposal to hold a unilateral referendum on independence before September 2017, the same day that the Constitutional Court asks the public prosecutor to investigate the President of the regional government for disobeying its rulings.
- On 29 October Mariano Rajoy is invested as Prime Minister thanks to PSOE’s abstention.

France
- On 17 October the police trade unions begin a 10-day strike over the lack of resources and to denounce the vulnerability of the public authorities against attacks by protesters.
- On 24 October the evacuation begins of the Calais refugee camp known as The Jungle, announced on 26 September by the President François Hollande.

Italy
- On 4 and 5 October more than 10,000 refugees are rescued alive in 72 operations coordinated by the coast guard.
- On 6 October the police arrest the ‘Ndrangheta boss Antonio Pelle, in Boviano, Reggio Calabria, one of the world’s most wanted criminals.

Croatia
- On 10 October the President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic asks Andrej Plenkovic, the HDZ leader and winner of the September elections, to form a government. On 19 October, with the support of 91 of the 151 deputies, the new coalition between HDZ and MOST is approved.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
- On 2 October Bosnia holds local elections. The Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) wins 30 mayoral posts in the Bosnian Serb entity, 11 more than in 2012. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Action Party (SDA) wins 33 mayoral posts.
- On 11 October the Bosnian Serb Parliament declares 9 January a national holiday in the entity but specifies that it will be a non-compulsory secular holiday.

Montenegro
- On 16 October Montenegro holds early parliamentary elections won by DPS with 36 of the 81 seats, ahead of DF (with 18 seats) on a day marred by violent acts committed by pro-Russian activists against joining the EU and NATO.
- On 26 October the Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic, announces his decision to step down for the next term, handing over to the hitherto deputy Prime Minister Dusko Markovic.

Serbia
- On 11 October various citizen movements announce the creation of a political party called the United Civic Front.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244
- On 8 October the Parliament approves the government’s takeover of the Trepca mining company, one of the largest from socialist Yugoslavia, to prevent it from entering bankruptcy and despite protests in Belgrade which claims 75% of the ownership of the mining complex, part of which is in Serbian territory.

FYROM
- On 11 October thousands gather in Skopje, called by the social democratic opposition, to protest against the government, on the 75th anniversary of the anti-fascist uprising during World War II.

Albania
- On 25 October following the opposition Democratic Party’s (PD, centre-right) request for the Venice Commission to settle the dispute over the constitutionality of the Law on the Reevaluation of Judges and Prosecutors, the Constitutional Court suspends the so-called Vetting Law, one of the main texts of the judicial reform approved in July by the Parliament and required by Brussels for progress in the accession talks.

Greece
- On 15 and 16 October left-wing party Syriza holds its second congress in which the sole candidate, the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, is re-elected as party leader with 92.39% of the votes.
- On 25 October the ESM authorizes the release of 2.8 billion euros of the
second tranche of Greece’s new financial assistance package.

**Turkey**

- On 2 October the police arrest Kudrettin Gülen in Izmir, the brother of the preacher Fethullah Gülen, charged with organizing the coup attempt on 15 July.
- On 7 October the authorities issue arrest warrants for 166 people, including several police chiefs, accused of participating in July’s attempted coup.
- On 9 October 19 people are killed in a PKK suicide attack on a police station in Hakkari, a day after four civilians are killed in a police attack in Yüksekova.
- On 10 October the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, launch the construction of the TurkStream gas pipeline, which will enable Russian gas to be exported through Turkey, bypassing Ukraine.
- On 13 October the army suspends 109 military judges in connection with July’s coup attempt.
- On 16 October three police officers are killed in an explosion attributed to Daesh in Gaziantep.
- On 19 October the authorities in Ankara ban protests or public gatherings in the capital until 30 November, after receiving information about potential terrorist attacks.
- On 20 October 40 soldiers are arrested from an airbase in Konya accused of being involved in July’s attempted coup.
- On 23 October two police officers are killed and another person is injured in a bomb blast in Bingöl, attributed to the terrorist organization PKK.
- On 25 October the co-mayors of Diyarbakir, Gultan Kisanak and Firat Arli, of the pro-Kurdish HDP, are arrested for interrogation as part of an anti-terror investigation against the PKK.
- On 27 October the authorities arrest 45 air force pilots and order the arrest of a further 28 suspected of having links with the attempted coup in July.
- On 31 October 11 senior managers and journalists from the newspaper Cumhuriyet are arrested accused of having ties with the Fethullah Gülen network and the PKK.

**Syria**

- On 1 October Russian-backed Syrian regime forces disables Aleppo’s main hospital, M10.
- On 2 October the US announces the definitive breakdown in talks with Russia for a stable ceasefire in Syria, saying that Moscow persists in breaching the terms agreed, violating the 12 September ceasefire with the offensive still in progress on Aleppo. In response, Russia suspends its nuclear deal with Washington on the use of plutonium in nuclear warheads.
- On 5 October at least 19 people are killed in an airstrike attributed to the Turkish air force in the Kurdish-majority village of Thilthana, as part of the Turkish Operation Euphrates Shield against Daesh and the PKK, which continues throughout the month leaving hundreds of casualties.
- On 6 October a Daesh bomb attack in Atme, on the Turkish border, leaves at least 25 people dead, most members of the Failaq al-Sham militia.
- On 20 October Russia establishes a humanitarian truce until 23 October to allow civilians to leave Aleppo. The measure is rejected by the US and UK and by the rebels who consider leaving the east of the city as an act of surrender.
- On 27 October at least 22 children and six teachers are killed in attacks on a school in Idlib, in the most deadly attack on a school since the beginning of the war.

**Lebanon**

- On 31 October a two-year power vacuum in the Lebanese Presidency comes to end with the official appointment of Michel Aoun as the new President.

**Egypt**

- On 3 October the authorities report the death in Cairo of Mohamed Kamal, an influential Muslim Brotherhood leader sentenced to life in prison on two counts in absentia, in a security forces operation.
- On 13 October the Saudi state-owned company Aramco announces its decision to suspend the supply of crude oil to Egypt. Government sources suggest it is a “political decision” amid a cooling of relations between Riyadh and Cairo following the court’s decision to suspend the place the islands of Tiran and Sanafir under Saudi sovereignty and the lack of Egyptian support for Saudi actions abroad in Syria or Yemen.
- On 14 October Daesh attacks a military checkpoint in North Sinai killing at least 12 soldiers in the deadliest attack in recent months. On 15 October an army airstrike leaves at least a hundred jihadists dead.
- On 22 and 26 October the former President Mohamed Morsi and the former Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie are sentenced respectively to 20 years and life in prison for inciting violence, in the first final verdicts given to both men.

**Libya**

- On 14 October the former Prime Minister Khalifa Ghwell and other members of the General National Congress (GNC) - the former Libyan Parliament - lead an attempted coup, trying to take control of the Rixos Hotel in Tripoli, the old GNC headquarters and seat of the current Parliament, the State Council. The coup leaders call on Abdullah al-Thinni, Prime Minister of the parallel government in al-Baida, linked to the Tobruk Parliament, to join the movement to create a new unity government and put an end to the Presidency Council - the current Government of National Accord- recognized by the international community.
- On 25 October the Presidency Council announces the appointment of Ashraf Tulty, former media advisor to the National Transitional Council (NTC), as government spokesman.
- On 27 and 31 October the US bombs Daesh positions in Sirte.

**Tunisia**

- On 12 October a total of 76 people, most of whom are on the run, are handed down sentences ranging from seven years in prison to the death penalty for the killing of eight soldiers in July 2013 in Mount Chaambi.
• On 23 October five years after the Constituent Assembly elections, the first election for the new Supreme Judicial Council is held, the creation of which is stipulated in the 2014 constitution.

Algeria

• On 22 October, during the central committee meeting of the National Liberation Front (FLN), Amar Saadani resigns as leader of the party citing health reasons. He is succeeded by Djamel Ould Abbes, who is also close to the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

• On 24 and 25 October 16 trade unions lead two days of general strike against the Labour Law reform, which foresees a revision of the pension system that includes removing the right of early retirement.

• On 24 October the inhabitants of Ouargla, backed by the National Committee for the Rights of the Unemployed (CNDDC), demonstrate against the electricity and gas price increases, as part of the popular protest movement ongoing since September in various towns in southern Algeria.

Morocco

• On 3 October Morocco dismantles a Daesh cell in Kenitra, Sale, Tangier, Sidi Slimane, Tan Tan, Zagora and Oulad Teima composed exclusively of women, which was preparing terrorist attacks in the country.

• On 7 October Morocco holds legislative elections. The Islamist PJD reasserts itself as the strongest party with 31.65% of the votes and 125 of the 395 seats in the Chamber of Representatives. With 25.82% of the votes, the PAM is the second most voted party, with a significant increase of 55 seats.

• On 8 October the secretary general of the National Rally of Independents (RNI, liberal) and Foreign Minister Salaheddine Mezouar resigns following the party’s poor election performance. On 29 October the Agriculture Minister Aziz Akhannouch is elected as the new secretary general.

• On 28 October the street vendor Mouhcine Fikri is killed in Alhucemas crushed by a garbage lorry while trying to retrieve goods confiscated by the police. His death sparks demonstrations, which, on 30 October, spread to the country’s main cities.

Mauritania

• On 19 October the UN condemns the Mauritania’s recent indictment and jailing of various activists from IRA-Mauritania.

• On 20 October the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz announces that he will not run for a third term, in the context of the National Dialogue taking place throughout the month involving the government and part of the opposition. One of the main decisions emerging from the process is for a national referendum to be called to decide on the removal of the Senate, the creation of regional councils and the modification of the national anthem and flag.

EU

• On 20 October the Scottish government publishes a draft bill for a new independence referendum faced with the new scenario of the United Kingdom’s exit from the EU.

• On 28 October the Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the Budget Kristalina Georgieva announces that she will resign in January to take up a position in the World Bank.

• On 30 October the EU and Canada sign a free trade agreement (CETA).

November 2016

Spain unveils the composition of the new government. In France, François Fillon wins the LR primaries. Italy reports new mass migrant arrivals. In Bosnia, the Foreign Minister Alija Dzemustafic is arrested. The Montenegrin Parliament approves the new government. In Greece, the cabinet is reshuffled. Tensions mount between Ankara and the EU over the migration agreement. Cypriot reunification talks fail to reach an agreement on territorial adjustment between the north and south of the island. In Syria, the fight for control of Aleppo continues. In Lebanon, Saad Hariri becomes Prime Minister. Egypt receives a major loan from the IMF. In Tunisia, public hearings begin for victims of the dictatorship. Algerian civil servants demonstrate against the new pensions law.

Portugal

• On 4 November the Parliament adopts the 2017 draft budget, which seeks a balance between cuts in spending, required by Brussels, and its promises to the population to ease austerity measures.

Spain

• On 3 November the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy unveils the composition of his new government. Soraya Saenz de Santamaría continues as First Vice-President and is appointed Public Administration Minister. Among the most noteworthy changes are the appointments of Alfonso Dastis as Foreign Minister, Maria Dolores de Cospedal as Defence Minister and Juan Ignacio Zoido as Interior Minister.

France

• On 4 November the police evacuate the migrant camp established around the Stalingrad and Jaurès metro stations in Paris, where some 3,000 people are living.

• On 18 November a court in Nanterre rejects the appeal filed by Jean-Marie Le Pen to rejoin the FN, but grants him the status of honourable president of the ultra-right party, which is led by his daughter and from which he was expelled in 2015.

• On 19 and 20 November six suspected Daesh members are arrested in Strasbourg and Marseille.

• On 28 November François Fillon beats Alain Juppé and Nicolas Sarkozy to become the LR candidate in the 2017 presidential elections.

Italy

• On 5 November more than 4,220 migrants are rescued by the coast guard.

• On 14 November the Italian authorities report the arrest of Tunisian Moez Ben Abdelkader Fezzani in Sudan,
thought to be the main Daesh recruiter in Italy.
• On 27 November a bomb explodes outside a police station in Bologna. The action comes after other similar attacks in recent months in the city, some of which the Italian Anarchist Federation have claimed responsibility for.
• On 28 November the government announces that the number of migrants arriving by sea from Africa in 2016 has reached 171,299, as compared with 154,000 in 2015 and 170,100 in 2014.

Malta

• On 10 and 11 November Malta hosts a Libyan Political Dialogue meeting to remove the obstacles to implementing the Political Agreement under which the Presidential Council should assume control of the whole country.

Croatia

• On 27 November Davor Bernardic is elected as the new SDP president.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

• On 8 November the arrest of 10 Bosnian Croats accused of war crimes during the Bosnian War increases the demands of the Bosnian Croat parties to have their own entity.
• On 11 November the former Interior Minister Alija Delimustafic is arrested during a major anti-corruption operation in collaboration with Croatia.
• On 11 November the Bosnian Serb government confirms having filed a war crimes complaint against Croatia’s Defence Minister Damir Krsticovic.

Montenegro

• On 6 November the special prosecutor investigating the alleged plot to sway the October elections says plans had been made to assassinate the Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic.
• On 28 November, despite the opposition boycott, which refuses to recognize the election results, the Parliament approves the new government of Dusko Marovic, former intelligence services chief and vice-president of the DPS, in coalition with the Social Democrats (SD).

Serbia

• On 14 November around 100 migrants clash with Serbian police in an attempt to enter Croatia.
• On 16 November the police seize the largest weapons cache found in Serbia in 15 years.
• On 23 November NATO and Serbia agree to strengthen cooperation, although Belgrade stresses that it does not aspire to enter the Atlantic Alliance.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 14 November Kosovo reaches an agreement with Serbia for its own international phone code, which will be 383.
• On 16 November the police announce the arrest in November of 19 Daesh members planning attacks in Kosovo and Albania.
• On 25 November the first meeting of the EU-Kosovo Stabilization and Association Council is held.
• On 28 November thousands of Vetëvendosje supporters accuse the government of killing the activist ASTRIT Dehari, who was arrested in September and jailed on suspicion of being involved in a grenade attack on the Parliament. The state prosecutor says he believes Dehari committed suicide.
• On 28 November several people are arrested during the celebrations to mark Albania’s independence from the Ottoman Empire for throwing molotov cocktails at the Turkish consulate in Prizren.

FYROM

• On 18 November the special prosecutor opens an inquiry into various senior secret police officials for illegal wiretapping, in the government spying scandal that led to the resignation of the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski in January.

Greece

• On 4 November the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announces a government reshuffle. Euclides Tsakalotos remains at the head of the Finance Ministry and the Economy and Labour ministries will be taken over by Dimitris Papadimitriou and Efi Ahtsioglou, respectively.
• On 17 November thousands of Greeks take to the streets to commemorate the 1973 student revolt and express their opposition to the government’s austerity policies.

Turkey

• On 4 November Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yüksekdag, co-presidents of the HDP are arrested, in the anti-terror probe against the PKK. On the same day, an attack, attributed to the terrorist organization, on police facilities in Diyarbakir leaves at least nine people dead and a hundred injured.
• On 5 November an arrest warrant is issued for nine executives and journalists of the opposition newspaper Cumhuriyet, accused of having ties with Fethullah Gülen and the PKK.
• On 18 November the Istanbul public prosecutor orders the arrest of 103 members of the Yildiz Technical University, accused of being involved in July’s attempted coup.
• On 21 November Ahmet Türk, the mayor of Mardin, and Emin İrmak, the co-mayor of Artuklu, are arrested in an investigation into the PKK.
• On 22 November the government dismisses more than 15,000 civil servants and shuts down 550 associations and nine media outlets accused of threatening national security.
• On 22 November the government withdraws its draft law to suspend prison sentences for sexual abuse of minors if no force or threat is involved and if the aggressor has married the victim.
• On 25 November the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatens the EU with opening its borders and allowing millions of migrants to pass, who currently are retained in Turkey under the migration agreement, in response to the European Parliament’s approval to suspend accession negotiations in light of Turkey’s “authoritarian drift.”

Cyprus

• On 22 November the reunification negotiating round held in Mont Pel-
Syria

- On 2 November Russia announces a new “humanitarian truce” in Aleppo to evacuate civilians and armed groups. The rebels reject the offer saying it amounts to surrender.
- On 22 November the SOHR says at least 141 civilians have been killed in the last week since the resumption of airstrikes on east Aleppo.
- On 24 November at least three Turkish soldiers are killed in al-Bab in an air strike led by the Syrian government.
- On 28 November the regime takes the rebel-held al-Sakhour, a key district in northeastern Aleppo, from rebel hands.
- On 30 November the SOHR condemns the government for arresting hundreds of people fleeing from eastern Aleppo.

Lebanon

- On 3 November Saad Hariri is appointed Prime Minister for the second time after receiving the backing on 31 October of Michel Aoun as President, despite two years of strong opposition.
- On 20 November construction begins on the security wall around Ain al-Hilweh, the country’s largest Palestinian refugee camp.
- On 25 November the army arrests one of the main Daesh leaders, Ahmad Youssef Amon, in Arsal.

Jordan

- On 4 November the European Council approves a 200-million-euro assistance package for Jordan to support its economic stabilization.
- On 8 November Atef Tarawneh is elected parliament speaker for the fourth time.
- On 23 November the United Nations says it will start delivering humanitarian assistance again to the 85,000 Syrians trapped at Jordan’s border, who have received no aid since August.

Egypt

- On 9 November the Administrative Court confirms its suspension of the agreement of 11 April to transfer the islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia.
- On 11 November the IMF approves a 12-billion-dollar loan to Egypt, the largest given to any country in the region.
- On 15 November the Parliament approves the law regulating the activities of NGOs in Egypt and their funding sources, perceived by the opposition as a new move to repress civil liberties.
- On 16 November Egypt removes Ahmed Shafiq, Hosni Mubarak’s former Prime Minister, from its watchlist.

Libya

- On 17 November the National Libyan Army, loyal to the Tobruk authorities and led by Khalifa Haftar, take control of the districts of Ganfouda and Guwarsa, one of the last Islamist strongholds in Benghazi.
- On 23 November Tunisia confirms the presence of US drones on the Libyan border, in the fight against Daesh.

Tunisia

- On 9 November the authorities announce the death of the Daesh emir Jund al-Khilafa in fighting on the Algerian border.
- On 16 November the security forces dismantle a cell linked to Daesh that was planning attacks in Tunisia.
- On 17 November the public hearings begin for victims of the dictatorship, a crucial part of the work of the Instance of Truth and Dignity.

Algeria

- On 27 November thousands of civil servants demonstrate against the pensions law, which puts an end to the right to early retirement. Participating in the march are the Islamist Green Algeria Alliance (AAV), the Workers’ Party (PT) and the Socialist Forces Front (FFS).

Morocco

- On 18 November the 22nd United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22), which began on 7 November, comes to an end. The meeting concludes with the approval of a document to begin drafting a set of rules to regulate the Paris Agreement (COP21).

Mauritania

- On 18 November the Court of Appeal orders the release of three anti-slavery activists and reduces sentences for another 10.
EU

- On 3 November the British High Court of Justice denies the government the authority to initiate the exit from the EU without prior parliamentary approval.
- On 22 November the Euro Chamber votes in favour of a resolution that suggests Member States allocate 2% of their GDP to defence and to create multinational forces, while also creating a European army headquarters that allows the Union to act where NATO will not.
- On 24 November Martin Schulz announces that he will step down as President of the European Parliament in January 2017 to lead the socialists’ list in the German legislative elections and dispute the federal chancellorship in the presidential elections.

December 2016

In France, Bernard Cazeneuve is appointed Prime Minister. In Italy, the rejection of the constitutional reform leads to the resignation of the Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. Serbia’s first trial held for the Srebrenica massacre begins in Belgrade. The FYROM holds early legislative elections. In Greece, there is a general strike against austerity measures. The Russian ambassador to Turkey is assassinated in the same month that the TAK carry out an attack in Istanbul. In Cyprus, reunification negotiations are resumed. In Syria, the Syrian army takes full control of Aleppo, and Russia and Turkey agree on a ceasefire. In Lebanon, the Parliament approves the government of Saad Hariri. In Egypt, an attack on Saint Peter’s Church in Cairo leaves 27 dead, the prominent Islamist Adel Habara is executed and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ratifies the new law regulating the media. In Libya, the Government of National Accord announces the total liberation of Sirte and reaches a major agreement with the Central Bank.

Spain

- On 20 December the former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar resigns as honorary president of the PP over disagreements with the current party direction.
- On 22 December Podemos ratifies the expulsion from the party of the president of the Balearic Parliament Xelo Huertas after discovering that she is under investigation in a corruption scandal.

France

- On 7 December the hitherto Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve is appointed Prime Minister to replace Manuel Valls, who resigned the previous day to prepare his candidacy for the socialist primaries, with a view to running in the 2017 presidential elections.
- On 9 December the former Budget Minister Jerome Cahuzac is sentenced to three years’ imprisonment and another five years of ineligibility to take public office for tax fraud.
- On 14 December the lower house of the Parliament approves extending the state of emergency until 15 July 2017.
- On 19 December the managing director of the IMF Christine Lagarde is found guilty of negligence by the Court of Justice of the Republic, over irregularities in the concession of a multimillion-euro payout to businessman Bernard Tapie in 2008, in an arbitration case when she was the French Finance Minister. Lagarde, however, avoids sentence.

Italy

- On 4 December the Italians reject the constitutional reform proposed by the government of Matteo Renzi and approved in April by the Parliament in a national referendum. The reform contemplated, among other changes, removing provincial administration, transforming the Senate into a territorial house and reducing the number of senators from 315 to 100.
- On 11 December the Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni is appointed the new Prime Minister to replace Matteo Renzi, who resigned on 5 December, following the approval of the 2017 budget, over the result of the referendum on 4 December.
- On 17 December Raffaele Marra, head of personnel at Rome’s City Hall and right-hand man of the mayor Virginia Raggi (M5S) is arrested suspected of bribery and influence peddling. Parallel to this, the mayor of Milan Giuseppe Sala (PD) steps down over his involvement in an influence peddling investigation.
- On 21 December the Parliament approves the government proposal for a 20-billion-euro plan to revive the financial system.
- On 24 December the authorities step up security after the death of Tunisian Anis Amri, the suspected perpetrator of the attack on a Christmas market in Berlin on 19 December, shot on 23 December by police during a police check in Milan.

Malta

- On 6 December the Parliament unanimously approves a bill under which fines and prison sentences can be given to anyone promoting gay conversion therapy. This is the first law of this kind in Europe.

Croatia

- On 12 December negotiations fail between the government and public sector unions over demands for a salary increase for public sector workers in 2017.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 30 December the Bosnian Serb President Milorad Dodik testifies before the state prosecutor to holding the referendum in September to establish “Statehood Day” as a national Bosnian Serb holiday, which was banned by the Constitutional Court.

Serbia

- On 9 December Serbia protests Croatia’s decision to block the opening of Chapter 26 of Serbia’s EU accession negotiations, pertaining to education and culture, claiming that Belgrade has not made the progress needed to produce textbooks that are of an adequate standard for students from the Croatian minority.
- On 12 December the first trial celebrated in Serbia for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre begins.
On 21 and 22 December Bosnian Serb trade unions demand that the government keep in place higher salaries for seniority, coinciding with the debate in the entity’s Parliament on the restrictive budgets for 2017.

On 22 December the Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic announces the agreement under which Russia will supply arms to Serbia in the framework of the bilateral agreement on military-technical assistance. The agreement comes in the context of an arms race with Croatia, which has been modernizing its armed forces with US and European support.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

On 14 December the Bulgarian International Criminal Court judge, Ekaterina Trendafilova, is appointed president of the Special Court for Kosovo, based in The Hague.

FYROM

On 11 December the VMRO-DPMNE wins the early legislative elections winning 51 seats (39.39% of the votes) followed by Zoran Zaev’s SDP with 49 seats (37.87%). The close results require the formation of a coalition government.

Albania

On 29 December the Election Commission dismisses two deputies and a mayor for failing to declare their criminal history, as required by 2015’s law on transparency.

Greece

On 9 December a general strike begins against the government’s austerity measures and negotiations with the international lenders.

On 14 December the ESM temporarily suspends the application of the first measures agreed to alleviate the Greek public debt after the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’ announcement to use part of the surplus as a Christmas bonus for 1.6 million pensioners.

Turkey

On 10 December a double bomb attack by the terrorist group TAK leaves 38 dead in Istanbul. The pro-Kurdish HDP condemns the attack and 118 members of the party are arrested.

On 19 December the Russian ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov is assassinated in Ankara by Turkish police officer Mevlut Mert Altintas, who, during the attack, shouts for revenge for the deaths in Aleppo caused by Russia.

On 24 December the authorities launch an investigation into 10,000 users of social networks under suspicion of complicity with terrorist groups.

On 29 December the Cumhuriyet journalist Ahmet Sik is arrested, charged with spreading terrorist propaganda.

On 30 December at least 40 people are arrested in Adana for belonging to Daesh.

Cyprus

On 13 December reunification talks are resumed with a new round of a month of “intensified talks” on all negotiation chapters.

Syria

On 22 December the United Nations General Assembly approves with 105 votes in favour, 15 against and 52 abstentions—including those of Russia and Iran—the opening of a panel to assist in prosecuting war crimes in the Syrian conflict.

On 22 December the Syrian army announces the end of its conquest of Aleppo after weeks of siege, attacks and the evacuation of more than 25,000 people from the eastern part of the city, agreed on 14 December under the auspices of Russia and Turkey.

On 23 December Turkey announces the end of the FSA support operation to take control of al-Bab, a strategic move to create a buffer zone in northern Syria, as part of Operation Euphrates Shield.

On 29 December the ceasefire enters into force brokered the previous day by Russia and Turkey and accepted by the Syrian regime and the rebels through the signing of three documents: one relating to the ceasefire throughout Syria, another on the measures to be adopted to observe its compliance and a third on the readiness of the parties to resume peace negotiations.

On 29 December the Kurdish groups in Syria approve a roadmap to establish a new federal government in the north of the country, in order to gain greater political and financial autonomy from Damascus.

On 30 December Turkey says it has “neutralized” 1,294 Daesh militants and 306 PKK fighters in northern Syria since the beginning of Operation Euphrates Shield.

Lebanon

On 28 December the Parliament approves the composition of the new Prime Minister Saad Hariri’s government, with the support of 87 of the 127 deputies.

Jordan

On 18 December at least nine people are killed in an armed attack on a police patrol in Qatraneh, the tourist enclave of the province of Kerak, in which the perpetrators of the shooting hold 14 people hostage in the city’s castle.

Egypt

On 11 December a bomb in Saint Peter’s Church, adjacent to Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Cairo, the seat of the Coptic Pope, leaves 27 dead.

On 15 December the prominent Islamist militant Adel Habara is executed, sentenced to death in 2014 for the death of 28 soldiers in an attack carried out in August 2013 in the Sinai.

On 18 December an anti-terror operation in Giza ends with the death of a leading member of the Hasm terrorist group, accused by Cairo of having ties with the Muslim Brotherhood.

On 22 December the journalist and writer Ahmed Naji is released from prison after, on 18 December, the Court of Cassation suspends his two-year prison sentence for violating public modesty, pending a definitive verdict.
• On 25 December Egypt announces the death of 23 jihadists in a series of airstrikes in the Sinai.
• On 26 December Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ratifies the law approved by Parliament in November that regulates the media and gives the government the authority to choose the members of the Supreme Council for the Administration of the Media.
• On 29 December the government approves handing over the islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia and refers the resolution to the Parliament for its corresponding approval. The move comes despite the Higher Administrative Court’s July ruling against the government’s transfer of the two territories, which is pending the resolution of the government’s appeal, a verdict for which is to be issued in mid-January 2017.

Libya
• On 5 December the Government of National Accord announces the total liberation of Sirte from Daesh control.
• On 7 December a militia coalition launches an offensive to take control of the Ben Jawad oil facilities and other towns in the Gulf of Sirte under control of the Khalifa Haftar’s forces, which are able to repel the attack. The Government of National Accord denies any connection with the attack.
• On 14 December Khalifa Haftar tells his troops to prepare for an offensive on Tripoli, the scene of fighting since late November between unity government supporters and groups linked to the country’s Grand Mufti Sadiq al-Ghariani and the former Prime Minister Khalifa Gwell.
• On 28 December the general Khalifa Haftar launches an offensive against rebel groups based on the border with Chad.
• On 30 December the Government of National Accord and the Central Bank of Libya reach a cooperation agreement to address the serious economic problems the country is undergoing.

Tunisia
• On 7 December the Tunisian General Labour (UGTT) cancels the strike it had organized for the following day after reaching an agreement with the government on the demanded salary increases.
• On 11 and 27 December 13 people are arrested in Monastir for belonging to two cells linked to Daesh. Throughout December dozens of arrests are made under the same charges in Ben Guerdane, Tunis, Ettadhamen, Sidi Buzid and Meyez el-Beb.
• On 15 December the head of national security Abderrahmane Belhaj Ali resigns after just a year in the position, citing personal reasons.

Algeria
• On 9 December the government concludes one of the largest deportations of 2016 sending at least a thousand Sub-Saharan immigrants back to Niger.
• On 11 December the British-Algerian journalist Mohamed Tamalt dies after three months in a coma after being on hunger strike in protest against his arrest in June and two-year jail sentence, charged with defaming the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.
• On 27 December the Movement for the Society of Peace and a splinter group of the Front for Change announce that they are considering reuniting as a single party before the legislative elections in April 2017. Another three Islamist parties el-Binaa, the Front for Justice and Development and Ennahda also form an alliance to form a single party.

