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Foreword

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

We are now at the 15th edition of the IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook. During the publication of these 15 editions, the Mediterranean as a region has been witness to a multitude of events, from situations that were unimaginable 15 years ago to stagnated conflicts which have hardly changed, revolutions, wars, political setbacks, heartening progress, economic crises or bitter disappointments.

For better or for worse, an endless stream of events has made its way into the Yearbook. Yet, even in a publication as extensive as this one, it is impossible to truly capture and contain such a boundless reality and effervescence of activity. An important part of the Yearbook’s work, therefore, throughout these 15 editions, has been to try to capture the essence of the events, to select the most important, to go beyond telling the news and offer an in-depth analysis of the phenomena that are deciding the fate of the Mediterranean region. This analysis has been embodied in the pages of the Yearbook in a precarious balancing act between current affairs and long-term processes, including events that are immediate, urgent, relevant and underlying.

The selection of themes and articles that constitute the Yearbook’s contents is an attempt at capturing this boundless reality in a single publication, limiting all that complexity, richness and diversity to just 500 pages. This selection process sees its culmination in the Keys section of the Yearbook, where we strive to attain that delicate balance and present the most important themes in the Mediterranean area.

The first of this year’s Keys focuses on the challenges of globalization, on the social changes this represents and the state crises that arise as a result of these transformation processes. The articles analyze the challenges that states are facing, the transformation brought about by the digital revolution in the Mediterranean or the radically different trajectories of the Arab countries following the Arab Spring uprisings.

In this edition, Keys analyzes the role of the main non-European Mediterranean players in the Mediterranean area. At a time when European influence in the Mediterranean seems to have weakened, the major world powers are coming back into the regional limelight. Four articles, therefore, explain firstly how Russia’s return to the fore on the international scene has included a major role in the Mediterranean, especially in the Middle East, where it has adopted a decisive role in the Syrian conflict. The Yearbook also dedicates an article to China’s presence in the Mediterranean; an economic presence which has steadily grown in recent years and has led to an increase in China’s political influence. The Gulf countries have also increased their influence in the Mediterranean, their disputes, to some extent, continuing through conflicts, such as in Libya, or in the relations they establish with Mediterranean Arab countries thanks to financial aid. Lastly, there is also an analysis of US politics in the Mediterranean, especially following the administration change and arrival of a President such as Trump, and his effect on US foreign policy.

The third part of Keys, which comprises the first section of the Yearbook, is focused on sectarianism and the politics of hate in the Mediterranean. Three articles here deal with different aspects of this topic: on the one hand the geopolitics linked with sectarianism in the Middle East (with a particularly strong role played by the Saudi Arabia - Iran rivalry), while on the other hand the advance of Islamophobia, analyzed in the European and US context. Lastly, the subject of minorities in the Middle East is another theme discussed in these pages, specifically, in this case, the future of the region’s Christian minorities.
The selection of the last subject in Keys was determined by its importance in world news as well as its proximity. The attacks in Barcelona in August 2017, little more than 700 metres from where the Yearbook is prepared, have made violent extremism one of the themes of Keys in this edition. This area has been approached from varying angles: the role of young people and European jihadism; that of the jihadi networks following the fall of Daesh’s pseudo-caliphate or the role of returning foreign fighters and the security challenges they represent.

After Keys, the next major section of the Yearbook, the Dossier, provides an in-depth analysis on the subject of relations between Europe and the Mediterranean. The degree of European involvement with its southern and eastern Mediterranean neighbours is hugely decisive in the development of the Mediterranean area. The Dossier looks at relations between Europe and the Mediterranean from different areas and different perspectives. This section, therefore, contains articles on the geopolitical framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations, the role of the ‘renewed’ neighbourhood policies or the effect of Europe’s crisis when it comes to relations with Mediterranean countries. There are also two articles on the bilateral relations of France and Germany with Mediterranean countries and their influence in European relations. The Dossier also incorporates two fundamental areas in recent Euro-Mediterranean relations: the new European defence policy and its relation with ongoing conflicts in the Mediterranean and the effect of the European response to the refugee crisis on European values. The crisis of European ideals has had a direct impact on Euro-Mediterranean relations.

The European Union is in the grip of a wave of national populism, feeding on the fears and lies that are being spread concerning the very values that have enabled the Union to grow, like solidarity, cooperation and shared development. Europe must respond to these challenges and strengthen its potential. If the European Union responds tentatively to humanitarian emergencies such as irregular migration, in fear of a xenophobic response, it will do a disservice to its capacity as an international leader and will lose its ability to promote an alternative discourse in international geopolitics, a discourse that favours development, solidarity and cooperation and which has a common goal. The EU has not lost its potential, but it must adapt to new times, to greater integration, a deeper union and a consensus on external politics, which can take the Union forwards to the next stage and, in so doing, give fresh impulse to Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Like in previous editions, the articles from Panorama, which are more brief and specific, complete and complement the preceding sections and encompass a broad range of subjects. Although they may appear less important than the themes dealt with in Keys and Dossier, they are an attempt to cover the boundless reality that is the Mediterranean area and offer a broad geographic and subject-based range of articles. Firstly, it is worth highlighting articles that complement some of the themes from Keys or the Dossier, such as jihadism in the Sahel, the training of imams, the crisis between the Gulf countries, the new youth culture or the European-Arab dialogue.

The selection of articles also addresses the internal politics of most Mediterranean countries, including themes such as food security, information technologies and employment, the geopolitical impact of climate change, the media in Arab countries, human trafficking in the Mediterranean, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen or the protection of cultural heritage.

To complement and complete the information offered by this great volume of articles, the second part of the Yearbook is dedicated to Appendices, which aim to provide readers with a wealth of information, enabling them to gain further insight into the Mediterranean reality. Chronologies, statistics, country profiles, maps and other annexes offer a general understanding of the different aspects of Mediterranean countries and pose new questions for readers, into which they can then delve more deeply.

Over the years, a body of knowledge on the Mediterranean area has grown from these 15 editions of the Yearbook, which now constitute a unique compendium of information. Working on the 15 editions has, therefore, meant treading a path which, to a greater or lesser extent, has uncovered the Euro-Mediterranean reality, offering our readers an informative and knowledge-based guide with the tools needed to take an informed and analytical approach to the complexity of the Mediterranean world. This is something that requires great effort from many contributors, and I couldn’t end this presentation without expressing my gratitude, and that of the IEMed, to all those who have participated, in one way or another, in these 15 editions.
Perspectives
The Future of Europe at Stake in the Mediterranean Region

Antonio Tajani
President
European Parliament, Brussels

The coming months will be decisive to the future of Europe. If the European Union Member States do not put an end to their disagreements and find a means to regulate the inflow of migrants and asylum seekers, the EU project could be shaken forever.

A real short, medium and long-term strategy is required. First of all, departures from countries of transit and the African seaboard must be stopped, allowing only those who are truly eligible for asylum to reach Europe. After this, asylum-seekers should be distributed among the European countries according to an automatic, obligatory mechanism.

Departures must be stopped and people smugglers must be prevented from continuing their deadly traffic, which is making the Mediterranean an immense cemetery. Those who truly need asylum cannot be left at the mercy of traffickers without scruples. Obstructing departures also means ending the accumulation of profits by these merchants of men, women and children.

Let us take example from the agreement made with Turkey, which has allowed the Balkans route to be closed.

Six Billion Euros for the Mediterranean

The European Union must invest at least 6 billion euros to block the access routes across the Mediterranean. Based on EU-Niger cooperation, we must collaborate more with countries of transit, namely Mauritania, Mali, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya. Before 2016, some 150,000 migrants were passing through Niger every year. By 2018, there were no more than 5,000. I travelled to Niger this past 18 July to step up our cooperation. On the political level, but also on the economic front. A significant delegation of European businesses accompanied me to strengthen ties between Europe and this region and contribute financial means to the private sector.

Reforming the Dublin System

In 2017, three fifths of asylum requests in Europe were made in only three countries: Germany, Italy and France. This injustice is connected to the Dublin Regulation, which is causing increasing tension among EU Member States.

We must adapt it to create a more effective European asylum system. In November 2017, the European Parliament already adopted a proposal for equitable distribution of asylum seekers. This text is a stepping stone for reform.

Without European strategy, the motto of everyone for themselves will prevail and it will be the end of the Schengen Area.

Taking Action for Libya

The EU must coordinate its action in Libya. I travelled there in early July to provide the European Parliament’s support to the stabilization process, which, in particular, involves organizing dem-
ocratic elections as quickly as possible. We are ready to provide resources and skills to ensure these important elections run smoothly.

Departures from countries of transit and the African seaboard must be stopped, and people smugglers must be prevented from continuing their deadly traffic, which is making the Mediterranean an immense cemetery.

Next October, the European Parliament will host all parties interested in the organization and proper functioning of these elections. But we will also discuss security, economic stabilization and the reconstruction of a viable health system.

An Ambitious Marshall Plan for Africa

An effective global strategy should also deal with the deep-seated causes of these exoduses. By 2050, the population of Africa will have doubled. Unless we take action, the hundreds of thousands of migrants knocking at our doors today will become millions.

The instability in vast regions of Africa and the Middle East is behind this inflow, as are terrorism, poverty, famine and climate change. This is why, at the European Parliament, we are demanding a Marshall Plan for Africa. We will need at least 40 billion euros to mobilize 500 billion in investments. The aim is to open up perspectives and raise employment for young Africans in their countries, allowing them to regain hope.

At the European Parliament, we are demanding a Marshall Plan for Africa. The aim is to open up perspectives and raise employment for young Africans in their countries, allowing them to regain hope.

The European Parliament proposes an intelligent, credible strategy. We must set aside national egotism and act together to rebuild the Mediterranean, the crucible of our civilizations, the essential link between Europe, the Maghreb and Africa.
Keys
Globalisation, Changing Societies and the Crisis of State

Challenging the State from above, Empowering It from within

Silvia Colombo
Head of the Mediterranean and Middle East Programme
Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a heterogeneous region characterized by multiple stresses. The existence of inter-state as well as intra-state conflicts and multiple political and societal fault lines has traditionally opened the door to external interference, sometimes leading to outright external intervention by a host of external actors. This trend has been facilitated by and has led to the weakening and erosion of states in the region in performing their tasks. Maintaining order and security, providing for at least a modicum of political and economic governance, and fulfilling key basic needs of the population are the functions traditionally associated with states. However, a cursory look at the state of the region points to the fact that MENA is experiencing a crisis of statehood and governance.

The focus of this article is on how the MENA region’s configuration as an increasingly ‘penetrated’ and globalized system of states affects the EU’s policy-making. The presence, interests and actions of external players, such as the United States, Russia and China, will be briefly scrutinized in terms of their cooperation patterns – beyond their geopolitical outreach – with the states and/or societies in the region. In parallel, an assessment of the new European Union’s (EU) focus on fostering ‘resilience’ in MENA will be undertaken. What emerges from the evidence presented in this contribution is that although there are powerful forces pulling MENA states apart from above, there are a number of players making efforts to strengthen their foundations and to endow them with the ability to reform and withstand crises. The sum of all these trends is an increasingly globalized MENA state system, but at the same time one that is built around the importance of the domestic and local dimensions.

A ‘Penetrated System’: the MENA Region, Globalization and the Role of External Actors

Dominant forces of the prevailing global order – usually Western and European states – have traditionally been accused of penetrating the MENA system and thus shaping the destiny of regional politics and embedding the region in the dynamics of the global balance of power. In this respect the MENA regional system is often described as the object of high and unparalleled intervention and control by actors from outside the region. Since Ottoman times, extra-regional powers have aimed at protecting their vital interests in the region by actively participating in local and regional politics. This narrative was especially emphasized during the Cold War, a period characterized by the involvement of superpowers in MENA, unveiling the region’s ‘strategic importance.’ Regional actors aligned themselves with the United States or the USSR, transferring the bipolar order to regional politics, although not necessarily directly ‘controlling’ the politics of regional states. The MENA region became strongly embedded in the dynamics of global politics, forging alliances around the two superpowers.

These circumstances strengthened the view of MENA as a ‘penetrated system.’ The existing scholarship has tended to describe the relationship between the global and regional actors by framing it as a patron-client dynamic, i.e., as a relationship between weak states and great powers. The ‘penetrated system’ concept transcends the Cold War era and has been used as a way to understand how extra-regional actors have played a critical role in shaping the socio-political reality of the MENA region through their direct presence (colonialism/imperialism) or (in)direct influence. From the perspective of the MENA states, however, debates have focused more on the level of autonomy this regional sub-system and its actors have vis-à-vis external forces. In this respect, globalization, deepening interdependencies and changes in the global distribution of power point to the fact that the MENA states have been able to shape international politics and the global order more than what was once thought. Mutual interdependence enabled MENA countries to toy with Western powers and play them out to guarantee their collaboration in advancing individual state agendas. This is clear when it comes to the emerging regional would-be hegemons such as Iran, Qatar and Saudi Arabia and their projection onto the MENA chessboard. These players have increasingly adopted autonomous foreign policy stances vis-à-vis the dwindling commitments and interests of the United States in the region, the once global super power. The spillover of regional conflicts from Syria and Yemen after 2011 has prompted a greater involvement by these regional players, which at the same time has raised the stakes in the conflicts. Security perceptions and the need to secure key strategic interests have led Riyadh, Tehran and Doha to effectively manipulate the agendas of global players – particularly Russia and the United States – to their own benefit. All in all, the regional system is the path for gaining further autonomy from the interests of global powers or to draw global agendas closer to the domestic and local levels.

Regarding the global distribution of power and its impact on the MENA region, the US dominance in the region based on the protection of its interests (first and foremost Israel’s security and a permanent military presence in the Gulf) ended during the first decade of the 21st century, leaving space for what has been defined as ‘the rise of the rest.’ More concretely, a new centre of global power has swiftly emerged in Asia in terms of demography, economy, trade, technology and ideas with its increased projection onto the MENA region itself. These developments have meant that the end of America’s period of unipolarity, rather than prompt a multipolar structure, paved the way for a system with a power vacuum, as no single unit is willing or able to exercise leadership. The loss of gravity in the international system and the lack of effective global governance schemes force major external powers, such as China, the United States, the EU or Russia, to compete for influence in the MENA region, although without the possibility of shaping its socio-economic and political reality entirely. This means that in the framework of post-bipolar-world globalization, states in MENA act both under the pressure of and in response to the influence exerted by external players, attempting to ‘govern globalization’ and shaping ‘the global structure of interdependencies’ in prioritized policy areas. This point leads us to the investigation of the current role of external players in MENA as cooperation partners and their impact on the states in the region.

Russia

Russia’s cooperation in the MENA region has consisted mainly in bilateral agreements between institutional bodies, but also in deals between private companies, and priority areas such as security, military and trade. Trade relations with the region as a whole reached $42 billion in 2017, with a 32% growth in trade, especially with Turkey, Egypt, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Egypt has been the

References:

object of a systematic engagement by Russia through economic, energy and military cooperation. Its trade volume with Russia reached $5.5 billion in 2017. During the first months of 2018, the Egyptian government approved the agreement for the creation of the Russian Industrial Zone in East Port Said on the Suez Canal Economic Axis, where investments are projected to reach around $7 billion and 35,000 new jobs are to be created in a wide array of industries. Recently, Egyptian and Russian ministries have signed a $21-billion deal for the construction of a nuclear power plant, which represents both a decisive step for Egypt towards alternative energy resources and a significant response to its domestic energy demand growth. Cooperation on trade and energy has been accompanied by a steady increase in opportunities in the military sector.

In the framework of post-bipolar-world globalization, states in MENA act both under the pressure of and in response to the influence exerted by external players, attempting to ‘govern globalization’ and shaping ‘the global structure of interdependencies’ in prioritized policy areas

Lebanon has recently moved its eyes towards Russia, especially for stronger economic cooperation. Initial steps have been taken through mutual investments with Russia in 2017 after the signing of a cooperation agreement with a Russian trade company in the framework of the Lebanese business delegation’s visit to Russia in April 2017. Russian cooperation in Tunisia has traditionally focused on counter-terrorism, nuclear energy – with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on nuclear cooperation in 2016 – and tourism. In the tourist sector, a 10% increase in the number of Russian tourists in Tunisia between 2016-2017 led to positive economic results for Tunisia as well as to closer relations with the Kremlin. As far as Algeria is concerned, Russian cooperation is mainly military. In 2014, Algeria signed a $1-billion arms deal with Russia, which made it the top buyer of Russian arms in the region. In addition to this, in 2016, Algeria and Russia began sharing intelligence on terrorist groups’ movements and announced a strengthening of their military cooperation. There is currently renewed cooperation in the energy sector, but due to the restrictive foreign investment laws in Algeria, it is difficult for Russia to get better energy deals. Finally, Morocco-Russia cooperation was stepped up in 2017 through the signing of 11 agreements in the agricultural, military and energy sectors.

China

Chinese cooperation with the MENA countries has seen a significant increase in recent years, first and foremost in the energy sector, thanks to China’s high energy demand. Secondly, with the implementation of its One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, China has endowed the New Silk Road Fund with $40 billion and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with $100 billion to be invested in part-

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8 Ibidem.
13 Feuer, Sarah and Borshchevskaya, Anna, Cit.
The importance of the OBOR initiative is noticeable in various bilateral agreements and deals that have increased trade opportunities and have led to cooperation in infrastructure projects with MENA countries. The recent MoU signed with Morocco, after the China-Morocco Economic Forum in Rabat in November 2017, with the aim of enhancing bilateral trade and investments, is a case in point. Another example is the contract signed in 2015 by a Chinese company for the building of the new multi-purpose terminal in the Alexandria Port (Egypt) and the fact that the China Railway Construction Corporation was participating in 2017 in the construction of a railway in Egypt. To complete the picture of China’s cooperation vis-à-vis North Africa, in 2017 Tunisia signed three agreements with China with the aim of boosting bilateral trade cooperation. These agreements include plans for the construction of a $65-billion shopping centre in Tunisia. Moreover, during the same year, Chinese tourists in the North African country reached 10,000, which is a good sign for the Tunisian economy. Another recently expanding sector of cooperation between China and Tunisia is technology. Tunisia will host the first overseas centre for China’s BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, a pilot programme between China and the Tunisia-based Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization (AICTO), with the aim of promoting the global application of BeiDou.

Algeria and Egypt represent cases in which Chinese cooperation has not always contributed to spurring socio-economic improvements despite high expectations and the fact that the agreements reached have certainly strengthened diplomatic and trade relations between China and North Africa. For example, the initial hopes that the major investments made by Beijing in the Algerian economy would translate into a boost in job creation for the local population were frustrated by the fact that around 40,000 Chinese workers are currently present in the country. Similarly, Chinese investments in Egypt have increased by about 75% since 2016. This is the case, for example, of the investments made in the Suez Canal Economic Zone, which exceeded $1 billion in 2017, with the prospect of creating 3,000 jobs in Egypt. No clear indication exists, however, that this figure has materialized.

United States

The United States is hardly a newcomer to MENA and it has cultivated important relations with most of the countries in the region through various kinds of cooperation, such as defence, security, counterterrorism, trade, energy and development. Focusing on the last few years, the US Administration has experienced a backtracking in terms of its involvement in MENA with the election of President Donald Trump. Despite the initial protectionist stance, the US Administration has maintained an active role, especially in defence and military issues, in relation to most MENA countries. Nevertheless, some important exceptions have emerged with the cuts made in aid programmes. The case of Egypt is the most important one, in view of the $100 million in military assistance withheld by the United States because of the lack of improvements in human rights and democracy. Nevertheless, multiple cooperation agreements in the fields of investment, education, health, agriculture and water worth $12 million were signed in 2017 to raise incomes and job opportunities for farmers, with a special focus on the development of

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19 SOULI, Sarah, cit.
Upper Egypt. This exemplifies one of the key aspects that differentiates US cooperation in MENA from that of Russia and China, namely the strong focus on development and the key role played by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in a wide range of activities related to water, education, the economy, governance and environmental issues. In February 2018, a MoU was reached between Jordan and the United States in the framework of which Washington will provide $1.275 billion per year in bilateral foreign assistance to Jordan over a five-year period to stimulate the country’s economy, as envisaged in the Economic Stimulation Plan of 2018-2022.

Spurred by globalization and the will to prevent the mutual spillover of challenges to and from MENA, Russia, China and the United States are active on the regional chessboard with their cooperation initiatives targeting states first and foremost in the developmental, economic, social and cultural domains.

The paragraphs above have shown that a host of players have stepped up their cooperation with MENA countries. Spurred by globalization and the will to prevent the mutual spillover of challenges to and from MENA, Russia, China and the United States are active on the regional chessboard with their cooperation initiatives targeting states first and foremost in the developmental, economic, social and cultural domains. These actions respond to the ultimate need to protect their own interests in the trade, energy and security sectors with little or no consideration for the extent to which these initiatives empower the MENA states or, on the contrary, undermine them. In addition to these traditional sectors of cooperation, new areas such as technology, tourism and cultural exchanges are emerging with new possibilities for strengthening cooperation. Quite superficially, these forms of development cooperation are no different from what the EU and its Member States have been promoting in the region in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy’s (ENP) revised partnership priorities for each country and bilateral relations. However, on closer inspection, it emerges that the EU has recently come to realize that these cooperation projects need to be implemented in a coordinated, holistic way, ensuring that they lead to fostering the resilience of states and societies.

**State and Societal Resilience and the Role of the EU: Fostering the Capacity to Reform from within**

Similarly to other players, the EU approaches MENA both as a priority for action and as a source of deep apprehension, as a result of the sheer amount of challenges emanating from the region. In response to this and to the perceived failure of previous cooperation frameworks and the EU’s loss of leverage, the issuing of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in June 2016 has represented an important step in the efforts to refashion the EU’s global role and vision. Its contents are a clear reflection of the times, the product of deep changes occurring at the international level as well as within the EU and its Member States. The EU’s ‘soft power’ instruments – most notably the legacy of EU enlargement and normative appeal, its values-based system, financial capabilities, emphasis on the rule of law and embrace of multilateralism – continue to represent the fundamental drivers for the EU’s global role. The values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights are still present in the EUGS, yet the modalities for attaining these

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objectives have softened, in itself an acknowledgement of the changing times and the EU’s declining influence. Rather, the EUGS introduces the concept of ‘resilience,’ noting that “a resilient society featuring democracy, trust in institutions, and sustainable development lies at the heart of a resilient state.” In this respect, resilience is identified as an important intermediary step to enhance good governance and the rule of law, necessary conditions to allow for the ultimate attainment of participatory democracy.

Seeking to break free from what has been described as the EU’s ‘silo mentality’ to allow for a more holistic and comprehensive pooling of EU resources and leverage from different sectors and fields is a necessary step to ensure increased synergies between various strands of EU policy.

To advance such goals, the EUGS calls on EU policies to adopt targeted actions at both the state and societal levels, on the basis of the assumption that no state resilience can exist without societal resilience. Top priorities of the EU’s new resilience agenda in MENA are the fight against corruption, education, private sector development and energy transitions.

In seeking to foster resilience in MENA, the EU ultimately aims to support states and societies with the long-term goal of embarking on a locally-driven process of socio-economic and political reform towards greater forms of participatory representation based on the rule of law and a more equitable distribution of power and opportunities. It is in this context that resilience is defined by the EU as the “capacity of societies, communities and individuals to manage opportunities and risks in a peaceful and stable manner, and to build, maintain or restore livelihoods in the face of major pressures.” In that regard, there is no lack of ambition in the EUGS. Yet, perhaps the most important and potentially groundbreaking contribution contained in the Strategy is its effort to combat the excessive compartmentalization of EU policy and approaches. Seeking to break free from what has been described as the EU’s ‘silo mentality’ to allow for a more holistic and comprehensive pooling of EU resources and leverage from different sectors and fields is a necessary step to ensure increased synergies between various strands of EU policy. Ultimately, such an effort reflects the understanding that effective responses to most contemporary challenges stemming from MENA can only result from a more integrated and united EU, as well as from the assessment of contemporary developments in the distribution of global power, which calls for a recalibration of the EU’s foreign and security policy.

25 See, for instance, “[t]he EU will foster the resilience of its democracies, and live up to the values that have inspired its creation and development. These include respect for and promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. They encompass justice, solidarity, equality, non-discrimination, pluralism, and respect for diversity. Living up consistently to our values internally will determine our external credibility and influence.” See Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy, p. 15, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf.

26 Ibidem, p. 23.

27 Alternative definitions of resilience include the following: “the capacity of a state – in the face of significant pressures – to build, maintain or restore its core functions, and basic social and political cohesion, in a manner that ensures respect for democracy, rule of law, human and fundamental rights and fosters inclusive long-term security and progress.” See European Commission – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU’s external action, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels, 7 June 2017 JOIN(2017) 21 final, p. 3, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/join_2017_21_ft_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v7_p1_916039.pdf.
Globalisation, Changing Societies and the Crisis of State

Re-Linking the Mediterranean in the Digital Age

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The Digital Era in the Mediterranean Context

The economies of the Mediterranean have long been perceived to be underperforming relative to the need for sustained growth rates to combat high levels of youth unemployment. Particularly for young graduates and women, unemployment is most prevalent in the regions closest to the Mediterranean coastline in both southern European states and their southern neighbours in North Africa and the Levant. 75% of the population south of the Mediterranean is under 30 years of age, leading to precarious livelihoods for many in informal and semi-formal sectors that represent as much as 50% of formal economies. In southern Spain, Italy and Greece, youth unemployment levels have risen to above 50% over the past decade.

The solutions proposed to meet these challenges are often framed in terms of pre-existing economic models rather than through exploring new ways to satisfy public demand for economic inclusion. On the European side, the Italian President Sergio Mattarella admitted as much in May 2018, warning that “(t)he European project has lost its ability to meet the expectations of large portions of the population.”

Citing the unemployed of southern Italy in particular, the President echoed a growing concern that the EU’s ‘employment-growth’ malaise disproportionately affects the peripheral regions of the Mediterranean even in economies such as Spain, Greece and Italy, where recovery has now begun to take place since the financial and ‘eurocrises’ of a decade ago.

New approaches are clearly needed to redress the gap between established ‘top-down’ economic thinking and the dynamism of the digital age that is testing the logic that has led to the current outcome. The step changes in global economic models already underway are also, to an unavoidable degree, impacting the whole Mediterranean region, both north and south. Transnational models of production are moving closer to both producers and consumers, meaning that where delivery times and the market specificity of customized goods and products are taking over from the mass-production models of the 20th century, geographical proximity is becoming more relevant to the kind of ‘information-enhanced’ specializations that Morocco, for example, has embraced in servicing neighbouring markets in Europe.

The digital component of these developments is likewise challenging the post-World War II political order that has created hard borders between the internal markets of the European Union and those of its external partners. The expansion of virtual connectivity has opened up new channels for the design and implementation of cross-border businesses, production models and trade which will require a new set of internationally agreed frameworks and

3 See Valladao, op. cit, p. 19
parameters to manage. The growth of clustered models of production—through techno-hubs and localized warehousing and fast delivery systems for goods and services—will also favour urban centres and ports close to consumers, in ways that argue for new thinking about the geopolitical spaces within which this activity takes place. As a result, the economic logic of exploring new forms of Mediterranean sub-regionalism may be coming of age. In turn, the divisions that have separated the peripheral regions of southern Europe, North Africa and the Levant for over seventy years are also likely to come under challenge—as an historical aberration rather than the current political norm.

The Scope of Change and Its Potential

As Alfredo Valladao argued in 2014, centralized models of governmental control are already struggling to keep pace with the combined developments of virtual connectivity and the inter-penetration of global economics, at a time when they have few options to offer to transform economies within national frameworks alone. The political push for change is more likely to come from new private sector and non-state actors, who are more cognizant of how current global trends can be adapted to local markets, including at the sub-regional level. The generations coming of age in the digital era are also embracing political terms of reference that are increasingly influenced by global interconnectedness.

The ‘fourth industrial revolution’ is based as much on relatively simple technological ‘add-ons’ to speed up automation in productive industries and agriculture as it is on the ‘hi-tech’ and virtual innovations that are creating new markets and forms of economic activity. The current mix contains both old and new components, from advanced robotics, to smart phone applications and artificial intelligence (AI) applied to a variety of functions, along with enhanced machine learning (ML), ‘big data,’ supercomputing, and online, platform-based work spaces. The most potentially disruptive advance of all lies in blockchain technologies for devolved data and ledger verification, which could soon revolutionize the world of finance, access to credit and personal identity rights, inter alia.

In mature economies, the debate on how these developments are transforming labour markets has largely focused on the disruptive effects of automation on traditional employment sectors and the rise in under-protected self-employment through the ‘gig economy.’ The world of work for many in the southern Mediterranean, in contrast, is already unprotected, as reflected in the size of the informal economies in which many are obliged to work to survive; as a result, the challenge for the wider Mediterranean region is less that of managing the loss of jobs in the formal economy to ‘hi-tech’ equivalents than of completely restructuring economies to make them internally inclusive, educated for flexibility and change, and open to the new forms of inter-connected economic activity sweeping the planet.

The step changes in global economic models already underway are also, to an unavoidable degree, impacting the whole Mediterranean region.

So far, the kind of specialized engineering (in aeronautics, for example), offshore car assembly plants (for export back to France) and devolved financial services adopted in Morocco, and to a lesser extent in Tunisia, respond to the logic of existing Euro-Mediterranean models: the major investors in these projects are European and North American transnationals (Bombardier, Renault etc), drawing on cheaper North African labour markets to situate production processes in the most cost-effective locations. In a world of increasing virtual connectivity,
the next stage of development could potentially see smaller scale innovations gradually eroding the exclusively ‘top-down’ nature of these investments across the Mediterranean.

It is not inconceivable, for example, that a group of like-minded design engineers, entrepreneurs and angel investors from both sides of the Mediterranean could combine to create new types of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that are intentionally more 'horizontal' in conception and benefits, and set within a new set of bespoke Mediterranean sub-regions. Drawing on the stronger regulatory and legal frameworks in place in the European Union (EU), for example, such models could include forms of social enterprise that invest profits back into the Mediterranean's hinterlands in ways that straddle the political and economic divisions within each sub-region.

The Structural and Psychological Challenge

The fact that, to date, this has not happened on a larger scale is an indication of how rarely the challenges faced on both sides of the Mediterranean are conceived of as arising in comparable contexts. Many of the region's littoral communities share similar economic and structural deficits as peripheral regions of their own economies, yet these deficits are rarely addressed as a common challenge for which shared and explicitly linked solutions might be sought. The proximity of the Mediterranean's peripheral regions to each other – above all in the western and central Mediterranean between Spain and Morocco, Italy and Tunisia respectively, and the eastern Mediterranean between the Balkans, Cyprus and the Levant and Egypt – has been distorted by recent political history to create a set of almost insurmountable psychological as well as physical barriers to conceiving of new ways of adapting to the most recent challenges of globalization.

Most debates on youth unemployment, for example, still take place within separate ‘North-South’ contexts, which see the causes of youth unemployment in North Africa, for example, as different in degree and context to endemic youth unemployment in the peripheral regions of southern Europe. Yet, the digital age offers new ways of exploring regional economies of scale as well as of developing new and hybrid economic models to connect complementary assets, investments and talent across the Mediterranean Sea.

The most striking example might be found in the high unemployment rates in the northern Rif region of Morocco, situated only 14 kilometres away at its closest point across the Straits of Gibraltar from Andalusia in southern Spain, where youth unemployment continues to be amongst the highest in the European country. The development of the Tangier-Med transshipment port and the free trade zones (FTZs) that have attracted industrial investments within its hinterland have to some degree redressed the decline of northern Morocco. However, the wider economic benefits accruing to this region barely rival the economic dynamism of the Moroccan port city of Casablanca, situated further south on the Atlantic coast, which acts as a much stronger pole of attraction for diversified and interlinked economic growth and development.

The recent social unrest in the northern Rif city of Al Hoceima attests to regional development funds having been promised, but not delivered, by Morocco's central government.

The political push for change is more likely to come from new private sector and non-state actors, who are more cognizant of how current global trends can be adapted to local markets, and to the generations coming of age in the digital era.

Rather than increasing the network of economic links across the Mediterranean from Morocco to Spain, the Straits of Gibraltar now act primarily as a barrier to illegal migration by Sub-Saharan Africans seeking to enter Europe through the Spanish enclave of Melilla on the northern Moroccan coast. The Straits are also perceived as an acrossing point for terrorism, trafficking and organized crime that the EU cooperates closely with its southern partners to prevent. The Tangier-Med port, in turn, is seen as a rival to the Spanish port of Algeciras, where the creation of a future sub-region could see both ports becoming assets capable of working in tandem to
strengthen the development of the western Mediterranean as an interlinked economic hub. The disincentives in place – above all the barriers to the free movement of people and goods across the Mediterranean erected since the 1970s – have made the logic of engaging in sub-regional cooperation beyond the EU’s southern borders hard to imagine, let alone attempt to put into practice. This type of sub-regional model may necessarily need to involve dual nationals with residency and visa rights on both shores of the Mediterranean to act as pioneers in these new spheres, but they are unlikely to flourish until the most obvious current barriers to the movement of goods, people and finance are lifted.

Start-ups and the New Political Challenge

A number of virtually-connected transnational business models already exist in the ‘horizontal’ universe of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), stretching from Dubai (from where many MENA region start-ups emerge) across North Africa to Morocco. The success of souq.com (recently acquired by Amazon) and the car-sharing business Careem are regularly cited in this context. In the North-South trans-Mediterranean dimension of joint projects the playing field is less even: European technologies and skills are exported to the southern Mediterranean rather than co-designed, co-funded and co-owned from their inception by a regional mix of partners. The context for such endeavours is also governed by the regulatory and legal frameworks of the Euro-Mediterranean process in place since the mid-1990s, which favour southern partner government involvement in larger-scale projects, rather than creating the kind of environment for small-scale, privately-funded trans-regional enterprises to succeed.

In the digital age, however, newly-emerging business models are more likely to change societies from within: by ‘disrupting’ existing supply chains and modes of production, by introducing new sectors (such as e-commerce, financial, consumer and public services) that governments have ignored or neglected, and forms of entrepreneurialism and (self-) employment that operate flexibly, via online platforms, within larger-than-national markets. While the ‘start-up’ age is still in its infancy, 13 Egyptian start-ups have recently featured in the Forbes top 100 most innovative and well-funded start-ups in the Arab world list, and the second best-funded start-up on the list is the Lebanese music streaming business Anghami. From Tunisia, at least two start-ups, RoamSmart and Axe Finance are now accessible in 38 countries internationally or have offices in Europe and Dubai.

In a world of increasing virtual connectivity, the next stage of development could potentially see smaller scale innovations gradually eroding the exclusively ‘top-down’ nature of investments across the Mediterranean

The younger generations of the region will not only benefit from this potential, but will largely replace governments as the instigators of the introduction of new technologies into business. Governments are still essential players in expanding access to affordable online connectivity and providing the education and skills required to embrace global change. However, the region’s ‘digital natives’ are likely to be at the forefront of challenging the region’s existing political and economic elites to adapt to the new models they create, along with providing best practice examples of the legal, regulatory and financial frameworks needed for them to thrive, as has recently been the case in Tunisia.

Given the vested interests in place, there is likely to be considerable resistance on the part of the region’s

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8 “Top 100 Startups In The Arab World 2017,” Forbes Middle East www.forbesmiddleeast.com/en/list/top-100-startups-arab-world/ (anon)
10 Ibid.
protected and clientelistic ‘old guards’ to ceding space to the newcomers, and the process of change is unlikely to be smooth. But as economic protests across the southern Mediterranean have taken on an increasingly political profile in 2018, challenges to the balance of power between the region’s privileged and its economically excluded citizens are beginning to gain traction. In response to local demand, for example, the Tunisian street protests of early 2018 were followed by the adoption of a digital-friendly ‘start-up’ law in April 2018; the online boycott campaign launched (anonymously) in Morocco in April 2018 against price rises for a number of products explicitly targeted the owners of companies, including a government minister, deemed to be benefitting from privileged political access;11 a week of street protests in Jordan in June 2018 brought down a prime minister and caused the withdrawal of a parliamentary income tax bill.12

Innovation to the Fore

Already well-versed in the use of mobile phone-based apps, young entrepreneurs are better-placed to identify opportunities for leap-frogging the bureaucratic and informal hurdles they currently face in accessing credit, or gaining licences to operate, for example. The personalized contacts needed to succeed in private sectors close to political establishments, including in some disadvantaged regions of southern Europe, are also likely to come under increasing scrutiny in coming years. The disruptive potential of the technological revolution is that it is essentially ‘borderless,’ thereby allowing diaspora and like-minded communities across the Mediterranean to explore virtual partnerships and new funding sources for creative endeavours, including ‘crowdsourcing,’ which has yet to be legalized in most MENA and southern Mediterranean states.

Governments may seek to control access to new technology, or limit its beneficiaries through regulation and new tax laws, but the lack of alternatives to stem the tide of unemployment is slowly changing the relationships of power. In the vanguard of change will be those benefitting from an understanding of both local markets and of the kind of resources that can be tapped in Europe, North America and Asia, and then adapted to meet local demand. An increasing number of the region’s graduates will have studied and lived outside their countries of origin, which has also opened many of them to creative solutions that combine the best business practices and innovations in one society with identifying market gaps and opportunities in their own societies.

Examples of innovation already under development in North Africa include niche agricultural production for export to European markets, in spirulina (widely used as a health supplement) and quinoa (a grain hitherto imported from Bolivia and Peru). Online retail and e-commerce is also ripe for development across North Africa, where the advent of mobile phone-enabled money transfer systems has opened new possibilities for financial inclusion to those still excluded from the traditional banking sector. Despite pockets of deprivation and poverty relative to Europe, the consumer-led growth potential of many emerging middle class areas across the southern and eastern Mediterranean will not only create new market sectors, but also re-employ many of those at risk of unemployment in existing industrial and agricultural sectors thanks to automation and greater market specialization.

The Value of Connectivity

Even though levels of connectivity and usage vary considerably across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the states around the Mediterranean lag only slightly behind the Gulf in mobile phone usage, according to a recent industry report.13 The results, based on analysis from 2016, account for more than 1.1 million jobs created, directly and indirectly, by the advent of the mobile industry

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13 GSM Association. The Mobile Economy Middle East and North Africa 2017 2017 www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=84935f577497f3d35c8ed9a41b9c1a4adownload
across the whole MENA region. Access to the Internet also varies considerably across the region (Morocco and Jordan being the most accessible, according to the most recent ICANN report). The potential for mobilizing new platforms and connectivity to re-invent whole economies is thus still in its infancy, while the southern Mediterranean’s lack of critical physical infrastructure, despite the presence of new and already established ports, is also an impediment to making more of market diversity, proximity and a relatively well-educated and young workforce on both sides of the Mediterranean Basin.

At the same time, the speed with which individual companies have now expanded into global virtual space (most visibly Google, Facebook and other ‘Silicon Valley’ giants) presents unique challenges for official regulators and government agencies seeking to control and manage the local impacts of virtual accessibility. This is one area where North Africa, the Levant and southern Europe may have an under-explored advantage: the surge in mobile phone usage has been one of the most rapid at the global level, especially in the years since the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011. Relatively low-tech models of connectivity – such as voice activated software adapted to low-cost mobile phones – might transform under-explored traditional sectors, such as agriculture and the retail and service sector, where the workforce is perhaps unlikely ever to be educated beyond secondary level, but where the density of demand for work is high.

The incentives for young entrepreneurs to seek new ways of combining forces in sub-regional endeavours are also not yet sufficiently in place for many to seek to operate outside the existing financial and economic hubs of northern Europe or the capital and commercial cities south of the Mediterranean, for example. Yet, cross-regional networks already emerging, such as the trans-Mediterranean Cultural Innovators Network, see no problem – but rather an advantage – in combining skills and insights from a variety of perspectives north and south of the Mediterranean, to achieve shared goals and common ends.

Conclusion: From Periphery to Sub-Regional Development

For the peripheral regions of southern Europe, North Africa and the Levant not to continue to fall behind rising global economic trends, it will make more sense in coming years to explore economies of scale in sub-regional ‘clusters’ that combine assets on both sides of the Mediterranean, whether this is driven by governments themselves, in tandem with, or under pressure from new entrepreneurial trends. The region’s current ‘North-South’ investment models, including franchising, subcontracted production and assembly plants, are likely to co-exist with new developments, but the drive for economic inclusion will change the nature, and appeal, of sub-regionalism over time. This is because where geographical proximity still matters for trade and commercial exchange, in the digital age, the artificial barriers separating the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean will come under greater pressure from business models capable of connecting workforces virtually via platforms, along with devolved production chains using smart technology to ‘leapfrog’ the efficiency gaps in current industrial and agricultural production models. Not all of this requires the most sophisticated of technology, but intelligent adaptations of new technologies will make it easier for innovative entrepreneurs to identify new market sectors and link local niche production hubs directly to global markets.

None of this will happen overnight nor in a particularly linear and well-sequenced fashion. The resistance of large-scale economic players to innovation will be compounded by excessive state dominance in key import and export markets along with the oligopolistic tendencies of existing private sectors across much of the Mediterranean. But the social and economic pressures arising from endemic youth unemployment and economic exclusion on both sides of the Mediterranean is giving rise to new forms of political challenge to the status quo, along with new opportunities for alliances to form across existing divides. And major transformations often start from small, often unnoticed, beginnings.

14 Ibid: Figure 11, page 28.
15 ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), is a Californian not-for-profit ‘dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable’ as well as monitoring the impacts of internet usage, as in David Dean ‘Accelerating the Digital Economy in the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey,’ Report 2017 www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/accelerating-digital-economy-report-09oct17-en.pdf.
16 Cultural Innovators Network http://culturalinnovators.org/about-us/
The Arab States after the Uprisings: ‘Transitions,’ Rebuilt Authoritarianisms and Collapsing States

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In the beginning of the 2010s, the Arab states witnessed greater political change than in the preceding decades. They had not faced challenges or undergone macro-political transformations of similar importance since the revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s, which brought to power Nasser in Egypt or the Ba’athists in Iraq and Syria. Mass uprisings seriously shook authoritarianism in the Arab world. The latter area seemed poised to slip free of its authoritarian ‘exceptionalism,’ a feature that came to the fore in the 1990s and 2000s, when compared with the alleged globalization of democracy elsewhere in the world. In a matter of weeks, Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt were overthrown and, within months, with the help respectively of a NATO intervention and a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) mediation, Gaddafi was killed and Saleh in Yemen was forced out of office. With the exceptions of Bahrain, where a large uprising was crushed with the help of a Saudi and Emirati intervention, and Syria, where the uprising turned into civil war, hopes ran high: political parties came out of the shadows, particularly Islamist and Salafi organizations; civil society activities boomed; interim authorities organized national dialogues (with promising prospects, especially in Yemen), elections, constitutional reforms and transitional pacts. In 2011, the Arab states passed through what might be called in comparative politics a critical juncture, which opened up a period of transitions, namely processes of socio-political change (characterized with alternations in power and increased new liberties) whose outcomes were largely indeterminate, or at least not predetermined as a transition to democracy. Yet, a few years later, hopes were severely dashed. In 2013, Egypt’s first democratically elected president and a Muslim Brother was ousted after one year in office by a military coup. In 2012-13, following a growing militarization of the uprising, Syria entered a full-scale civil war, with the afflux of Sunni Salafi jihadists from outside and regional interventions, especially from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and Hezbollah. Mid-2014, Libya and Yemen exploded in civil war with the breakdown of state institutions. Challenges to the State grew everywhere, especially with the rise of the alleged Islamic State (Daesh). Only Tunisia came out as a democratic, although fragile, exception. The outcomes during the 2010s of the new phase that was unexpectedly opened up in 2011 were different across the region, with the Arab world experiencing the entire spectrum of comparative politics with transitions, authoritarian rebuilding and collapsing states.

Where Did the Uprisings (Revolutions) Go?

The high visibility of mass civic protests in public spaces in 2011 was succeeded in 2012-13 by the end of large-scale street protests, the return of repression against all manner of political dissent, the diminishing resolve of some activists driven back home or to their computers and a generalized return to authoritarianism – even in Tunisia, talks about presidential centrality are being increasingly heard or at least advocated in 2018. The fateful drift away from democratic hopes should not lead us to underestimate the stressful challenge of the 2011 uprisings in various Arab states, including those said to have been left out of the wave of Arab Springs, especially Oman and Saudi Arabia –
other ‘super-rentier’ monarchies such as Qatar or the Emirates represent specific cases of sparsely populated and closely-knit societies where more than two-thirds of the population is made up of non-Arab foreigners; and Jordan was also shaken along with Morocco. No regime came out untouched, although republics that had increasingly turned personalistic or were ruled by ‘sultanistic’ regimes (to borrow the Weberian vocabulary) were especially affected:1 sultanistic regimes had started to exclude the wider circle of military, bureaucratic and professional elites from rewards and opportunities or became too predatory on business - Ben Ali’s wife and her family’s corruption, Mubarak’s plan to install his son as successor. This description was also prevalent for Libya, Yemen and Syria, but the outcomes there were not so straightforward due to the different entrenching of regimes in the socio-cultural landscape, with tribes, fragmented societies or confessional solidarity. To date, there has been no extinction of activism, street protests, demonstrations, strikes, protests, outrages or sit-ins, and many sites of activism have remained in advocacy-oriented initiatives (human rights, women’s rights, press freedoms, social empowerment), new youth or leftist parties/groupings, and even among new generations of Islamists coming out of the strictly hierarchical and gerontocratic Muslim Brotherhood.2 Tellingly and very surprisingly, social protests have remained active after 2013 in repressive Egypt. Even in war-torn Syria, the potential for civic activism has not been fully overshadowed and extinguished by the proliferation of armed groups.

Indeed, massive social mobilizations were not able to completely erase the structures of authoritarianism. They stressed them to breaking point and were able to disrupt existing authoritarian equilibriums by shaking structures of power and legitimacy ('normal' or 'usual' authoritarianism enduring for decades). None of the mobilized societies, or at least parts of them, succeeded in acquiring meaningful and sustained influence over the course of transitional processes, with the exceptions of some specific moments and in the Tunisian case. Transitions were real and led to huge changes, but the teleological view of them as transitions to democracy was far-fetched. On the other hand, in some cases, beginnings of transition opened up civil wars or slow-burning coups that turned into civil wars.

Tellingly and very surprisingly, social protests have remained active after 2013 in repressive Egypt. Even in war-torn Syria, the potential for civic activism has not been fully overshadowed and extinguished by the proliferation of armed groups.

Authoritarianism Reassertion or Authoritarianism 2.0

Protests that gathered momentum by early 2011 and that spread from Tunisia to Egypt and then onwards to Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Syria had a highly

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2 ARAB REFORM INITIATIVE, Effervescent Egypt, Paris, January 2018
stressful effect on Arab states with their imposing character and generic demands for dignity, liberty, humanitarian rights, social justice and economic grievances. These sustained, cross-class, geographically-widespread mass protests disrupted authoritarian normality and placed authoritarian regimes under great stress, leading them to resort to authoritarianism as a way to gather coercive means and, ‘beyond coercion,’ to build some form of legitimacy by redistributing and giving ‘direction’ (=authoritarian durability) to various state institutions or clients in the privatized economy. As exemplified in 2011, Arab societies were strong and their protests were much more than a simple check on the grandiose ambitions of the state elites (the weak State/strong society hypothesis of the 1980s). Yet they had no organizational capabilities to sustain their influence when the focus of transformations shifted from the streets to re-institutionalization. Their capabilities were limited, constrained by authoritarian legacies after years of authoritarian repression that uprooted all forms of politics. And new actors, whether politically organized or closer to the model of social mobilizations, showed their political inabilities and inexperience and their lack of support from broader society during institution-building processes.

Transitions were real and led to huge changes, but the teleological view of them as transitions to democracy was far-fetched. On the other hand, in some cases, beginnings of transition opened up civil wars or slow-burning coups that turned into civil wars.

In Max Weber’s view, the State as a social organization that possesses legal order, bureaucracy, compulsory jurisdiction and monopoly over the legitimate use of force is not just another social organization similar to those emerging out of societal dynamics. The State might have been put under stress and in disarray in 2011-12, but it might also have served as a springboard for power when one actor (the military) was able to convene a coalition of forces and give it a ‘direction.’ The Arab State has continued to be a unique political actor with superiority in terms of power and decision-making, except in cases where it collapsed: the State plays a much more decisive role in the Arab world when compared with other regions such as Latin America or Europe, where its role was transformed in the 1990s; and its extensive political resources are available to whomever controls its bureaucratic levels and is then able to shape the rules of the game in state-society relations.

Egypt acted as a trendsetter in the Arab world and as a role-model that some actors in eastern Libya (general Haftar) tried to mimic after 2013. One actor, the military, was able to impose itself on other elites and mobilized publics, albeit through repression. The military was deeply entrenched in the Egyptian political system and the economy and could hamper the development of a transition from that stance: it displayed capabilities, whether material or, more importantly, moral, which were much more effective than those of a delegitimized implementer such as the Interior Ministry after its association with the day-to-day authoritarianism during the Mubarak regime. Yet the army was under as much stress in 2011 as other state institutions, as a consequence of the disappearance of the executive’s ‘direction’ in a highly centralized system. By projecting a strong self-image of the army as a pillar of Egypt, at the service of the country, it was able to keep its cohesiveness and reposition itself in the centre of the stage, in line with the January uprising - as signalled by the much-touted slogan “the military and the people are one hand” (al-jaysh wa al-sha'b ayad waheda). The army benefited from an acute polarization between the Muslim Brotherhood, who came to power through elections, and those who feared and opposed them, in particular in the state apparatus, especially the police, judges, the media and big entrepreneurs. This paved the way to a crucial context for the military’s intervention and then entrenchment in the power. The army

could not have acted in the absence of such a specific setting. Nothing was foreordained from the start or the product of a secret and looming plot of the military and the ‘deep state’ to eradicate the Muslim Brotherhood as early as 2011. Yet the army was able to act decisively with a coup in 2013 and to hijack the transitional path by manipulating the Tamarod (rebellion) mobilization in public spaces under the guidance of the military intelligence (close to the Defence Minister and its former head, general al-Sisi).

The new al-Sisi regime has remained cohesive with the presidency and its military networks at the centre of the regime reformation, with a militarization of power previously unseen in Egypt, at least since Nasser: the military under Mubarak was an essential pillar of the regime, yet the Mubarak system stood above the military. The new regime has also displayed an extreme fragmentation of state structures and difficulties to rein in various centres of power, with security services playing a hidden guiding role. To give some degree of cohesiveness to the regime, the military has proffered a powerful discourse about the State, with constant references to the state apparatus, the State as a unifying force and the redefinition of its role under the heading of “respect for the State” (hayba al-dawla). The regime has lacked ideological glue beyond the drumbeat announcement of endless infrastructure projects (including the new Suez Canal) financed by Saudi and Emirati money and at the price of an increasing debt.

And the al-Sisi regime has displayed a security-first approach to the State taking a repressive turn of levels not seen since 2013, with offensive and heavy-handed state violence unleashed against the Muslim Brotherhood.

This is not just a return to the Mubarak years but a new formula of authoritarianism in a post-2011 setting exercised by an insecure and vulnerable authoritarian regime that has moved away from the more inclusive, redistributive and populist authoritarianism of the 1990s-2000s. A similar strategy is being followed in Saudi Arabia – with a new period of authoritarianism since the rise of Mohammad bin Salman, the son of King Salman – and the Emirates, where, in addition to pouring massive amounts of money into welfare programmes, they have led a virtual counter-revolution to preserve what was left of the old authoritarian order in the Arab world.

Collapsed States and Civil Wars

The stress test of massive social mobilizations had far-reaching consequences for more fragile institu-
The Fragile Tunisian ‘Exception’ in the Spectrum of Arab Transitions of the 2010s*

Western governments and scholars rushed to label Tunisia a successful case of democratic transition. Indeed, Tunisian elites were able to preserve the State after the fall of Ben Ali and his immediate clique of profiteers and securocrats and to preserve the potential for further democratization, with the essential help of Tunisia’s (relatively) preserved tradition of civil society, in particular key organizations such as UGTT, UTICA, lawyers and human rights groups – who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Ben Ali had a predatory role but did not dismantle the existing bureaucracy as a structure for governing society – especially difficult in a country with a strong national identity. Political elites were able to negotiate a division of power within the state and political institutions – and the charismatic leader of Ennahdha was able to leverage his authority within mainstream Islamists towards dialogue. A crucial intervening factor, when compared with the similar case of Egypt was that Tunisia had a small, very professional military, with no experience of political engagement, as a consequence of deliberate policies adopted by Bourguiba then followed up by Ben Ali to restrain the military – Ben Ali was a military officer yet very quickly became a securocrat. The military was literally handed the power with the fall of the Ben Ali regime, but returned it to civilian elites, announced it would submit to civilian rule and stood aside from all politics.

After the failure of the troika (Ennahdha with the Congress for the Republic and Ettakatol) and the dangerous polarization between Islamists and secularists in 2013 (the Bardo Square demonstrations) – a sign of Ennahdha’s eagerness to take the reins of power –, political elites managed to reach a consensus between Ennahdha (religious conservatives) on the one hand and networks of so-called secularists and old (Ben Ali) regime elites in Nidaa Tounes (nationalist conservatives) on the other. In a country endowed with a large middle class, high levels of urbanization and a high ratio of literacy, civil society organizations played a key role in nudging Tunisia in a democratic direction by adopting a watchdog role and facilitating national dialogues when Tunisian politics hit an impasse.

Yet, hopes among Tunisians for improved access to politics and a more equitable distribution of economic resources were dashed with the weakening of state institutions, under a cooperative yet competitive pact between Nidaa Tounes and Ennahdha and with deepening social inequalities and regional asymmetries. The competitive cohabitation between Ennahdha and Nidaa Tounes has slowed down political reforms to a halt, thus weakening state institutions and their legitimacy by keeping the country in a state of endless and unstable transition – this is highlighted by the high level of abstention among young Tunisians, of which there is a high percentage within the population. And ‘pacted’ politics has led to a distribution of posts in the administration along partisan lines and to an increased corruption/clientelism (in terms of access to credit, public tenders, etc.). Although now much more ‘democratized’/ ‘horizontalized’ in an opened partisan and political system and no longer restricted to Ben Ali’s clique, consensual or ‘pacted’ democratization also has its ‘dark side.’ Technocrats in the government and genuinely devoted to the task of reforms have faced the difficult task of implementing real reforms, enticing foreign (governmental and private) direct investment, not to mention the structural challenges of a Tunisian economic model that was oriented toward tourism and exports and over-centralized in the hands of a few urban coastal entrepreneurs, finding themselves unable to offer the large-scale job opportunities away from the coast, as envisioned in the so-called call for “compensative inequality” (or “positive discrimination”) between regions in the January 2014 Constitution.

And, in parallel, Tunisia has experienced highly destabilizing terrorist attacks (with three major attacks in 2015 and an assault on Ben Guerdane in 2016), especially along its unsecure borders with Algeria and Libya.

* M. Penner ANGRIST, “Understanding the Success of mass Civic Protest in Tunisia” The Middle East Journal, 67(4), Autumn 2013;
tional settings in Libya and Yemen. Behind the veneer of authoritarian durability, these states were much more complex: Libya was a weak state, with ambiguous sovereignty and a tradition of persistent local politics; Yemen had a millennial state tradition but was rocked by its difficult adaptation to changes, in particular to its transformation, since the mid-20th century, from a Zaydi imamate to a republic subject to regional influences. Furthermore, decades-long authoritarian regimes under Gaddafi and Saleh weakened and to some extent destroyed the State: Gaddafi had an anti-institutionalist strategy and circumvented institutions to buttress his own familial and tribal clientelist network; Saleh overused institutions, in particular transforming the military and security forces as a way to enhance his preeminence as a power-broker by favouring his clan. There was a ‘clanification’ or ‘tribalization’ of the State and its main institutions to an extent never seen in Egypt or Tunisia – but similar to Iraq or Syria. In 2011, transition was further hindered by an international intervention and an eight-month civil war in Libya and a quasi (and relatively contained) civil war in Yemen. In particular, the military as an institution exploded in many parts in Libya and fractured in two halves in Yemen, leaving room for the rise of militias or large numbers of army colonels turned warlords.

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In Libya, France, Great Britain, the (‘leading-from-behind’) US Administration and their Qatari, Emirati or Saudi allies over-estimated the cohesion and abilities of the alleged political leadership (the National Transitional Council): Libyan transitional authorities were overwhelmed by the rise of armed revolutionary brigades, recruited at a local level on the basis of cities, neighbourhoods, villages, tribes, clans, families, etc, with the implosion of the military in many parts, the members of which then joined the revolutionaries ( thuwwar). In May 2014, former political conflicts (over legislative elections and the role of former army officers in the east) coalesced into a full-scale civil war between two warring camps. The bleak picture that has arisen in Libya is one of fragmentation, with three powerless governments, including a ‘reconciliatory’ one resulting from UN mediation, and two parliaments navigating a maze of armed militias that have been the key stakeholders on the ground.

In Yemen, there was a genuine transition from 2011 to 2013, in particular with a national dialogue which ignited some hope, though very much dominated by the old political elite – neighbouring Saudi Arabia was also panicked by the idea of a successful uprising on its doorstep. Transition dragged on and ended inconclusively in 2014 amidst frustrations, particularly regarding its implicit objective to resolve two regional conflicts, the southern question and the Houthi rebellion, a northern Zaydi revivalist movement that waged nine wars with Saleh. And in September 2014, the Houthis (or Ansar Allah) benefitting from the decay of the Yemeni State and with the backing of military units and tribal forces loyal to former President Saleh, seized Sana’a. They placed interim President Hadi under house arrest – he fled to Aden then Saudi Arabia – and marched south from their northern stronghold. In March 2015, a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia gave a new regional dimension to the conflict with an intense and destructive campaign of aerial bombardments and with an Emirati intervention on the ground (along with numerous mercenary forces) that backed the ‘pro-government’ (Hadi) forces. In particular in the south, veterans of the former South Yemen mounted resistance to the Houthis (and Saleh) and became more openly secessionist while hosting Hadi’s forces in Aden, an inconvenient marriage that exploded at the end of 2017. In parallel, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), one of the most powerful branches of the terrorist group, made territorial advances in the south, even taking control of cities, ports and whole military units and their equipment. And in December 2017, the uneasy Saleh-Houthi

alliance collapsed and Saleh was killed by Houthi forces, adding to the country’s fragmentation. State and societal collapse amid a Saudi blockade and humanitarian catastrophe, sectarian tensions the likes of which had not existed in the country – with the Houthis now said to be ‘Shias’ and proxies allegedly supported by Teheran –, and hardened sectarian (Salafi) narratives fuelled by Saudi discourses and aiming at ridding Yemen of ‘Shia influence,’ combined to draw a bleak picture of the heavily fractured Yemeni State.

At a more general level, these developments reveal a new weakening of territorial control for the Arab states, shattered over the course of recent years by the Arab Spring uprisings (in the beginning) and their subsequent and various outcomes (difficult or aborted transitions, rebuilt authoritarianisms and state collapse). Contestations of territorial Arab states are nothing new, but the recent developments represent the gravest challenge since the state system crystallized in the 1920s – and some of these new challengers have boasted about breaking states allegedly related to the Sykes-Picot agreements, an emblem of all that was wrong in the Arab state system. In a context of weakened or even collapsing states, some political actors have tried to carve out the territorial foundations of new states, as exemplified by the (increasingly secessionist) Southern Movement in Yemen, to a lesser extent federalists in Cyrenaica (al-Barqa) in eastern Libya, Kurdish nationalists in Iraq (with ebbs and flows after the failed September 2017 referendum on independence) and, more pragmatically, a Syrian branch (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat, PYD) of the Turkish PKK in northeastern Syria (called the Rojava or the Arab-Kurdish federation). And other ‘parasitical’ actors such as Daesh (renamed the alleged Islamic State) have capitalized opportunistically on the weakening of Syria and Iraq by merging a transnational jihadist call from al-Qaeda extolling Muslims to revolt and recruiting fighters from around the world, in an attempt to locally rule (or pillage) a territory (from 2014 to 2018).

And the whole series of questions about the Arab State deciphered in this article are crystallized in the complex trajectory of Syria since 2011, from civic uprising to militarized revolt with increased sectarianism, to jihadization with the influx of regional and foreign fighters, then regional and international conflict in particular after the mid-2015 Russian intervention. The plunge into civil war, for which the regime was responsible to a greater extent than the (not blameless) opposition, gave the severely weakened Assad regime carte blanche to crack down on protesters and gradually regain control of a ‘useful Syria,’ with crucial help from Russia, Iran and Hezbollah – though important sources of oil and wheat production have remained in the autonomous eastern part of the Euphrates supported by an international (American, British and French) coalition. At a time when the Assad regime has regained sovereignty over most geographical parts of Syria and the Daesh ‘State’ (Raqqa) has come to an end, now in the hands of PYD forces, questions remain regarding whether or not the Syrian State is in complete dereliction – the Assad regime is victorious but weakened, fragmented by internal or Iranian-supported militias, and severely exhausted in terms of resources to fight and govern – or if it remains the pillar of revamped ‘Assadian’ authoritarianism. At the same time, Syria has become a hotbed of regional rivalries or proxy wars played out within its borders (Turks vs. Kurds, Israelis vs. Iranians, Israelis vs. Hezbollah, Saudis vs. Iranians, etc.) and even international tensions between Russia and the US, thereby highlighting Syria’s weakened sovereignty.

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Presence of Non-Euro-Mediterranean Actors in the Mediterranean

Russia in the Mediterranean and in Europe

Eugenio Bregolat
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That the rigors of geography and climate push Russia towards the Mediterranean is an elementary geopolitical truth found in the first lessons of any treatise on the matter. With the White Sea frozen more than six months a year, Russia has historically pressed southwards, in search of warm open seas that would allow it to become a naval power. It has done this in three directions: towards the Persian Gulf, through Persia; towards the Black Sea and the Mediterranean; and, centuries later, towards the Yellow Sea, through the country’s far Asian reaches. As the gateway to the Mediterranean for Russia, Constantinople (which the Russians called ‘Tsargrad,’ or ‘the Imperial City’) was the epicentre of these ambitions for more than a thousand years. Between 860 and 988 the proto-Russian state, Kievian Rus’, tried to conquer it six times. The decline of that primitive Russian state and the subsequent Mongol conquest (in the year 1240) marked the start of an eight-century parenthesis in Russia’s ambitions in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Through his conquests, Peter the Great achieved a window for Russia onto the Gulf of Finland, where he built the city that bears his name. However, whoever controls the Danish straits – the Belts and Sound – can block the outlet to the Atlantic. After defeating the Swedes at Pultava (1709), Peter also reached the shores of the Black Sea, an extension of the Mediterranean that does not freeze over in winter. It was his successor, Catherine II, though, who ultimately consolidated a broad stretch of coastline there for Russia, founding the port cities of Nikolaev (1774) and Odessa (1783). But those Black Sea ports are subject to the same problem as St. Petersburg: when the Turkish straits are in enemy hands, Russia’s access to the Mediterranean is barred. Like the straits of Gibraltar, Hormuz or Malacca, these straits are a global geopolitical nerve centre; hence, Russia’s renewed ambitions regarding Constantinople. To contain those ambitions, in the 19th century, England and France propped up the decrepit Turkish Empire, allying with it in the Crimean War (1853-56). Additionally, in the second half of the 19th century (1863), the port and city of Vladivostok were founded on the Yellow Sea. As this port, too, is covered in ice for four to five months a year, Russia sought more convenient ones for its fleet. It found them in Port Arthur (today, Dalian), in China, and the Kuril Islands, which Russia seized from Japan in World War II.

In the 20th century, as part of the Triple Entente to contain Germany forged in the secret Constantinople Agreement (1915), England and France promised to give Constantinople and the Dardanelles to Russia in case of victory. In return, the English would increase their sphere of influence in Iran and the French would be given control of Syria and Palestine. Russia’s defeat at the hands of Germany, the triumph of the Russian Revolution, and Russia’s subsequent withdrawal from the war prevented the transfer of Constantinople to Russia. Passage through the Turkish straits is governed by the Montreux Convention (1936), which gives control over them to Turkey. In peacetime, merchant vessels are guaranteed unrestricted innocent passage, whilst the passage of warships is subject to certain limitations, depending on their tonnage and whether or not they belong to a Black Sea state, as well as to a cap on the number of vessels that may be transiting the straits at any given time. Turkey may close the straits to warships belonging to countries that are at war with it or pose a threat to its security.
Beginning in the 1950s and throughout the Cold War, Russia maintained a permanent presence in the Mediterranean, always watchful of the movements of the US 6th Fleet. First, it had a submarine base at Vlorë (Albania) and after the Six-Day War (1967), it had naval and air bases in Syria and Egypt. The 5th Soviet Squadron had about 70 ships in this sea. Following the collapse of the USSR, Russia’s naval presence in the Mediterranean dwindled to almost nothing.

It is along these geographical and historical coordinates that the avatars of recent decades have been projected. In June 1989, Solidarity ousted the Communist Party of Poland from power at the polls. Unlike Nikita Khrushchev in Hungary, in 1956, or Leonid Brezhnev in Czechoslovakia, in 1968, Mikhail Gorbachev did not send in tanks. In choosing not to, he rescinded the Brezhnev doctrine (whereby the USSR would prevent any socialist country from leaving the system) and began the dismantlement of the post-WWII order established in Europe. Gorbachev later accepted the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, which Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand initially opposed. He also accepted the end of the Warsaw Pact and, ultimately, the dissolution of the USSR itself, in December 1991. He could have prevented each one of these events through the use of force, but he refused to do so.

Russia regarded the EU’s attempt, in 2014, to woo Ukraine, to the detriment of Putin’s Eurasian Union, as a first step towards the country’s integration in NATO.

Fearing a bloodbath, Western leaders, including Felipe González, George Bush Sr, Mitterrand and Thatcher, amongst others, had opposed the USSR’s dissolution. Bush gave what came to be known as his ‘Chicken Kiev’ speech before the Ukrainian Parliament, cautioning against “suicidal nationalism.” Thatcher was even more explicit, stating that she could no more imagine opening an embassy in Kiev than in San Francisco.

In this context, it is easy to understand why the vast majority of Russians did not accept what, for Moscow, entailed the loss of all the gains made since Peter the Great, at the turn of the 18th century. The independence of Ukraine was regarded as the amputation of a limb. If Abraham Lincoln had prioritized preventing bloodshed, the Russians say, the United States would no longer exist. Vladimir Putin gave voice to what the majority of Russians felt when he said that the breakup of the USSR had been the greatest strategic disaster of the 20th century. The underlying message was: “This would not have happened with me.” And, thus, reading between the lines: “It’s not over yet.”

This process was later compounded by the expansion of NATO. Although some dispute his account, Gorbachev claims that he was given assurances by the US and Germany that if he accepted the reunified Germany’s continued membership in NATO, the organization would not expand eastwards. Russians do not understand how Gorbachev could have failed to demand a written guarantee for such a critical issue. Clearly, both the former members of the Warsaw Pact and several of the former Soviet republics wanted to join the Atlantic Alliance, which would shield them from Moscow’s ambitions. However, it is equally clear that Russia viewed their admission as a grievance, notwithstanding any pledges not to enlarge. Russia could begrudgingly accept the admission of the former Warsaw Pact members to NATO. It could even resign itself to the admission of the three Baltic states (known in the defunct USSR as ‘the Soviet abroad’). However, the idea of the admission of Ukraine or Georgia was unpalatable to much of Russian society. George Kennan, the chief strategist of 20th century US foreign policy, predicted, “Expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold-War era. Such a decision may be expected […] to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking.” Time has proved him right. Furthermore, the following years saw NATO’s intervention in the war in Yugoslavia, the defeat of Serbia, a traditional Russian ally, and Kosovo’s conversion into an independent state.

The result of the wide-ranging process of withdrawal undertaken by Gorbachev and its exploitation by the West is a ‘humiliated and offended’ Russia. Moscow believes that whilst it behaved as a friend, granting everything for free, renouncing the use of force when it could have used it, it was treated like
an enemy. In Moscow’s view, it abandoned the Cold War, but the West did not. People often point to the 1930s to draw comparisons between Putin and Hitler. In my view, there is a much more relevant precedent: the resentment engendered in Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, which led to World War II. Having learnt that lesson, the Western countries were magnanimous to Germany following its defeat in 1945 and, again, in 1990. However, they ignored the lesson when Russia lost the Cold War without spilling blood. The recomposition of the European order was only superficially addressed. Gorbachev’s repeated appeals to build a “common European home” fell on deaf ears. Had a gesture been made (financial aid for Perestroika, some type of partnership agreement between the European Union and Russia, non-enlargement of NATO, etc.), it would have generated strategic trust and, with it, a solid basis for a non-conflictive long-term relationship with Russia.

Russia regarded the EU’s attempt, in 2014, to woo Ukraine, to the detriment of Putin’s Eurasian Union, as a first step towards the country’s integration in NATO. Russia views the prospect of the US 6th Fleet in Ukrainian ports as a knife to its throat and, thus, preventing it, as a primordial geostrategic imperative. Putin’s response, including the annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Ukraine, met with massive support from the Russian people. The Russian military intervention in Georgia, in 2008, and Moscow’s support for the secession of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, received identical support. Russia also views a potential NATO presence in the Caucasus, which enclose the vast Russian plains to the south, as incompatible with its security. Russia can leverage its geographical proximity and the multiple recourses at its disposal to destabilize these two countries or any other former Soviet republic. Meanwhile, NATO is unwilling to engage in a military conflict with Russia to defend Ukraine or Georgia, although it is willing to pressure it with economic sanctions. The Russian people have borne the additional hardships entailed by these sanctions, at least to date, out of feelings of wounded pride, or nationalism, and the fact that Ukraine is viewed as inseparable from Russia. In this context, the position shared by Kissinger and Brzezinski, who advocate the ‘Finlandization’ of Ukraine, i.e., the adoption of a position of equidistance between Russia and NATO, makes complete sense. When Russia refers to the former Soviet republics as ‘the near abroad,’ it is referring to ‘Finlandization’; Russia aims to limit these countries’ sovereignty by vetoing their membership in NATO.

Russia’s angry reaction to what it considers attacks on its vital interests has included, in addition to the military actions against Georgia and Ukraine, support for anti-system forces and for parties opposed to European integration in EU countries and the return of its naval and air forces to the Mediterranean, where it has shored up its position in several coastal countries. Russia aims to monitor NATO and jihadism, as well as safeguard its trade interests, especially gas and oil exports, the backbone of its economy. It also seeks to project power beyond its borders and ‘near abroad,’ like the great power it wishes to remain.

Syria, a former ally of the USSR during the Cold War, has provided Russia with naval facilities at the Tartus base. In 2012, after Assad’s deployment of chemical weapons, Obama decided against a military intervention, going back on his word. Russia stepped in to mediate the destruction of the Syrian chemical arsenal – or part of it. At Damascus’s behest, Russia launched its military intervention in 2015, changing the course of the civil war and establishing itself as a champion of the Assad regime. Russia has skillfully taken advantage of the lack of understanding between NATO and the EU and some of their partners in the eastern Mediterranean. In the Syrian civil war, Russia supports Assad, whilst Turkey supports his enemies. Against this backdrop, Russian-Turkish relations were seriously damaged when, in November 2015, Turkish fighter jets shot down a Russian warplane in disputed airspace near the Syrian-Turkish border, as well as by the killing, one month later, of the Russian ambassador in Ankara. However, since then, the relations have improved considerably. Putin and Erdogan’s shared problems with NATO and the EU have served as a platform for entente. The US criticized Turkey for how it repressed the thwarted coup attempt, in 2016, and for its disregard for human rights, refusing to hand over the cleric Fethullah Gulen, the mastermind behind the attempted coup according to the Turkish government. US support for Kurdish forces in Syria, considered terrorists by Turkey, as well as US sanctions on Turkish companies for vio-
lating sanctions against Iran are also reasons for disagreement. That the EU has closed its doors to it is also viewed by Turkey as a humiliation. The shared perception of having been aggrieved by NATO and the EU has cemented the growing understanding between Russia and Turkey, which have managed to temporarily set aside their differences over Syria and are now striving, together with Iran, to find a solution to the conflict that is acceptable to all three. As a result of this rapprochement, Turkey, a NATO member, has purchased S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems from Russia. The two countries have also undertaken major energy cooperation projects: the construction of a gas pipeline for the sale of Russian gas to Turkey and the construction by Russia of a nuclear power plant. The understanding is largely satisfactory for both sides: Russia gets to drive a wedge into the heart of NATO, whilst Turkey strengthens its negotiating position vis-à-vis both NATO and the EU.

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As with Turkey, Greece's rapprochement with Russia is grounded in the deterioration of its relations with the EU and the US. Given that, albeit for different reasons, both countries are experiencing this decline, it is just as advantageous for Greece to play 'the Russian card' as it is for Russia to play 'the Greek card.' Greece initially opposed the EU's sanctions against Russia. Although it later accepted them, it applied them laxly. Meanwhile, Russia provides cheap energy, credits and investment to Greece, whilst also selling it military equipment. In Egypt, Obama pressured Mubarak to step down and called for democratic elections, as part of the effort to spread democracy in the Middle East in the wake of the 'Arab Spring.' In light of the Muslim Brotherhood's victory at the polls, things did not turn out as hoped. Because of their fear of Islamic radicalism, the US and Europe turned a blind eye when the Egyptian army staged a coup, disregarding the outcome of the elections, considering it the lesser evil. Nevertheless, Obama's relations with al-Sisi were strained. As in the previous cases, that state of affairs afforded an opportunity to Russia, which secured an agreement for its military aircraft to use facilities in Egyptian territory, something it had not been able to do since Sadat expelled the Soviets in 1972, nearly half a century earlier. Russia is building a nuclear power plant in Egypt and has sold it fighter-bombers and combat helicopters. Cyprus rounds out the list of Russia's friends in the eastern Mediterranean. About half of its bank deposits and much of its inbound tourism come from Russia. It was a Russian loan that enabled the overhaul of the Cypriot banking system after the spread of the crisis that began in 2008. Thus, in recent years, Putin's Russia has managed to significantly strengthen its geostrategic position in the eastern Mediterranean, as part of its renewed ambition to continue playing the part of a great power.

Part of the price that the US and EU are paying for their mishandling of the process of recomposing the European order is the strengthening of the entente between Russia and China. This has been a major boon in terms of both Russia's geostrategic position with regard to the West, as it undermines the impact of the sanctions imposed due to the Ukraine conflict, and China's geostrategic position, to the detriment of the US's turn towards Asia. One result of this understanding was the joint military exercises conducted by Russia and China in the Mediterranean in 2015. Both Russia and China regard the US as a 'primary threat' and reject both the attempts at political regime change, pushing them towards liberal democracy, and the US's refusal to acknowledge their spheres of influence in their own backyards. Russia and China are working together in the Shanghai Security Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, and the BRICS association. Trump has helped strengthen the ties between them by mentioning them together as "strategic rivals" of the US in the country's most recent National Security Strategy, published last December. No matter how you look at it, a new cold war climate has settled over the relations between Russia and the West.
Presence of Non-Euro-Mediterranean Actors in the Mediterranean

The Chinese Breakthrough in the Arab and Mediterranean Markets

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Although distant regions, China and the Arab countries have maintained relations that date back to the first centuries of our era, well before the appearance of Islam. Arab readers interested in the history of these relations might enjoy the detailed features on historic Sino-Arab relations published by the excellent Arab magazine Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi in 2017. In any case, these relations experienced a long eclipse from the 15th century to the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Originally limited to political matters, they increased dramatically once China opened its economy to the world as of 1978. At first centred on the Gulf States, the Chinese would eventually spread their attention to all Arab countries, including those of the Maghreb. This study aims to report on China’s remarkable breakthrough onto the Arab and Mediterranean markets.

China and the Arab Countries as of 1949

The Popular Republic of China was proclaimed in 1949, in the middle of the Cold War pitting the liberal West against the Soviet Union. China decided not to align itself with either camp, preferring to engage in the non-alignment advocated in Bandung in 1955 and then officialized in Belgrade in 1961. This did not prevent China from supporting all national liberation movements against colonialism and imperialism. Hence China’s support to Egypt during the tripartite Suez aggression in 1956, its recognition of the provisional Algerian government in 1958 and its support for the national Palestinian movement, for which it has trained numerous military cadres.¹ For their part, Arab countries supported granting the People’s Republic a permanent seat on the Security Council in 1971, and began establishing diplomatic relations with China between 1956 and 1990.² But from 1949 to 1978, economic relations shrank to a trickle.

Under Deng Xiaoping (1978-1992), China engaged in timid economic reform and a prudent opening to the global economy.³ Slowly but surely, it entered accelerated development, becoming the industrial workshop of the world, achieving considerable trade surpluses and garnering sovereign wealth funds now estimated at over three trillion dollars.

It is precisely when China becomes an economic power that it rediscovers the importance of the Arab World for its economy and its international influence.

The Interests of China in the Arab World

China’s interests in the Arab World are legion – we will point out the most significant ones.

Their First Interest is Geopolitical

As a global trading power, China depends largely on maritime transport, which is used for 90% of Chinese exports. Navigation security is thus of primordial interest. Of the four main straits – Malacca, Hor-

muz, Bab-el-Mandeb and Gibraltar—three are located in the Middle East North Africa region (MENA). It is estimated that half of China’s oil imports and a quarter of its natural gas imports go through the Strait of Hormuz in the Arab-Persian Gulf. Bab-el-Mandeb or the Mandeb Strait, at the entrance to the Red Sea, is even more important, since a fifth of Chinese exports to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe take this route, through which some 300,000 barrels/day also go, travelling from Algeria, Libya and Sudan on their way to China.

The Second Interest Is Energetic

According to the economic newspaper, MEES (27 January 2017), China imports nearly 3.6 million b/d from the Middle East, that is, nearly 48% of its total oil imports. Its dependence on Arab and Iranian gas is only slightly lower (41% of its overall gas imports). Considering China’s growing needs, it is highly likely that the country’s dependence on the Arab and Middle East region become more pronounced over the coming two decades.

The Third Interest Is Economic

The Chinese economic penetration into the Arab markets over the past 25 years has been spectacular, making Chinese exports to Arab countries go from $10 billion in 1990 to $220 billion in 2016. This is a 22-fold increase. Though this only amounts to 5.2% of estimated Chinese exports in 2016 at $3.96 trillion, the trend seems to indicate that Chinese commerce with Arab countries will surpass $300 billion well before 2025.

The Fourth Interest Is Fostering Investment

Sub-Saharan Africa attracts greater investment for the time being than the Arab African countries or the Middle East: $252 billion as compared to $177 billion, $70 billion of which in the Gulf States. However, the growth rate for investment in Arab countries has been particularly strong over the course of the past decade and will be even stronger over the next few years, considering new Chinese initiatives, in particular the New Silk Roads discussed below.

The Fifth Interest Is of a Religious Order

This should come as no surprise, for it is of the essence, from the Chinese point of view, to maintain close relations with Muslim countries. First of all because China, on its border with Mongolia, has a Muslim minority of 20 of 25 million—the Uyghur—who consider themselves marginalized and stigmatized. China fears both their separatist demands and their possible radicalization (certain Uyghur youth having joined the ranks of Daesh in Iraq and Syria). Moreover, the New Chinese Silk Roads, in both the North and South, cross or run along the borders of many countries where 80% of the population is Muslim. And finally, more and more Chinese Muslims are making the pilgrimage to Mecca every year: there were 20,000 in 2017. China is also multiplying initiatives designed to show its respect for Islam, such as the World Muslim City, which opened in 2016 in Yinchuan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>3,660</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1,414</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Soviet Republics</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>1,207</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North and South America</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the Middle East and systematic alignment with Israel’s colonial policies offend the sensibilities of Arab and Muslim populations;

b) **Diversifying their export markets** and attracting Asian investment;

c) **Establishing partnership cooperation** with a major Asian country with no colonial past in the Arab countries and with whom relations are more tranquil than with European countries.

For the Arab states, in fact, China seems a counter-model: its foreign policy is based on respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and recognition of the regimes in power. As far as its diplomacy is concerned, it prioritizes win-win partnerships, dialogue, negotiation, non-interference, respect for international regulations, rejection of sanctions and conditionalities, and rejection of collective punishment, which are common practices of Western chancelleries. Arab leaders, who are far from being paragons of democracy, appreciate the concept of an ‘harmonious world’ based on respect for the specificities of all.5

### The 2004 Arab-Sino Cooperation Forum

In view of the growing interests, the Chinese launched an Arab-Sino Cooperation Forum in 2004. The results were not long in coming: trade between China and the members of the League of Arab States rose from $36.7 billion in 2004 to $145.4 billion in 2010, in other words, it more than quadrupled in six years. In March 2012, China and the Arab countries took a further step and launched the High Council for Energy Cooperation. In May 2012, the 5th Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum was held in Hammamet, Tunisia. At the 6th Forum in 2014, under Sino-Moroccan presidency, the Chinese and Arabs expressed satisfaction with the results of the first decade of cooperation (2004-2014) and decided to increase trade for the coming decade (2014-2024) by diversifying spheres of cooperation, multiplying cross investment and encouraging exchange among civil society.

To do this, China intends to make its relations with the Arab world fall within the project launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, called New Maritime and Terrestrial Silk Roads.

### The New Silk Roads, or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, 2013) and Arab Countries

The BRI is an initiative launched in 2013 by Chinese President Xi Jinping in a speech delivered in Kazakhstan. It aims to connect China with the rest of the world via a complex network of roads, railways and maritime routes, with the aim of increasing China’s trade with Asia, Europe and Africa and improve its connectivity with its main partners. The initiative is multidimensional. It has various components:

1. **A Land-Based Component** (rail and roadways), with railways and motorways connecting China and Europe, consisting of six corridors connecting China with Asia, Europe and the Middle East;

2. **A Maritime Component, with two routes**: that of the Arctic to the north, and the southern one, through the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal to reach the port of Piraeus in Greece, already under Chinese control, and possibly to Tangier-MED in Morocco (this is not yet settled but is under consideration).

It is thus a large-scale project for the future that will connect China to all continents and which requires the mobilization of major investments that could

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range from 4 to 26 trillion dollars, according to specialists. To finance this gigantic project, China plans on mobilizing a multitude of actors, both public and private, in particular the China Development Bank, the Silk Road Fund, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), etc.

Arab countries showed interest in the Chinese initiative right away and many countries have already joined it. Some, such as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, are participating in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as well. Morocco even wants the New Silk Roads to reach as far as Tangiers.

China is satisfied with the favourable and even enthusiastic reception of its initiative among Arab countries and published an official document in January 2016 called “China’s Arab Policy Paper” in which China is pleased to indicate that the Arab world has become China’s top oil supplier and 6th trade partner, with trade amounting to over $220 billion. The Chinese stated they wish to increase this trade to over $300 billion by the 2024 horizon, which will be the 20th anniversary of the Cooperation Forum, but it’s safe to assume that this threshold will be crossed well before.

### China and the Gulf States: An Insatiable Appetite for Energy

Since China has opened up to the world, three geographic areas have occupied a prominent place in its economic policy: South East Asia for its geographic proximity, Sub-Saharan Africa for its resources, and the Gulf States for their oil and gas. Indeed, the increasing dependence of Chinese imports on oil and gas lends the Gulf States as well as Iraq and Iran a special place in Chinese economic policy.

Exclusively considering the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, total trade with China in 2015 reached $136 billion and trade balance was good, putting China in 2nd position after the EU, which remained the GCC’s main trade partner in 2015, with a total trade of $166 billion (150 billion euros) but a trade balance of nearly $60 billion in favour of the EU.

With $136 billion in trade in 2015, the GCC countries became China’s 6th trade partner. However, considering the growth rate of GCC-China trade, the EU will be surpassed in its turn, likely before 2020, making China the leading trade partner of the GCC.

Naturally, energy occupies a prime place in trade between China and the GCC countries. With a population of 1.3 billion and a nearly double-digit growth rate, China has become the 2nd world consumer of oil (from 2.3 million barrels/day in 1993 to 12 million b/d in 2016) after the US and is the top importer. GCC countries already supply 33% of China’s oil imports and this dependence will grow over the coming decade.

Apart from trade and energy exports, Gulf States are increasingly attracting Chinese enterprise. Hundreds of Chinese companies now operate in GCC countries in the spheres of infrastructure, construction, petrochemicals, refinery and nuclear power. There are even military drone factory installation projects. Such cooperation allows the Gulf countries to diversify their alliances and markets and align their

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**TABLE 2** China – GCC Countries Trade 2015 (in billions of dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrein</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>136.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF) – figures are rounded off.

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8 Tim NIBLOCK. *“China’s Emergence as the Gulf’s Greatest Trade Partner” (in Arabic), Al-Mustaqbal al-arabi, July 2017, p.79
China and the Maghreb: Promising Cooperation

Until the end of the 20th century, the Maghreb, with the exception of Algeria, was ignored: the Maghreb seemed distant and was perceived as a market in the hold of the European Union. But since then, China has discovered the great interest of the Maghreb, and particularly Morocco, to its global economic deployment strategy.

And yet China and the Maghreb have had diplomatic relations since the 1950s. Indeed, China was one of the first countries to recognize the provisional government of Algeria in 1958 and Algeria granted the People’s Republic of China the same recognition in 1962. With regard to Morocco, it recognized Mao’s People’s Republic in 1958. Tunisia did the same in 1964.

But apart from mutual recognition, China neglected the Maghreb. The Chinese offensive in the Maghreb began at the end of the 20th century and first targeted Libya and Algeria, two oil countries. With a non-functional Arab Maghreb Union, Chinese policy has been structured according to bilateral relations. This orientation is convenient for the Chinese, who wish to stay out of intra-Maghreb disputes.

Algeria: China’s Historic Partner

Because of its energy resources, its geographic size and the importance of its market, it is Algeria that was first targeted by the Chinese. And it was this country that attracted the bulk of investments and numerous Chinese businesses. All major Chinese oil and refinery enterprises are present in Algeria (CNOOC, SINOPEC and CNPC), as well as engineering and public works companies (ports, motorways, airports) and construction companies (social housing and shopping centres). The number of Chinese works in Algeria is beyond counting today: the Algiers Opera House, the Djamaa Al-Jazaïr Mosque, the new Algiers Airport, the buildings housing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Constitutional Court, a 750-kilometre aqueduct from Salah to Tamanrasset and the East-West Motorway, not to mention the automobile and small lorry assembly factories in Tlemcen and Annaba. There is even talk of building a deep-water port for container ships at El Hamdania. All of this means the Chinese presence in Algeria is estimated at 80,000 expatriates.

Exclusively considering the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, total trade with China in 2015 reached $136 billion and trade balance was good, putting China in 2nd position after the EU.

Naturally, as in Morocco and Tunisia, Chinese penetration in local markets is staggering: low-value products, electric and electronic products, toys, fabrics, household products, communications products, etc. The inhabitants do not seem to be complaining of such a plethora of Chinese products at souk stalls. But the risk of the disappearance of artisan know-how is real and could lead to the disappearance of numerous traditional professions. It is distressing, moreover, to note the lack of interest shown by politicians regarding this aspect.

Chinese Interest Veering towards Morocco and Tunisia

Until recently, Morocco, and above all Tunisia, were the poor relations of Chinese policy in the Maghreb. But an interesting change has been taking place since 2000. Tunisia, for instance, has launched a joint venture with the Chinese company, Haier Maghreb (HHW), to distribute its products (freezers, refrigerators, microwave ovens, washing machines, dishwashers, etc.) throughout North Africa. Other companies intend to do the same to take advantage of Tunisia’s central location in the Maghreb and its proximity to European markets.

Morocco Has Begun Interesting the Chinese in More Ways than One

Its internal stability, the size of its market, its geographic location between the EU and Sub-Saharan Africa, its two seaboards, the port of Tangiers (Tanger-Med), the EU-Morocco Association Agreement and the US-Morocco Free Trade Agreement are considerable assets for Chinese entrepreneurs and investors.

But there is another significant asset: the positive feelings towards China in North Africa, in particular in Morocco: there is no historic resentment and China does not get involved in countries’ internal affairs.

From the Moroccan perspective, relations with China are a new window of opportunity:

— They allow Morocco to attenuate the verticality of EU-Morocco relations by diversifying export markets;
— They reinforce Morocco’s policy of opening up to Sub-Saharan Africa, making Morocco not only a place of transit from Africa to Europe, but above all a strong link where China can delocalize a good number of its economic activities;
— They attract Asian investment towards Tangiers, contributing to making the Tanger-Med port a maritime transport hub;
— They contribute to opening Morocco up to international competition and thus to its general attractiveness to other investors.
— They integrate Morocco into the Chinese New Silk Roads Initiative (BRI), making Tanger-Med a transport hub of the greatest importance. At the China-Africa Summit in Johannesburg in December 2015, Morocco’s head of government, Abdelilah Benkirane, indicated the importance he lent the Chinese Initiative and even proposed that the Maritime Silk Route be connected to Atlantic Europe via Tanger-Med. It is in this context that on 16 November 2017, Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, signed a memorandum of understanding making Morocco the first African country to join the Chinese project.

Morocco grasped early on the important role played by China in the global economy and since the beginning of the 21st century, well before the launching of the New Silk Roads in 2013, it undertook a series of initiatives designed to strengthen Chinese-Moroccan relations: Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group (2000), Ibn Battuta Friendship Association (2000), and China-Morocco Trade Association (2012). China, for its part, has multiplied the creation of Confucius Centres like the one in Rabat (2009), after opening centres in Tunisia’s Sfax in 2005 and Cairo and Ismailia in 2008.

On the diplomatic level, there is a multiplication of initiatives: the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Trade’s visit to China in 2009, the visit to Morocco by his Chinese counterpart in 2011, the China-Morocco Investment Forum in 2011, the Sino-African Entrepreneurs Summit in Marrakesh in 2015, and finally, the King of Morocco’s visit to China in 2016, during which a Joint Declaration was signed concerning the establishment of a strategic partnership between China and Morocco.

China has become the 2nd world consumer of oil (from 2.3 million barrels/day in 1993 to 12 million b/d in 2016) after the US and is the top importer

This Moroccan policy of openness is apparently bearing fruit: China has become Morocco’s 3rd supplier and its 18th client. However, China-Morocco trade is very unequal: since in 2014, Moroccan exports were only the equivalent of 7.7 % of its imports.

Insofar as Chinese investments, they are developing at a steady pace. According to Fathallah Oualalou,10 there were some 20 Chinese businesses in Morocco in 2014, in the sectors of textiles (Li Fung), communications, fishing with freezer trawlers, and basic equipment (LENOVO, HAIER, ZTE, SEPCO, FORPETRO, HUAWEI, etc.). But there is still considerable potential for cooperation in many other spheres.

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Naturally, banks must hone their services to facilitate investment operations. The Chinese bank, Eximbank, is already present in Casablanca. The Moroccan BMCE bank is likewise present in China.

In this deployment of new Chinese strategies, Morocco will most certainly play a more important role insofar as consumer market, maritime hub, junction point between continents, and gateway to the EU and Africa.

In fact, at the last China-Africa Investment Forum, held in Marrakesh on 27 and 28 November 2017, Mr. Othman Benjelloun, president of the BMCE Bank of Africa group, made a strong plea for tripartite Chinese-Moroccan-African cooperation and emphasized the leading role Morocco intends to play in the New Silk Roads initiative.11

And finally, there is a sphere where Morocco has a significant comparative advantage but which has yet to be used to its full potential: cultural tourism. Today there are millions of Chinese tourists travelling the world. Morocco could attract hundreds of thousands of them. But this requires an effective marketing policy, Chinese-speaking guides, reception facilities, a hotel offer meeting Asian needs, and more frequent flights.

In conclusion, the Chinese are growing increasingly interested in the Maghreb countries. Certainly, the Chinese appetite for oil and gas is insatiable and continues to determine China’s trade policy, lending Gulf countries and Algeria and Libya particular importance. However, the Chinese increasingly wish to connect to the outer world through the New Silk Roads to make China a global actor. In this deployment of new Chinese strategies, Morocco will most certainly play a more important role insofar as consumer market, maritime hub, junction point between continents, and gateway to the EU and Africa.

11 Benjelloun, Othman. "Les 8 convictions de Othman Benjelloun : un modèle de partenariat agissant", in Maroc Diplomatique, December 2017, p.10-11
Presence of Non-Euro-Mediterranean Actors in the Mediterranean

America and the Mediterranean: an Arena for Transnational Threat Management

Ellen Laipson
President Emeritus, Stimson Center
Director, International Security Program
George Mason University

An overarching American strategy for the Mediterranean region may be desirable, but it is not on the radar screen for policymakers in Washington. This is not just a judgment about the current Administration, but has been a chronic reality in American foreign policy; the development and implementation of policies are more often than not organized by the geography of countries, rather than maritime space. As Ian Lesser explained in last year’s volume, “the Mediterranean hardly figures as a unified geopolitical space in American foreign policy.”

The Mediterranean region, from a US perspective, will continue to be a region of diverse relationships, challenges and institutions, with the US national security establishment very active in some sub-regions and nearly absent in others. NATO continues to be an anchor for American engagement, despite the President’s skepticism about its value. Historically, the eastern Mediterranean has been more important to the US than other sub-regions, whether over the Greece-Turkey-Cyprus triangle, or Arab-Israeli issues. The Balkans and Maghreb have occasionally captured the attention of Washington, but have usually been viewed as a European priority more than an American one.

At present, the Mediterranean is viewed as a zone of turbulence and instability, from the flashing red lights of Syria and Libya, to sporadic terrorist incidents in European capitals, to the continual human wave of migrants transiting the sea from Africa and the Maghreb in search of a better life in Europe. While the migration crisis appears to be waning and is not an immediate American concern, the secondary effects of such a large transfer of population have long-term economic, political and social consequences. These have added to the European Union’s woes, managing Brexit and anti-immigration politics at the same time, creating the perception that the European side of the Mediterranean is inwardly focused and weakened. Fears of another Israeli war with Hezbollah or even with Iran directly are rising. Turkey is becoming a less reliable NATO ally. The net result is a perception of danger: the State Department has issued various levels of travel warnings for every Mediterranean country except Morocco, Cyprus and Greece.

Looking to the future, two factors are likely to prevail in drawing US policymakers to the Mediterranean region. One is the cluster of interrelated transnational challenges, from terrorism to migration to climate change, which requires international cooperation and may provide opportunities for continued US engagement with European and Arab partners around the Mediterranean. The second is the prospect of a more confident and assertive Russia, seeking to reclaim an important role in the Middle East and looking for weaknesses to exploit, from American retrenchment to the internal preoccupations of the European Union. This potential threat could set the agenda for US-European cooperation in NATO, but it could also be a source of friction within the alliance and in key bilateral relationships.

2 https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html
American Engagement and Retrenchment

The Trump Administration’s foreign policy, now in its second year, continues to be plagued by uncertainty, even chaos. The March 2018 firing of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and the replacement of National Security Advisor McMaster with the more hawkish John Bolton, has the effect of concentrating power in the President, whose national security views are subject to frequent change and reversal. Many of the President’s foreign policy positions derive from his business experience and his confidence that he is an effective dealmaker, rather than any deeply held convictions about international relations.

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Throughout 2017, the President expanded his knowledge of world leaders and problems through travel and official meetings, but usually failed to demonstrate any real mastery of the complexity of issues, the importance of diplomatic give and take, and the established procedures to consider threats and policy options. Instead, he has relied on his personal judgment of leaders, often with public put-downs to assert his primacy in key relationships. He has focused on bilateral channels to achieve his objectives, often eschewing existing multilateral forums and mechanisms to build consensus around crisis responses.

The President’s America First agenda also leads him to view foreign policy as an instrument to achieve his domestic goals, not as a vital function of the federal government and a core responsibility of his position. He has no qualms about disrupting institutions and global norms, and arguments from Western leaders and his own advisors about the value of stability and consistency in US policy have not been persuasive to him. He is uninterested in, if not disdainful of past American policies to promote democracy, human rights, and development, and his Administration is committed to reducing the workforce and budgets of many civilian international agencies and activities.

Many of the President’s foreign policy positions derive from his business experience and his confidence that he is an effective dealmaker, rather than any deeply held convictions about international relations.

Like his predecessor, Barack Obama, Trump believes his electoral success was due in part to his attention to the fatigue in the American public for wars and costly overseas entanglements. Yet the President is not consistently isolationist, and still promotes a strong American military posture to deter enemies and ensure peace. In sum, it is hard to imagine a new equilibrium in American foreign policy emerging soon. Greater volatility and unpredictability are more likely.

Tour d’Horizon

One can attempt, despite the uncertainties, a more systematic review of key policies related to the Mediterranean and likely approaches by the Trump Administration, drawing on formal documents and statements, and assessing the ongoing and emerging issues around the region as they affect US interests and the priorities of the US Administration.

The National Security Strategy

The National Security Strategy provides a window into the conceptual thinking of the Administration and how it might apply to Mediterranean issues.

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report was drafted by political appointees in the White House and released in late 2017. Most notable are the new emphasis on geopolitical competition with China and Russia, and the purposeful downgrading of terrorism, which has been the organizing principle of national security since 9/11. The notion of competition as the prime driver of relations between states permeates the report. Diplomacy is one of the tools of this competition, and is intended to promote and defend American interests, rather than build a more cooperative and peaceful world. The document heralds the success of defeating the Islamic State, with the implication that the US can scale back its involvement in Syria and Iraq. Language on the importance of alliances and allies addresses the Administration’s satisfaction that allies are contributing more to the common defense and have been put on notice that the US will “no longer tolerate economic aggression or unfair trading practices.”

As for values and soft power, which have long been prominent in American and joint EU-US efforts in the southern Mediterranean, the Strategy report acknowledges that some other societies share the American aspiration for freedom and prosperity, but makes clear “we are not going to impose our values on others.” It takes a cooler, private-sector driven approach to helping developing countries, by “moblizing resources, capitalizing on new technologies and incentivizing reform.”

In sum, this first formal document that captures the Administration’s world view favours tough talk about American power in a competitive world. It privileges the military as the best means to create a favourable environment for American interests, primarily through deterrence and containment. It does not ignore entirely all the forms of civilian engagement and idealism that have long been associated with the US roles in Europe and the Middle East, from building educational and agricultural systems to the Marshall Plan.

Russia

The eastern Mediterranean region is a potential arena for renewed US-Russian rivalry. The sharp deterioration of US-Russian relations that began during the Obama Administration has been continued, with new sanctions imposed by the Trump Administration in response to Russian interference in the 2016 US elections and other evidence of rampant Russian hacking into a wide range of American institutions and technologies. While the President has angrily dismissed allegations of collusion with any Russian entities during his presidential campaign, and continues to express personal regard for Vladimir Putin, virtually all other players in the US system have come to view Russia in darkly adversarial terms, leading to concerns about a new Cold War.

The Trump Administration was initially open to a productive partnership with Russia in Syria. But Russia’s total support for the Assad regime and its brutal suppression of opposition forces, and its defiance of the UN process made it difficult for US officials to sustain any semblance of common goals. At most, the two governments have been able to communicate to avoid accidents in Syrian airspace, as Moscow and Washington use air power for distinctly different purposes.

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US officials have not publicly acknowledged deep concerns about Russia’s inroads into other key Middle Eastern countries that have long been seen as part of the US camp. Turkey is a particularly provocative case: a NATO country is developing political and military cooperation with Russia, and defying the US by attacking Washington’s Kurdish partners in the campaign against the Islamic State. A showdown looms in 2018, as Turkey ups the ante in occupying Kurdish towns in Syria, while the US invests

in more self-sufficiency for northern Syrian areas not under regime control. Russia could well improve its ties to Egypt and the major Gulf states, further exposing the decline of American dominance and influence in the region.

For now, Arab officials and experts express only limited interest in a strong Russian role in the region, and are more interested in developing ties with Asia as an alternative to the West as partner of choice for economic and security matters.

Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism cooperation will continue to be an important feature of US relations with most of the countries around the Mediterranean rim. Kinetic operations against extremists and more strategic planning and training to prevent radical extremism are the primary focus of the Department of Defense’s partnerships across North Africa, led by the African Command (AFRICOM). In Central Command (CENTCOM), counterterrorism sits alongside countering Iran as major missions.

The Obama-era theme “countering violent extremism” (CVE) was rebranded early in the Trump Administration to a less comprehensive campaign to defeat the Islamic State. The CVE framework addressed a wide array of civilian activities promoted at international conferences, on topics from investments in education and women’s empowerment to programmes to strengthen legal institutions, and to build resilience in civil society. The Trump team decided to deconstruct the offices in the State Department that organized CVE work, and focus only on the military campaign, a time-limited stabilization period, and a media and communications effort to defeat the “digital caliphate.”5 This approach envisions an endgame for US involvement, and a transfer of responsibility to the regional states to prevent any resurgence of the Islamic State. In addition, the scaling back of funding for the State Department, unless reversed by the US Congress, will further diminish US involvement in civilian programmes for youth, job creation, and governance reform, which are so badly needed in the southern Mediterranean and have been viewed as addressing the underlying causes of radicalization and terrorism.

Counterterrorism cooperation will remain an important arena in US-European relations, but has already been delegated to intelligence, law enforcement and aid officials. These activities are often mentioned in summit communiqués, but may not require high level attention or new decisions. But the Trump Administration is sure to focus on cost-sharing, and will measure its own success by signs that other countries are contributing more, financially in particular, to joint efforts.

Arab Israeli Conflict

The world is waiting, with weary resignation, for a promised peace initiative from the Trump Administration. Few experts expect presidential advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner to succeed in generating meaningful progress in Israeli-Palestinian relations, although the White House promises to do so. The December 2017 decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem could well make it impossible for any Palestinian leader to agree to a US-led process, and recent public exchanges between US and Palestinian leaders conveys a sharp deterioration in mutual respect. Yet the Trump White House believes that important Sunni Arab leaders may be able to move a new initiative along, and the new generation of reform-minded Gulf Arab leaders have been consulted and want to be engaged.

The Obama-era theme “countering violent extremism” (CVE) was rebranded early in the Trump Administration to a less comprehensive campaign to defeat the Islamic State

Other Mediterranean countries with a deep investment in Arab-Israeli peace, from key European countries to Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan, may still hope that the Administration, against all odds, will be able to accomplish something that keeps the

The possibility of a two-state solution alive. Whether they can add value to the process through their ties with the players remains to be seen. So long as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in office and enjoys the full support of President Trump, it is hard to imagine a peace process in which Israel makes any meaningful concessions to Palestinians, a basic tenet of any negotiations process.

Iran

Iran casts a shadow over Mediterranean issues in several ways. First, is an alarming scenario where Iran's success in Syria emboldens it to extend its reach into Lebanon. Its ally, Hezbollah, which to varying degrees can determine the policies of the State of Lebanon, could provide Iran with access to the sea, and complete Iran's alleged strategic objective of creating a security corridor across Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. There is already an increase in Iranian ship traffic in the Mediterranean, whether for commercial or more nefarious purposes. Regional experts worry that Israel might feel compelled to reassert some redlines in the region, and that recent limited military exchanges over the Golan or over Lebanese territory could escalate into open conflict. A second way Iran casts a shadow is the very real prospect that President Trump will pull the plug on US participation in the nuclear agreement signed in 2015 between Iran and the six major powers (EU Three plus US, Russia and China). After a year of tactical moves that demonstrated the President's displeasure, short of formal repudiation, by May's internal milestone to recertify compliance and extend the waivers on certain sanctions against Iran, the game may be over. The new Secretary of State and National Security Advisor, Mike Pompeo and John Bolton, respectively, will make Trump less constrained and more inclined to follow his instincts to ratchet up tensions with Iran, including serious consideration of the use of military force. Such a move would create a true crisis in US relations with its major European allies, all of whom believe, along with China and Russia, that the agreement has made a positive contribution to regional security and has reduced nuclear dangers for the Middle East and for Europe. In spring 2018, EU countries are hard at work to dissuade the US from abandoning the agreement. They realize it will be too risky to reopen the actual agreement with revisions to extend its duration, for example. Instead, they are reportedly focused on sanctioning Iran on issues not technically part of the nuclear agreement: ballistic missile developments and policy in Syria.

Thinking More Holistically about the Med?

Policymakers have tried and usually failed to develop more comprehensive approaches to twilight regions, or maritime spaces that encompass more than one continent or geographic entity. In the late 1980s, Secretary of State Shultz asked his Policy Planning staff to do some fresh, big-picture thinking about the Mediterranean, and the authors failed entirely, breaking the region into familiar conflict zones or subregional clusters. The Obama Administration explored an Indian Ocean policy initiative, but found the set of issues too disparate to create a coherent whole.

President Trump has been the dominant and disruptive figure in US foreign policy since his election in 2016. It has been hard for analysts and journalists, to know whether his personal preferences will be reconciled with institutional practices and long-standing international relationships.

American analysts understand that NATO, with its NATO-MED dialogue, and the EU, with a succession of initiatives towards the southern rim, have long hoped for a more integrated and coordinated approach to the Mediterranean region. On the US side, it is often the maritime forces, the US Navy in particular, that embrace the idea. Such holistic approaches make sense to sailors, more than to land-based officials.

In Admiral James Stavridis’ new book, Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World’s Oceans, he demonstrates an abiding interest in the Mediterranean, recognizing its historic significance as the
birthplace of naval warfare, and the importance of the sea as a zone of geopolitical contestation. His policy recommendations are narrowly cast. He focuses on Libya as the source of greatest instability and urges Italy to ask for more maritime assistance from NATO. A more complete appreciation of the naval contribution should include its role enabling civilian efforts to respond to natural or man-made disasters, and in facilitating military and civilian exchanges.

A recent think tank study also promoted a more integrated approach to the region, calling its geographic space a platform for a “broader and fluid community.” It looks at the Mediterranean out to the year 2030, and gives much needed attention to energy, resource stresses and climate as drivers of that future. It posits four scenarios: erosion (projecting out the migration trends to their darkest outcomes), drawbridge (European states act to stem the tide), power play (conflict brings in global powers) and Club Med (factors for cooperation prevail). Of course the most likely future will be some kind of mix of these scenarios. In any case, the authors dream big, calling for more US attention, presence, resources and role as a balancer for the region. They call on Europe to sustain economic growth, resolve its identity issues, support Arab political modernization, and strengthen its borders. And NATO could do more to build defence partnerships with Arab states, and use its resources and infrastructure more for crisis management in the region. These ambitious ideas do not align with the current thinking of the Trump Administration, but provide a useful contribution to a larger policy conversation. President Trump has been the dominant and disruptive figure in US foreign policy since his election in 2016. It has been hard for American analysts and journalists, not to mention allies and foreign interlocutors, to know whether his personal preferences will be reconciled with institutional practices and long-standing international relationships. There is a magnetic pull to this unusual political figure that makes it hard to calibrate or predict important trends or changes in official US behaviour and action.

We may be entering a long period of American retrenchment that is harmful to established patterns of free trade and collective security. This cannot be good news for the Mediterranean region, or, in the long run, for American interests either.

Beneath the radar of presidential interest, much activity in bilateral and multilateral channels will proceed. Responding tactically to Russian assertiveness and coordinating actions on the myriad of transnational problems may be promising areas for continued cooperation. Many channels remain open, even as European and Arab partners worry about reduced American attention and resources to play a leadership role in the region. One cannot avoid the sober conclusion that we may be entering a long period of American retrenchment that is harmful to established patterns of free trade and collective security. This cannot be good news for the Mediterranean region, or, in the long run, for American interests either.

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Presence of Non-Euro-Mediterranean Actors in the Mediterranean

Gulf Rivalries Reach North Africa

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The imprint of the Gulf countries is very visible in North Africa. And not only in terms of millionaire investments, as we had grown accustomed to thinking. The geopolitical competition between them is increasingly blatant and stark, and any situation will do to gain influence or try to snatch it from a rival.

In the 1990s, it was said that the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in the Maghreb were increasingly independent of what was happening in the rest of the Arab world. Alliances and counter-alliances were shaped by the historic rivalry between Algeria and Morocco, not the conflicts of the Middle East; the countries of the Maghreb increasingly looked to Europe or Africa; and regional powers, such as Turkey, Israel or the Gulf countries themselves did not seem to pay too much attention to what happened there. It may not have been a minor issue, but it was a secondary one.

This began to change in 2011, when a wave of protests that would shake the foundations of the pre-existing order began in Tunisia. Both the established regional powers and those that aspired to move up the ladder, such as Qatar or the Emirates, understood that new opportunities, as well as new risks, were emerging in North Africa. The biggest bets were placed in Egypt, the centre of gravity of the Arab world and North Africa's most populous country. The Gulf's influence was also felt in the Tunisian transition and the Libyan conflict.