Mauritania
• On 21 December Cheikh Ould Saleck, a member of the Mauritanian AQIM, is included by the US on its list of international terrorists.
• On 30 December the government rules out holding a national referendum to decide on the constitutional changes proposed in the framework of the National Dialogue, in light of the country’s difficult financial situation. Instead, the reforms will be voted on exclusively in the Parliament.

EU
• On 1 December the European Commission announces a 221-million-euro aid package for stabilization and reconstruction projects in Syria, Libya, Jordan and Egypt.
• On 15 December according to Eurostat, during the third quarter of 2016, the number of asylum seekers in the Union has risen by 17% with respect to the second quarter of 2016, with a total 358,300 applications.
• On 23 December the European Commission signs contracts to the value of 270 million euros for the construction and equipping of schools for refugee children in Turkish reception centres. On the same day, European emergency funding is approved for Italy -38.2 million euros- and Bulgaria -48.2 million euros- to support the management of migrant arrivals.

Gibraltar
• On 16 June David Cameron visits Gibraltar for an act in support of the United Kingdom remaining in the EU, as part of the campaign in the runup to the referendum. The first visit to the colony of a British Prime Minister since 1968 comes to end ahead of schedule because of the assassination in Birstall, West Yorkshire, of the Labour MP Jo Cox by an extreme right-wing Brexit supporter.
• On 23 June 96% of Gibraltarians vote remain in the British referendum on the UK’s exit from the EU. Given the victory for leave voters on a national level, however, Gibraltar is greatly concerned for its economy if its border with Spain becomes an external border to the EU.
• On 2 December the United Kingdom reiterates its rejection of Spain’s offer in October of co-sovereignty over Gibraltar, as a formula –other than devolution to Spain- for the Rock to remain in the EU once Brexit has taken place. In parallel, the Spanish Parliament and Andalusia’s autonomous government dissociate themselves from the government’s proposal saying that it could compromise Spain’s future negotiating position.

Western Sahara
• On 18 January Sweden decides not to recognize Western Sahara as an in-
dependent state, to ease diplomatic tensions with Morocco, which is calling for a boycott of products and companies of the Nordic country following the Swedish Parliament’s announcement that it will implement a motion to recognize the former Spanish colony as a sovereign state.

- On 29 February tensions rise in Western Sahara five days ahead of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s visit, with the murder of a Saharawi shepherd next to the separation wall erected by Morocco. The Polisario considers the incident, which it attributes to Moroccan soldiers, as the most serious since the ceasefire signed in 1991.
- On 8 March Morocco condemns the visit of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Nouakchott, Algiers, the Tin-douf refugee camps and Bir Lahu, in Polisario-controlled Saharawi territories, accusing him of “abandoning neutrality, objectivity and impartiality.”
- On 29 April the UN Security Council renews the mandate of its mission in Western Sahara and calls for its return to full functionality following Morocco’s expulsion of a large number of civilian staff members.
- On 6 May the UN Security Council adopts a resolution with 10 votes in favour, two against and three abstentions that calls for the renewal of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).
- On 31 May Mohamed Abdelaziz dies, the historic leader of the Polisario and President of the SADR since 1976. Khatri Abdouh assumes the interim presidency.
- On 9 July Brahim Ghali, a historic member of the Polisario Front from the Reguiba tribe is elected the new leader of the SADR.
- On 27 July the Moroccan high court of appeal orders the retrial of 24 civilians convicted for the killing of security force members during the eviction of the protest camp set up near Laayoune in 2010, thereby canceling sentences of between 20 years and life in prison, handed down in 2013 by the military court.
- On 15 August the Moroccan security forces enter the area between the Guerguerat border post and the border with Mauritania to carry out “cleaning and tamacking” works to halt the increase in illegal trade in the area detected by Morocco. Rabat considers the area a man’s land, while the Polisario Front says it is part of the SADR.
- On 31 August the Polisario urges the United Nations to put pressure on Morocco to withdraw its forces from Guerguerat and invites MINURSO to set up a permanent checkpoint there. Morocco insists it will continue its operations in the area.
- On 6 September it is 25 years since the UN-brokered ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario began. The referendum, which was to be conducted after the cessation of hostilities, and would allow the population of Western Sahara to choose between fully joining Morocco, autonomy and full independence, has not yet been held due to Rabat’s refusal to contemplate the third option.
- On 23 November Morocco abandons the Arab-African summit in Malabo, in protest against the presence of the SADR.
- On 14 December the media reports the possible transfer of some of the Moroccan army’s garrisons to Guerguerat, coinciding with the Polisario’s alleged intention to transfer some of its camps to the area.

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2016 begins with new attacks in the West Bank and East Jerusalem carried out by Palestinian citizens on Israelis and members of Israel's security forces. Known as the Stabbing Intifada, the attacks began in October 2015 as a protest against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, but more specifically as a rejection of the pressures from ultra-Orthodox sectors of the Israeli government to change the status of the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary of Jerusalem. In October, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopts a resolution submitted by Palestine, which denies any relation between Judaism and the Temple Mount or the Western Wall and describes Israel as an “occupying power,” prompting Israel to suspend collaboration with the international organization.

Violence in the context of the Stabbing Intifada, mostly knife attacks, but also vehicle rammings and shootings, continue throughout the year, despite the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) declaring it is doing all it can to stop them. In November, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is re-elected as leader of Fatah amid increasing controversy over his policies and internal divisions in the Palestinian party, the most significant of which arises from supporters of Mohammed Dahlan, who lives in exile in the United Arab Emirates. Dahlan, who was thrown out of the party in 2011 but maintains a powerful influence over the Revolutionary Council and its Central Committee, is sentenced in December by Ramallah’s anti-corruption court to three years in prison for misuse of public funds.

In reaction to the rise in violence and the demonstrations and clashes with Israeli security forces, Israel repeatedly evacuates and closes the Old City and steps up security measures in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank. Construction of the separation wall is also accelerated, and, in July, the Knesset (Parliament) approves a law authorizing the indefinite suspension of deputies that act against the interests and security of the State of Israel, after a parliamentary majority approves the temporary suspension of four Arab Joint List MPs after they visited families of Palestinians who took part in the Stabbing Intifada. Added to this is June’s approval of the new anti-terror law with a generalized agreement among deputies from the coalition government and the opposition to toughen penalties, not only for those carrying out attacks, but also for their accomplices, for whom the same sentences are established as those given to the perpetrators. The harsher sentences also apply to minors, with the law passed in July allowing prison sentences to be served from 14 years of age.

Other noteworthy events in the area of security are a number of gunfights in the area of the Golan Heights and in the south of Syria between the Tsahal (Israeli army) and the Syrian army, in connection with the Syrian Civil War. Likewise, the end of the year sees the first fighting between Israeli troops and Islamic State (Daesh) members in the area. Furthermore, at the beginning of May, Israel and Hamas exchange gunfire for the first time since the Gaza War in 2014. Subsequently, in September, Israel begins construction of an underground barrier along the border with the Gaza Strip to block the smuggling tunnels and hinder possible infiltrations. With respect to Palestine’s internal affairs, in February, Qatar hosts a new round of talks between Fatah and Hamas in the inter-Palestinian reconciliation process, which make no significant progress. In September, the High Court of Ramallah suspends the municipal elections scheduled for 8 October 2016 after courts in Gaza, which are not recognized by the PNA, cancel electoral lists close to Fatah, and in view of the inability to hold elections in East Jerusalem. In May, in the Gaza Strip, Hamas gains parliamentary approval to reintroduce the death penalty, despite opposition from the PNA. In the same month, the first three death sentences since 2007 are carried out. With regard to Israel's internal political panorama, the year is marked by the jailing of a former Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, after being found guilty in the Holyland corruption case; the death in September of the former President and former Prime Minister Shimon Peres; the reconciliation agreement with Turkey, thus putting an end to the crisis started in 2010 with the sinking of the Freedom Flotilla, as it tried to break the maritime blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip; and, in May, the reincorporation into the coalition government of Avigdor Lieberman’s ultra-nationalist party Yisrael Beitenu (Israel Our Home), which leads to the departure of the Environment Minister Avi Gabbay, from the centrist Kulanu party (All of Us) and Moshe Yaalon, from Likud, as Defence Minister, a post taken over by Lieberman. This represents a shift even further to the right for the government led by Benjamin Netanyahu’s conservative Likud (Consolidation), which does not show promise for the peace talks that have been frozen since 2014, when the last
attempt to reactivate them was made by the US State Secretary John Kerry. The Israeli authorities’ approval of new settlements or the expansion of already existing ones in Palestinian territory continues to be both one of the non-negotiable priorities of Yisrael Beiteinu and one of the main stumbling blocks for reactivating the peace process, despite efforts by the Middle East Quartet -the UN, US, EU and Russia- that they be stopped, or the draft resolution written by Egypt and the PNA, which condemns the construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory, submitted to the United Nations Security Council in December. The resolution is approved thanks to a US abstention, in the Obama Administration’s last decision in the region, despite pressure from Israel and the future Trump Administration.

In 2016, thousands of new constructions are authorized in the 100 temporary settlements and 150 permanent settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In addition, a law is passed by the Parliament allowing the retroactive legalization of temporary settlements (known as outposts), which precede permanent settlements, in occupied territories of the West Bank. Until now, an absence of permits has meant that such settlements have been illegal under Israeli legislation. The law, approved in December, excludes the case of Amona, an outpost in the West Bank awaiting a definitive ruling from the Supreme Court, which is finally pronounced on 22 December when the court orders its eviction and demolition before 8 February 2017, after accepting a 45-day delay requested by the government.

In 2016, several states launch initiatives to try to reanimate the peace process in a context of regional destabilization and competition for influence in the region. The most visible of these is the Paris Conference on 3 June, led by France and attended by representatives of more than thirty countries, although with the notable absence of both Palestine and Israel, the latter opposing the initiative because of its multilateral nature. The Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi reiterates his country’s traditional role as mediator inviting the parties to resume the talks, in a gesture praised by the Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman and which comes weeks before the first official visit in nine years by an Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, to Israel, where he is received by Benjamin Netanyahu. However, a third initiative from Russia is perhaps the most significant in view of the country’s quick and strong positioning as a rising power in the Middle East. In this regard, in early September, the Kremlin confirms its readiness to organize a meeting in Moscow, between the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which would be the first such meeting in six years. Two contexts form the backdrop to Russia’s offer. The first is the Russian President Vladimir Putin’s moves to improve relations with both parties; in Israel’s case through the materialization of both countries’ wishes to increase incorporation in Defence and create a free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Israel. The second is the decline of Washington’s hitherto clear leadership in the peace process and the end of the Obama era, two months before the Republican candidate Donald Trump’s election victory confirms a change in the US administration. Trump’s pro-Israeli stance augurs a complicated role for the US as a mediating power, one of his first, controversial decisions being to announce his intention to move the United States embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

January 2016

Israel

• On 4 January Israel launches scores of missiles into the Lebanese border area of Rweiset el-Alam, in Shebaa Farms. The attack may have been in response to an explosion near an Israeli border patrol in the area.

• On 22 January the Israeli army evicts around 80 settlers who had illegally occupied two buildings in the centre of Hebron, close to the Cave of the Patriarchs / Ibrahim Mosque.

Peace Negotiations

• On 31 January the Israeli President Reuven Rivlin rejects the French initiative to hold an international conference to negotiate a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, saying that dialogue among “allied countries” on issues that affect the security of Israel and its citizens should be undertaken directly. France’s Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declares that if the initiative fails, Paris will consider officially recognizing a Palestinian state.

Conflicts between the Parties

• On 1 January two people are killed and another seven injured in a shooting in a bar on Dizengoff Street in central Tel Aviv, carried out by a Palestinian citizen from the town of Arara.

• On 9 January Israeli soldiers shoot dead two Palestinians who tried to stab them at the Bekaot checkpoint in the West Bank.

• On 9 January Israeli troops demolish the house of the Palestinian Muhammad Halabi in Surda, near Ramallah. Halabi helped to spark the current wave of violence known as the Stabbing Intifada when he murdered two Rabbis on 3 October 2015 in Jerusalem’s Old City, after which he was shot dead by Israeli security forces.

• On 17 January a resident from the settlement of Otniel, south of Hebron, is stabbed to death in her home. Her assailant, presumed to be Palestinian, then flees the scene.

• On 17 January the Shin Bet (Shabak), Israel’s intelligence and internal security service, arrests around thirty Palestinians suspected of participating in terrorist activities and violent unrest.

• On 18 January an Israeli woman is seriously injured when she is stabbed by a Palestinian in the Israeli settlement of Tekoa, in the south of the West Bank.

• On 23 January an Israeli security guard shoots dead a 13-year-old Palestinian girl, who, according to police sources, was attempting a stabbing attack outside the Israeli settlement of Anatot, in the West Bank.
February 2016

Israel

- On 7 February after four months of a rise in Palestinian attacks, which have already left around 200 dead, the Labour Party endorses its leader Isaac Herzog’s plan to accelerate the completion of the separation wall around the West Bank and 28 Palestinian districts of East Jerusalem, and which leaves the large Jewish settlements on the Israeli side. The plan, which aligns with the ideas of the governing, conservative Likud, also gives the PNA greater authority, on the condition that the Israeli army remains in control of security on the Palestinian side.
- On 8 February the Ethics Committee of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) bans the deputies Haneen Zoabi, Basel Ghat-tas and Jamal Zahalka, from the Balad party (Democratic National Election), a member of the Joint List, from entering the plenum and parliamentary committee sessions for four months, for meeting with families of Palestinians from Jerusalem who were killed by security forces after carrying out attacks on Israelis.
- On 14 February Israel resumes its ties with the EU following a three-month dispute over Europe’s November 2015 ruling that special labels be used for products imported from Jewish settlements in occupied territories, a measure deemed by Israel to be a “boycott.”
- On 15 February Ehud Olmert becomes the first former Prime Minister to be jailed in Israeli history after entering the Maasiyahu prison, in Tel Aviv, convicted of bribery and obstruction of justice when he was mayor of Jerusalem, in the Holyland housing development scandal.
- On 18 February three Israeli rockets land in Jabal al-Manaa, a position held by forces loyal to the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad to the south of Damascus.

Palestine

- On 7 and 8 February a new round of talks between Fatah and Hamas is held in Qatar in the inter-Palestinian reconciliation process, which fails to make any significant progress. Fatah warns it will resume unilateral control of the Gaza Strip, which has been under Hamas rule since 2007 after bloody armed clashes with Fatah supporters.
- On 25 February the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Fathali announces that Iran will make payments to the value of 7,000 dollars to the families of Palestinians killed in protests against Israel or by the Israeli army.
- On 26 February Omar Nayef Zayed, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and wanted for 25 years after being sentenced to death by Israel, is found dying in the Palestinian embassy in Bulgaria. Zayed had sought refugee in the embassy after, in December 2015, the Israeli Ministry of Justice sent a letter to the Bulgarian government requesting his extradition. The PFLP and Hamas accuse Mosad, Israel’s foreign intelligence agency, of Zayed’s death, although the Bulgarian public prosecutor says that his death, apparently from defenestration, was not the result of murder.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 1 February Israeli soldiers kill a Palestinian who tried to attack them with a knife in the settlement of Salit, in the West Bank.
- On 3 February one Israeli police officer is killed and another injured in an attack carried out by three Palestinians from Jenin, at one of the main entrances to Jerusalem’s Old City. The three assailants are shot dead by border guards at the Damascus Gate.
- On 4 February a court in Jerusalem sentences two Israeli teenagers to life and 21 years in prison respectively for the kidnapping and murder, on 2 July 2014, of a Palestinian minor. Abu Khdeir, from Shuafat, East Jerusalem, was burnt to death by the two Israelis as an act of revenge for the recent murder of three Israeli teenagers in Hebron.
- On 7 February the Israeli police shoots dead a Sudanese citizen after he stabs a soldier and attempts to flee.
- On 14 February the Israeli police announces it killed five Palestinians at the Damascus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem in three separate actions that took place during the protests in the area.
- On 18 February two Palestinian minors stab an Israeli soldier to death and seriously injure another at a supermarket in the south of the West Bank.
- On 19 February a Palestinian citizen stabs two Israeli police officers before being shot down by police at one of the entrances to Jerusalem’s Old City. Hours later, another Palestinian attempts to drive a vehicle into a group of Israeli soldiers in the West Bank, after which he is shot dead by the soldiers. A third incident also takes place in the West Bank when a Palestinian is shot dead by Israeli soldiers during clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and security forces.
- On 23 February the Israeli army demolishes the houses of two Palestinians, al-Haroub and Raed Masalmeh, who killed five people in November 2015 in the West Bank and Tel Aviv respectively, in the so-called Stabbing Intifada.

March 2016

Israel

- On 8 March the US Vice-President Joe Biden travels to Israel to push forward the negotiations of the strategic cooperation agreement between the US and Israel. The visit comes a day after the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancels an official visit to the US, scheduled mid-month and during which he was to meet with the US President Barack Obama and attend the annual conference of the pro-Israel lobby at the US Congress AIPAC. The cancellation is greeted with surprise at the White House, whose spokesperson says it “found out through the media,” while Israeli sources cite difficulties in scheduling the meeting with Obama as it coincided with the dates for the President’s official visit to Cuba. However, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reports that the cancellation may have been caused by the failure to advance in the negotiations of the strategic cooperation agreement regarding Israel’s request to receive greater military aid from the US, currently set at around 3 billion dollars a year.
• On 20 March around 1,500 Falashas-Israeli citizens of Ethiopian origin-protest during the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Jerusalem, against the Israeli government’s announcement at the beginning of the month to limit the number of Ethiopians entering the country in 2016, despite having previously committed to bringing over thousands of members of the Falash Mura community as quickly as possible, who are living in transit camps in Gondar and Addis Ababa.
• On 22 March 19 Yemeni Jews arrive from the city of Raida after being evacuated from the country in a secret Israeli army operation and thus concluding a 67-year-long repatriation process of Yemen’s Jewish community to Israel, which began with the arrival of 50,000 Yemeni Jews between 1949 and 1950 in the so-called Operation Magic Carpet. Since then, arrivals have been much more isolated, but in recent months Israel and the US have cooperated to accelerate the evacuation of all Jews from Yemen because of the country’s ongoing conflict.

Palestine
• On 4 March Hamas announces the execution on 7 February of Mahmoud Ishtiwi, head of one of the battalions of the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades. Ishtiwi was sentenced to death by a religious and military court for "moral turpitude" after being held for a year without charge. According to The New York Times, Ishtiwi was the victim of a purge after being accused of embezzling funds from his unit and of having homosexual relationships.

Conflicts between the Parties
• On 1 March Israeli soldiers kill a Palestinian citizen during an operation to rescue two soldiers who were attacked after entering the Kalandia refugee camp, according to the Israeli army.
• On 8 March an American tourist is killed and 11 Israelis injured by a Palestinian armed with a knife close to the headquarters of the Peres Centre for Peace in south Tel Aviv, where the US Vice-President is meeting the former Israeli President Shimon Peres. The assailant is shot down by police.
• On 12 March two Palestinian children are killed in an Israeli airstrike in the north of the Gaza Strip, in retaliation for missiles launched into southern Israel.
• On 14 March three Palestinians are shot down by Israeli soldiers after attacking Israeli settlers in Kiryat Arba, in the West Bank.
• On 17 March two Palestinians stab an Israeli soldier on the outskirts of the Ariel settlement in the West Bank, after which they are shot dead by the Israeli army.
• On 24 March two Palestinians are shot dead by the Israeli army after stabbing an Israeli soldier.

April 2016

Israel
• On 7 April a study by Israel’s Macro Center for Political Economics reveals that the country spends more money on Israeli settlers living in the West Bank that on its other residents, and that it has increased its budget for the settlements by 28.4% in 2015, with respect to the previous year.

Conflicts between the Parties
• On 18 April an explosion on a bus at the Patt junction, in southeast Jerusalem, claimed by Hamas, leaves at least 21 injured. The act of terrorism comes hours after Israel announced the discovery of an underground tunnel on the border with Gaza, and is praised by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah and the PFLP, which describe the attack as a “natural” response to the occupation of Palestine and the al-Aqsa Mosque.
• On 24 April the Israeli authorities evacuate the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary and arrest two Palestinians in yet another episode of tension in the Old City of Jerusalem, this time coinciding with the celebration of Jewish Passover.
• On 24 April Israel releases a 12-year-old Palestinian girl, after she served two and a half months in an Israeli jail. The minor, arrested on 9 February in Karmei Tzur, near Hebron, was charged with planning a knife attack on Israelis.
• On 27 April the Israeli border police shoot and kill two Palestinian brothers after they attempted to stab officers at the Kalandia checkpoint.

May 2016

Israel
• On 20 May Benjamin Netanyahu re-incorporates the ultra-nationalist party Yisrael Beiteinu into the coalition, led by Avigdor Lieberman, a minister under Netanyahu between 2009 and 2015. Thanks to this agreement, the coalition government gains six more seats in the Parliament giving it a strong parliamentary position ahead of France’s plans to reactivate the peace process. On the same day, claiming that the country is being taken over by “extremist and dangerous elements” –in reference to the agreement with Yisrael Beiteinu- Moshe Yaalon resigns as Defence Minister, a post Netanyahu hands over to Lieberman.
• On 25 May the Environment Minister Avi Gabbay, from the centrist Kulanu party, resigns, citing a shift to the right in Benjamin Netanyahu’s government coalition with the inclusion of Yisrael Beiteinu, a move which gives the government 66 of the 120 parliamentary seats.

Palestine
• On 6 May the Palestinian Finance Minister announces an agreement reached with Jordan and supported by the International Quartet that will allow, for the first time, exports of Palestinian products to the Hashemite Kingdom, after their prior inspection by Israel.
• On 12 May Egypt opens the Rafah crossing, on the border with the Gaza Strip, which has been closed for 85 days.
• On 25 May Hamas announces that the Parliament in Gaza has approved the death penalty, despite opposition from the PNA and human rights groups. In a statement, the Islamist movement that controls the Gaza Strip declares that the law was passed by the Islamist lawmakers in the Palestinian Legislative Council, a body that has failed to bring together its 132 deputies since Hamas took control of the Strip in 2007.
• On 31 May three Palestinians from Khan Yunis serving sentence for murder are executed by firing squad in Gaza, in the first act of capital punishment since 2007.

Peace Negotiations

• On 19 May the French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault announces that the international conference, promoted by France, aimed at relaunching the peace talks will be held on 3 June.
• On 30 May Avigdor Lieberman is sworn in as Defence Minister. His first act in his new post is to voice his support for negotiations with the Palestinians based on a two-state formula and he repeatedly praises the initiative of the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi for resuming the peace process.

Conflicts between the Parties

• On 3 May the Jerusalem District Court hands down a life sentence to 30-year-old Yosef Haim Ben David for the murder in 2014 of a Palestinian minor, who he and two Israeli minors, also sentenced in February, burnt alive.
• On 4 May in response to Palestinian militants shelling Israeli troops undertaking search and destroy missions on underground tunnels on the border, the Israeli air force attacks several Hamas targets in Rafah. Against the backdrop of this exchange of fire, the first since the Gaza War in 2014, on 5 May a Palestinian woman dies from injuries suffered by shots from an Israeli tank in Khan Younis.
• On 10 May the trial begins against the Israeli soldier Efr Azaria accused of shooting in the head and killing a badly injured attacker on 24 March in Hebron. This is the first such trial of an Israeli soldier in more than a decade.

June 2016

Israel

• On 7 June, in Moscow, the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announce their intention to increase defence cooperation and create a free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Israel. The announcement comes against the backdrop of a bilateral rapprochement, which is also intended to give both countries a stronger position in the Middle East.
• On 13 June the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon is elected to chair the UN General Assembly’s Legal Committee, charged with sensitive issues, including the fight against international terrorism. This is the first time an Israeli representative will head a permanent committee of the UN.
• On 15 June the Parliament approves the new anti-terrorism law with 57 deputies in favour -including a large part of the opposition- and 16 against, which toughens sentences not only for those who carry out attacks, but also for their accomplices, who will receive the same sentences as those given to the perpetrators.
• On 20 June at least 65 Palestinian prisoners, mostly from the PFLP, declare an open-ended hunger strike in the Israeli prisons of Megiddo and Gilboa in solidarity with the PFLP member Bilal Kayed, who was put on administrative detention after serving a 14-year prison sentence.
• On 26 June a court in Israel hands down a life sentence to Yishai Schissel, the ultra-Orthodox Jew who carried out an attack on several people taking part in the 2015 Gay Pride parade in Jerusalem, leaving one person dead and six injured.
• On 27 June Israel announces it has reached a reconciliation agreement with Turkey to put an end to the bilateral crisis that began in 2010 and under which the victims of the Freedom Flotilla will receive compensation amounting to 20 million dollars.
• On 28 June the Israeli police announce a three-day closure of the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem after dozens of young Palestinians barricade themselves into the al-Aqsa Mosque in protest against the area’s Israeli occupation.

Palestine

• On 2 June for the first time in three weeks the Egyptian authorities reopen the country’s border with the Gaza Strip for four days to allow students, the sick and dual-nationality citizens to leave or enter Gaza.

Peace Negotiations

• On 3 June France hosts a meeting aimed at relaunching talks between Israelis and Palestinians based on the creation of two states in the region. Around 30 ministers and representatives of Arab and Western countries, the UN and EU take part in the meeting, to which neither representatives from Israel nor Palestine are invited, who have not held direct negotiations since 2014. Although the secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Saeb Erekat describes the initiative as hopeful, Israel opposes it because of its multilateral approach.

Conflicts between the Parties

• On 8 June at least four people are killed and another six injured in an attack carried out with automatic weapons in the Sarona shopping centre, near the Ministry of Defence and Army HQ in Tel Aviv. After the attack, which Hezbollah describes as a “heroic operation,” Israel freezes the 83,000 special permits it had granted Palestinian citizens from the West Bank and Gaza to travel through its territory during the month of Ramadan.
• On 21 June Israeli soldiers kill a Palestinian citizen when responding to a rocket and incendiary bomb attack on Israeli vehicles on the road that joins Jerusalem and Tel Aviv where it crosses through the West Bank.
• On 29 June Hallel Yafa Ariel, a 13-year-old Israeli girl is stabbed to death in her bed at home in the settlement of Kiryat Arba, by a Palestinian citizen from Hebron, who is shot down by police after the attack.

July 2016

Israel

• On 1 July the Quartet on the Middle East -the UN, US, EU and Russia- urges Israel to stop its policy of construc-
tion and expansion of illegal settlements in Palestinian territory.

- On 4 July Tzipi Livni, the former Foreign Minister and currently deputy in the Knesset returns from a trip to the United Kingdom where she avoided questioning by the British police over war crimes committed in the war in the Gaza Strip. Livni was summoned to appear voluntarily in the investigation into the Israeli military’s Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009, in which 1,391 Palestinians were killed -including 759 civilians- and 5,300 injured.

- On 5 July General Gadi Eisenkott, the Israeli chief of general staff, revokes the so-called Hannibal Directive, the controversial military code name in use since the Israeli intervention in Lebanon between 1982 and 1985 and which authorizes indiscriminate attacks to prevent the capture of Israeli soldiers by enemy militias, even at the cost of hostages’ lives.

- On 20 July more than 200 French Jews arrive in Israel. Since the attacks in France in 2015 it is estimated that more than 12,000 French Jews have made Aliyah, the return to the Land of Israel. According to the director of the Jewish Agency for Israel in France, Daniel Benhaim, 5,000 people are expected to make the journey from France in 2016, 30% fewer than in 2015. With 600,000 members, the Jewish community in France is the largest in Europe and third largest in the world, behind Israel itself and the US.

- On 21 July the Parliament’s plenum approves, with 62 votes in favour and 45 against, the law that allows lawmakers suspected of having supported enemies of the State of Israel to be indefinitely suspended from their parliamentary duties, if said suspension enjoys the support of 90 of the 120 members of the house. The text received approval in a first reading from the parliamentary Justice Committee on 29 March with 59 votes in favour and 52 against.

- On 22 July dozens of Palestinians held prisoner in Israeli jails go on hunger strike in solidarity with the prisoner Bilal Kayed, hospitalized because of the serious deterioration in his health. Kayed has been fasting since 15 June in protest against the decision to put him in administrative detention, taken a day before his release and after he had served a 14-year prison sentence for belonging to the PFLP.

- On 26 July the Israeli Parliament passes a law allowing minors involved in murder or attempted murder who are between 12 and 14 years of age when they are convicted to serve sentence when they turn 14.

- On 27 July Israel reopens the border with Syria for the first time since the beginning of the war to allow the entry of humanitarian aid.

Palestine

- On 4 July, a week after the normalization of Turkish-Israeli relations, the Pan-ama-flagged ship Lady Leyla, which set out from Turkey, arrives at the Israeli port of Ashdod with 11,000 tonnes of supplies, food and toys for people living in the Gaza Strip, following inspection by the Israeli authorities.

Peace Negotiations

- On 10 July the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister Sameh Shoukry urges Israelis and Palestinians to resume peace talks during his official visit to Israel, the first undertaken by an Egyptian head of diplomacy in the last decade.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 5 July a young Palestinian from az-Zawiya is injured when she tries to stab two Israeli soldiers at a bus stop at the Gitai Avisar junction, close to Ariel in the north of the West Bank.