At the same time, the countries of North Africa increasingly had no choice but to position themselves with regard to the rivalries between the Gulf countries. The clearest case was the boycott of Qatar, but the war in Yemen is equally important, as well as all things related to Iran, a highly sensitive issue for Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. An eloquent sign of just how connected the geopolitical dynamics of the Gulf and North Africa are was Morocco's decision, in May 2018, to cut off diplomatic relations with Iran, after accusing Teheran of supporting the Polisario Front through Hezbollah. As this article will explain, while this may have been the most recent case, and one of the most striking, it was hardly the only one.

Egypt: The Lifeline

The political changes in Egypt have immediately been reflected in its relations with the Gulf countries. Whilst Saudi Arabia positioned itself as one of the countries most favourable to Mubarak remaining in power, Qatar quickly bet on his fall. With the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Qatari landing materialized, amongst other things, in the form of an exponential increase in investment – more than 1,000%, coupled with the promise of another $18 billion in the years to come. More clear proof of the Qatari support could be found in the repeated injections of capital in the form of aid: some $8 billion in a total of three payments. The last payment was preceded by a meeting between senior officials from both cabinets that ended with statements by the then-Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jas-

sim al-Thani, encouraging bilateral relations to continue apace and the countries to take advantage of the good moment.2

The tables turned again after Morsi’s fall in 2013 and Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s rise to power. Qatar withdrew and Saudi Arabia and the Emirates welcomed the announced change with a disbursement of $8 billion to Egypt for various items, including direct transfers to the Central Bank, energy supply and interest-free loans. This aid was on top of two other lifelines for the Egyptian economy: remittances from Egyptian workers in the Gulf – more than two percentage points of its GDP, coming especially from Saudi Arabia – and multi-million-dollar investments spearheaded by the Emirates to the tune of €1.3 billion a year.3

This injection of liquidity was vital to keeping the economy afloat and served as a counterweight to the pressures of international players, such as the United States and the European Union, which froze some of their financial assistance.4 Whilst Brussels and Washington expressed reservations or maintained a wait-and-see approach, both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi firmly supported the new regime. In the Saudi case, the main concern was to prevent the country from collapsing and to bring it closer to its sphere of influence. The Emiratis viewed the opportunity in ideological terms: it was an unbeatable chance to curtail the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood. For years, especially since 2011, the leaders of Abu Dhabi have perceived the Islamist movement as a regional rival and, above all, a threat to their own security.

Despite the massive amount of aid received, the new Egyptian authorities sought to retain a broad margin of autonomy in foreign policy, and that did not always sit well with their creditors. The Egyptian leaders began to acknowledge that there would be no solution to the Syrian conflict without al-Assad. Al-Sisi himself explained that his priority was “to support national armies.” When asked if that applied to Syria as well, he said yes.5 Saudi Arabia began to show its discontent, and, in 2016, the tension between the two countries increased to the point where Saudi Arabia cut off the oil supply in retaliation for Egypt’s alignment with Russia on a Security Council resolution over the siege of Aleppo.

In 2017, the alliance was rebuilt and gestures intended to ease the tension proliferated. The most controversial of all was the cession by Egypt of two islands, Tiran and Sanafir, to Saudi Arabia. Al-Sisi showed the extent to which he was willing to take risks to normalize relations with Riyadh. Despite the popular outrage over the move, which was regarded as a betrayal of national sovereignty, and the fact that the issue was brought before the courts, Parliament, in lockstep with the Presidency of the Republic, decided to expedite the territorial concession.

In June 2017, Egypt confirmed its alignment with the Saudis and Emiratis with the decision to launch a joint boycott against Qatar, which it accused of supporting terrorism and meddling in its internal affairs and those of other Arab countries. Egypt’s message to its partners was that they could rely on it in the fight against the Muslim Brotherhood. This stands in contrast with the much lower profile it has assumed in other issues, such as the war in Yemen or the controversy over the Iran nuclear deal. Proof that despite its economic dependence on the Gulf, Egypt still aspires to maintain a certain degree of autonomy in foreign policy.

Choose Your Candidate: The Gulf and the Tunisian Transition

The Gulf countries’ presence in Tunisia is not a new phenomenon, as attested by the large urban development projects in the capital. What is new is the highly political dimension it has acquired. With the start of the democratic transition, various Gulf countries began to see Tunisian politics as a battlefield. In keeping with its strategy of building alliances with new players to emerge in the wake of the 2011 protests, Qatar decided to support both the new Tunisian government, led by the Islamists of Ennahda,

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2 Daragahi, Borzou. “Qatar gives Egypt $3bn aid package.” Financial Times, 10 April 2013. Available at: www.ft.com/content/790a7d52-a1f4-11e2-8971-00144feabdc0 (retrieved: 23 May 2018).
4 The European Union opened the debate on suspending aid and shutting off the weapons tap in the summer of 2013. The United States announced that it would be withdrawing a transfer of $260 million and halting shipments of military equipment.
5 Al-Sisi hinted at his support for Assad in an interview with the Portuguese broadcaster RTP in November 2016.
and President Moncef Marzouki. Official visits multiplied and the Qatari presence became so visible that the opposition forces began to question it. By way of example, in 2014, several leaders, such as Mahmoud Baroudi, Khemais Ksila or Samir Ettaieb, boycotted a dinner in honour of the Emir of Qatar offered by the President of the Republic.6

Despite its economic dependence on the Gulf, Egypt still aspires to maintain a certain degree of autonomy in foreign policy.

The United Arab Emirates decided to enter the game, trying to neutralize the influence of both political Islamism and Qatar. In September 2013, it withdrew its ambassador, sparking all sorts of rumours about Emirati support for Nidaa Tounes, a clearly anti-Ennahdha formation. Following Beji Caid Essebsi’s victory in the December 2014 elections, the Emirates tried to rebuild relations, but their hopes were dashed. Nidaa Tounes ended up forming a government with Ennahdha, and the Qatari presence in Tunisia did not abate. Since then, Abu Dhabi has seized every opportunity to express its disappointment. The lack of Emirati investment in Tunisia or the obstacles Tunisian citizens face to obtain visas from the country reflect the political tension between the two governments.7

The relations between Tunisia and Saudi Arabia have followed a different logic. Despite offering Ben Ali safe harbour when he fled the country, Riyadh has decided not to interfere in the day-to-day battles of Tunisian politics. In exchange, the Tunisian authorities have endeavoured not to irritate the Saudis. A good example of this was when the Prime Minister sacked his Religious Affairs Minister, Abdeljalil Ben Salem, in November 2016 over remarks linking terrorism to Saudi Wahhabi proselytizing.8

Choose Your Militia: The Gulf and the Libyan Conflict

The Gulf countries played an important role in the fall of Gaddafi. Unlike in the mobilizations in Egypt or Tunisia, there was almost complete convergence in Libya. Animosity towards Gaddafi was one of the few things on which all the Arab Gulf capitals agreed. Not in vain, the Libyan leader had come to use very coarse language to refer to the Gulf monarchs, in particular, the Saudis. One of the final incidents occurred at a 2009 summit, when Gaddafi said, “I have been waiting six years to tell you that you are a liar. You were made by Britain and protected by the United States.”9 When the protests began in Libya, the Gulf Cooperation Council was one of the first organizations to call for the imposition of a no-fly zone. It was followed, in similar terms, by the Arab League, lending regional legitimacy to UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which ultimately resulted in a regime change operation. Although the operation was led by NATO, the Emirati and Qatari air forces joined the coalition.

With the start of the democratic transition, various Gulf countries began to see Tunisian politics as a battlefield.

The other major moment in which the Gulf countries left their mark in Libya was in 2014. That year saw the derailment of the transition and the start of the second phase of the conflict. Following the elections of 25 June, two centres of power emerged: Tripoli and Tobruk, supported by Qatar and the Emirates, respectively. They were not the only regional players to take sides, but they were amongst the most influential. The Gulf countries’ involvement mainly took the form of financial or military support for the parties to

the conflict. Several Arab countries have accused Qatar of funding groups included on lists of terrorist organizations, such as Ansar al-Sharia and the Benghazi Defence Brigades. Doha denied the accusations. In contrast, its support for the government in Tripoli and groups linked to the Muslim Brotherhood is a proven fact. As for the Emirates, a United Nations report concluded that the country was violating the arms embargo, but Abu Dhabi did not feel it was necessary to deny it or to respond to the questions put to it by the UN. The Emirati support for the forces led by Khalifa Haftar is no secret, with several meetings between Mohamed Bin Zayed and the Libyan general having been made public.

The Gulf countries played an important role in the fall of Gaddafi. Unlike in the mobilizations in Egypt or Tunisia, there was almost complete convergence in Libya

Occasionally, the involvement of the Emirates and, by its side, Egypt has gone further. In the first months of the conflict, the UAE Air Force, with Egyptian support, launched a campaign to strike government-controlled targets in Tripoli. In 2017, Egypt bombed the city of Derna, apparently with Emirati support, in retaliation for an attack that killed dozens of Copts.

The involvement of all these players shows how Libya has become the scene of a regional conflict with a strong ideological component. The players who perceive the Muslim Brotherhood and political Islam as a threat to the security of the regime or, on the contrary, as an opportunity to expand their influence are the ones who have become most explicitly involved.

Choose Your Side: The Qatar Boycott

In June 2017, four Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain) made a decision as drastic as it was risky: they announced the blockade of Qatar with measures that included not only breaking off diplomatic relations, but also restrictions on the mobility of people and goods. Shortly thereafter, they published a list of demands to lift the blockade, and Doha chose not to compromise. The division between the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council was transferred to the rest of the Arab countries and, therefore, to North Africa, as well. Doha asked for help to resist, whilst the backers of the boycott asked the rest of the countries to join. Of all the countries in the Maghreb, the most interesting positionings were those of Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania.

Morocco is a traditional Saudi ally and has long sought to strengthen its ties with the Gulf countries. Three examples may help to illustrate this unique relationship: Morocco was the only Maghrebi country, in 1991, to contribute troops to the international coalition to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait; in the midst of the Arab Spring, the Saudis broached the possibility of Morocco joining the Gulf Cooperation Council; and, in 2015, Rabat joined Operation Decisive Storm in Yemen. This move sparked some debate within the country, especially following the shooting down of a Moroccan fighter jet in May of that year.

In contrast, in 2017, Morocco not only declined to join the boycott but also, in the first few weeks, sent a plane with food supplies to Doha. Rabat sought to square the circle: to preserve its ties with Qatar, one of the countries that had most increased its investment in Morocco, whilst arguing that this did not mean it had taken part and that, precisely for that reason, it supported the mediation efforts of Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia did not see things the same way and began to make its displeasure known to Morocco, choosing the sphere of sports to send a clear signal. Turki al-Sheikh, head of the highest Saudi sport authority, the General Sports Authority (GSA), took advantage of the Moroccan candidacy for the 2026 World Cup to send a warning. “If we were asked for support, we would firstly look at what serves Saudi Arabia’s best interest,” he tweeted from his official Twitter account. Al-Sheikh made it clear that “to be in the grey area is no longer acceptable” for Saudi Arabia, in reference to Morocco’s neutral stance in the Qatari blockade.15

It is in this context that Morocco’s decision to cut off relations with Iran in May 2018 must be understood. Rabat accused Iran of training and providing military support for the Polisario Front via Hezbollah in Algeria. The message was intended for multiple recipients, one of which was certainly Saudi Arabia.

The Algerian position is also interesting, as the country has long sought to stay out of the regional confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Algerians declined to join the so-called Islamic Military Alliance promoted by Saudi Arabia, which brings together the vast majority of Sunni Muslim countries. With regard to conflicts such as those in Syria and Yemen, it has always advocated trying to find a negotiated solution. Algeria’s neutrality in relation to the crisis between the Gulf countries must thus be interpreted as a new affirmation of autonomy. And yet, it does not seek to be hostile towards Saudi Arabia. Were that the case, it would have offered a token of support to the Qatari authorities. Why? The key lies in Saudi Arabia’s preeminent position in the energy market, an essential aspect for the survival of the Algerian economy and, therefore, the country’s political stability.

Mauritania is a completely different case, as it was one of the few countries that did break off relations with Qatar and quickly joined the boycott. This decision can be explained, firstly, by the country’s domestic political dynamics: one of the main opposition forces is the Islamist Tawasul party, close to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was also accused of receiving Qatari support.16 However, other factors may also have played a role in the decision, such as the growing investment, development aid and military cooperation provided by Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, not only in Mauritania, but to the Sahel and West Africa as a whole.17 That would explain, for instance, why the Mauritanian positions with regard to the crisis between the Gulf countries are more akin to those of Senegal or Niger than to those of its Maghrebi neighbours.

**And Now What?**

Five trends are taking shape: (1) the Gulf countries, especially Qatar and the Emirates, no longer consider North Africa a secondary issue, but rather one of the preeminent stages on which to project their influence; (2) the volume of aid and investment that they are disbursing in these countries reduces the influence and conditionality of other players, such as the European Union; (3) the political fragmentation or polarization in North Africa opens up spaces for interference by external actors; (4) the support of the Gulf countries for rival political groups further polarizes political transitions and is an obstacle to resolving some conflicts that, like the Libyan conflict, remain open; and (5) North African countries are under increasing pressure to take sides in the Gulf rivalries and any attempt to preserve autonomy or declare their neutrality makes their creditors uneasy. Until these trends are reversed, we will have to get used to analyzing the political and security dynamics of North Africa with one eye turned to the Gulf.

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Sectarianism and the Politics of Hate

Playing with Fire: Trump, the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry, and the Geopolitics of Sectarianization in the Middle East

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The Risk of an Escalatory Cycle

Sectarian conflict has been on the rise in the Middle East in recent years. From the catastrophic wars in Syria and Yemen to the volatile assemblages of Iraq and Lebanon, Sunni-Shiite relations are at a breaking point. The Saudi-Iranian regional rivalry is a key driver of this poisonous process.

At the beginning of every year the International Crisis Group (ICG) issues a list of “10 Conflicts to Watch” around the globe. Second on its list for 2018, behind only the standoff with North Korea, was what it calls the “US-Saudi-Iran rivalry,” underscoring the central role Washington plays in this dangerous game. The rivalry, according to the ICG, is “enabled and exacerbated by three parallel developments: the consolidation of the authority of Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia’s assertive Crown Prince; the Trump Administration’s more aggressive strategy toward Iran; and the end of the Islamic State’s territorial control in Iraq and Syria, which allows Washington and Riyadh to aim the spotlight more firmly on Iran.”

This US-Saudi strategy – with key supporting roles played by Israel and the United Arab Emirates – involves “multiple forms of pressure to contain, squeeze, exhaust, and ultimately push back Iran,” say the ICG, while noting that “Tehran and its partners still appear to be in a strong position”:

“The Bashar al-Assad regime, backed by Russian air power, is prevailing in Syria. Across Iraq, Iran-linked Shiite militias are entrenching themselves in state institutions. In Yemen, Tehran’s relatively small investment in backing the Houthis has helped them weather the Saudi-led campaign and even launch missiles of unprecedented range and accuracy into Saudi territory.”

“Despite demonstrating its resolve to confront Iran and its partners,” the ICG notes, “Riyadh has been unable to alter the balance of power”: “Forcing [Lebanese Prime Minister Saad] Hariri’s resignation backfired, not just because he later withdrew it, but also because all of Lebanon united against the move and Hariri then inched closer to Lebanese President Michel Aoun and Hezbollah. In Yemen, Riyadh turned the Houthis and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against each other, but in doing so further

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2 INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP. 10 Conflicts to Watch in 2018, 2 January 2018: www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2018

fragmented the country and complicated the search for a settlement and a face-saving Saudi exit from a war that is enormously costly not only to Yemenis but also to Riyadh’s international standing.” “With so many flashpoints, and so little diplomacy,” the ICG concluded, “the risk of an escalatory cycle is great.” “Any move,” the organization admonished, “could trigger a broader confrontation.”

The IGC issued this warning five months before the Trump Administration announced the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or Iran nuclear deal, in early May 2018. That policy move both reflected and deepened the strategic turn toward isolating and confronting Iran – and makes war significantly more likely. Trump had signalled this turn a year earlier, during his May 2017 visit to Riyadh. The lavish ostentation of the occasion, along with the spectacles of the sword dance and the glowing orb, dominated media coverage, but Trump’s Riyadh address made a decisive and consequential statement. He emphatically endorsed the Saudi-Emirati claim that Iran is the main (if not indeed sole) source of the region’s problems and must be stopped in its tracks. This is a recipe for disaster in an already fragile regional equation. There has been a dramatic rise in sectarian conflict in the Middle East, particularly since the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq.7 By embracing the Saudi narrative, putting the likes of John Bolton and Mike Pompeo at the helm of US foreign policy, and now scrapping the Iran nuclear deal, Trump is throwing fuel on the fire of the sectarianization process gripping the region.8

The Saudi-Iranian War of Narratives

But the sectarian narrative – specifically the spectre of a ‘Shia crescent’ or ‘Iranian snake’ – has been gaining traction since the 2003 toppling of Saddam Hussein and the concomitant emergence of Shia-majority rule in Iraq. Jordan’s King Abdullah gave expression to these anxieties in 2004. As Ian Black (then with The Guardian, now a visiting senior fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre) summarized: “King Abdullah of Jordan coined a controversial phrase that still resonates powerfully in the Middle East: there was, he argued, a “Shia crescent” that went from Damascus to Tehran, passing through Baghdad, where a Shia-dominated government had taken power and was dictating a sectarian brand of politics that was radiating outwards from Iraq across the whole region.”

Leaked diplomatic cables revealed that in 2008, the Saudi kingdom repeatedly exorted Washington to “cut off the head of the snake” by launching military strikes on Iran.10 Iran has reinforced this narrative: Ali Reza Zakani, a member of Iran’s parliament and a confidant of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, has bragged that three Arab capitals – Baghdad, Damascus and Beirut –

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5 See Roula KHALAF, “The Saudi seduction of Donald Trump,” Financial Times, 23 May, 2017: www.ft.com/content/8e18a22-3fbd-11e7-9d56-259f63e998b2; Ishaan THAROOR. “Trump embraces the Saudi vision for the Middle East,” Washington Post, 22 May, 2017: www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/05/22/trump-embraces-the-saudi-vision-for-the-middle-east/. Adam ENTOUS shows that Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel had been manoeuvring in close coordination to push for this policy turn for several years, and Trump’s election opened the door for them to steer Washington sharply in the direction of confronting Iran. See ENTOUS. “Donald Trump’s New World Order.”


“have today ended up in the hands of Iran and belong to the Islamic Iranian revolution” and predicted that Sanaa would soon follow.\(^1\) This notion of Iran controlling four Arab capitals, hyperbole notwithstanding, has hit a major nerve in the Sunni Arab world.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has claimed that Tehran’s goal is “to control the Islamic world.” Referring to the Shia political theology of the Islamic Republic, he asked: “How can I come to an understanding with someone, or a regime, that has an anchoring belief built on an extremist ideology?\(^2\) In interviews with Western journalists, the Crown Prince has repeatedly compared Iran’s leaders to Nazi Germany. “I believe the Iranian supreme leader makes Hitler look good,” he told Jeffrey Goldberg. “Hitler didn’t do what the supreme leader is trying to do. Hitler tried to conquer Europe… the supreme leader is trying to conquer the world.”\(^3\) Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in turn, claims that “the key driver of violence” in the region is an “extremist ideology promoted by Saudi Arabia” – namely, Wahhabism, which he calls a “theological perversion” and a “death cult.” “Over the past three decades, Riyadh has spent tens of billions of dollars exporting Wahhabism through thousands of mosques and madrasas across the world,” Zarif wrote in the New York Times.\(^14\)

Then there is the figure of Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the al-Quds brigade of Iran’s elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), who looms large in what we might call the contemporary anti-Shia imaginary: for many Sunni Arabs he embodies, in his transnational exploits, the menace of the Iranian hegemon on the rise.\(^15\)

Indeed, anti-Shia sentiment across the Middle East (and even in parts of the Islamic world with virtually no Shia communities, such as Malaysia) is at an all-time high. As Fanar Haddad observed in 2013: “[T]he vocabulary of anti-Shiism in the Middle East has changed dramatically over the last 10 years. Shites who used to be accused of ethnic otherness are now being cast as outside the Muslim community itself. Exclusion on doctrinal grounds was a mostly Saudi exception in the framing of Shiism. It is now increasingly becoming the regional rule.\(^16\)

The sectarian narrative – specifically the spectre of a ‘Shia crescent’ or ‘Iranian snake’ – has been gaining traction since the 2003 toppling of Saddam Hussein and the concomitant emergence of Shia-majority rule in Iraq.

As Alexandra Siegel noted in 2015: “From fiery sermons disseminated by Salafi televangelists to gory videos circulated by the self-proclaimed Islamic State, sectarian narratives and hate speech are on the rise across the Arab world. As the conflicts in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen rage on, hostile messages and violent images circulate 24 hours a day through both traditional and social media channels. While the use of sectarian language is hardly a new phenomenon, dehumanizing anti-Shia and anti-Sunni

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12 “Iran is seeking ‘to control Islamic world,’ says Saudi Arabian prince,” Associated Press, 2 May 2017: www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/02/iran-is-seeking-to-control-islamic-world-says-saudi-arabian-prince


slurs are increasingly making their way into common discourse.\textsuperscript{17} The case of Yusuf Al Qaradawi epitomizes this trend. The prominent Egyptian cleric and spiritual guide to the Muslim Brotherhood has advanced a series of anti-Shia polemics in recent years that have fuelled sectarian animus in the Middle East. He has asserted that Shiites are “heretics” who seek to “invade Sunni society” and claimed that Iran’s clerics want to “eat the Sunni people.”\textsuperscript{18} Iran’s role in Syria has provided fertile ground for this message. The cleric’s access to al-Jazeera, where he hosts a regular programme, has given these views a mass audience.

Anti-Shia hatred has found its most extreme expression in the political theology of the so-called Islamic State, or ISIS.\textsuperscript{19} The ideological architect of the Islamic State’s virulent anti-Shiism was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. A jihadi journeyman and sectarian entrepreneur from Jordan, Zarqawi engineered the 29 August, 2003 attack on the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq – one of Shia Islam’s holiest sites – which killed more than a hundred people.\textsuperscript{20} Zarqawi declared “all-out war” on what he called the “crafty and malicious scorpion” of Shiism and called on Sunnis to rise up against Shia “snakes” across the Middle East.\textsuperscript{21} Zarqawi’s focus on targeting the “near enemy” (the Shia) as opposed to the “far enemy” (the Americans) led to tensions between the Jordanian and the leadership of al-Qaeda, whose Iraqi branch he headed.\textsuperscript{22}

### Wars of Position

The regional policies of both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (in Yemen) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (in Syria) are causing horrific carnage and have engendered deep resentment. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia has committed unrelenting atrocities in Yemen – bombing hospitals, schools, markets, weddings, funerals and residential areas, killing thousands of civilians.\textsuperscript{23} Iran, for its part, is deeply complicit in the war crimes of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, which include deliberate starvation, bombing of medical facilities and residential buildings, and the invertebrate use of chemical weapons.\textsuperscript{24} Whereas for years the Islamic Republic concealed the extent of its involvement in Syria from the Iranian public, it now openly celebrates it.\textsuperscript{25} In addition to deploying its own IRGC forces, Iran has arrayed a massive transnational flow of arms from Iran to Syria.


\textsuperscript{24} On Iran’s role in Syria, see Danny POSTEL. “Theaters of Coercion,” Democracy: A Journal of Ideas, Fall 2016: https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/42/theaters-of-coercion/

of Shia fighters into Syria to defend the Assad regime: Shia militias from Iraq, Shia mercenaries from Afghanistan and Pakistan, and of course Hezbollah in Lebanon, which has its own reasons for crossing the border to defend Assad but does so in close coordination with its Iranian patrons.26 These fighters are engaged in staggering levels of violence. More recently, Iran has been engineering population swaps along sectarian lines to fortify the Assad regime.27 This extreme brutality has hardened the sectarian fault lines in the region. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran bear responsibility for this abhorrent state of affairs.

Conclusion

The bad news is that sectarian enmity and conflict in the Middle East have soared to perilous levels. The good news is that there is nothing necessary or inevitable about this state of affairs. Contrary to the new conventional wisdom in Western capitals and media circles, which would have us believe that the violence convulsing the Middle East today is the result of “ancient hatreds” or primordial, trans-historical forces, and thus intractable – a lazy and convenient narrative steeped in Orientalism – the fact is that the sectarianization of the region’s politics is a recent phenomenon and can be reversed.28 Turning the tide of sectarianization will be no small task, to be sure. Once unleashed and cultivated, once lodged into hearts and minds, identitarian hatreds can take on a life of their own and become self-fulfilling prophecies.29 The 2011 Arab uprisings, which swept across the Middle East and North Africa a mere seven years ago, remind us that sectarian passions are far from the only ones that can surface and mobilize the people of the region. There is a revisionist tendency to project the violence and chaos prevalent today back and retrospectively imagine the Arab uprisings as sectarian in origin, or as having inevitably ushered in the region-wide sectarian bloodbath we see now. On the contrary, the 2011 popular uprisings in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen, for example, were decidedly cross-sectarian in their composition and non-sectarian in their slogans, demands and agendas. They morphed into sectarian conflicts over time – principally as a result of deliberate regime strategies and the counter-revolutionary interventions of regional powers.30


29 We borrow the formulation of the “cultivation of hatred” from the late historian Peter Gay, See Peter Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993, the third volume of his five-volume study The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud.

But things can change very quickly. Although most of the popular uprisings were crushed, thwarted, or upended, the conditions that gave rise to them in the first place remain in place or have worsened, setting the stage for future upheavals. Yet the picture remains inescapably bleak. This is a moment of deep authoritarian retreatment across the region: the dictators are back in charge and have learned how to adapt and survive. This sordid state of affairs is bolstered and reinforced by Western policy. The monarchs, autocrats, and oligarchs of the Gulf feel they have a wind from the West at their backs and a green light to corner Iran.

If they get their way and provoke a military confrontation, it will wreak havoc on the region and intensify sectarian animosities to unfathomable levels. Western governments must stop fuelling this lethal sectarianization process. They must discontinue the policies that encourage its principal regional purveyor, Saudi Arabia, in its belligerent behaviour. Washington and London provide critical support to the Saudi coalition in its cataclysmic war in Yemen and are complicit in its ongoing and amply documented atrocities, including war crimes. “In one strike alone, we were able to verify that U.S. bombs were used to attack an entire residential building, leaving scores of children and families killed,” Samah Hadid, Amnesty International’s director for Middle East campaigns, told the Los Angeles Times. “The UK refuses to call out the [Saudi-led] coalition’s massive violations of the laws of war in Yemen, even though the coalition continues to unlawfully kill Yemeni civilians, strike weddings, and bomb homes,” writes Myrto Tilianaki of Human Rights Watch. “Instead of providing logistical and military assistance to coalition forces that have committed serious violations, these influential members of the international community should seek to hold perpetrators of such violations to account,” said James Lynch, Amnesty’s Deputy Middle East and North Africa Director. “There is no reasonable explanation by states such as the US and the UK that would justify their continued support and irresponsible arms flows to the Saudi Arabia-led coalition, when there is extensive evidence that these have resulted in enormous harm to Yemen for the past three years,” says Amnest International’s Middle East research director, Lynn Maalouf. The work of de-sectarianization will be an uphill battle and could require decades. To be sure, there are pockets of cross-sectarian activism and inter-sectarian dialogue underway across the region. But those vital efforts will remain consigned to the margins until the bombs stop falling.

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Islamophobia, Security Narratives and Countering Violent Extremism: Dangerous Liaisons

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After the Arab Spring avalanche and the resurgence of ISIS as the new global threat, the last couple of years have enshrined new dynamics in the world of narratives and policy-making – the interplay between Islamophobia, security and the flourishing Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) ‘industry.’

Feeding on Orientalism and Colonialism, post-Cold War ‘civilizationalism’ has paved the way for identity politics to construe a new enemy: Islam and Muslims. The post-9/11 securitization of domestic and foreign policies has been the perfect hotbed for increasing claims of constant suspicion and growing hostility suffered by Muslims, a situation aggravated when combined with racial, gender or class discrimination.

Today, Islamophobia is the perfect toy in the hands of far-right populist leaders in Europe and the US. Narratives that convey a message of mistrust towards Islam and Muslims are spreading to mainstream politics, thus widening acceptance in the media and public opinion at large. Islamophobia is also a double-edged sword as it also serves the purposes of jihadists who use it in their narratives of victimhood and self-defence – be it in the Middle East, Europe or the US – as a tool to achieve their recruitment goals.

Islamophobia, increased securitization and a greater focus on identity politics have given rise to new flourishing fields of study and action, namely radicalization and de-radicalization, lately reworded as CVE. Despite its very much needed existence, CVE has yet to decide whether it targets extremist thought and/or extremist action, whether it intends to deal with all forms of violent extremism or solely that of jihadism, and to what extent the current CVE paradigm is capable of overcoming the temptation of securitization or policing Muslims.

From Arabs to Muslims

Islamophobia is not just an issue of recent years – particularly in Europe –, but rather can be traced back to the early 20th century, and is rooted in colonialism and the idea of the superiority of a hegemonic culture (Western) over a ‘different’ one. This difference, as described by Orientalists, might be exotic, even appealing, but, in all cases, is also less civilized and enlightened than their own societies. In fact, as a system of meaning, the “old Islamophobia,” as defined by Vincent Geisser (2003), is a predominant mindset that still permeates much of our understanding of diversity. The new Islamophobia emerged later, coupled with anti-immigration narratives and terrorist threats.

Up until the end of the 1970s, the difference was mainly perceived as a matter of ethnicity. While in the US the construction of ‘Otherness’ was usually linked to the negative perception of Arabs due to their opposition to Israel – and thus, Arab ‘bad guys’ started to emerge in Western imaginaries associated with Palestinian militant organizations or other ‘rogue’ leftist Arab regimes –, in Europe, narratives were mainly focused on ethnicity and socio-economic status of migrants and citizens from a diverse origin.

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 allowed the emergence of a new sort of rival – the Muslim enemy. Coupled with the rising challenge posed by Islamist movements within Arab countries and the spread of Salafism, the latter blessed with increased funding from conservative Gulf regimes, Muslim identity be-
gan to occupy the centre of the debate over security at an international level. If up until then, ideology had been placed at the heart of terrorist motivations, the post-Cold War period, with Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History,” entailed the death of ideology and the birth of identity as the new grail for interpret violence. Assuming Bernard Lewis’ arguments on identity as the core of the Middle East’s problems, Samuel Huntington gave birth to the idea of civilizations as new political global actors, Islam and the West being indefatigably destined to clash. By 9/11, al-Qaeda embodied the ‘Muslim enemy’ but it held a whole community of believers hostage. This focus on identity as a source of violence and the sedimentation of the Muslim enemy through the literature on radicalization provided the ideological foundation for both the ‘war on terror’ and Islamophobia (Kundnani, 2012).

9/11 was the perfect culmination of Huntington’s predictions and narratives on radicalization, mainly attributed to and explained by an inherent propensity to violence in Islamic faith. Such an approach was duly reinforced by the fact that terrorists used religious wording and framing in order to give legitimacy and meaning to their actions. This explains why, when analyzing terrorists’ engagement in violence, agency was transferred from individuals – who individually decide to engage in violence – to a collective responsibility that associates all Muslims. In this sense, violence was seen as the choice of a set of individuals with a particular ideology determined by wider circumstances but also rooted in the theological/psychological dimensions of ‘Muslimness.’ In the US, violence by other groups not based on religious grounds but rooted in political conflicts was interpreted by the same matrix as global terrorism. At the same time, authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa that felt threatened politically and socially by Islamist movements – many of them having long rejected violent take-over strategies and now encouraging a bottom-up approach to Islamization – were instrumentally assimilated into global terrorism. At the same time, authoritarian regimes in the MENA region benefited from the ‘War on Terror’ to target and blur the lines between non-violent Islamist movements and violent jihadi organizations.

Blurring the lines not only played in favour of authoritarianism, but also connected the threat of global jihadism to concrete Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation. As a result, the ‘Arab bad guy’ became the ‘Muslim bad guy.’ This way, the term ‘Islamofascism,’ coined by Maxime Rodinson to describe the Iranian theological-political interpretation of governance, was enlarged to encompass all stripes of Islamisms, regardless of their stance or reasons for violence. This term would also be extended to a great variety of Muslim subjects whose identity would come to the forefront.

The construction of the ‘enemy within’ was perfect for anti-migration and far-right political groups, who found in this approach the perfect argument to condemn a whole segment of the European population.

As Arun Kundnani (2012) argues, terrorist attacks in Europe afterwards added a new layer of comprehension to the religious focus of the phenomenon. The fact that some of the terrorist attackers in London or Madrid were born and raised or lived as immigrants in European societies was a sign of failed integration and incompatibility of Muslim religion and culture with Western liberal values. Robert Leiken (2005) pointed at “Europe’s Angry Muslims,” while Fukuyama (2006) insisted on the failure of multiculturalism with regard to Muslims. At the same time, while Bruce Hoffman (2008) focused on the role of external organizations, Marc Sageman (2004) emphasized the role of what he called “home-grown wannabes,” drawing attention to European Muslims as a source of domestic threat. The construction of the ‘enemy within’ was perfect for anti-migration and far-right political groups, who found in this approach the perfect argument to condemn a whole segment of the European population.

At that point, traditional anti-Semitic discourse turned into anti-migration and finally anti-Islam. Violence was a consequence of ‘extremist beliefs,’ a product of Islamic culture and a result of the failure of integration, while identity and beliefs overshadowed the
weight of the socio-political root causes of terrorism. The historical presence of Muslims in Europe was neglected in favour of an approach that considered Muslims newcomers and alien subjects in European liberal societies. Furthermore, the ‘Eurabia’ narrative, the far-right conspiracy theory of an attempt from Arabs to replace the European population, was turned into a sort of resistance against an ‘Islamic Reconquista of Europe.’ On the other hand, this idea matches perfectly well with the arguments raised by jihadi organizations such as al-Qaeda or later ISIS, who claimed the need to reconquer Al Andalus, not so much as a real strategy per se as a rhetoric argument to raise symbolism and mobilize followers. Nevertheless, both approaches perfectly complemented and fed into one another.

Islamophobia Is Here to Stay

The period of distention that allowed for the so-called Arab Spring was soon coupled with negative assumptions on the role and capacity of Arabs, and particularly Muslims, to democratize. In this sense, identity politics, which emerged as a core issue after the Arab uprisings, were again instrumentalized, leading to the rise of renewed jihadist structures. As long as ISIS just threatened local populations – Muslims of all sects – external actors had little interest in combating them. Soon after, ISIS attacks against minority groups or foreigners (journalists or humanitarian workers) raised the alarm and brought about the engagement against ISIS on its territorial feud. While the West once again projected ‘selective empathies,’ ISIS engaged in a dual strategy: one territorial and local, and the other focused on the ‘far enemy,’ the West, such a strategy leading to a new wave of terrorist attacks and the embodiment of the perfect Muslim enemy in ISIS.

On the other hand, the crisis of the European project, with its core values at stake, particularly facing the arrival of refugees and migrants fleeing from war and deteriorating living conditions, coupled with a certain ideological void and a loss of trust in mainstream politics, converged in the perfect ground for populist rhetoric. This is how terrorist attacks, security narratives and populist discourses have enshrined Islamophobia over the last decade; with a peak during the last couple of years, Islamophobia and anti-immigration narratives have permeated almost all public debates.

In this regard, the migration agenda had a major role to play in the 2016 referendum on Brexit, just as it did in the election campaign in Germany. The result is that the far-right political camp has “moved from the periphery to the centre and become integral to the political landscape in Europe” (SETA, 2017). While most of these parties are still in the opposition, some are becoming governing parties, as is the case in Austria, Bulgaria or Finland. Moreover, many centrist parties have started to assume part of their xenophobic, anti-immigration rhetoric.

The normalization of Islamophobic speech in Italy, along with the strong anti-immigration statements and attempts to criminalize NGOs rescuing people in the Mediterranean made by Vice-President and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, have just added more fuel to an already burning issue. Terrorist attacks in the US, France, Belgium, UK, Germany and Spain inflated speeches against Muslims, depicting all of them as potential radicals and attackers, or as acquisitive accomplices. The Finsbury Park mosque attack was an example of unbridled Islamophobia, which followed suit regarding many other attacks and incidents reported in Europe and the US. In 2017, Europe witnessed 99 attacks from racist, nationalist and separatist extremists, followed by 27 left-wing extremist attacks and 13 jihadi terrorist attacks (SETA, 2017). Nevertheless, public opinion still sees Europe’s Muslim population as the greatest threat to security. Islamophobia has the lion’s share of the blame for this perception, even in a country such as Spain, where, after the dreadful Madrid 2004 terrorist attacks, the reaction was somehow exemplary. 13 years later, Islamophobic incidents in Spain have risen by 600% between 2014 and 2016 (Plataforma Ciudadana Contra la Islamofobia, 2017), thus proving that Islamophobia has finally taken root in social and political imaginaries and is here to stay.

From Denial to Acknowledgment of Islamophobia Networks

The first question that emerges when dealing with Islamophobia is whether or not such a phenomenon exists and is different from other kinds of discrimination already in place. Sceptics tend to assume that
Islamophobia is nothing more than an overlapping concept of racism, neglecting its specific form of hostility resulting in the discrimination of Muslims or those seen as Muslims (Runnymede Trust Report, 2017). Islamophobia does not focus on biological differences but rather on cultural and religious ones. It describes Islam as an incomprehensible religion for Western minds, depicting it as a monolithic entity, disregarding the diversity of people who profess such a religion. Islam and Muslims are seen as inferior, barbaric, irrational, sexist, primitive, violent, aggressive, and supportive of terrorism. In fact, whereas there is a de-politicization in the understanding of the root causes of terrorism, Islam is highly politicized by Islamophobes and considered a sort of militant ideology, so that hostility is normalized and discrimination defended.

The ‘us versus them’ narrative is embedded in the discursive tradition of the West, imported from the Orientalists to the Islamophobes, and increased by the degree of hostility and hate. In this context, everything takes on an ‘Islamic meaning’ and all failures and conflicts are explained through the essentialist, religious-cultural matrix. These ideas circulate vastly through the communicating vessels that connect intelligentsia, opinion-makers, media, policy-makers and society. The effects of Islamophobia are increasingly palpable and still vastly neglected. Hostility against Muslims has an impact on the lives of millions of people, leads to problems of internal security and breaks social cohesion by fragmenting societies, fuels extremist narratives and places Muslim individuals and organizations under suspicion.

2017 has also been the worst year for anti-Muslim violence in the US. Hate crimes against Muslims in the US surpassed post-9/11 levels. The White House Summit of 2015 focused on defining extremism basically from an Islamic perspective, while ignoring other more frequent and dangerous forms of extremism such as white supremacism and far-right extremism. Besides, in many cases Islamophobia in the US interacts with other layers of discrimination, taking into account that 33% of US Muslims are African-Americans and thus, the issue of civil rights and racial segregation also interplays with their Islamic background to conceive of an even more aggressive stance against them. Recent US polls show that 50% of Americans think that Muslim Americans support terrorism and are more devoted to Islam than to the US or their countries of birth or residence. Moreover, 20% of them would deny Muslims their right to vote (Sides & Mogahed, 2018).

The new US President Donald Trump and his ‘Muslim Ban,’ along with the massive anti-Muslim propaganda launched from several affiliated media, has contributed to increasing previously mentioned perceptions of hostility towards Muslims. With the surge of ‘fake news,’ Trump could invent terrorist attacks in Sweden and criticize migration policies in Europe, while he and other relevant figures in the political or social sphere stuff sympathetic media outlets with conspiracy theories (SETA, 2017).

Islamophobia in the US and Europe have different origins, but are developing the same characteristics and operate in very similar patterns. It is a complex transnational phenomenon that is hardly dealt with transnationally and without the necessary intersectionality.

Islamophobia, therefore, is considered a ‘militant term’ and those organizations that call for Muslim rights or fight against Islamophobia are considered threatening or violent. Therefore, Muslim organizations such as CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) are targeted twice as much as individuals, as their militancy is considered a way of defying the West and a device of external actors (Isaacs, 2018). At the same time, the backbone of the US Islamophobia network is being revealed and exposed (McClenen, 2018). A report on ‘black money’ traced back the funding of $42.6 million to Islamophobia think tanks between 2001 and 2009 (Center for American Progress, 2011). Organizations such as Stop Islamization of America or ACT! For America are getting stronger under Trump’s presidency and the ongoing denunciation campaigns in campuses and universities is becoming more acute, particularly mixing global jihadi terrorism, with Arab-Israeli conflict and conspiracy perceptions on American Muslims (Network Against Islamophobia).
The dismantling of a violent extremist group called Action des Forces Operationnelles in France, which was ready to kill Muslims, in July 2018 is evidence of the professionalization of Islamophobia networks and their growing threat against domestic security at large. Ironically enough, they were armed with ammunition and TATP, the same explosive used by jihadists. In fact, they are nothing more than two faces of the same coin, ready to kill in the name of some instrumentalized identity, be it Muslim, Christian, European or Western.

All in all, Islamophobia in the US and Europe have different origins, but are developing the same characteristics and operate in very similar patterns. It is a complex transnational phenomenon that is hardly dealt with transnationally and without the necessary intersectionality. Islamophobia combined with gender, race, income, etc. turns good Arabs into bad Muslims, and Hijabi women into fanatic terrorists or the strife for equality and civil rights into a matter of loyalties and faith. This is why transnational approaches to combat Islamophobia are urgently needed, particularly in the current context of global communications.

Countering Violent Extremism: Is the Cure Worse than the Disease?

After a turbulent decade marked by attempts by scholars and experts to understand the nature, structure, operational mode and funding of jihadism as today’s most powerful global threat (and thus setting patterns, trends and profiles), it evolved into a new structure where religion was still the framework, although with less doctrinal depth, and communication strategies were its most outstanding asset. Nonetheless, in most policy-making arenas its focus and main feature was still the religious dimension, while the relevance of socio-economic and political grievances was either neglected or diminished. Therefore, ISIS benefited in its territory from the sequels of conflict, authoritarianism, corruption, discrimination, nepotism, sectarianism and, in general, by the perceptions of relative deprivation. In addition, it was blessed with strong Islamophobia networks in Europe and in the US (those existing in other parts of the world are not covered by this article), and a new CVE industry dead set on de-radicalizing and, incidentally, criminalizing Muslims.

CVE is a sort of catch-all umbrella term encompassing all the different dimensions linked to the fight against terrorism and extremist violence (WANA, 2016). However, most of the work done in this field still neglects other rising forms of violent extremism because their motivation cannot be attributed to their cultural background. Conversely, mental health is very often assumed as the motivation behind the actions of many non-Muslim violent extremists.

CVE programmes in Europe have mainly focused on 'sensitive' populations, combining reinforced surveillance and profiling with reporting hotlines (Hatif, Stop Djihadisme, Stop Radicalismos) and multiple and disconnected de-radicalization programmes (Exit in Germany has already operated with right-wing extremists), many of them navigating between the dichotomies of de-radicalization and disengagement or de-mobilization. CVE strategies suffer from the main conceptual failure in distinguishing between cognitive radicalization and behavioural radicalization, as well as in deciding who should come into play in one case or another. Similarly, this same confusion is translated into the configuration of prevention and detection programmes. Most strategies conceived as preventive, such as PREVENT from the British CONTEST programme, have been criticized for their stigmatization potential as they address vulnerable individuals or populations. As in most US CVE strategies, reliance on the so-called community is very important. Despite its positive approach as a way to empower citizens to become resilient to extremism, in reality they give social stakeholders the burden of assuming certain surveillance-like activities. Public-private partnerships, which are very common in the US, rely strongly on community trust, engagement and leadership. However, in Europe particularly, there is no such solid consistent and coherent Muslim community. Representativeness is weak at best, and the attempts to institutionalize Islam by the authorities, as in France, have not been very successful. In cases like Spain, religious diversity has had a weak legal and institutional development and in the face of the lack of a joint CVE strategy, local initiatives are so far the most remarkable ones. Nevertheless, such initiatives and the most ambitious plans implement-
ed until now lack the necessary empirical data that enable us to gauge success and impact. Strong intervention in social spheres such as education has been one of the most controversial approaches of CVE in Europe, since instead of implementing long-term sustained prevention mechanisms that address the entire school population, they use flawed indicators to train educators in detecting radicalized students.

Most of the work done in this field still neglects other rising forms of violent extremism because their motivation cannot be attributed to their cultural background. Muslims, places of worship, NGOs and neighbourhoods are put under surveillance and subject to exhaustive profiling. The debate on CVE is still very much attached to the religious factor, mainly at the expense of politics, and tends to focus on predictive rather than explanatory factors. Moreover, it still relies considerably on military solutions as ‘neutralizers’ of the immediate threat regardless of mid and long-term negative setbacks. Immediateness is precisely one of the main enemies of prevention. The importunate ‘if you see something, say something’ that is constantly voiced in public transport is the pinnacle of a sort of community-wide surveillance system that is very much in line with the shifting roles between security forces and civil society stakeholders (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018).

Huge Challenges ahead

Obviously there is a strong need for CVE to start building consensus on definitions and creating impact measurement indicators for implemented programmes. While the focus on radicalization is still dominant in CVE and attributed mainly to Muslims, it will be very difficult to disarticulate the mechanisms for gathering grievances that extremist groups instrumentalize. Because even though jihadists use a distorted vision of Islam to indoctrinate followers, the social and political arguments that they raise are based on realities, and, as disputed as they might be, they are commonly legitimated by an important part of humanity. Moreover, the link between internal and foreign policies in current violent extremism is growing stronger, and therefore approaches to CVE need to be very much all encompassing. What is clear is that one model cannot fit all cases, and, although interpretation must find consensus, action must be informed and based on a local level. Prevention should remain the realm of civil society intervention, with long-term, sustainable initiatives that address the whole of society. This is why political mandates might not be so interested in investing in such time-consuming strategies, and this is exactly where civil societies must reclaim their space and role. Overcoming the ‘Minority Report’ dilemma will allow bottom-up approaches and strategies to emerge.

The Islamophobia network is becoming stronger by the day. Well funded and highly infuriated, it targets Muslims and those who are considered Muslims or ‘Muslim-friendly’ thanks to media outlets, social media and platforms that even target scholars for their ideas or their stances on fairly different issues linked to conflicts in MENA. This Islamophobia network finds a strong echo in and vulgarizes a narrative criminalizing Muslims, which permeates mainstream media and institutional discourses, influenced as well by the energy of the far-right, and opens borders for prejudices, the politicization of Islam (ruling on burkas or burkinis), bigotry in policy-making and disproportionate reactions to terrorism.

So far, such reactions have only served to create virtual geographies in which Ripoll, Rouen or Manchester become very close to Raqqa, and a flawed CVE ‘industry’ might contribute to increasing the perception of injustice and humiliation that many Muslims already feel. The result is more opportunities for extremists of all natures.

Furthermore, recognition of Islamophobia is still “a challenge for us all,” as stated by the 2018 Runnymede Trust Report published 20 years after the first seminal one. Islamophobia cannot only be found in the arguments of ranting politicians, the spray-painting of mosque walls, Quran burning or many other acts of anti-Muslim bigotry in the name of purity, identity, secularism or even feminism (yes, Islamo-
phobia can also be left-wing). Media and public opinion replicate embedded prejudices against Muslims that in the present security context grow stronger by the day. More than 60% of news stories published in six mainstream Spanish newspapers concerning Islam or Muslims were Islamophobic, and news items that dealt with Islam and women or veils were more Islamophobic than those dealing with Islam and terrorism, proving the need for intersectionality and transnationality in the fight against Islamophobia (Observatorio de la Islamofobia, 2017). In the current security context, Islamophobia is not the last straw but one essential piece in the machinery of violent extremism. Therefore, a responsible approach to CVE should aspire to, at least, breaking this ongoing relationship and making room for citizens to engage.

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Sectarianism and the Politics of Hate

The Future of Christians in the Middle East after the Defeat of Islamic State (IS)

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While the Arab Spring has offered an opportunity for religious and ethnic minorities to obtain their full political rights in new democratic regimes, the rise of violent Islamist groups, as is the case with the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) has put religious and ethnic minorities under unprecedented threat. This is the case in particular with Christian communities in Iraq and Syria after the establishment of the so-called Islamic caliphate in June 2014, and, to a lesser degree, the Coptic community in Egypt, targeted several times by Islamic State’s branch in Egypt.

The human rights violations committed by Islamic State against religious minorities has led the international community to act militarily in cooperation with national governments and local militias in Syria and Iraq in order to put an end to its rule. By the beginning of 2018, Islamic State had lost most of its territory, including the cities of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria.

However, despite the military defeat of Islamic State, many Iraqi and Syrian Christians are still unsure about their future in the Middle East. IS seems not to be the main challenge to the presence of Christian communities, but rather one of its symptoms. The quick rise and fall of IS rule has unveiled two alarming defies to the Christian communities in the region. On the one hand, it raises doubts about the efficiency of the Iraqi and Syrian state institutions and their ability to provide their citizens with basic services including security, and on the other, it revealed the fragile nature of the societal ties between the different religious communities in the region, particularly Sunni-Christian relations.

Christian Communities and Political Transitions in the Middle East

Arab political regimes have often treated Christians as second-class citizens following the old Ottoman millet system, according to which Christians “are granted certain rights and Churches limited freedom and prerogatives in managing some of their internal affairs, in exchange for total loyalty and acquiescence to the deprivation of their political rights and parts of their civil rights” (Mitri, 2018, p. 117). However, the wave of political transitions in the Middle East, which started first with the US invasion of Iraq leading to the ouster of the Saddam Hussein regime in April 2003 and then the wave of Arab uprisings that began in Tunisia in December 2010, challenged this pact.

In Iraq, Christian communities, like other religious and ethnic groups suffered under the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein (1979-2003) with no political rights and limited religious freedoms (Salloum, 2014, pp.300-313). The removal of the Hussein regime in 2003 led to different views among Christians. Some Iraqi Christians believed that the regime change would offer them a chance to ameliorate their political status, while others feared the rise of the Islamic forces, both Sunni and Shia, on the political scene. In the post-Saddam Hussein era, Christians have been allowed to form their own parties and compete in local and national elections. Christian figures, such as the secretary general of the Assyrian Democratic Movement Yonadam Kan ha, have been involved in the political process since...
its early stages with the establishment of the Governing Council and the constitutional writing process. However, the growing influence of the Shia religious parties in the post-Hussein era, the deterioration of the security situation due to the near civil war between Sunni and Shia militias, and the attacks against Christian churches and properties by Sunni extremist groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) led many Christians to leave their country. Out of the 1.4 million Christians that used to live in Iraq before 2003, Christians are estimated in recent years to number no more than 300,000.

Despite the military defeat of Islamic State, many Iraqi and Syrian Christians are still unsure about their future in the Middle East. IS seems not to be the main challenge to the presence of Christian communities, but rather one of its symptoms.

The tragic experience of Christians in Iraq has shaped the views of many Syrian and Egyptian Christians with the wave of Arab uprisings that started in December 2010. The Church leadership in Egypt and Syria supported the regimes in place and warned Christians not to participate in these uprisings. In Egypt, the Coptic Church asked its followers not to participate in the protests against the Mubarak regime in January 2011, while in March 2011 in Syria, the Council of Bishops in Damascus issued a statement describing the Syrian uprising as "a foreign conspiracy." However, part of the Christian youth in both countries rejected these positions by their religious leadership and supported the uprisings. In Egypt, a segment of the Coptic youth established a youth movement to defend Copts’ rights, known as the Maspero Youth Union (named after the Maspero area of Cairo, where Coptic youth organized sit-ins to protest against religious discrimination). Throughout the transitional period following the ouster of Mubarak the Maspero Youth Union put pressure on the transitional authority through demonstrations and sit-ins in order to push it to end all forms of discrimination against the Copts. They also cooperated with other political and revolutionary groups to ensure a wider support for their demands. Throughout 2011-2012, the Union participated in many marches and was keen to release political statements clarifying its position towards the various political debates during the transitional period, particularly those that affected the rights of the Coptic community. Similarly in Syria, many Christian youth have supported the revolution from day one, hoping to build a new democratic regime based on freedom, justice and human rights. In cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Qamishli, and Latakia, Christian activists have taken part in demonstrations and sit-ins. In Damascus for example, a group of more than 50 Christians, including three monks, began meeting in 2011 to discuss how Christians could support the revolution. They rejected the church leadership’s supportive stance toward the Assad regime and drafted a letter emphasizing the values of freedom and dignity for all Syrians, which they delivered to a number of Christian religious leaders. Other Christian activists have worked to raise awareness among their Christian communities about the revolution and its goals. Among one such group was Bassel Shehadeh, a young film director from Damascus who went to the city of Homs to document the revolution through his videos and to train other revolutionary activists to make their own videos. He was killed in May 2012 when the regime bombed the city (Sabbagh, 2015, pp. 84-86).

The Rise of Islamist Forces

The rise of religious forces after the removal of the Mubarak regime in Egypt and within the revolutionary scene in Syria has increased Christian concerns over their future in both countries. In Egypt, the victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 2012 parliamentary and presidential elections increased fears among the Coptic community. At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood failed to deal with Copts’ concerns about religious freedom and their marginalization in state institutions. As the opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood increased, many Copts joined it as well. Coptic protesters took part in the massive demonstration calling for early presidential elec-
tions on 30 June 2013 and the Coptic Pope Tawadros II supported the military intervention to remove the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated President Mohammed Morsi from power on 3 July 2013.

In Syria, the militarization of the peaceful uprising and the emergence of Islamist groups to dominate the revolutionary scene, such as al-Qaeda-affiliated Hay’at Tahrir Al Sham (formerly the Al-Nusra Front), the Army of Islam and the movement of Ahhrar al-Sham has fuelled fears among Christians of the alternative to Assad’s regime, in particular those who live close to these groups’ areas of influence.

In Syria and Iraq, the situation became alarmingly precarious with the increasing territorial presence of Islamic State. Islamic State could be traced back to the group al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), established by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2004. After Zarqawi’s death in 2006, AQI created a new organization called Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) in 2010. ISIS supported the revolt against the Syrian regime and helped establish the al-Nusra Front in Syria. In April 2013, al-Baghdadi decided to merge the two groups operating in Syria and Iraq under the name of “Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham” (ISIS). However, some leaders of the al-Nusra Front rejected this decision leading to a split within the group between those who remained loyal to al-Qaeda and those loyal to al-Baghdadi, who left the group and joined ISIS’ branch in Syria.

In Iraq, ISIS launched a military operation during the summer of 2014 and made enormous territorial gains in the four Iraqi regions of Anbar, Nineveh, Salahuddin and Diyala. In Syria too, the group expanded its control to include large areas of the provinces of Raqqa, Aleppo, Deir Al-Zour, Idlib and Al-Hasakah to establish an Islamic caliphate (a state governed in accordance with Islamic law) stretching from Aleppo in Syria to Diyala in Iraq. Islamic State also tried to consolidate its presence in other countries such as Egypt and Libya. In Egypt, an Islamist group, initially known as Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (Supporters of Jerusalem), which has been active in the Sinai Peninsula since 2011, pledged allegiance to Islamic State in November 2014 and renamed itself the Islamic State-Sinai Province. The group aims to take control over the Sinai Peninsula to turn it into a province of the Islamic caliphate ruled by ISIS. However, the Egyptian military has succeeded in limiting the presence of the group in Sinai.

Religious minorities suffered greatly under the rule of the Islamic caliphate. ISIS offered Christians three choices: to convert to Islam, follow the rules imposed by ISIS in their daily lives, which included paying a protection tax called Jizya, or be killed. In Mosul, the group gave Christian families an ultimatum to either follow ISIS’ rules or leave the city. After they left, ISIS confiscated all Christian properties without any compensation.

The situation of other religious minorities such as the Yazidis was even more difficult than that of the Christians as they fall outside the category of ahl al-kitab as recognized by the Quran. While ‘recognized minorities’ theoretically face three options: conversion, subjection to the Islamic rules or death, Yazidis were only offered two: conversion or death. Moreover, Yazidi women who refused to convert to Islam were sold as slaves.

In Syria as well, ISIS issued a number of restrictions on the Christian community in the city of Raqqa including: paying taxes in exchange for their safety, and a ban on making renovations to churches, displaying crosses or other religious symbols outside churches, ringing church bells, praying in public or carrying arms.

Although the situation in Egypt is different, Islamic State has also targeted the Coptic Christian community, accusing the Copts of supporting the Egyptian regime. Islamic State in Egypt has carried out three major terrorist attacks in recent years against Coptic Orthodox churches in Cairo, Alexandria, and Tanta, which left more than 80 dead. In North Sinai, Christian families have suffered assassinations and forced displacement. In February 2017, more than 70 Christian families left the city of Arish in North Sinai after receiving death threats from the Sinai branch of Islamic State.

The atrocities committed by the militants of Islamic State shocked the international community, leading many countries, including the US and Russia, to act in cooperation with national and local actors to put an end to the rule of the Islamic caliphate. After almost three years of its rule, Iraqi forces retook the city of Mosul in July 2017. A few months later, a US-backed alliance of Syrian Kurdish and Arab fighters recaptured the city of Raqqa in October 2017. In December 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al Aba-
di declared victory over Islamic State in Iraq. In January 2018, the US-led coalition against ISIS declared that 98% of territory once claimed by the jihadist group across Iraq and Syria had been re-captured.

What Is the Future for Christian Minorities after the Defeat of Islamic State?

The military defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq is definitely an important step for both countries and their different religious and ethnic communities. However, it will take more than military action to reassure the different religious minorities, and particularly Christians, about their future in the Middle East. Many Christians do not perceive Islamic State as the main danger, but rather as merely a symptom of a deeper problem. The quick rise of Islamic State in Syria and Iraq was only possible due to the weak and corrupt state institutions in place there, and has led to a deep divide between the Christian and Sunni communities. These two challenges need to be addressed first in order to ensure the future of Christians in the Middle East.

First, the quick victory of ISIS reflects the weakness of state institutions and its inability to enforce order, maintain security and provide public services for its citizens. Many Christians in Syria and Iraq question the ability of the current state institutions to protect them and offer them basic services, even after the defeat of Islamic State. As many of them argue, the military defeat of ISIS itself was only possible due to international support and the presence of local militias, Kurdish and Shia ones, and had little to do with the strength of the State. Regardless of the presence, or not, of Islamic State, if state institutions are unable to enforce order, the lives and properties of many Christians are endangered. In Iraq, religious militias, both Sunni and Shia, have often tried to impose their rules in the territories they control. Some of these militias have targeted Christian properties, as is the case in Baghdad where Shia militias have occupied Christian properties and used their networks within state institutions to manipulate ownership contracts. Christians in Syria fear a similar scenario with the steady militarization of the Syrian regime, a process through which the Syrian regime has been subcontracting the regime’s critical military efforts to loosely associated loyalist militias (Lister and Nelson, 2017). The lack of security represents an important concern for Christians living in the regime-controlled areas. Many Syrians accuse the regime of being responsible for this situation, as its amnesty in 2011 allowed a number of common criminals to be released and then recruited in the regime’s militias (Becker, 2014, p.3). Even in the safe zone of Latakia, the kidnapping of young Christians has become a major concern for Christian families. Latakia is often considered one of the quiet areas, relatively isolated from the armed conflict in the rest of the Syrian territory. Some Christians accuse security officers of being involved in these crimes as a way to make money (G. Fahmi, personal communication, 22 June, 2017). In Damascus as well, some Christians who used to support the Syrian regime now complain about the heavy presence of Shia militias close to Christian areas, such as Bab Tuma. This presence has put social pressure on Christian families and, in many cases, obliged them to change their way of living. The Syrian State’s inability to enforce security and order, and to delegate this authority to other Lebanese or Iraqi militias, is as much a cause for serious concern as the Jihadi Sunni groups are for Christians in Syria (G. Fahmi, personal communication, 23 March, 2017).

The military defeat of ISIS is an important step for both countries and their different religious and ethnic communities. However, it will take more than military action to reassure the different religious minorities, about their future in the Middle East.

Second, the experience of the last three years reveals the fragile nature of the societal ties between the Christian and Sunni communities, despite the discourse of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians. For many Iraqi and Syrian Christians, Islamic State is not a foreign power that has now been pushed away from their territory; but
rather many of them view it as a group that enjoys local support from some Sunni sectors. In Mosul for example, Sunni jihadi groups were active long before the establishment of the so-called Islamic caliphate. According to findings from a 2016 survey led by Norwegian Church Aid on the perceptions and experiences of religious minorities displaced in the Kurdistan region, residents of Mosul were the most likely to report experiences of insults before the ISIS occupation (74%), compared with about 25% in other areas (The Protection Needs of Minorities from Syria and Iraq, 2016, p.15).

The quick victory of ISIS reflects the weakness of state institutions and its inability to enforce order, maintain security and provide public services for its citizens.

In a conversation with an Iraqi priest, he stated clearly that Christians do not feel safe to live in Sunni areas anymore after the experience they went through under the rule of Islamic State (G. Fahmi, personal communication, 7 December, 2016). In another interview with a Syrian Christian, she claims that something has broken between the Christian and Sunni communities in Syria, “We cannot forget that we were left alone when Islamist groups took control of our neighbourhoods. No one stood by our side. Maybe they were afraid rather than being supportive of these groups, but for us the outcome is the same.” (G. Fahmi, personal communication, 7 March, 2018).

Although the rule of Islamic State lasted for only three years, it has revealed much deeper challenges facing the Iraqi and Syrian Christians on both society and state levels. The military victory is only the first step; however, ensuring the future of Christian communities in the Middle East, will need more time and effort to be consolidated. On the societal level, rebuilding trust between the different religious and ethnic communities is an important step to ensure a durable and stable peace in Syria and Iraq. Islamic State rule has left many wounds among the different religious and ethnic communities that need to be addressed. On the state level, state institutions and particularly the security forces need to be reformed to increase their efficiency and lower corruption. In addition, a democratic and transparent decision-making process that involves all ethnic and religious groups should be consolidated and all forms of religious discrimination should be terminated. The future of Christians in the Middle East is strongly connected to the future of their states and other religious communities. Hence, the struggle for a better future for Christians is the same struggle as that of all other citizens who want democracy, rule of law and full citizenship.

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Violent Extremism

Terrorist Attacks, Youngsters and Jihadism in Europe

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Jihadist mobilization in Europe is no novelty and has historically implied a range of activities: providing logistical and financial support to terrorist groups; planning and executing attacks; and travelling to war zones to join insurgent organizations and terrorist groups. For instance, during the 1990s, groups such as the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Egyptian al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya, and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) set up a network of supporters across European countries. Similarly, over the last decades European militants have joined jihadist groups in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, and Somalia. However, jihadist mobilization has witnessed a sharp increase in recent years – especially after the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, in 2011, and the ascent of Islamic State (IS), which proclaimed the caliphate on 29 June, 2014. On the one hand, the number of foreign fighters1 heading to Syria and Iraq is unprecedented, both from a European and worldwide perspective. Moreover, jihadist attacks in Europe – generally following a cyclical pattern, alternating relatively quiet periods and more violent ones – have experienced a spike.

This contribution will briefly illustrate the jihadist mobilization which has affected European countries2 over the last few years. In the first section, data on jihadism-related arrests, thwarted and executed attacks, and foreign fighters will be dissected. In the second part, the contribution will introduce the issue of young people’s involvement in jihadist terrorism, presenting data and examples. The third section will provide an overview of the reasons behind jihadist mobilization, with a particular focus on youth. Lastly, some final remarks will close the article.

Jihadist Mobilization in Europe: Some Data and Examples

To assess the jihadist mobilization across European countries in recent years – that is, the magnitude of jihadist activities carried out in the region –, various elements can be taken into account. Some useful indicators are provided by data on arrests, thwarted and executed attacks, and foreign fighters.

Arrests, Foiled Plots and Executed Attacks

In total, over the years 2012-2016, 2,175 suspects were arrested in EU countries for jihadist terrorism related offenses.3 This accounts for more than double the figure of the period 2006-2011, with 1,056

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2 When speaking of ‘Europe’ and ‘European countries,’ we generally refer to EU countries (plus Norway and Switzerland, in some cases). Therefore, the Balkans, Turkey, Russia, and former Soviet republics are excluded.

3 Please note that these figures do not take into account the UK, since the data provided by the country do not disaggregate terrorist incidents by ideology (jihadist, left-wing, right-wing, etc.).
arrestees. In particular, the number of arrests has sharply increased after 2012: only 159 individuals were apprehended for jihadist terrorism in 2012, whereas that figure reached 718 individuals in 2016. However, the bulk of this rise occurred in the years 2013-2015, whereas the variation across 2015-2016 was less pronounced (687 arrests versus 718 arrests, respectively). A significant part of those arrests – more than half – occurred in France: 429 suspects were taken into custody in 2016, and 1,228 altogether over the years 2012-2016. A considerable amount of arrests occurred in Belgium, too.4 Likewise, European countries witnessed a boost in the number of jihadist attacks perpetrated on their soil, especially after 2014. 46 terrorist attacks inspired by jihadist ideology were executed between 2014 and 2017 – nearly all of them between 2015-2017: 20 attacks in 2017, 14 in 2016, and 10 in 2015. To put things into perspective, it ought to be highlighted that between 2008-2013, 14 attacks have been carried out in Europe. Concerning the 2014-2017 wave, the most affected country was France – which saw 23 attacks on its territory since 2014 – followed by the United Kingdom and Germany (seven attacks in both cases), Belgium (four attacks), Austria, Denmark, Finland, Spain, and Sweden (one attack each). The terrorist operations resulted in a death toll of roughly 350 victims and over 2,000 injured. In parallel with launched attacks, a significant number of plots have been thwarted by authorities: for instance, over the period 2014-2016, 24 well-documented jihadist plots (and an even greater number of vague plans) were foiled.5 Among the major halted plots, there was a terrorist plan envisioned by the so-called “Verviers cell,” dismantled in Belgium in January 2015. It apparently involved the use of TATP and semiautomatic weapons; although the intended target was not clear, it seemed that Brussels’ Zaventem Airport was an option. It was reportedly masterminded by Abdelhamid Abaaoud – a Belgian operative and key figure in the IS external operations branch (Amn al-kharji), who took part in the November 2015 Paris attacks. Another notable example was the Riviera bomb plot, foiled in February 2014 in the Cote d’Azur region, France. The suspect, Ibrahim Boudina, had allegedly trained with IS in Syria, and possibly contemplated targeting the Nice Carnival celebrations. He, too, appeared to have been dispatched back to France by IS.

The ultimate question of ‘why’ individuals (especially youngsters) become involved in jihadism-related activities has bedevilled policymakers, security services, scholars, and public opinions alike. All the more so because the path towards mobilization, implying a process of radicalization, is complex and multifarious, at the crossroads between personal factors and structural drivers, originating from a conducive environment. Thus, moncausal explanations are insufficient.

With respect to attacks launched in 2014-2017, most of them (39 out of 46 attacks, i.e. nearly 85%) were carried out by single actors. While in most cases links between perpetrators and members of IS were rather weak, in a few instances a more substantial coordination can be spotted. The May 2014 shooting at the Brussels Jewish Museum is illustrative: Mehdi Nemmouche was initially thought to have acted alone; however, further investigations revealed that he had traveled to Syria and had been sent back to France by IS. Conversely, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel – who killed 86 people in the July 2016 Nice attack – did not seemed to be connected with IS operatives, at least according to information disclosed so far. Another connection emerging in attacks of recent years is that of ‘virtual planning,’ where IS fighters assisted would-be jihadists outside of Syria and Iraq in preparing and committing

5 NESSER, Petter; STENERSEN, Anne and OFTEDAL, Emilie. “Jihadi Terrorism in Europe: The IS-Effect.” Perspectives on Terrorism 10(6); ISPI Database on Jihadist Attacks in the West.
attacks, by using social media and encrypted online messaging platforms. This is precisely what happened in the Wurzburg, Ansbach and Normandy church attacks, all executed in July 2016. Only in seven cases out of 46 (i.e. roughly 15% of total 2014-2017 attacks), a group consisting of two or more actors physically took part in a terrorist act. However, the number of thwarted plots involving a group of militants is higher. This is possibly due to the fact that single-actor plots are less likely to be detected by authorities, in contrast with group-based plans.\(^6\) The (quite narrow) set of group-led attacks in 2014-2017 includes the November 2015 Paris attacks, the March 2016 Brussels attacks, and – more recently – the August 2017 Catalonia attacks.

**Foreign Fighters**

Another phenomenon which mirrors the post-2011 jihadist mobilization is the flow of foreign fighters heading to Syria and Iraq. At a worldwide level, up to 40,000 individuals may have joined insurgent groups in the Syrian-Iraqi region. An unprecedented figure, indeed – and this holds true for European countries, too, although on a smaller scale. As a matter of fact, as many as 5,000 foreign fighters are estimated to hail from EU countries. The bulk of these foreign fighters enlisted in or supported extremist groups, especially Islamic State – and this is why we refer to such figures to infer the magnitude of jihadist mobilization.

Departures of foreign fighters affected European countries in an uneven fashion. In absolute terms, France saw the largest number of ‘travellers’ (nearly 2,000), followed by Germany (over 900), the United Kingdom (850), and Belgium (around 480). In relative terms – that is, in comparison with each country’s population, Belgium ranks first (with 42 foreign fighters per one million inhabitants), followed by Austria and Sweden (34 and 31 foreign fighters per one million inhabitants, respectively). Instead, southern European countries such as Spain and Italy produce a modest contingent, both in absolute and relative terms: 204 and 129 foreign fighters, respectively, which means four and two ‘travellers’ per one million people. The number of foreign fighters is even smaller in eastern European countries: for instance, as of April 2016, Estonia and Latvia witnessed the departure of just two individuals each.\(^7\)

A common fear relating to foreign fighters has to do with the so-called ‘blowback effect’ – namely, the risk that a number of combatants may return to their home countries to conduct a terrorist attack. This threat was highlighted by Europol as early as 2012: *mujahidin* may take advantage of the training, the experience, the knowledge and the contacts acquired at the front to strike at home. Such concerns are not unfounded: in recent years, jihadist veterans took part in various attacks worldwide, including the November 2015 Paris attacks and the March 2016 Brussels attacks. Another example is provided by Rachid Redouane, one of the June 2017 London Bridge attackers, who had reportedly fought in Libya. Returnees may also be involved in auxiliary activities – logistically and/or financially assisting other cells, as well as acting as ‘radicalizing agents’ vis-à-vis other members of their community. What is more, Islamic State endured massive territorial losses over the last year, with the risk that an increasing number of jihadist combatants and supporters may return to their countries of origin. Apparently, indeed, 30% of European foreign fighters have already returned home.\(^8\) Nonetheless, various factors mitigate this kind of threat. In the first place, it would be misleading to equate fighting abroad with the execution of terrorist attacks at home. Not all foreign combatants will head back home, and even returnees may not intend to target their countries of origin. As shown in a study by Hegghammer – which focuses on waves of Western foreign fighters from 1990 to 2010 – only one out of nine returned to carry out an attack in their country of ori-

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\(^6\) NESSER, Petter; STINERSEN, Anne and OFTEDAL, Emilie. *Jihadi Terrorism in Europe: The IS-Effect,* cit.; ISPI Database on Jihadist Attacks in the West.


In the period 2014-2017, 15 out of 66 perpetrators (23%) were jihadist veterans.10

The Reasons behind Jihadist Mobilization and the Role of Youngsters

Youngsters as the Bulk of Jihadist Mobilization

While there is no common jihadist profile – with huge differences in socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and economic conditions – a few recurring patterns can be pinpointed, one of them being the relatively young age of jihadist attackers and foreign fighters. When analyzing attacks carried out in European countries between 2014 and 2017, it emerges that the average age of perpetrators is roughly 27.5 years. The mode, i.e. the most recurring age, is 29, while the median, i.e. the ‘central’ value, is 27; moreover, the youngest attacker was 15 years old at the time of the terrorist act, whereas the oldest was 54. Indeed, only six out of 66 perpetrators (accounting for 9%) were underage at the time of the attack; 20 individuals (30%) were in the 18-24 bracket; 20 (30%) were in the 25-30 bracket, and, finally, 18 (27%) were over 30 years old.11

Two (opposite) aspects can be observed. For one thing, individuals aged 30 and younger account for the vast majority (nearly 70%) of perpetrators in Europe in the last four years. For example, the jihadists who physically12 carried out the August 2017 Catalonia attacks were all under 25, and one of them, Moussa Oukabir, was underage at the time. Likewise, both Adel Kermiche and Abdel Malik Petitjean, who carried out the July 2016 Normandy church attack, were 19 years old. Even more striking is the case of Yusuf K., a 15-year-old teenager who in January 2016 assailed a Jewish teacher in Marseille, wielding a machete. These incidents seem to be consistent with a pattern already underscored by media and academia alike – i.e. the growing number of increasingly young would-be jihadists. This trend, however, does not always hold true, and may even be contradicted in a few cases. Suffice it to say that the proportion of attackers over 30 – 27% – is far from negligible. In two occurrences – the March 2017 Westminster attack and the June 2017 Linz stabbing – attackers were in their 50s. Not to mention that the average age of European perpetrators (27.5 years), though under 30, is not exceptionally young.13

Similar remarks can be made as regards foreign fighters from European countries. The European contingent is highly diversified – so generalizations would be ill-suited –, but it is possible to spot some recurrent age patterns. In this case, too, young men between 18 and mid-to-late twenties (at the time of their departure) are overrepresented, with differences across countries. In a few eastern and southern European countries, foreign fighters tend to be older.14 For instance, Italy – whose ‘travellers’ are mostly (47%) 30 years old or younger – also displays a significant proportion of individuals over 30 (40%).15

Jihadist Mobilization: What Are the Drivers?

The ultimate question of ‘why’ individuals (especially youngsters) become involved in jihadism-related activities – be it in the form of preparing attacks at home or joining groups abroad – has bedevilled policy-makers, security services, scholars, and public opinions alike. All the more so because the path towards mobilization, implying a process of radicalization, is complex and multifarious, at the crossroads between personal factors and structural drivers, originating from a conducive environment. Thus, monocular explanations are, at best, insufficient – if not misleading – when trying to understand the radicalization and mobilization of jihadist

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10 ISPI Database on Jihadist Attacks in the West.
11 The age of two attackers is unknown.
12 Thus excluding those who provided support and/or intended to strike, but actually did not take part in the attack (e.g. Imam Es Satty). The included perpetrators are: Younes Abouyaqoub; Houssaine Abouyaqoub; Omar Hichamy; Mohamed Hichamy; Moussa Oukabir; Said Aallaa.
13 ISPI Database on Jihadist Attacks in the West.
15 ISPI Database on Italian Foreign Fighters. In 13% of cases, the age is unknown.
sympathizers. A thorough analysis of the issue would require much more space, beyond the scope of this article. Here, we will introduce only the main hypotheses. Potential motivations behind jihadists’ paths of radicalization and mobilization can be roughly divided into two sets: individual-related and contextual-related factors. Among the individual-related drivers, socio-economic factors are one of the most recurring explanations. This hypothesis concerns the marginalization of Muslim communities (meaning a lack of integration, scant access to education, jobs, and opportunities, but also a general sense of disenfranchisement) as the main factor at the root of radicalization. In this respect, a few points are worth highlighting. First of all, when analyzing the radicalization and mobilization of jihadists in Europe, it is essential to devote attention to social conditions: failing to do so would imply missing a (critical) piece of the puzzle. Yet, focusing solely on this aspect risks delivering an incomplete picture, too; as we will see, other crucial elements should be taken into account. Not every terrorist incident can be explained with the poverty-extremism hypothesis. Secondly, the existence of a straightforward, explicit link between deprivation and extremism has proved to be uncertain, with significant variation across geographical areas. In the case of Europe – as observes Hegghammer – while it is true that jihadists, on average, tend to be economic underperformers, correlation is not tantamount to causation. The true question relates to the extent of this causal link and its interplay with other factors. Other kinds of individual-related factors have been underlined, including personal frustrations experienced by people at some moment in their lives, often youngsters. Interestingly, Oliver Roy proposed an alternative interpretation, focusing on the young, especially second-generation Muslims. In his view, it makes sense to speak of the ‘Islamization of radicalism’: some of these youngsters – feeling alienated in Western societies, and at the same time experiencing a generational revolt against their families – frame this sense of rebellion and nihilism in jihadist terms. Thus, Roy asserts, the real issue is that these individuals are in search of an extremist cause to embrace, while they overlook the religious dimension proper. With reference to context-related drivers, a variety of pull factors prompted the mobilization of European foreign fighters towards Syria and Iraq. The two most prominent triggers were possibly the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011 (and the ensuing violence), as well as the proclamation of the caliphate by IS, on 29 June, 2014. As a matter of fact, numerous militants were motivated by the desire to fight the Assad regime and defend local Muslims, considered to be under siege. After the establishment of the ‘caliphate’ was announced, further (personal) motivations came into play: the epic narrative nurtured by IS and its members; adventurism and the wish to evade reality; jihadist sympathizers’ eagerness to live in a context where – they thought – Islamic tenets were strictly implemented. On top of that, the Syrian-Iraqi area had been relatively easy to reach for a significant amount of time. Lastly, another context-related variable has to be addressed: radicalization hubs and how they affect jihadist mobilization, not just in terms of foreign fighters’ departures, but also in terms of preparing attacks. The hub model can complement other interpretations, offering an explanation for geographical discrepancies which – on the surface – seem beyond comprehension. Actually, the intensity of jihadist activities not only varies across countries, but even within a given country. A particular town, for instance, may stand out for its unusually high number of jihadist sympathizers and militants – in spite of sharing virtually identical social, economic, and demographic indicators with nearby towns and cities. In this case, the dynamics of hubs may well be at work. Why and how these clusters emerge and solidify is more difficult to ascertain – usually due to an interplay of diverse factors. Among them, there is the presence of a ‘radicalizing agent’ (such as a charismatic preacher or a jihadist veteran), but also kinship and friendship bonds play a huge role. The August 2017 Catalonia attacks are telling: it is suspected that Imam Es Satty – the ringleader, old-


er than the other plotters and arguably more experienced and familiar with the jihadist milieu – acted as a radicalizing agent, while pre-existing ties between the other members of the cell would do the rest. In other instances, the particular condition of a certain area (e.g. high rate of crime, social exclusion, etc.) may provide a conducive environment for the rise of jihadist hubs. In some circumstances, fortuity may be involved, too. The case of Lunel, a French town which is home to less than 30,000 people, and – puzzlingly – ‘produced’ some twenty foreign fighters, is illustrative in this respect.18

To Sum Up: Conclusive Remarks

This brief contribution aimed to outline the development of jihadist activities in Europe in recent years. As already seen, the outbreak of the Syrian conflict and the ascent of IS marked a spike in domestic mobilization – a fact which is mirrored by the sheer number of arrests, thwarted plots, launched attacks, and foreign fighter flows. Jihadist mobilization, nonetheless, hit European countries unevenly. The most affected country – in relation to arrests, attacks, and foreign fighter departures alike – was France. Countries like Germany, the United Kingdom, and Belgium have, too, been significantly affected by the phenomenon. Other nations, however, – first and foremost eastern European countries – saw a rather low degree of mobilization. Understanding the exact triggers which activate radicalization and mobilization is no smooth task. A plethora of factors, indeed, feature in this complex equation – both personal, individual reasons and structural causes, originating from an enabling environment. Volatility and violence in the Levantine region and the rise of IS are arguably two relevant, context-related factors. As concerns individual-related drivers, the picture becomes increasingly complex, also implying more subjective reasons (personal frustrations, for examples) linked to very specific life events experienced by single individu-

als. Social and economic conditions are typically cited as potential trigger factors. Oliver Roy, then, frames the radicalization of disenfranchised youngsters as a generational revolt and an ‘Islamization of radicalism.’ Finally, speaking of ‘jihadist hubs’ may help explain idiosyncratic concentrations of jihadists in a certain geographical area.

The outbreak of the Syrian conflict and the ascent of IS marked a spike in domestic mobilization – a fact which is mirrored by the sheer number of arrests, thwarted plots, launched attacks, and foreign fighter flows

Regrettably, the debate on jihadism in Europe has too often been portrayed in a simplistic fashion, with a binary approach. On the one hand, oversimplifications and single-cause explanations have been put forth – but, as such, they cannot capture the complexity of the phenomenon, and end up catering to a flawed picture. On the other hand, the different hypotheses have been treated as mutually exclusive explanations – yet it is not always the case. In the future, it may be beneficial to explore intersections between the different explanatory models. If it is true that a number of European jihadists endure social and economic marginalization, then under what conditions may poverty and exclusion lead to extremism? And under those circumstances, can other factors (e.g. the presence of radicalizing agents) activate a process of radicalization? If so, how? Answering those questions requires building a more comprehensive, multidimensional explanatory frame – and this is a prerequisite for better understanding the untangled phenomena that are radicalization and mobilization.

18 VIDINO, Lorenzo; MARONE, Francesco and ENTENMANN, Eva. Fear Thy Neighbor: Radicalization and Jihadist Attacks in the West, cit., pp. 82 ss.
Violent Extremism

Jihadist Networks After the Collapse of Daesh’s Pseudo-Caliphate

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The ‘Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant,’ also known by its Arabic acronym Daesh, was proclaimed in April 2013 in the Syrian city of Raqqa, under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.1 In June 2014, over the course of a few days, Daesh captured Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq. Shortly thereafter, Baghdadi dramatically assumed the title of ‘caliph.’ Daesh organizes its territorial base in ‘provinces.’2 The same term is used to designate its growing number of affiliates. Daesh lost Mosul in June 2017, after nine months of some of the fiercest urban combat since World War II. The fall of Mosul was followed by the retaking of Raqqa, 80% of which was destroyed by the fighting. Daesh no longer controls the territory between Syria and Iraq, where its pseudo-caliphate thrived for three years. Nevertheless, the jihadist threat remains, due to the networks that Daesh continues to encourage and inspire. To facilitate a better understanding of this constantly evolving reality, the remainder of this article will take a three-part approach. First, it will offer a status update on the ‘French veterans of globalized jihad,’3 discussed in an article in a previous edition of the IEMed Yearbook. Next, it will present a case study of Daesh’s ‘Sinai Province,’ which has continued to develop since the collapse of the pseudo-caliphate. Finally, it will report on the situation in Libya, where networks have been organized and deployed not only to neighbouring Tunisia, but also Europe.

The End of the French ‘Veterans’

In 2003, Boubaker al-Hakim founded the ‘Buttes-Chaumont network,’ active in France, Syria, and Iraq. He was the mentor of the brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, who carried out the Charlie Hebdo massacre (12 dead) in January 2015 in Paris. By then, he was also part of Daesh’s operational hierarchy, under the nom de guerre4 Abu Muqatil. In November 2016, he was killed in an American strike on Raqqa. He thus joined the growing list of French ‘veterans’ eliminated, one after another, in strikes by the US-led anti-Daesh coalition, including: Salah Gourmat, a key propagandist in the jihadi world who went by the pseudonym ‘Ichigo Turn’; Rachid Marghich, Wissem al-Mokhtari, and Walid Hamam, all three from Trappes and close to the Bataclan suicide bombers; Charaffe al-Mouadan, also linked to the Bataclan terrorists; and Macreme Abougou, the inspiration for a fortunately foiled plot to attack a church in Villejuif, in April 2015.

In contrast, Salim Benghalem, who welcomed Daesh’s French ‘volunteers’ under the name Abu Mohammed, seems to have survived several liquidation attempts. In January 2016, he was sentenced in absentia in France to 15 years of prison for his role in sending jihadists from Val-de-Marne to Syria in

1 Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is the pseudonym of Ibrahim al-Badri al-Samarrai, born in 1971, not far from the Iraqi city of Samarra.
2 The Arabic word for ‘province’ is wilaya.
4 The Daesh branch responsible for attacks abroad is referred to with the generic term Enni, or ‘Security.’
2012-13. He was also identified as one of the jailers of the French hostages held by Daesh in 2013-14. The investigation into the attacks of 13 November 2015 in Paris and Saint-Denis (130 dead, in addition to seven terrorists) revealed his role as a sponsor. Similarly, Fabien Clain, who claimed responsibility for those attacks on behalf of Daesh, released an audio message in January 2018 and would thus still seem to be at large.

Meanwhile, Thomas Barnouin, sentenced in absentia to 15 years in prison for his participation in a jihadist network, was captured in December 2017 by the Kurdish militias that control north-eastern Syria. His fate, like that of his two compatriots also held by the YPG, Romain Garnier and Thomas Collange, poses a legal quandary. France cannot recognize the authority, let alone the judgement, of a militia, as opposed to that of the Iraqi State, whose judicial decisions it does accept. (As Iraq has the death penalty, the French Justice Minister has considered intervening were it to be given to a French national.)

The terrible blows inflicted on Daesh by the Western coalition have undeniably weakened the jihadist networks and their capacity to strike France and its European neighbours. However, this considerable weakening should not be mistaken for the elimination of this terrorist threat.

It is worth recalling that ‘victory’ against what was then known as ‘Islamic State in Iraq’ had already been proclaimed in 2011. However, as a result of the sectarian policies pursued by the regimes in Baghdad and Damascus against the Sunni population, ‘Islamic State’ was able to reconstitute itself first in Syria, then in Iraq, until achieving its culmination in the pseudo-caliphate. These same Sunni populations are still excluded and marginalized, even repressed, wherever the Western coalition has chosen to rely on mainly Shiite partners in Iraq or Kurds in Syria. As there is no reason to expect the same causes to have different outcomes, a revival of Daesh in the coming years, fuelled by Sunni resentment and the lack of real reconstruction in Mosul and Raqqa, is entirely conceivable. This is all the more so given that ‘Islamic State’ had only 700 fighters in 2011 versus ten times that number between Syria and Iraq today. Furthermore, Daesh’s affiliates have never been so active, beginning with its ‘Sinai Province.’

Jihadists Rooted in Sinai

The Sinai Peninsula, comprised largely of desert, is home to only 600,000 inhabitants, two thirds of whom are Bedouins belonging to some fifteen tribes (the remaining third consist of ‘Nile Valley Egyptians’ and Palestinians). This population’s resentment of an Egyptian army that it perceives as an occupying force led to the development, in 2011, of the Supporters of Jerusalem (Ansar Beit al-Maqdis or ABM). This jihadist group, with ties to the smuggling of weapons to Gaza, was consolidated in the town of Sheikh Zuweid, situated between the cities of Ar-

5 The People’s Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), itself a part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), supported by the Western coalition.
ish and Rafah. The extremely brutal Egyptian repression, and, in particular, the collective punishments that accompanied it, simply broadened the base of this mainly Bedouin and local guerrilla. In July 2013, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi overthrew the only democratically elected President in the history of Egypt, the Muslim Brother Mohammed Morsi, whose disastrous mismanagement had caused millions of Egyptians to take to the streets. Sisi, who was promoted to field marshal before renouncing his military titles upon being sworn in as President, in May 2014, accuses all his opponents of ‘terrorism,’ whether they are Islamists, secular or nationalists. As in other Arab countries where similar processes are underway, the escalation of the repression has led to an embrace of jihadist extremes. However, unlike the Assad regime, whose sick games directly fuelled the rise of Daesh, in Egypt, it is the army’s patent inefficiency that has indirectly allowed the jihadists to take root in Sinai.

On 24 October 2014, ABM carried out one of its bloodiest operations, killing 30 members of the security forces and destroying at least one M60 tank. Sinai was declared a military zone and closed to journalists, who are sanctioned if they contradict the army’s official accounts. Two weeks later, the Egyptian jihadists pledged allegiance to Daesh, officially becoming its ‘Sinai Province.’ The Sisi regime, engaged in an all-out campaign against ‘terrorism,’ proved unable to regain the support of at least some of the Sinai Bedouins to turn them against Daesh. On the contrary, the systematic destruction of entire towns has uprooted thousands of people, rendering them even more vulnerable to jihadist recruitment. This is particularly true in the Egyptian part of Rafah, a city split in two, with a Palestinian side across the border in the Gaza Strip. On 1 July 2015, the ‘Sinai Province’ led some 20 coordinated attacks against the security forces. The official death toll of 21 was certainly understated, with sources on the ground speaking of 70 dead in the government ranks. Two weeks later, an Egyptian naval ship was sunk in the Mediterranean by a jihadist missile. On 31 October, 224 people perished in the destruction over Sinai of a Russian aircraft belonging to the company Metrojet. Although the ‘Sinai Province’ claimed responsibility for the attack, it took Moscow several days, and Cairo several months, to accept the reality of a terrorist attack. In fact, Daesh had seized control of the aircraft before it took off from Sharm el-Sheikh Airport, one of the few remaining popular tourism destinations in Egypt. The impact of the attack on the already devastated sector was terrible.

Daesh then turned against the Coptic minority in Sinai, forced by a streak of killings to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere in Egypt. That, however, was only the start of a wave of anti-Coptic terrorism carried out by Daesh, reaching Cairo (25 dead on 15 December 2016), Alexandria and the Nile Delta (44 dead on Palm Sunday 2017). In each case, the suicide attackers sought to strike churches, although the Coptic patriarch targeted in the Alexandria explosion came out unscathed. The ravings of Sisi and his generals thus led not to Daesh’s decline in Sinai, but rather to the spread of the jihadist violence to the rest of Egypt.

The Egyptian armed forces have not been able to retake control in Sinai, which has become the most dangerous abscess of jihadist obsession in the southern Mediterranean.

The worst massacre in contemporary Egyptian history was perpetrated by Daesh on 24 November 2017, in a North Sinai mosque in Bir al-Abed. At least 311 people were killed by jihadist commandos who surrounded the building during Friday prayers. The killers’ freedom of movement was so appalling that Sisi ordered security to be restored in Sinai in three months, an ultimatum he obviously could not enforce. The bloodbath targeted a Sufi community, whose mysticism Daesh regards as ‘heretical.’ However, it was also aimed at Bedouins who might be tempted to cooperate with the army. Daesh used the carnage to recall that the security forces, which were hard-pressed to protect themselves in Sinai, could not safeguard the lives of potential local partners. The seemingly inexorable progress of jihadist terror in Sinai has enabled Daesh to take root in a strategic region, at the crossroads of Africa and Asia,
even as its pseudo-caliphate was collapsing in Syria and Iraq. Any new conflict over the Gaza Strip, such as those of November 2012 or the summer of 2014, would now risk spreading to Sinai in case of a jihadist provocation. Israel takes this disastrous scenario seriously enough to have offered discreet support to the Sisi regime. According to the New York Times, in 2016-17 Israel ordered a hundred strikes, usually carried out by drones, against jihadist targets in Sinai, at an average rate of once a week. Despite this unofficial yet substantial assistance, the Egyptian armed forces have not been able to retake control in Sinai, which has become the most dangerous abscess of jihadist obsession in the southern Mediterranean.

The Libyan Knot

Paradoxically, the situation is less worrying in war-torn Libya than in Egypt under Sisi’s boot. Nevertheless, it is particularly disturbing that Daesh has three ‘provinces’ in Libya, corresponding to the historical divisions between Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan. Baghdadi’s supporters first gained a foothold in 2014, in Derna, Cyrenaica, taking advantage of active local networks to send ‘volunteers’ to Syria and Iraq. With their usual sadism, they subsequently beheaded 21 Egyptian Copts, in February 2015, on a beach in Tripolitania. They then set up a training camp in Sabratha, not far from the Tunisian border, which produced the Tunisian terrorists who attacked the Bardo National Museum in Tunis (22 dead, 18 March 2015) and a beach in Sousse (39 dead, including 30 British nationals, on 26 June 2015). Hakim, who, as noted, played a role in Daesh’s attacks in France, also bore some responsibility for these deaths: between 2011 and 2013, the Franco-Tunisian had organized a jihadist group in Tunisia, which was targeted by Daesh from Libya as France had been from Syria. The confrontation between the rival governments in Tripoli and Tobruk was conducive to the establishment of Daesh. The warlord Khalifa Haftar, who controls Tobruk, models himself so closely after Egypt’s Sisi that he borrowed the title of ‘Field Marshal.’ As in Egypt, the branding of all opposition as ‘terrorists’ has played into the hands of the actual terrorists. Daesh managed to take Sirte, halfway between Tripoli and Tobruk, and to seize control of a stretch of coast in the centre of the country. This territorial conquest largely offset the destruction of the Sabratha camp in an American airstrike in February 2016. Haftar preferred to extend his influence to the ‘Oil Crescent’ of the Gulf of Sirte, through which most of the country’s oil exports pass, rather than take on Daesh directly. Thus, it was the Misrata-based militias, loyal to the UN-backed ‘national unity government,’ who went to battle in Sirte, liberating the city from Daesh in December 2016 at the cost of very heavy losses.

An analysis of profoundly changing jihadist networks must not neglect one sad fact: long-established dormant cells are just as capable of spreading terror as jihadists infiltrated or sponsored from the Middle East.

Baghdadi’s supporters had lost their territorial base in Libya even before they lost it in Syria and Iraq. However, in the interim they had managed to establish a new dynamic in networks designed to strike Europe. Daesh documents seized in Sirte revealed the existence of a jihadist cell in Milan, the city where the Tunisian Anis Amri was shot dead by the police, on 23 December 2016, four days after ploughing a lorry into a Christmas market in Berlin and killing 12 people. Amri’s incredible flight following the attack, through Amsterdam, Brussels and Lyon, did not reveal all of his secrets. On the other hand, he was certainly in contact with Tunisian jihadists in Libya. The Libyan connection is even stronger in the case of Salman Abedi, the terrorist behind the Manchester Arena suicide attack (22 dead, 22 May 2017). A British citizen of Libyan origin, he had forged relationships with Daesh in Tripoli and Sabratha during trips to his parents’ country of origin.

Unlike the ‘Sinai Province,’ which has always been led by local Bedouins, in Libya Daesh has been taken over by political operatives sent by Baghdadi. The internationalization of this Libyan branch, as well as the multiple transit facilities along the coast or through Tunisia, thus explain the importance of the networks directed from Libya in Europe. However, the loss of Sabratha and, especially, Sirte has forced the jihadists to retreat to the desert in southern Libya, eroding its capacity to operate in Europe. One can only hope this weakening will last, although any definitive victory against Daesh in Libya will ultimately depend on the establishment of legitimate authorities throughout the country. Today, European opinion remains highly polarized on the issue of the return of the jihadists fighting in the Middle East, totalling some 5,000 in Western Europe, of whom 1,500 have already come back. However, none of Daesh’s attacks in Europe in 2017 was carried out by a ‘veteran’ of Syria or Iraq. An analysis of these profoundly changing jihadist networks must not neglect one sad fact: long-established dormant cells are just as capable of spreading terror as jihadists infiltrated or sponsored from the Middle East. That was the tragic lesson of the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks (15 dead on 17 and 18 August 2017), which mobilized a strong cell of 12 terrorists. Furthermore, Spain’s lack of participation in the anti-Daesh coalition did not spare its people, which once again gives the lie to the notion that Daesh’s attacks are a ‘retaliation’ for Western strikes. Daesh’s ‘European campaign,’ launched in May 2014 with the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels (four dead), is most likely not over, even if Baghdadi’s ‘caliphate of terror’ no longer exists as an established entity. The imperative of a genuine European anti-terrorism policy remains all the more urgent.

References


7 Eric SCHMITT. “Thousands of ISIS fighters flee to Syria, many to fight another day.” New York Times, 4 February 2018.
Violent Extremism

Returning Foreign Terrorists: What Type of Security Challenges Are They Posing?

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The recent reverse flow of foreign terrorist fighters\(^1\) out of Syria and Iraq following the declared defeat of ISIS is dominating academic and policy circles not only in Europe but in the Middle East as well. According to the 2017 Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors, an average of 61% of respondents from both regions agree that foreign terrorists are representing the biggest threat posed by violent extremism. The number of respondents from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and France agreeing with that statement are more than other countries.\(^2\)

These perceptions can be justified in light of the number of foreign terrorist fighters who joined ISIS and other terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq. Until January 2015, the International Institute for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence (CSR) count of foreign terrorists from the Middle East was 11,000 fighters out of a total of 20,730 fighters; the rest originated from European and Western countries. Until the end of 2017, the Radicalization Awareness Network RAN counted more than 42,000 foreign terrorists from 120 countries. The Soufan Group reported that the largest number of fighters originated from former Soviet Republics, the Middle East and the Maghreb, and western Europe (Chart 1).

It is estimated that the cohort of foreign terrorists who joined ISIS since 2014 represents around 50% of the organization, with varying fighting experience, as some of them acted as foot soldiers or middle- or very high-ranking officers.\(^3\)

It is noticeable that most of the efforts being done to counter the recent flow of foreign terrorists following the Battle of Raqqa is focusing on one aspect of that flow, which is the reverse flow to home countries, known as the ‘returnees.’ This aspect is inspired by ISIS’ strategy of ‘remaining and expanding,’ which is based on the creation of new theatres of action\(^4\) guided by ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani’s call in September 2014 for “all supporters who could not join the caliphate to attack the enemy wherever they could, and with whatever means, without waiting for instructions.”

This article argues that there are other aspects of that flow that raise other challenges to national and regional security which include leaving or being sent by ISIS to another conflict zone, or leaving to a third country to start anew life. Accordingly, the article is divided into two sections. The first section attempts to map the recent flow of foreign terrorists out of Syria, and identifies two destinations for foreign terrorists, other than their home countries, which include moving to a third country, or to another conflict zone. The second section examines three challenges posed by that flow: local/homegrown terrorism inspired by ISIS, the balance between controlling the flow of terror-

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\(^1\) Foreign fighters are defined in this context as non-Syrian individuals that decided by themselves to leave their countries to take part in the armed conflict in Syria without obtaining permission from any official domestic authorities.


\(^3\) Maja TOUZARI GREENWOOD. “Islamic State and al-Qaeda’s Foreign Fighters,” Connections: The Quarterly Journal, 16, no. 1, 2017, pp. 87-97

\(^4\) Richard BARRETT, “Beyond The Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees,” The Soufan Center, October 2017, p.17
ists and protecting refugees’ rights, and the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees.

Mapping the Reverse Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Examining the flow of terrorists returning from the conflict zones in the Middle East is a challenging academic task due to the lack of information on the number of foreign terrorists who left Syria and Iraq after the battles of al-Raqqa and Mosul, either because countries refrain from sharing that data or due to the fact that the foreign terrorists left Syria and Iraq for a country other than their home countries, and therefore have not returned yet. It is obvious that the assumption that those who left to join ISIS will return to their home countries is dominating the discussions in many academic and policy circles. However, this paper argues that this assumption could be misleading to policy makers and security institutions. The Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), up until July 2017, reported that the percentage of foreign terrorists who decided to return back to their home countries represented 30% of all foreign fighters, leaving 70% of the fighters not returning home and to an unknown fate. Also, it is not necessarily the case that the country that was the source of the highest number of foreign terrorists to join ISIS will be the destination of the highest number of returnees.

This paper, based on open-source data identifies three trajectories taken by foreign terrorists as follows:

a. Moving to another conflict zone: some foreign fighters decided to move out of Syria and Iraq to other conflict zones in Libya, North Sinai, Yemen, and the Sahel region and vice versa. For instance, the female Saudi fighter Reem al-Jereesh left for Yemen with her son in March 2014, and later moved to Syria to join ISIS. The same route was taken by Wafaa al-Yehia, as she left Saudi Arabia with her two sons in 2012 for Yemen and later went on to Syria. Moreover, the official Egyptian army spokesman stated the arrest of many foreign terrorists in North Sinai as part of the ‘Operation Sinai 2018.’ Abdelraheem alMismary, the Libyan terrorist, together with his colleagues, crossed the border into Egypt to establish the terrorist organization ‘Ansar al-Islam’ in the Western Desert and man-

a. Aged to plan and carry out a terrorist attack in al-Wahat al Bahariya in October 2017.

b. Moving to a third country: some foreign terrorists decided to start a new life through travelling to a third country. Most of these foreign terrorists are going through self deradicalization processes. Neighbouring countries to Syria and Iraq are the preferred destinations for this category of fighters.

c. Returning back to their home countries: this category of foreign terrorists is the one drawing the attention of academics and policy makers due to its clear impact on the national security of the receiving countries.

The Soufan Group reported in October 2017 that 4,594 citizens or residents from 35 countries had returned home. Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Central Asia received the highest numbers of returning terrorists according to the same report. As indicated in Table 3, the number of terrorists who returned back to Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom was closer to half of the total number of foreign terrorists who left. Most of those returning fighters left Syria during the ceasefires enforced by the US, Russia, and their local allies in al-Raqqa, and managed to cross the borders with Turkey and, from there, reaching their home countries, in the case of European countries, and through Sudan, in the case of African and North Afri-

### TABLE 3: Number of Returned Fighters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Foreign Fighters</th>
<th>Returned Fighters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>&gt;165</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Balkans</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>~528</td>
<td>&gt;123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>~185</td>
<td>~60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>&gt;5,000</td>
<td>~500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>&gt;145</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>&gt;80</td>
<td>~43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,910</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>&gt;200</td>
<td>&lt;50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>&gt;915</td>
<td>~300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>~600</td>
<td>&lt;50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel (Palestinian Territories)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>~3,000</td>
<td>&gt;250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>&gt;44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>3,417</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>3,244</td>
<td>760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>~150</td>
<td>&gt;2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>~300</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>2,926</td>
<td>&gt;800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>~850</td>
<td>~425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>&lt;129</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

can countries (See Chart 2). The BBC reported on 13 November, 2017\(^7\), that foreign terrorists moved out of al-Raqqa under the gaze of the US and its local ally, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and through deals reached between the latter and ISIS fighters. They then fled to Idlib or out of the country through Turkey with the help of smugglers. This latter trip bears a cost of $600 per person and a minimum of $1,500 for a family.

It is worth mentioning that those moving out of Syria, are not only male fighters, but also women and children born there. ISIS relies on women to provide its male fighters with a normal life, and it uses children as informants, through whom they can maintain their control.

Many scholars consider female returnees as low-risk victims. RAN reported that “Female returnees often return to their home countries within the EU for one or a combination of several reasons: some are disillusioned after their experience of hardship and oppression, or after their husband was killed; others come back for medical treatment and family support. In a few instances, women have been bought free and rescued by their families. Some return due to family pressure.”

However, female returnees are likely to pose a threat if they decided to carry out attacks in their home countries, or to act as recruiters. Many countries have encountered that threat. For instance, a recruitment group of 10 women was dismantled by the authorities in Morocco in October 2016.

In the case of children, they are either moved to Syria with both or one of the parents, or have been born to foreign terrorist families in territories controlled by ISIS. The Soufan Group reported that up until 2016, ISIS had recruited and trained more than 2,000 boys aged 9-15. Bearing in mind the religious education ISIS gives children who will then serve as spies, preachers, recruiters, soldiers, executioners, or suicide bombers, they could take part in any terrorist attack being planned or carried out by any ISIS returnee.

It is worth mentioning that foreign terrorists may experience fates other than moving out of Syria. On the one hand, some of them have been killed in military confrontations. The BBC reported on 11 October, 2017, that a one-day air strike killed about 500 or 600 fighters and families in al-Raqqa. Another group of foreign terrorists were imprisoned in the Hawi al-Hawa prison outside Raqqa for initial interrogation, but their fate is not known.

On the other hand, some of them, especially those originating from Arab countries, decided to stay in Syria and Iraq. The Independent reported, in October 2017, that at least 275 Syrian fighters surrendered to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and have been freed from al-Raqqa. Those fighters are likely to begin a new life or to join other militant groups active in other Syrian cities like Deir Ezzor. The Soufan Group also reported that there are foreign terrorists who decided to remain in Syria and Iraq, and they are more likely to be those who joined ISIS for religious reasons. They are citizens of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Canada, Denmark, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Malaysia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, and the UK.

Issues and Challenges

This paper argues that the recent flow of foreign terrorists out of Syria, is posing many challenges that are not confined to the replica of the ‘Caliphate state’, as the future challenges are defined by the capabilities of these terrorists to carry out significant terrorist attacks in new places. Thus, examining these challenges requires analyzing the profiles of those foreign terrorists, in terms of their qualifications, their role in ISIS (front-line fighters, leaders ...), criminal background, and their motivation joining ISIS (humanitarian reasons, ideological drivers ...).

But due to the lack of this information, what is mentioned in this section are the general security issues and challenges that could be posed by the movement of foreign fighters not only to countries in the Middle East but also to those in Europe.

Local/Homegrown Terrorism Inspired by ISIS

Some of the foreign terrorists who managed to leave Syria and Iraq to go back to their home countries without being arrested or noticed by national authorities, either ended up becoming local fighters, establishing local recruiting networks, or acting as local fundraisers. Even if the authorities suspected a returnee, he/she usually gets an early release due to the lack of evidence.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed many terrorist attacks carried out by returning terrorists from Syria and Iraq. For instance Tareq al-Maimoony, Kahled al-Anzy, Abdullah al-Sarhan and Marwan al-Dhefr are four Saudi nationals detained for carrying out the attack on the Shiite mosque in al-Daloh on 3 November 2014. Al-Maimoony is a returnee from Syria, and the other three were graduates from the al-Monasaha programme, the national prison-based deradicalization programme. Marwan al-Dhefr was one of the returning fighters from Iraq who was arrested by the Iraqi forces and returned to Saudi Arabia after his release.

Also, Ansar beit al-Maqdis in North Sinai in Egypt is appealing for both Egyptian and foreign terrorists who were in Syria. Egyptian authorities managed, in 2016 and 2017, to dismantle a number of small cells inspired by ISIS in many governorates in Upper Egypt, which either carried out or were planning to carry out a terrorist attack, or were acting as a recruitment cell using face-to-face communication or through social media platforms.

The same challenge has been encountered by European countries. For instance, the Brussels attacks on 22 March, 2016, which targeted the airport and the underground, were carried out by a cell that was formed by returning foreign terrorists from Syria, along with two Belgian citizens. Thomas Hegghammer analyzed data between 1990 and 2010 and found that only between one and nine Western foreign terrorists returned to conduct attacks in the West. Applying the same ratio to the around 5,000 European fighters who returned to Europe, means that around 270 militants are likely to plan and carry out attacks.

Besides, the role of women and children returnees is crucial in the discussion of this challenge. Many scholars consider female returnees as low-risk victims. RAN reported that “Female returnees often return to their home countries within the EU for one or

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8 Robert Fisk. “Isis has lost Raqqa – so where will its fighters head to next?”, The Independent, 16 October, 2017.
a combination of several reasons: some are disillusioned after their experience of hardship and oppression, or after their husband was killed; others come back for medical treatment and family support. In a few instances, women have been bought free and rescued by their families. Some return due to family pressure.”

However, female returnees are likely to pose a threat if they decided to carry out attacks in their home countries, or to act as recruiters. Many countries have encountered that threat. For instance, a recruitment group of 10 women was dismantled by the authorities in Morocco in October 2016.

In the case of children, they have either moved to Syria with both or one of the parents, or have been born to foreign terrorist families in territories controlled by ISIS. The Soufan Group reported that up until 2016, ISIS had recruited and trained more than 2,000 boys aged 9-15. Bearing in mind the religious education ISIS gives children who will then serve as spies, preachers, recruiters, soldiers, executioners, or suicide bombers, they could take part in any terrorist attack being planned or carried out by any ISIS returnee.

**Balance between Controlling the Flow of Terrorists and Protecting Refugees’ Rights**

European countries are coming up against the challenge of how to reach a balance between providing an opportunity for Syrian refugees to start a new life, and, at the same time, avoid giving that opportunity to ISIS terrorists trying to enter a European city. Reaching this balance is problematic as the public opinion in Europe holds suspicious stances towards refugees, especially in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Portugal, where the people place their national authorities under great pressure.

Such negative stances are being bolstered by the stories told by European returnees. Abu Basir al-Faransy, a young French ISIS fighter quoted by a BBC report in 2017, mentioned that their return back to France following ISIS’ instructions: “There are some French brothers from our group who left for France to carry out attacks in what would be called a ‘day of reckoning.’”

European policies in response to those stances have tended to restrict the flow of refugees. The European countries reached an agreement with Turkey, and managed to close the migrant routes from Greece into Europe. Also Frontex and Europol has enhanced the needed checks and controls. However, new ISIS inspired networks could be created outside the European radar. It is more likely to be created by foreigners of third countries and European returning terrorists who would plan and carry out attacks in new European theaters.