- On 27 July during a raid in Surif, near Hebron, Israeli soldiers kill a fighter from Hamas’ military wing the al-Qassam Brigades, who was responsible for the attack that killed Rabbi Michael Mark on 1 July in the West Bank. Another three Hamas members are arrested.

August 2016

Israel

- On 8 August the Interior and Public Security Ministries announce the creation of a joint taskforce to gather information on foreign activists in Israel or the West Bank looking to delegitimize the State of Israel, with the aim of deporting them.

- On 10 August the Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan announces the creation of five new Israeli police stations in East Jerusalem, where there is currently just one police station, in the historic Old City. The new stations will be located in the neighbourhoods of Ras al-Amud, Jabal Mukaber, Silwan, Issawiya and Shur Baher.

- On 25 August after 71 days of fasting, lawyers of Bilal Kayed, a member of the PFLP, announce that he is suspending his hunger strike after reaching an agreement with the Israeli authorities to end his administrative detention in December, after serving six months in jail. In exchange, Kayed agrees to a four-year exile from Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

- On 31 August the government body in charge of managing the occupied territories authorizes the construction of 466 new homes in different parts of the West Bank, 179 of which have retroactively received legal authorization after being built illegally. According to the Israeli NGO Shalom Ajshav (Peace Now), 2,623 new homes in the settlements have been approved in the last year, 756 of them retroactively.

Palestine

- On 24 August Egyptian security sources reveal that Abu Suleiman, one of the main Daesh commanders in the Sinai Peninsula, was admitted mid-June to a European-funded Gaza hospital, after being injured in fighting with the Egyptian army.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 24 August unrest erupts in the vicinity of the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem when Israeli security forces forcibly disperse a demonstration in solidarity with the prisoner Bilal Kayed.

September 2016

Israel

- On 4 September Israel shells a Syrian armed forces position in response
to mortar hitting Israeli-controlled territory in the Golan Heights.

- On 8 September Israel begins construction of an underground barrier along the border with the Gaza Strip to block the smuggling tunnels and prevent infiltrations.
- On 8 September an Israeli court hands prison sentences down to five Arab-Israelis for attempting to join the ranks of Daesh.
- On 8 September the Labour and Social Affairs Minister Haim Katz (Likud) authorizes permits for carrying out essential work on the railways in Tel Aviv for 10 September, coinciding with the Jewish Shabbat. However, on 9 September the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suspends the order giving in to pressure from the coalition government’s two ultra-Orthodox members who are against the “violation of the sanctity of Shabbat.” Netanyahu’s decision, which causes chaos in the Israeli financial capital’s circulation system, ignites a debate on the excessive influence of the 12 haredi (ultra-Orthodox) deputies in government decisions with respect to the percentage of the population -around 10%- at a time when Likud is losing support in the polls to the centrist Yesh Atid (There is a Future) party of Yair Lapid. Consequently, the Prime Minister’s decision is nullified by the Supreme Court, which reminds Netanyahu that the power to authorize such permits corresponds to the Labour Minister.
- On 10 September the Christian charity World Vision cancels around 120 contracts in Gaza after Israel accuses its director in the Strip Mohamed el-Halabi of diverting millions of dollars to Hamas.
- On 11 September the Israeli Supreme Court denies a petition against force feeding prisoners on hunger strike, arguing that the measure is constitutional.
- On 13 September the Syrian military command says it has used surface-to-air missiles to shoot down an Israeli fighter jet and drone in its airspace. The Israeli army denies the disappearance of any of its aircraft which were participating in reprisal missions after missiles were launched from Syria into the Golan Heights.
- On 28 September Israel’s former President and Prime Minister and Nobel peace prize laureate Shimon Peres dies aged 93, two weeks after suffering a stroke.

### Palestine

- On 8 September the High Court in Ramallah suspends the Palestinian municipal elections scheduled for 8 October in view of the inability to hold elections in East Jerusalem, territory controlled by Israel since 1967 and where 250,000 Palestinians live, who would be excluded from the elections, and after courts in Gaza, which are not recognized by the PNA, disqualify Fatah electoral lists.

### Peace Negotiations

- On 8 September the Russian Foreign Ministry confirms its readiness to organize a meeting in Moscow between the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Should this offer be accepted, just a few weeks ahead of an official visit by the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to the region, it would be the first meeting between the two leaders in six years. Moscow also points out that both the Israelis and Palestinians have requested Russian mediation -also backed by Egypt- for an eventual reactivation of the peace process, which has made no advances since Washington’s failure in April 2014 to bring Abbas and Netanyahu to the negotiating table.

### Conflicts between the Parties

- On 4 September the Israeli army attacks two Hamas targets in Beit Lahia, in the north of the Gaza Strip.
- On 13 September Hamas rejects Israel’s offer to exchange 19 of the movement’s fighters captured in 2014 and the bodies of another 14 of its members for the bodies of the Israeli soldiers Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, who were killed during Israel’s Protective Edge offensive in the summer of 2014.
- On 20 September Israel significantly steps up its police and military presence in Jerusalem and the West Bank in view of the eight attacks carried out by Palestinian citizens in the last five days, in a reactivation of the so-called Stabbing Intifada.

### October 2016

#### Israel

- On 5 October the Israeli army intercepts the sailing boat Zaytouna-Oliva in international waters on its way to the Gaza Strip in an attempt to break the blockade in place since 2007.
- On 14 October Israel announces that it is suspending cooperation with UNESCO after the executive board of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopts a resolution drafted by Palestine and backed by Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and Sudan, which is critical of Israeli actions against Muslims’ freedom of worship and access to the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and which denies the Jewish connection with the Temple Mount and Western Wall, describing Israel as an “occupying power.” In reaction to the resolution, criticized by the Director-General of UNESCO herself Irina Bokova, the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declares that “To say that Israel has no connection to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall is like saying that China has no connection to the Great Wall of China and that Egypt has no connection to the Pyramids.”

#### Palestine

- On 6 October a demonstration is staged against the government of Mahmoud Abbas by hundreds of supporters of Mohamed Dahlan, the former leader of a Fatah faction critical of Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas’ leadership of Palestine and the PNA, who, in 2011, was expelled from the movement accused of corruption – awaiting a court ruling- and of being behind Arafat’s death in France in November 2004. Dahlan, however, now has a strong influence among members of the Revolutionary Council and Central Committee. The demonstrators call
for Dahlan’s return to Palestine from his exile in the United Arab Emirates and for greater efforts to be made in the reconciliation process between Fatah’s factions ahead of the party’s 7th congress, scheduled for the end of the year and in which Dahlan’s supporters fear changes may emerge in Fatah’s party line that will leave them on the sidelines.


Conflicts between the Parties

• On 5 October a delegation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) travels to Israel and Palestine for the first time since the Gaza war in 2014 with the aim of promoting a better understanding of its work and thus dispelling any mistrust regarding its investigations into the perpetration of crimes of war and against humanity in the Palestinian territories, with Palestine officially accepted as an ICC member on 1 April 2015.

• On 10 October the Israeli security forces and emergency services are deployed around the Ammunition Hill light rail stop, close to Israel’s police headquarters, after an armed Palestinian opens fire from his vehicle and drives away still shooting, killing two Israelis.

November 2016

Israel

• On 14 November the Israeli government unanimously approves a draft bill to retroactively legalize temporary settlements (outposts), which precede permanent settlements in occupied territories in the West Bank, which until now have been illegal under Israeli law as they lack permits. The vote takes place despite the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s request to postpone it until the Supreme Court rules on the seven-month extension requested by the public prosecutor on 1 November to carry out the court-ordered eviction of the Amona outpost, which is to be carried out before 25 December.

• On 24 November more than 80,000 people are evacuated from Haifa and various nearby towns because of a massive wave of fires in different parts of the country, mostly in the north and southern regions of Jerusalem. The causes of the fires are being investigated by the secret services, as the government suggests terrorists may be responsible.

Palestine

• On 29 November the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, is re-elected leader of Fatah at the party’s 7th congress in Ramallah, the first held by the movement since 2009. Abbas was the only candidate, despite growing doubts among the population over his politics and the internal rifts inside the Palestinian group.

December 2016

Israel

• On 7 December the first reading of a draft bill that will allow the legalization of 4,000 settlers’ homes built on privately-owned Palestinian land in the West Bank receives the support of a parliamentary majority. A decision which, for the Education Minister and leader of the ultra-Orthodox party HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home), Naftali Bennett, means “the future imposition of Israeli sovereignty on Judea and Samaria,” or, effectively, the end of the two-state solution defended by the international community as a way of resolving the conflict. The approved text excludes the West Bank settlement of Amona which is under a Supreme Court order to be evacuated before 25 December, against which an appeal has been filed.

• On 15 December the US President-elect Donald Trump announces the appointment of David Friedman as the US ambassador to Israel.

• On 23 December the United Nations Security Council approves a draft resolution presented by Egypt and the PNA condemning the construction of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory, thanks to a US abstention and despite opposition from Israel and the future US Trump administration.

Palestine

• On 27 December an Israeli court orders the 10-day house arrest of the Arab-Israeli MP Basel Ghattas accused of illegally supplying mobile telephones to Palestinian prisoners convicted of terrorism.
Zoari, a Hamas member, is murdered in Sfax. The Tunisian Interior Minister Hedi Majdub says that the role of foreign intelligence agencies in the assassination cannot be ruled out. The Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman refuses to comment on the assassination.

- On 17 December Egypt announces the reopening of the Rafah border crossing for a six-day period.
- On 22 December the Israeli Supreme Court approves the 45-day moratorium requested by the government to evacuate the West Bank settlement of Amona, which was to be demolished by court order before 25 December for being built illegally on privately-owned Palestinian land. The definitive date for the settlement’s eviction and demolition is moved to 8 February 2017, which is “the last extension, whether an alternative arrangement is reached or not.”
- On 28 December Egypt destroys a 1,700-metre-long underground tunnel in the Rafah area.
- On 28 December the Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh hands the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas an invitation to attend the next annual Arab League summit in March 2017 in Amman, where the Palestinian issue will top the meeting’s agenda.

Peace Negotiations

- On 28 December the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says he would resume peace talks under the condition that Israel puts an immediate end to the construction and expansion of settlements in Palestinian territory.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 19 December an Israeli man is shot and wounded in the West Bank town of Halamish, hours after a Palestinian is shot dead by Israeli forces during clashes in Beit Rima, near Ramallah. The perpetrator of the shooting flees the scene,
- On 21 December a Palestinian citizen is shot dead by Israeli soldiers during clashes in Kafr Aqab, East Jerusalem. The unrest was sparked by soldiers initiating the demolition of the home of Misbah Abu Sbeih, who was killed by the Israeli security forces after, on 10 October, he carried out an attack on a police station in East Jerusalem, which left one woman injured.
- On 22 December Shabak agents arrest more than twenty Hamas members in Nablus accused of planning suicide attacks in different Israeli cities.
- On 26 December a young Palestinian is injured by shots fired by Israeli forces during clashes close to Joseph’s Tomb, in Nablus –in Area A of the Oslo Accords-, which began with the arrival of Israeli pilgrims escorted by the army.

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January

Netherlands Presidency

1 – Amsterdam: Netherlands takes over the EU Council Presidency from Luxembourg. The Netherlands Presidency focuses on four priorities: a comprehensive approach to migration and international security; Europe as an innovator and job creator; sound, future-proof European finances and a robust eurozone; forward-looking policy on climate and energy. The conflicts and violations of human rights in the southern Mediterranean are major factors of instability in the region. The Presidency wants to take an integrated approach to face complex issues like the migration crisis, terrorism and cyber security as internal and external challenges are strongly interwoven.

https://english.eu2016.nl/

Neighbourhood

7 – Brussels: The European Commission (EC) has adopted a series of cross-border cooperation programmes for a total of €1 billion, in order to contribute to a more integrated and sustainable regional development in the neighbouring border regions (East and South) and to a more harmonious territorial cooperation on EU’s external borders. The funding comes under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

Audiovisual

13-14 – Amman: Representatives of nine broadcasters from the southern Mediterranean, engaged in exchanges of expertise to improve women’s representation on screen and in programming gather for an evaluation meeting. This event, supported by MedMedia, an EU-funded project, and in cooperation with the Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators (COPEAM), is part of a strategy strengthening gender equality policies in the media, which combines consultations, networking activities and peer-to-peer exchanges.


ARLEM

18-19 – Nicosia: During the 7th plenary session of Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), local authorities across Europe and the Mediterranean deepen cooperation in the face of the migration crisis and political instability. Practical cooperation at the local level is essential if countries around the Mediterranean are to manage challenges created by the conflicts in Syria and Libya, migration and climate change. The plenary adopts two thematic reports drawn up by the ARLEM Commission for Sustainable Territorial Development, on employment and territorial development in the Mediterranean region and on a sustainable urban agenda in the Mediterranean region as well as the adoption of ARLEM’s Action plan for 2016.


Research and Innovation

18 – Cairo: The capacity for research and innovation to unlock potential in the South Mediterranean is the focus of discussions between experts gathered at the initiative of the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Economic Science Institutes (FEMISE). Experts from the academic, civil society and policy-making communities meet with the ultimate objective of drawing up a research agenda to unlock potential in the South Mediterranean. One suggestion is to ensure the reform of the education system and, in addition to providing financial aid to businesses.


Politics & Security

18 – Brussels: According to a statement issued at the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting, EU welcomes the new Libyan Presidency Council, presided over by Fayyed al-Sarraj and supports the Government of National Accord (GNA) as the sole legitimate government of Libya. The EU HR/VP Mogherini announces concrete and practical decisions on the effective implementation of the National Government Agreement. EU will focus on supporting local authorities, border management and security sector reform.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/5174_en

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

21 – Tunis: On the sidelines of EESC’s annual session, a seminar on “the role of an organised civil society in the democratic transition process: the example of Tunisia,” is held and attended by members of the “Tunisian Quartet of National Dialogue”, the winner of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize. The EESC is working on drafting a “notice” on the revision of the neighbourhood policy that emphasizes the duty to involve civil society in the EU’s policy towards its southern neighbours.
Investments
25–26 – Marseille: Two French organizations for the promotion of entrepreneurship and investment - Agence pour la Coopération Internationale et le développement local en Méditerranée (ACIM) and Finances & Conseil Méditerranée (FCM) - organise training and information workshops under the aegis of the EU to encourage diasporas to invest in their country of origin. 30 project leaders of Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian origin, who are living in Europe, gather to participate in an information workshop and coaching on setting up their businesses in the Maghreb.

Euro-Mediterranean University
26 – Rome: The President of the Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes (UEMF) and the Dean of the University of Florence sign two cooperation agreements for the co-creation and co-development of the Euro-Mediterranean School of Architecture and Urban Planning to be located within the UEMF campus. This Institute aims to be a school of excellence for training and research in the field of architectural sciences, urban planning, design, & heritage. Graduates of the Euro-Mediterranean School of Architecture and Urban Planning will hold a double university degree that is recognized by both the Moroccan and Italian states. By means of this agreement, the two universities express their shared desire to develop academic links and facilitate university cooperation.

Politics and Security
26 – Ankara: The EU and Turkey agree on a joint work plan for the next six months in order to maintain the new momentum and start the necessary preparations by holding a High-Level Political Dialogue prior to the second Turkey-EU Summit. The first summit was a turning point in creating a new momentum in relations, including through a re-energized accession process. The Turkish Government reiterates its determination to continue with political reform process in the area of Rule of law and fundamental rights. EU and Turkey believe that there is a need to exert huge effort to address the refugee crisis and irregular migration to this end EU confirms its commitment to expand significantly its overall financial support by creating a EUR 3 billion Refugee Facility for Turkey.

February

Terrorism
2 – Rome: Foreign Ministers of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL/Daesh meet to take stock of the Coalition’s work and to accelerate our unified efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat Daesh, dismantle its networks, and counter its global ambitions. The Global Coalition will expand its multifaceted approach: intensifying and accelerating the military campaign; depriving Daesh of financial resources; providing Syrian and Iraqi refugees with humanitarian support; restoring the communities and essential services in liberated areas; supporting a lasting investment in inclusive governance and a sound political process in Iraq and Syria; increasing collaboration and information sharing in the counterterrorism arena.

Terrorism
2 – Strasbourg: The EC presents an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against terrorist financing and to call for a strong coordinated European response to combatting terrorism. The European Agenda for Security had identified a number of areas to improve the fight against terrorist financing. The Action Plan will focus on two main strands of action: Tracing terrorists through financial movements and preventing them from moving funds or other assets; Disrupting the sources of revenue used by terrorist organizations, by targeting their capacity to raise funds.

Press Freedom
8 – Beirut: The “Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press” reaches its 11th anniversary, this award is a symbol of the EU’s commitment to freedom of expression as a foundation for a democratic society and EU’s support for freedom of expression in Lebanon, the Middle East and the Gulf. This award, which has been awarded by the EU since 2006, honours the Lebanese journalist and writer Samir Kassir, who was assassinated in 2005.

Environment
9-12 – Athens: The Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention – Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP/UNEP) convene for their 19th Ordinary Meeting. Representatives of 21 Mediterranean countries and the EU debate and adopt a number of decisions on biodiversity and ecosystems, land and sea-based pollution, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change adaptation. These decisions, which address specific issues of the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, define strategies and actions on sustainable development in the Mediterranean. Ministers renew their commitment and determination to address together the emerging challenges related to environmental protection and sustainable development of the Mediterranean Sea and coast, in the global framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly
http://web.unep.org/uneemap/19th-meeting-contracting-parties-barcelona-convention-be-held-athens

Twining Projects
11 – Tunis: The EU and Tunisia launch two “twinning” operations: one focuses on the reinforcement of the capacities of the Tunisian Ministry of Justice and its jurisdictions, and the other on training the justice system personnel. 40 million € has been dedicated to the Justice Reform Programme (PARJ) from 2012 until 2020. This gives EU the status of leading partner for Tunisia regarding its judicial reforms.

FEMISE
13-14 – Athens: The Annual conference of FEMISE is held under the
theme “Two decades after Barcelona, rethinking the EU-Med Partnership,” as the EU-Med region celebrate 20 years since Barcelona while still facing many economic, social and political challenges. The FEMISE conference is organized every year around a theme that is considered of importance to the EU-Med region and provides a platform for the different actors from the North and the South of the Mediterranean to debate and exchange views. www.femise.org/en/slideshow-en/forthcoming-femise-annual-conference-2016/

Youth
14 – Amman: Emerging young leaders from 8 Arab countries gather for the “Debate to Action: Communications and Leadership Programme” which provides a platform for Arab youth leaders to engage with professional journalists, senior leaders, and European peers and is organised by the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), the Jordan Media Institute, in partnership with the British Council, UNESCO through EU-funded networks. The challenge set for the programme aims at helping participants to grow as leaders and ambassadors for dialogue in their region, build social capital, grow their media skills, develop their influencing and advocacy skills, enhance and stretch their analytical and creative skills, and develop their Cultural Intelligence. The programme includes expert training and mentoring sessions with professional journalists and media experts, and practical sessions with decision-makers and senior leaders.

UfM
16 – Brussels: The Senior Officials of the UfM member countries approve four new regional projects by according to them the UfM label, bringing up the total number of UfM-labelled regional cooperation projects to 41. The four new UfM-labelled projects will contribute to strengthening regional cooperation in the following areas: private investments for renewable energies, marine litter, shipping services and women’s health. http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-member-states-further-enhance-regional-cooperation-in-2016-by-endorsing-4-new-development-projects/

Refugees
17 – Brussels: The Steering Committee meeting of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey is chaired by the EC with the participation of all EU Member States plus Turkey in an advisory capacity. The resources of the Facility will come from the EU budget and from EU Member States reaching a total of up to €3 billion over two years. This funding will finance the provision of humanitarian, development and other assistance to refugees and host communities, national and local authorities in managing and addressing the consequences of the inflows of refugees. It will provide more urgently needed humanitarian aid and access to education for refugee children in Turkey.

Media
18 – Beirut: A consultation on proposals to establish a Special Mechanism for Media Freedom in the Arab World is organized by the EU-funded MedMedia programme and gathered 20 participants representing media outlets and media support organizations, universities as well as the National Media Council (CNA). The event is part of a multi-layered discussion launched to develop a Special Mechanism for Media Freedom in the region. During national consultations, participants are invited to examine various proposals for the Special mechanism, the scope of its mandate, its structure and funding as well as a draft Arab Declaration on the Principles of Media Freedom. Participants stressed the importance to guarantee the mechanism’s independence and said the exceptionally difficult situation in the region should not deter stakeholders from taking the initiative forward.

Energy
18 – Paris: The International Energy Agency (IEA) and UfM sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) setting out the outlines of closer cooperation between the two organizations on projects of mutual interest in the energy field. The two parties share similar goals and have together identified a number of potential areas of cooperation. These include, but are not limited to, joint projects involving research and technical assistance; collaboration on joint publications; data sharing; training and capacity building; regional cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable energies as well as the exchange of expertise between the two parties in areas such as climate change, the water-energy-food nexus and regional energy market integration. http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-and-iae-join-forces-to-strengthen-climate-action-in-the-euro-mediterranean-region/

Environment
23 – Brussels: UfM launches a new Regional cooperation Project called “Blue-Green Med-CS; Networking Civil Society in the Mediterranean region through environment and water issues” to promote water and environment cooperation by enabling more than 120 civil society organizations (CSOs) to acquire skills in various environmental areas. The project will foster regular dialogue and collaboration between Northern and Southern CSOs working in water and the environment and will provide Southern CSOs with the opportunity to participate in the planned H2020 capacity building activities which include mentoring, sharing information and possibly replicating best environmental governance practices and projects.
http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-launches-new-regional-cooperation-project/

Enterprises
24 – Brussels: A high-level regional seminar on Access to Finance for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth - Stimulating MSMEs Growth in the Mediterranean Region is held in order to identify the items on the agenda of reforms needed to foster the financial inclusion of MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) and enhance their contribu-
 tion to job creation. Policymakers, bankers, entrepreneurs as well as representatives of the private sector, EU financial institutions, think tanks and of civil society from the MED region and EU countries discuss solutions and reforms needed to unlock access to finance for MSMEs in the MED region. Participants highlight the fact that national specificities should be taken into account to implement actionable recommendations and policy reforms in this area.


March

PEGASE

1 – Brussels: The EC has approved a €252.5 million assistance package supporting the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian refugees. It is the first part of the EU’s 2016 annual support package in favour of Palestine. €170.5 million will be channelled directly to the Palestinian Authority, through the PEGASE mechanism. Through these funds the EU will support the Palestinian Authority in delivering health and education services, protecting the poorest families and providing financial assistance to the hospitals in East Jerusalem. The remaining €82 million will be a contribution to the Programme Budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides essential services for Palestinian refugees across the region.

Culture

2-6 – Marrakech: More than 40 cultural actors from 7 Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) participate in two workshops organized by the EU funded Med Culture Regional Program. The first workshop focuses on ways and methodologies for developing cultural activity in marginalized regions. The second workshop is organized around the creation of partnerships with various stakeholders, including the media, and the value of these partnerships in strengthening cultural activities, sharing resources and promoting good practices. These workshops provide cultural profession-

als with the opportunity to discuss common challenges and share experiences with their peers from the southern Mediterranean countries. Participation in these workshops is done through an open call for applications, in order to offer the greatest number of people the opportunity to take part in these capacity development initiatives.

www.medculture.eu/node/3978#overlay-context=node/3979

Media

8 – Tunis: The EU-funded MedMedia programme launches a new initiative entitled “Khabirat, Women Experts in the Mediterranean” aimed at enhancing the contribution made by women to media outputs across the region. The initiative will focus on establishing directories of women experts which can be used by editorial teams in the course of their work. Women play an important role in the media but their visibility as experts and sources of opinion remains weak.

www.med-media.eu/event/international-womens-day-medmedia-unveils-plans-to-create-directories-of-women-experts-in-the-region/

Refugees

11 – Brussels: The EU Council of Ministers approves an emergency support mechanism in response to the difficult humanitarian situation caused by the refugee crisis, notably in Greece. This enables the EU to help Greece and other affected Member States to address the humanitarian needs of the large numbers of men, women and children. At the same time, the EP has a lively debate, requesting details of a deal struck by EU leaders with Turkey on the management of migrant and refugee flows, underlining that international asylum rules must be respected. Most political group leaders insisted that EU accession negotiations with Turkey and talks on visa liberalization for Turkish nationals travelling to the EU should not be linked to the refugee issue, and they also brought up the situation of human rights in that country.

ALF

14 – Paris: ALF President speaks at the opening of a civil society training initiative organised by Facebook and aimed at supporting NGOs on the front-line of fighting online extremism. The training event brings together civil society, NGOs and academic research institutions to build capacity for strategic communications and share best practices for campaigns against online extremism and hate speech.

EU-Jordan

16 – Brussels: EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice President of the EC, meets the King of Jordan H.E. Abdullah II to reaffirm the EU engagement with Jordan and to discuss the political and security situation in the region. HR/VP Mogherini highlighted the EU’s will to strengthen and broaden the longstanding EU-Jordan partnership in light of the challenging domestic and regional situation.


Civil Society

16 – Brussels: The EC launches a call for proposals for a total amount of EUR 20 million to involve civil society in pan-African issues. Five African countries bordering the Mediterranean (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt) are invited to cooperate in addition to the cooperation foreseen in the “neighbourhood policy” in these countries. The objective is to improve the contribution of civil society organizations (CSOs) in decision making and policy formulation processes at the continental level in Africa, particularly in the areas of good governance and democracy, human rights, peace and security at the rights of women.


April

Media

7-9 – Ajaccio: The annual meeting of the Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators (COPEAM) provides a unique opportunity for the EU-funded MedMedia programme to present its recent achievements in the
fields of gender equality and youth empowerment. The conference brings together journalists and media managers representing broadcasters from 27 countries across the Mediterranean as well as delegates from the EU, the League of Arab States, the UNESCO, the European Broadcasting Union, the Arab States Broadcasting Union and other media support organizations. Professionals take part in two workshops: the first one aims at capturing the final results of MedMedia’s peer-to-peer programme on gender equality in the broadcast sector; the second focusing on young people, highlighting the challenges facing them; their portrayal by and contribution to the media as well as the role of civil society in providing them with platforms for debate.


EU-Turkey Deal
13 – Brussels: The agreement to return migrants and asylum seekers from the Greek islands to Turkey was at the centre of a debate with Council President Donald Tusk and Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the European Parliament. A broad majority of MEPs voiced concern over the migration agreement between the EU and Turkey and called on the Commission and Council to closely monitor the situation of human rights and freedom of speech in Turkey, as well as allegations that Syrian refugees are being pushed back to Syria by the Turkish authorities. They also questioned whether Turkey can be considered a “safe country” for refugees.


EuroMeSCo
13-15 – Brussels: The EU-funded EuroMeSCo “Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission” (EuroMeSCo), the main network of research centres on politics and security in the Mediterranean, holds annual general assembly tackling the current security architecture in the Mediterranean and examine how to improve the situation. There is heightened interest in this meeting, in that it is taking place in a context of intense reflection on the future of a region disturbed by conflict, terrorism, the challenges of economic development and the European contribution to their solution. The agenda reflects these concerns. The plenary session will be centred on the theme of the “fragile balance in the Mediterranean, with tense relations between some states” and the collapse of others, but also with the increasing threat arising from politicized sectarianism and terrorist groups.

www.euromesco.net

EU-Tunisia
18 – Brussels: After the EU-Tunisia Association Council the HR/VPPs Mogherini reiterates the mutual commitment to deepen their privileged partnership, which reflects the exceptional nature of Tunisia’s democratic transition and the shared ambition to intensify relations in all areas to consolidate Tunisia’s democratic achievements, support the Tunisian security sector, encourage socioeconomic reforms, foster the integration of the Tunisian economy with the EU’s internal market and work more closely in the field of migration.


Electricity
21 – Istanbul: The EU-supported Association of Mediterranean Transmission System Operators (Med-TSO) organizes a workshop on enhancing Transmission System Operators’ (TSO) cooperation during its 11th General Assembly. The meeting focuses on Med-TSO’s activities in the framework of the Mediterranean Project and the role of the various Mediterranean TSOs to enhance cooperation and power system integration. The Mediterranean Projects setting up a roadmap to share resources, costs and risks of investments in energy infrastructures in the Mediterranean Region in order to promoting the development and implementation of a harmonized and integrated Mediterranean electricity grid.

Politics & Security
21 – Brussels: Home Affairs Ministers examine the progress in implementing the measures to reduce the humanitarian consequences of the current migratory situation, protect EU external borders, stem the flows, reduce illegal migration and safeguard the integrity of the Schengen area. They reaffirm the need to speed up the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement of 18 March and in particular the resettlement of Syrian refugees from Turkey in the framework of the 1:1 scheme. They also invite Member States to accelerate the relocation of asylum seekers from Greece and Italy.