**Reintegration and Rehabilitation**

As the foreign terrorists are not leaving Syria and Iraq alone, but with their families in tow, this creates a two-fold challenge for the receiving countries. On one hand, in the case of children returnees, especially those who were born in ISIS-controlled territories, proving parenthood and nationality is a challenge, as most of them do not have official identification documents. Also, they encounter the issues of how to hold these children responsible for any terrorist action they may have carried out abroad, and how to change their ideological indoctrination and make them familiar with EU norms.

In the case of low-risk female returnees who were granted the opportunity by their government to reintegrate into society, they are still likely to radicalize their children, especially, as RAN pointed out in its report, European females who joined ISIS for ideological reasons and have a deep commitment to the ‘caliphate’ ideals.

On the other hand, governments need to equip law enforcement institutions with the appropriate and effective tools to disengage both returning foreign terrorists, low-risk and high-risk returnees and those who are willing to live a normal life.

The availability of a well-designed rehabilitation /deradicalization programme for those returning male and female fighters who are willing to live a new life is very important. Some countries in Europe are

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dedicating resources for prison-based interventions and deradicalization programmes, others are more interested in standalone programmes. Most of these programmes are found in northwest Europe such as the EXIT-programmes adopted in Norway, Sweden and Germany, the Danish 'Aarhus approach,' and the Dutch reintegration initiative.14 Other countries, like Finland, are keen to facilitate the resocialization of returnees in society. At the local level, community seminars are organized which bring together representatives from different public sectors, NGOs, religious communities and community-based organizations. These seminars act as platforms for preventing the ‘targeting’ of Muslim communities, and polarization around the topic of radicalization and foreign terrorist returnees.

Conclusion

Developing policies to counter these challenges requires resilient national institutions capable of foreseeing the future developments of each of the three challenges and, at the same time, strong regional coordination and cooperation mechanisms. Egypt and Morocco, for instance, are trying to strengthen the resilience of Chad and other Sahel countries in detecting the movement of foreign terrorists. Also, Turkey is keen on sharing its data on listed foreign terrorists crossing its borders with concerned countries. The EU managed to reach the aforementioned deal with Turkey in order to restrict the flow of refugees to Europe, and it is encouraging European countries to enhance the sharing of information with Middle Eastern countries.

In addition, RAN and other European organizations are developing customized tools to strengthen the resilience of state institutions and civil society in Europe to contain and prevent threats posed by returnees. However, more effort needs to be made at the national level. The question of how to deal with male, female, and children returnees is still unanswered. Having an adequate detention regime for any returnees arrested or put on trial is still a work in progress in many countries. Also, the awareness at the local level of the threats that could be posed by having a returnee living in the neighbourhood needs to be enhanced.

In addition, at the regional level, there is still a need to develop an early warning system that could detect the development of a transnational network among terrorists created by their movement between conflict zones in the Middle East and Europe. Finally, directing resources to encourage research institutions in the Middle East and Europe to study why ISIS was so successful in attracting that cohort of foreign terrorists remains crucial.

Dossier: Europe and the Mediterranean
The Mediterranean in 1995

When the Barcelona Process was launched in November 1995 with the Final Declaration of the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, the world was experiencing an unprecedented geopolitical epiphany. The end of the confrontation between the Western and Soviet-influenced blocs had brought authors such as Francis Fukuyama to consider the idea of the “End of History” as the end of the history of ideological struggles, with Western liberalism emerging as the final victor.

The fall of the Berlin wall at the end of 1989 unleashed the Soviet Bloc’s gradual break-up. The consequences were immense. After the electoral victory of Solidarnosc over the Polish communist party in 1989 came the German reunification and the progressive political and military shift throughout central Europe. This was followed by the end of the Warsaw Pact and, finally, as incredible as it may have seemed at the time, the dissolution of the USSR itself in December 1991. The confrontation between the blocs of the bipolar world, essentially the prevailing geopolitical system throughout the post-World War II era, was over. If there was any need for further demonstration of the unipolar nature of the new situation, Saddam Hussein’s defeat in 1991 at the hands of the United States and the UN-backed international coalition was conclusive evidence of America’s capacity and determination as a global police force.

In the Euro-Mediterranean world, such a staggering seismic shift in geopolitics was to have two lines of consequence.

Firstly, in the North, it meant Germany’s reunification, after which the West began drawing the central European countries into its orbit, a process which culminated with the expansion of the EU in 2004 and its subsequent expansions in 2007 and 2013 from 15 to 28 members. Of equal or greater importance was the progressive incorporation into NATO of these countries, beginning with Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, completed in 1999, and then Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and the three Baltic states in 2004. Despite the creation of different NATO-Russia dialogue platforms, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991, the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997 in Paris and the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002, NATO’s expansion towards the East steadily increased tensions with Russia. At its 2008 Bucharest summit, NATO’s agreement over its readiness to incorporate Georgia and Ukraine into its ranks sounded alarm bells in Putin’s Russia. This, coupled with the progress in Ukraine-EU negotiations, led to destabilization in these countries thanks to Moscow’s support of the pro-Russian separatist minorities, and Russia’s military occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea in 2014.

In the southern Mediterranean, the collapse of the Soviet Empire spelt the end of the proxy confrontations being played out throughout the world between countries aligned with the USSR and allies of the United States and the West in general. In the Mediterranean, the Soviets had already been expelled from Egypt by Sadat in 1972. However, the Soviet Union’s presence and influence was upheld through its traditional allies from the ‘rejectionist front,’ – Syria in particular – and, in different ways,
such as arms sales and bilateral political pacts, multilateral fora involving countries like Algeria or Libya or by backing political movements in most third-world countries.
The “hyperpuissance américaine,” as Hubert Védrine called it, and NATO’s expansion gave western Europe a security guarantee that, although subject to American leadership, generated a sense of optimism. Its liberal democracy and market economics was the prevailing model on the international panorama and countries in its area of influence, such as in the Mediterranean, were invited to participate.

When the Barcelona Process was launched in November 1995, the world was experiencing an unprecedented geopolitical epiphany.

In 1995, there were also signs that the Mediterranean’s biggest conflict might be resolved. It seemed the Middle East Peace Process might reap its fruits, following the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the Oslo Accords, thereby completing, with an agreement among all parties, the Camp David Accords, which had already been signed by Egypt and Israel in 1978. Regrettably, however, hopes should not have run so high, as the peace leaders on both sides were assassinated by radicals from their own camp: Anwar el-Sadat on 6 October 1981 and Isaac Rabin on 4 November 1995, weeks before the Barcelona Conference that would launch the Euro-Mediterranean Process.

In 1995, even in Afghanistan the moderate Ahmad Shah Massoud controlled Kabul, from where he would be ousted by the Taliban hordes in September 1996. Al-Qaeda hitmen were later sent to the northern mountains to assassinate him on 9 September 2001, two days before the mega terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York.

The system of Arab states, with the Arab League created in 1945 as a simple meeting point between its ministerial leaders, was characterized internally by what we would now call the traditional authoritarian Arab state. The creation of the modern state following independence meant that the leaders and movements that had fought against colonialism took over the positions of power after emancipation, in most cases within single-party systems. In spite of the patriarchal and socially conservative mindset, which still prevailed in Arab societies, these were secular regimes led, or more precisely dominated, by modernizing parties that were either somewhere on the right of the political spectrum, such as Istiqlal in Morocco or Bourghiba’s Neo Destour in Tunisia; or which leaned to the left, like the FLN in Algeria, Nasserism in Egypt and the Ba'ath parties in Syria and Iraq. In the much more conservative Bedouin land of the Arabian peninsula, however, the Saudi monarchy, and all others, followed Wahhabism under the impetus and control of the first King of Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud and his successors. The Saudi leaders were now custodians of Islam’s holy sites which they conquered in 1924, overthrowing the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein and his son Ali, putting an end to the latter’s short-lived reign as the last King of Hejaz.

In the Arab-Mediterranean world this traditional authoritarian Arab state, recently established as a modern state, would undergo a series of crises, arising from the frustrations of the Arab populations of the time. There were three main reasons for this: the unfulfillment of promises of economic development as a fruit of independence; the Arab defeats at the hands of Israel, in 1948, but especially in 1967 and 1973; and, finally, the failure to fulfill promises of political, economic and social democracy, which had formed part of the imagery associated with the fight for independence. These frustrations underlie the progressive ossification of the traditional authoritarian Arab state, which prevailed until 1995 in different forms. It later suffered its definitive crisis with the Arab Springs, which began against Ben Ali’s regime in Tunisia towards the end of 2010.

Construction and Deconstruction of the Euro-Mediterranean Dream

The Euro-Mediterranean Association or Partnership was launched in 1995, fundamentally as a policy led by the European Union and agreed upon with countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean. The aim was to create an area of peace, understanding and progress around the Mediterranean Basin.
through the creation of a free trade zone that would mobilize the economies of the southern countries and aid their modernization with an extensive programme of technical assistance and financial cooperation. It was clear that this was the ideal moment, especially because of the prospects of a reasonable outcome in the Middle East. It was even said that the new Barcelona Process arose to take advantage of the ‘dividends of peace.’ The most interested countries began to sign Association Treaties, beginning with Tunisia in 1995 and Morocco in 1996.

In the Arab-Mediterranean world this traditional authoritarian Arab state, recently established as a modern state, would undergo a series of crises, arising from the frustrations of the Arab populations of the time.

The Barcelona Process generated a wave of optimism, which spread with the launch of the European Commission-funded MEDA programmes, created both as a support for government policies and to enliven civil society. Despite Libya and Syria’s refusals to participate, the process continued to advance to the extent that major advances were presented at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference held in Valencia in 2002, the second under a Spanish presidency. These were exemplified with certain singular achievements: on the multilateral and political level, with the launch of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly; economically, with financial cooperation through the European Investment Bank’s new FEMIP facility; and socioculturally with the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation for intercultural dialogue. The conference also reported good progress for the MEDA programmes and extensive bilateral cooperation programmes with each partner country.

It would be true to say that Khomeini’s revolution in Iran in 1979 brought about a substantial shift in the geopolitical status quo with the creation of the first revolutionary Islamic State. But already in 1980, this was brought to an abrupt standstill by the Iran-Iraq war launched by the Sunni dictator and Ba’athist leader Saddam Hussein, who received political and financial support to fight Khomeini’s Shia regime from the Sunni petro-monarchies of the Gulf, particularly the Saudi monarch. That was when the large-scale confrontation began between the Sunnis and Shiites from both sides of the Gulf. But that war, for all its severity and the millions of casualties it left on both sides, was still seen as distant from Europe and the Mediterranean. More distant still was the war in Afghanistan with the intervention of the Soviet army against the Mujahideen or Islamic guerillas from 1978 until the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. Supported at the time by the conservative monarchies of the Gulf and the United States, this was the conflict from which al-Qaeda emerged, the embryo of the future international Islamist terrorism. The terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York and on Washington on 11 September 2001 shook the world and upset the framework established in 1995. It triggered the wars first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq, America’s response and retaliation dubbed by the neo-conservative Administration of President Bush Jr. the “war on terror.”

This marked our entry into a new world of global geopolitics. But the Euro-Mediterranean process continued to view it as something distant. It sought renewal through bilateral policies with the new European Neighbourhood Policy launched by President Prodi in 2004 and, later, the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, as a Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation and agreement framework. 2011 saw the outbreak of the Arab Springs, which directly affected Euro-Mediterranean Process participating member countries, starting with Tunisia. It now became clear that the geopolitical changes required serious thought to be given to how the new international scene affects the global strategy of the European Union and in particularly Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

### Structural Changes in Globalization

In the almost 25 years since the Barcelona Conference, the Euro-Mediterranean has undergone major changes under the influence of an accelerated globalization process.

The first major structural change was in the area of demographics, the predictions of which did nothing to lessen the impact. Considerably behind Europe’s
Europe and the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean world is still undergoing its own demographic transition, although accelerated and already in a relatively advanced state. At the time of the independence declarations, the fertility rate in the Arab Mediterranean world was still over seven children per woman. With improvements in sanitary conditions, nutrition and other areas, the survival rates for newborns increased along with the life expectancy of adults. While Europe concluded its long demographic transition in the 1950s and 1960s, the Arab-Mediterranean world was still undergoing a demographic boom, like all third world countries as a whole. While the Arab world had 70 million inhabitants in 1950, in 2007 this number had reached 335 million. It is predicted that this figure will reach 500 million between 2025 and 2030, equal to the clearly stagnating EU population, where fertility rates, in general, are below 1.5 children per woman. In the Arab world, however, despite improved sanitary and environmental conditions and life expectancies extending throughout the 20th century, particularly in the second half, birth rates, and therefore fertility rates, only began to fall as of the mid-eighties. But since then, the decline has been considerable, with Tunisia already down to 2.01 and Morocco to 2.2 children per woman. Strangely, since 2011 there has been a slight upturn. In Egypt and throughout the Middle East the rate is still above three children per woman. But the fall in fertility rates is such a recent phenomenon that still for the next 15 years whole generations will be reaching adult age and, therefore, arriving on the employment market, where they are facing serious problems of youth unemployment. The good news, if the European public can believe it over the hue and cry of populist politicians, is that these demographics give rise to one of the well-known complementarities between the North and South of the Mediterranean. The North lacks the bulging youth population of the South, so immigration can drain the excess in work force in the South and mitigate the decline and aging European population, while at the same time contributing to paying the pensions on this continent.

In any case, the fact that in a decade the Arab countries will reach the population of the EU, with some 500 million inhabitants in the North and around the same in the South of the Mediterranean, is itself a geopolitical change of great magnitude.

From the perspective of migration, we can add two additional phenomena to these structural demographic changes in the Euro-Mediterranean area. One, which is circumstantial, is the enormous flow of refugees arriving in Europe, especially fleeing the war in Syria. Arrivals peaked in 2015, with the arrival of 1.5 million refugees, which caused and continues to cause a great hullabaloo among the politicians of the populist demagoguery, who are still in a flap over a phenomenon that largely belongs to the past. This is not the case, however, with economic migration. Europe is facing a dramatic situation from the Sahel and the Sub-Saharan countries, where populations are being pushed into a potentially mass and unending exodus to flee poverty and the lack of opportunities. Europe is encountering serious difficulties to reach an agreement on a policy for migration, which is causing serious internal divisions and a surge of far-right, xenophobic and anti-European parties. The solution can only be to face the situation with a dual perspective. Firstly, short and medium-term measures are needed to guarantee the control of the Union’s external borders, avoiding the growth of mafias which profit from people trafficking. At the same time effective humanitarian action must be taken to help refugees and migrants and favour a legal and ordered immigration in accordance with distribution criteria and with the conditions of each receiving country.

Secondly, there must especially be long-term measures, but ones that are far-reaching and taken with urgency. This should be done through a policy of development cooperation aimed at lifting the African countries from their misery and helping them to construct prosperous, safe and well-governed societies. Europe must prepare to invest heavily in the development of Mediterranean Partner countries and even more in Sub-Saharan countries. The European Union boasts of being the largest development aid donor (68 billion euros between the Union and the Member States), but the budgets the European Commission assigns to this area must be multiplied tenfold. It may seem like a lot of money, but it is undoubtedly the cheaper alternative. And the biggest challenge is not so much to reach these figures as to spend the money properly for an effective and positive transformation of these countries. As we will see later, we urgently need to organize a large area of efficient economic cooperation and integration between Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa.
The change in energy is another of the great challenges that Europe is facing in the context of globalization. There have already been considerable changes since 1995, but it is today that the far-reaching transformations are taking place. In the short term, again, the changes are palliative, with phenomena as game-changing as the fracking that has made the United States oil self-sufficient, or improvements to ensure supplies with the construction of alternative gas and oil pipelines from Russia, Central Asia or Africa to Europe. But further exploration into alternative energies and the change in the energy model, which is also to a certain extent social and economic, is beginning now. The end of the combustion engine in the automobile industry and transport is nearing, but the change in energy model cannot only be a policy of the European Union. The situation undoubtedly requires effective multilateral action and pacted international policies in the face of what is clearly a global issue. The Mediterranean as a source of energy – both fossil fuels and alternative forms – and as a strategic transport route on a global level, must play a crucial role here. Together with the change in energy model we should also consider the attention given to environmental sustainability and climate change. The Mediterranean and its neighbouring lands constitute one of the planet’s fragile areas. Desertification is knocking loudly on the doors of Northern Africa, while Europe is still destroying its once privileged environment. Reverting these trends will require considerable effort. There are colossal expenses in environmental sustainability, cooperation or development in areas of vital interest for us in the Mediterranean or Africa which need to be met collectively and upon which the future well-being of all of us depends. We may not be talking about the redistribution of income or personalized social spending, but we must understand that this will also form part of our welfare state and will determine its future sustainability.

Technological change, both through the digitalization of processes and the leap in communication technologies, is having a profound change on our environment. The third industrial revolution might give Europe a new role, which it lost after its traditional industries disappeared. Part of the digitalized industry, and services, may well come back to Europe, where there are higher education levels. Certainly, in the Europe-Mediterranean-Africa group there might be complementarities and synergies, both in terms of production and the market, with all participants reaping the benefits. There should also be separate mention made of the growing role that new communication technologies will continue to play in the social, cultural and, therefore, political changes, with particular relevance as we have already started to see in the Arab world after 2011. The powers that be and institutions no longer have the monopoly on communication with citizens. Today, ordinary people can talk to one another, and are more often than not critical of the authorities rather than in agreement with them.

The geopolitical changes required serious thought to be given to how the new international scene affects the global strategy of the European Union and in particularly Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

Finally, we should consider a geopolitical change that especially affects the Euro-Mediterranean area, contemporary development and even participation in the power: that of political Islamism. And parallel to this, though they should not be confused, the appearance, extension and conquest of Islamist radicalism and jihadism throughout the Muslim world, which has also reached Europe’s new Islam. We will analyze these phenomena in the following summaries.

Internal Changes in Europe.

Some of the changes that have taken place or are taking place inside of Europe certainly have geopolitical relevance. The first is, without doubt, the enlargement of the EU. The EU has more than doubled its number of member countries, thereby increasing its global weight. The 500 million citizens of the 28 EU countries today generate 24% of global GDP in current nominal terms, exceeding the 22% generated by the US, the 14%, and growing, generated by China or 3% generated by Russia, India or Brazil. In fact, as impressive as its military capacity, territory
and ambitions may be, Russia’s aggregate GDP is still 19% below Italy’s. But it is clear that, in geopolitical terms, GDP is not the only important factor. On the other hand, while its enlargement has increased the EU’s standing, it has also damaged its coherence and capacity for common action, as the refugee crisis, among many other episodes, has demonstrated.

There are colossal expenses in environmental sustainability but we must understand that this will also form part of our welfare state and will determine its future sustainability.

Europe is also deep in multiple crises making it difficult in some cases to distinguish between what is structural and what is circumstantial.

Firstly, Europe has undergone, between 2008 and 2014, the biggest economic crisis since the post-World War II era. The crisis also highlighted the North-South differences within the community. While Germany benefited from an undervalued currency which raised its exports, countries in the South had to make challenging internal adjustments through salary cuts and slashes in social spending and investment. Greece seemed, and to a large extent still seems, to be on the edge of the abyss; Portugal was financially bailed out with effective measures; and Spain and Italy managed to make last-minute adjustments getting their economies back on track at the expense of considerable debilitation on a social and political level.

A deep political crisis, through an attack on the legitimacy of the representative democratic institutions themselves, has been the result of the deterioration of the social and economic situation. This was compounded by the refugee crisis and the wave of migrant arrivals in the tragedies of the Mediterranean, in turn leading to the emergence of right and left-wing populism.

There are right-wing, xenophobic populist parties – like the Lega in Italy, the National Front –now National Rally– in France, the German Alternative für Deutschland, Jaroslaw Kaczynski’s Law and Justice (PiS) in Poland, Viktor Orban’s Hungarian Civic Alliance, and the FPÖ, (run previously by Georg Haider and today by the Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria), which place the emphasis on xenophobia and immigration as the origin of all the ills afflicting those hit by the crisis and allegedly diluting countries’ identities and causing national decay.

And there are outraged left-wing populist parties. Some of these are now in government, like the Italian 5 Stelle, forced into a hard-to-believe coalition of opposing extremes with the Lega in order to rise to power. And parties which form parliamentary alliances with the government while also being critically opposed to it, like Podemos in Spain, or those that form a far noisier opposition. They rebel (or rebelled) against the elites, whether economic, political or institutional, and against the traditional parties, blaming them for the cuts in social policies and unemployment. Politicians from all parties without distinction spent the years of crisis claiming that all the problems and cuts were Europe’s fault – and, of course, claimed the credit for all the good things that happened while they were in power. Euroscepticism, as a result, has grown exponentially, alongside a lack of confidence in the future of the EU itself. Without doubt, Europe has been greatly weakened, not only internally, but also as a model and international actor.

Brexit, while perhaps not having the domino effect feared at the outset, and hoped for by Eurosceptics in eastern Europe, is undoubtedly bad news. It is evidence of an alarming lack of confidence in the future of the EU itself. Without doubt, Europe has been greatly weakened, not only internally, but also as a model and international actor. Brexit, while perhaps not having the domino effect feared at the outset, and hoped for by Eurosceptics in eastern Europe, is undoubtedly bad news. It is evidence of an alarming lack of confidence in the European project and, at any rate, means, with the departure of the United Kingdom, a weakening of the European Union in global terms, economically, financially and especially in the arena of military capacity. The result is still uncertain and, if it is carried out as planned, it is not yet clear what relationship the United Kingdom will have with the EU, or what kind of bridging role it will play between Europe and the United States.

The New Geopolitical Mediterranean.

Twenty five years after the Barcelona Conference, the Mediterranean’s geopolitical landscape has undergone a profound mutation. Its distinguishing features need clarifying when it comes to defining policies. Looking at the focus and development of the
Global Strategy for the EU adopted in 2016 is a good opportunity for this. Firstly, seen from a European perspective, it is worth making it clear from the outset that the European Union is no longer the main actor, nor does it dominate the situation in the Mediterranean as it once did. For countries especially in the southern and to a lesser extent the eastern Mediterranean, in 1995, there was no other economic, social and, therefore, political partner that could equal the European Union and its member countries. In the Maghreb especially, the trade flows with Europe reached more than 70% of its external trade, which gave rise to an acceleration in investments and even industrial relocation. Europe was where migrant workers were heading and from where they were sending their remittances, which for Morocco, for example, came to account for 9% of the country’s GDP. Europe supplied the tourists that fed into a sector which generates so much local employment and is a significant source of revenue. To a lesser extent, that was also the reality in the Mashreq. The United States only maintained a strong presence in the Mediterranean on a strategic and military level, increasing its weight in the Middle East and the Mashreq, where its trade and investments were also much more significant. The offer of an association with the UE through the Barcelona Process, therefore, was hard to beat. Today, the situation could not be more different. The EU’s presence has not diminished, despite the weaknesses that plague it. Trade flows are well-maintained. But there are other games in town. The attraction for Europe is now shared with a growing financial and also ideological tropism towards the Gulf. Russia has come back in force trying to recover the legacy of the USSR. China has appeared at full throttle and even India has begun to join in. And above all, the regional powers, which rarely left home in the past, have taken on a significant role in the area of security, or, should we say, insecurity. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Security Council (GSC) with the unruly Qatar, and even Iran, previously far-removed from the equation, have an important, albeit varying, political, economic and even military presence, both in the eastern and western Mediterranean. As for the United States, during Obama’s presidency it was already being signaled from Washington that the Europeans should be largely responsible for its own security – and that included in terms of costs. President Trump has even brought into question Europe’s position as a US ally, which does nothing to stop him from saying they should be more involved in NATO. But it seems clear that, although we are still allies, Europe needs to be increasingly capable of ensuring its own security. Now there is no common Soviet enemy, whose global threat, perceived as being direct by America, was the underlying justification for the US’ interest for NATO, the aims of the United States are not always going to coincide with those of Europe in terms of economics, trade, politics and the military. With a neighbour like Russia – which is no longer the former USSR plus the Warsaw Pact- Europe will have to learn the old classical balance of power game again. Now, in a global panorama and among the major powers, it will have to balance the scales, a role historically played by Great Britain on the continent. The EU is the world’s largest economy, with 24% of the global GDP, as already mentioned, and is the biggest market, but it has to overcome its lack of internal cohesion to play its due role; one which is increasingly essential on the global scene. Primarily for the sake of its own interests. And this rule should first be applied in the Mediterranean, where the presence of its American ally is comparatively less in economic and trade terms. Europe will have to spend more on defence, true, but not on buying American weapons, as Trump would have it, instead progressively developing its own defence research and industry and creating its autonomous operative capacity while remaining a faithful NATO ally.

Euroscepticism has grown exponentially and Europe has been greatly weakened, not only internally, but also as a model and international actor.

To a degree, President Obama had already begun the US withdrawal from the Middle East. While Russia is no longer seen as a direct and global threat by the US, it is understood that, despite supporting opposing sides, the US is allowing Russia to be the one who directs mediation efforts for preparing the future of Syria. This is not only the case in the Geneva talks, but also and above all in the dialogue in Astana,
launched at the end of 2016 in the capital of Kazakhstan, under the auspices of Russia, Iran and Turkey following the final liberation of eastern Aleppo. The Trump Administration, on the other hand, maintains its alliance with Saudi Arabia and with Israel, which it sees as vital interests for US foreign policy.

President Putin wants to win back the former USSR’s influence and role for today’s Russia. But he has lost his empire, no longer has the territory or the resources of central Europe granted under the Warsaw Pact or even a large part of the republics of the USSR itself. The Russian Confederation no longer includes the three Baltic states, Ukraine, Belorussia, the South Caucasus, with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, or the major petrol republics of Central Asia, like the enormous and rich Kazakhstan (4.5 times the size of France), Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The Kremlin’s empire has lost more than 50% of its citizens and 25% of its territory, as well as its satellite countries of central Europe, which to make matters worse, like the Baltics, are now NATO members. The USSR had 300 million inhabitants across 22 million sq km; Russia today has 146 million inhabitants across 17 million sq km. But Russia remains a big country. It is the biggest European country, with the population of France and Germany combined, is the biggest country in the world by landmass, almost doubling the United States and China, and is a military and nuclear power. That is to say, Europe needs to have the best possible relations with Russia. And today they are anything but good. Russia feels humiliated because it thinks that the West took advantage of its weak period to snatch away its empire. It accepted everything until, with Putin now in power, the West touched on land that Russia considers as its own, i.e., Ukraine, the cradle of Kievan Rus’. For Putin this move to include Ukraine in the EU, as a step prior to joining NATO, was intolerable and it brought about the destabilization of Ukraine and the invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Russia has also returned to the Mediterranean, regaining the tropism towards warmer waters that hails from the time of the Tsars. Although complicated by the straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and then Suez and Bab-el-Mandeb or Gibraltar, the Mediterranean is its year-round unobstructed access to the high seas. Russia, therefore, has a legitimate interest in being present in the Mediterranean for strategic, economic and commercial reasons. Hence, it is trying to regain its old allies from the Soviet era, like Syria, Algeria and, as far as is possible, Egypt too and even Turkey. It also has a strong interest in fighting jihadism and Islamic extremism through fear of a contagion effect in its Caucasian and Central Asian republics, as was clear from the bitter experience in Chechnya. For all these reasons, and to demonstrate its plans to become a great power again, Russia’s involvement in the Syrian war was total, to the point of radically changing the expected outcome. It has now regained the Tartus naval base there, recovering and expanding its supply base, as outlined in the 1971 Brezhnev-El Assad Agreement, and transforming it into a permanent naval base.

Russia, therefore, has a legitimate interest in being present in the Mediterranean for strategic, economic and commercial reasons

Moscow is also weaving agreements with al-Sisi’s regime in Egypt, without the democratic conditionalties demanded by the Europeans and, at least up until a short while ago, the Americans. Russian tourists replace fearful Europeans in the tourist markets of Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, which now buy weapons from the flourishing Russian arms industry and construct nuclear plants with Russian technology and companies.

With Turkey, a NATO country, Russia has straightened out its poor relations of recent years and now Putin and Erdogan support one another implicitly to remain strong with respect to Europe and NATO. Here there is also a strong presence of Russian tourists, as well as its nuclear and arms sector; something which is notably unique for a NATO country. Supporting opposing sides in the Syrian war does not stop them from understanding one another, as long as nothing stands in the way of the Turks’ top priority of controlling and neutralizing the Kurds. Even Cyprus has become a major tourist destination for Russians and an important financial centre for its millionaires and oligarchs.
The geopolitics of the Mediterranean can no longer be understood without taking into account what is already the enormous and growing presence of China. During the Roman Empire, China was already the other great power on the other side of the planet. Scornful of the rest of the world, it built its Great Wall to keep the savages away from its precious civilization. Until 1830 it accounted for 30% of the world’s GDP. That was when it began to decline, falling victim to ruthless foreign interference, which, after the disastrous end of Mao’s ‘cultural revolution’, left an economy in 1978 that accounted for just 2.7% of the global GDP.

Ever since, China has recovered at a dizzying pace. Today, with a population equal to 18% of the total world population, it accounts for 14% of the global GDP, as mentioned, and is planning on doubling that figure in the next decade. Geopolitically, this is the most significant statistic of the last 25 years, the global impact of which would necessarily affect the Mediterranean. China has a strategic interest in the Arab world and the Mediterranean. This is the channel that joins China’s maritime route with the great European and Atlantic market. And China is not only the great factory of the world, but also a major exporter and importer of raw materials, particularly oil, of which it is already the world’s number one importer with 18 million barrels per day, 33% of which come from the GCC.

Since the beginning of the century, China’s mission has been to become a leader in terms of the economy, political influence, the markets, as a source of raw materials and in the energy sector. Its infrastructure projects of the Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road look to Europe, the Arab world and also Africa. Its overwhelming ambitions, for which it offers all kinds of financial facilities through the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank and other channels, enable it to open up and develop China’s interior (where it still has a restless Muslim Uighur population) and Central Asia, while at the same time connecting the Chinese economy with and projecting it towards the Middle East, Europe and Africa. The Mediterranean is one of the main areas of the extremely ambitious plans for transport infrastructure development and for increasing China’s presence. The Port of Piraeus already belongs to China, which is also building another major maritime hub in Algeria and negotiating with Morocco to double the Tanger Med port. King Mohammed VI himself made an important state visit to China in 2016. China is already Morocco’s third biggest trade partner and is well-received throughout the Arab world and Africa thanks to its policy of respect for a country’s sovereignty and its refusal to interfere with internal affairs.

In this regard, it sets no conditionalities, regardless of the governments in power, and never meddles in the regional conflicts of these areas of such complexity. Chinese exports to the Arab world, which stood at 10 billion dollars per year in 1990, has leapt to 220 billion in 2016 and aspires to reach 300 billion by 2024. In short, today it is already a counter-model and an alternative to the European association model, and its geopolitical weight is sure to grow along with its influence in the economy, trade and investment. 70,000 Chinese citizens are already living and working in Algeria, and similar communities are relentlessly growing in all other countries.

The greatest geopolitical risk in the Mediterranean today is undoubtedly the political instability and unrest throughout the Middle East and the Arab world. The new Mediterranean geopolitical landscape is the result of that instability and unrest, on which a series of factors have an influence. Aside from the major world powers intervening or meddling in an attempt to take advantage of these circumstances, there are two main fault lines.

The first involves the confrontation between a regressive identity of Islamic inspiration and modernity as forces present throughout the Arab-Muslim world and can adopt authoritarian or democratic forms. The crisis of the traditional authoritarian Arab state, which began with the Tunisian Revolution in 2011, has opened an era of transitions in the Arab world, which may well be short-lived or could last several generations.

The other fault line is the clash between the regional powers in the area, sometimes assisted by a world power, as they vie for power and hegemony. The violent confrontations and destruction this entails is something that European nations have fortunately left in the past, to such an extent that it is difficult for them to understand such motivations. Different vectors of strength overlap one another and are interwoven into each possible scenario. The two fault lines are present in every conflict. Obviously, each regional power falls somewhere along the ideological-identitarian spectrum, because of
Each regional power falls somewhere along the ideological-identitarian spectrum, because of their convictions or to justify their confrontations in terms of ideological struggle.

Besides its close alliance with the United States, which maintains a keen interest in the security of the Gulf and the stability of the oil market, Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy priorities are first of all in the Middle East and consist of its confrontation with Iran for hegemony in the region and for leadership of the whole of the Islamic world. Secondly, in the majority Sunni Arab world, Saudi external actions focus on seeking support for the traditional authoritarian Arab State.

Against Iran, its results are uncertain to say the least in the wars in Yemen and Syria. The attempt to regain an influence over Iraq, offering the majority Shiite government of the new President al-Abadi, who succeeded al-Maliki in 2014, an alternative to excessive dependence on Iran, complicates the country’s unification with the strong Kurdish and Sunni minority.

The effects are, for the time being, limited, although it has managed to attract the firebrand and influential Iraqi Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr. In Lebanon, Saudi Arabia had to agree to Saad Hariri’s return to power after forcing him to resign over his government with Hezbollah in the Lebanese power balance since 2011. The ultimatum given to Qatar was, in the end, a disaster for Saudi Arabia and the GCC and has only served to push Qatar towards even more intense relations with Iran. For Riyadh, Qatar has gone from the Gulf Cooperation Council to collusion with Iran and is constantly pestering the conservative authoritarian Arab governments through its al-Jazeera TV and financial influence in all political transitions. Qatar supports the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Ennahda in Tunisia, Justice and Development in Morocco and other exponents of political Islam in opposition to traditional authoritarians like el-Sisi or Western-style democratic modernists like Nidaa Tounes.

As Riyadh’s second priority for action – seeking support for conservatives in all countries of the Arab world, thereby ensuring the maintenance of or return to the traditional authoritarian Arab State – Saudi Arabia gives its support, through generous funding, for el-Sisi in Egypt, general Haftar in Libya, the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies and maintains a relationship it claims to be one of patronage with all other Arab countries.

Erdogan’s Turkey is a NATO member and officially still a candidate for the EU, with whom Turkey has upheld a highly profitable Customs Union since 1995, which has been the basis for its industrial boom. However, Erdogan’s moderate Islamic AKP government has increasingly acted as an autonomous power beyond those alliances in the region’s confrontations. Right from its beginnings in 2003, Erdogan’s government launched a policy of ‘zero problems with the neighbours’ with the newly independent countries of Turkmen descent from Central Asia. It also pursues a policy of neo-Ottomanism, an exercise of soft power aimed at recovering Turkey’s ascendancy over the countries of the old Ottoman Empire which it led until 1918 as the seat of the caliphate. When the Arab Springs broke out in 2011, Turkey presented itself as a model of Islamic democracy to be imitated in the Arab world. As such, like Qatar, it supported the political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ennahda in Tunisia, Justice and Development in Morocco, etc. After the opposition upris-
ing against al-Assad, it supported the arrival of jihadis of all origins into Syria through Turkey, while at the same time receiving 3.4 million refugees, for which it ensured Europe footed the bill. Its top priority is the fight against the PKK and the Kurdish movements in general, whose minority in Turkey stands at 15 to 20 million and could feasibly stand behind the PKK’s separatist proclamations. This is the reason for Turkey’s intervention in the war in Syria, attacking the pro-PKK groups fighting against the central power in Damascus in the Kurdish-controlled border areas. However, it upholds good relations with the autonomous Kurdish government in northern Iraq, which has no ties with the PKK. This has placed Turkey in an increasingly contradictory position as a NATO member and European ally who, in reality, is on the same side as and colludes with al-Assad’s regime and Russia, and, in spite of this, with Iran as well. The feeling of frustration over Europe’s rejection of Turkey’s EU entry and the mounting disagreements with the Trump Administration and its protectionist policy simply emboldens the country to continue along the same lines.

In general terms, it is worth distinguishing between the unrest in the Middle East and in the Maghreb. The Middle East is the Gordian knot of global unrest. All internal conflicts there are rapidly internationalized through intervention and meddling by regional and world powers, the latter today consisting of the US and Russia. North Africa is increasingly distant from those foci of unrest and the vital interests of its stakeholders, hence there is incomparably less penetration and meddling by external powers when conflicts break out there.

In Egypt, Obama and the EU itself pushed President Mubarak into leaving the power. The result was a victory for the Muslim Brotherhood, who had Qatari and Turkish support and lukewarm backing from the US and Europe, who looked the other way when general al-Sisi snatched away the power, taking a counter-revolutionary step backwards that was praised and politically and financially supported by Saudi Arabia and the GCC. The outcome was a return to the Mubarak system of the hardened traditional authoritarian Arab state, outlawing the Muslim Brotherhood as terrorists, along with practically the entire opposition. The EU and US’ complaints over violations of human rights have simply been the impetus for Russia to return to the country from which it was expelled by Sadat and where it has military facilities, sells arms and is building a nuclear plant. Tourists are beginning to flock back to the Nile and Egypt has returned to its daily difficulties of overpopulation and a lack of development and modernization.

The situation in Libya is very different. After the implosion of the State and the chaos and division of the country following NATO’s attack and the hunt for Gaddafi, structural destabilization has become the backdrop to a relatively low-intensity conflict. The alleged control of the UN-recognized Tripoli government and that of General Hafter in Benghazi hide the simple reality of an absence of government in all areas. There is a prevalence of tribal, militia and mafia powers in the different regions which carry out all kinds of trafficking and activities, irrespective of whether they are aimed at people’s survival or are criminal. One of these trafficking activities which is of particular concern to Europe, besides arms trafficking, is clandestine migration, the trafficking of human beings. However, it seems that the Libyans themselves, with support from the US airforce and help from the Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt in support of General Hafter, have been able to defeat ISIS’ attempts to install a new jihadist emirate in Libya. This has now been pushed into the Sahel belt, where state structures are even more fragile than the armed groups in Libya. The UN and its mediator Ghassan Salameh are working to find consensus for a national government and democratic transition. However, their efforts are doomed to fail as, in the confusion of the widespread low-intensity chaos, no armed group is willing to facilitate this change and in so doing transfer and lose the power they enjoy today in their fiefs. The only consensus that exists is that of the distribution of oil revenues, surprisingly, through the Central Bank.

The countries of the central Maghreb are further from the hornet’s nest of the Middle East and closer to Europe. Here, Tunisia is the only country in the Arab world that, after the 2011 revolution, is still advancing in its democratic transition despite economic difficulties and a population that will only get increasingly disgruntled if the situation does not improve. In the first democratic elections victory went to the moderate Islamist party Ennahda, with major economic support from Qatar and to a certain extent Turkey’s political backing. However, the government’s inexperience, mounting instability and al-Si-
si’s coup d’état in Egypt prompted it to step down. The writing of a democratic and secular constitution, under intense pressure from a coalition of civil society groups pushing for consensus and stability earned the latter the Nobel Peace Prize. The modernizing, neo-bourguibist party Nidaa Tounes won the next presidential and parliamentary elections, governing in coalition with Ennahda itself. While retaining its Arab and Muslim identity, its fundamental aim is to gain a new status of economic association and integration with the European Union which allows it to stabilize the country and make economic progress, despite the destabilization risk stemming from the chaos in neighbouring Libya. This is the European Union’s big chance to show how its external action and aid can be effective – call it what you may, association, neighbourhood policy, etc.- while also enjoying the support of the entire international community. If they can’t manage it in Tunisia, it would be an irreparable historical failing for Europe and the entire Arab world.

Algeria today has two fundamental features: it is a rich rentier state thanks to oil and gas and remains stable thanks to political stagnation, largely due to the traumatic recent memory of the brutal and indiscriminate jihadist terrorism that rose to unprecedented levels in the nineties. It was therefore immune to the Arab Spring uprisings and could finance social and political peace in a society that would, under no circumstance, risk entering another period of violence. Under such conditions, the regime established by the FLN and the army almost 60 years ago continues to succeed itself, just as President Abdelaziz does, who was a minister in the first government of independent Algeria in 1962 and Foreign Affairs Minister from 1963 to 1979, and who, after his country’s various twists and turns, has been the President of the Republic since 1999. From a security perspective, aside from the risks of internal destabilization, which is unlikely in a strong and financially rich state like Algeria, its concerns centre on the control of its immense territory, which stretches deep into the Sahara right up to the belt of the Sahel. These concerns are all the greater today and shared by all states in the area and the international community. Algeria’s rivalry with Morocco for hegemony in the Maghreb has prompted it to keep its land border with this country closed and is crucial for keeping the conflict in the Western Sahara alive through Algerian support for the SADR in Tindouf.

Morocco is the only country in the Arab world that was not swallowed up by the Ottoman Empire, and it has retained its status as a Sultanate or independent Muslim kingdom in different forms since time immemorial. Together with Tunisia, it is the Mediterranean partner country that maintains the closest relations with the EU. From a socioeconomic point of view, after a long period of instability under Hassan II, the country has steadily progressed, particularly thanks to a policy of modernization undertaken following the coronation of the new monarch Mohammed VI in 1999. But the pace of progress has been insufficient for the hordes of young people arriving on the job market and to narrow the notorious distance with the other side of the Strait.

Tunisia is the European Union’s big chance to show how its external action and aid can be effective

Like Tunisia, most of its trade, investment flow, tourists or emigrant workers’ remittances comes from Europe. It actually officially requested entry to the EU under Hassan II, which was, of course, impossible from the outset for simple reasons of geography. As an independent country it has always kept itself in the Western orbit and is party to America’s oldest standing treaty, a country with which it maintains excellent political, trade and military relations. In any case, and understandably, it aspires to having a privileged relation with the EU. This is one of the country’s strategic axes, along with its fundamental political relations with the Arab countries and its recent policy of rapprochement with the rest of Africa, where it hopes to become an economic, political and trade partner and serve as a bridge to Europe. The Alawite monarchy, as the maximum religious authority, maintains the country’s unity and stability, which is only threatened if socioeconomic tensions rose or if the monarchy’s great drive to recover the territorial integrity of the Sahara were to fail. From a security point of view, Morocco’s greatest concern stems from a lack of a definitive solution on
an international level for the Western Sahara conflict. Morocco occupies and administers this region, but the Sahwaris of the Polisario Front lay claim to it from Tindouf, with support from Algeria and part of the international community. Jihadist terrorism and instability in the Sahel are the other big concern, although the armed and security forces are readily able to carry out their constitutional duty.

What is the EU strategy for the Mediterranean?

The renewal of the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy in 2017 and the prior approval of the EU’s new Global Strategy in 2016 have provided key moments for reflection on the European approach to the complicated Mediterranean area. The conclusions have not been revolutionary, but they have been substantial, albeit insufficient in their application. From the point of view of cooperation and the application of the association treaties, there have not been any radical changes, but some relevant criteria have been introduced. In particular, a greater degree of realism in allowing positive or negative discrimination in cooperation with partner countries. This is based on their level of commitment to the values and reforms that underlie the entire Euro-Mediterranean project, as well as their alignment with EU interests, such as respect for human rights and democracy, but also in areas like migration control or participation in peace efforts. There has been an increase, although pitifully insufficient, in the resources available for the neighbourhood policy. There is a clear distinction between the different policies applied to the partner countries, but it is not enough and lacks the decisive support that countries at a key moment of their transition in association with Europe should be receiving, as is the case for Morocco and especially Tunisia.

From a geopolitical viewpoint and one more directly related with security, Europe is still a dwarf in military terms. It is true, however, that the initial steps have been taken to perhaps overcome that situation one day and finally create a European Defence Community, which has been an unrealized dream since the 1940s. A joint command centre has been created in Brussels for training missions, a European Defence Fund has been created to invest 1.5 billion euros a year in research and the defence industry, which will be consolidated in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, and, above all, after establishing a first EU military intervention force, the Permanent Structured Cooperation on Defence has been launched to strengthen cooperation between interested Member States. In sum, although the percentage increase from zero to one is infinite, it is practically nothing in comparison with the challenges the EU has to face. The EU, however, is still the specialist in ‘soft power,’ although, despite its efforts, on a scale which is insufficient for the magnitude of the challenges to which it must rise. A short while ago, Federica Mogherini herself pointed out that “the state of the world today is a state of caos, a confused proliferation of crises, where conflictuality and confrontation seem to prevail over rationality.” It is true, as she points out, that, thanks to the strength of its values, and to its economic and political capacity, “the EU is today the point of reference for all those that are investing in peace, multilateralism, free and fair trade, sustainable development, the fight against climate change, human rights and democracy, social economy – in a rules-based global order.”

Europe has a long and demanding task ahead of it, to build and protect an area of peace and shared progress around the Mediterranean

But all that is clearly insufficient in view of the EU’s need to deal with the chaos arriving at our doors and which, in different ways, is making its way into our society. Europe has a long and demanding task ahead of it, to build and protect an area of peace and shared progress around the Mediterranean; a Euro-Mediterranean Area of Economic Integration, which includes the rest of the African continent as privileged members in a great area of Euro-African partnership.
The ‘Renovated’ European Neighbourhood Policy and the New European External Investment Plan for Africa and the EU Neighbourhood

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In 2017, the EU implemented the mid-term review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its financial instrument, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The first elements of this new strategy, including the new Partnership Priorities (PP) were adopted after the June 2016 Global Strategy of the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), which contributed to the reorientation of the EU’s external action as a whole. In September 2016, the European Commission also proposed a new European External Investment Plan (EIP) for Africa and the EU Neighborhood.

The implementation of the ENP mid-term review, the EUGS and the EIP are three indicators of the progressive reorientation of the EU’s external action in its neighbourhood. The aim of this article is, therefore, to focus on the novelties of an approach that is now based, according to the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy, on ‘principled pragmatism.’

The Implementation of the ENP Review: Supporting Stabilization and Resilience in a Neighborhood Deeply Affected by Conflicts and Crisis

Following the November 2015 Communication on the ENP review, new frameworks for ‘bilateral engagement’ were concluded with some ENP partners through “Partnership Priorities, updated Association Agendas or existing Action Plans.” The novelty is the adoption of new Partnership priorities alongside the traditional ENP instruments. These different ‘joint bilateral documents’ are supposed to reflect ‘shared political priorities’ and to provide the “basis for the ongoing programming exercise of the new bilateral assistance programmes (Single Support Frameworks)” under the ENI, for the 2017-2020 period.

The new Partnership Priorities with Lebanon and Jordan were adopted in December 2016 notably to “help both countries address the impact of the refugees following the Syrian conflict.” Also, the so-called new ‘Compacts,’ containing “priority actions and mutual commitments were agreed and annexed to the Partnership Priorities.” As mentioned in the ‘Report on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review,’ “both partner countries were already receiving EU assistance to address the needs and promote the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and vulnerable host communities.” It is, therefore, more the format that has changed.

The EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities were adopted through a decision of the Association Council on 11 November 2016. This is of importance as the decisions that were used to adopt the Action Plans are legally binding, contrary to recommendations. The preamble of the decision states that the second EU-Lebanon Action Plan “came to an end in 2015 and has not been renewed.” Therefore, the EU and...
Lebanon have decided to “consolidate their partnership” and agreed on a “set of priorities for the period 2016-2020, with the aim of supporting and strengthening Lebanon’s resilience and stability while seeking to address the impact of the protracted conflict in Syria.” The “EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities, including the Compact” supporting the “implementation of the Agreement” on the basis of a set of “commonly identified shared interests,” have thus been adopted simultaneously. The five PP are the following:

- Security and countering terrorism (“security sector reforms” and “institutional capacity of security actors including law enforcement, security management, oversight bodies and justice”);
- Governance and rule of law (“institutional capacity building”; promotion of the “shared values of democracy and the rule of law including good governance and transparent, stable and effective institutions, protection of free speech and an independent press”; “independence of the justice system,” and “efficient public sector”);
- Fostering growth and job opportunities (notably: municipalities; private investment infrastructure; trade, agriculture, industry; energy security, climate action and conservation of natural resources);
- Migration and mobility: (negotiating a “joint declaration to launch their Mobility Partnership”);
- Mechanisms for dialogue and mutual coordination.

For this last priority the general idea is to “rationalize and optimize the implementation of the Association Agreement.” This implies a “thorough rethinking of the dialogues and sub-committees taking place.” The current sub-committees will, for example, be regrouped into “fewer thematic meetings.” Obviously, the search for greater efficiency is a core priority and this is true for all partners.

The EU-Lebanon Compact, annexed to the PP, sets out some mutually agreed actions and defines “priority actions to support the stabilization of the country” over the period 2016-2020. It also underlines that the “mechanism to review progress in the implementation of the Compact will draw inter alia on the policy dialogues under the general framework of the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement.” A first example of reciprocal commitments can be taken from the first PP as referred to in Table 4.

Another example of this time, ‘mutual objectives’ can be found at the level of the PP on migration and mobility as we can see in Table 5.

The willingness to reinforce ownership is obvious in these two examples. The approach followed for

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<th>TABLE 4</th>
<th>EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities: 1st Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Enhancing Stability: Security and Counter-Terrorism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EU Commitments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lebanon Commitments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Actively support the implementation of the counter-terrorism roadmap through technical assistance and financial and non-financial support.</td>
<td>i) Improve the coordination of security services, including agencies responsible for border management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Provide technical assistance and financial support in countering criminal activities including the fight against the smuggling and trafficking of humans, drugs and firearms.</td>
<td>ii) Support the operational activities of the interministerial Counter-Terrorism Committee established on 26/5/2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Reinforce Integrated Border Management by supporting the four border agencies.</td>
<td>iii) Design and implement a comprehensive integrated counter-terrorism strategy in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Support conflict prevention and mediation as well as interventions aimed at countering violent extremism and diffusing tensions.</td>
<td>iv) Agree an Integrated Border Management (IBM) strategy, including increased coordination of Lebanese security agencies and cooperation within relevant EU programmes.</td>
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<td>e) Intensify cooperation and support on aviation safety and security.</td>
<td>v) Intensify cooperation on aviation safety and security.</td>
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<th>TABLE 5</th>
<th>EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities: 4th Priority</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Migration and Mobility</strong></td>
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<td><strong>EU – Lebanon Mutual Objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once agreed, EU and Lebanon will implement fully the mutual political commitments of the Mobility Partnership after its adoption and all the actions in the related Annex, in line with the following priorities identified therein:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Promoting and facilitating well-managed legal migration and mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strengthening the capacity of the relevant Lebanese authorities to manage borders and prevent irregular migration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Strengthening the nexus between migration and development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Enhancing dialogue and cooperation on matters related to refugees, allowing for thorough discussion of concerns.</td>
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the adoption, in December 2016, of the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities and anned Compact is similar to the EU-Lebanon one, as the PP replaces the EU-Jordan Action Plan which entered into force in October 2012. However, a specific Addendum 1 includes detailed Jordan-EU commitments concerning: enhancing macro-economic stability; private sector development, business climate, trade and investment, job creation; quality education and training for social inclusion and development; sustainable use and management of natural resources; strengthening cooperation on stability and security including counter-terrorism; well-managed refugee, migration and mobility policies; and justice and political reform, democratic elections and human rights. There is also a specific ‘Addendum 2’ containing ‘quantitative benchmarks’ proposed to “monitor progress in the implementation of the EU-Jordan compact.” It is clearly indicated that the “monitoring will occur on a regular basis and at least once a year, in the context of the foreseen review mechanisms and the meetings related to the bilateral cooperation between the EU and Jordan.” This specific addendum 2 is reproduced in Table 6.

The five Partnership Priorities with Algeria, adopted in March 2017 with the decision 1/2017 of the EU-Algeria Association Council is not legally binding, contrary to a decision. Moreover, only three priorities have been identified: i) Political dialogue, governance, the rule of law and the promotion of fundamental rights; ii) Cooperation, socio-economic development, including trade and access to the European single market; iii) Energy, the environment and sustainable development; iv) Strategic and security dialogue; v) The human dimension, including cultural and inter-religious dialogue, migration and mobility.

It is worth mentioning that Algeria concluded an Association Agreement (AA) but never agreed on an ENP Action plan. No evaluation, therefore, in the form of the so-called Regular reports, has ever been adopted. Moreover, the original tariff dismantling calendar for the bilateral Free trade area of the AA has been prolonged by three years (1 September 2020). The revised ENP therefore enabled, in 2017, the evaluation of the implementation of the AA, through a “Report on the state of play of EU-Algeria relationships in the framework of the renovated ENP,” and an agreement to be reached on the new Partnership Priorities. However, no ‘Compact’ is referred to in decision n°1/2017.

The three Partnership Priorities with Egypt were adopted in July 2017, not on the basis of a decision but through recommendation n° 1/2017 of the EU-Egypt Association Council of 25 July 2017. As mentioned above, the difference is that a recommendation is not legally binding, contrary to a decision. Moreover, only three priorities have been identified: i) Egypt’s sustainable modern economy and

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<th>Jordan Commitments</th>
<th>EU Commitments</th>
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<td>- 50,000 jobs for Syrian refugees by end-2016; 75,000 by end-2017; 100,000 by end-2018, provided there is sufficient demand for work permits</td>
<td>Bilateral commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education: public and free education was provided to at least 140,000 Syrian children in 2016 and to at least 190,000 children at the end of 2017</td>
<td>Overall a minimum of €747 million of new funding was pledged in 2016 and 2017, including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Macro-Financial Assistance loan of €200 million, provided pre-conditions are met</td>
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<td>- €108 million humanitarian assistance 2016-17</td>
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<td>Syrian refugees</td>
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<td>The EU applies simplified Rules of Origin requirements to Jordan exports towards the EU under the following conditions:</td>
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<td>- 10 years’ duration</td>
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<td>- in 18 designated economic zones and industrial areas.</td>
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Source: Addendum 2 of the Decision n° 1/2016 of the EU-Jordan Association Council of 19 December 2016

### TABLE 6

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Jordan Commitments</th>
<th>EU Commitments</th>
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<td>- 50,000 jobs for Syrian refugees by end-2016; 75,000 by end-2017; 100,000 by end-2018, provided there is sufficient demand for work permits</td>
<td>Bilateral commitments</td>
</tr>
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<td>- Education: public and free education was provided to at least 140,000 Syrian children in 2016 and to at least 190,000 children at the end of 2017</td>
<td>Overall a minimum of €747 million of new funding was pledged in 2016 and 2017, including:</td>
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<td>- Macro-Financial Assistance loan of €200 million, provided pre-conditions are met</td>
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<td>- €108 million humanitarian assistance 2016-17</td>
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Source: Addendum 2 of the Decision n° 1/2016 of the EU-Jordan Association Council of 19 December 2016
social development; ii) Partners in foreign policy; iii) Enhancing stability. Compared to Jordan, Lebanon or even Algeria the general impression is that the EU-Egyptian approach is, for the time being, far less ambitious. There is no compact or any kind of addendum, and it is stressed, in the conclusion of the PP, that “in the spirit of co-ownership, the EU and Egypt have jointly defined Partnership Priorities and will develop an agreed evaluation and monitoring mechanism.”

Tunisia (after the Jasmine Revolution) and Morocco have been considered as the Mediterranean front-runners of the ENP. The priority of the EU’s support to Tunisia was confirmed in a joint communication adopted in September 2016 on the ‘Strengthening of EU support to Tunisia,’10 to set out “further actions to promote long-term stability, including good governance, justice reform, socioeconomic development and security.” It also provided “a basis for the creation of the EU-Tunisia Joint Parliamentary Committee.”11 On the occasion of the EU-Tunisia Association Council of 11 May 2017 the “two sides held an exchange of views on the future framework of relations between Tunisia and the EU which will replace the Action Plan for a Privileged Partnership (2013-2017).”12 It is worth noting that a “second full round of negotiation” regarding the Tunisian Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) is planned for the first half of 2018. For Morocco, DG trade indicates that the latest DCFTA round of negotiation “took place in April 2014” and that the negotiations “were then put on hold to accommodate the plan of Morocco to carry out additional studies before continuing the negotiations.”13 In other words, the exact structure of the future EU-Morocco relationship remains uncertain, while the negotiations of the Tunisian DCFTA are still on track.

Two Mediterranean countries, given their current situations, are in a specific situation. Libya never benefited from a contractual relationship with the EU and its internal situation remains extremely unstable. Therefore, the EU adjusted its cooperation to the “very particular circumstances, including by channelling support through municipalities” and with the implementation of the December 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The EU continues to “mediate with the objective of bringing all Libyan actors together to find a comprehensive agreement to restore law and order, enhance the rule of law, bring the armed and security forces under civilian control, avoid financial collapse, preserve the country’s unity and tackle terrorism and irregular migration.”14 Given the current situation, the EU also developed a specific Strategy for Syria.15

New frameworks for ‘bilateral engagement’ were concluded with some ENP partners through Partnership Priorities, updated Association Agendas or existing Action Plans

In the Eastern Neighbourhood, the main changes were introduced with the conclusion of three Association Agreements, including a DCFTA (AA-DCFTA). With Ukraine, the DCFTA has been provisionally applied since 1 January 2016. EU-Georgia and EU-Moldova Association Agreements entered into force in July 2016 and reviews of their Association Agenda for the period 2017-2020 are ongoing. Consultations on Partnership Priorities have also been launched with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus. As Armenia decided to join the Eurasian Customs Union, the AA DCFTA project was replaced by a “new Comprehensive and Enhanced

11 JOIN(2017) 18 final, p. 5.
14 JOIN(2017) 18 final, p. 5.
Partnership Agreement” signed on 24 November 2017. Azerbaijan also decided to negotiate the same type of agreement that excludes an FTA with the EU.

All in all, to replace ‘Action plans’ by ‘Partnership Priorities,’ basically means getting rid of the strict conditionality approach launched in 2011 with the so called ‘deep democracy criteria’ and to differentiate more and adapt cooperation to the political will of the partner. The simultaneous publication of the ‘Regular reports’ for all partners benefitting from an ENP action plan has been abandoned. However, due to legal constraints, ‘Association Implementation Reports’ have been adopted with regard to Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia16, whereas “Reports on the state of play of EU relations” with regard to Algeria17 and Tunisia “in the framework of the renovated ENP” have also been introduced.18

The New European External Investment Plan for Africa and the EU Neighbourhood

The European Commission adopted, in September 2016, a communication titled: “Strengthening European Investments for jobs and growth: Towards a second phase of the European Fund for Strategic Investments and a new European External Investment Plan.”19 The approach draws on the experience of the Investment Plan for Europe, the so-called Juncker Plan20, and extends it to the EU Neighbourhood and Africa. The EIP contains, for instance, priorities “inspired by the key principles of, and experience gained with, the Investment Plan for Europe”21 and its goal, that is to provide an EU guarantee to mobilize private investment.

The EIP includes three elements designed to attain the general objective of job creation and sustainable growth: i) mobilizing investment; ii) stepping up technical assistance; and iii) supporting economic and structural reforms to improve the business and policy environment. This is perceived, by the Commission, as being a “key factor in transforming development policy and assistance” in order to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and address the “multiple challenges faced in both the EU Neighbourhood and Africa.” The objectives of creating jobs and promoting sustainable growth in order to bring stability and improve “conditions on the ground in fragile countries affected by conflict” will address the migratory challenge. Still, according to the Commission, a “new approach is needed to address the factors that constitute the root causes of migration, and to support partners to manage its consequences, both in Africa and in the EU Neighbourhood, by financing investments and addressing barriers to private investment.” The diagnosis is that:

20 The Juncker Plan has three objectives: to remove obstacles to investment, to provide visibility and technical assistance to investment projects and to make smarter use of financial resources. The EU-wide results as of April 2018 are that: the “EFSI expected to trigger €284 billion in investments” and “90% of the original €315 billion target” were met, while “384 infrastructure and innovation projects” were approved, as well as “398 SME financing agreements.” Around “611,000 SMEs” are expected to benefit from the Plan. European Commission, April 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe-juncker-plan/investment-plan-results_en
in 2015, "more than 60 million people left their places of origin (…). North African and Middle Eastern countries hosted about 40% of all displaced people worldwide, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for another 30%";

ii) the EU’s “external policies, and in particular its development and Neighbourhood policies,” seek to promote prosperity but “economic growth in developing countries has now reached its lowest level since 2003”;

iii) As regards FDI “going to developing countries, only 6% goes to fragile countries, pushing down the investment per capita to a level almost five times lower than in other developing countries. Similarly, the cost to start a business is almost three times higher in fragile countries than in non-fragile countries.”

In September 2017, a Regulation “establishing the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), the EFSD Guarantee and the EFSD Guarantee Fund” was adopted. The EFSD is one of the centrepieces of the EIP. It aims to support investments primarily in Africa and the Union’s Neighbourhood as a means to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, particularly “poverty eradication, as well as the commitments under the recently revised European Neighbourhood Policy.” The direct link to the ENP mid-term review should be stressed. The preamble is also clear about the fact that the EFSD aims to address “specific socioeconomic root causes of migration, including irregular migration,” and to “contribute to the sustainable reintegration of migrants returning to their countries of origin and to the strengthening of transit and host communities.” The EFSD, should also “contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.” According to Article 15 of the Regulation, a “contribution of €350 million shall be provided by the general budget of the Union” for the EFSD Guarantee Fund. Stimulating investments in Africa and the EU’s neighbourhood will not be an easy task. At EU institutional level, the European Commission created a Secretariat of the External Investment Plan and the EU Delegations and the European Investment Bank will play a crucial role in this regard. The Juncker plan seems to have worked well in the EU, but Africa and the EU neighbourhoods are very different, from a private investor perspective. Country-risk analyses will, without doubt, remain the key indicators for them.

Conclusion: Is ‘Principled Pragmatism’ Viable?

Principled pragmatism, which combines pragmatism and idealism, has been attributed to Abraham Lincoln’s method of political analysis, itself inspired by Niccolo Machiavelli. Principled pragmatism looks appropriate for addressing a very volatile and complex situation, as it allows for notably quick reactions to crises and for greater flexibility in a difficult and changing geopolitical context. The fact that the EU institutions recognized the limits of the ENP is certainly positive, but the return to the Fortress Europe syndrome could affect the credibility of the European Union’s actions as a whole. Only time will tell if this pragmatism will be more appropriate and efficient than the ‘deep and sustainable democracy’ approach developed after the so-called Arab Spring. The reinforcement of a multi-speed ENP is, in any case, obvious.

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Whatever the depth of the European project’s ‘crisis,’ it is a ‘dual’ phenomenon, one internal, and the other external. The EU project – its size, its mechanisms, and the values on which it is based – is challenged from within in a number of different ways. It is also challenged directly from third countries, some being traditional allies of the European Union, others its rivals. The consequence is that the EU foreign policy now needs to take into account new parameters, including hostility, reduced attractiveness/leverage with neighbouring countries, hesitations from its own foreign policy ranks, and even fundamental doubts from within.

But the mid- and long-term remedy lies in more Europe, not less, and in a renewed reliance on and defence of European values. EU-style democracy may no longer be a given and therefore needs to be defended against hostile political actors from within and from abroad. This is a new existential endeavour for the EU institutions.

The Crisis of the European Project Is First and Foremost an Internal One

Trying to rank the EU’s internal problems by increasing degree of seriousness, I would list Brexit, a dysfunctional post-Lisbon Treaty foreign policy mechanism, the rise in migration movements, populism in central Europe and other countries, and a serious challenge to basic European values. Each of these issues has an external dimension. Brexit is certainly an element of the current crisis. Despite being the result of a hugely miscalculated gamble on the part of the British conservative leadership, Brexit will be implemented and may be resolved in the foreseen timetable. From a foreign and security policy perspective, the sooner Brexit is implemented, the better, as it will remove a crippling uncertainty. Once the United Kingdom is out of the EU, the remaining 27 member countries will undoubtedly weigh less on the world stage diplomatically, economically and militarily. The loss will be particularly perceptible in the field of military operations outside the EU, although joint force projection may still be a possibility depending on future arrangements. The capacity and geographical scope of the British Foreign Service will also be missed.

The EU foreign policy mechanisms created by the Lisbon Treaty are also in themselves part of the crisis. Despite all the good words and intentions concerning a Common Foreign and Security Policy and the hard work of two successive High Representatives and the European External Action Service staff, the reality is that the EU’s foreign policy has increasingly been crafted at Heads of State and Government level¹ (the European Council), essentially by the larger Member States,² and often in crisis mode. In itself, the EU’s foreign policy machinery does work, but its work is largely made of routine operations (statements, demarches, coordination at high-officials level, local concertation between ambassadors) while the real policy initiatives are taken

by individual Heads of State and Government after, at best, direct consultation between a few of them. On a number of recent occasions, there was no involvement of the EU institutions concerned (European External Action Service, European Commission, European Parliament) prior to fresh policy moves. Recent French initiatives on Libya, on the Syrian Kurds, or on a Syrian peace process post-strikes are cases in point, which are part of the long-standing Gaullian attitude in France’s diplomacy.3 The notable absence of the EU from the diplomatic aspects of the Syrian crisis (except for two conferences held in Brussels in 2017 and 2018) is particularly illustrative of the current situation. It results from the unwillingness of the most influential Member States to involve EU institutions in efforts to influence the resolution of the Syrian crisis, with the exception of the more technical aspects (humanitarian assistance, trade sanctions). In the EU foreign policy field, doing “more together to build diplomatic muscle”4 remains a challenge.

EU-style democracy may no longer be a given and therefore needs to be defended against hostile political actors from within and from abroad. This is a new existential endeavour for the EU institutions

Populism and extreme right parties5 are on the rise in the European Union: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany are the most striking examples. In most cases, this phenomenon has developed as a rejection of the EU integration drive and as a defence of national interests6 over collective European interests. Populist parties have fully exploited the migration crisis of 2015 in two directions: rejecting the ‘other’ as a threat to national (and often Christian) identity, and criticizing the lack of EU efficiency in securing borders and providing security.

Ironically, the movement is stronger in the Central European countries of the Visegrad Group (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) which have been the biggest recipients of both political and financial support during the post-communist transition. There is undoubtedly a recession in European democracy,7 although a period of renewal may follow. More generally, there is a vast reshaping of European political forces, one in which movements more than traditional parties are increasingly important, including in countries like France8 where the extreme right was defeated in the 2017 elections.

European values are contested by major political players, including several political parties sitting in government and by prime ministers sitting around the European Council table. In some cases, parties contesting EU values are not in government but they have enough political leverage to influence governments. Different concepts, different historical backgrounds may provide part of the explanation,9 but overall it is a hugely disquieting moment in European history, especially considering the roots and history of the European project since 1950. The recent victory of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán10 – and notably his capacity to reform the country’s constitution in a legal way thanks to the super-majority won by his Fidesz Party – will probably drastically change

Hungary’s political landscape, with much less room for a vibrant civil society, academic freedoms and media independence. The surge in movements of refugee and migrants in 2015, under the influence of the war in Syria and activities of human trafficking networks produced such a political shock in many EU countries that it weakened the European project and triggered a massive increase in xenophobic and rejectionist attitudes in the EU. As Carnegie Europe’s Stefan Lehne asks\(^{11}\): “Why has the 2015 influx of 1.4 million refugees had such a lasting, traumatic impact on the collective European psyche?” There were many factors that triggered mass population movements: the Syrian war, insecurity in Afghanistan, Eritrea or Sudan, as well as poverty in many parts of Africa. Moreover, the lack of controls in Turkey (at least initially) and the influence and agility of trafficking networks were determining factors in the massive migration phenomenon of 2015. On the EU side, fears of terrorism being associated with refugee flows (although largely unsubstantiated), deep divisions between Member States on asylum policies, misgivings about the Schengen Treaty, and difficult reforms in the area of border controls and the coast guard made the EU response slow and difficult to agree upon.

The European Project Is also under Attack from Abroad

External factors can also be ranked by increasing degree of seriousness: US, Russian and Turkish attitudes toward the EU have been changing rapidly and have become increasingly hostile. More importantly, a new “authoritarian model” of government has developed inside and outside the EU, at the antipodes of the value-based EU model. From Washington, the EU is faced with a new attitude from the Trump Administration: hostility on trade issues, criticism on defence policies and contributions to NATO, and, even more importantly, permanent unpredictability on foreign policy. In both substance and style, President Donald Trump has in many ways destabilized his EU partners and allies, especially when contradictory messages are issued by various parts of the Administration. Trade policy,\(^{12}\) including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), NATO policy,\(^{13}\) and the policy on Syria constitute cases in point.

The EU’s foreign policy machinery does work, but its work is largely made of routine operations while the real policy initiatives are taken by individual Heads of State and Government after, at best, direct consultation between a few of them

Multiple changes of high-level personnel in the US Administration in the first 15 months of the Trump Presidency and a flurry of puzzling messages from the US President himself created a negative perception in the EU: imprecision, fluctuation and inconsistency were now coming from a hitherto solid ally and supporter of the European project during the entire post-World War II period. The first few months of the Trump Presidency jolted EU leaders, in particular after the NATO and G7 summits in May 2017. As The June 2018 G7 summit in Canada only reinforced these trends. German Chancellor Angela Merkel\(^{14}\) put it then: “The times in which we could completely depend on others are, to a certain extent, over. (...) We Europeans truly have to take our fate into our own hands. (...) We have to know that we must fight for our future on our own, for our destiny as Europeans.” As Carnegie’s Erik Brattberg put it: “traditional transatlanticism is in flux.”\(^{15}\)

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From Russia, the EU is confronted with a permanent and structural harassment policy.\textsuperscript{16} This policy has been implemented through the funding of political parties, election interference, and hacking, but also in the security field with a permanent harassment of NATO and European forces at sea and in the air. Several instances of extra-judicial killings of political opponents have also occurred in the United Kingdom.

Russia has recently increased its political, military and economic presence in the Middle East and Turkey. Russia’s dynamic diplomacy,\textsuperscript{17} a worldwide endeavour with multi-pronged tools, contrasts with the lack of the EU’s collective diplomacy. Russia is setting foot militarily in the Middle East with a permanent air force base in western Syria (where it controls the skies) and dominates the security situation, replacing the traditional role of the US in the region. Russia is also in talks with Turkey to provide an S400 defensive missile system and, for security reasons, will probably operate this from within Turkish air force command centres, laying down (if the sale is confirmed) a huge precedent in a NATO country.

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Russia is also using its powerful energy sector as a diplomatic tool, essentially aiming to keep maximum control of gas supplies to the EU. Linked to its obsession to bypass Ukraine, Russia is building gas pipelines in both the North Sea (Nord Stream) and the Black Sea (Turk Stream), while at the same time involving itself in offshore gas exploration in Israeli and Egyptian waters, together with onshore projects in northern Iraq and eastern Libya.

In 2015-2017, Turkey, for its part, has rapidly moved from EU candidate country status to that of an EU partner with a permanently hostile narrative, while retaining strong economic ties in terms of trade, investment and technology. Interference in national politics, especially in Germany and the Netherlands, criticism of France over its military presence in Syria, inconsistency of a foreign policy driven largely by domestic electoral considerations have become the hallmarks of Turkey’s relations with the EU and EU member countries.

While, until recently, it had been following a ‘European trajectory’ (despite all the ambiguities associated with the EU enlargement policy and with Turkey’s own political evolution under President Erdoğan), Turkey is now on an ‘antagonistic orbit’ with the EU, largely for its own domestic political reasons. The accession of Turkey to the EU as part of a deep and lasting political alliance\textsuperscript{18} is now out of the question, due to the country’s drift toward a one-man-rule system. The unanimity rule used by the EU in accession matters clearly precludes any advance on that front. Even a reduced partnership has now become problematic, although domains such as trade,\textsuperscript{19} investment and counterterrorism still constitute a base for joint action. To a large extent, the fact that Ankara’s narrative with the EU has become structurally hostile – and is unlikely to be smoothed out anytime soon – is preventing improvements in the EU-Turkey relationship from materializing.

The alliance of convenience between Ankara and Moscow, largely based on Turkey’s diplomatic isolation after the July 2016 coup attempt and on Russia’s exploitation of its partner’s weakness, is now holding ground for reasons linked to traditional economic and energy considerations, to foreign policy issues (Syria), and to domestic political considerations. This policy is not without its deep contradictions, as illustrated by Ankara’s approval of Western strikes on Syria’s chemical arsenal on 14 April.

\textsuperscript{17} AA.VV. The Return of Global Russia, Research Project, Carnegie Russia http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/interactive/global-russia
ish politics remain a key driver: the only way for the AKP to remain solidly in power is to reinforce its alliance with the nationalist MHP party. This calls for drumming up a fiercely nationalist, anti-Kurdish, anti-Greek, anti-EU and anti-US narrative. This new situation will have lasting military consequences for NATO, the US and the EU.

An EU Foreign Policy Challenged by the EU’s Internal and External Crisis

The European Union is currently confronted with a massive change of paradigm: some of its own members, as well as countries which were ‘natural allies’ have become, at least for the foreseeable future, ‘structurally hostile’ members or partners, or at the very least unpredictable ones. As described above, this is the case – inside the EU – of Hungary, Poland and potentially a few others, and – outside the EU – of the US under the Trump Administration and Turkey under President Erdoğan.

The fact that Ankara’s narrative with the EU has become structurally hostile – and is unlikely to be smoothed out anytime soon – is preventing improvements in the EU-Turkey relationship from materializing.

This is a new landscape. In the foreign policy field, the EU’s cohesiveness and influence are now at risk, and joint action with allies and partners will become difficult and even impossible in some cases. Several current situations illustrate this new paradigm. How can, for example, the European Union keep defending the pursuit of a diplomatic solution with Iran\(^\text{20}\) (e.g. the nuclear deal) when, fundamentally, the US and the EU diverge on what future course of action to take, and when the US Administration shifts toward a military confrontation policy with Iran?

Similarly, in the case of Syria, the basis for joint action was the anti-ISIL coalition, with the involvement of air forces from the US and several EU countries (among others) and special troops on the ground from the US, France and the UK. How can this coalition hold if contradictory messages\(^\text{21}\) come (as they currently do, with the exception of chemical weapons) from Washington on the continuation of US actions and if there is no predictability on the future course of action in the UN context about a political settlement in Syria? Additionally, how can the EU make its weight felt in the negotiations on a political settlement in Syria if some of its member governments insist on acting on their own?

In this respect, the current (partial) alignment of Ankara with Moscow’s policy in Syria creates another issue for the EU because Turkey, which was never deeply involved in destroying ISIL, has recently shown open hostility toward those EU countries (as well as the US) most active in the coalition (e.g. expelling the German air force from Incirlik air force base in 2017, or verbally threatening France for holding talks with Syrian Kurdish entities in 2018).

Projecting EU values abroad has traditionally been at the core of EU foreign policy in Africa (Lomé and Cotonou agreements), the Mediterranean (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Union for the Mediterranean), and on the European continent (enlargement to central Europe between 2004 and 2013, enlargement process with the Western Balkans and Turkey). Today, the development of an illiberal democratic model within the EU’s boundaries through democratic elections will largely hamper the EU’s capacity to project its values toward third countries. An example of a more general nature is the collective defence by Western countries of rule of law and human rights in the Mediterranean area: how can it continue defending rights and values in Mediterranean countries (e.g. Egypt) if the US is not interested anymore?

To put it another way, can the EU ‘offset’ the diminishing support for democracy from the US?\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^{20}\) S. SADJADPOUR. Failure Foretold, Carnegie Middle East Center, 2017 [https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/73552](https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/73552)


\(^{22}\) R. YOUNGS. In the Era of Trump, Can Europe Step Up on Global Democracy?, Carnegie Europe, 2017, [https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/75075](https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/75075)
Beyond just making statements? As Carnegie Europe’s Richard Youngs puts it, “A reinforced European commitment to global democracy could act as an antidote to the EU’s loss of international influence and prestige in recent years.”

The EU Model Is Facing Competition from the ‘Authoritarian Model’

A new ‘authoritarian model’ based on the Russian example has emerged and is taking root. It comes in various shades within and outside the EU.

Within the EU, in several cases, it is the result of democratic election and a rejectionist attitude toward EU integration policies, as can be seen in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In other EU countries, rejectionist tendencies are confined to some political parties which have not acceded to power (or not yet), but remain opposed to further EU integration and/or have a strongly negative stance on migration from Mediterranean countries (e.g. FPÖ in Austria, the National Front in France, AfD in Germany, the League in Italy, and PVV in the Netherlands). In some countries, even outside government, several of these parties are able to exert influence on the coalition in power.

Outside the EU, the authoritarian model has developed through undemocratic means – like in Turkey (constitutional referendum of April 2017), Egypt (recent elections), or indeed Syria – and there is little chance that this trend will be reversed. This model is openly confronting the European external agenda. In turn, accession to the EU or a partnership with the EU has a reduced attractiveness or has simply vanished in those countries following this emerging authoritarian model: basically, following EU political standards has become an impediment for authoritarian regimes intent on reinforcing their powers. Their argument in discussions with EU leaders is clear-cut: we are fighting terrorism (on your behalf as well) and you should understand our constraints.

This narrative essentially illustrates a return to a ‘post-September 11’ agenda.

Conversely, the leverage that the EU could in principle exert in some Mediterranean countries is largely altered by the other interests the EU has in these countries: military and counterterrorism considerations, including arms sales, (Egypt, Turkey), trade and investment interests (all countries), energy interests (Egypt, Libya), and considerations linked to the control of migration flows (Turkey, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco).

The EU is intending to maintain its support of the defence of human rights and rule of law, as well as free media and a free civil society. However, beyond a statement of principle, it remains to be seen how the EU will be able to implement these policies in countries where EU support for democracy will be perceived as a hostile move against those in power.

Conclusion

Looking at the way in which the EU can counter its own illiberal trends, the choice facing EU political leaders is between ‘More Europe’ or ‘Less Europe and more cynicism,’ unless EU Member States split between a core group fully upholding EU values and another group (or several groups) parting ways with the core group and ‘freeing’ themselves from their initial commitment to liberal democracy.

Civil society in Europe is reacting against populism and autocratic tendencies. This is a sound process, but it is resting on the assumption that civil society will still enjoy a free space to work in, which is not guaranteed if we take the forthcoming constitutional transformations in Hungary as an example of what is in store.

However, civil society engagement will not be enough: a consistent reaction is needed from the core EU institutions such as the European Council, the Parliament and the Commission, including through a policing mechanism – or perhaps different political options – for those governments choosing a different path.


Dossier: Europe and the Mediterranean

Rethinking Europe’s Comparative Advantage in the Mediterranean

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The notion that the EU is no longer the only game in town in its wider neighbourhood has become commonplace. Periodical debates about Europe’s geopolitical competitiveness in its southern flank have largely circled around the questions about whether Europe can compete with Gulf money, Chinese investment, or Russian arms. What has not received sufficient attention, by contrast, is the question about what comparative advantage the EU has or may develop that those other players lack. The debate about Europe’s geopolitical competitiveness transcends technocratic questions on the effectiveness of aid conditionality. Instead, European competitiveness will need to be placed in a more holistic framework of international projection, assessed against the broader background of an international environment in transition. This environment is characterized by the empowerment of non-Western states, non-state actors, and individual citizens. It is also shaped by a wider competition in terms of power, money, commerce, diplomacy, and influence both between and within polities. The crisis of the international liberal order and the crisis of domestic liberal politics condition and nurture each other, forming a twin crisis of liberalism. As the global diplomatic marketplace transforms, the EU must adapt its products and marketing strategy.

In the Mediterranean, such adaptations have mostly focused on repackaging old approaches amidst doubts as to whether conditional foreign policy still works in a region where partnership with the EU used to be the only offer. However, beyond current funding schemes and partnership frameworks, we need to zoom out and ask: what is the EU’s appeal and comparative advantage in the emerging geopolitical dynamics shaping the Mediterranean, and how can it be translated into concrete cooperation offers?

Transformation, Not Decline

John Ikenberry has succinctly explained how the liberal international order, built and led by the United States and its allies since the end of World War II, is going through a phase in which the diversification of global power centres leads not to American decline, but to a dynamic process in which the catching up of some states leads to a shift in the global distribution of political and economic power. What is widely perceived as a threat to the liberal international order itself, Ikenberry sustained, is merely a demand for adaptation as “the world is not rejecting openness and markets; it is asking for a more expansive notion of stability and economic security.”

In the face of the enormous success of the liberal international order in bringing about unprecedented levels of peace and prosperity, the challenges it faces today are consequences of this success as other states do not question the order in itself but demand a greater say in how this order is governed. More recently, it has become clear how the need to integrate rising powers and adapt ways of collective problem-solving pushes the traditional guardians of the liberal international order towards an agenda of renewal. Crucially, Ikenberry sustains: “The coming divide in world politics will not be between the Unit-

ed States (and the West) and the non-Western rising states. Rather, the struggle will be between those who want to renew and expand today’s system of multilateral governance arrangements and those who want to move to a less cooperative order built on spheres of influence. These fault lines do not map onto geography, nor do they split the West and the non-West.”

For Europe and its role on the global stage – and by extension, its role in the Mediterranean –, this transformation of the international environment has several implications. Firstly, like the US, Europe is not in decline, but its global weight is relativized as it contrasts with an increasing array of emerging centres of power. Europe’s basic strengths are still there, and still in demand, but need to be adapted to a more dynamic diplomatic marketplace.

Europe is not in decline, but its global weight is relativized as it contrasts with an increasing array of emerging centres of power. Europe’s basic strengths are still there, and still in demand, but need to be adapted to a more dynamic diplomatic marketplace.

Secondly, the fact that the old guardians of the liberal international order can no longer dictate the rules means the beginning of a long, much more diverse and dynamic negotiating process over how global and regional rules of interaction will be designed. In Europe’s east, Russia is the main challenger of a Western-minded status quo. In the Mediterranean, the challenge to the old status quo comes from a much wider array of governments, as well as from non-governmental forces, ranging from peaceful popular protest movements to violent spoilers – all of whom demand their say in shaping the rules of interaction. In this environment, for the EU to insist on rigid frameworks that were born out of past geopolitical realities, or to replace them with new but equally rigid ones, would be unwise and inefficient. More likely, the regional expression of this larger shift will also slowly devise its new set of rules in a long and dynamic process of negotiation.

Thirdly, if the fault lines in the EU’s neighbourhood are not merely between the EU and non-Western powers, but between reformers and status quo forces within societies, European foreign policy towards its neighbourhood will take place as much within Europe as it will abroad. The domestic dimension of Europe’s foreign policy decisions, including interests, constraints and public diplomacy, will need to be routinely factored in when weighing up options in the Mediterranean. Against this broader background, a look at past EU policy principles in the Mediterranean is needed to assess how they might be adapted.

**Shifting Leverage, Shifting Mindsets**

The debate over Europe’s diminishing leverage in its southern vicinity has often been linked to the question about how politically feasible, and morally desirable, it is to tie aid and other leverage assets to domestic political and economic reforms. In this context, three main arguments have routinely been employed in favour of abandoning conditionality in European foreign policy: the loss of leverage in the face of new competition, the patronizing undertone that conditionality brings to a partnership, and the policy’s poor success rates in bringing about systemic reforms. Academic debates have produced a number of studies quantifying and measuring leverage. The sudden interest and role of the Gulf states in North Africa following the 2011 uprisings and its impact on Western leverage has received particular attention. A recent DGAP study details how EU aid, despite some nuance regarding Gulf disbursements, pales in comparison to GCC states’ aid and investment in post-2011 Egypt and Tunisia. It also shows how Gulf aid is not only not coordinated with European donors but, as in the case of Egypt’s return to military rule, often stands in direct opposition to the objectives of EU policy in the region.3

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2 Ibid.
Beyond the competition argument, it has also been argued that aid conditionality, as the brainchild of past geopolitical realities, is no longer in line with the more balanced and careful modalities of interaction required in a multipolar world order. European aid conditionality was embedded in the historical parenthesis of two decades following the end of the Cold War, an era of Western dominance in which the EU was the junior partner. Punitive aid conditionality was largely out of fashion by the mid-2000s, and the impact of sanctions has been subject to fierce academic and policy debates. While positive conditionality found more lasting support, the impact potential of monetary incentives also lost much of its appeal with the 2011 Arab uprisings. Explicit conditionality was hence toned down in the 2013 ENP review, and largely abandoned in the 2016 EU Global Strategy. A consensus in the EU policy community today sustains that while conditionality can be an important tool to press for very specific outcomes (such as in the case of grave human rights violations), in many places the EU today does not have the leverage to press conditions, and even where it does, it is not necessarily desirable to maintain this style of institutionalized asymmetric cooperation.

Last but not least, the success rates of enticing political reform via conditionality have been pretty low. While it is rarely possible to establish a direct connection between aid levels and a specific reform measure, the impact of conditional aid (or lack thereof) is more visible over longer periods of time. Assessments of the EU’s eastern enlargement – routinely hailed as the showcase of successful positive conditionality – “concluded that incentives played a secondary role and were linked mostly to second-phase governance reforms, not the big, overarching choices in favour of democracy.”

In the southern Mediterranean, long before the Arab Spring gave the death knell to the EU’s nominal transformative agenda, it had become clear that EU democratic conditionality had largely failed. Prior to the 2011 uprisings, civil society observers routinely criticized how Arab authoritarian governments were able to dupe donors by implementing only cosmetic reforms which failed to disperse effective power. Even before Gulf money flooded the Mediterranean, doubts ran high that the development aid provided by European governments provided sufficient incentive for entrenched elites to have anything other than a marginal impact on political reforms. Although with laudable intentions, EU policies had nowhere accompanied any significant democratic breakthrough. Instead they had implicitly sustained soft authoritarian rule by providing support to empty-shell democratization ultimately aimed at regime survival.

The debate over Europe’s diminishing leverage in its southern vicinity has often been linked to the question about how politically feasible, and morally desirable, it is to tie aid and other leverage assets to domestic political and economic reforms.

An important lesson from a decade of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), therefore, was precisely that quantum leaps in democratization cannot be bought, and where democracy and human rights are no political priority, no institutional bureaucratic mechanism will change that. No authoritarian regime in the Arab world has been reformed away by conditionality. Today, the only place where EU leverage might work is Tunisia, where there is a basic democratic acquis in place and the government has a real interest in bringing reforms forward. But in Tunis, conditionality is mostly perceived as patronizing towards young democratic institutions that deserve respect not coercion.

Despite all reasonable doubts about institutionalized conditionality, however, it is also clear that any partnership aimed at legal and regulatory approximation can only be conditional on the necessary domestic reforms of the aspiring country. Countries cannot join the Common European Market if they have not adopted its rulework. Since the reforms in question are directly and logically linked to the incentive the partner country seeks to obtain, this kind of conditionality, far from being patronizing asym-

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metry, is a practical necessity, yet one with potentially game-changing domestic side effects. Nevertheless, the pertinent question for EU leverage today is much larger than conditionality: how can an holistic EU foreign policy leverage all of its assets in the relations it has with its partners in ways that best secure the whole range of its interests?

Past approaches on aid conditionality presumed that aid would be made dependent on democratic performance, thus adopting a silo mentality with regard to democratic reform. But short-term policy challenges are so complex that it is not feasible to shape relations with third countries based on a single criterion or policy area. The challenge for policy makers hence is to devise a more holistic, widely-cast kind of leverage that spans all areas of external action.

With this premise in mind, what are the main assets that build Europe’s leverage?

**Europe's Selling Points Abroad**

In the face of the above arguments, it becomes clear that in a changing geopolitical environment in which cooperation cannot be taken for granted, it is time for the EU to think about other ways to remain attractive, and to use other tools to promote its interests in symmetrical and asymmetrical relationships alike. Other players do have both clear-cut selling points and an accompanying diplomacy campaign. China, for example, has a coherent geopolitical master plan. With its Belt and Road Initiative, it has drawn up a long-term plan for its own economic and political survival. It is attractive by inviting others to join it on the way up. What are the EU’s selling points?

The often-invoked European brand value as the land of freedom and human rights may be weakened, yet still draws considerable admiration and yearning. For governments to cede to EU demands, however, something more tangible must be on offer.

By far Europe’s biggest asset in relations with its southern neighbours is not development aid, but trade. It is, therefore, surprising that debates on EU conditionality have almost exclusively focused on aid allocations. The amounts that the EU and its Member States dedicate to development cooperation with North Africa, however, are ridiculed by the potential impact integration into the EU’s internal market could have on the economic and political development of these countries.

The EU is by far the most important trade partner for all southern neighbourhood countries, which send between 55 and 90 per cent of their total exports to the EU. At the same time, intra-regional trade in the southern Mediterranean is only a fraction (5.9% in exports, 5.1% in imports) of the countries' total trade, one of the lowest levels of regional economic integration in the world.

All southern Mediterranean countries have a grossly unbalanced trade relationship with the EU, which only does between 0.6% (Tunisia) and 4% (Algeria) of its total trade with these countries. With the possible exception of hydrocarbon exporters Libya and Algeria, the EU does not need trade from the southern Mediterranean, while the economies of southern Mediterranean countries depend in large part on trade and investment with the EU-27. Whereas the strength of the world’s biggest consumer market is the EU’s greatest geopolitical asset, it is even more so for small developing economies in the immediate geographic proximity, which depend almost entirely on European trade and investment.

The EU’s ongoing process of negotiating deep and comprehensive trade agreements (DCFTAs) with some of the countries in its southern neighbourhood plays precisely to the transformative potential of trade as the bloc’s key asset. While DCFTAs began to be offered as of 2006 to its eastern neighbours, the offer was also extended to the South following the 2011 Arab uprisings. With the EU’s proposal, which aims to gradually integrate initially Tunisia and Morocco into the EU’s internal market on the basis of regulatory and legislative approximation, the adaptation of trade-relevant legislation would see Tunisian and Moroccan exporters automatically meeting EU standards and able to export to the EU market. EU legislation will moreover provide a blueprint for economic reforms that will help to generate a more stable and attractive investment climate. So, in addition to strengthening trade rela-

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5 EU, source
In order to give southern neighbourhood countries access to the EU market, communication and public diplomacy to electorates on both shores of the Mediterranean must be stepped up considerably to make sure politicians have the necessary domestic backing to bring economic reforms underway.

Europe’s Selling Points at Home

If the coming fault lines of the international order are running between reformers and status quo forces, not only between but also within polities, shifts in foreign policy are equally being negotiated at home. Therefore, a more balanced approach to Europe’s immediate neighbours will not only require reviewing our selling points towards potential partners abroad, but also towards our own electorates. If domestic status quo powers are not to emerge as spoilers, a shift toward a more explicit focus on the needs and expectations of European electorates from international partnerships will be necessary.

By far Europe’s biggest asset in relations with its southern neighbours is not development aid, but trade. It is, therefore, surprising that debates on EU conditionality have almost exclusively focused on aid allocations

In the short term, European interest in the southern Mediterranean is focused on the containment of security spillover, in particular in terms of migration and militant extremism. This is fair as those challenges are real and correspond to demands from European publics. The 2011 Arab uprisings and their troubled aftermath have fundamentally changed the way European policy-makers and publics think about the Arab world. It taught Europe the lesson that democratic development in its immediate vicin-

8 Ibid.
ity is a matter of strategic European self-interest, perhaps even more than it is a normative goal. As foreign and domestic policy became indivisible, Arab democracy and development morphed from being someone else’s problem to being Europe’s, too. All of a sudden, stability in the southern Mediterranean became a decisive political factor in Europe. For the last decade now, policy-makers have been warned that a narrow focus on short-term, quick-security fixes will not solve but aggravate the security challenge coming from the South. Yet, breaking the vicious cycle of permanent crisis management in the current political environment will require a lot of political courage and leadership. Beyond security, there is another dimension in which Europe has a more strategic interest in a real partnership with these countries. Undoubtedly, the prospect of democratic, stable and reliable regional partners as a potential asset and anchor for the EU in North Africa is of great strategic value. However it remains too theoretical and lofty a goal to muster the political courage and backing to lift EU-MENA relations to a new level. But as the EU is engaged in soul-searching on how to approach its periphery and on its role in the world more broadly, some of the closer southern Mediterranean partners could provide a convenient testing ground for decisive EU action in the neighbourhood. Tunisia seems like a particularly good place to start.

**Tunisia: a Low-Hanging Fruit**

Both Tunisia and Europe are undergoing a crossroads moment. Tunisia’s slumping economy threatens to drag down the political transition, and in Europe, centrifugal forces within oblige the bloc to redefine what criteria should govern its relationship with close external partners. In this constellation, there is a window to forge a new model of how Europe’s relations with neighbours of great political affinity could look like. Tunisians seek different dimensions of closer alignment with the EU: ones that are both symbolic and practical. The first is about political symbolism and international branding. It also heralds the way in which Tunisia sees itself developing, the kind of society it aspires to be, and whether its people see themselves more as part of the Arab world, the African continent, or the Mediterranean community of democracies. The practical alignment is about concrete elements of integration in the economic, political, social and cultural/people spheres: increased political and security cooperation, visa-free travel, more student exchange schemes, research cooperation, financial aid, technical cooperation, investment plans, youth employment projects, participation in EU agencies and programmes (defence, research, others), market access (be it via DCFTA or other free trade schemes), and so on. What could the overarching framework be for such arrangements?

For the EU, the democratic signalling-effect and the potential outlook of having a reliable democratic Arab partner to help broker regional deals alone will not release the political will in European capitals needed to commit to a grand, ambitious long-term vision with Tunisia beyond the margins of the neighbourhood framework. By contrast, one factor that could make a deeper alignment with Tunisia more attractive for the EU at this time of fundamental political soul-searching is Tunisia’s potential as a testing ground for both a new kind of proactive-shaper of EU foreign policy, and a new formula for engaging close allies. Tunisia is right not to want to be compared primarily to its authoritarian Arab neighbours. It is time for Europe to acknowledge Tunisia’s special status beyond the Neighbourhood Policy. At the same time, the EU should seize the opportunity offered by the Tunisian demand for closer association to break new ground in the ways it engages with other democracies in its immediate vicinity. 

**Conclusion**

Despite everything, Europe still does have a lot of leverage in the southern Mediterranean. But it needs to project it in other ways. The EU cannot compete with others in terms of aid levels. But despite recent troubles, the EU remains a hugely successful politi-

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Instead of lingering in reactiveness, the EU should project itself as an active player in its periphery and not wait for the next crisis to act.

Leveraging market access via trade integration and legislative approximation is a key element in this calculus. It is a model in prototype phase: if and how Tunisia’s and Morocco’s economies develop under a prospective DCFTA can leave an immense imprint on the whole region. Tying these countries politically and economically to the EU will likely strengthen their position in the region, too. From a regional geopolitical perspective, having a reliable, predictable partner that shares European values in the midst of the Arab world bears valuable potential. Morocco has already gone to great lengths to enhance its geopolitical profile over the past decade. While Tunisia is a geopolitical dwarf today, it is unlikely that it would remain so as a consolidated democracy. As a small country with no meaningful geopolitical assets of its own, a democratic, prosperous Tunisia is likely to seek a higher diplomatic profile by means of a key comparative advantage: the only Arab country to enjoy the trust of Europe and the US at the eye level of a democratic peer.

The tricky bit are relations with those countries that do not depend on the EU, either economically or politically. To the South or the East, relations with authoritarian petro-states imply an entirely different political calculus. It has always been misguided to pretend that Algeria could be attracted by the same bait as Tunisia or Morocco. But as the age of fossil fuels reaches its peak and social contracts in petrostates erode, the Algerian and Libyan game may simply be a longer shot. Egypt and Jordan, while not petro states, are geopolitically important, and are therefore provided a range of economic and political choices from a wider array of heavyweight partners, including from the Gulf, Russia and the United States, than their smaller North African peers. With some of these countries, it is difficult to conceive how the EU could lock them into a broader partnership commitment. Yet, perhaps that is not even necessary.

Instead of lingering in reactiveness, the EU should project itself as an active player in its periphery and not wait for the next crisis to act. By aspiring to tie not all but a few select key partners to Europe while this option is still on the table, Europe can invest in resilient anchors for a stable Mediterranean while at the same time laying the groundwork for a lasting influence in its southern neighbourhood.
Dossier: Europe and the Mediterranean

Whatever Happened to the Spirit of Barcelona?

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Forged in the heady mid-nineties when it seemed that the bad old days of superpower rivalry were behind us, peace in the Middle East was imminent and regional integration of the type pioneered by the European Union was on the march, the Barcelona Declaration now looks like a high point for multilateralism in what the EU now terms the ‘Southern Neighbourhood.’ The Euro-Mediterranean partnership (EMP) launched back then aimed among other things to establish a Free Trade Area by 2010, as well as regional processes across the board, from security to cultural relations, with major new financial commitments to back them up.

The diverse Arabic speaking countries of the South, which one might say were ‘divided in their unity,’ were also given a fillip, as negotiations on new EU Association Agreements (AA) got underway, with AAs being signed with almost all EMP countries (including Israel) by the early 2000s. Those agreements had a number of common aspects, including on regional cooperation but were essentially tailored to the differing circumstances of each country, so that while the AAs with less developed partners like Egypt and Palestine stressed economic and social development, the one with Israel focused on trade liberalization.

These AAs have largely stood the test of time and today are certainly the most robust legal basis and, arguably, one of the most important political instruments underlying the EU’s relations with the South. But the regional environment has changed in ways that no one could have foreseen in 1995. Contrary to Fukuyama’s infamous thesis of the time, history did not come to an end. Indeed the past 20 years or so has seen an avalanche of it, not least in the EMP countries, starting with the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in the same month as Barcelona was announced, which put paid to Middle East peace prospects, through the invasion of Iraq, the Arab uprisings of 2011 and their aftermath, to the advent of the terror and migration crises which have rocked both sides of the Mediterranean.

And in recent years, the role of other players in the region has caused a distinct turn for the worse when it comes to multilateralist approaches. Russia’s resurgence in Syria and to a lesser but significant extent in Egypt and elsewhere is the most obvious example. Turkey and Iran have also gone in for power projection based on national interests. At the same time, the US, once a generally benign, if not entirely convinced, partner in encouraging regional integration has scaled back its involvement, focusing mainly on fighting extremism and overtly taking sides in the Middle East, (notably Donald Trump’s December 2017 announcement on Jerusalem as Israel’s capital), which has brought the EU’s traditional ally into discordance with the European position on the issue.

Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf countries have also become much more active, flexing their financial and political muscle, some times for good, as in the support for Egypt’s economic reforms under its IMF programme, but sometimes not, as in their penchant for military solutions to conflicts which the EU would prefer to be ended through UN-led processes. And the fallout from the worsening GCC/Iran tensions is yet another factor deepening fissures in the region, for example in the evolving Saudi relationship with Israel, based mainly on common cause against Tehran. These developments and more have led to the region becoming more fractured and fragile than ever.
before, and left the high ambitions of Barcelona looking like cathedrals in the desert. And they have brought about a sea change in the EU’s view of the region. Whereas it was once seen largely as an area of opportunity (some used to argue that it was itself a proto-EU in the making) the ‘Southern Neighbourhood’ is today often regarded as a place dominated by dangerous conflicts and threats. Given that some of the countries in the region, notably Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, have continued to make generally peaceful progress, this may be an unfair appreciation, but one thing is certain: the mantra of the EU’s 2016 Global Strategy, that external security, especially in the MENA area, is essential to Europe’s internal security, was fairly well received by European leaders and citizens and continues to resonate today.

Bilateral or Bust?

So perhaps it is no wonder that the revised European Neighbourhood Policy, while continuing to support multi-sectoral regional programmes and organizations like the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), has prioritized security and stability as key drivers for relations with the South. And since there is a lack of credible regional interlocutors in these areas, the EU is now more focused on the bilateral dimension, though one should add that there has also been an important new effort to upgrade the exchanges with the Arab League, involving both political dialogue and action, of which more later. However, one is bound to wonder whether the EU is congenitally capable of effectively handling this new bilateralism in areas like security. An entity which is itself founded on (an albeit very successful) post-Westphalian vision of peaceful cooperation is bound to be seriously challenged when having to deal with issues like counter-terrorism, especially when its partners are states that can be intensely preoccupied with national sovereignty, at best only partly democratic in nature and often governed by regimes with a high degree of military involvement, and when the EU as an institution has only limited security mandates, capabilities and experience. Egypt is a case in point, and a brief look at the experience so far is instructive. The new ‘partnership priorities agreement’ (PPA) under the revised ENP was agreed in July 2017, and, as elsewhere in the region, includes a strong commitment to the joint fight against terror and violent extremism, involving a comprehensive approach to addressing root causes, “with due respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to counter and prevent radicalization and promote socio-economic development.”

But despite major efforts by the EEAS and some Member States to follow through, security cooperation with the EU institutions remains at a rather low level, with disagreements over equipment supply (since 2013, the EU retains formal restrictions on the export of items that could be used for internal oppression), and the deployment of expert personnel to the EU Delegation in Cairo. Discord on what constitutes ‘due respect’ of rights and Europe’s refusal to treat the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization have also caused a good deal of friction.

The role of other players in the region has caused a distinct turn for the worse when it comes to multilateralist approaches. Russia’s resurgence in Syria and to a lesser but significant extent in Egypt and elsewhere is the most obvious example.

With the two sides yet to find a modus operandi, it is a moot point whether much progress will be possible. The EU is also not always helped by Member States that fail to support these efforts or prefer to focus on other priorities, such as the supply of conventional arms to Cairo, which, among other things, undermines the spirit, if not the letter, of the 2013 restrictions at the EU level mentioned above. On the other hand, there have been somewhat better results in the exchanges on migration, the other ‘new’ priority in the PPA agreement. After long delays, the first Egyptian projects under the EU’s Valletta facility are about to begin, and cooperation between the Egyptian Navy and operation Sophia to counter human trafficking and assist its victims is
improving, as Cairo seems to have understood that, at least when it comes to the high seas, EU military coordination has real meaning. That said, there is little sign of progress on forging a mobility partnership of the kind that is being negotiated with other partners in the region.

All this points to a classic weakness in the bilateral approach: since security is not a core European competence, absent a visible and coherent all-EU presence, the dialogue is not in practice ‘bilateral’ in the full meaning of the word. Knowing this, Cairo can play one off against the other when faced with demands that it does not like.

While it accounts for a third of the region’s population, Egypt may not be typical of the entire region, but it does provide an illustration of some of the limits to bilateralism in the current context.

On the other hand, bilateral trade talks on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) are underway with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan and there is some hope that they will come to fruition. Even Egypt, which has traditionally been sceptical, has recently shown some interest in moving forward, at least on some aspects, although it is too soon to judge whether this will be sustained.

Should these DCFTA’s come into force, they could, combined with the PEM convention on cumulation of origin, now close to full ratification, make a significant new contribution to incoming EU investment as well as intra-regional exchanges; essential requirements if these countries are to meet their investment needs and burgeoning demand for jobs from their fast-growing youthful populations.

What Future for Regionalism?

But notwithstanding these initiatives, the fact is that for all the efforts since 1995 to create that elusive Free Trade Area, MENA is still one of the least economically integrated areas of the world. ‘South-South’ exchanges remain very limited and this lack of interdependence remains a real drag on prospects for strengthening the regional dimension. Intra-regional processes such as Agadir have not made much headway and the UfM has struggled, especially beyond the Maghreb region, to find a role for itself in stimulating investment in genuinely regional infrastructure.

EMP regional development programmes continue and a few have had some success, notably in creating networks between officials, policymakers, businesspeople and civil society in sectors such as energy, technology and youth. But their effect is limited. Given this, and the fact that, as mentioned above, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf are playing an ever greater role in the affairs of the neighbourhood, it may be time to seriously consider new political initiatives on the regional front that go beyond the somewhat artificial construct of the ‘Southern Neighbourhood’ per se. One such action could be the holding of a first Euro-Arab summit.

The EU holds regular summit meetings with most key partner countries and regions around the world, but there is one major region that has been conspicuous by its absence from the summit agenda, i.e., the Arab world, which is an odd omission to say the least, given the host of common challenges that preoccupy both the EU and this region.

For many years, a number of EU Member States, and virtually all those on the Arab side, have pushed for such a meeting, or at least have not obstructed it, but it was only in December 2016 at the last EU-Arab League (LAS) Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Cairo that an agreement on the idea was reached. Since then, there have been some working-level exchanges, but serious preparations have yet to get underway and it seems unlikely that it could take place before 2019, given the lead time needed to ensure that the substance is clearly identified and that the 50 countries involved (28-plus institutions on the EU side and the 22 Arab League member states) are properly represented at Head of State and/or Government level.

Why the delay? Schisms on the Arab side, namely the crisis over Qatar, which affects both the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries and most of the rest of the LAS, which is split on the Saudi-led initiative to isolate Doha. There may also be some doubts on the EU side about the prospects for a good turnout, given ‘summit fatigue,’ the venue proposed by LAS sources (Cairo) and domestic distractions such as Brexit. It certainly will not be easy to come up with meaningful common political messages on the most important issues, and there is a risk that it will degenerate into a talking shop. But if history is any guide, there will always be internal divisions, Arab or European, standing in the way
of such an event. At the same time, the commitment has been made and there is now a pressing need to move forward.

Turning to what the substance of such a meeting could be, as noted, one of the many reasons why MENA and indeed the Gulf region is in such disarray is the woeful lack of progress on integration, despite historical affinities and it being home to the world’s oldest post-war regional institution. With that in mind, and without wishing to exaggerate the EU’s influence on its Arab partners, the fact that the European Union would find it useful to upgrade its political relationship with the LAS as a group could help the latter regain some credibility with its own membership and citizens. That, in turn, might help it to take on a greater role in bringing peace and development to this atomized region.

Secondly, with a little imagination, it should be possible for the two sides to come up with some influential common messaging. At a time when the US has for now, to coin a phrase, taken itself off the table as an honest broker in the wake of the Jerusalem announcement, and where there is a dearth of viable alternatives, it is worth recalling that both sides have long been committed to the two-state solution and the Arab Peace Initiative, although few European or Arab leaders today seem to give this the attention it deserves. Crafting a strong common position which directly engages all of them could help to inject energy into the moribund peace process. Without that, the drums of war for yet another round of violence in Palestine and Israel will only beat louder, among other things giving extremists in MENA and in Europe itself new succour.

Apart from the appalling suffering visited on the peoples of those countries, the fallout from conflicts in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen is fueling instability, whether through the rise of Islamophobia and populism, or through unsustainable policies of repression in the name of security. A Euro-Arab summit in itself will not bring peace, not least because some of the parties to those wars will not be present, but again, it could give momentum to efforts, especially those led by the UN, to find solutions. It might also help to sharpen joint action to fight the deprivation, terrorism, and irregular migration generated by these conflicts, all of which gnaw at the roots of societies on both sides. And depending on developments later in 2018, there may also be room for discussion about how best to cooperate on post-war governance and reconstruction, wherever that is a feasible proposition.

The summit could also address the deep-rooted economic challenges that the region faces. It may well be that after a few false starts, the transition to a post-hydrocarbon world has now begun in earnest and this obviously has fundamental, possibly existential consequences for a number of LAS countries, oil exporters and consumers alike. Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 programme is one of several signs that Arab governments now take this seriously. Europe is, and most likely will continue to be, the prime source of foreign investment, development aid and trade for the region and has a vital part to play in its economic security, something that is evidently in the EU’s own interest as well. One way to strengthen this aspect is through forging closer cooperation between the EU, UfM, European Development Banks and the Arab Funds on boosting investment in infrastructure and job creation in MENA.

Up to now, there has been much talk about this, but not a great deal of action.

Europe is, and most likely will continue to be, the prime source of foreign investment, development aid and trade for the region and has a vital part to play in its economic security, something that is evidently in the EU’s own interest as well.

Moreover, the two regions’ private sector organizations and companies could usefully organize a parallel exchange on investment. And given their crucial role in development and governance, civil society groups could also come together, even if there will undoubtedly be diverging opinions about how that should be managed.

The EU already has a wide-ranging programme of economic, development and security-related regional cooperation with the LAS Secretariat, mainly under the ENP, and there is an ambitious work programme in areas such as energy, the environment
and crisis management. While there have been some achievements, for example in raising the League’s capacity to better monitor and help abate humanitarian crises, the summit could give new direction to calibrating these efforts to tackle new challenges in the region, and provide some operational ‘deliverables.’

Last but not least, summits like this always give an opportunity for leaders to solve or at least progress on bilateral issues, whether they be within or between the respective regions, including in the challenging security dialogues underway now under the PPA’s.

What Next?

However, as said, if it is to happen, serious work needs to get into gear very soon: the next EU-LAS Foreign Ministers meeting is due at the end of 2018, and, unless there is progress before then, both sides will have some explaining to do.

In conclusion, implementation of the PPAs is still in its early stages and it is too soon to judge whether the new stress on bilateralism will have the desired results. But there is no question that the approach gives rise to a new set of serious challenges. A complementary push at the regional level is probably needed if the EU’s critical relationship with countries in the region is to be deepened in the way foreseen by the new ENP.