Neighbourhood
22 – Brussels: At a seminar on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), organised by the EuroMed Human Rights Network (EuroMed Rights) the EU-funded European Endowment for Democracy underlines the ongoing demand for support for democracy work in the southern region of the Mediterranean. After nearly three years of operation, EED has identified its operational niche and proves to be a gap-filling mechanism, complementing EU instruments. To date, it has funded 304 initiatives, among which 124 initiatives from the EU Southern Neighbourhood totaling €8.44 million. It assists pro-democratic civil society organizations, movements and individual activists, acting in favour of a pluralistic multiparty system, regardless of their size or formal status.

www.democracyendowment.eu/

Women
25-26 – Barcelona: Fifty international experts on gender equality from UfM governments, international organizations and civil society organisations meet for the UfM Regional Dialogue process on gender. The objective is to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the UfM ministerial commitments, and prepare for the next Ministerial meeting on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, foreseen to take place in 2017. In this framework, four working groups are currently working on four areas identified as priorities to be covered by the Ministerial Declaration: 1) Women’s participation in economic life; 2) Women’s access to leadership and decision making positions; 3) Combat violence
against women and gender-based violence; and 4) Dispel stereotypes through education and culture. 

May

Press Freedom
2-4 – Casablanca: Journalists’ unions, human rights campaigners and media groups from across the Arab world back a Declaration on Media Freedom. The Declaration, which represents a commitment to the principles of media freedom, independent journalism and the right to information, is endorsed during the International Federation of Journalists and the Moroccan journalists’ union (SNPM). The declaration sets our 16 key principles aimed at promoting the highest international standards of media freedom and protecting journalists’ rights. Areas covered by the Declaration include Freedom of expression, Freedom of information, Journalists’ safety, Media law reform, Self-regulation, Equality, Hate speech and intolerance, Independence of public service broadcasters.

ARLEM
3-4 – Murcia: Representatives of regions and cities from both shores of the Mediterranean gather for the 17th meeting of the ARLEM to discuss cross-border cooperation, the new ENP and energy and climate issues amongst other topics of common interest. Murcia region will organise a support action on water management, irrigation systems and agriculture. Other European cities have committed to organizing working groups in public administration, management of health centres and waste management services.

Migration
4-6 – Dublin: The theme of the first conference of the EU-funded Erasmus Migration IV is “Connecting, communicating and networking with Diasporas.” The event gathers participants from 14 EU countries, 7 Southern Partner Countries and Turkey as an observer. The conference gives participants the opportunity to learn about case studies and experiences in diaspora engagement from Ireland, Denmark, Morocco, Lithuania and others and to discuss their relevance for the Mediterranean. The main objective of Erasmus Migration IV is to support EU Member States and the Southern Partner Countries (SPC) of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) in establishing a comprehensive, constructive and operational dialogue and co-operation framework. www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euromed-migration-iv/

EU-Tunisia
9 – Gammarth: Celebrating Europe Day and the 40th anniversary of the first EU-Tunisia cooperation agreement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, states that the partnership with the EU remained a core priority of Tunisia. He expresses the strong commitment of his country to “reach the next stage in its relations with the EU, and make Tunisia the closest partner of the Union in its southern neighbourhood.” He praises the strong and continued support of Europeans to the efforts of Tunisia to achieve economic and social development and to strengthen a stable democracy www.diplomatie.gov.tn/index.php?id=27&tx_ttnews%5d=2505&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=27&cHash=19ca7514cfe5d16e601939d6bd1aaa

Public Administration
10 – Amman: The EU-funded programme SIGMA programme (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management) organizes a regional conference to present a report on “The Principles of Public Administration: A Framework for ENP Countries.” These Principles aim to support the national authorities, the Commission services and other donors to develop a shared understanding of what public administration reform (PAR) entails and what the countries could aim at with their administrative reforms. The conference brings together representatives from central management institutions with responsibility in PAR from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia among others. www.sigmaweb.org

Climate Change
12 – Paris: More than 50 climate expert representatives from UfM member countries, key international organizations working in the field of climate change such as the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), as well as civil society representatives meet at the 4th UfM Climate Change Expert Group (UfMCCEG). The aim of the meeting is to follow up on the on the implementation of actions related to the fields of local authorities, private sector investments and capacity building and to adopt a work programme for 2016 aiming at enhancing the Mediterranean climate agenda under a regional umbrella of medium-term strategy.

Road Safety
17 – Barcelona: The first informal Expert Meeting on Road Safety in the Mediterranean region is held as a forum to exchange experiences and good practices, analyse current efforts and actions, as well as explore ways to substantially improve road safety in the Mediterranean region. The meeting is chaired by UfM SG Sijilmassi, Jean Todt, UNSG Special Envoy for Road Safety. Participants express their support for a regional approach to road safety prevention in the Mediterranean and agreed to explore the possibility of establishing a Regional Observatory on Road Safety in the Mediterranean, based on other successful regional experiences. http://ufmsecretariat.org/coordinated-action-to-improve-road-safety-in-the-mediterranean/

Civil Protection
17-20 – Válabre: Egyptians, Jordanians and Palestinians officers from risk management structures attend a simulation exercise on flood and earthquake at the Euro-Mediterranean Centre of Risk Simulation in the framework of the EU-funded PRPD SOUTH II (Prevention, Preparedness, and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters) programme. The objective of this workshop is to prepare the participants for the management of operational responses to major natural disasters. Participants assess a crisis, share relevant information, manage and process
information, organise on-site rescue, co-ordinate implemented resources, organize the return to normal situation.

**EU-Egypt**

23 – Cairo: During the 5th EU-Egypt Association Council participants discuss common issues on the bilateral and regional levels as well as the progress achieved in terms of agreeing on cooperation priorities between the two sides for the next three-year period. Both sides also discuss the developments in the peace process, the regional situation in the Middle East, and the possibilities of cooperation between Egypt and the European Union in order to restore stability in the region, as well as in the framework of fighting terrorism and extremism, and to address the problem of illegal immigration from all the economic and social aspects of both phenomena.

**Human Rights**

23-26 – Strasbourg: Around 30 participants from the southern Mediterranean attended the second module of the Programme for advanced training in the field of human rights (PATHS). The training is devoted to the "Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights and other international systems for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms". Participants, ranging from national experts to lawyers and other human rights professionals, analysed the European Convention on Human Rights’ provisions, the Parties’ obligations and the Convention’s provisions and protocols. They also had the opportunity to debate and exchange on the human rights protection in the international and European legal systems. http://ppt.eu.coe.int/en/web/south-programme2/home

**Energy**

24 – Alger: The first EU-Algeria Energy Business Forum takes place co-chaired by the Algerian Minister of Energy and the European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy. This forum gathers more than 500 European and Algerian companies, as well as industry associations, financial institutions and experts, is held within the framework of the Strategic Partnership for energy between the EU and Algeria. On this occasion, the EU announces the funding for €10 million of a technical assistance programme supporting the implementation of the National Programme for Renewable Energies and the National Plan for Energy Efficiency. http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/algeria/press_corner/all_news/news/2016/forum-affaire-energie_fr.htm

**Civil Society**

26-27 – Brussels: Representatives of more than 150 civil society organizations, academics, media, social actors, local and national government representatives and international organizations from the Southern Neighbourhood and Europe gathers for the third annual Civil Society Forum Neighbourhood South. The Forum is part of an initiative aiming at an enhanced and more strategic engagement with civil society. Behind the Forum and the consultation process lie efforts at the creation of a sustained and structured dialogue between civil society, the authorities and the EU on regional agendas in the southern Mediterranean.

**UIM PA**

28-29 – Tangiers: The 12th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UIM (PA-UIM), acknowledges the review of the ENP, calls for the pursuit of “further complementarities and synergies between the ENP and UIM activities” and encourages the ENP to “increase its support for UIM’s regional cooperation efforts.” Parliamentarians express their satisfaction with the progress made by the UIM to carry the regional agenda forward, consolidate the regional political dialogue and to interact with all actors involved in cooperation in the region and called on “governments to increase their political and financial support to the UIM and its Secretariat to increase impact and contribute more effectively to regional socio-economic and human development.”

**Migration**

7 – Brussels: The EC launches new support measures worth 275 million € to support the North Africa region in ad-
dressing the current migration situation. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa adopts three new programmes which will focus on the following areas: migration governance, protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees, and enhanced resilience of migrant populations and their host communities. The package includes: enhancing the response to migration challenges in Egypt; strengthening protection and resilience of displaced populations in Libya; regional level support providing additional funding to the Regional Development and Protection Programme in the North of Africa. The so-called “North of Africa Window” of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa covers the following five countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

Politics and Security
13-14 – Jordan/Lebanon: The EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) holds high-level talks with political leaders of Jordan and Lebanon to assess the political and security situation of these countries. King Abdullah II of Jordan discusses the strategic partnership between Jordan and the EU with the PSC delegation, and voices his country’s appreciation for the support provided by various EU institutions helping the Kingdom in addressing challenges due to regional crises, mainly the Syrian refugee crisis and the fight against extremism. PSC also meets with Lebanese political actors, among them the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament. The delegation is also briefed by the Lebanese Armed forces on the security situation of the country. It also paid a visit to UNHCR premise and to an informal refugee settlement in Zahleh.

TAIEX
14-15 – Zagreb: Representatives of Ministries of agriculture and other relevant public bodies from the southern Mediterranean countries attend a workshop on marketing standards in the fruit and vegetables sector, in the framework of the EU-funded Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX). The workshop is one of the five events organized to mark the twentieth anniversary of the TAIEX instrument. It focuses on EU marketing standards in fruit and vegetables, import and export conditions and producers organizations in the sector.

Security & Defence
20 – Brussels: At their meeting the EU 28 Foreign Ministers extend for a year the mandate of EUNAFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU naval operation to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and traffickers in the southern central Mediterranean. The Foreign Affairs Council of the EU also endorses two supporting tasks to the operation’s mandate: training the Libyan coastguards and navy as requested by Libyan authorities, and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo to Libya.

Politics & Security
28 – Brussels: High Representative Mogherini presents the EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy to EU leaders meeting at the EU summit. The strategy, under the title “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe,” reflects the collective views expressed in the process and offers a strategic vision for the EU’s global role. According to the document, the European Union will follow five lines of action in the Mediterranean and the MENA region: the EU will support functional multilateral cooperation; it will deepen sectoral cooperation with Turkey, while striving to anchor Turkish democracy in line with its accession criteria; it will pursue balanced engagement in the Gulf and Iran; it will support cooperation across North and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East; and it will invest in African peace and development as an investment in its own security and prosperity.

July

Slovak Presidency
1 – Bratislava: The Programme of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union is based on four priorities: an economically strong Europe, a
modern single market, a sustainable migration and asylum policies and a globally engaged Europe. On migration
the Presidency intends to encourage sustainable EU migration and asylum policies, which will be based on the prote-
ction of external borders, restoration of the Schengen area, cooperation with third countries and solidarity. In terms
of internal security, the challenge for Eu-
_blogue is to make the fight against terror-
ism more effective through a common coordinat-ed approach by the Member States. In the world, helps it to face com-
plex challenges and contributes to stab-
ilising its neighbourhood. In terms of
the Southern Neighbourhood, the Presi-
dency will foster the development of
dialogue and cooperation, and will pro-
mote the stabilization of partner coun-
tries in the political, economic and secu-
_rity fields, including by providing assistance in solving long-standing cri-
es based on the diplomatic efforts of
the international community.
www.eu2016.sk/data/documents/
presidency-programme-eng-final5.pdf

Asylum
8 – Valletta: The European Asylum Sup-
port Office (EASO) releases its yearly
reference report, which shows that, in
2015, almost 1.4 million applications for
international protection were made in the
EU: the highest number since the begin-
ing of EU level data collection in 2008. The
highest numbers of asylum appli-
cants recorded were citizens of Syria,
the Western Balkan countries combined,
and Afghanistan. The main receiving
countries were Germany, Hungary, Swe-
den, Austria and Italy.
www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/
files/public/20160630%20Press%20
release%20EASO%20AR%20on%20
Asylum%20on%20EU%202015.doc

Asylum
13 – Brussels: EC presents new pro-
posals to complete the reform of the
Common European Asylum System. The
Commission proposes the creation of a
common procedure for international pro-
tection, uniform standards for protection
and rights granted to beneficiaries of
international protection and the further
harmonization of reception conditions in
the EU. The changes will create a genu-
ine common asylum procedure and guar-
antees that asylum seekers are treated in
an equal and appropriate manner, re-
gardless of the Member State in which
they make their application.
IP-16-2433_en.htm?locale=en

Dialogue
13 – Madrid: Focal points and repre-
sentatives of the major institutions con-
tributing to Intercultural and Interreli-
gious Dialogue, including the EEAS, the
OSCE, the Council of Europe, the ALF,
the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UN-
AOC), the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz
International Centre for Interreligious and
Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) and the
UIF Secretariat gather to conduct a
mapping exercise of existing tools and
actions in this field, with the aim to iden-
tify areas of collaboration, establish coordi-
_nation mechanisms and set out a
roadmap towards a Euro-Mediterranean
intercultural and interreligious dialogue
regional agenda.
http://umfsecretariat.org/institutional-
partnership-to-strengthen-intercultural-
and-interfaith-dialogue-in-the-euro-
mediterranean-region/

Culture
15-19 – Amman: Some 50 peers
among cultural operators from nine Arab
countries participate in three different
capacity development workshops, or-
ganized by the EU-funded regional pro-
gramme Med Culture. The first workshop
aims at laying the foundations for suc-
sessful sustainable collaborative work,
which could have an impact on the de-
velopment of cultural operators’ career
paths and enhancing the structuring of
organizations within the cultural field.
The second workshop looks into “Cul-
tural Policies and the Value of Cultural
Projects” and sheds some light on the
interaction between cultural operators
and their overall cultural and political
environments. The third activity consists
of two-day training on “Sustainability &
Communication.”

Climate
18-19 – Tangiers: The MedCOP Cli-
imate brings together more than
2,000 representatives from various
countries in the Mediterranean Basin,
from civil society organizations and vari-
ous regional/international organizations
to economic stakeholders and experts.
The aim of the second edition of the
MedCOP Climate is to highlight current
Mediterranean initiatives linked to cli-
am action and to formulate innovative ideas in an attempt to achieve the goals
set by the Paris Agreement. The event
includes thematic workshops, confer-
ences and round table discussions on
issues related to climate change. It will
also see the inauguration of a “Medina
of Solutions,” which will reveal a potential
circular economy adapted to climate
change through creative and innovative
solutions in support of sustainability.

Civil Protection
20 – Brussels: The EU-funded PPRD
SOUTH II (Prevention, Preparedness,
and Response to natural and man-made
Disasters) programme is holding its
closing ceremony wrapping up three
years of civil protection cooperation with
the SMPCs. The event, is an opportu-
nity to highlight the importance of coop-
eration in disaster management, par-
cularly with new emerging threats. It
includes two conferences focusing on:
the role of civil protection when facing
multiple threats and mass casualties
management, including terrorism at-
tacks and chemical, biological, radio-
 logical and nuclear (CBRN) risks, with
eamples from Algeria and France; med-
ical and public health preparedness
and response facing CBRN risks. Dur-
ing this conference, CBRN Centre of
Excellence (CBRN CoE) initiative in the
Middle East, North Africa and Sahel
region will be presented and a focus on
two CBRN CoE projects will be pro-
tected to participants.

Women
20 – Amman: The UIF EU-funded pro-
ject “Development of clusters in cultural
and creative industries in the South
Mediterranean region” (Creative Medi-
terranean) supports a high-level Confer-
ence on “Promoting Women Empower-
ment for Inclusive and Sustainable
Industrial Development in North Africa
and Middle East.” The Conference pre-
sents an update report on constraints
faced by women entrepreneurs in the
region, discuss measures and policies
needed to promote women’s economic empowerment, demonstrate the potential of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in creating economic opportunities for women; facilitate sharing of best practices of successful women entrepreneurs as role models.


August

SMEs

26 – Amman: The EU-funded project “Enhancement of the Business environment in the Southern Mediterranean” (EBESM) organizes a high-level seminar, on the “Role of Banks and Credit Guarantee schemes” to enhance financial inclusion for Jordanian MSMEs. The seminar gathers more than 60 participants, including policy-makers, financial institutions bankers, representatives of the private sector, think tanks, academia and of civil society from Jordan as well as entrepreneurs and EU experts. Discussions tackle the policies and the measures needed to ease MSME finance constraints and help them to grow, to be more competitive and thereby create jobs.

September

SMEs

14-15 – Beirut: Lebanese and Egyptian members of the “public-private dialogue mechanisms” (PPD) established in both countries to promote export and a green economy, as well as representatives of Chambers of Commerce, Association of Industrialists, Youth and Women Entrepreneurship Associations, come together to explore new ways of policy dialogue outreach mechanisms for specific public policies at a training workshop organised in the framework of the EU project EBESM. The workshop provides a forum for knowledge sharing and debates on three main dimensions in favour of SMEs reforms, namely: elaborating a strategy for policy advocacy, drafting evidence-based position papers and enhancing negotiating skills.

Women

20-21 – Skhirat: In the framework of the UfM Regional Dialogue on women empowerment two working group meetings take place to review and discuss the efforts made in combating violence against women and gender stereotypes in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Participants stress the importance of a comprehensive approach to tackle the issues of violence against women and gender stereotypes and the necessity to improve the coordination and partnership between the key actors concerned, including the media and civil society. They identify social and cultural norms, the challenge of impunity and the enforcement of laws among the main and urgent issues to be addressed. Experts formulate a number of other key recommendations, including improving research and data collection, strengthening regional cooperation between countries and with key stakeholders, and promoting exchange of success stories and lessons learnt.

Energy

20-22 – Beirut: The EU-funded CESMED project holds two workshops dealing with the preparation and presentation of SEAPs (Sustainable Energy Action Plans) and SECAPs (Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans) to national authorities and municipalities. The objective is to introduce the overall benefits, content and steps to prepare SECAPs and ways to finance SECAp projects and to explain the content and the preparation modalities of SECAPs.

Solar Energy

26/9-2/10 – Palermo: The Sun Med Festival, the first Solar Energy festival, organized by the “Small scale thermal solar district units for Mediterranean communities” (STS-Med) project, aims at highlighting the role of the sun in the evolution of the Mediterranean civilisations and the opportunities it offers for an eco-friendly future in this area. It features more than 50 events including meetings, workshops, hackathon, games, concerts and alternating workshops, talks and exhibits with some of the economy and innovation leaders. It marks the end of the STS-Med project, which was implemented to promote the adoption of new technologies to improve energy efficiency in public and private buildings of the Mediterranean area.

Employment

27 – Dead Sea: At the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Employment and Labour UfM Countries reaffirm their commitment to work together to address the challenges relating to employment, employability and decent work in the Mediterranean region, particularly for young people and women. Ministers assert the value of a common approach to address the issue of unemployment, particularly of young people and women, as a means to consolidate stability in the region. They also support an integrated two-track approach, which addresses both the demand-side and the supply-side of the labour market.


EU-Tunisia

29 – Brussels: A Joint Communication of the EC and HR Mogherini reafirms the EU’s commitment to Tunisia’s democratic transition, sets out a number of measures that the EU could take collectively to enhance its support for Tunisia’s efforts to address the critical challenges that the country is facing and promote long-term stability, resilience, good governance, socio-economic development, and security in the country.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/10746_en

October

Women

10-11 – Barcelona: Participants at the UfM 3rd high-level conference on women’s empowerment “Women for the Mediterranean: Driving force for development and stability,” stress the necessity of a common vision and a regional framework to find concrete solutions to better mobilise the full potential of women. The Conference provided a regional dialogue forum where the 250 participants from more than 30 countries stressed the need to invest in the essential contribution of women as a re-
response to the current Mediterranean challenges, including inclusive growth, extremism and radicalization as well as migration challenges.


Politics & Security
17 – Luxembourg: The Foreign Affairs EU Council Adopts conclusions on the joint communication by the High Representative and the European Commission, “Strengthening EU Support for Tunisia.” In these conclusions, EU Foreign Ministers reaffirm their commitment to “fully supporting the consolidation of democracy in Tunisia.” This support must be reflected in a high-level political dialogue with Tunisia, reads the document. The ministers also call on Tunisia to continue to put into practice the new Constitution and implement reforms, especially the five-year development plan.


Sustainable Development
18 – Quito: On the margin of the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), the UfM organizes the networking event “Union for the Mediterranean – Urban Projects Finance Initiative (UPFI): Towards a New Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean region.” The event brings together more than 100 participants, including several Ministers from UfM Member States, international and regional organizations and IFIs leaders, key urban development actors in the Mediterranean in order to develop future regional programmes and projects, with a view to addressing the region’s demographic and environmental challenges.

Civil Society
19-21 – Tunis: Civil society organizations (CSOs) from the Southern Mediterranean countries are invited to take part in a training on local Governance, communication skills and participatory approaches for policy development, to be organized by the EU-funded project Civil Society Facility South (CSF South).

The workshop aims to mobilize CSOs to effectively engage in good local governance, enhance CSOs communication skills for effective outreach, support CSOs in transforming policy priorities into actions through participation tools and to share good practice and lessons learned across the region.

ALF
23-25 Valletta: The 3rd Edition of the ALF organizes Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Intercultural Dialogue with civil society organizations from almost 50 countries alongside leading international organizations, the Forum represents – with its 800 participants – the largest single gathering of actors working on intercultural dialogue. The Malta Forum aims to tackle the unprecedented challenges in the Mediterranean region, particularly those affecting youth – unemployment, radicalization, migration – by fostering dialogue among the younger generations and improving inter-cultural relations.

www.annalindhfoundation.org/forum2016

EESC
25 – Athens: The 21th edition of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions focuses on topics including the promotion of legal migration, women participation in labour force, the role of the civil society in the view of the COP22, the coordination of social protection systems in the Euromed region and the ENP. 140 participants from Economic and Social Councils, representatives of employers, trade unions, other economic and social interests groups and NGOs from UfM countries members attend this edition.


Local Governance
26 – Barcelona: A conference is hosted by the City Council of Barcelona to mark the 25th anniversary of MedCities, a Euro-Mediterranean municipal network working to promote cooperation in urban development initiatives. The event is inaugurated by UfM SG Sijilmassi, and is attended by the Mayors of Barcelona and Tetouan, the Co-president of ARLEM Markku Markkula, as well as stakeholders from cities throughout the region, including Croatia, Cyprus, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Spain.

Participants welcome the upcoming UfM Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable Urban Development as a “call for action” aiming at elaborating a comprehensive and operational action plan towards a New Urban Agenda for the Mediterranean region and following a cooperative approach that underscores the joint efforts of governments and key stakeholders from cities around the region.

Tourism
26-27 – Petra: The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan hold a two-day conference, bringing together tourism stakeholders from the public, private, banking, investment and development sectors. Participants are working in the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region and are driving tourism development on a national, regional or global level. This is the occasion to identify the challenges and best practices that are specific to the region, with a view to drafting comprehensive recommendations for tourism development in the future, encompassing the following three priority areas: Provide access to training and employment opportunities; Enhance resource and energy efficiency; Strengthen local Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. A declaration to ensure the development of a sustainable and inclusive tourism sector based on human rights and social and economic justice and equality is drafted.

http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf final_petra-declaration_0.pdf

November

Invest
2-3 – Marseille: On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the ANIMA Investment Network ANIMA and their partners are organizing the EMEA (Europe – Middle East – Africa) Business Forum. The Forum is targeted at business and economic decision-makers from this region, and deals with the opportunities brought by the digital revolution
and the new frontiers of cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean. The event is aimed at: corporations or entrepreneurs interested in promoting their company in the EMEA region, understanding these markets and developing business networks across the region.

EU-Lebanon
11 – Brussels: During the EU-Lebanon Association Council a document on the Partnership Priorities for 2016-2020 and a Compact have been adopted. Four priorities have been agreed: security and countering terrorism, governance and rule of law, fostering growth and job opportunities, and migration and mobility. With regards to the Compact agreed by the EU and Lebanon, at least €400 million will be allocated in 2016-2017 to support the country’s stabilization and address the impact of the Syrian crisis. The Compact sets out mutually agreed actions to provide an appropriate and safe environment for refugees from Syria and for host communities and vulnerable groups.


Climate Change
15 – Marrakesh: The UfM Secretariat is participating in the UN Climate Change Conference to launch regional initiatives for the successful achievement of the Paris Agreement targets in the Euro-Mediterranean region. With the EC, the UfM launches the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform, which aims to ensure that all citizens and businesses of the region have access to secure, affordable and reliable modern energy services. The second initiative, the SEMED Private Renewable Energy Framework, is launched together with the EBRD. This €227.5 million financing framework aims to stimulate the development of private renewable energy markets in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan.

http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-at-cop22-driving-a-shared-mediterranean-agenda-for-climate-action/

December

Energy
1 – Rome: Energy Ministers from the 43 UfM countries gathers for the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meeting on energy. They agree to step up regional cooperation on energy in order to deliver a secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply, a major factor for stability and shared prosperity in the Mediterranean region. Concrete initiatives will be carried out under the three UfM energy platforms covering the priority policy areas, namely the UfM Regional Electricity Market Platform (UIM REM Platform), the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (UIM REEE Platform) and the UfM Gas Platform. The UfM energy platforms are established for structured policy dialogue with a view to identifying concrete partnership actions and following up on their implementation. As such, they will play a central role in taking energy cooperation in the Mediterranean region forward.


Human Rights
13 – Brussels: The EP honours Nadia Murad and Lamiya Aji Bashar, two Iraqi Yazidi activists, with the 2016 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. The award recognizes their fight against the hardship and brutality perpetrated by Daesh, and their role as spokespersons for women afflicted by Daesh’s campaign of sexual violence, as well as for their Yazidi community. EP President, Martin Schulz, called on the International Criminal Court to investigate the crimes committed by Daesh and recalled the Europe’s duty to protect people persecuted by the group.


Cross Border Cooperation
16 – Athens: The ENI Cross Border Cooperation programme in the Mediterranean Basin (CBCMed) holds its launching conference “WE MED” gathering over 300 participants from the 13 Mediterranean countries involved in the Programme. Discussions shed light on the importance of developing impactful and long-lasting cooperation to address crucial challenges and make a positive contribution to the lives of men and women across the Mediterranean region. During the first session focuses on stories of Mediterranean cooperation starting from experiences of final beneficiaries from funded projects under the ENPI CBC Med Programme; while the second session tackles the growing challenges in the Mediterranean region - including security, migrations, impact of climate change, economic growth, youth unemployment - in view of highlighting the shared priorities and approaches which can help build new momentum in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Culture
17-22 – Tunis: The EU-funded Med Culture programme organizes two regional capacity-building activities in Tunis with the participation of cultural actors from eight southern Mediterranean countries and a second meeting of the Tunisia national working group. The first activity (17-19 Dec.) is a regional workshop based on peer-to-peer exchanges on the theme of cultural entrepreneurship. Its objective is to explore the specificities of entrepreneurship in the cultural field, to provide the participants with the necessary resources, and to encourage them to create their own, tailor-made business model. The second regional workshop (19-21 Dec.), on the theme “Reinventing partnerships,” examines the evaluation of the collaborative process, and analyses different models and practices that promote interactions between different stakeholders, including opportunities to collaborate with other sectors at multiple levels. A second meeting of the Tunisia national working group also takes place to take stock of the activities carried out to date and to present the action plan for the year 2017.
Other Cooperation Initiatives in the Mediterranean

1. NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

Instability in the Mediterranean region is important to NATO Allies and partners both for humanitarian and geopolitical reasons as security in the Middle East and North Africa is organically related to security in Europe. NATO has developed a network of partnership with seven southern Mediterranean countries under the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), as well as with four countries of the Gulf region through the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Within these frameworks, these countries: share insights on areas of common interest or concern through political consultation and intelligence sharing; participate in exercises and training for future missions; contribute to current operations; support research on new capability development; integrate gender perspective into security and defence; fight against corruption in the defence sector; enhance efforts to destroy or control arms. MD started in 1994 with five participating countries, which included Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, followed a few years later by Algeria and Jordan.

The Dialogue has the following features: it is progressive in terms of participation and content; it is generally bilateral in the NATO+1 format but also admits multilateral meetings in the NATO+7 format; the same basis is offered to all the partners according to a non-discrimination principle; however each country can decide to intensify its own participation in the spirit of self-differentiation through an Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) and NATO will not impose the extent of the cooperation; it is complementary to other regional or international initiatives; it has both a political and practical dimension. Until 2011, the overall responsibility for the MD fell to the Mediterranean Cooperation Group (MCG), established at the Madrid Summit in 1997. It was then replaced by the Political and Partnerships Committee, which is responsible for all partnerships. The Committee meets at the level of Political Counsellors on a regular basis to discuss all matters related to the Dialogue including its further development.