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The Euro-Arab summit is one way of achieving this, but should it prove impossible to deliver, other means of injecting new political energy into this dimension should be urgently considered. Leaders could do worse than revisit the spirit of Barcelona, even if the regional grouping that it spawned may have been overtaken by events since 1995.
France and the Mediterranean

France ‘and’ the Mediterranean or France ‘in’ the Mediterranean? Despite their great similarity, these two options are nonetheless profoundly different. The former uses a coordinating conjunction usually employed to unite essentially different elements. In this case, it would emphasize the otherness of France vis-à-vis a Mediterranean that is foreign to it. On the contrary, the latter uses a preposition imbued with a strongly inclusive sense. The truth most likely lies somewhere in between, as is often the case. In fact, obviously, beyond the semantic nuances to which it is probably not useful to dedicate much time, it is the matter of the relationship, understood in all of its dimensions, that France has with this multi-scalar area that is actually at issue here. It is therefore with a certain surprise that one notes the absence of the entry ‘France’ in the remarkable Dictionnaire de la Méditerranée. Not that the ‘great nation’ is ever truly absent, but its presence is interwoven in a diffuse manner. France’s influence informs the history of the Mediterranean, this impregnation being expressed itself in a multitude of variations.

The Mediterranean, a French Intellectual Passion

The Mediterranean seems to be above all the object of an intellectual passion for France. First, the result of the assertion of the Latin world, then its evolution, it is an idea more than an area of geopolitical projection. This argument has lent a great deal of legitimacy to colonial enterprises, particularly French ones in the Mediterranean. The ultimate point being to erase all traces of the betrayal described by Lucien Febvre: “After the secession of Orient, soon would come, in addition and no less seriously, the secession of the Maghreb, that tragic secession of Northern Africa, so profoundly Romanized, so profoundly Christianized, and which was brusquely turning its back to the Roman world and, for centuries, perhaps forever, moving into the anti-Europe circle. That was […] the great defection, the one that broke Mediterranean unity, that broke the family of these ‘circum-Mediterranean’ countries.” But the Mediterranean can also be that ‘middle’ sea, where a fanciful confluence takes place between worlds that hubris has separated. It was in this spirit that Paul Valéry and Albert Camus would forge their Mediterranean projects. The former would create in Nice the Centre Universitaire Méditerranéen, symbol of the “ideal of the most complete and perfect human development.” The Mediterranean was then seen as the place where “they managed to combine the word and reason” better than elsewhere, in an extraordinary “civilization-making machine.” For Camus, the Mediterranean is the meeting point “of a sensitive body and landscape,” the crucible of that “Southern thinking” that turns the “Mediterranean dream” into a genuine political battle. Rejecting Maurras’ unilateralism and racism, Camus claimed an “open, attentive and even welcoming” Mediterranean. Without falling into the indictments anch-
ronistically denouncing colonialism too often made against him, there is no denying that Camus was the son of a time when the Mediterranean was “thought and imagined by Europeans.”

The Mediterranean seems to be above all the object of an intellectual passion for France. First, the result of the assertion of the Latin world, then its evolution, it is an idea more than an area of geopolitical projection.

In another register, that of Mediterranean studies, of which he was the founder, the work of F. Braudel develops an innovative approach to understanding the Mediterranean as a “space built by social, economic and political circulation.” Included in these interrelations with Europe, the Atlantic and the Sahara, the “second face of the Mediterranean,” the latter remains but a “Western lake” where Islam is an “intruder” or even a “counter-Mediterranean” phenomenon. Neither “neutral” nor “innocent,” these representations are, in a sense, as much the product as the matrix of the spirit of the times in which they have prospered.

The Heart of the French Colonial Empire

The Mediterranean is the crucible of the very concept of colonization. France has taken part in it more than others. Indeed, as noted by A. Laurens, the “Mediterranean geopolitics of the 19th century was built around the North-South axis of French penetration into the western Mediterranean Basin, which caused the helpless frustration of Italy, unified late, and now around the British West-East axis, continuing along the East Indies route.” Inaugurated by the ambiguous Egypt expedition, this sequence ends at the beginning of the 1960s. Launched “nearly by chance,” the conquest of Algeria placed France in the Mediterranean in the long term, even offering it a central role in what was the first globalization. The Mediterranean was then nothing more than an ‘inland sea’ connecting the shores of the Métropole (i.e. France proper) to its North African possessions and departments. The appropriation of areas was done in the most violent of manners. After destroying all resistance, the colonizers proceeded to apply the theory of ‘effectivités’ or principle of effectiveness (i.e. claim of title to land by occupation…). This entailed relations of authority between the State, which claimed sovereignty, and the local population; in practical terms, it meant the materialization of territorial acquisition. ‘Appropiable”, subject to effective occupation, was any terra nullius, that is, in addition to abandoned or uninhabited lands, areas that did not belong to a so-called ‘civilized’ state. This policy amounted to denying the very reality of coherent human groups holding rights predating the invasion. Ostensibly absorbed into a French community that recognized in these people very few attributes of full citizenship, the colonial peoples were artificially added to a common heritage. Not without cynicism, and sifted through the filter of imperial expansionism, the Mediterranean idea brought the paradoxical promise of a “joint destiny.” It was in the Mediterranean, however, that France was to have its most symbolically painful and politi-

7 ibid. p. 200.
8 M. CRIVELLO, in Dictionnaire de la Méditerranée, op. cit., pp. 187-188.
13 B. SÈBE, op. cit., p. 268.
14 It is true that this concept, at least in its latest interpretation, has since been challenged by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with regard to Western Sahara. In this case, Spain, as a colonial power, stated it was ready to follow the decolonization process suggested by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Morocco, with the support of Mauritania, claimed these territories in order to regain its past territorial integrity. For the Court, the fact that the territory in question had not been a state at the time of conquest did not suffice to make it terra nullius. This territory was in fact inhabited by populations that “were socially and politically organized in tribes and under chiefs competent to represent them” (Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion, ICJ Reports 1975, p. 12; Section 81, p. 31), www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/61/061-19751016-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf.
15 A. LAURENS, op. cit., p. 35.
cally costly decolonization experience, to the point, moreover, that this cruel rupture endlessly poisoned its relation to history. This rupture reshuffled the cards in various ways. The newly independent states rejected a reading of the Mediterranean too obviously marked by colonialist postulates. By a nearly automatic effect, this new order compelled France to profoundly rethink the relations that should unite it with an area over which it could no longer attempt to exercise any imperial prerogatives. It was through the European adventure that this restructuring process would begin.

‘European’ France and the Mediterranean

Just after the Second World War, France only retained its status of great power because of its formidable capacity to attach its strategic ambitions to projects that surpassed it but of which it was the main instigator. Aware that a confrontation again tearing apart the continent would plunge the country into the throes of an existential uncertainty insofar as its possible place in a world in which it would no longer be one of the linchpins, France felt that building Europe would allow it to continue to count. European states had to set forth the terms of a compromise between the desire to re-establish a lost power and the aspiration to build mechanisms of co-operation creating sufficiently close-knit solidarity to exclude any prospective conflicts. Reprising the elements supplied by J. Monnet, R. Schuman made his famous statement of 9 May 1950 under the golden decorations of the Clock Room at the Quai d’Orsay. In a brief statement, the essentials were set out; the idea was to launch an ambitious project, based on a pragmatic yet audacious method, where the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) would be but the first stage. There is unquestionably a ‘European’ manner of handling complexity. The European Communities were driven by a continuous dynamic of expansion, managing to find a common interest transcending the individual concerns even at critical stages. Hence, as of 1972 and on France’s initiative, an overall Mediterranean policy was established, which became, over time, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (1995) and eventually the European Neighbourhood Policy. Acting as a filter, the European project allowed a healthy distancing from the colonial experience, opening the perspective of more balanced cooperation for the South shore peoples. Through this process of ‘Mediterraneanization,’ the European Community offered France the precious resource of influence. In any case, the instrumentalization of the European project has reached its limits insofar as the Union has progressively become an indispensable partner, constraining any French strategies in the Mediterranean.17 Moreover, letting itself get carried away at times by rowdy activism, France itself has threatened the general economy of an institutional and political architecture that it largely helped conceive.

It was in the Mediterranean, however, that France was to have its most symbolically painful and politically costly decolonization experience

And this is how the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), fervently launched by a recently elected President Sarkozy, emerged as the archetype of the ‘good idea gone wrong.’ Underpinned by the simplistic, to say the least, project of reconnecting the unlikely combination of the Latin and Arab worlds, chemically unstable categories that are known to be hazardous to handle, the UfM succumbed to the ideological ambiguities in which it was shrouded. In its first draft, this project was put together as a means of lending France a freedom of action of which it would have been deprived in a European Union incidentally decried as irremediably mired down in the excesses of a functionalism without vision. In doing so, the idea was to evade the EU discipline that had become unbearable by entrusting the UfM with competences that, according to some,

17 D. SCHMID, op. cit., p. 16.
19 ibid.
pertained exclusively to the European Union. There was also the will to regain control in the face of a Germany now exercising unshared power over a continent that the fall of the Berlin Wall had reconfigured. And finally, the manoeuvre aimed to settle the Turkish issue at a nominal cost by offering Ankara a sort of trompe-l’œil alternative to accession. In fact, France did not conceal the fact that the integration of Turkey would herald an inevitable dissolution of the Union into an amorphous ensemble without autonomous political will. However, nothing went as planned. France was obliged to settle for a compromise consisting, on the one hand, of reincluding all of its European partners, starting with Germany, obviously, but also the Mediterranean EU Member States, and on the other hand, reducing the perimeter of the UfM’s competences to technical matters (Mediterranean Depollution, Maritime and Land Highways, Civil Protection, the Euro-Mediterranean University, Solar Energy and the Mediterranean Business Development Initiative), none of which, above all, would encroach upon the prerogative of the European Union.

This (relative) failure of French diplomacy does not obscure certain geopolitical recurrences. Hence, for instance, today no-one would dream of denying the centrality of the issues rooted in the Mediterranean soil. Migratory flows exercise a pressure (without this term implying the least value judgement) that no reasonable mind can objectively challenge. Nothing indicates that it could go otherwise in the foreseeable future. This is due to at least two reasons:

— Europe needs immigration more than ever because it constitutes a potential factor contributing to economic performance and social cohesion.20
— The EU lives next to a crisis arc (terrorism and radicalisms being its most tangible expression) becoming embedded at its immediate or strategic borders.

This reality has doubtless contributed to informing the view of Europeans, including those distant from the Mediterranean, of their environment. In this regard, France can claim the exercise of a singular responsibility, especially since it still has strong advantages.21 ‘Influence’ – it still holds considerable weight in the European Union, particularly at a time when the latter is experiencing one of the worse crises in its history. Moreover, in the Mediterranean area, it has a disputed but always very significant economic presence and a development aid policy that is still proactive. And finally, France retains a special relationship with the countries of the Maghreb as well as those of the Mashreq. In August 2017, at an annual conference of ambassadors, President Emmanuel Macron sketched out the contours of a strategy aiming to “create an integrated axis” in order to “bring […] the European and African continents closer together via the Mediterranean,” which was also to be lent the function of an area of liaison. This means that the Maghreb must remain a central priority for France.

In any case, the instrumentalization of the European project has reached its limits insofar as the Union has progressively become an indispensable partner, constraining any French strategies in the Mediterranean.

This reinvestment in the area first of all entails that Paris abandon any desire to go it alone. Without the support and involvement of the EU and its Member States, nothing will be possible in the long term. This requires that the EU itself be capable of structuring a Mediterranean policy that is not simply reactive but spatially and materially dense and comprehensive. Because, instead of a policy, for the time being, the EU is rather carrying out international ‘action’ whose results are mediocre. At no time has it managed to decisively influence the major is-

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20 Its active population will diminish inevitably by 2060 by some 50 million people even if immigration were to remain at its highest level and by 110 million if the latter decreased.

sues underpinning the global balance. To be convinced, it suffices to realize that, though the EU is the primary supplier of humanitarian aid to Syria, its political influence is nil or nearly nil. By the same token, it was unable to stop the process of US disengagement from the Iran nuclear deal. In this regard, it is quite difficult to reply to D. de Rougemont, who questioned specifically European values, "those that would be missing from the world and from humanity if Europe were suddenly to vanish, engulfed by a catastrophe [...]". Once we dissociate them from the capacity of the EU to assert its interests, these values are not enough to define its identity under conditions allowing it to accomplish its separating vocation. The defence and promotion of these values should arise from confluent interests. For, no matter how sophisticated, legal and institutional mechanisms will never suffice to create a community of interests. At best, they are its organic expression. Without indulging in a complacent narrative according to which national selfishness undermines the leadership of the Union, suffice it to note the modesty of achievements in this sphere attributable to the EU. The latter remains a second-rate ‘actor.’ It is rash to imagine that France could, as things stand, rely on such an ethical partner to relaunch an ambitious Mediterranean policy.

Without the support and involvement of the EU and its Member States, nothing will be possible in the long term. This requires that the EU itself be capable of structuring a Mediterranean policy that is not simply reactive but spatially and materially dense and comprehensive.

In any case, I will refrain from joining the chorus of experts, who have erred so often that we remember nothing of the acrobatic about-turns to which they are compelled by capricious current events.

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Germany in the Mediterranean - Between Sincere Engagement, Impotence, and a Normative Paradox

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The Mediterranean region was catapulted to the forefront of German foreign policy because of the uprisings in 2011 and subsequent drastic developments. At first, genuine euphoria over people’s power and the transitional steps towards more open democratic systems characterized Germany’s standpoint, and relatively quickly resources were augmented and new instruments created to support projects and initiatives aimed at democratic and structural reforms. Today the region is in total disarray and Tunisia is the only exception, albeit an extremely strained one, of a country transitioning to a more pluralistic and open society. The German stand was altered accordingly but its engagement continued and was raised considerably. Despite continuous noteworthy engagement in the region, internal and external constraints prevent a more visible German hallmark at the macro-political level in the area, and the German government, as in the past, remains vulnerable to criticism because of a normative contradiction in its foreign policy.

Sincere Engagement - For Germany as well
Two major interests of Germany are to curb migration and fight terrorism. But it would be inaccurate and unjust to reduce the German approach to those two domains that have always featured prominently in Germany’s politics towards the region. Germany has been supporting stability and economic cooperation in the Mediterranean for decades, long before the uprisings in 2011. Now, the country is one of the key development and humanitarian aid actors. Germany’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) has more than doubled since 2011. The lion’s share of this increase flowed into humanitarian aid to Syria and host countries for Syrian refugees, as well as soft loans to Morocco in the renewable energy sector. Germany has been the key driver for comprehensively and collectively responding to the refugee crisis emanating from conflicts in Syria and Iraq. In 2017, it offered humanitarian aid in the Syrian crisis context to the figure of €720 million, which is topped only by the US. Since 2012, the Federal Foreign Office has made available a total of almost 2 billion euros for humanitarian projects in the region. The German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas recently reaffirmed the support for Syria and announced an additional €1 billion in aid to Syria and neighbouring countries who are hosting Syrian refugees.¹

Tunisia is an example that showcases how Germany, particularly when it observes genuine reform efforts from the bottom, but also by political elites, musters considerable resources and support. By way of an example, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has raised its funds for Tunisia from 37.5 million euros in 2010 to 290 million euros in 2016. Tunisia is also a key beneficiary of the special initiative for the stabilization and development of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, an instrument with which German development cooperation tries to improve living conditions and promote political participation and social justice in the MENA region. Tunisia also received 75 million from the Transformation Partnership by the German Federal Foreign Office for more

¹ An example of a very successful alignment of humanitarian and development aid is the Cash for Work Programme that creates employment opportunities for both refugees as well as the inhabitants of host communities.
than 100 projects targeting good governance and the rule of law, employment and dual vocational training and civil society and professional media. This is certainly not to suggest that there isn’t legitimate critique of Germany’s aid and room for improvement, but overall the engagement is considerable. Another certainty is that this aid should serve local communities and recipient countries, and civil society is placed centre stage in this engagement. Hence, Germany supports bottom-up stability and willing reform-oriented counterparts at the highest echelons. But this aid is undoubtedly also a core tool to further Germany’s own interests of stability, security, and economic and trade expansion in the region, and, consequently, national interests at home. The migration file needs to be seen through this prism as well.

Migration and the Internal Calculus

The German government views all its economic, social and political endeavors in the region as measures that, if bundled together, should reduce push factors of migration. It has also created specific migration-related projects such as advice centres for rejected asylum seekers to assist them in establishing their own businesses and finding jobs upon returning. Whilst it is true that the entire engagement serves to curb migration, there is a securitized approach in the immediate handling of the issue, as walls are raised rather than torn down for people to reach Europe in a legal and human manner. For example, Germany is a key supporter of FRONTEX in terms of personnel and resources, and Germany is tolerating Italy’s cooperation with militias and former human traffickers to control Libyan waters, the results in terms of devastating human rights violations being well-documented. At the same time, it is uncertain whether there will be noticeable progress on a new German migration law in this legislative period.

Particularly after having paid a high political price for its open-door policy vis-à-vis Syrian refugees, the German government is primarily seeking to prevent people from crossing the Mediterranean. Germany’s engagement pertaining to the migration issue will, today more than ever, be driven by internal calculations on populism. In this legislative period, countries in the Maghreb are more likely to be designated as safe countries. The goal is to accelerate asylum application processes from these states, facilitate the repatriation of rejected asylum seekers to their countries of origin and – just as importantly – to convey a message inside Germany that the government is changing course and becoming firm on migration. Out of the three suggested Maghreb countries, Tunisia unquestionably scores best on a rule-of-law and freedom scale compared to the other two. Morocco and Algeria, for their part, should first enhance their human rights and rule-of-law record, as it is paramount for such a designation to be based on solid, scientific criteria: it represents a strong normative message to others in the region.

Restrained Policy, Diplomacy, and Multilateralism under Stress

Being an economic and political heavyweight in Europe, combined with the rise of a myriad of challenges globally, Germany’s allies, together with international experts, have often called for a more active German role in both political and military terms. This debate flared up again when the US, the UK and France carried out airstrikes in Syria. Germany was not asked to join, and, precisely as a result of the message conveyed through their not being consulted, the why- and if- questions were once again on the table. Germany, because of its historical legacy, acts with restraint when asked to intervene militarily, and its reaction to crises, whether in the Mediterranean or elsewhere in the world, will always be, first and foremost, of a diplomatic and political nature. Any decision to engage militarily will always be preceded by an intense political but also public debate to assure the backing of German society. This was the case, for example, with the military support and training given to the Kurdish peshmerga in northern Iraq since 2014.

In principle, for the new, as well as previous, German governments, it is paramount to act within legitimate multi-lateral settings such as the United Nations (UN) or the European Union (EU); this is a pillar of Germany’s foreign policy. While in essence

2 It is beyond the scope of this paper to comprehensively list Germany’s engagement. Hence several examples are depicted.
an approach worthy of respect, in recent years it has been increasingly undermined by several factors. The EU has never been able to manufacture a joint foreign and security policy towards the MENA region; bilateral relations always trumped EU politics. Today the EU is more fragmented than ever with the UK departing and the community of values being highly contested by members such as the Visegrád group. Against this backdrop, calls for at least Germany and France to join forces vis-à-vis the Mediterranean seem legitimate. A prerequisite, though, would be France's willingness to open up to Germany as regards a region it considers its own backyard because of its colonial past and strong ties. Whether this shift will materialize is marred with doubt.

On an international stage, the US has metamorphosed under President Trump into a very difficult partner for Germany. Envisaging both sides strategizing for the Mediterranean and finding common ground on many dossiers seems unrealistic. The blockage of instruments of international order and relations, such as the UN, by powers like Russia is an additional challenge. Syria is a case in point, where the UN is paralyzed and where there are two mediation processes competing with each other: the UN's Geneva process and the Sochi process, headed by Russia. The malfunctioning of these multilateral instruments, within which, in times of crisis, Germany is even more keen to embed its politics, combined with its non-military profile often lead to German impotence at the macro-political level in the region.

Impotence Because of Complexities

This impotence is not only a repercussion of divisions within the West and powers obstructing the rules of the international system and law. It is also related to the very nature of crisis that is prevalent in the Mediterranean. In Libya, for example, an extremely complex landscape of warlords, militias, terrorists, and criminals competing for power and resources and used as proxies by regional actors is prevalent. The same holds true for Syria. A feasible scenario of how Germany, or any actor other than the UN, should engage to find a political solution is non-existent. The rivalry between the two regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, and its destructive manifestation in countries such as Syria, Lebanon or Iraq is on the rise and the only power with clout here, the US, has sided with Saudi Arabia and is further jeopardizing the situation by threatening to annul the nuclear deal with Iran. All too often, a militarized autocratic mindset of elites that pursue zero-sum-politics reigns in the Mediterranean with hardly any room for compromise.

The leverage debate in such settings is ongoing. Before 2011, the climate in the southern Mediterranean might have been more conducive to consistent conditionality, a policy never applied by the West. Today, with increased emancipation from the West, a diversification of the MENA states' external relations and the existential nature of conflicts, conditionality might lead to a further deterioration of an already strained political and diplomatic infrastructure between the German government and some of its counterparts in the region. Besides, for conditionality to bear fruit, there needs to be much more coordination and streamlining of Western countries' foreign policies towards specific cases, which should also be in line with policies pursued by the European Union. Only collective relations constitute a powerful tool. As noted, though, divisions mark the reality today. Finally, if economic or military support are conditional on improvements in human rights practices or the like, it is likely to be rejected by states in the region, who may well then deny a country like Germany access to their markets and economic opportunities, even if this translates into losses for them as well. These economic losses need to be factored in. This is where the normative paradox in Germany's foreign policy rises to the surface.

Normative Paradoxes

Germany’s foreign policy is formulated as a value-based policy. But human rights and democracy will always be subordinate to economic, security and strategic interests. Germany's wellbeing and its globalized social market economy depend on an economic and strategic interconnectedness with other states, including autocratic ones, worldwide. Credibly standing up for its own values and norms seems unattainable. Egypt, for example, is an autocracy but, according to German decision-makers’ ra-
tional, the country is too big to fail, and diplomatic channels need to be kept open because of its strategic location; and it is a giant market. While the logic of Egypt being too big to fail is understandable, as state failure or massive internal unrest indeed pose a huge security threat to the region due to the mere size of its population, the question remains: aside from economic gains, what political and diplomatic capital does Germany extract, respectively, by increasingly normalizing its relations with Egypt and compromising on the normative dimension of its policy? Furthermore, its aid programme also indirectly contributes to strengthening and stabilizing the regime itself.

The same paradox holds true for Germany’s arms deal with countries in the region. While these policies might sound plausible for fighting terrorism, for example, they cannot obscure the fact that Germany might end up being an indirect actor in war crimes and human rights violations. A recent manifestation of such an unintended role are German tanks used by the Turkish military in its operations in Syria. In principle, even countries experiencing relative peace and which receive weapons and equipment today might be the culprits tomorrow, if these are then used against their own civilians or those of other countries. In a militarized region where an unprecedented arms race is underway, the option of war and violent confrontation ranks highest. Hence, Germany’s policy here is incoherent and unsustainable, and this paradox sends out very mixed signals to societies in the region. Nevertheless, in general, and compared to other Western powers, Germany enjoys a positive image, a matter it should make more efforts to capitalize.

No Sense in a Mediterranean Strategy

The absence of a German strategy towards the MENA region in general, into which policies are embedded to attain defined goals, is often lamented. There are indeed common denominators regarding the woes of countries in the region, such as corrupt governance, high unemployment, poor quality education systems, an absence of economic competitiveness, or dysfunctional social safety nets. Last but not least – with the exception of Tunisia and, to some extent, Morocco – countries in the region lag behind in terms of inclusive political systems and freedom. Although, given the extreme heterogeneity in the status quo and specificities, such a strategy would either have to be abstract, and hence hollow, or there would need to be tailor-made sub-strategies for different countries, as well as regions within countries, given the stark regional disparities in many countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, or Egypt.

Besides, strategies for countries in relative peace, such as Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, or Egypt, and for countries in war, such as Libya and Syria, have hardly any common denominators; the context defines the instruments and possibilities.

What Germany should do more of is set geographic and thematic focuses for specific countries. While the macro level should not be abandoned, for reasons mentioned above, it is the level Germany has least influence over. Hence, more attention and resources should be devoted to creating and supporting islands of stability and democracy within authoritarian or war-torn countries. The sub-national level, including local governance, should be more broadly targeted, and all German instruments should be channeled towards more confined geographic areas. This contributes more qualitatively to the development of certain communities within the Mediterranean states. Germany should also heavily invest in its soft power. Despite the magnitude of the challenge, it should unrelentingly engage bi- or multilaterally to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Iran, among others, to advance on a much-needed security architecture for the region, and to diffuse the orphaned conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis. With so much bloodshed in the region, the necessity of a powerful country with a non-military record that enjoys considerable credibility cannot be overemphasized.

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3 The legal status of Germany’s political foundations was a matter of contention between the two governments. Now the German government seems to have accepted an agreement denying political foundations the right to carry out political projects, and all their funding activities and engagements need to be approved beforehand by the Egyptian authorities.
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The Mediterranean has always been conspicuously absent from European Union defence policies, and when it has been present, it’s been included rather indirectly, that is, because of a perceived threat. Commentators may consider it good that it not be included at all, but this primordial ambiguity creates a de facto conceptual disorder in the relations between the EU and its southern and eastern periphery. Indeed, in Community texts, southern and eastern countries were perceived, on the one hand, implicitly as a potential threat, while on the other, they were officially the object of cooperation and stepped up development – the pendulum swinging to one side or the other depending on the period and crises. This slightly schizophrenic relationship was never resolved, for EU engagement in security and defence affairs was very progressive and required, and still requires, an effort towards ownership. We are still at the same point today, whereas a truly integrated policy is indispensable now more than ever.

The European Union was built slowly, in successive stages. From 1957 to 1992 (and the Treaty of Maastricht), the European Economic Community, then the nascent European Union, were expressly deprived of defence competencies (including industrial ones) by its Member States – with France at the fore. This initial exclusion would have a number of negative effects. First among European officials, who not only developed a strong suspicion of anything having to do with defence and security (even in the sphere of data protection) but also and above all, gained a very gradual entry into the concepts and operational dimension of defence and security. It was more often successive shocks – wars and attacks (2001, 2003, 2004…) – that would make them cross stages towards defensive bodies. What’s more, the participation of a good number of Member States in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO (who refused the redundancy or supposed weakening of relations with the United States entailed by the hypothetical emergence of a European defence system), on the one hand, and the presence of purely neutral countries on the other, did not make it easy for military matters to enter the institutional framework. Nonetheless, things gradually evolved. At the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London in 1991, Jacques Delors stated the principles that continue to underlie what would become the European Union and its security and defence policy – today the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The President of the Commission claimed to be in favour of “a form of political union entailing a common policy in matters of foreign relations and security” and of a “single community” with economic, political and security power.

As Jacques Docquiert remarked at the time in commenting on the conference: “The security or defence policy ‘should, according to him, express double solidarity’: unified analysis and action in foreign policy matters on the one hand, and on the other hand, reciprocal engagement ‘to come to the aid of countries whose integrity were threatened’ by enshrining in the future treaty the provisions of Article 5 of the Western European Union (WEU) treaty setting out this principle.”

At the same time, and unrelatedly, the think tanks were being established that would conceive the general framework of an integrated partnership for cooperation in the Mediterranean that would be both inside and outside the Community institutions – among them the Mediterranean Study Commission (MeSCo), which would lead a bit later to the emergence of the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission (EuroMeSCo).

Indeed, the first global concept with an integrated approach appeared in December 1990, in the middle of the Gulf Crisis (invasion of Kuwait by Iraq), with the launch of the Renovated Mediterranean Policy (RMP) which, though it maintained the traditional bilateral practices of the European Economic Community (EEC), opened itself up for the first time to cross-cutting cooperation programmes in spheres of general interest (water, environment, energy, transport). EEC investment was symbolized by a significant rise in the sums allotted for financial aid and loans, since over the course of just four years they were the equivalent of the entire funds allocated since the Mediterranean cooperation programmes were launched (i.e., since 1960).

Nevertheless, it wasn’t until 1994 that the European Union, finally established by the Maastricht Treaty of 7 February 1992, truly took into account the Mediterranean imperative. This awareness and the action derived from it was made possible by a remarkable analysis of the situation in the Mediterranean region by the European Commission, summarized in the October 1994 Communication from the Commission to the Council, Strengthening the Mediterranean Policy of the European Union: Establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and by the happy chronological coincidence whereby France, Spain and Italy successively took up the EU presidency at that key point in its history. These three countries (with the decisive support of Germany) decided to make the Mediterranean the political priority of their successive terms, that is, an exceptional continuity for the EU of 18 months with the same initiative. The result was the Barcelona Declaration made at the end of the conference held there (26-27 October 1995), which gathered around the same table the EU countries and the countries of the Mediterranean Basin and vicinity, as well as Jordan, Palestine and Mauritania.

From the Barcelona Partnership to the Union for the Mediterranean: Moving Towards Disillusionment

The ‘Revolution’ of the Barcelona Conference

The ‘revolutionary’ nature of the Barcelona Declaration lay in its globalizing approach to security, which associated defence-type security (hard security) with the positive evolution of economic and socio-political conditions in the Basin. It established a significant financial effort by the North (10 billion euros in loans and grants) while the South committed to upgrade its economic and administrative structures and above all, modernize its political and social framework (progress towards democratization, respect for human rights, minorities’ rights, women’s rights, etc.). A constraining dimension had even been accepted by the southern participants via the principle of conditionality, which a priori associated the granting of economic aid by the EU to respect for the basic Human Rights principles endorsed by the United Nations.

This concept of global security, which had been tested by the EU initially with its eastern neighbours (before their accession to the EU), tended to be a distinctive structuring feature of the developing European Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

In both the North and the South, the Barcelona Declaration was perceived as a great nascent hope. The gap of indifference or even fear conditioned by mutual perceptions arising from the Gulf War (Scud missiles and Muslims taking to the streets on the one hand, and brutal, domineering technology on the other) was becoming a reality. Barcelona was to restore strained relations and endorse a common effort, knowing that indifference on the one hand, and the weight of paralyzing traditions on the other would not facilitate the convergence of mindsets.

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The first component of the political and security Partnership proposed adopting a declaration of principles establishing common goals, such as respect for: fundamental texts, the rule of law, fundamental liberties and human rights. In the sphere of security, countries committed to: principles of non-interference with regard to territorial integrity, not resorting to force, the pacific resolution of differences and the struggle against organized crime.

The Barcelona Partnership actually represented a pacified approach to international relations. This vision was part of a security dynamic associated with the end of the Soviet Union and the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In many regards, the declaration signed in Barcelona in 1995 could not be adopted in the same terms today.

The 2001 Reversal

As if mirroring the Kuwait War, the events of 11 September caused a reorientation of the Western world’s view of the Arab world. There is a confusion between radical Islamic terrorism and Islam in general in certain minds. Though the Arab world viewed the West as an aggressor in 1991, the opposite was happening in 2001.

Added to this was the perception by the countries on the eastern EU border (Poland and Bulgaria, as well as Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Republics) that the deal made with the Mediterranean countries was much better than those made with the East and that a rebalancing was needed. This was the point, in 2003, when the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched. This new policy, although the EU would deny it, considered any Union ‘neighbour’ as an entity to be treated equally insofar as what it expected from them and what said neighbour could obtain from its bilateral relations. The new policy was specified in the document Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. The aim was to “avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union” by enhancing relations (apart from with Russia) with Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and the Southern Mediterranean countries to be based on a long-term approach promoting reform, sustainable development and trade. The Commission suggested that “the EU should aim to develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood - a ‘ring of friends’ - with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations. […] To this end, Russia, the countries of the western [Newly Independent States (NIS)] and the southern Mediterranean should be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU’s Internal Market and further integration and liberalization to promote the free movement of - persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms).” This policy was recorded by the European Council on 18 June 2003.

The Barcelona Partnership actually represented a pacified approach to international relations. This vision was part of a security dynamic associated with the end of the Soviet Union and the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Thus, from a temporal viewpoint and despite (or perhaps because of) its initial ambitions, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership based in Barcelona was but an interlude amid a crisis-oriented vision of the Mediterranean which, before and after it, has been the guiding principle of this period of post-Cold War inter-Mediterranean relations.

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4 A Portuguese observer at the time was particularly clear on this issue: “However, to realise the full potential of the Wider Europe Framework differentiation based on geographic criteria must be avoided. The Commission must restate that progress in political dialogue with any partner can be based only on actual merits and sharing common values.” – Madalena Meyer-Reensen, “The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on the Barcelona Process”, EuroMeSCo Papers No. 38, November 2004, p. 11. www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/200411-EuroMeSCo-Paper-1.38.pdf


6 Ibid., Section 1-[4].
In 2008, Nicolas Sarkozy decided to replace the Partnership, considered ineffective and outdated, with a Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Launched to great pomp and circumstance in Paris in July 2008, this new process, poorly conceived, ran up against the resistance of various countries of the North and South Mediterranean and the tsunami of the world economic crisis that killed the ambitious projects that the UfM wished to carry out before they were even launched. Today this organization manages development projects, and not without a certain success. But its political ambition is gone.7

The CFSP/ESDP: An a Priori Neutral Tool, Yet a Focus of Concern

In the field of defence and security, the Treaty of Nice (26 February 2001) ratified the pre-eminence of the European Council, which established the EU’s ‘common strategies’ and ‘common actions’. A defence dimension was added to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) present in the Treaty of Maastricht, now becoming the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which was intended to have an operational dimension. The management of everyday politics was left up to the Council of Foreign Ministers (which could involve Defence Ministers when needed). Execution was monitored by the Political and Security Committee (PSC) composed of ambassadors or permanent representatives of Member States. Management of action was assigned to a Military Committee (EUMC) consisting of military representatives of the Chiefs of Defence and who were to apply the PSC’s directives. And finally, the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), based in Brussels, was to implement the decisions of the Military Committee.

The military actions apt to be conducted by the EU at first came under the so-called ‘Petersberg tasks’ framework, namely: evacuation of EU nationals, peace-keeping missions, crisis management, and humanitarian missions.8 And finally, recall that the treaty of the Western European Union (WEU), a defence treaty also known as the Treaty of Brussels, of 17 March 1948, signed by a sizable number of EU members, was integrated into the Treaty on European Union (except Article IV of said treaty on management of compulsory mutual assistance, which was the object of specific provisions and reservations by certain Member States regarding their participation in exclusively European actions). The EU’s new remit insofar as arms cooperation and the establishment of an ad hoc military structure were derived from the WEU’s former prerogatives.

After the failure of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, the Lisbon Treaty added to the Petersberg tasks the possibility of conducting joint action on disarmament, military advisory and assistance missions, conflict prevention missions, and post-conflict stabilization operations (Article 42, expansion of former Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union - TEU). The Lisbon Treaty also established that all these missions can contribute to fighting against terrorism.

Thus, the ESDP has not a priori had any particular effect on Euro-Mediterranean relations. It was conceived as a neutral tool with which to respond to erga omnes crisis situations involving Europeans or entailing the EU’s mobilization to stop international ‘scandals’ (collapse of the humanitarian aid system, civil war, etc.). The ESDP reflected a technical vision of a ‘defence Europe’ expressed by the definition of mission and not political or diplomatic goals. But this absence of goals, in fact, troubled those who might feel targeted. The EU geopolitical environment seemed to indicate that the EU might project its military power towards the periphery rather than elsewhere. Some of the Euro-Mediterranean Partner States were not mistaken in feeling concerned by what at times seemed to them like preparation for interference (and the intervention in Kosovo and the example of Iraq at the time did not exactly reassure them).9

9 This was attested to by the numerous, at times heated debates on this subject held at EuroMesCo meetings in the following years.
The European Strategy in 2003: Between the Need to Exist and Condescendence

In 2003, the invasion of Iraq by the United States and a circumstantial coalition obliged the Europeans to react collectively – even if some European countries were part of this coalition. At the same time, the existence in the Treaty of Amsterdam (followed by Lisbon) of an ad hoc position specifically responsible for the CFSP – the Secretary-General of the Council, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy10 – (in this case, Mr. Solana, former NATO Secretary General) lent a decisive spirit and a new impetus to European engagement in security affairs. After a long battle, Mr. Solana pushed through a text that can be considered the EU’s real entry into security policy. The world had just entered the Iraqi conflict in a general setting marked by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – (Saddam’s supposed weapons, never found) and Solana used this lever to establish the EU as a major world actor for non-proliferation.11 The struggle against terrorism – which would strike Europe continuously as of that date – was the second structuring element of that text, the others being regional conflicts, failed States and organized crime. In a way, the Mediterranean, without being cited, can be found as a ‘negative space’ in this catalogue, but what is truly striking is the tone of the solution proposed by the EU to remedy these problems.12

In the spirit of this text, the Mediterranean (along with eastern Europe) is basically only perceived as an instrument. “The task should be to promote, to the East of the EU and at the borders along the Mediterranean Basin, a series of well-governed countries with which the EU will be able to have close relations based on cooperation. Settling the Israeli-Arab conflict is a strategic priority. In the absence of such settlement, there will be little chance of resolving other Middle East problems.” Note the paternalism here, the notion of good governance being what the EU conceives as such, for the supposed good of peripheral countries, without this notion itself ever being specified. Does it mean to “govern well” for the good of the people and the countries? Does it mean to respect such EU criteria as described in the Neighbourhood Policy that was established at that time? Or does it mean to enforce security as the latter is seen by the EU, i.e. prioritizing the struggle against terrorism and non-proliferation?

The ESDP has not a priori had any particular effect on Euro-Mediterranean relations. It was conceived as a neutral tool with which to respond to erga omnes crisis situations involving Europeans or entailing the EU’s mobilization to stop international ‘scandals’

In this context, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has but nominal value in this text. It gives the serious impression that the Mediterranean is only being dealt with because there is no other choice, and the countries concerned are requested to comply with the EU’s benevolent injunctions for their own good. To correct this perception, much too pervasive in the ‘target’ countries, the EU endeavoured to develop a strategy specifically dedicated to the Mediterranean.

10 The position was created by the Treaty of Amsterdam. The office-holder’s functions were extended in the Treaty of Lisbon with a seat on the European Commission and the position of chair of the EU Foreign Affairs Council.
The Shooting Star of the Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East

A year after the invasion of Iraq and the launching of the (quickly aborted) Greater or Broader Middle East project by the US to conceptually accompany this mad military campaign, the EU, in order to lend substance to the 2003 Global Strategy, took into account the strategic changes that had just occurred and transferred the global strategy it had just established to the regional level, adopting a “Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East.”

The main lines of this strategy were:

— Reaffirming the principle of the partnership notion;
— Emphasizing North Africa and (as a new element) the Middle East;
— Taking into consideration each country’s specificities (taken from the Neighbourhood Policy);
— Pursuing actions that had already been undertaken, such as the Euromed Partnership or cooperating with the Gulf Cooperation Council;
— Recalling the EU’s economic engagements, but also its social and human rights goals;
— Strongly engaging in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
— Maintaining coherence with the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), this latter element being given with no particular specifications.

The idea and conception were excellent – extending the partnership to the Middle East and the Gulf states. But in reality, this strategy, which never saw the light of day except on paper, was never put into practice!

The Mediterranean governments’ ‘political’ reading of these texts was that they represented carte blanche for their security policies. On the pretext of struggling against terrorism, repression returned with a vengeance in the majority of countries, progressively expanding to include any political opposition, as in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria in particular.

The European Union Strategy in 2016: A Mediterranean Essentially Present Only insofar as its Dangers and Risks

The shock of the Arab revolutions was so great that it took the EU months to react – never mind the tardy reaction of certain Member States, including France – and at times inopportunistly (cf. intervention in Libya).

On the pretext of struggling against terrorism, repression returned with a vengeance in the majority of countries, progressively expanding to include any political opposition, as in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria in particular.

The first real EU text, designed to take note of the changes, was that of High Representative Ashton in July 2011. Rather uninspired, it noted the need for democratic processes in the area and indicated an awareness of the difficulties to be surmounted. This is what some countries call ‘the bare minimum.’

A truly serious paper did not arrive until November 2015, namely, “Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy.” This text, which addressed the Mediterranean much more than northeastern Europe, states the positive effects of the revolutions in improving the rule of law, social justice, etc. But it also notes their attendant negative effects (conflicts, terrorism, refugees). According to this paper, the answer lies not only in the economy, good governance and open markets, but also in preventing crises, “enhancing cooperation on security sector reform […], tackling terrorism and preventing radicalization […], in full...
compliance with the rule of law and international law, including international human rights law.”

Thus, for the first time, the EU was truly beginning to assume the junction between security, cooperation and development.

**Clear Vision of Threats and Risks; Limited Solutions**

The positive thinking of 1995-2000 quickly gave way to a danger zone. From 11 September 2001 to the elimination of Gaddafi, not to mention the rise of Daesh and the events in Syria, terrorist attacks and waves of refugees and migrants, European public opinion and certain governments’ perception of the Mediterranean crystallized around an image of an area principally radiating violence and insecurity. This perception is evident in the majority of texts.

In June 2016, after a long road and countless meanders, the new Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy was born, under the heading “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe.”

Even if the text acknowledges that “these are also times of extraordinary opportunity,” the 2016 Strategy takes a dramatic view of the future: “existential crisis,” “Union […] under threat,” “European project […] being questioned.” Threats of varying order, nature and scale “endanger our people and territory”: “terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change and energy insecurity.”

The text obviously focusses on the Mediterranean in the section entitled “A Peaceful and Prosperous Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa.” The considerations made under this section generally reflect those included in the reviewed Neighbourhood Policy.

To respond to these challenges and threats, the EU was to foster “functional multilateral cooperation.” This ‘practical’ cooperation was to be conducted via the Union for the Mediterranean and would work on issues such as border security, trafficking, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, water and food security, energy and climate, infrastructure and disaster management.

Turkey – now managing refugees from Syria – is present in a section where the EU states it will “strive to anchor Turkish democracy” and “pursue the accession process” (a statement made more in a spirit of entreaty). The matters of refugees, terrorism and energy would be likewise on the agenda of future discussions.

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The interesting development – survivor of the still-born strategic partnership of 2004 – concerns the EU’s opening up towards the Gulf on the one hand, and – as a novelty – the Sahara-Sahel region on the other. The EU also suggests a dialogue with Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The European response to this crisis of metaphysical anguish, which also reflects an absolute reality, according to the EU, calls for security, resilience, an integrated approach to conflicts (that is, involving all factors), “cooperative regional orders” (including the Mediterranean) and world governance. Among the means mentioned to attain these goals, the text emphasizes “joining up,” in the English version – which is translated into French as “concertation” (i.e. acting in concert, collaborating, cooperating,
agreement...). Acting in concert with Member States, acting in concert with Partners States; but to what end? This is perhaps a limitation of said good text, i.e. its lack of substance and, no doubt, ambition in the solutions, which, in a way, is the antithesis to the Barcelona Declaration. But could it be otherwise in an EU devastated by the crisis and still largely convalescent?

“The Future of European Defence”: As Always, the Mediterranean Threat

On 7 June 2017, the European Commission published a Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence, which established the framework for the indispensable future development of this sphere in the EU. In this short text, which is intended to serve as a basis for in-depth reflection by European institutions and Member States, the Commission specifies that: “Across the Mediterranean and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the spread of ungoverned spaces and conflict has left a vacuum for terrorists and criminals to thrive. Regional rivalries are escalating and we have witnessed a dramatic rise in civilian victims and refugees across the world, with more than 60 million people displaced. Greater connectivity is blurring the boundaries between internal and external security. And climate change and resource scarcity, coupled with demographic growth and state fragility can also drive conflict and instability around the world.”

Conclusion: Towards Convergence

“The message from Europeans is crystal clear: security and defence should be an integral part of what our Union does,” says the 2016 Strategy. But this Strategy cannot be implemented unless there is a global vision of European foreign policy. The problem is that issues of defence and foreign policy, including cooperation and development, have advanced on parallel tracks (except during the brief, suspended Barcelona period). The administration as well as experts on both sides hardly communicate –except for significant efforts by the EU External Action Service (EEAS).

Security experts only see threats. Benoît d’Aboville, for instance, states that “threats to the future of European security have shifted to its environs.” According to Nicole Gnesotto, “what they [i.e. European citizens] expect is for Europe to play an effective role in pacifying the crises of the South that are feeding terrorism and streams of refugees. Not in 2027, but as soon as possible.”

The contradiction arising from the 2016 text, however, cannot be resolved unless the Mediterranean countries are associated; first and foremost, those of Northern Africa – from Egypt to Mauritania (while awaiting more positive developments in the Middle East) – in a veritable political-military alliance based on a very strong economic component.

The debate on ‘Defence Europe’ faces a number of unknowns: within the EU itself, the diverging positions of the major Member States; the fear of countries worried about marginalization in a ‘Franco-German space’ that has become too stifling; the nationalist obsession and retrenchment

The document on the future of European defence also states that: “Enhancing European security is a must. Member States will be in the driving seat. They will define and implement the European level of ambition, with the support of EU institutions. The initiatives currently under way indicate clearly that Mem-

21 "A Joined-up Union [...] We must become more joined up" (!), ibid, p. 49-50. Summary in French: SN 10193/16, p. 5.
23 Ibid., p. 7.
ber States and EU institutions have already embarked upon this road." But at what pace do the Member States wish to build a real European Union of Security and Defence? To what point are they willing to anticipate rather than react in the strategic context? To what degree do they consider European security to be a European responsibility? The debate on ‘Defence Europe’ faces a number of unknowns: within the EU itself, the diverging positions of the major Member States (Germany, Brexit, Poland); the fear of countries worried about marginalization in a ‘Franco-German space’ that has become too stifling (Italy, Spain); the nationalist obsession and retrenchment. The migrant crisis has created a possibly irreparable break. As stated by Dominique David, “There is no agreement today among Europeans as to what the European Union should be insofar as a body politic confronted with others. Europeans even diverge on their very conception of the world order and what their place could be in it.” For, with the shift of the world’s strategic centre towards the Pacific already underway, the Mediterranean Region and Europe find themselves in a Finisterre-type periphery (in its strict sense of physical “end of the world”). And this peripheralization could, in the future, be political, economic and social. Jean Dufourcq illustrates this problem well when he says that “the Euro-Maghreb region will be but a small neighbourhood of the world megalopolis, a small neighbourhood that will have to make the most of the situation by using its most competitive assets.”

The EU must therefore meet a double obligation. First of all, it must define what it is and what it wants to be in order to be able to project itself – and in this regard, the question of the EU’s definitive borders will gain crucial importance! And secondly, it must offer a real political proposition to the Mediterranean states, and first and foremost the Maghreb – for the moment the least problematic and best structured area – in order to draw the Mediterranean seaboard countries into a true alliance and a real, integrated regional project. Defence, security, development and cooperation are not mutually exclusive. They are the multiple and complementary facets of a major political project for tomorrow – doubtless the only viable option.

Dossier: Europe and the Mediterranean

Has the Mediterranean Refugee Crisis Undermined European Values?

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What is often called ‘the refugee crisis’ is in a fact a deep European political crisis which unrolled in 2015/2016, paralyzing decision-making and creating deep, probably irreparable, divisions between EU Member States. It is thus better understood as a European political crisis, a crisis of the EU, or a crisis of European identity. The Mediterranean piece of the overall crisis is longstanding, with a series of localized crises that pre-date the events of 2015-2016 and continue to this day. It involves the migratory routes into Italy, Malta and Spain, and related humanitarian and political problems.

This European political crisis on refugee issues has had a serious detrimental impact on the European values set out in the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), in particular on human dignity and human rights. It is not too late, however, to pursue alternative approaches, which are necessary since the current approach also undermines European interests – and in particular the interests of the Mediterranean region.

What Are ‘European Values’?

There are multiple interpretations of ‘European values’; the expression is one subject to different uses and misuses, by individuals and institutions. The starting point for the EU and its Member States are the EU Treaties, with the clearest expression of values in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), which states:

“The EU is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.”

Emphasis is often placed on the rule of law because not only is it among the values, but it is also a prerequisite for the realization of the other values – and much else besides.

It is quickly apparent that most, if not all, of these values have been undermined by the Mediterranean refugee crisis, both directly and indirectly, and with consequences that refugees, Europeans, and other regions will continue to experience for many years to come.

The Wider Crisis

The proximate short-term cause of the 2015/2016 crisis was a large increase in refugees arriving in Europe along a route from Turkey to Greece across the Western Balkans and then onwards. Overall, from 2014 to 2015, there was a quadrupling of the number of people arriving, with a million crossing into the EU in 2015. By far the largest population were Syrians (more than 50%), followed by significant numbers of people from Afghanistan (around 15%) and Iraq (7-8%), with smaller numbers from a range of other countries. The majority of those who arrived during this crisis were refugees, and this should be understood as the result of the horrific ongoing war in Syria.

Distinctions have to be drawn between those entitled to international protection (refugees within the meaning of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, those granted subsidiary protection, and those granted humanitarian protection) and people migrating for other reasons. Asylum seekers
are those whose status has yet to be determined. Despite the different status and particular rights of those entitled to international protection, European values should be applied in all cases, in law, policy and practice. Moving away from European values and taking a harsher approach to migrants will often also have a negative impact on refugees, because it stimulates the disruption of migratory routes which are also used by refugees; it may lead to a reduction in the rights of all; and it creates a situation of generalized xenophobia, as well as leading to conflicts and suspicions between different groups of people on the move.

Focus on the Mediterranean

When people were prevented from leaving Turkey by the Turkish authorities acting in accordance with the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016, attention shifted to the Mediterranean. While many have criticized the deal behind the EU-Turkey Statement as illegal, unethical and impractical, for policy-makers whose measure of success was to prevent the arrival of people in Europe it worked. Political debate began on whether a 'solution' like this could be applied to the Mediterranean, despite the fact that it was supposed to be an exceptional measure. The overall objective of Europe's strategy became one of prevention of arrivals to Europe, culminating in shadowy agreements reached between Italy and the government of Libya, and then with militias in Libya, in order to disrupt smuggling activity. In parallel, since the end of Mare Nostrum, there has been a reduction in search and rescue activities (SAR) carried out by the EU, replaced with a focus on support to the Libyan coastguard, and, in 2016/2017, attempts to reduce independent SAR NGO efforts. The 'problem,' as it is viewed by some, is that anybody rescued by a European vessel will be brought to Europe, because the well-documented conditions in Libya are so appalling that it would contravene international law to disembark people there. However, as is the case in Turkey, cooperation with local coastguards provides support to the rescue operations and means survivors are then taken to Turkey or Libya. This is a complex area in international law, with some legal scholars arguing that some support does lead to legal liability for Europeans assisting third country nationals; others dispute this interpretation and claim there is little relevant jurisprudence. Italy's actions have the open support of the EU, with public statements from senior EU policy-makers and funding provided.

At the same time, for years, Italy has felt abandoned or neglected by the EU. The failure to reform the Dublin system combined with a widespread criticism of Italy in northern Europe contributes to the rise of anti-migrant and anti-EU political forces, as much as it does to increasing migrant arrivals. In fact, statistics show little correlation between arrival numbers and a country's anti-immigration views.

The Values under Attack

All the actions that had been implemented by the end of 2017 to tackle the Mediterranean crises and the wider European political crisis on migration and refugee protection resulted in a serious undermining of Europe's values, both directly and indirectly.

While many have criticized the deal behind the EU-Turkey Statement as illegal, unethical and impractical, for policy-makers, whose measure of success was to prevent the arrival of people in Europe, it worked.

Looking at the list of values set out in the TEU, those most obviously undermined are respect for human dignity and human rights. Human dignity is clearly absent in the conditions in which refugees and migrants find themselves in Europe and in the countries in which they are stuck as a result of European action. Within Europe, irregular situations, undocumented work, and living without legal status often involve a loss of dignity and risk of exploitation, but it may also be absent within the asylum process, in reception and detention centres, and in the manner in which people are treated in interviews and hearings. There is also an undermining
of human dignity in the way refugees are presented by the media and politicians. People are presented either as a threat or as victims, both of which can be dehumanizing if people are reduced to characteristics such as brutality, incivility, bestial aggression, on the one hand, or helplessness on the other. Discussion of migration in military terms (invasion, threat, defence of borders, etc.), along with either openly or insidiously racist or Islamophobic commentary contributes to ‘othering’ refugees and migrants, which is another way to strip people of their dignity.

Human dignity is clearly absent in the conditions in which refugees and migrants find themselves in Europe and in the countries in which they are stuck as a result of European action.

Of course, these phenomena are not confined to migration across the Mediterranean. However there is an aggravating factor: that those arriving in Italy in particular are often classed as ‘undeserving’ economic migrants and therefore doubly at fault for arriving in Europe. Statistics show that a higher number – the majority – of those arriving from Turkey in 2015/2016 were refugees, and still more were entitled to other forms of international protection. For people arriving in Italy to seek protection, the recognition rates – i.e. the percentage of people eventually granted international protection – are lower. Firstly, at least some of these people are entitled to protection. Secondly, it is very hard to know exactly what the figures are due to the lack of information regarding second-instance decision-making in Italy, at which stage many decisions not to grant protection are overturned. Thirdly, while those entitled to international protection have special status under international law and states have a responsibility towards them, all migrants are bearers of human rights and certain obligations towards them should be respected. The negative discourse damages all people on the move and also ethnic minorities by legitimizing prejudice and xenophobia.

The human rights that are not respected start with the most important rights, including: the right to life, which is undermined by the ceasing and disruption of search and rescue; freedom from torture, which is violated by the containment of people in Libya, where the horrific conditions are well known; the right to asylum, if people cannot reach Europe or are prevented from submitting asylum claims; the right to housing, if reception conditions are inadequate; the right to legal remedies, when asylum systems are not functioning, and so on. Violations are well-documented by human rights organizations and will not be repeated here, but certain damaging aspects merit further exploration.

**Questioning the Universality of Human Rights**

Overall respect for human rights is undermined through questioning the universality of human rights. It is often not the idea of human rights per se that extremists and nationalists object to, but the idea that the human rights of certain groups should be protected or that it is Europe’s obligation to protect these rights. This is dangerous, as denying the rights of some groups quickly expands to an attack on the rights of others. Although it is convenient to believe that it ‘only’ affects the people seeking Europe’s protection, this is simply not true. Human rights are universal; they are not just for particular groups – for ‘us’ but not for ‘them,’ for the ‘deserving’ but not for the ‘undeserving.’ A threat to the rights of some is a threat to the rights of all because anyone could one day find themselves in the ‘undeserving’ group.