At the 2004 Istanbul Summit, NATO’s Heads of State and Government elevated the MD to a genuine partnership through the establishment of a more ambitious and expanded framework, which considerably enhanced both the MD’s political and practical cooperation dimensions. Consultations of the 28 Allies and seven MD countries take place on a regular basis on a bilateral and multilateral level, at ministerial, ambassadorial and working level formats. The political dimension also includes visits by NATO Senior Officials, including the Secretary General (SG) and the Deputy SG, to MD countries. The main purpose of these visits is to conduct high-level political consultations with the relevant host authorities on the way forward in NATO’s political and practical cooperation under the Dialogue. The new Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2011, identifies cooperative security as one of three key priorities for the Alliance. Practical cooperation in the MD includes seminars, workshops and other practical activities in the fields of modernization of the armed forces, civil emergency planning, crisis management, border security, small arms & light weapons, public diplomacy, scientific and environmental cooperation, as well as consultations on terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The military dimension of the practical cooperation includes invitations to Dialogue countries to observe – and in some cases participate – in NATO/PfP military exercises, attend courses and other academic activities at the NATO School (SHAPE) in Oberammergau (Germany) and the NATO Defense College in Rome (Italy), and visit NATO military bodies. The Individual and Partnership Cooperation Programme (IPCP), which replaces the previous Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP) framework document, is aimed at enhancing bilateral political dialogue as well as tailoring cooperation with NATO according to key national security needs. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia have all agreed tailored ICPs with NATO. At the 2014 Wales Summit two important initiatives were endorsed: the Partnership Interoperability Initiative and the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative. The first provides measures to ensure that the connections built up over years of operations and exercises will be deepened so that partners will contribute to future NATO-led operations (currently only Jordan has access to enhanced cooperation). The DCB Initiative is demand-driven and aims at NATO’s commitment with partners. This package includes: seven areas of cooperation (cyber defence, military exercises, Counter-Imprompted Explosive Devices cooperation, border security…); the invitation to participate in the 2015 NATO Cyber Coalition exercise (the first MD countries to do so); and a Science for Peace and Security (SPS) project on Counter-IED. The Sci-
ence for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme is a policy tool that enhances cooperation and dialogue with all partners, based on scientific research, innovation, and knowledge exchange. It provides funding, expert advice, and support to security-relevant activities. More than 30 SPS activities are held with MD countries covering areas such as cyber-defence training for Morocco, the implementation of a cyber-defence strategy in Jordan, the development of advanced security technologies in Israel and the creation of a regional crisis management centre in Mauritania.

Unlike the MD, the ICI only focuses on practical cooperation and it was launched in 2004. It is addressed to the Gulf Countries and, as it stands, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have all joined the Initiative. Based on the principle of inclusiveness, the Initiative is, however, open to all interested countries of the broader Middle East region who subscribe to its aims and content, including the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Initiative offers bilateral activities that countries can choose from, which comprise a range of cooperation areas: tailored advice on defence transformation; military-to-military cooperation to contribute to interoperability through participation in selected military exercises and through participation in selected NATO and PIP exercises and in NATO-led operations on a case-by-case basis; cooperation in the fight against terrorism, including through intelligence sharing; cooperation regarding border security in connection with terrorism, small arms and light weapons and the fight against illegal trafficking; and civil emergency planning. With the approval of the new partnership policy at the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Berlin in April 2011, all NATO partners will have access in principle to the same range and number of activities. This will dramatically expand the number of activities accessible to ICI countries. ICI partners have also increasingly demonstrated their readiness to participate in NATO-led operations, acting as security providers. Today, several ICI partners actively contribute to the NATO ISAF operation in Afghanistan. Following the launch of Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates promptly provided air assets to the operation and were recognized as contributing nations, playing a key role in the success of the operation. Finally, within the Parliamentary dimension of NATO a Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) was created in 1996 as a forum for parliamentarians of NATO and the MENA region to discuss security issues. The GSM conducts seminars, bringing together parliamentarians from NATO countries with their counterparts in the region, to explore specific topics and to consider the annual GSM Report. The Group also undertakes an annual visit to a country in the region.

Main Events in 2016

- 18-19 February, Rabat, Morocco: NATO Deputy SG Vershbow pays his first official visit to Morocco. He underlines Morocco’s contribution to international security and stability in a fast changing and turbulent regional security environment. In his bilateral meetings, Ambassador Vershbow stresses that the security of NATO member countries is closely linked to the security of its neighbours in the South, and thanks Morocco for facilitating the achievement of a political solution to the crisis in Libya. At a Public Diplomacy seminar on NATO-Morocco Cooperation in the 21st century, Ambassador Vershbow discusses NATO’s continued commitment to working with Morocco in the MD framework. For over two decades, both through MD and ICP, NATO and Morocco have been able to build a strong partnership, adapting to Morocco’s evolving security needs. Morocco has contributed in various ways to NATO missions in the Balkans – first in Bosnia-Herzegovina and then in Kosovo – and to Operation Unified Protector in Libya. Recently it also played a major role in seeking to promote a political solution to the Libyan crisis, hosting the UN-led consultations and actively trying to build a bridge between Libya’s warring parties.


- 29 February, Kuwait City, Kuwait: NATO SG Stoltenberg welcomes closer cooperation between NATO and Kuwait during his first official visit, speaking at the site of the future NATO-Kuwait Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre. The NATO-ICI Centre will foster cooperation between NATO and Gulf partners in a number of areas, including strategic analysis, civil emergency planning, military-to-military cooperation and public diplomacy. It will be a focal point for NATO’s cooperation with Kuwait and the other countries of the ICI, as well as others in the Gulf, such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, and with the Gulf Cooperation Council. Kuwait was the first country to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in 2004. It was also the first country in the region to host meetings of Gulf countries and the North Atlantic Council and to sign an information security agreement with NATO in order to facilitate the exchange of sensitive information, and an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme with NATO. During the visit, a NATO-Kuwait Transit Agreement is also signed. This agreement will facilitate the transit of personnel, supplies and equipment to the NATO Mission in Afghanistan.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_128712.htm

- 2 March, Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates: Official visit to UAE by NATO SG Stoltenberg, where he praises UAE’s contributions to NATO-led missions in Bosnia, Libya and Afghanistan. UAE is one of NATO’s most active partners in the framework of the ICI. In 2012, the UAE became the first and only country in the Middle East and North Africa region to open a mission to NATO. The UAE has held joint consultations and exercises with NATO in numerous areas, including maritime security, counter-piracy, proliferation and energy security.

- 17 March, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: NATO SG Stoltenberg welcomes King Abdullah II for talks on the Alliance’s partnership with Jordan and regional security challenges. Mr. Stoltenberg underscores NATO’s commitment to Jordan and the country’s role as an active member of NATO’s MD. He also commends Jordan for its valuable contributions to the NATO Response Force and its participation in NATO-led mis-
sions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Libya. In particular, SG thanks Jordan’s contribution to the training of Iraqi officers in Jordan, as part of NATO’s Defence Capacity Building assistance measures for Iraq. In their talks, they also discuss NATO-Jordan bilateral cooperation and shared security challenges, including the spread of terrorism and extremism. 


• 18 March, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: NATO SG Stoltenberg welcomes the Gulf Cooperation Council SG Al Zayani for talks on deepening cooperation between the two organizations. They exchange views on the regional security situation, and discuss reinforcing ties between NATO and the GCC with more regular staff contacts and political dialogue as a first step. The Alliance has already developed political dialogue and practical cooperation with four out of six Gulf Cooperation Council members (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) through ICI.


• 4 May, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: NATO Agrees to allow Israel, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait to open diplomatic missions to its headquarters, meaning that ambassadors and attachés will have upgraded access to exercises, events and alliance-related procurement programs. In Israel’s case, permission to open an office in NATO is made possible after Turkey lifts veto.

• 19-20 May, Brussels, Belgium: NATO Foreign Ministers meet to tackle key issues before the Warsaw Summit in July. They agree that NATO should do more to project stability beyond the Alliance’s borders, both by deploying combat forces when needed and by training up local forces. Ongoing initiatives with partners include training for hundreds of Iraqi officers in Jordan, cyber defence projects with Jordan, and helping developing special forces training and a national intelligence centre for Tunisia. Ministers also decided to continue preparatory work with a view to assisting Libya strengthen its defence and security institutions, provided the Libyans so request. Cooperation with EU will increase and Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean will become a broader maritime security operation.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events_130777.htm

• 8-9 July, Warsaw, Poland: 58 official delegations participate in the 57th NATO summit, which is held in Poland for the first time. The two main themes of the Summit are deterrence, defence and projecting stability to the NATO neighbourhood. The continuing crises and instability across the Middle East and North Africa region, in particular in Syria, Iraq and Libya, as well as the threat of terrorism and violent extremism across the region and beyond, demonstrate that the security of the region has direct implications for the security of NATO. Peace and stability in this region are essential for the Alliance. There is a great concern over the ongoing crisis in Syria and its consequences, in terms of terrorism and the human tragedy it caused, with massive flows of migrants. Allies have swiftly contributed maritime assets to international efforts to stem the flow of irregular migration in the Aegean Sea in the context of the refugee and migrant crisis in cooperation with relevant national authorities and through the establishment of direct links between Maritime Command (MARCOM) and FRONTEX. Other territories of concern are Iraq, Libya and the Sahel-Sahara. Through Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) activities being implemented in Jordan, which include countering improvised explosive devices, explosive ordnance disposal and demining, as well as civilian-military planning and advice on security sector reform in Iraq, NATO is training Iraqis in selected areas. Allies are also ready to provide Libya with advice in the field of defence and security institution building, and to develop a long-term partnership, possibly leading to Libya’s membership in the MD.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm

• 26-27 October, Brussels, Belgium: Allied Defence Ministers discuss practical steps to take forward NATO’s cooperation with the EU (progress in creating four NATO battalions in the Baltic States and Poland) and on how NATO can enhance its efforts to project stability in its neighbourhood. In that context, ministers agree that training and capacity-building of Iraqi armed forces should begin in Iraq itself in January 2017, building on existing training of Iraqi officers in Jordan.

• 27-29 October, Rome, Italy: The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO-PA) organizes a seminar gathering 140 parliamentarians from 39 countries. It addresses six themes: the situation in Libya and North Africa, the refugee crisis and border control, the political consequence of mass migration in Europe and the United States, the Western Balkans as a bridge between the MENA region and Europe, the situation in Syria and Iraq and the challenge of radicalization and terrorism in the West. Members of the NATO-PA Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) also vote to adopt a report on the Expansion of Daesh into Libya and the western Mediterranean. This report explores the divisions that continue to undermine security in Libya, the international campaign against Daesh in Sirte and the links between that conflict and developments in Europe and the western Balkans, both of which have been an important source of foreign fighters working inside Daesh.

www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=4393

• 15 November, Nouakchott, Mauritania: A national crisis management centre, supported by NATO’s Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, is inaugurated to help authorities quickly respond to crises and coordinate an appropriate response. The centre will also improve civil protection, early warning of the population against threats and risks, and enhance preparedness against crises affecting national security. Regionally, it facilitates situational awareness in the different provinces of Mauritania. The centres receive and process emergency calls, track incidents, and share the information gathered with the national level and other regions that may be affected by a particular event.

• 6-7 December, Brussels, Belgium: NATO Foreign Ministers conclude two days of meeting during which they have made progress on a number of key issues, including cooperation with the EU. Ministers also take stock of the Alliance’s efforts to project stability by help-
ing to build strong institutions in partner countries, training local forces, and tackling terrorism. Ministers review progress on NATO efforts to support the Counter-ISIL Coalition, the training of Iraqi officers, and maritime operations in the Mediterranean.

2. OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

The relationship between the OSCE and its MPCs dates back to the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, which recognized that security in Europe is closely linked with security in the Mediterranean as a whole. Immediately after Helsinki, Mediterranean non-participating states were invited to a specific meeting on Mediterranean issues related to economic, social, environmental, scientific and cultural topics. It was at the 1993 Rome Ministerial Council meeting when Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Tunisia requested a closer cooperation and finally became partners for cooperation in 1995 (Jordan joined in 1998). In 1994 an informal contact group of experts met to conduct a dialogue with MPCs to facilitate the exchange of information of mutual interest and generate ideas: the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG). Within the political framework of this relationship, besides the MCG, the main elements are: the annual OSCE Mediterranean Conference, certain annual OSCE events, the OSCE PA Mediterranean Forum and the visit by the Secretary General (SG). The OSCE Mediterranean Conference is generally attended by international organizations, parliamentarians, academics and NGOs, and it provides a place for the exchange of ideas and exploring new ways to enhance cooperation. At the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting, partners engage in high-level meetings with the OSCE Troika (incoming, current and past Chairmen-in-Office) and the OSCE SG. In 2003, OSCE participating states decided to extend the fields for cooperation with partners (counter-terrorism, border issues, economic and environmental activities, trafficking in human beings, election observation, media freedom) besides encouraging them to voluntarily implement OSCE commitments. Since 2007, a special fund has been created to attend to Partners’ needs to participate in specific activities. The wave of upheavals that swept across the southern Mediterranean as of 2011 confirmed the need to reinforce and adapt the Partnership to assist Partners on their way to democracy and stability. The Contact Group serves at the main venue for regular dialogue with the Partners. It generally meets seven times a year at ambassadorial level and its chairman is generally the incoming chair of the OSCE. It discusses topics relevant to OSCE Partners or members in the three OSCE dimensions: politico-military, economic and environmental and human. Since 2011, Partners have displayed a readiness to share relevant information and developments within the group while OSCE participating states have reaffirmed their support to share their expertise, experience and OSCE toolbox for democratic transition. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) enhances relations between participating states and MPCs from a parliamentary perspective. MPCs are invited to participate in OSCE PA conferences, and also to country observation missions offering them the opportunity to study best practices and democratic processes.

2016 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 15th Winter Meeting, and the Mediterranean Forum

- 25-26 February, Vienna, Austria: The Assembly’s 15th Winter Meeting gathers more than 250 parliamentarians from 57 OSCE participating States. The parliamentary debate and keynote presentations focus on the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe and efforts to strengthen the collective response. The Vice-President of the OSCE PA, Christine Muttenen (MP, Austria), stresses that the current crises in Europe cannot be solved by a single country and instead need the attention and co-operation of the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE on all levels. The enhancement of international co-operation is particularly important in dealing with the migration crisis and the most affected countries in need of assistance and stabilization. Female refugees face exceedingly dangerous circumstances and require specific attention. OSCE field operations provide an important contribution by working together with border control authorities. Nevertheless, the OSCE and the OSCE PA could deliver more and should improve how they utilize their instruments in order to manage current and future challenges. The OSCE PA’s three general committees (Political Affairs and Security; Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment; and Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions) also meet to hear addresses by high-level OSCE officials and from committee rapporteurs, who offer presentations on their ideas for reports and draft resolutions to be developed for the OSCE PA’s 25th Annual Session in Georgia. Special debates are held in relation with each committee: “Transnational Security in the OSCE Area: Confronting Terrorism,” “Migration management: opportunities and challenges to the economy in the OSCE region” and “The human rights of migrants and refugees.” The Special Debate of the OSCE PA meeting is devoted to the refugee and migrant crisis. Speaking about the current migration crisis, EU Commissioner Styliades urges greater dialogue and a more coordinated response to the situation. The crisis has put the EU under great pressure, testing its unity and principles. While he acknowledges the need to protect the EU’s external borders, he nonetheless argues that raising walls will not solve the problem. Styliades calls on OSCE PA to pledge its support to the resolution of the Syrian crisis, stopping the attacks on civilians, granting aid organizations full access to the people in need and free passage to safety in order to ameliorate the suffering of the Syrian people. The EU Commissioner says that governments should continue to work closely together and help Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey in making the everyday life of refugees better. The OSCE PA Third Committee (Human Rights) Chair Isabel Santos presents a report sharing the ideas, observations and recommendations resulting from trips to Turkey, Italy, Ser-
25th Annual Session of the OSCE PA and the quarter-century anniversary of the Assembly’s work

- 1-5 July, Tbilisi, Georgia: The 25th Annual Session of the OSCE PA brings together nearly 300 parliamentarians from 54 OSCE participating countries in Tbilisi. The Session is held under the theme “25 Years of Parliamentary Co-operation: Building Trust Through Dialogue,” commemorating the quarter-century anniversary of the Assembly’s work. 2016 is a landmark year for both the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the nation of Georgia, as it marks the 25th anniversary of the PA’s establishment and the 25th anniversary of Georgia’s independence. Emphasizing that recent problems in the OSCE area have largely been due to a lack of trust and cooperation, the President of the Parliament of Georgia insists on the need to promote dialogue to restore confidence and resolve conflicts. Featuring several days of parliamentary debate in committee and plenary meetings, the Session culminates in adoption by majority vote of the 2016 Tbilisi Declaration. The Declaration contains the Assembly’s wide-ranging pronouncements and policy recommendations for the OSCE and its participating states in the fields of political affairs, economics, the environment and human rights, serving as policy guidance to governments and parliaments. The Declaration helps shape OSCE and national policy and is complemented by a number of supplementary items relating to OSCE commitments and values. Stressing the theme of trust-building, the Declaration “reaffirms the undiminished validity and historic role of the guiding principles and common values of the Helsinki Final Act signed in 1975, including the commitments on politico-military, economic, environmental, human rights, and humanitarian issues.” It regrets however the trend of gridlock in the OSCE and urges OSCE countries to enhance the level of co-operation in addressing common challenges. Among the issues covered in the Declaration are terrorism, the crisis in and around Ukraine, protracted conflicts in Georgia, countering corruption, energy, climate change, migration, and the rights of refugees. The Assembly also approves 15 resolutions to supplement the Declaration, addressing issues such as fundamental freedoms in the Crimean Peninsula, prevention of child sexual exploitation, confidence-building measures in the Baltic Sea region, and ensuring that members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly affected by international travel bans are able to attend OSCE events.


2015 Autumn Meeting of the OSCE PA

- 30 September to 2 October, Skopje, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: The OSCE PA holds an Autumn Meeting every year to enhance inter-parliamentary dialogue and provides a discussion forum about the Mediterranean region’s political challenges. More than 170 parliamentarians from 49 OSCE participating states gather to discuss the theme of “Strengthening Confidence-Building Measures and Good Governance in the OSCE Region,” and the role of parliamentarians in fostering co-operation to address ongoing and emerging crises in the OSCE area. During the opening session, the OSCE PA President, Christine Muttonen stresses the need for confidence-building in order to “engage with each other and search for common ground.” On 30 September, the Mediterranean Forum is opened by OSCE PA Special Representative on Mediterranean Affairs Michel Voisin (MP, France). Under the theme of “Improving Human Rights-Based Governance of International Migration,” parliamentarians from more than a dozen countries offer comments and address questions on the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis, conflicts in the Mediterranean region, and the threat of violent extremism. Other issues related to the themes of “Developing Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in South East Europe: The Role of the OSCE” and “Good governance as a basis for fostering economic development in the OSCE” are discussed during the 2016 Autumn Meeting.

5-6 October, Vienna, Austria: The conference brings together youth representatives from the Mediterranean region and beyond and is attended by several ministers and high-level representatives from international and regional organizations such as the OSCE Mediterranean Partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia), academia, civil society, and media, including a high-level delegation from the Government of National Accord of Libya. It focuses on “Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Facing Security Challenges and Enhancing Opportunities” and addresses questions related to security and partnership between countries North and South of the Mediterranean. For the first time, the Mediterranean Conference provides a unique platform to engage youth in a discussion of the Mediterranean agenda, with a focus on sharing best practices in countering violent extremism, turning migration into an opportunity, and supporting youth empowerment at all levels to foster common security. OSCE SG Zannier underlines that youth is most affected by the phenomena agitating societies across the region, from radicalization to migration. www.osce.org/partners-for-cooperation/mediterranean/281811?download=true

Annual Ministerial Council – 23rd OSCE Ministerial Council

8-9 December, Hamburg, Germany: OSCE Foreign Ministers and delegations from the 57 OSCE participating states gather for the annual Ministerial Council. It acts as the main central decision-making and governing body and provides a rare opportunity for participating states and 11 Partners for Co-operation to engage in high-level multilateral and bilateral talks on their current security relations and concerns. Declarations and decisions are adopted on reinforcing the OSCE’s role and efforts to address common issues. In the political-military field, OSCE participating states decide to continue and build on the OSCE’s efforts related to reducing the risks of conflict stemming from the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), they voice unanimous support for strengthening OSCE efforts to counter and prevent terrorism, and decide to enhance the use of Advance Passenger Information (API) with the aim of combating terrorism. Moreover, the Ministerial Council decides that Slovakia will chair the OSCE in 2019, while Italy will chair the Organization in 2018. www.osce.org/oscemc16

Mediterranean Contact Group

The major themes of the 2016 Austrian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group (MCG) are dialogue and inclusivity. The OSCE’s Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation participated actively not only in various OSCE events, but also in numerous projects throughout the year. Five meetings of the MCG are held in Vienna during the course of the year. The first meeting, held on 29 February 2016, is attended by the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, winner of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, which serves as a powerful symbol of successful civil society dialogue in difficult conditions. The Quartet members, representing the Tunisian bodies, focus on the challenges for Tunisia, such as economic development and combating radicalization. At the second meeting, on 14 March, three experts on migration issues share their experience in migration management and opinions on the current trends. Delegations call for the closer involvement of the OSCE in this field. On 19 April, the third meeting includes a panel discussion on interreligious dialogue and the fourth, on 14 June, is dedicated to the radicalization of youth and its prevention. Lastly, the fifth and final meeting, takes place on 18 November with a meeting on the topic of job creation and business opportunities for youth around the Mediterranean. As in previous years, the political dialogue between participating states and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation is complemented by a growing variety of practical co-operation projects. The projects cover all the key areas of the current OSCE and Mediterranean agendas. Most notably, in collaboration with Spain, Austria promotes the organization of the first ever Mediterranean Contact Group Retreat outside Vienna, which is held in Madrid on 23 and 24 May. Another relevant initiative is the organization of a Regional Roundtable for North African Youth on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, taking place in Tunis on 3 May. Austria hands the Chairmanship of the MCG over to Italy in 2017 while Austria will be chairing the OSCE. www.osce.org/cio/286196?download=true

Meeting of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group in Madrid

23 May, Madrid, Spain: The meeting of the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group is preceded by an expert workshop entitled “Dialogue in search of social cohesion.” The two events seek to boost dialogue and mediation on the two shores of the Mediterranean. The goal of the workshop is to operate as a forum for discussion and exchange on the participation of civil society in informal mediation processes in the Mediterranean and its connection with governmental and institutional initiatives. Attending are 25 experts from think tanks, NGOs and other areas of civil society from countries in the Mediterranean Arc and Mediterranean partners. Participating states, together with the EU, aim to find synergies between action by civil society and governments, particularly in the case of Libya. www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/SalaDePrensa/NotasDePrensa/Paginas/2016_NOTAS_P/20160523_NOTA109.aspx

3. 5+5 Dialogue

The 5+5 Dialogue comes from a French proposal and was set up on 10 October 1990 during a ministerial meeting in Rome. It gathers the ten countries of the western Mediterranean Basin: five countries from the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia) and five members of the European Union (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Malta who joined in 1991). The 5+5 Dialogue has a flexible and informal nature. Over the years, it has been trans-
formed from a merely political forum to one for strengthened regional and multidisciplinary cooperation in the western Mediterranean. Its flexibility and informality have enabled a gradual opening up, and the participating ministers and senior officials now meet to discuss an increasing number of issues. Originally just a political compromise between Foreign Ministers dealing with security and stability, as well as economic integration, it later expanded to include other spheres, such as Education, the Environment and Renewable Energies, Home Affairs (since 1995), Migration (since 2002), Inter-parliamentary Relations (since 2003), Defence (since 2004), Tourism (since 2006) and Transport (since 2007). Due to its practical and operational nature, it is a forum for the exchange of ideas and the launch of new initiatives. It can also capitalize on its restricted geographical scope, which is limited to the western Mediterranean. This initiative has encouraged the insertion of Libya and Mauritania in the regional context.

Main Meetings in 2016

Foreign Affairs

• 28 October, Marseille, France: The 13th Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the 5+5 Dialogue in the Western Mediterranean takes place under the French and Moroccan co-Presidency. In addition to the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the ten countries of the Dialogue, other institutions participate as observers: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), ALF and UfM. The main issue on the agenda is to stabilize the region and enhance solidarity in order to handle terrorism. Ministers take stock of the regional situation emphasizing the Libyan and Syrian crises. Regarding Libya, they reaffirm their exclusive support for the Government of National Accord, urge the international community to provide assistance to the Libyan people, and ask all parties involved to respond favourably to Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj’s call for dialogue and reconciliation. In Iraq and Syria, they stress that only a political resolution of the crisis will allow the eradication of Daesh. That is why, in addition to their collective military effort, the countries involved must step up their efforts in terms of stabilization, strategic communication, and prevention of terrorist financing, foreign terrorist fighters and radicalization. Nevertheless, Ministers welcome the successful operations conducted by the Iraqi forces against Daesh and encourage the government to implement the necessary reforms for national reconciliation. Regarding Syria, participants condemn in the strongest possible terms the unacceptable violence and attacks directed at the civilian population, especially in Aleppo, and the use of chemical weapons. They recall that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict and appeal for the resumption of negotiations to set up a political transition, the only thing capable of preserving the territorial integrity of Syria, alleviating its people’s suffering and building lasting peace. The Middle East Peace Process is also on the agenda. In particular, Ministers express their concerns about the resurgence of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. They condemn Israeli colonisation and continuing settlement activity in occupied Palestine. Regarding the Sahel region, they focus on the peace agreement in Mali and stress the necessity for the international community to provide strong support for Sahelian countries in order to promote all the initiatives to combat terrorism and radicalization. On the other hand, they establish and discuss the three main sectorial priorities: fostering training for young people and youth employment; cooperating for inclusive and sustainable economic and social development; taking action on migration and mobility. During the meeting, they have discussions with youngsters who have prepared recommendations thanks to the ALF. These recommendations include the training and mobility of young people, which are essential issues. Migration is also at the heart of this meeting; the leaders lend special attention to the fight against human and arms traffickers who exploit migrants crossing by sea from Libya to Europe. Ministers conclude that the challenge is not just to fight illegal immigration and rescue people at sea, but also to have an ambition for development. In the Final Declaration, Ministers stress their will to continue strengthening cooperation and complementarity between the different frameworks and forms of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, namely: the 5+5 Dialogue, the UfM, the ALF, the EU, and the AMU.

Declaration:

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/conclusions_5_5_marseille__sans_signatures_cle8b9934.pdf

Defence

The 5+5 Defence Initiative was launched in 2004. The aim was to encourage mutual understanding among member countries and develop multilateral cooperation in order to promote security in the western Mediterranean by addressing common concerns in the spheres of security and defence. The presidency of the 5+5 Defence Initiative is held by each country participating in the Initiative in annual rotation following the alphabetical order of the countries in English. Algeria holds the 2016 presidency and France follows in the rotating presidency. The main meeting is the gathering of Defence Ministers (usually taking place in December) in the country holding the presidency. During the Ministerial meeting, Ministers approve the Action Plan for the year to come, and analyse and discuss the result of the activities that occurred during the year. The Chiefs of Defence also gather once a year in October to review the activities undertaken that year and approve the Activity Plan for the following year. The main goal of these meetings is to support political action undertaken by the 5+5 Defence Initiative, deepening the dialogue concerning regional military matters, understanding and acquaintance between the Armed Forces, and therefore improve the military cooperation between all ten countries of the Initiative.

• 20 October, Algiers, Algeria: The Chiefs of Staff of the 5+5 Defence Initiative member countries gather for their 8th meeting. The 5+5 Defence Initiative is one of the most active regional initiatives in terms of multilateral cooperation, consultations and dialogue on security stakes. The Chiefs of Army Staff of the member countries express their countries’ willingness to strengthen “the growing power” of this process of co-
operation to face the different threats in the region and underline the activities undertaken by their countries in fields of common interest.

www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/international/le-cema-et-ses-partenaires-du-5-5-reunis-a-alger

- 15 December, Algiers, Algeria: Defence Ministers of the 5+5 Defence Initiative gather to discuss regional challenges and promote consultations on prevailing issues, including the fight against terrorism. As chair of the 2016 Defence Initiative session, Algeria notes that the international and regional context has witnessed complex geopolitical shifts, which requires more intensive cooperation between regional partners. It also stresses that the 5+5 Initiative is a key militarily tool to overcome the scourge of terrorism, especially by stepping up information sharing. France, which will take the next rotating presidency, states that its main focus for 2017 will be the security issues related to climate change within the 5+5 area. www.5plus5defence.org/fr/Pages/Initiative5-5-Defense-reunion-des-ministres-a-Alger.aspx

Water

- 16 November 2016, Marrakech, Morocco: During the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP22), a side event takes place for the signature of a Ministerial Declaration to endorse the Action Plan and Rules of Procedure for the 5+5 Water Strategy in the Western Mediterranean. The aim of this strategy is to promote sustainable water use at local, regional and national levels through the adoption of cross-cutting goals, management criteria and operational objectives in order to harmonize water policies in the Mediterranean. The Action Plan was promoted initially by the joint initiative of Spain and Algeria and is the result of six technical workshops that took place from 25 February 2015 to 24 June 2016. Both countries are actively involved in the peaceful resolution of international conflicts and hope this strategy may constitute a tool for preventive diplomacy, contributing to maintaining international peace and security by facilitating international cooperation on water issues. Marrakech Declaration: http://remoc.org/docs/wswm/112016_Marrakech/MarrakechDeclaration_signed.pdf


Tourism

- 11 July, Casablanca, Morocco: The 4th Ministerial Conference on Tourism of the Western Mediterranean takes place to discuss the effect of tourism on climate change. Ministers consider that, through urban and air transportation, tourism contributes to gases producing the greenhouse effect. Therefore, through the signing of the Declaration of Casablanca they aim to alleviate the effects of tourism on the environment and share effective strategies with other countries by limiting the impact of tourism activities on climate, in particular by increasing energy efficiency, improving modes of transportation, reducing water use, and collaborating with all national, regional and international institutions for the development of sustainable and responsible tourism. Declaration of Casablanca: https://ma.ambafrance.org/IMG/pdf/declaration_de_casablanca.pdf?3562/b351d7f563e6fb313b878d34942f40581b5f342

4. Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)

After the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia and the growing tensions among ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the Balkan area, the EU, in its attempts to cope with these crises, promoted the “Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe” for south-eastern European countries hoping to join the Union in the future. Within this treaty, at the Finnish EU Summit in 1999, the Italian Government presented the “Adriatic-Ionian Initiative.” The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII) was established at the Summit on the Development and Security of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, held in Ancona (Italy) in May 2000. At the end of the Conference, the Foreign Ministers of the participating countries, Italy, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece and Slovenia signed the “Ancona Declaration” in order to strengthen regional cooperation to promote political and economic stability, thus creating a solid base for the process of European integration. Today, the AII has eight members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The initiative’s Chairmanship rotates every May/June according to alphabetical criteria. The Chairmanship of Croatia started in June 2015 and ended in May 2016, with Greece taking over from June 2016 until May 2017. Following the recent EU approach to support multilateral sub-regional cooperation, the AII started working, in 2010, on the idea of a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian Region. Since then the AII Participating states, started raising awareness regarding the need to establish a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian basin. The European Council has given a mandate to the EU Commission to present a new “Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region” (EUSAIR) by the end of 2014. The EUSAIR has been endorsed by the Council on 24 October 2014 and is now in its implementation phase. Many years after the establishment of the AII, the geopolitical environment has deeply changed. Slovenia in 2004 and Croatia in 2013 entered the EU the other Adriatic-Ionian East-side coastal Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), even if with different time-frames and conditions, are gradually approaching the EU within the Stabilization and Association Process framework, as a prelude to future EU membership.

Main events during the Croatian Chairmanship

The future of the Adriatic Sea is a priority of national interest to Croatia and, as Chair of the AII, the country wishes to strengthen interrelations among participating countries with a view to encouraging their development, including knowledge and information exchange processes, the preparation of infrastructure, and other development and com-
commercial projects. Croatia proposes political dialogue on the following aspects: redefining the objectives of the All itself; positioning the All in the newly-created political framework and cooperation area of the EUSAIR; collaborating with other initiatives and organizations in the geopolitical region. Taking over the presidency of the All from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, has become the first EUSAIR participant country to co-chair its Governing Board with the European Commission (EC). In the context of reducing the number of fora and avoiding the duplication of their subjects, Croatia will propose to merge the meeting of the Ministerial Council of the All with the annual meeting of EUSAIR foreign ministers.

- 24-23 February, Brussels, Belgium: The 3rd Governing Board (GB) of the EUSAIR, under the co-presidency of Croatia and the EC, focuses on the organization of the First EUSAIR Forum in Dubrovnik. In this context, both practical and conceptual aspects are discussed, including how to coordinate efforts with the All, considering that, for the first time, a “double hat” Ministerial Meeting will issue a single Adriatic and Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministerial Declaration. The meeting is also intended to update delegates on the latest developments, the work plan for 2016 and the activities carried out by Thematic Steering Groups.

- 15-16 April 2016, Split, Croatia: 14th Conference of Speakers of Parliaments of the All. This meeting comes at a very crucial time for Regional Cooperation in the Adriatic and Ionian area, only few weeks before the first EUSAIR Forum to be held in Dubrovnik. The Conference results in strengthened parliamentary cooperation in the region on the refugee and migration crisis and on support to the EUSAIR. Furthermore, based on a decision taken during the previous Conference of Speakers in Neum, the participants establish a network of high officials of National Parliaments aimed at facilitating a permanent exchange of information and experiences among the parliaments on EUSAIR and All issues. The SG of the Initiative addresses the speakers informing them of recent All intergovernmental affairs, particularly concerning its role of intergovernmental anchorage to the EUSAIR.


- 12-13 May, Dubrovnik, Croatia: First EUSAIR Forum jointly organized by the EC and Croatia. It takes stock of the progress of the Strategy since its endorsement by the European Council in October 2014, and contributes to define the way ahead. The event provides ample possibilities for networking, and represents a great opportunity to reach out to a wide range of stakeholders from the Region, including national, regional and local administrations, the business sector, academia and civil society at large. The first “double hat” Adriatic and Ionian Council/ EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting also takes place on 12 May and it is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Croatian Republic, Mr. Miro Kovač, and attended by the eight Ministers of Foreign Affairs of All, as well as by the eight Ministers responsible for EU funds and the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy. The Dubrovnik Declaration issued by Ministers focuses on renewing the commitment of the eight countries on going from words to deeds in the implementation phase of the EUSAIR, as well as on finding new ways the EUSAIR can support All countries affected by the refugee and migration crisis.


**Main events during the Greek Chairmanship**

With Greece’s Chairmanship of the All begins a new cycle of chairmanships on a rotational basis. Its main goal is to focus on organizing activities to be carried out by Round Tables, which were reformed in May 2015 so as to also serve the EUSAIR, in the fields of Blue Growth and Maritime Cooperation, Transport and Energy Connections, Environmental and Civil Protection, Sustainable Tourism and Culture, as well as Inter-University Cooperation. Inspired by the Brussels Declaration of Foreign Affairs Ministers and the Adriatic and Ionian Council of 13th May 2015, according to which the Round Tables were turned into an auxiliary tool at the disposal of EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups, the Hellenic All Chairmanship will further build on the work carried out by the preceding All Chairships as well as on the accomplishments and the progress achieved so far by EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups. Moreover, the Hellenic All Chairmanship will place particular emphasis on cooperation in the sector of tourism and will make every effort to work closely with civil society and coordinate its actions within the framework of All inter-parliamentary cooperation, also taking into consideration the need to respond to the ongoing refugee and migration crisis.

- 13 September, Athens, Greece: The All-Permanent Secretariat visits the newly established Hellenic Chairmanship of the All. The annual visit of the Permanent Secretariat to the Presidency is meant to allow a meeting of the people in charge of the Presidency, both dealing with All and EUSAIR, to plan the activities of the newly established Chairmanship during the year and to share ideas on how to integrate intergovernmental activities within the All with the EUSAIR as much as possible.


- 13 December, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: All SG attends the Central European Initiative (CEI) Summit. The conference is focused on the migration and refugee crisis and on strengthening infrastructural connectivity in the area. The role of the All concerning the domains chosen by the CEI Chairmanship is outlined and these domains are considered to be key priority also for the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). A stricter cooperation will possibly be achieved between All and CEI through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in the near future.

5. The League of Arab States

The League of Arab States is an association of 22 countries established in 1945 with the aim of improving coordination among its members on matters of common interest. The founding members of the League (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Yemen) agreed to seek closer cooperation on issues regarding economics, communication, culture, nationality, social welfare and health. The LAS traditionally embodies both the idea of Pan-Arabism (the principle of an Arab homeland) and Arab nationalism (respect of each member state’s sovereignty). Among LAS main achievements are the 1950 Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty; 1995 Draft Agreement on turning the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction; and the 1999 Arab Agreement on Combating Terrorism, should be mentioned. The highest body of the League is the Council, composed of representatives of member states, generally Foreign Ministers. Each member state has one vote, regardless of the size of the country. The Council meets twice a year, in March and September but it may also convene a special session at the request of two members. The General Secretariat runs the daily activities of the League. It is the executive body of the Council and administrative body of the League. The Current SG is the Egyptian Ahmed Aboul Gheit since July 2016, who succeeded Nabil el-Araby. The Arab league struggles with dysfunction and disunity among its members. In 2002 it achieved remarkable consensus on the Arab Peace Initiative. The 2011 Arab uprisings in Middle East and North Africa offered an occasion to propose actions and initiatives: it backed the UN action against Gaddafi’s forces in Libya and sent, for the first time in history, a mission of observers to Syria (after suspending its membership in the League). Further information: www.lasportal.org/en/Pages/default.aspx

Main Events in 2016

58th Meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Arab Justice Ministers Council

- 11-12 May, Cairo, Egypt: The 58th meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Arab Justice Ministers Council is held at the headquarters of the Arab League General Secretariat under the chairmanship of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Discussion focuses on the fight against organized crime, terrorism and corruption, support to criminal justice in Arab countries, and the promotion of Arab and international cooperation in judicial and legal fields. The ministers also talk about various agreements, such as the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and its mechanism of implementation, the Arab Convention on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, and the Arab judicial cooperation network on counter-terrorism and organized crime.


Consultative Meeting of the UN Security Council with the Arab League

- 21 May, Cairo, Egypt: The United Nations Security Council held an unprecedented consultative meeting with delegations from member states of the LAS, discussing, among others, developments of the Palestinian issue, the Middle East peace process, and updates on the situation in both Libya and Somalia. The participants also discuss the challenges posed by the surging numbers of refugees, displaced persons and illegal immigrants. Many representatives from both sides urge that such consultative meetings become regular, with some diplomats calling for making them a fixed mechanism between the two organizations. Mr. El Araby, SG of the organization, also stresses the need to reconsider the way the Security Council operates in order to become better able to shoulder responsibilities entrusted to it in dealing with crises that threaten international peace and security and resolving disputes by peaceful means. He points out the significant role played by regional organizations in that regard.


27th Arab Summit

- 26-27 June, Nouakchott, Mauritania: Dubbed the “Summit of Hope,” it takes place for the first time in Mauritania and it was expected to discuss many issues, including counter-terrorism, the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and turmoil in Syria and Libya, but hardly meets the expectations of a new phase for inter-Arab cooperation raised by Mauritanian hosts. Indeed, most Arab leaders decide not to show up, including Egyptian and Iraqi Presidents, and only seven of them attend the Summit. Addressing the opening session, Mauritanian President calls for the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli peace talks, which collapsed in 2014 and affirms that the region will remain unstable as long as there is no end to the Israeli occupation. During the meeting, Arab leaders assert that the Palestinian issue will be one of their top priorities, stressing the need for joint Arab action while expressing support for the French-led peace initiative. Officials also vow to defeat terrorism and reaffirm their commitment to follow the most effective practical methods to counter all threats to national security by developing counterterrorism mechanisms, while the Saudi Foreign Minister recalls the creation of the Islamic Military Alliance. In the final communiqué, they also briefly express the wish to see the conflicting parties in Syria reach a political solution, based on the preservation of the unity and stability of Syria. Concluding the Summit, Arab leaders underline the need to establish strong economic and cultural ties with the aim of striving for development, without specifying mechanisms of cooperation. The lack of cohesion and solidarity between the LAS members during this meeting comes from the fact that Arab countries accuse Iran of meddling in their affairs. In recent months, tension has escalated between the two sides since Saudi Arabia cut its diplomatic ties with Tehran earlier this year. Moreover, Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies accuse Tehran of arming Yemen’s Shia Houthi group, which overran the capital of Sanaa and other provinces in 2014, and the conflict in war-torn Syria worsens Arab-Iranian relations.

1st Ministerial Conference on Women and Achieving Peace and Security in the Arab Region

- 5 September, Cairo, Egypt: The LAS and UN Women hold the first ministerial conference on “Women and Achieving Peace and Security in the Arab Region,” lasting two days. This gathering aims to facilitate the implementation of the regional strategy and plan for UN Security Council resolution 1325, which first recognized women’s disproportionate suffering in times of conflict and calls for their engagement in peace and security processes and for prioritizing them in humanitarian assistance. The conference is attended by Arab ministers and the SG of the LAS, as well as representatives from UN Women and international organizations. The participants acknowledge that the region can no longer afford any delay in reaching the representation women deserve in decision-making circles, given the fact that a large body of evidence compiled over the past few decades indicates that engaging women in peace and security processes and humanitarian assistance benefits not only women, but entire communities, increasing the chances of peace agreements lasting for 15 years by 35%. The conference concludes with a number of resolutions including the allocation of financial resources and technical assistance to develop National Action Plans to execute UN Security Council resolution 1325. The resolutions also include developing financing and monitoring mechanisms to enhance accountability and ensure serious commitment to the goals of the women, peace and security agenda, as well as ensuring a female presence of at least 30% in legislative bodies, decision-making circles and negotiation teams. The closing statement urges international organizations and donors to push for better reporting mechanisms for sexual violence, better access to services and medical and psychological care for women survivors of sexual violence, and better living conditions and access to basic services for women refugees in the region, especially Palestinian women.


146th Arab League Council Ministerial Meeting

- 8 September, Cairo, Egypt: The 146th session of the Arab League Council emphasizes its unified positions on Libya, Syria, Yemen and Iran. During this meeting, Tunisia takes over from Bahrain at the presidency of the Arab League Council until March 2017. Conflicts in Syria, Libya, Yemen, the Palestinian issue, as well as reform of Arab League mechanisms are the main topics discussed at the session. The event aims to help SG Ahmed Abul Gheit and the ministers to emphasize unified Arab positions on these issues. Mr. Abul Gheit calls for an Arab Initiative to resolve the crisis in Syria and asks Kuwait to involve the Secretariat of the League in the efforts to reach an agreement in the intra-Yemeni talks. The Ministerial Council issues a statement condemning the “hostile statements of the Iranian Supreme Leader,” Ali Khamenei and calling on Iran to stop interfering in Arab affairs. In addition, the Tunisian Foreign Minister stresses the need to intensify Arab and international efforts to help the Libyan people overcome their differences and opt for dialogue and consensus in order to preserve the unity of their country and its sovereignty, and restore security and stability within its territory. www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Politics/8220852-tunisia-takes-over-from-bahrain-at

Tripartite Meeting on Libya

- 25 October, Cairo, Egypt: a trilateral meeting is held at the headquarters of the LAS where the Arab League, the African Union and the UN agree on how to strengthen their cooperation in advancing the political process towards democratic transition in Libya. They reiterate their commitment to a Libyan-led solution to the conflict, and thus reject any foreign military intervention in Libya. They also reiterate their support to the Presidency Council and condemn recent acts of violence. The parties resolve to form a Troika to enhance cooperation and coordination to encourage national reconciliation, advance political dialogue and facilitate the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. They also plan to establish a joint mission of envoys from the three organizations to encourage the parties to enter into dialogue.


5th Meeting of the EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue

- 1 December, Cairo, Egypt: Permanent representatives of the LAS and the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) gather at the fifth meeting of the EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue. The discussions held by the Ambassadors mainly focus on terrorism and extremism as well as conflicts in the Middle East, including Syria, Israel-Palestine, Libya, Yemen and Iraq. According to a press release, representatives from the LAS and the EU welcome the strengthening of the Euro-Arab partnership as “an adequate regional response” to common political, economic, social and security challenges. Indeed, since the launch of this meeting in November 2015, progress has been made in developing Euro-Arab operational cooperation. Six strategic Cooperation Working Groups also meet in Cairo tackling issues such as conflict prevention, early warning and crisis management, humanitarian assistance, counter-terrorism, transnational organized crime and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms control. A new Working Group dedicated to migration is also launched, demonstrating the shared regional interests and common challenges faced on this issue. https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/16185/european-union-eu-political-and-security-committee-psc-and-the-league-of-arab-states-las-permanent

4th Arab-European Foreign Ministers Meeting

- 20 December, Cairo, Egypt: The meeting, attended by 49 Foreign Ministers of the LAS and the EU, is chaired on behalf of the Arabs by League SG, Aboul-Gheit, and on behalf of the EU by High Representative Mogherini. The ministers convene to discuss the ongoing crises in Syria, Libya and Yemen, among other things, and Mogherini
insists on including all regional actors in efforts for a lasting peace, since what happens in the above countries has a direct impact on Europe. She also stresses the need of a common strategy to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism and for increased cooperation on the issue of illegal migration. LAS SG about- gheit calls on European states to contribute politically and diplomatically to a solution of the Syrian conflict as well as to engage in the settlement of the Palestinian issue. At the end of the gathering, participants adopt a Declaration where they acknowledge the importance of engaging together to address common political, economic, social and security challenges, in particular, the fight against terrorism and the prevention of radicalization and its root causes, as well as migration. They also share their concerns on the security situation with which both the European countries and the Arab States are confronted, and confirm that these challenges are better addressed by a common Euro-Arab effort, in which both sides – in an equal partnership – share experiences, search for joint solutions and prepare the most adequate responses. Finally, they welcome the progress achieved on Euro-Arab cooperation as a means to provide an integrated response to face all these regional challenges, and express their determination to further strengthen relations to achieve regional and international stability and security as necessary conditions for prosperity and socio-economic development.


6. Deauville Partnership

As a response to the upheavals in the Arab world in 2011, the G8 launched the Deauville Partnership (DP) at the summit held in May 2011 in the French city of Deauville. The aim of the partnership is to improve and coordinate international political and financial aid for countries in a transition process such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Jordan and Yemen. The partnership also aims at strengthening cooperation with relevant regional partners (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates) and to guarantee coordination with international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank) and key international organizations (OECD, UNDP, EBRD, EIB). The DP requested the WB to establish a special fund to support the transformation underway in several countries. The MENA Transition Fund was established in September 2012 and its aim is to provide funds for technical cooperation to improve governance and public institutions and foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth in such a way as to improve the lives of the citizens of these transition countries. In June 2014, Germany assumed the presidency of the initiative until 31 of December 2015, following France, the US and the UK. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is currently managing the action to coordinate the IFIs and Development banks. The key events of the Partnerships are the annual meetings of Foreign Ministers and of Finance. The priorities of this initiative are supporting SMEs, strengthening the legal framework, promoting investments and improving opportunities for women. After Germany, Japan Chair the Partnership during 2016.

Main Events During 2015

• 2 March, Tokyo, Japan: During the Deauville Partnership Senior Officials Meeting, participants gather to review the past initiatives and achievements, examine the current economic, political and social situation in the Middle East and North African region, and exchange views on how to inject new momentum into the Deauville Partnership for it to remain relevant to the region’s needs, meaningful and sustainable. They establish that the Deauville Partnership should continue to serve as an important platform in the MENA region for dialogue between G7 members, Arab Countries in Transition (ACTs), regional partners and relevant international institutions in order to foster sound financial and economic evolution through long-term structural reforms and improved economic governance in the ACTs. Participants also acknowledge the necessity to keep the momentum going and reaffirm their goal to reach the $250 million capitalization goal for the MENA Transition Fund. Priority issues for the next 2-3 years include: assistance and support in the governance area, investment promotion, strengthening the governance and reform foundations that support the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, financial inclusion, job creation, good governance, greater empowerment of women and youth in public and economic life, and social cohesion, as these elements contribute to promoting economic growth and social stability. The participants note the importance of women’s economic empowerment to ACTs’ overall economic growth, and they welcome Japan’s proposal to host an expert meeting in 2016 to discuss women’s public and socio-economic role.

• 29-30 May, Rabat, Morocco: The MENA Transition Fund’s 9th Steering Committee Meeting is co-chaired by Japan and Morocco and seeks to approve new projects with maximum impact submitted by Arab countries in transition and closely monitor on-going projects in the MENA region. The Trustee presents the Transition Fund’s current funding status and outlook. Total pledges received at the time of the SC meeting amount to $228.5 million. The participants reiterate the importance of achieving the goal of $250 million, particularly given the very small funding gap. Donors also acknowledge the important role the Fund has been playing as a platform to facilitate project formulation in TCs. Indeed the brief presentation given by the Executive Secretary provides a financial and portfolio update and outlines the 20 country projects that were submitted. Finally the participants also stress that the most important issue is to open discussion on a further extension of the Fund’s life because political and economic transitions take time to fully develop and yield results and they need strong support for the development of in-house capacity.

www.menatransitionfund.org/sites/ mena_trans_fund/files/documents/ SCM%20Minutes%2028May%20 2930%20Rabat%29%20FINAL.docx
It is an informal coordination and consultation group of the seven EU Mediterranean Member States on issues of common interest.

- 22 November, Barcelona, Spain: The UIM, as an observer in the Deauville Process, hosts the 2nd Deauville Partnership Senior Officials meeting, organized under the 2016 Japanese Presidency of the G7. The main focus of the meeting is to discuss the progress made on economic governance strategic support for SMEs and future activities. The promotion of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the Arab Countries in Transition (ACTs) is an important pillar of the partnership in view of their potential for job creation and stability in the region. UIM SG Si jilmassi underlines the importance of the regional dimension and the need to promote synergies between the UIM and Deauville Partnership frameworks. Participants at the meeting stress the importance of the MENA Transition Fund as a key tool in supporting ACT efforts towards structural reform. Italy, which will take over the G7 Presidency as of January 2017, lays out its future engagements and priorities as regards the MENA Transition Fund and the future work of the Deauville Partnership.

http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-secretariat-at-hosts-deauville-partnership-senior-officials-meeting/

7. The Mediterranean Group

The Mediterranean Group gathers the Foreign Ministers of seven European Mediterranean countries, namely, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain on an informal basis. The proposal to create this group came from Spain and Cyprus with the aim of generating a space for informal consultations in order to resume the aims and initiative of the former Olive Group. It was formally presented to the EU Foreign Affairs Council in December 2013. The Group provides a platform for the exchange of views and best practices on the key challenges facing the Mediterranean region, with a focus on migration, security, foreign policy and economic cooperation. It is an informal gathering of Foreign Ministers and officials from seven Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain. The aim of the Group is to foster cooperation and coordination on common interests and priorities, particularly in the fields of migration, security and economic development. The Group holds regular meetings and working sessions, and has a Secretariat to support its work. The Group is open to other countries and organizations with an interest in the Mediterranean and the Group’s work is supported by a Secretariat located in Barcelona. The Group’s work is supported by a Secretariat located in Barcelona.
This chapter provides details of the results of presidential and legislative elections that took place in 2016 in independent states, presented in circum-Mediterranean order. The list also includes referenda and those elections held in autonomous entities or in any other relevant territory that are of particular political significance.

**Portugal**

**Presidential Elections**

24 January 2016

Previous elections: 23 January 2011. Parliamentary Republic. The President is elected for a five-year term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>% 1st round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa (Social Democratic Party, People’s Party, People’s Monarchist Party)</td>
<td>52.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>António Sampaio da Nóvoa (Independent supported by the Portuguese Workers’ Communist Party, PCTP/MRPP, LIVRE)</td>
<td>22.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisa Matias (Left Bloc, Socialist Alternative Movement)</td>
<td>10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria de Belém (Independent)</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar Silva (Portuguese Communist Party)</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitorino Silva (Independent)</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 48.66%

**Spain**

**Legislative elections**

26 June 2016

Previous elections: 20 December 2015. Spain is a parliamentary monarchy. It has a bicameral legislative system (Cortes Generales) composed of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. Elections are held to renew both bodies to serve four-year terms. 350 members are designated to the first chamber through a proportional representation system, closed-party lists and a 3% threshold. The second chamber has 259 seats and they are allocated as follows: 208 directly elected in four-seat constituencies and 51 appointed by the autonomous legislatures.

**Congress of Deputies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People’s Party (PP) (Conservatism)</td>
<td>33.01 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) (Social democracy)</td>
<td>22.63 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United We Can – In Common We Can – En Masse – Commitment (Left wing)</td>
<td>21.14 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens – Party of (C’s) (Liberalism)</td>
<td>13.06 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC – regional independentist)</td>
<td>2.66 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalan European Democratic Party (PDCat – regional independentist)</td>
<td>2.01 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Nationalist Party (Christian democratic, vasque nationalist)</td>
<td>1.19 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Country Unite (EH Bildu, far left, vasque nationalist)</td>
<td>0.77 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canary Coalition</td>
<td>0.33 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 66.9%

**Senate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People’s Party (PP) (Conservatism)</td>
<td>33.18 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) (Social democracy)</td>
<td>23.47 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United We Can Podemos – In Common We Can – En Masse – Commitment (Left wing)</td>
<td>19.87 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC – regional independentist)</td>
<td>3.25 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 66.7%

**Italy**

**Referendum**

4 December 2016

Voters were asked whether they approve a constitutional law that amends the Italian Constitution to reform the composition and powers of the Parliament of Italy, as well as the division of powers between the State, the regions, and administrative entities. The question was: Do you approve the text of the Constitutional Law concerning “Provisions for overcoming equal bicameralism, reducing the number of Members of Parliament, limiting the operating costs of the institutions, the suppression of the CNEL and the revision of Title V of Part II of the Constitution” approved by Parliament and published in the Official Gazette no. 88 of 15 April 2016?

| % | Yes | 40.89% |
| No | 59.11% |

Turnout: 65.48%

**Croatia**

**Legislative elections**

11 September 2016

Previous elections: 8 November 2015. Croatia is a parliamentary republic. It has a unicameral legislative system (Hrvatski Sabor) with 151 seats. The deputies are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system to serve four-year
term. Seats are allocated as follows: 140 members are elected in the 10 constituencies representing the whole Croatian territory and they can either belong to a party or run as independents; 3 members are elected in the constituency representing the Croatian Diaspora and 8 are elected to represent the ethnic minorities. A 5% threshold is established in an electoral district, except for those parties representing minorities for whom the threshold correspond to 0.4%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic districts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDZ Coalition (Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ, Croatian Social Liberal Party, HSLS, Croatian Christian Democratic Party, HSS, HSP-AS) (Conservatism)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Coalition (Social Democratic Party of Croatia, SDP, Croatian People’s Party – Liberal Democrats, HNS, Croatian Party of Pensioners, HSU, HL) (Social democracy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridge of Independent Lists (MOST) (Centre-right)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Only Option Coalition (Human Shield (22), Change Croatia, Youth Action) (Populism, Euroscepticism)</td>
<td>6.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Even Stronger Istria Coalition (Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS) and allies (Regionalism))</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Prime Minister Coalition (Milan Bandić ‘365 - Party of Labour and Solidarity (BM365), People’s Party – Reformists and allies) (Centre)</td>
<td>4.04</td>
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<td>Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) (Regionalism)</td>
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<td>Other Minorities</td>
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Tumour (Domestic districts): 54.35%

Serbia

Legislative elections

24 April 2017

Previous elections: 16 March 2014

Serbia is a parliamentary republic. It has a unicameral legislative system (Narodna skupština) with 250 seats. The deputies are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system to serve a four-year term. A 5% threshold is established for all political parties, except for those representing minorities for whom the threshold correspond to 0.4%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serbia Is Winning (Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and allies) (Conservatism)</td>
<td>48.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) – United Serbia (JS) – Greens of Serbia (ZS) (Social democracy)</td>
<td>10.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serbian Radical Party (Right wing; Serbian nationalism)</td>
<td>8.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enough is Enough (Liberalism)</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a Just Serbia (Democratic Party (DS); New Party (RS); Reformist Party (RS) and allies(Social democracy, Social Liberalism, Third way)</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dveri – Democratic Party of Serbia DSS (Christian nationalism, National Conservatism)</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for a Better Serbia (LDP–LSV–SDS)</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) –Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMDP) (Minority interests)</td>
<td>1.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosniak Democratic Union of Sandžak</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak (SDAS) (Bosniak minority interests)</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Party (Slovak minority, greens)</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party of Democratic Action (PDD) (Albanian minority interests)</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tumour: 73.41%

Montenegro

Legislative Elections

16 October 2016.

Previous elections: 14 October 2012

Montenegro has a unicameral Assembly (Skupština) with 81 seats. The deputies are elected through a party-list proportional representation system to serve a four-year term within a single nationwide constituency. There is a 3% threshold to gain representation. For the lists representing the Albanian minority, in the event that none surpasses the 3% threshold but the most successful obtains no less than 0.35% of valid votes, then it is entitled to one seat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) (centre-left)</td>
<td>41.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Front (centre-right)</td>
<td>20.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Coalition (Democratic Alliance (DEMOS), Socialist People’s Party (SNP), United Reform Action (URA) (centre)</td>
<td>11.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Montenegro (centre)</td>
<td>10.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (Social democrats)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Democrats (Neoliberalism)</td>
<td>3.26</td>
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<td>Bosniak Party (BS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albanian Coalition (Albanian minority interests)</td>
<td>1.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croatian Civic Initiative (HGI) (Croatian minority interests)</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Tumour: 68.79%

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Legislative elections

11 December 2016

Previous elections: 27 April 2014

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has a unicameral parliament (Sobranie) with 123 seats to serve a four-year term. Deputies are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system, and three of them represent the diaspora. There is no threshold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) (Conservatism)</td>
<td>39.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Union Coalition (SDSM) (Social democracy, Third way)</td>
<td>37.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Union for Integration (DU/BDI) (Albanian minority interests)</td>
<td>7.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Besa Movement (Social conservatism)</td>
<td>5.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Alliance for the Albanians” coalition</td>
<td>3.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA/PDSH) (Albanian minority interests)</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tumour: 68.79%
Cyprus
Legislative Elections

22 May 2016
Previous elections: 22 May 2011
Presidential democratic republic with a unicameral legislature. 59 members of the House of Representatives (Vouli Antiprosopon/Temsilciler Meclisi) are elected by proportional representation for five-year terms of office, with the exception of the three representatives of the Maronite, Roman-Catholic and Armenian minorities. 24 seats are allocated to the Turkish minority in the Northern part of the island, although they have remained vacant since 1963.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% seats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Coalition (DISY, conservatives of the liberal party)</td>
<td>30.69 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL, socialist)</td>
<td>25.67 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (DIKO, liberal)</td>
<td>14.49 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Social Democracy (EDEK)</td>
<td>6.18 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens’ Alliance (SYPOL, centre-left)</td>
<td>6.01 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity Movement (KA, national conservatism, euroescepticism)</td>
<td>5.24 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Ecologists - Citizens’ Cooperation (KOSP, green)</td>
<td>4.81 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Popular Front (ELAM, ultranationalism)</td>
<td>3.71 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 66.74%

Jordan
Legislative elections (House of Deputies)

20 September 2016
Previous elections: 23 January 2013
The Arab Kingdom of Jordan has a bicameral National Assembly (Majlis al-Umma) consisting of the Senate (Majlis al-Ayan) with 65 seats and the Chamber of Deputies (Majlis al-Nuwaab) of 130 members, elected as follows: 103 members are elected by proportional representation from 23 multi-member constituencies. 15 women members are elected from 15 of the constituencies, in which the female candidate with the highest vote is elected. Nine members are elected by the Bedouin minority from three constituencies electing three members each. Nine members are elected by the Christian minority from nine of the constituencies, in which the Christian candidate with the highest vote is elected. Finally, three members elected by the Chechen-Circassian minority from three of the constituencies. Each constituency was contested by multiple lists, some of them allied to lists in other constituencies, but most of them purely local.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front (islamist, Muslim Brotherhood)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamzam (moderate Islamist)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Centrist Party (ICP, Islamist)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Current Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice and Reform Party</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Arab Socialist Ba’ath (Neo-Ba’athism)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Awn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 43.4%

Morocco
Legislative Elections – Assembly of Representatives

7 October 2016
Previous elections: 25 November 2011
Parliamentary Monarchy with bicameral legislature: the Assembly of representatives (Majlis al-Nuwaab/Assemblée des Répresentants and the Assembly of Councillors (Majlis al-Mustasharin). In the 2016 elections, the 395 members of the Assembly of representatives were elected with direct universal suffrage: 305 from party lists in 92 constituencies and the remaining 90 seats from a national list (single constituency) according to a system of quotas: 60 seats reserved for women and 30 reserved for men under the age of 40.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice and Development Party (PID, Islamist)</td>
<td>27.88 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM, liberal)</td>
<td>20.95 102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Istiqlal Party (PI, Centre-right, nationalism) 10.68 46
National Rally of Independents (RNI, Centre-right, liberal) 9.37 37
Popular Movement (MP, conservative) 6.84 27
Socialist Union of People’s Forces (USFP) 6.19 20
Constitutional Union (UC, centrist) 4.54 19
Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS, communist) 4.72 12
Democratic and Social Movement (MDS, centrist) 1.34 3
Federation of the Democratic Left 2.83 2
Union and Democracy Party (PUD, conservative) 0.41 1
Green Left Party (PGV, green) 0.23 1

Turnout: 43%

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http://pomed.org
European Union Cooperation

TABLE A1 Official Aid to Mediterranean Countries Financed under the European Commission Budget and the European Development Fund (EDF) in 2015

(in millions of euros) Commitments Payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
<th>Payments</th>
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<td>Croatia</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo (Res.1244 of the UNSC)</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYROM</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Algeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


*Res. 1244 of the UNSC.
### TABLE A2  European External Assistance in the Mediterranean Countries by Country and Instrument** - Commitments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>INSC</th>
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<th>IPA 2</th>
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</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE A3  European External Assistance in the Mediterranean Countries by Country and Instrument** - Disbursements

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>ENI</th>
<th>DCI - Geo</th>
<th>DCI - Thema</th>
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<th>INSC</th>
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<th>Echo</th>
<th>Other</th>
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### Appendix C: European Union Cooperation

**IEMed. Mediterranean Yearbook 2017**

#### TABLE A4 European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) 2014-2020 Commitments under the ENI Indicative Allocations (in millions of euro)

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### TABLE A8  
**European Investment Bank Loans toward Mediterranean Countries in 2016**

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<td><strong>Bosnia and Herzegovina</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>BMCE Loan for SMEs and Midcaps</td>
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### TABLE A9  
**Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)**

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<th>Funding Allocations in Mediterranean Areas</th>
<th>Millions of euros</th>
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<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td><strong>Palestine</strong></td>
<td>25.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Syrian Crisis (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North Africa (Algeria, Libya)</strong></td>
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Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean

TABLE B1
Breakdown of Net Spanish Official Development Assistance in the Mediterranean Region

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<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>€</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Algeria</td>
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CHART B1
Breakdown of Spanish Gross Development Aid in the Maghreb and the Middle East by Sector (2015)

**TABLE B2**  Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region by Aid Type (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Budget support</th>
<th>Core contributions to multilateral institutions</th>
<th>Project-type interventions</th>
<th>Donor country personnel and other technical assistance</th>
<th>Scholarships for training / research (in developing countries)</th>
<th>Scholarships and student costs in donor countries</th>
<th>Administrative costs not included elsewhere</th>
<th>Development awareness</th>
<th>Refugees in donor countries</th>
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<td><strong>Maghreb and Middle East</strong></td>
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## TABLE C1

Number of Foreigners from MPCs in the European Union by Nationality

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<th>Tunisia</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Libya</th>
<th>Total Euromed immigrants</th>
<th>Total non EU-27 immigrants</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>434</td>
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<td><strong>8,162,375</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,043,026</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### CHART C1


- 2016
- 2015
- 2014

### TABLE C2

<table>
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<th>Member State</th>
<th>Relocated from Italy</th>
<th>Relocated from Greece</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>939</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>204</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

- 3,200
- 8,732

Relocation is the transfer of persons who are in need of international protection from one EU Member State to another EU Member State.*

*Council Decision on the relocation of 120,000 people from Italy and Greece; Council Decision on the relocation of 40,000 people from Italy and Greece (July 2015).

Source: European Commission
### TABLE C3 Resettlements in Europe

Resettlement is one tool to help displaced persons in need of protection to reach Europe safely and legally, and receive protection for as long as necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member State</th>
<th>Total Resettlement*</th>
<th>Total Resettled under the 1:1 Mechanism with Turkey **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>102</td>
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<td>162</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>684</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,213</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Latvia</td>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>25</td>
</tr>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>557</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>278</td>
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<td>Liechtenstein</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,968</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,329</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total resettled under the 20 July scheme, including the 1:1 mechanism with Turkey

** In the EU-Turkey Statement form 18 March 2016 it was agreed that for every Syrian national returned from Greek islands another will be resettled to the EU directly from Turkey. This 1:1 aimed to replace irregular flows of migrants travelling in dangerous conditions across the Aegean Sea by an orderly and legal resettlement process.

Own Production. Source: European Commission

### TABLE C4 Returns from Greece to Turkey (April 2016-June 2017) by Origin

<table>
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<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Syria</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
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<td>Algeria</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri-Lanka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>79</td>
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</table>

Source: UNHCR
The Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements

### TABLE D1: Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start of Negotiations</th>
<th>Agreement Concluded</th>
<th>Agreement Signed</th>
<th>Entry into Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>May 1996</td>
<td>December 1996</td>
<td>February 1997</td>
<td>July 1997*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>March 1995</td>
<td>June 1999</td>
<td>June 2001</td>
<td>June 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>June 1997</td>
<td>December 2001</td>
<td>April 2002</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
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</table>

* Interim agreement signed by the EU and the PLO (to the benefit of the Palestinian Authority).

- To enter into force each Association Agreement must be ratified by the European Parliament, the Parliament of the Partner Country and the Parliaments of the 25 Member States of the European Union.
- Until its accession to the EU, Turkey shall be governed by the Customs Union Agreement, which entered into force in January 1996 and is based on the First Generation Agreement of 1963.
- In 2008 the Association Agreement with Syria was revised. It was planned to be ratified on 26 October 2009. However, Syria indefinitely postponed signing the Association Agreement with the European Union. The agreement will enter into force provisionally when it is signed by Syria. The definitive entry into force requires the European Parliament’s evaluation and ratification by the Member States. In December 2011, Syria suspended its adhesion to UfM. Since 2012, as a result of the conflict escalation and the pressure from the international community, there has not been progress in the signing and ratification of the Association Agreement.
- Negotiations for a Framework Agreement with Libya were launched in 2008, but suspended in 2011 due to the Libyan Civil War; as of 2014 the EU is seeking to re-launch the negotiations.

### TABLE D2: Stabilisation and Association Agreements and EU Accession Process of the of Western Balkan Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start of Negotiations</th>
<th>Agreement Signed</th>
<th>Entry into Force (Interim Agreement)</th>
<th>Entry into Force</th>
<th>Candidate Country</th>
<th>Start of Negotiations</th>
<th>Entry into the EU</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* On 21 May 2006, a referendum was held, which led to Montenegro’s independence from the Federation it had formed with Serbia.
• EU relations with the Western Balkan Countries are regulated by the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The SAP serves as a framework for the development of various instruments and helps each country to carry out political and economic transition preparing them for a new contractual relationship with the EU: the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAAs), under which they aim to progress towards closer association with the EU.

• Negotiations with Serbia were interrupted in May 2006 due to lack of progress in cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In early 2007, the new administration in Belgrade launched a plan and constituted a National Council for cooperation with the ICTY, a measure which allowed negotiations to resume on 13 June 2007. In April 2008, the European Union and Serbia signed the agreement. The Interim Agreement will not enter into force until the EU Council considers that Serbia is fully cooperating with the ICTY. In December 2009, the Council unfroze the Interim Agreement, which entered into force in February 2010. In March 2012 Serbia achieved the status of candidate for EU membership. In September 2013 a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia entered into force. In line with the decision of the European Council in June 2013 to open accession negotiations with Serbia, the Council adopted in December 2013 the negotiating framework and agreed to hold the 1st Intergovernmental Conference with Serbia in January 2014.

• After its declaration and the EU’s acknowledgement of Montenegro as a sovereign and independent State, the EU has maintained relations with independent Montenegro. The SAA was signed on 15 October 2007. In January 2008, the entry into force of the Interim Agreement represented progress towards the national ratification process and closer relations with the EU. The SAA entered into force in May 2010. In June 2012 negotiations began for the accession of Montenegro to the EU. As of 13 December 2016, 26 negotiating chapters, have been opened, of which two have been provisionally closed.

• Three years after the start of negotiations between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2005, the SAA was signed and the Interim Agreement took effect. However, despite real progress in collaboration with the ICTY, the Commission still notes numerous dysfunctions in the institutional and judiciary spheres. On April 21, 2015 the EU notes that Bosnia and Herzegovina meets certain pre-basic criteria: the adoption of a federal law governing public aid and the establishment of a stable system of population census; the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights verdict on the Sejdic-Finci case requiring constitutional amendments for members of the communities of the country, other than the Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, to be elected to the Presidency or as deputies; and that the country creates a unitary body to regulate bilateral relations with the EU. For all these reasons the EU adopts the SAA on April 21, 2015, allowing its entry into force on June 1, 2015. In February 15, 2016 Bosnia and Herzegovina submits its application to join the EU.

• More than seven years after the start of the negotiations, Croatia joined the European Union on 1st July 2013.

• In June 2003, the Thessaloniki European Council decided that all Western Balkan countries be considered as potential candidates for EU accession. Macedonia (2005) and Serbia (2012) have already been granted candidate country status. Albania (2009) has also applied for EU accession. In October 2012, Commission recommended that Albania be granted EU candidate status, subject to completion of key measures in the areas of judicial and public administration reform and revision of the parliamentary rules of procedures. In June 2014, Albania was granted the EU candidate status.

• The negotiations for the signing of an SAA with Kosovo officially began on October 28, 2013. Because this is the first SAA is negotiated after the promulgation of the Treaty of Lisbon, which gave EU legal personality, the SAA with Kosovo did not require ratification by each and every one of the Member States of the EU (EU five states - Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Slovakia and Romania do not recognize the status of Kosovo as an independent state). In the case of Kosovo and because of its unique specificities there is no commercial Interim Agreement associated with the SAA. The SAA was signed in October 27, 2015, and enters into force in April 1, 2016.
Signature of Multilateral Treaties and Conventions

TABLE E1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multilateral Treaties on Human Rights and Penal Matters*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racial discrimination</strong></td>
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Appendices
### TABLE E3
Multilateral Environmental Treaties

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of adoption</th>
<th>Climate change</th>
<th>Kyoto protocol</th>
<th>Biological diversity</th>
<th>Biosafety protocol</th>
<th>CITES</th>
<th>Desertiﬁcation</th>
<th>Persistent organic pollutants</th>
<th>Ozone layer</th>
<th>Control of hazardous wastes and their disposal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td>UN UN UN UN</td>
<td>CITES UN UN UN UN</td>
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### TABLE E4
Multilateral Disarmament Treaties

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<th>Date of adoption</th>
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<th>Nuclear weapons</th>
<th>Bacteriological weapons</th>
<th>Conventional weapons</th>
<th>Chemical weapons</th>
<th>Nuclear testing</th>
<th>Antipersonnel mines</th>
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Source: UN UN UN UN UN UN UN UN UN
### TABLE F1: Human Development Index (HDI)

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Life expectancy at birth 2014</th>
<th>Mean years of schooling 2014</th>
<th>Expected years of schooling 2014</th>
<th>GNI per capita PPP $ 2014</th>
<th>Human Development Index 2014</th>
<th>Position in HDI Ranking 2014</th>
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<td>12.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<td>7.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10,064</td>
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<td>111</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: UNDP.

* Data refer to 2014 or the most recent year available.

---

### CHART F1: Human Development Index and Gross National Income per capita (2005-2014)

Human Development Index and GNI per capita for various countries in the Mediterranean region, showing the correlation between development and economic indicators. The graph illustrates how different countries rank in terms of HDI and their GNI per capita from 2005 to 2014.
### TABLE F2  Population: Demography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Estimated population for 2050</th>
<th>Crude birth rate per 1,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Crude death rate per 1,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Average annual population growth rate</th>
<th>Total fertility rate</th>
<th>Immigrants</th>
<th>Net number of immigrants</th>
<th>Net migration rate per 1,000 inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>millions</td>
<td>millions</td>
<td>per 1,000</td>
<td>per 1,000</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>births per woman</td>
<td>thousands</td>
<td>thousands</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>10.1</td>
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<td>1.28</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>1.32</td>
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<td>8.1</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>9.9</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
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<td>2.30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- Net annual average of migrants: the annual number of immigrants less the annual number of emigrants.
- Net number of migrants divided by the average population of the receiving country for the period under consideration.
- Data unavailable.

---

### CHART F2  Evolution of Population in the 10 Most Populous Mediterranean Countries (1960-2015)

![Evolution of Population in Mediterranean Countries](chart)

**Source:** WB

---

Hi, there! I'm here to assist you today. Please feel free to ask me any questions you have, and I'll do my best to provide you with helpful and accurate responses. Whether you need help with understanding a concept, solving a math problem, or anything else, I'm here to help. Just let me know how I can assist you. :)

Let's get started! What topic would you like to discuss or learn more about? I'm here to help with a wide range of subjects, so feel free to ask me anything. Whether it's science, history, math, writing, or something else, I'll do my best to provide you with valuable insights and knowledge. So, what can I help you with today?
### TABLE F3

#### Population: Structure and Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population age composition</th>
<th>Rural population</th>
<th>Urban agglomerations of more than 750,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Population located on the Mediterranean coastal regions</th>
<th>Urban population living in slums</th>
<th>Population density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>age 0-14 %</td>
<td>age 15-64 %</td>
<td>age 65 %</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>66</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21.8</td>
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<td>15</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: WB. a. Latest data available from this period. b. Own production according to UNPOP data. c. Own production according to National Statistical Offices data. d. Data from 2008. e. Data from 2010. f. Data from 2011. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F3

#### Population of Urban Agglomerations with 300,000 Inhabitants or More in 2014 (2015)

24% - 1: Percentage of Population in Urban Agglomerations - Number of Urban Agglomerations with 300,000 Inhabitants or More

Own production. Source: UNPOP.
TABLE F4

Education and Training of Human Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net enrolment rate</th>
<th>Public expenditure on education</th>
<th>Pre-primary and primary</th>
<th>Secondary and post-secondary</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary pupils per teacher ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>Duration of compulsory education</td>
<td>R&amp;D personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
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Own production. Source: UNESCO

* Latest data available from this period.
TABLE F5  Health and Survival

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Own production. Source: CME. CME WB UNAIDS UNAIDS WB WB (..) Data unavailable.


Own production. Source: CME.
### TABLE F6 Nutrition and Food Security

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<th>Food Supply kcal/person/day</th>
<th>Cereal trade imports mt</th>
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<th>Children underweight % children aged &lt; 5</th>
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Own production, Source: FAO

*Latest data available from this period, Data unavailable,*

### CHART F6 Cereal Import Dependency Ratio (2014)

![Cereal Import Dependency Ratio (2014)](chart.png)

Own production. Source: FAO.
TABLE F7  Access to Health Resources

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<th>Population using improved drinking-water sources %</th>
<th>Population using improved sanitation %</th>
<th>Births attended by skilled health personnel %</th>
<th>Contraceptive prevalence rate %</th>
<th>% of women with a husband or partner who report use</th>
<th>Births per 1,000 women ages 15-19</th>
<th>Total health expenditure % of GDP</th>
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Own production. Source: WHO.

CHART F7  Health Expenditure, Public (% of GDP)

Own production. Source: WHO.
TABLE F8  Gender: Social Development

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<th>Year first woman elected or appointed to parliament</th>
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Own production. Source: UNPOP.

a. Referring to the first year appointed in the current parliamentary system.

b. The date refers to the first year in which a woman was nominated to Parliament.

c. First partial recognition of the right to vote or stand for election.

d. Situation as of 1 January 2017.

e. The values shown refer to lower or single chamber.

f. Latest data available from this period.

(··) Data unavailable.

CHART F8  Life Expectancy at Age 60 (2015)

Own production. Source: UNPOP.
Appendices

The Mediterranean in Brief

The Mediterranean Yearbook 2017

TABLE F9 Technology and Communication

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<th>Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions</th>
<th>Fixed-broadband subscriptions</th>
<th>Active Mobile-broadband subscriptions</th>
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<th>Internet users</th>
<th>Share of ICT goods of total trade</th>
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Own production. Source: ITU

CHART F9 Internet Users and Broadband Subscriptions (2015)

Fixed-broadband subscriptions (per 100 inhabitants)

Active Mobile-broadband subscriptions (per 100 inhabitants)

Internet Users (per 100 inhabitants)

Own production. Source: ITU.
### TABLE F10 Security and Military Expenditure

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<th>Refugees</th>
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Own production. Source: IDMC UNHCR UNHCR WB SIPRI SIPRI SIPRI SIPRI

a. Data only refer to Palestinian refugees under UNHCR mandate.
b. Military pensions not included.
c. Data from 2012.
d. Total exports or imports for the entire period.
e. Includes part of the military pensions.
f. Data refer to the approved budget, not real spending.
g. Excluding paramilitary forces.
h. Includes civil defence spending, which usually accounts for about 4.5% of the total.
i. Data from 2013.
j. Data from 2014.
(..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F10 Military Expenditure (2015)

- **Top Five Countries by Military Expenditure per capita ($)**
- **Military Expenditure (in million $)**
- **Military Expenditure in % of GDP**

Own production. Source: SIPRI.
TABLE F11 Economic Structure and Production

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<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP, current prices 2015 millions $</th>
<th>GDP per capita, current prices 2015 $</th>
<th>GDP growth %</th>
<th>Share in GDP by sector 2015 agriculture %</th>
<th>2015 industry %</th>
<th>2015 services %</th>
<th>Consumer price index %</th>
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Source: IMF, WB. Data from 2014. IMF staff estimates except for Greece and Italy. Data unavailable.

CHART F11 General Government Gross Debt (% of GDP)

Own production. Source: IMF.
### TABLE F12: Agriculture

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*Own production. Source: FAO.*

a. Agricultural area is divided into ‘arable land and permanent crops’ and ‘permanent meadows and pastures’. (.) Data unavailable.

### CHART F12: Cereal Yield kg per hectare (1965-2014)

![Cereal Yield Chart](chart-f12)

*Own production. Source: FAO.*
### Appendixes

#### The Mediterranean in Brief

**IE Med. Mediterranean Yearbook 2017**

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<th>CHART F13</th>
<th>Ovine Meat Production (2014)</th>
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#### TABLE F13 - Livestock

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**Own production, Source:** FAO  
- a. Included bovine, caprine, ovine and buffalo livestock.  
- b. Includes chicken, hens, ducks, turkeys and geese.  
- c. Includes horses, asses, mules and camels. . . Data unavailable.
### TABLE F14  Fisheries

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Own production. Source: FAO

\(^a\) Motorized vessels propelled by engines. \(^b\) Latest data available from this period. \(^c\) Data unavailable.

### CHART F14  Trade in Fish and Derivate Products (2014)

#### Top Five Exporters of Fish and derivate products
- **USA**: 25,000
- **Japan**: 15,000
- **China**: 10,000
- **Spain**: 5,000
- **France**: 2,500

#### Top Five Importers of Fish and derivate products
- **USA**: 25,000
- **Norway**: 20,000
- **Vietnam**: 15,000
- **Thailand**: 10,000
- **China**: 5,000

Own production. Source: FAO
### TABLE F15 Employment and Unemployment

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Employed population</th>
<th>Employment rate</th>
<th>Agriculture %</th>
<th>Industry %</th>
<th>Services %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Women %</th>
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Own production. Source: ILO.


**Employed (in thousands)**

**Unemployed (in thousands)**

Own production. Source: ILO.
### TABLE F16

**Income Distribution**

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Own production. Source: WB.

### CHART F16

**Evolution of Gini Index in some Mediterranean Countries (2004-2013)**

Own production. Source: WB.
### TABLE F17 Gender: Economic Activity

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<th>Women</th>
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<th>Men</th>
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Own production. Source: ILO.

### CHART F17 Employment by Economic Activity and Gender (2015)
### TABLE F18  
Production and Energy Consumption

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<th>Energy production</th>
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Own production. Source: IEA.

- Negative values indicate that the country is a net exporter.
- Includes hydroelectric, biofuels and waste and geothermal, solar and wind. Data unavailable.

### CHART F18  
Energy Production by Renewables and Waste Sources (2014)

- Countries with more than 5,000 ktoe Produced by Renewables and Waste Sources
- Countries with less than 5,000 ktoe Produced by Renewables and Waste Sources

Own production. Source: IEA.
TABLE F19
Production, Consumption and Access to Electricity

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<th>Population with access to electricity</th>
<th>Electricity production</th>
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<td>kWh</td>
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Own production. Source: IEA & WB. * Excluding Hydroelectric. " Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable.

CHART F19
Electricity Consumption by Source (2014)

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### TABLE F20 CO₂ Emissions

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<td>0.22</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: IEA. (a) This does not include motorcycles. (b) Own production according to IEA data. (c) Own production according to OICA data. (d) Data unavailable.

---

### CHART F20 CO₂ Emissions in Mediterranean Countries, Share by Country (2014)

- **Spain** 232
- **France** 285.7
- **Turkey** 307.1
- **Italy** 319.7
- **Portugal** 42.8
- **Morocco** 53.1
- **Greece** 65.9
- **Egypt** 173.3
- **Algeria** 122.9

---

**Legend:**
- **Rest of Med Countries** 483
- **Rest of Med Countries** 71.4
- **Syria** 24.6
- **Tunisia** 25
- **Jordan** 24.1
- **Lebanon** 22.4
- **Serbia** 38.5
- **Libya** 47.9
- **Morocco** 53.1
- **Israel** 64.7

**Note:** Million tonnes of CO₂.
### TABLE F21: Water Resources and Water Consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Water resources coming from other countries</th>
<th>Water dependency</th>
<th>Per capita</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>as % of total resources</th>
<th>Water consumption by sectors</th>
<th>Desalinated water production</th>
<th>Own production</th>
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<td>Total renewable water resources per capita (m$^3$)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total renewable water resources (10$^6$ m$^3$)</td>
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**Source:** FAO *Latest data available from this period.*

---

**CHART F21: Renewal Water Resources in Mediterranean Countries with less Water Resources per Capita (2014)**

[Diagram showing countries with the highest and lowest water resources per capita.]

---

*Own production. Source: FAO. Latest data available from this period.*
### TABLE F22  
**Environment**  

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total area</th>
<th>Forest area</th>
<th>Wood fuel production</th>
<th>National protected areas</th>
<th>Threatened species</th>
<th>Ecological footprint</th>
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*Own production. Source: FAO FAO FAO FAO WB WB IUCN IUCN IUCN GFN*

---

**For these groups there are still many species that have not been assessed. The figures presented should be interpreted as the number of species known to be threatened within those species that have been assessed to date.**

---

**CHART F22  
Ecological Footprint per capita (2013)**

*Own production. Source: GFN.*
### TABLE F23  International Trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Exports 2015</th>
<th>Exports 2015</th>
<th>Coverage ratio</th>
<th>Trade balance</th>
<th>Current account balance</th>
<th>Workers' remittances $</th>
<th>% of total trade $</th>
<th>Foreign direct investment inflows 2015</th>
<th>Foreign direct investment outflows 2015</th>
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Own production. Source: UNCTAD.

- Percentage of exports and imports of goods and services.
- Personal transfers and compensation of employees.
- Own production using UNCTAD data.
- Estimated.
- Data unavailable.

### CHART F23  Trade Balances in Mediterranean Countries (2015)

**Countries with Highest Trade Balance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Trade Balance in Goods</th>
<th>Trade Balance in Services</th>
<th>Total Trade Balance</th>
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<td>500,000</td>
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<td>75,000</td>
<td>225,000</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
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**Countries with Lowest Trade Balance**

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<th>Trade Balance in Services</th>
<th>Total Trade Balance</th>
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Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
### TABLE F24

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<th>All food items</th>
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<th>Fuels</th>
<th>Minerals and metals</th>
<th>Manufactured products</th>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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Own production. Source: UNCTAD.

### CHART F24

All Food Items Exports (2015)

Exports by Product Groups, World

Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
### TABLE F25

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Own production. Source: UNCTAD.

### CHART F25

**All Food Items Imports (2015)**

- Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
### Table F26: Tourism in the Mediterranean

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<th>Inbound tourists thousands</th>
<th>Outbound tourists %</th>
<th>Outbound tourists thousands</th>
<th>International tourism receipts millions $</th>
<th>% of exports</th>
<th>Tourism expenditure in other countries millions $</th>
<th>% of imports</th>
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Own production. Source: UNWTO. WB WB^a WB WB WB WB WB WB WB. ^a Value calculated using WB data. ^b Data from 2014. (%) Data unavailable.


[Chart showing international tourism departures and expenditures for various countries]
TABLE F27  Official Development Assistance (ODA)

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<tr>
<th>Official development assistance by donor countries</th>
<th>Official development assistance in recipient countries</th>
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<td>millions $</td>
<td>% of GNI</td>
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<td>a. Value calculated using OECD data. (..) Data unavailable.</td>
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CHART F27  ODA from EU Institutions to Mediterranean Countries (in million $) (2015)

% ODA from EU Institutions over ODA from All Donors

Own production. Source: WB
### TABLE F28  External Debt

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</table>

Own production. Source: WB.

a. Value calculated using WB data. b. Data unavailable.


![Evolution of External Debt Stocks in Turkey](chart)

Own production. Source: WB.
Definitions

Adolescent fertility rate
Number of births per thousand women aged between 15 and 19.

Agricultural land area
Land surface area made up of arable and permanently cultivated lands and by permanent meadows and pastures.

Annual population growth rate
Exponential change in the growth of the population during the period indicated.

Aquaculture production
Includes marine, freshwater and diadromous fish, molluscs and crustaceans cultivated in marine, inland or brackish environments.

Arable lands and permanent crops
Agricultural surface area that groups the data on arable or farm land and land used for permanent crops. Arable and farm land is land given over to temporary crops (those giving two yields are only counted once) temporal meadows for cutting or grazing, land dedicated to commercial vegetable gardens or orchards and land temporarily fallow for a period of less than five years. The term does not include land that has been abandoned as a result of migratory cultivation. Land destined for permanent crops refers to land dedicated to crops that occupy the terrain during long periods and that do not need to be replanted after each harvest, such as cacao, coffee and rubber. It includes land occupied by bushes destined to flower production, fruit trees, walnut trees and vineyards, but excludes land planted with trees destined to the production of firewood or wood.

Armed forces
Strategic, land, naval, aerial, command and support forces. It also includes paramilitary forces, such as the gendarmerie, the customs services and the border guard if they are trained in military strategy.

Births attended by skilled health personnel
Percentage of births attended by health personnel (physicians, nurses and midwives) that are trained in the care, supervision and counselling of women during pregnancy, birthgiving and puerperium, and who can also deliver babies and assist them on their own.

Broadband Subscriptions (Fixed and Mobile)
Number of active (fixed or mobile) subscriptions to high speed access to the public internet.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions
The emissions of carbon dioxide produced in the burning of all fossil fuels used by a country.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by sector
Shows the proportion of carbon dioxide emissions produced by the burning of fossil fuels in the sectors of transport, industry and electricity production. The transport sector includes emissions produced by all forms of transport by road, rail and air, including agricultural vehicles travelling by road. International journeys by boat or aeroplane are excluded. The industrial and construction sector includes emissions produced by all types of industry and construction. The electricity sector includes emissions produced by the generation of electricity for public use, including thermal power stations.

Cereal production
The figures for cereal production only refer to harvests of dry grain. Crops harvested for hay, unripe foodstuffs, forage and silage, or are used for grazing, are therefore excluded.

Cereal production yield
The outputs per hectare have been calculated using the data on surface area and production.

Cereal trade
The figures obtained by the FAO, have been supplied by the respective governments in the questionnaires sent out by the FAO.

Children overweight
Percentage of overweight (weight-for-height above + two standard deviations of the WHO Child Growth Standards median) among children aged 0-5 years.

Children underweight
Percentage of underweight (weight-for-age less than two standard deviations of the WHO Child Growth Standards median) among children aged 0-5 years.

CO₂ emissions intensity by GDP
Average quantity of CO₂ emitted per unit of incomes generated by a particular economy.

Consumer price index
Reflects changes in the cost, for an average consumer, in the acquisition of a basket of goods and services that can be fixed or can change at specific inter-
Economically active population in Agriculture
Part of the economically active population engaged in or seeking work in agriculture, hunting, fishing or forestry.

Electricity consumption per capita
Refers to the gross production per inhabitant and includes the consumption of auxiliary stations and the losses in the transformers considered an integral part of the central station. It also includes the total electricity produced by pumping stations, without deducting the electricity absorbed by the pumps.

Electricity production
Measured in the alternating equipment terminals of electric power stations. Also includes hydroelectric, coal, oil, gas and nuclear energy sources and generation by geothermal, solar, wind, tidal and marine energy, as well as renewable residues and fuels.

Electricity sources
Refers to the energy sources used to generate electricity: hydroelectric, coal, oil, gas and nuclear.

Employed population
Proportion of the economically active population that is employed. When adding the employed population to the unemployed the result is the whole economically active population or labour force.

Employment by sector
According to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the Agriculture category also includes hunting, fishing and forest exploitation; the Industry category includes mining, extraction and public services (electricity, water and gas); the Services category includes the wholesale and retail trades, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage services, communications, financial services, insurance, real estate, business services, as well as community, social and personal services.

Employment rate
Percentage of population in work relative to the total population of working age.

Energy use
Energy use refers to use of primary energy before transformation to other end-use fuels, which is equal to indigenous production plus imports and stock changes, minus exports and fuels supplied to ships and aircraft engaged in international transport.

Energy production
Primary energy forms – oil, natural gas, coal and its derivatives and renewable fuels and residues – and primary electricity, all converted into equivalents of oil. The renewable fuels and residues refer to solid and liquid biomass, biogas and industrial and municipal residues.

Expected years of schooling
Number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates were to stay the same throughout the child's life.

Export/Import concentration index
The Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index is used, in a normalised version, to obtain values between zero and one (maximum concentration). It measures the degree of market concentration and the calculation takes into account the different product groups exported, according to the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).

Exports
The value of all goods supplied by an economy to the rest of the world. It excludes labour and income in concept of property, as well as transfer payments.

External debt
The sum of the national debt, with public guarantee, private unsecured long-term debt, credit from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and short-term debt.

Fertility rate
Number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age specific fertility rates.

Fertilizer consumption
Amount of vegetable nutrients used per unit of cultivatable land. The fertilizers

Contraceptive prevalence rate
Percentage of women who are married or in a relationship who report using at least one method of contraception.

Crude birth rate
Number of births per year per thousand inhabitants. An estimate is made in the middle of the current year.

Crude death rate
Number of deaths per year per thousand inhabitants. An estimate is made in the middle of the current year.

Current account balance
The sum of the net exports – exports minus imports – of goods and services, incomes and net transfers.

Debt service
The sum of the main payments and interest payments made for long-term debts, interest paid on short-term debts and repayments (redemption and charges) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Desalinated water production
Amount of water produced by elimination of salt from salt water using a variety of techniques, including inverse osmosis. Most of this water is used for domestic purposes.

Duration of compulsory education
Number of years, within a determined age group, that children and young people are legally obliged to attend school.

Ecological footprint
Measurement of the use of renewable natural resources by humanity. For a given population it is defined as the total area of biologically productive land and water required to produce the resources consumed, to maintain energy consumption, to make way for infrastructures and to absorb the waste generated by the population. The unit used to measure the ecological footprint is the global hectare and is defined as a hectare of biologically productive space, equal to the world average.
considered are nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Consumption is calculated as production plus imports minus exports, and traditional nutrients (animal and vegetable fertilizers) are not included. The data obtained is the result of dividing the consumption of fertilizer of each country by the surface area of arable and permanently cultivated land.

**Fish and seafood supply quantity**
Calculated from the availability of fish and seafood for human consumption, divided by the total population within the geographical borders of any given country. Nationals living in other countries are excluded, although foreigners living in the country are included.

**Fixed telephone subscriptions**
Fixed telephone line connecting the subscriber’s terminal equipment to the public switched network.

**Food supply**
Amount of food, in kilocalories per day, available for each person in the population.

**Forest area**
Understood as all land with natural or artificial plots of trees, whether productive or not.

**GDP (see Gross Domestic Product)**

**GDP per capita (see Gross Domestic Product per capita)**

**GDP growth rate**
Annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency.

**GDP per unit of energy use**
Indicator of energy efficiency. The temporary differences and entire countries partly reflect, structural economic changes, changes in the efficiency of particular sectors and differences in the use of fuels. The GDP has been converted into 2005 international dollars.

**Gender inequality index**
The Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects women’s disadvantage in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market—for as many countries as data of reasonable quality allow. The index shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, which indicates that women and men fare equally, to 1, which indicates that women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions.

**Gini index**
Measure of greater or lesser inequality in the distribution of income and consumption, considering a state of perfectly equal distribution. A value of zero represents perfect equality and a value of one hundred total inequality.

**GNI (see Gross National Income)**

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**
The sum of the added value by all the resident producers in an economy, plus any tax on the product (without taking into account the subsidies). The added value is the net profit of an industry after adding together all the profits and subtracting the intermediate contributions.

**Gross Domestic Product by sector**
The contribution of the distinct economic sectors in the GDP is determined according to the added value determined by the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).

**Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP per capita)**
Using the official exchange rates to convert the figures in national currency into USA dollars does not measure the relative internal acquisition powers of each currency in each country. The International Comparison Project (ICP) of the United Nations and the World Bank develop measures of the GDP on an internationally comparable scale using as conversion factors, the Purchase Power Parities (PPP) in respect to each country.

**Gross National Income (GNI)**
The sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad. The added value of the net profit of an industry after having summed up all profits and deducted international contributions.

**HDI (see Human Development Index)**

**Human Development Index (HDI)**
Index elaborated by the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) relating three indicators: income level (per capita GNI), health (life expectancy at birth) and level of education (mean years of education and expected years of schooling).

**Immigrants**
Refers to the people born outside of a given country at the mid point of the year. The data is given in absolute figures and as a percentage in respect to the population of the receiving country.

**Imports**
Value of all goods received by an economy from the rest of the world. It excludes labour and income in concept of property, as well as transfer payments.

**Inbound tourists by destination country**
Number of tourists who travel to a country other than that in which they have their usual residence, for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose main purpose in visiting is other than an activity remunerated from within the country visited.

**Infant mortality rate**
Shows the number of deaths of infants under one year of age per thousand live births.

**Internally displaced people**
As a result of armed conflicts or human rights abuses, some 25 million people
live as internally displaced population. These people were forced to flee from their homes for fear of losing their lives, but unlike refugees, they were displaced within their country’s borders. Even though internally displaced people are twice as many as refugees, their situation receives less international attention.

**International tourism receipts**
Income received in a given country from visitors, including payments made to national freight companies for international freight. It also includes the prepayment of goods and services received in the destination country. It can include the income from single day visitors. The percentage it represents in respect to exports is calculated as a ratio of the exports of goods and services.

**Internet users**
The estimated number of Internet users out of total population. This includes those using the Internet from any device (including mobile phones) in the last 12 months.

**Labour force participation rate**
The labour force participation rate is defined as the ratio of the labour force to the working-age population, expressed as a percentage. The labour force is the sum of the number of persons employed and the number of persons unemployed.

**Land area**
Refers to the total surface area minus the surface covered by inland waters. Inland waters are defined in general as rivers and principle lakes.

**Land under cereal production**
The figures related to cultivated crop surface areas generally refer to the area harvested, although those corresponding to permanent crops can refer to the total planted area. The figures for the cultivated cereal area only refer to harvests of dry grain. Crops harvested for hay, unripe foodstuffs, forage and silage, or used for grazing, are therefore excluded.

**Life expectancy at birth**
The number of years that a new-born infant would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.

**Literacy rate**
Total is the percentage of the population age 15 and above who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life. Generally, “literacy” also encompasses “numeracy,” the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.

**Live animal stock**
The data on stock covers all domestic animals regardless of age, location or final purpose. Estimates have been made for countries that have not supplied data, as well as for countries supplying partial statistics.

**Live animal trade**
Enormous quantities of unregistered animals cross the borders of some countries. In order to obtain more representative international trade figures of live animals, the FAO has incorporated estimates of the unregistered trade.

**Long term external debt**
Debt that has an original or extended maturity of more than one year. It has three components: public, publicly guaranteed and private non guaranteed debt.

**Maternal mortality ratio**
Annual number of deaths of women owing to causes related to pregnancy, for every 100,000 live births.

**Mean years of schooling**
Average number of years of education received by people ages 25 and older in their lifetime based on education attainment levels of the population converted into years of schooling based on theoretical durations of each level of education attended.

**Mediterranean and the Black Sea catches**
Fishing catches for commerce, industry or subsistence (including recreational catches where the data is available). The data refers to the catch by the fleet of a country in the Mediterranean and/or in the Black Sea.

**Military expenditure**
Total expenses effected by the Ministry of Defence and other ministries on the recruitment and training of military personnel, as well as the manufacture and acquisition of military supplies and equipment. Military assistance is included in the expenses of the donor country.

**Mobile cellular telephone subscriptions**
Refers to the subscriptions to a public mobile telephone service and provides access to Public Switched Telephone Network using cellular technology.

**Net energy import**
Shows the amount of energy use by an economy and to what extent it exceeds its domestic production.

**Net enrolment ratio**
Number of students enrolled in a level of education who are of the official school age for that level, as a percentage of the total of the population of official school age for that level. The figures are shown for primary and secondary education.

**Net migration rate**
Net number of migrants divided by the average population of the receiving country within the period considered.

**Net number of migrants**
The entry of immigrants into a given country minus the outgoing emigrants of the same country.

**Official Development Assistance (ODA)**
The net payment of donations and loans granted under advantageous financial terms by official boards of partner countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as international organisations, with a view to promoting economic development and wellbeing, including co-operation and technical assistance.

**Oil equivalent**
All the values of energy production and consumption presented in this classification are calculated and published by the International Energy Agency (IEA).
which uses the equivalent metric tonne of oil based on the calorific content of the energy products as the unit of measurement. An equivalent metric tonne of oil is defined as $10^7$ kilo calories or 11,628 gigawatts per hour (GWh). This amount of energy is practically equal to the amount of energy contained in a tonne of crude oil.

**Outbound tourists by country of origin**

Number of trips that travellers make to a given country from their normal country of residence, for a period of less than one year, for any other reason than to undertake a paid activity in the country visited.

**Passenger cars**

Road motor vehicles, other than two-wheelers, intended for the carriage of passengers and designed to seat no more than nine people (including the driver).

**Permanent pasture**

Refers to land used permanently (five years or more) for herbaceous fodder, whether cultivated or uncultivated (meadows or uncultivated land for grazing).

**Physicians**

Number of medical doctors (physicians), including generalist and specialist medical practitioners, per 10,000 population

**Population density**

The result of dividing the average annual population of a country by its land surface area expressed in square kilometres.

**Population in urban agglomerations of more than 750,000 inhabitants**

Percentage of the population of a country living in metropolitan areas, that in 2005 had a population of more than 750,000 people.

**Population located on the Mediterranean coastal regions**

Population living in the Mediterranean coastal regions of the Mediterranean countries.

**Population living with HIV/AIDS**

Estimated number of people of any age infected with HIV or AIDS. Includes the whole living infected population at the end of 2003, regardless of whether or not they have developed the disease. It shows the actual figure and the percentage in respect of the population of the country.

**Population using improved drinking-water sources**

The percentage of population using an improved drinking water source. An improved drinking water source, by nature of its construction and design, is likely to protect the source from outside contamination, in particular from faecal matter.

**Population using improved sanitation**

Percentage of population using an improved sanitation facility. An improved sanitation facility is one that likely hygienically separates human excreta from human contact. Improved sanitation facilities include: Flush or pour-flush to piped sewer system, septic tank or pit latrine, ventilated improved pit latrine, pit latrine with slab and composting toilet.

**Population with access to electricity**

Refers to the number of people with access to electricity as a percentage of the total population.

**Prevalence of smoking**

The percentage of men and women who smoke cigarettes. The age range varies between countries, but in general it is 15 years of age or above.

**Primary pupil-teacher ratio**

Number of pupils registered in primary schools divided by the number of teachers in primary schools.

**Proportion of households with a computer**

Number of households which declared to have access to a computer at home. A computer includes: a desktop, portable or handheld computer (e.g. a personal digital assistant). It does not include equipment with some embedded computing abilities such as mobile phones or TV sets.

**Proportion of households with internet access**

Number of households which declared to have access to Internet at home. The Internet is a world-wide public computer network. It provides access to a number of communication services including the World Wide Web and carries email, news, entertainment and data files. Access is not assumed to be only via a computer - it may also be by mobile phone, digital TV etc.

**Protected areas**

Areas of land or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biodiversity, natural and associated cultural resources and managed through legal and other instruments. According to The World Conservation Union (IUCN) it includes the total area of all natural reserves, virgin areas, national parks, natural monuments, management areas of habitats and species, as well as protected land and sea areas in each country.

**Public expenditure on education**

Composed of capital expenses (construction, renovation, major repairs and purchase of heavy equipment or vehicles) and running costs (goods and services consumed during the current year and that need to be renewed the following year). It covers expenses such as salaries and rendering of services, contracted or acquired services, books and didactic material, social welfare services, furniture and equipment, minor repairs, fuel, insurance, rent, telecommunications and travel.

**Public health expenditure**

Refers to the recurring and capital expenses in government budgets (central and local), loans and external concessions (including donations by international agencies and non-governmental organizations) and social or compulsory medical insurance funds.

**R & D expenditures**

The current and capital expenses of creative and systematic activities that increase the stock of knowledge. In-
Includes basic and applied research and experimental development work that leads to new devices, products or processes.

**R & D personnel**
All persons employed directly on R&D, as well as those providing direct services such as managers, administrators, etc, expressed as a percentage of a population of one million.

**Refugees**
People who have been forced to flee their country for fear of persecution owing to reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinions or membership of determined social groups and who are unable or unwilling to return. The asylum country is the country in which the refugee has requested asylum, but has not yet received a response, or where he or she has been registered as an asylum seeker. The country of origin refers to the nationality of the seeker or to the country in which he or she is a citizen.

**Rural population**
The estimated population at the mid point of the year in areas defined as rural, as a percentage of the total population of the country.

**Sectorial distribution of the active population**
Shown by the percentages of the workforce employed in the different economic sectors: agriculture, industry and services.

**Share of income or consumption**
In the questionnaires carried out in homes in diverse countries to determine the distribution of income, they make five divisions (or quintiles) from the lowest to the greatest incomes. The two lower quintiles (40%) are considered the poorest. A relation is also made between the richest 10% and the poorest 10%, in order to establish the degree of inequality in incomes.

**Share of ICT goods as percentage of total trade**
Share of ICT goods imports and exports as a percentage of total imports and exports for every economy for which this information is available. The list of ICT goods is defined by the OECD, and was revised in 2010. This new list consists of 95 goods defined at the 6 digit level of the 2007 version of the Harmonised System.

**Short-term external debt**
Debt owed to non-residents having an original maturity of one year or less and interest arrears on long-term debt.

**Surface area**
Refers to the extension of the country in its totality, including the surface area occupied by inland waters.

**Threatened species**
Includes all the species classified by The World Conservation Union (IUCN), as “vulnerable, in danger, or in critical danger,” but excludes all introduced species, species whose status is not sufficiently known, extinguished species and those still without an assigned status.

**Total area equipped for irrigation**
Area equipped to provide water (via irrigation) to the crops. It includes areas equipped for full and partial control irrigation, equipped lowland areas, pastures, and areas equipped for spate irrigation.

**Total catches**
Fishing catches for commerce, industry or subsistence (including recreational catches where the data is available). The data refers to the catch by the fleet of a country in any part of the world. Marine fishing is practiced in seas or oceans, while freshwater fishing takes place in rivers, wetlands and inland lakes.

**Total health expenditure**
Funds mobilized by the system. Sum of general government and private expenditure on health.

**Total population**
Includes all of the residents of a country or territory with the legal status of citizen, except refugees settled in a country of asylum, who are generally considered as part of the population of their country of origin. Values for 2005 and projections for 2050 are shown.

**Tourism expenditure in other countries**
The expenditure in other countries of travellers from a given country, including the payments to national freight companies for international freight. It can include the expenses of single day travellers. The percentage it represents in respect of the exports, is calculated as a ratio of the exports of goods and services.

**Trade balance**
Account that holds the imports and exports of an economy during a certain period of time with the purpose of reflecting the corresponding balance. The negative values indicate a deficit in the trade balance.

**Trade in fish and derivative products**
Expresses the value associated to the exports and imports of live, fresh, frozen, chilled, dried, salted, smoked and tinned fish and derivative products. Includes fresh and salt water and aquaculture fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

**Under-five mortality rate**
Probability of death between birth and becoming five years old, expressed per thousand live births.

**Unemployment rate**
Percentage of the active population without work, but available for and seeking employment.

**Urban population living in slums**
A place of precarious settlement is a group of individuals who live under the same roof and lack one or more of the following conditions: secure tenure (state protection against illegal eviction), access to drinking water, access to basic healthcare, structural dwelling quality and sufficient vital space. In accordance with the situation of the city in which the precarious settlement is found, this concept can be locally adapted.

**Water consumption**
Total water used by humans in a year, without taking into account the losses due to evaporation in reservoirs. In-
includes water from non renewable underground sources, from rivers coming from other countries and from desalinated plants.

**Water dependency**
Percentage of water available in one country, coming from another.

**Water resources**
Refers to the total renewable resources, covering the watercourses of the country (rivers and underground rain water reserves) and the watercourses originating in other countries.

**Women in parliamentary seats**
Refers to the percentage of seats occupied by women in a lower or single chamber, or in a higher chamber or senate, according to each case. In the case where there are two chambers, the data refers to the weighted average of the participation of women in both chambers.

**Wood fuel production**
Includes wood from trunks and branches, used as fuel for cooking, heating or producing energy.

**Workers’ remittances**
According to the definition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Balance of Payments Manual, workers’ remittances are goods and financial assets transferred by immigrants living and working in an economy (where they are considered residents) in favour of the residents of their former country of residence. An immigrant must live and work in the new economy for more than one year to be considered a resident there. The transfers made to the immigrants own accounts abroad are not considered transfers. Moreover, all those derived from the possession of a business by an immigrant are only considered to be normal transfers to the country of origin.

**Year when women obtained the right to stand for election**
The dates refer to the year when the universal and equal right to stand for election was recognized. In the cases when two years appear, the first refers to the first partial recognition of the right to stand for election.

**Year when women obtained the right to vote**
The dates refer to the year when the universal and equal right to vote was recognized. In the cases when two years appear, the first refers to the first partial recognition of the right to vote.
List of the Organisms Consulted for Drawing Up Tables, Charts and Maps

CITES, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora  
www.cites.org

Eurobarometer  
http://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm

EIB, European Investment Bank  
www.eib.org

Europeaid, Development and Cooperation  
ec.europa.eu/europeaid

EUROSTAT, Statistical Office of the European Commission  
ec.europa.eu/eurostat

FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
www.fao.org

GFN, Global Footprint Network  
www.footprintnetwork.org/

IDMC, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
www.internal-displacement.org

IEA, International Energy Agency  
www.iea.org

IGME, UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, Child Mortality Estimates  
www.childmortality.org

ILO, International Labour Organization  
www.ilo.org

IOM, International Organization for Migration  
www.iom.int

IMF, International Monetary Fund  
www.imf.org
IPU, Inter-Parliamentary Union
www.ipu.org

ITU, International Telecommunication Union
www.itu.int

IUCN, World Conservation Union
www.iucn.org

Med.Cronos
www.iemed.org

Millennium Development Goals Indicators
http://mdgs.un.org

OECD, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
www.oecd.org

Pew Research Center
www.pewglobal.org

Psephos Adam Carr’s Election Archive
psephos.adam-carr.net

SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
www.sipri.org

UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
www.unaids.org

UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
www.unctad.org

UNDP, United Nations Development Program
www.undp.org

UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme
www.unep.org

UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
www.unesco.org

UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund
www.unfpa.org

UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
unhabitat.org/
UNHCR, United Nations Refugee Agency
www.unhcr.ch

UNHCR The Refugees Operational Portal - Mediterranean

UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

UNICEF, United Nations Children’s Fund
www.unicef.org

United Nations Treaty Collection
untreaty.un.org

United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN)

UNPOP, United Nations Population Division
www.unpopulation.org

UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
www.unrwa.org

UNSTAT, United Nations Statistics Division
unstats.un.org

UNWTO, World Tourism Organization
www.unwto.org

WB, World Bank
www.worldbank.org

WHO, World Health Organization
www.who.int
## Country Abbreviations in Charts and Maps

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Country Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>AL</td>
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<td>PS</td>
<td>Palestinian Territory, Occupied</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFAC</td>
<td>Arab Fund for Arts and Culture</td>
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<td>AFD</td>
<td>Agence Française de Développement</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFRICOM</td>
<td>Unites States Africa Command</td>
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<td>AII</td>
<td>Adriatic-Ionic Initiative</td>
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<td>AIO</td>
<td>Active Islamic Youth (BA)</td>
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<td>AJ</td>
<td>al-Jihad Islami</td>
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<td>AKP</td>
<td>Justice and Development Party (TR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALF</td>
<td>Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALMP</td>
<td>Active labour market policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANIMA</td>
<td>Euro-mediterranean Network of Investments Promotion Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>AQAP</td>
<td>Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula</td>
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<td>AQI</td>
<td>Al-Qaeda in Iraq</td>
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<td>AQIM</td>
<td>Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb</td>
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<td>ARLEM</td>
<td>Euro-mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of South East Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ASVDH</td>
<td>Sahrawi Association of Victims of Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed by the Moroccan State</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>BND</td>
<td>Federal Intelligence Service (DE)</td>
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<td>BTK</td>
<td>Communication Technology Authority (TR)</td>
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<td>CBC</td>
<td>Cross-Border Cooperation</td>
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<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>United States Central Command</td>
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<td>CETA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
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<td>CGEM</td>
<td>Moroccan General Business Federation</td>
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<td>CHP</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>DG NEAR</td>
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<td>Not in Education, Employment or Training</td>
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<td>OPEC</td>
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<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<td>Occupied Territories</td>
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<td>Party for Authenticity and Modernity (MA)</td>
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<td>PNA</td>
<td>Palestinian National Authority</td>
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<td>PPRD-South</td>
<td>Programme of Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters</td>
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<td>PPS</td>
<td>Party of Progress and Socialism (MA)</td>
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<td>R&amp;D</td>
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<td>Research, Development and Innovation</td>
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<td>Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>SD</td>
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<td>Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
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<td>SIPRI</td>
<td>Stockholm International Peace Research Institute</td>
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<td>SPC</td>
<td>Southern Partner Countries</td>
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<td>SSN</td>
<td>Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarines</td>
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<td>SSR</td>
<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
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<td>STEM</td>
<td>Sciences, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics</td>
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<td>TAIEX</td>
<td>Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument</td>
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<td>Treaty on European Union</td>
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<td>Kosovo Liberation Army</td>
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<td>UEMF</td>
<td>Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes</td>
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<td>UfM</td>
<td>Union for the Mediterranean</td>
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<td>UGTT</td>
<td>Tunisian General Labour Union</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus</td>
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<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<td>UNRWA</td>
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Authors

Sébastien Abis
Director, Club DEMETER
Associate Research Fellow, The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS), Paris

Roger Albinyana
Director of Euro-Mediterranean Policies and Regional Programmes
European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), Barcelona

Yossi Alpher
Writer
Ramat HaSharon, Israel

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na‘im
Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law
Emory University School of Law, Atlanta

Abbas Assi
Academic and researcher
Beirut

Rym Ayadi
HEC Montreal & Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association

Dr Marko Babić
Institute of European Studies
Faculty of Political Science and International Studies
University of Warsaw

Rosa Balfour
Senior Fellow, Europe Programme
German Marshall Fund of the Unites States, Brussels

Oriol Barba
Director
MedCities, Barcelona

Katherine Bauer
Blumenstein-Katz Family Fellow
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington DC
Haykel Ben Mahfoudh  
Professor of Public International Law, University of Carthage  
Expert in Security Sector Reform

**Bernard Botiveau**  
Emeritus Director of Research,  
French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS)  
Institut de Recherches et d’Études sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman (IREMAM), Aix-en-Provence

**Abdelmajid Charfi**  
President  
Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts Beit Al-Hikma, Tunis

**Jocelyne Cesari**  
Professor of Religion and Politics, University of Birmingham  
Senior Research Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University

**Pierre Conesa**  
Former Senior Official  
Ministry of Defence, Paris

**Kaku Attah Damoah**  
University of Trento and University of Florence

**Hamed El-Said**  
Chair and Professor of International Political Economy, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Senior Advisor, United Nations Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force, New York

**Amb. (ret’d) Gerald M. Feierstein**  
Senior Fellow and Director  
Center for Gulf Affairs, Middle East Institute, Washington DC

**Irene Fernández Molina**  
Lecturer in International Relations  
University of Exeter

**Senén Florensa**  
President of the Executive Committee  
European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), Barcelona

**Lorenzo Gabrielli**  
Researcher at GRITIM-UPF, Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration,  
Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona  
IEMed Associate Fellow, Barcelona

**Johannes Hahn**  
Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations  
European Commission, Brussels
Ari Heistein  
Special Assistant to the Director  
Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv

Damien Helly  
Visiting Professor  
College of Europe, Bruges

Miguel Hernando de Larramendi  
Research Group on Arab and Muslim Societies (GRESAM)  
University of Castilla-La Mancha

Jérôme Heurtaux  
Senior Lecturer, Paris-Dauphine University, PSL Research University, CNRS, [UMR 7170], IRISSO, Paris, France  
Research Fellow, Institut de recherche sur le Maghreb contemporain, Tunis

Max Hoffman  
Associate Director  
Center for American Progress, Washington DC

Kristen Kao  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
The Program on Governance and Local Development  
University of Gothenburg

Riva Kastoryano  
Research Director, CNRS  
Sciences Po – Centre de recherches internationales (CERI), Paris

Professor Bichara Khader  
Catholic University of Louvain

Dr. Aysegül Kibaroglu  
Department of Political Science and International Relations  
MEF University, Istanbul

Zoran Klarić  
Associate Professor / Senior Research Advisor  
Institute for Tourism, Zagreb

Cosimo Lacirignola  
Secretary General  
International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Paris

Erwan Lannon  
Professor  
University of Ghent
Ian O. Lesser  
Vice President  
The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Agnès Levallois  
Research Associate, Fondation pour la recherche stratégique (FRS), Paris  
Lecturer, Sciences Po, Paris

Aurèlia Mañé Estrada  
University of Barcelona and University of East Anglia, Norwich

Dina Matar  
Senior Lecturer  
Centre for Media Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London

Dr Abderrahmane Mebtoul  
University professor, international expert

Giles Merritt  
Founder and Chairman  
Friends of Europe, Brussels

Stella Neelsen  
Institute for European Studies  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Dr. Majeda Omar  
Director  
Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, Jordan

Soli Özel  
Lecturer at Kadir Has University, Istanbul  
Richard Von Weizsacker Fellow, Robert Bosch Academy, Berlin

Giovanni Pagani  
Researcher in Urban Development and Reconstruction, Barcelona

Marc Pierini  
Visiting Scholar  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Europe, Brussels

Thomas Pierret  
Senior Lecturer  
University of Edinburgh

Eman Ragab  
Senior Researcher  
Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS), Cairo
Raul Ramos  
Regional Quantitative Analysis Group AQR-IREA  
University of Barcelona & IZA

Carmen Rodríguez López  
Professor of Contemporary Turkish Studies  
Department of Arab and Islamic Studies  
Autonomous University of Madrid

Nadim N. Rouhana  
Professor of International Affairs and Conflict Studies  
Director, Program on International Negotiation and Conflict Resolution  
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford

Moisés D. Santana  
Entrepreneur and PhD Student at the University of Barcelona

Giulio Sapelli  
Research Associate  
Fondazione ENI Enrico Mattei, Milan

Yasmine Seghirate  
Head of Communication  
International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Paris

Peter Seeberg  
Associate Professor, Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark  
Director of Danish–Jordanian University Cooperation

Dr Igor Sutyagin  
Senior Research Fellow  
Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London

Giovanna Tanzarella  
Institut de recherche et d'études Méditerranée Moyen-Orient (iReMMO), Paris

Clément Therme  
Research Fellow for the Middle East Programme  
International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London

Mattia Toaldo  
Senior Policy Fellow  
European Council on Foreign Relations, London

Beatriz Tomé-Alonso  
Research Group on Arab and Muslim Societies (GRESAM)  
Loyola University Andalusia
Florian Trauner
Institute for European Studies
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Dr. Theodoros Tsakiris
Assistant Professor of Geopolitics and Energy Policy, University of Nicosia
Energy Program Director, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Athens

Pierre Vimont
Senior Fellow
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Europe, Brussels

Michael Werz
Senior Fellow
Center for American Progress, Washington DC

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin
Executive Director
Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv

Yahia H. Zoubir
Professor of International Studies & International Management
Director of Research in Geopolitics
KEDGE Business School, Marseille