The human rights of those beyond the population groups directly affected have also been undermined by the crisis, first because of the framing itself of the crisis, as discussed below, but also because one of its consequences has been to solidify and broaden support for a strategy of ‘externalization’ of refugee protection. This involves three elements: first, European asylum policies are becoming more restrictive in order to punish and to deter people; second, at borders, people are physically and legally prevented from accessing territory or accessing asylum; and third, European foreign policy is used as a tool to prevent the movement of people.
Reform of European Asylum Law

One of the EU’s responses to the crisis was to propose a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), despite the need for evidence on the functioning of what was a relatively new legal framework. The overall vision is of limiting the number of refugees in Europe, but the reforms also envisage increasing the responsibility of the countries of first arrival, which has led to opposition in the Mediterranean.

With the underlying objective of preventing access to asylum in Europe, the proposals contain provisions for the use of safe third country concepts. Simply put, under proposals for reforming the Dublin Regulation, an additional assessment will be required: whether or not a person can be sent to a safe third country, in which case they will be transferred there. This replicates one of the elements of the EU-Turkey deal, which includes the provision that Syrians arriving in Greece will be assessed and returned to Turkey using the safe third country concept, as hastily incorporated into Greek law.

For the countries of the Mediterranean, the proposals add an additional responsibility to the countries of first arrival, because they will have to carry out the additional assessment and arrange transfers to third countries. The Dublin system already places a disproportionate responsibility on the countries of the region because the countries of first arrival are largely responsible for asylum claims. The reform proposals from the Commission do not correct this fundamental flaw – although the European Parliament’s position on the reform of CEAS does suggest that it be changed. In addition, the question of solidarity has not been resolved with the ‘corrective mechanism’ to mitigate some of the Dublin Regulation’s unfairness, which is still rejected by some Member States.

The insistence on the first country of arrival principle is one of the key dysfunctions of European asylum policy, one of the reasons that a manageable situation turned into a crisis, and one of the reasons for the violations of the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. Due to their location, certain countries receive far higher numbers of asylum seeker arrivals than others – currently those at Europe’s southern borders. In some cases, they are simply not able to cope with the numbers, a situation which may be exacerbated by institutional weaknesses; this leads to delays and flaws in the process and people being kept in unfit conditions while cases are processed. Second, the country of first arrival principle is widely perceived as unfair and in some cases people have been allowed to move on to other countries. In general, countries have a perverse incentive to keep reception conditions low (so that it becomes illegal for courts to order that people are returned from other countries) and to discourage people from settling, which is also a reason why investment in integration is limited across the region. The consequence of all of these factors is a situation where human rights are not respected and where asylum seekers want to move on.

The human rights that are not respected start with the most important rights, including: the right to life, which is undermined by the ceasing and disruption of search and rescue; freedom from torture, which is violated by the containment of people in Libya, the right to asylum, if people cannot reach Europe or are prevented from submitting asylum claims

Rather than provoking a sensible, evidence-based and rights-based reform of the legal framework to reduce the responsibility of the countries of first arrival, the crisis has led to legal proposals that reinforce the principle and introduce a punitive approach to secondary movement (onward movement to other Member States) by refugees and asylum seekers.

External Affairs and Human Rights

The third aspect of externalization, migration control as an objective of external affairs, also undermines human rights – those of people in other regions of
the world. External affairs are now carried out through dubious agreements with third countries whereby they either agree to prevent people leaving, such as the EU-Turkey deal, or whereby they agree to accept the return of their own citizens or third country nationals, such as in the Joint Way Forward agreed with Afghanistan. In exchange, they may receive funding or other benefits, including impunity for criticism, tacit acceptance of their own actions to close the border and power over the EU. First, the transactional approach whereby another country hosts refugees or prevents migration in exchange for some benefit, creates a dependency on those countries which makes it difficult for the EU to support reform there. Again, the emblematic case is Turkey, where limited action is taken against the increasing domestic repression, in part due to the power that Turkey wields through its prevention of departures of refugees. At the same time, the number of people from Turkey claiming asylum in Europe is increasing due to this country’s retreat from democracy and towards repression. Another case would be Sudan, where European and bilateral cooperation on migration has provided the regime with legitimacy and protection.

Second, human rights, globally, – and the idea of an international order based on rules – are further undermined by their de-prioritization in European (EU and bilateral) external affairs. The EU’s 2016 Partnership Framework presents an image of migration control as the objective of all aspects of external affairs. If funding, political attention and leverage is diverted to migration control and away from other activities, then human rights, development, diplomacy and security are undermined. The weight and credibility of EU external affairs will be reduced – just at a time when it was developing.

Even from the perspective of migration management, there is a risk that a focus on short-term migration-related objectives will be counter-productive because it exacerbates the causes of forced displacement, which include a lack of security, repression and poor governance, all of which are obstacles to economic development. In the long term, concerns over large-scale migration could be better assuaged by a return to development and security building activities to improve people’s prospects where they are. In addition, Europe’s best contribution to reducing forcible displacement would be to stop exacerbating its causes, such as conflict and repression, through hosting stolen assets, in complicity with abusive governments, arms sales, interventions, and so on.

For the European Mediterranean countries, there is a risk that the EU’s new approach will damage the carefully built relationships with their counterparts in the southern Mediterranean. While Spanish-Moroccan cooperation on migration is often cited as an example of good practice in Brussels, it is a complex and multi-faceted relationship, and one based on longstanding, close diplomatic ties. It is not something that can be replicated by the EU as a whole in its engagement with particular countries – even if that were desirable.

The situation in Libya is far more problematic, with bilateral actions taken by Italy and France to deal with separate militia and authority forces in order to control migration. A return to ambitious collective European action, as was envisaged in 2011/2012, with a focus on political settlement, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) – especially the demobilization of militias – institutional support, and civil society, would be both more effective at creating a functioning state and – ultimately – at tackling the multiple migration-related problems, where the abuse and exploitation of migrants, including refugees, should be the top priority. For some in the Mediterranean region, they have been too quick to embrace the idea that the upside of the broader European crisis on migration is that now all EU Member States understand the importance of the ‘southern neighbourhood’ and of EU action in Africa. Previously, there was constant competition between the Member States that wanted EU foreign policy to focus on threats to the east and those that wanted investment in the south, who believed that MENA and Africa should be prioritized. Examples such as the large number of Mem-

A threat to the rights of some is a threat to the rights of all because anyone could one day find themselves in the ‘undeserving’ group.
Member States present at the 2017 EU-Africa Summit, Germany’s extensive new engagement, and an emerging Franco-German alliance in Africa are cited. While the interest of a wider group of Member States in building a serious EU foreign policy in Africa is positive, the fact that an anti-migration agenda has united Europe is both sad and potentially damaging to Europe’s presence and role in MENA and wider Africa.

Other Values at Risk

Beyond human dignity and human rights, the treatment of asylum seekers in Europe is also undermining freedom, as the widespread use of detention demonstrates. In addition, the freedom to support asylum seekers and to carry out humanitarian acts is also undermined with the criminalization of acts of solidarity, such as at the border between France and Italy, and in rescue cases in Greece, as well as in Hungary’s proposed laws restricting the operation of NGOs working on migrants’ rights. These laws will make it financially impossible for many organizations to operate, but they also include provisions allowing for individuals who work on migration to be classed as a national security risk, with restrictions on their freedom of movement being imposed. Thus, freedom of association and freedom of expression are undermined. The growing prevalence of racist narratives, either through the prominence given to extremists or through the absorption of their views by mainstream parties, means that the rights of minorities are also threatened. In some countries, fueling the fear of the ‘other’ is also targeted in recent or longstanding minority communities.

One of the greatest challenges facing policymakers in Europe concerns another of the listed European values: rule of law. As has been well-documented, rule of law has been deteriorating in certain European countries over the last 10 years, with Hungary the most acute case and Poland, since the election of 2015, provoking the strongest reaction from the EU. The crisis on migration and refugee issues did not cause this problem, but it has exacerbated it. In both countries – and in others – we see a total disregard for EU asylum law. Second, Viktor Orban, like many demagogues before him, exploits the fear of refugees and migrants to generate support and mask other problems. Third, in both countries, existing anti-EU sentiment – resulting in part from the perceived strictures of the accession process – is exploited to resist EU legal measures, such as relocation. In other countries, and for parts of the European Commission, the framing of the crisis, including the belief that the EU itself was threatened, justified measures that departed from the rule of law, such as the use of emergency powers.

The Principle of Solidarity

Article 2 of the TEU also refers to the principle of solidarity, which was widely discussed during the crisis and is particularly important to the Mediterranean region. It was largely absent, as demonstrated, for example, by the under 35,000 people relocated from Greece and Italy out of the 98,000 target (already reduced from 160,000). In the negotiations on reform of the asylum system, there is continued refusal to accept mandatory relocation schemes as part of the reform of Dublin by the four Visegrad countries. More generally, there is a refusal to carry out a deeper reform of Dublin to amend or remove the first country of arrival principle (although it is supported by the European Parliament). The bitter conflicts between Member States continue and the suggestion that countries should not benefit from EU funds if they refuse to show solidarity on the issue of migration is also part of the debate. In addition, rule of law conditionality for EU funding is being developed by the European Commission.

The transactional approach whereby another country hosts refugees or prevents migration in exchange for some benefit, creates a dependency on those countries which makes it difficult for the EU to support reform there.

It is clear that the EU will be unable to function without some level of solidarity among its Member States, like any collective, rules-based entity. The absence of solidarity creates anti-EU sentiment,
particularly in the Mediterranean, including in countries where politicians and the public have traditionally been strongly pro-EU. The 2018 Italian election results have to be understood in this light. The absence of solidarity is also one of the reasons why the situation became a crisis in the first place — even though the numbers of refugees arriving increased significantly in 2015, collectively Europe could have managed the situation, and would indeed have benefited, given the demographic changes. Similarly, a collective approach to migration on other routes and to asylum in Europe would also lead to better results. Instead, for many Member States the approach has been to compete in creating the most hostile environment and prevent access to their territory.

The absence of solidarity creates anti-EU sentiment, particularly in the Mediterranean, including in countries where politicians and the public have traditionally been strongly pro-EU.

Overall, the idea of the EU as a normative power is being undermined. The idea of normative power is either that the EU is a model which others follow through choice rather than through the use of force, or that it is a promoter of its values in the world, gaining credibility through the implementation of those values in its own territory. In either sense, the crisis on the migration and refugee issue has damaged normative power.

Alternatives?

Despite this overall bleak picture when it comes to European values, there are also many positive developments. Civil society across Europe has stepped up to support new arrivals, as have local authorities, cities, towns and villages. NGOs, volunteers and other collectives remain active in all countries, however hostile the government.

There are alternatives to the current approach, which would preserve European values and be more effective. First, a deeper reform of the Common European Asylum System, including a complete overhaul of the dysfunctional Dublin system. Second, opening more safe and legal channels for people to reach protection so they do not have to use smugglers and face traumatic journeys, which also drastically reduce their integration prospects should they make it. In addition, legal migration could be expanded to those seeking work and the status of those in Europe with jobs but who are undocumented could be regularized. Third, there needs to be a shared global responsibility for forced displacement, including a return to a sensible, evidence-driven external affairs policy for Europe, based on addressing the causes of displacement and migration — not on counter-productively prioritizing migration control. Finally, we need to invest in inclusion in Europe, through a focus on the rights of refugees and others.

References

Dossier: Europe and the Mediterranean

A Heterodox Vision for the Mediterranean

Amb. Hassan Abouyoub
Ambassador of Morocco in Italy, Rome

“Si l’histoire du passé pouvait servir à éclairer le présent, notre siècle serait des plus heureux, tant il y a d’histoires en tous genres” (If past history could serve to illuminate the present, our century would be one of the happiest, because there are so many histories of all sorts) Pierre-Jules Stahl, in Les pensées et réflexions diverses (1841).¹

Next year, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first association agreements, signed by Mediterranean third countries of the Maghreb and the European Economic Community. During this long period, we witnessed a number of events that marked history: the birth of ARPANET, the precursor to Internet, in California, the October War of 1973, Chernobyl, people walking on the moon, US withdrawal from Vietnam, the appearance of AIDS, the 1987 and 2008 stock market crashes, the emergence of China and the other BRIC countries, 9/11, the smartphone phenomenon and social networking sites, the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany, the birth of the Euro and the enlargement of the EU, the Arab Spring, religious terrorism, etc. Each of these events has had its consequences on world geopolitics and economy, as well as on social balances.

In our Mediterranean area, American intervention in Iraq, Rabin’s assassination, the war in Syria and the West’s bombing of Libya have woken the old demons born of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and above all, have exacerbated the lag behind other regions of the world insofar as human development, competitiveness and growth. The status quo dating back to the strategies deployed by France and Britain within the Sykes-Picot Agreement is a thing of the past. Though the two European powers of the last century had drawn the outlines of the new Middle East by sounding the death knell for Ottoman multiculturalism, they never managed to turn the entirely fabricated geographic states into national realities with a marked individual identity. The institutional models then imposed had not allowed the creation of the required harmony between ethnic and religious minorities within the framework of democratic spaces protecting human rights and liberties. Britain and France always preferred subservient regimes allowing them to play with the partitions imposed in the name of their strategic and political interests as per the colonialist ideology of the period. The humiliation felt by the populations dispossessed of their caliphal frame of reference with the end of the Ottoman Empire generated all sorts of rejection and resentment towards the West. Schools of political thought emerging in this context to provide the alternative to Turkish caliphal governance explored all forms of nationalism: the Muslim Brotherhood with their political Islam project, the Socialist Baath party in the Sham countries, Kemalism, Wahhabism, Pan-Arab Nasserism and all the other independentist movements. Their ideologies occupy a broad spectrum ranging from Salafism to secular Islam, from liberal thought to the most orthodox communism.

This review of history is necessary because, in its approach to Mediterranean issues, Europe has always favoured the policy of the ostrich, when what is necessary is to deal with the political complexity of the South Shore. Whether because of the poorly handled legacy of the independence wars, the imperative of energy security or political stability, or

other geopolitical factors, Europe has never managed to depart from the doctrine of status quo in its dialogue with the South.

After having abandoned the unilateral mercantilist approach characterizing Europe’s Mediterranean policies before the Barcelona Process, the latter never succeeded in exercising regional leadership due to the profound divisions inherent to the EU’s Foreign and Common Security Policy. The long crisis in transatlantic dialogue, taking root with President Nixon, has left the field open for the US to exercise strategic control with no competition in our region. The end of the Cold War has not substantially changed the course of things.

Europe has always favoured the policy of the ostrich, when what is necessary is to deal with the political complexity of the South Shore.

Barcelona 1995 heralded the beginning of a Copernican revolution in the Mediterranean. Sustained by the dream of peace in the Middle East, the opening of South Shore economies within the framework of structural adjustment policies and the liberalization of global trade as part of the Marrakesh Agreements, the Barcelona Process entitled all ambitions and utopias.

Conceived in the context of the Washington Consensus, the Barcelona Process attempted to put an end to the asymmetry of political relations between the two shores, on the basis of co-responsibility and the aim of shared prosperity in peace and security. A strategic partnership was thus established, resting on three (political, economic-financial and cultural) pillars. The creation of a Mediterranean Free Trade Area was the central line of the process. It was based on an implicit paradigm whereby the opening up of the South Shore economy to the market laws would necessarily entail a democratic adjustment that would sound the death knell for dictatorships.

Although during the negotiation of the Barcelona Declaration, it had not been possible to include the famous political conditionality clause (human rights, democracy, etc.), simply citing it instead in the preamble, the EU knew perfectly well that it was still early for political reform in the South. The Islamist terrorist attacks in certain EU Member States rendered collaboration with the regimes in power more pertinent and necessary due to their function as buffers against violence and insecurity.

The South Shore countries having chosen the path of reform felt somewhat wronged by the EU’s monolithic approach, which eliminated all differentiation from its Euro-Mediterranean policy. The South was thus treated as a monolithic bloc, which it is not, with no consideration for the cultural differences between the Mashreq and the Maghreb, nor the deeper nuances separating southern countries in their choice of level of proximity to Europe.

The absence of a unified mechanism for negotiation on the level of southern third countries eventually emptied the concept of an egalitarian partnership of substance and ended up reinforcing the bilateral dimension of the partnership to the detriment of its multilateral ambitions.

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on the eve of the conclusion of the Barcelona Agreement (1995) seemed like a bad omen for the aim of peace and stability in the Mediterranean and above all constituted a major question mark over the viability of the political foundations of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The intifada in occupied territories only bogged down the Process even more, in its situation as a permanent hostage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Because it has neglected this fundamental aspect and yet promised a project-based approach as a new dimension of the EU’s Mediterranean policy, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is nearly politically paralyzed. Its overly restrictive mandate has not allowed it to prevent or remedy the dramatic situation in which the South Shore is immersed today.

It is therefore in the domain of the obvious to assert that the Mediterranean needs a new impetus, different approaches and renewed political will, most likely based on new paradigms.

It would be wrong to ‘throw the baby out with the bath water.’ The goals of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration are even more pertinent now. The approach intended by the promoters of the UfM is not inconsistent with the letter or spirit of the Declaration. The conceptual progress made as part of the reforms to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are indisputably moving in the right direction. Nonethe-
less, all of this is insufficient to allow the Mediterranean to break the status quo and leave behind the immobilism that today constitute a real threat to common security.

In any case, the centres of power in the majority of the countries in the South have undergone a profound metamorphosis. The Arab Spring has delegitimized the forces that had governed in the post-independence stage (nationalist parties). The more or less recognized or accepted secular oppositions met the same fate as the social-democratic European left: they are no longer capable of playing their role of social shock absorber. Now, Arab public opinions are in direct confrontation with the established systems, assisted by an unprecedented democratization of information technology. The ‘digital’ representation of the people’s will is neutralizing constitutional institutions. It is increasingly becoming the only path of political expression, certainly without a legitimate basis, but terribly effective for destabilizing governing regimes or targeting politicians to discredit them. Post-revolt political reforms are running out of steam. Some are now advocating societal models based more on authoritarian liberalism: the market without Western-style democracy. The inability of legitimate governments born of the Arab Spring to restore macro-economic balance and to absorb electioneering social expenses that have burdened budgets without sustainable funding, the difficulty of reassuring investors, financial backers and tourists, and the failure of measures to restore the competitiveness of traditional export sectors are all factors contributing to creating a sense of frustration and disenchantment. Registered unemployment, especially among youth, has reached such severe levels (over 50% in certain cases) that it is reason for serious concern. Participation levels recorded at the last elections are an indicator of the patent level of scepticism towards the political class.

In this context, it is clear that the aim of progressively catching up with the standard of living of the North Shore is inexorably disappearing, at a time when inequalities between income classes and regional development levels have never been so pronounced. The consequences of such economic and social underperformance on economic migratory flows are undeniable. These movements, whose political effects combine with the masses of refugees leaving unsecure areas (Syria, Libya, the Sahel…), lend arguments, however fallacious they may be, to the populist movements that are currently reshaping the European political landscape. These movements, fed by the sub-primes crisis and the eurozone growth failure, are gradually relegating the issue of the Mediterranean to the backburner of European strategic priorities.

Europe has never managed to depart from the doctrine of status quo in its dialogue with the South.

None of the scholars of southern Europe dares imagine what impact a European Parliament dominated by populism will have on our region, on the future of the solidarity imperative, on common action against terrorism, etc. European left-wing parties that supported the Palestinian people and strengthened the peace camp or advocated a balanced Mediterranean policy, for instance, have lost their political influence. In order to survive politically, centre-right parties driven by bilateral interests have a tendency to shift towards the minefields of the radical right. There is now a major risk that the Mediterranean become an orphan in the future European political landscape. On the South Shore, the emergence of political Islam after the Arab revolts has generated attitudes ranging from mistrust to rejection of the West in general and the EU in particular. In this panorama, hardly a cause for joy, it is clear that, among the majority of institutions specializing in Mediterranean issues and politicians that can still be heard, there is broad consensus on the urgency of a new initiative based on new paradigms and new approaches. These actors substitute, in a fashion, a political class stunned by the emergence of populism, becoming mute when it comes to the Mediterranean and who laboriously try to contain the damage caused by the migratory issue to their traditional electorate.

Far be it from me to do an inventory here of the numerous proposals that have been aired. I will only discuss the ones that seem to be to be perfectly coherent with the wholly personal vision that I will de-
scribe hereafter in all humility, with the unwavering desire to nurture such a vital, life-saving debate.

The Prerequisites for a New Mediterranean Project

De Gaulle said that “politics and economy are as linked as action and life.” Transposed to the Mediterranean context, this aphorism means that the political prerequisite for any initiative whatsoever is fundamental. Entrusting the responsibility to the EU, with the current lethargic state of its founding project, and to a South Shore immersed in uncertainty would end up being the chronicle of a failure foretold.

It is therefore in the domain of the obvious to assert that the Mediterranean needs a new impetus, different approaches and renewed political will, most likely based on a new paradigm.

This taskforce should consist of people recognized for their independent spirit and neutrality and be co-opted by all the states of the Mediterranean Basin in addition to the EU Member States. Its mission, conceived within an exploratory framework, will be to identify confidence-building measures, a negotiation format and a roadmap that would lead to an intergovernmental conference for stability, peace and security in the Mediterranean.

• Among the confidence-building measures, there is one in the cultural or religious sphere regarding the Islamophobia driving Western populism. In this sense, a programme agreed to among the two shores to combat blanket judgement sand reciprocal ignorance is vital. It is possible today to neutralize the narrative fostering exclusion and revisiting fundamental human rights in the name of asocial design recalling the dark pages of our tormented history. The use of social networks is a very promising possibility. We could add a project for a multilingual on-line Mediterranean university that could be grafted onto the two existing institutions. This option could offer unsuspected opportunities for the rapprochement of the peoples of the 'mare nostrum.' Reconciling Islam and Europe and the South Shore with Europe are prerequisites for peace and stability. Mobilizing civil societies on both shores in a proactive approach is fundamental.

• Coupling these initiatives to a generalized Med-Erasmus would be beneficial for everyone.

• In parallel to this political dialogue, within the framework of institutions and programmes in effect (the UfM, ENP…), a Mediterranean emergency plan should be conceived, revolving around common policy or regional projects. For instance:

  - A Euro-Mediterranean electricity market that would complete the Europe-South Shore interconnection loop. This initiative would allow southern countries access to the extra electricity available in Europe, to provide an intelligent solution to the backup problems posed by the use of renewable energy and create a co-development project where everyone would win. This project would constitute a sort of transitory measure preceding the adoption of a common Mediterranean energy policy – a major geopolitical concern and an abiding source of strategic conflict.
— A common, jointly agreed initiative to manage the olive oil sector targeting the world market by increasing quality production to meet a rapidly growing demand and even turn the unhealthy climate of competition prevailing today with no objective reason into a virtuous synergy.

What is important at this point is to promote initiatives able to foster living and acting together and above all, to show public opinion in both the North and the South that the Mediterranean Partnership is an opportunity and not a threat.

— A common sustainable development policy for the Mediterranean agricultural space (horticulture, citrus fruit, etc.). The demographic decline of Europe, water resource problems and the demand for organic products allow a win/win policy to be considered that would safeguard existing farms, increase opportunities for new markets and save natural resources. The same approach could be progressively implemented to embrace another sensitive sector, that of the fisheries. These two sectors have always been points of friction due to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the privileges generated. It is time to rethink the challenges of this sector, so charged with political emotions and categorical struggles.

These are some sectoral ideas to keep in mind. There are many others to come in this spirit, on such issues as logistics, high technology, desertification and climate change. What is important at this point is to promote initiatives able to foster living and acting together and above all, to show public opinion in both the North and the South that the Mediterranean Partnership is an opportunity and not a threat.

The irrationality, ignorance and violence of the proposals put forth by populism can only call for patience. It will be an element on the agenda of the new political dialogue proposed in this article. Another issue has likewise been set aside. This is the funding of the common actions and emergency programme. If the approach proposed were to be accepted, the funding strategy would clearly be part of the global negotiation. I will thus not repeat the old project of a Mediterranean Bank, nor go back to the dialogue of the deaf that characterized the financial facet of the Euromed Partnership and the ENP. In any case, the margin for southern countries’ negotiating the amounts was nearly non-existent. Reflection should be made, however, on the new funding models to be conceived for future projects. This reflection should revolve around the following aspects:

• How can the necessary reforms in the South be financed without resorting to aggressive adjustment measures which public opinion can no longer accept (this is the case in Tunisia)?
• How can financial products be created for the projects carried out on the basis of private-public partnership (PPP)?
• How can money transfers by émigré populations be used more effectively?
• Shouldn’t we be thinking of an ECOFIN-Med that would allow coordination of macroeconomic policy of both shores, support reform and foster shared growth and prosperity?

By way of conclusion, I would like to emphasize the urgent need for action in our region, in the context of a new holistic, shared vision. Policies should assume their responsibilities in this regard. This action can no longer be based on states alone. We must involve enterprise, civil society, universities, local authorities, etc. (The latter would gain from organizing a permanent forum to deal jointly with the challenges of urbanization, competitiveness of territories, areas in decline, etc.). If within this vision, we fail to generate popular enthusiasm and broad support for a new Mediterranean, we will have to prepare for a particularly difficult tomorrow.
Panorama: The Mediterranean Year
ALBANIA

Official Name: Republic of Albania
Form of Government: Parliamentary republic
Head of State: Ilir Meta
Head of Government: Edi Rama

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
Socialist Party of Albania (PSSH, social democrat) 74
Democratic Party of Albania (PDS, conservative) 43
Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI, social democrat) 19
Party for Justice, Integration and Unity (PDIU, Albanian nationalism, centre-right) 3
Social Democratic Party of Albania (social-democracy, centre-left) 1

Population
Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Tirana (0.47)
Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Durres (0.20); Vlore (0.14)
Area km²: 28,750
Population (millions): 2.9
Population density (hab/km²): 105
Population age <15 (%): 18
Population age >64 (%): 13
Average annual population growth rate (%): -0.2
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 12

Economy
GDP & Debt
GDP (millions $): 11,866
GDP per capita ($, PPP): 10,326
GDP growth (%): 3.4
Public Debt (in % GDP): 73.3
Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 0.7
External Debt (millions $): 8,437
Inflation Rate (%): 1.3
FDI
Inflows (millions $): 1,124
Outflows (millions $): 64
International tourism
Tourist arrivals (000): 4,070
Tourism receipts (million $): 1,921
Migrant remittances
Receipts (millions $): 1,065
Receipts (in % GDP): 8.7

Total trade
in goods and services (millions $): 5,442
  in goods (millions $): 3,671
  in services (millions $): 1,771
in goods and services (% GDP): 45.9

Imports
Exports
Balance
3,438
-2,004
787
-2,883
2,851
880
29.0
-16.9

Main Trading Partners
Import: Italy (31%), China (11%), Greece (9%), Germany (8%), Turkey (7%)
Export: Italy (48%), China (6%), Greece (6%), United States (6%), Germany (4%)

Society
Education
Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 98.4/96.1
Net enrolment rate (primary): 96
Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 95
Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 61
Mean years of schooling: 10.0
Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 3.5
R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.20

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

Security
Total armed forces (000): 9
Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.1

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

Health
Physicians density (per 10,000): 12.9
Hospital beds (per 10,000): 29.0
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 6.8

Emissions
CO2 Emissions (mt per capita): 1.3
Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 138

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

ICT
Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 105.1
Households with computer (per 100): 20.2
Internet users (per 100): 66.4
### Algeria

**Official Name:** People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
**Form of Government:** Semi-presidential republic  
**Head of State:** Abdelaziz Bouteflika  
**Head of Government:** Abdelmalek Sellal

#### Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Liberation Front (FLN)</td>
<td>164</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Rally for Democracy (RND)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement of Society for Peace - Front for Change (MSP-FC, Islamist coalition)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally for Hope for Algeria</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ennahda-Front for Justice and Development (FJD, Islamist)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Education

- **Adult literacy rate:** 97.1
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 97.1
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 43
- **Mean years of schooling:** 4.4
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** 4.4
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 0.6

#### Water

- **Water resources (km³):** 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):** 6.7

#### Economy

- **GDP (millions $):** 159,046
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 13,867
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -6.4
- **External Debt (millions $):** 6.4
- **FDI Inflows (millions $):** 1,546
- **FDI Outflows (millions $):** 55
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 243

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>60,134</td>
<td>32,915</td>
<td>-27,220</td>
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<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>49,912</td>
<td>29,354</td>
<td>-20,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>10,222</td>
<td>3,561</td>
<td>-6,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>-17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Main Trading Partners

- **Import:** China (16%), France (12%), Italy (9%), Russian Federation (8%), Spain (7%)
- **Export:** Spain (17%), Italy (16%), United States (11%), France (11%), Brazil (5%)

#### Development

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

#### Health

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):**
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 35.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 7.1

#### Emissions

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 3.3
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 93

#### Protected areas

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

#### ICT

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 117.0
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 37.0
- **Internet users (per 100):** 43.0
### BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Official Name: Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Form of Government: Federal parliamentary republic  
Head of State: Mladen Ivanić (Serb); Bakir Izetbegovic (Bosniak); Dragan Čović (Croat)  
Head of Government: Denis Zvizdić

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)</th>
<th>House of Representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party of Democratic Action (SDA, centre-right)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian Democratic Party (SDS, Serbian nationalist)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Front (DF, social democratic)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ, Croatian nationalist and conservative)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Population**

- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Sarajevo (0.31)  
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Banja Luka (0.20); Tuzla (0.12)

| Area km² | 51,210 | Population age <15 (%) | 14 |
| Population (millions) | 3.5 | Population age >64 (%) | 16 |
| Population density (hab/km²) | 69 | Total fertility rate (births per woman) | 1.35 |
| Urban population (%) | 40 | Life expectancy at birth: Men/Women (years) | 74/79 |
| Average annual population growth rate (%) | -0.5 | Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive) | 5 |

**Economy**

**GDP & Debt**

- GDP (millions $): 16,568  
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 11,253  
- GDP growth (%): 3.1

| Public Debt (in % GDP) | 44.0 |
| Public Deficit (in % of GDP) | 1.2 |
| External Debt (millions $): | 10,958 |
| Inflation Rate (%) | -1.1 |

**FDI**

- Inflows (millions $): 285  
- Outflows (millions $): 12

**International tourism**

- Tourist arrivals (000): 777  
- Tourism receipts (million $): 770

**Migrant remittances**

- Receipts (millions $): 1,870  
- Receipts (in % GDP): 11.4

**Total trade**

| in goods and services (millions $) | 8,821 | 6,051 | -2,770 |
| in goods (millions $) | 8,336 | 4,348 | -3,988 |
| in services (millions $) | 485 | 1,703 | 1,218 |
| in goods and services (% GDP) | 52.2 | 35.8 | -16.4 |

**Main Trading Partners**

- Import: Croatia (16%), Serbia (16%), Slovenia (13%), Germany (12%), Italy (9%)  
- Export: Slovenia (15%), Italy (13%), Germany (12%), Croatia (11%), Austria (9%)  

**Society**

**Education**

- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 99.2/94.9  
- Net enrolment rate (primary):  
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary):  
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):  
- Mean years of schooling: 9.0  
- Public expenditure on education (% of GDP): 0.20  
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP):

**Water**

- Water resources (km²): 37.5  
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 86  
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 66  
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 15  
- Desalinated water production (millions m³):

**Security**

- Total armed forces (000): 11  
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.0

**Development**

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

**Health**

- Physicians density (per 10,000): 18.9  
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 35.0  
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 9.4

**Emissions**

- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 5.8  
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 234

**Protected areas**

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

**ICT**

- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 89.3  
- Households with computer (per 100): 77.5  
- Internet users (per 100): 54.7
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) 55
- Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP) 35
- Bridge of Independent Lists (Most) 10
- Croatian People's Party - Liberal Democrats (HNS) 5
- Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) 5
- Civic Liberal Alliance (GLAS) 5
- Istrian Democratic Assembly 5
- Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS) 3
- Bridge of Independent Lists (Most) 10
- Independent Democrats 7
- Other 15

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 (millions): 4.2
- Population age <15 (%): 15
- Population age >64 (%): 19
- Population density (hab/km²): 75
- Urban population (%): 59
- Average annual population growth rate (%): -0.8
- Total fertility rate (births per woman): 1.46
- Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years): 74/80
- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 4

Economy

- GDP & Debt
  - GDP (millions $): 50,731
  - GDP per capita ($, PPP): 21,537
  - GDP growth (%): 3.0
  - Public Debt (in % of GDP): 82.7
  - Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 2.0
  - External Debt (millions $): -1.1
  - Inflation Rate (%): -1.1

- FDI
  - Inflows (millions $): 1,745
  - Outflows (millions $): -422

- International tourism
  - Tourist arrivals (000): 13,809
  - Tourism receipts (million $): 9,820

- Migrant remittances
  - Receipts (millions $): 2,253
  - Receipts (in % GDP): 4.5

- Total trade
  - in goods and services (millions $)
    - Imports: 23,655
    - Exports: 25,063
    - Balance: 1,408
  - in goods (millions $)
    - Exports: 19,749
    - Imports: 11,573
    - Balance: -8,176
  - in services (millions $)
    - Exports: 3,906
    - Imports: 13,490
    - Balance: 9,584
  - in goods and services (% GDP)
    - Exports: 46.2
    - Imports: 48.9
    - Balance: 2.7

- Economic Sectors
  - Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 4
  - Industry, value added (% of GDP): 26
  - Services, value added (% of GDP): 70

- Labour market
  - Labour participation rate, female (%): 45.6
  - Unemployment rate (%): 13.1
  - Youth unemployment rate (%): 31.4

- Employment in
  - Agriculture (% of total employment): 7.6
  - Industry (% of total employment): 29.8
  - Services (% of total employment): 65.4

- Energy
  - Production (millions mt oil eq): 4.4
  - Consumption (millions mt oil eq): 8.4
  - Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): 2,000
  - Import (% energy used): 45.9

Society

- Education
  - Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 99.6/98.7
  - Net enrolment rate (primary): 88.8
  - Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 98
  - Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 67
  - Mean years of schooling: 11.1
  - Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 4.6
  - R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.90

- Health
  - Physicians density (per 10,000): 31.3
  - Hospital beds (per 10,000): 56.0
  - Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 7.4

- Emissions
  - CO2 Emissions (mt per capita): 3.7
  - Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 354

- Protected areas
  - Terrestrial (% of total land area): 37.7
  - Marine (% of territorial waters): 16.3

- ICT
  - Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 104.1
  - Households with computer (per 100): 75.9
  - Internet users (per 100): 72.7

Main Trading Partners
- Import: Germany (15%), Italy (13%), Slovenia (11%), Hungary (7%), Austria (6%)
- Export: Slovenia (14%), Italy (13%), Germany (13%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (10%), Austria (6%)
## CYPRUS

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

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

<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>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>
<tr>
<td>Citizens' Alliance (SYPOL)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Nicosia (0.25)  
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Limassol (0.23); Larnaca (0.08)  
- **Area km²:** 9,250  
- **Population (millions):** 1.2  
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 127  
- **Urban population (%):** 67  
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 0.8  

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

- **GDP (millions $):** 19,810  
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 32,658  
- **GDP growth (%):** 3.0  
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 99.3  
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** 4.4  
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -1.2  

#### FDI

- **INflows (millions $):** 4,138  
- **Outflows (millions $):** 5,376  

#### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 3,187  
- **Tourism Receipts (millions $):** 2,756  

#### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** 343  
- **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>12,688.6</td>
<td>12,700.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>7,147</td>
<td>2,870</td>
<td>-4,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>5,542</td>
<td>9,830</td>
<td>4,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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></th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicians density per 10,000:</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds per 10,000:</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Emissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ Emissions mt per capita:</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger cars per 1,000 people:</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Protected areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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></th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile subscriptions per 100:</td>
<td>134.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with computer per 100:</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users per 100:</td>
<td>75.9</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</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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Cairo (19.49*) *including the population of Giza (4.03) and Shubra El-Khema (1.61)</th>
<th>Alexandria (4.95); Port Said (1.09)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area $km^2$: 1,001,450</td>
<td>Population age &lt;15 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions): 95.7</td>
<td>Population age &gt;64 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km$^2$): 96</td>
<td>Total fertility rate (births per woman): 3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (%): 43</td>
<td>Life expectancy at birth: Men/Women (years): 69/74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual population growth rate (%): 2.0</td>
<td>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

**GDP & Debt**
- GDP (millions $): 332,349
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 11,541
- GDP growth (%): 4.3
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 103.3
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 2.8
- External Debt (millions $): 67,214
- Inflation Rate (%): 10.2

**FDI**
- Inflows (millions $): 8,107
- Outflows (millions $): 207

**International tourism**
- Tourist arrivals (000): 5,258
- Tourism receipts (million $): 3,305

**Migrant remittances**
- Receipts (millions $): 343
- Receipts (in % GDP): 5.8

**Total trade**
- in goods and services (millions $): 66,623
- in goods (millions $): 49,645
- in services (millions $): 16,978
- in goods and services (% GDP): 24.7
- Imports: 94,326
- Exports: 20,021
- Balance: -72,305

**Economic Sectors**
- Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 12
- Industry, value added (% of GDP): 33
- Services, value added (% of GDP): 55

**Labour market**
- Labour participation rate, female (%): 22.0
- Unemployment rate (%): 12.4
- Youth unemployment rate (%): 34.6

**Employment in**
- Agriculture (% of total employment): 25.6
- Industry (% of total employment): 27.7
- Services (% of total employment): 48.9

**Energy**
- Production (millions mt oil eq): 69.5
- Consumption (millions mt oil eq): 79.4
- Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): 870
- Import (% energy used): -7.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66,623</td>
<td>94,326</td>
<td>-72,305</td>
<td>58,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49,645</td>
<td>20,021</td>
<td>-29,624</td>
<td>19,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16,978</td>
<td>14,305</td>
<td>-2,672</td>
<td>12,732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Society

**Education**
- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 82.6/67.2
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 98
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 86
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 34
- Mean years of schooling: 3.8
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 0.7

**Water**
- Water resources ($km$³$): 58.3
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 911
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 86
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 3
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): 200

**Security**
- Total armed forces (000): 836
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP (millions $)</th>
<th>GDP per capita ($, PPP)</th>
<th>GDP growth (%)</th>
<th>Public Debt (in % GDP)</th>
<th>Public Deficit (in % of GDP)</th>
<th>External Debt (millions $)</th>
<th>Inflation Rate (%)</th>
<th>FDI Inflows (millions $)</th>
<th>FDI Outflows (millions $)</th>
<th>International tourism</th>
<th>Migrant remittances</th>
<th>Total trade</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>332,349</td>
<td>11,541</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>103.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>67,214</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8,107</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>5,258</td>
<td>3,305</td>
<td>66,623</td>
<td>94,326</td>
<td>-72,305</td>
<td>58,326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Trading Partners**
- Import: China (15%), Germany (7%), Russian Federation (5%), United States (6%), United Arab Emirates (5%)
- Export: United Arab Emirates (10%), Italy (7%), Saudi Arabia (7%), United States (6%), Turkey (6%)
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)
La République En Marche! (liberal) 312
The Republicans (LR, liberal conservative) 102
Democratic Movement (centrist) 47
UDI, Agir and Independents 32
New Left Goup (social democrat) 31
La France Insoumise (left coalition) 17
Democratic and Republican Left (communist) 16
La République En Marche! (liberal) 312
The Republicans (LR, liberal conservative) 102
Democratic Movement (centrist) 47
UDI, Agir and Independents 32
New Left Goup (social democrat) 31
La France Insoumise (left coalition) 17
Democratic and Republican Left (communist) 16

Population

Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Paris (11.01)
Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Lyon (1.64); Marseille-Aix-en-Provence (1.63); Lille (1.03); Nice-Cannes (0.98); Toulouse (0.96)

Area km²: 549,087
Population (millions): 66.9
Population density (hab/km²): 122
Population age <15 (%): 18
Population age >64 (%): 19
Average annual population growth rate (%): 0.4
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 3

Economy

GDP & Debt

GDP (millions $): 2,466,472
GDP per capita ($, PPP): 39,860
GDP growth (%): 1.2
Public Deficit (in % GDP): -1.5
Public Debt (in % GDP): 96.6
Inflation Rate (%): 0.3
FDI

Inflows (millions $): 28,358
Outflows (millions $): 57,328
International tourism

Tourist arrivals (000): 82,570
Tourism receipts (millions $): 50,883

Migrant remittances

Receipts (millions $): 24,332
Receipts (in % GDP): 1.0

Total trade

Imports

in goods and services (millions $): 772,979
in goods (millions $): 537,300
in services (millions $): 235,679

Exports

in goods and services (millions $): 743,839
in goods (millions $): 507,079
in services (millions $): 236,760

Balance

-29,140
-30,221
1,081
-1.2

Economic Sectors

Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 2
Industry, value added (% of GDP): 20
Services, value added (% of GDP): 79
Labour market

Labour participation rate, female (%): 50.7
Unemployment rate (%): 10.1
Youth unemployment rate (%): 24.5
Employment in

Agriculture (% of total employment): 2.9
Industry (% of total employment): 21.8
Services (% of total employment): 76.8
Energy

Production (millions mt oil eq): 137.8
Consumption (millions mt oil eq): 246.5
Consumption per capita (kg oil eq): 3,710
Import (% energy used): 44.1

Main Trading Partners

Import: Germany (19%), Belgium (11%), Italy (8%), Netherlands (8%), Spain (7%)
Export: Germany (14%), United States (9%), Italy (7%), United Kingdom (7%), Belgium (7%)

Society

Education

Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): ...
Net enrolment rate (primary): 99
Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 111
Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 65
Mean years of schooling: 11.3
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP): 5.5
R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 2.2

Water

Water resources (km³): 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): 306
Military expenditure (% GDP): 2.3

Development

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

Physicians density (per 10,000): 32.3
Hospital beds (per 10,000): 65.0
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 11.1
Emissions

CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 4.4
Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 496

Protected areas

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

Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 103.5
Households with computer (per 100): 81.5
Internet users (per 100): 85.6
**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): 145  
- Communist Party of Greece (KKE): 15  
- New Democracy (ND, conservative): 76  
- Independent Greeks (AE, right): 9  
- Democratic Coalition (PASOK-DIMAR): 20  
- Union of Centrists: 6  
- Golden Dawn (XA, far-right xenophobic): 16  
- The River: 6  
- Independents: 3

**Population**  
- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Athens (3.05)  
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Thessaloniki (0.74); Patras (0.26); Heraklion (0.22); Larissa (0.17); Volos (0.14)  

**Area km²:** 131,960  
**Population (millions):** 10.7  
**Population density (hab/km²):** 83  
**Population age <15 (%):** 14  
**Population age >64 (%):** 20  
**Average annual population growth rate (%):** -0.7  
**Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 3

**Economy**

**GDP & Debt**  
- GDP (millions $): 194,639  
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 25,265  
- GDP growth (%): -0.2  
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 183.5  
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 3.8  
- External Debt (millions $): -838  
- Inflows (millions $): -3,126  
- Outflows (millions $): 16,533  

**Migrant remittances**  
- Receipts (millions $): 245  
- Receipts (in % GDP): 0.1

**Total trade**  
- Imports ($): 56,143  
- Exports ($): 54,863  
- Balance ($): -1,280  
- in goods and services (millions $): 45,429  
- in services (millions $): 1,107  
- in goods and services (% GDP): 29.1  
- in services (% GDP): 28.5

**Main Trading Partners**  
- Import: Germany (11%), Italy (9%), China (9%), Netherlands (6%), Republic of Korea (6%)  
- Export: Italy (11%), Germany (8%), Cyprus (6%), Bulgaria (6%), United States (5%)

**Society**

**Education**  
- Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 98.1/96.2  
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 96  
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 117  
- Mean years of schooling: 10.7  
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 4.6  
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 1.5

**Health**  
- Physicians density (per 10,000): 262  
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 43.0  
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 8.4

**Emissions**  
- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 5.9  
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 455

**Protected areas**  
- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 34.9  
- Marine (% of territorial waters): 6.0

**ICT**  
- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 112.8  
- Households with computer (per 100): 68.6  
- Internet users (per 100): 69.1
### 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)
- Likud (neo-conservative): 30
- Zionist Union (centre left): 24
- Joint List (Arab parties): 13
- Yesh Atid (centre, laics): 11
- Kulanu (centrist): 10
- The Jewish Home (religious far-right): 8
- Shas (ultraorthodox Sephardis): 7
- United Torah Judaism (ultraorthodox Ashkenazis): 6
- Yisrael Beitenu (far-right ultranationalist): 5
- Shas (ultraorthodox Sephardis): 7
- Others: 6

#### Population
- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Jerusalem (0.86)  
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Tel Aviv-Jaffa (3.72); Haifa (1.11)

#### Area (km²): 22,070
- **Population:** 8.5 million  
- **Population age <15 (%):** 28  
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 395  
- **Population age >64 (%):** 12  
- **Urban population (%):** 92  
- **Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 80/84  
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 2.0%

#### Economy

**GDP & Debt**
- **GDP (millions $):** 317,748  
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 33,101  
- **GDP growth (%):** 4.1
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 61.0
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** -0.5
- **Labour market**
  - **Unemployment rate (%):** 4.8
  - **Youth unemployment rate (%):** 8.6
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.5
- **FDI Employment in Inflows (millions $):** 12,324  
- **FDI Employment in Outflows (millions $):** 12,501

**International tourism**
- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 2,900
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 6,426

**Migrant remittances**
- **Receipts (millions $):** 974
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 0.3

**Total trade**
- **Imports**
  - in goods and services (millions $): 86,995
  - in goods (millions $): 63,113
  - in services (millions $): 23,782
  - in goods and services (% GDP): 27.3
- **Exports**
  - in goods and services (millions $): 94,447
  - in goods (millions $): 55,547
  - in services (millions $): 38,899
  - in goods and services (% GDP): 29.7
- **Balance**
  - in goods and services (millions $): 7,552
  - in goods (millions $): -7,566
  - in services (millions $): 15,118
  - in goods and services (% GDP): 2.4

**Main Trading Partners**
- **Import:** United States (19%), China (12%), Germany (7%), Turkey (4%), Netherlands (4%)
- **Export:** United States (37%), State of Palestine (6%), China (5%), Hong Kong SAR, China (5%), Netherlands (6%)

### Society

#### Education
- **Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%):** ../..
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 97
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 104
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 64
- **Mean years of schooling:** 13.0
- **Public expenditure on education (% of GDP):** 5.8
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 4.3

#### Water
- **Water resources (km³):** 1.8
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** --
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):** --
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):** --
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** --

#### Security
- **Total armed forces (000):** 185
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** 5.8

#### Development
- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.899
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 19

#### Health
- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 36.2
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 31.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 7.4

#### Emissions
- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 7.4
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 323

#### ICT
- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 131.7
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 78.1
- **Internet users (per 100):** 79.7
ITALY

Official Name: Italian Republic
Form of Government: Parliamentary constitutional republic
Head of State: Sergio Mattarella
Head of Government: Giuseppe Conte

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (Chamber of Deputies)
- Five Star Movement (M5S, populist movement): 222
- Free and Equal (left): 14
- Northern League (LN, regionalists, populist right): 125
- Associative Movement Italians Abroad (centrist): 6
- Democratic Party (social democrat): 111
- Popular Civic List–AP–PSI–AC (centre-liberal): 4
- Forza Italia (FI, conservative): 105
- Linguistic Minorities (SVP–PATT): 4
- Brothers of Italy (FdI): 27
- Others: 7

Population
- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Rome (3.76)
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Milan (3.11); Naples (2.20); Torino (1.77); Palermo (0.85); Bergamo (0.85)
- Area km²: 301,340
- Population: 60.6 million
- Population age <15 (%): 14
- Population age >64 (%): 23
- Population density (hab/km²): 206
- Total fertility rate (births per woman): 1.37
- Life expectancy at birth: Men: 81; Women: 86
- Average annual population growth rate (%): -0.2
- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 3

Economy

GDP & Debt
- GDP (millions $): 1,850,735
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 34,195
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 132.0
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 1.3
- Inflation Rate (%): -0.1
- FDI Inflows (millions $): 28,955
- Outflows (millions $): 22,794

International tourism
- Tourist arrivals (000): 40,373
- Tourism receipts (million $): 10,669

Migrant remittances
- Receipts (millions $): 10,669
- Receipts (in % GDP): 0.6

Total trade
- in goods and services (millions $): 491,647
- in goods (millions $): 387,656
- in services (millions $): 103,990
- in goods and services (% GDP): 26.4

Imports
- 555,167
- 453,764
- 101,402

Exports
- 63,520
- 66,108
- 2,588

Balance
- 63,520
- 66,108
- 2,588

Main Trading Partners
- Import: Germany (16%), France (9%), China (6%), Netherlands (6%), Spain (5%)
- Export: Germany (12%), United States (10%), France (9%), United Kingdom (5%), Spain (4%)

Development
- Human Development Index (Value): 0.887
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 26

Health
- Physicians density (per 10,000): 39.5
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 34.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 9.0

Emissions
- CO2 Emissions (mt per capita): 5.4
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 628

Protected areas
- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 21.5
- Marine (% of territorial waters): 20.1

ICT
- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 140.4
- Households with computer (per 100): 64.7
- Internet users (per 100): 61.3
**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  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Action Front</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamz, (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>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Socialist Ba’ath</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Awn</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Amman (1.16)  
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Zarqa (0.45); Russiefa (0.43); Irbid (0.31)

- **Area km²:** 89,320  
- **Population (millions):** 9.5  
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 107  
- **Urban population (%):** 84  
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 3.2  
- **Population age <15 (%):** 36  
- **Population age >64 (%):** 4  
- **Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years):** 73/76  
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 15

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

- **GDP (millions $):** 38,709  
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 11,396  
- **GDP growth (%):** 2.0  
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 95.1  
- **Public Deficit (in % GDP):** -0.4  
- **External Debt (millions $):** 27,126  
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.8

#### Labour market

- **Labour participation rate, female (%):** 13.9  
- **Unemployment rate (%):** 15.3  
- **Youth unemployment rate (%):** 38.5

#### International tourism

- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 3,858  
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 4,943

#### Migrant remittances

- **Receipts (millions $):** 5,135  
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 13.5

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services</td>
<td>21,002</td>
<td>13,679</td>
<td>-7,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>16,564</td>
<td>7,447</td>
<td>-9,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>4,438</td>
<td>6,233</td>
<td>1,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>-18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Economic Sectors

- **Agriculture, value added (% of GDP):** 4  
- **Industry, value added (% of GDP):** 29  
- **Services, value added (% of GDP):** 67

#### Energy

- **Production (millions mt oil eq):** 0.3  
- **Consumption (millions mt oil eq):** 8.6  
- **Consumption per capita (kg oil eq):** 1,140  
- **Import (% energy used):** 96.8

#### Main Trading Partners

- **Import:** China (16%), Saudi Arabia (11%), United States (8%), United Arab Emirates (6%), Italy (5%)  
- **Export:** United States (23%), Iraq (12%), India (10%), Saudi Arabia (9%), United Arab Emirates (5%)

### Society

#### Education

- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** 98.4/97.4  
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 89.2  
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 70  
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 36  
- **Mean years of schooling:** -  
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** 0.40  
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** -

#### Water

- **Water resources (km³):** 0.9  
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 145  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):** 52  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):** 3  
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** -

#### Security

- **Total armed forces (000):** 116  
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** 4.5

#### Development

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.741  
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 86

#### Health

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 26.5  
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 14.0  
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 6.3

#### Emissions

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 3.1  
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 109

#### ICT

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 196.3  
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 47.0  
- **Internet users (per 100):** 62.3
**Country: Lebanon**

**Official Name:** Lebanese Republic  
**Form of Government:** Confessionalist parliamentary republic  
**Head of State:** Michel Aoun  
**Head of Government:** Saad Hariri

### Political Parties
- Amal-Hezbollah and allies (Amal Movement [16]; Hezbollah [12]; Syrian Social Nationalist Party [3]; Others [4]; Independents [5])  
  - Seats: 40  
- Future Movement and allies  
  - Seats: 20
- Lebanese Forces and allies  
  - Seats: 15
- Progressive Socialist Party  
  - Seats: 9
- Arm Movement  
  - Seats: 4
- Others  
  - Seats: 11

### Population
- **Capital:** Beirut (2.28 million)  
- **Main urban agglomerations:** Tripoli (0.7 million); Sidon (0.3 million)

### Area
- **Area km²:** 10,450
- **Population (millions):** 6.0
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 587
- **Population age <15 (%):** 24
- **Population age >64 (%):** 8
- **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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP &amp; Debt</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $):</td>
<td>10,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP):</td>
<td>17,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP):</td>
<td>142.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP):</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $):</td>
<td>31,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%):</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDI</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflows (millions $):</td>
<td>2,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>773</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International tourism</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000):</td>
<td>1,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
<td>7,153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrant remittances</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (millions $):</td>
<td>7,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (in % GDP):</td>
<td>14.5</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>17,327</td>
<td>3,689</td>
<td>-13,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education
- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** ..
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 62
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 60
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 38

### Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water resources (km³):</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desalinated water production (millions m³):</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Security
- **Total armed forces (000):** 80
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** ..

### Development
- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.763
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 76

### Health
- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 23.8
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 29.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 7.4

### Emissions
- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 3.9
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 97

### ICT
- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 96.4
- **Households with computer (per 100):** ..
- **Internet users (per 100):** 76.1

### Main Trading Partners
- **Import:** China (11%), Italy (7%), Greece (8%), United States (6%), France (6%)
- **Export:** United Arab Emirates (10%), Iraq (9%), Saudi Arabia (8%), Kuwait (7%), Switzerland (7%)
**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-designate, 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 (0.77), Misrata (0.73), Zawiya (0.20)  
**Area km²:** 1,759,540  
**Population (millions):** 6.3  
**Population density (hab/km²):** 4  
**Population age <15 (%):** 28  
**Population age >64 (%):** 4  
**Urban population (%):** 79  
**Total fertility rate (births per woman):** 2.31  
**Life expectancy at birth: Men/Women (years):** 69/75  
**Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 11

### Economy

**GDP & Debt**  
- GDP (millions $): 20,463  
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 6,811  
- GDP growth (%):  
- Public Debt (in % GDP):  
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -43.2  
- Inflation Rate (%): 27.1

**FDI**  
- Inflows (millions $): 493  
- Outflows (millions $): 341

**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>13,409</td>
<td>6,395</td>
<td>-7,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Main Trading Partners

**Import:** Italy (13%), China (13%), Turkey (10%), Republic of Korea (8%), Tunisia (5%)  
**Export:** Italy (24%), United Arab Emirates (15%), Spain (11%), Germany (7%), France (7%)

### Education

- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): ..
- 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 (% agriculture): 83  
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 5  
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): 70

### Security

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

### Other indicators

- **Development**  
  - Human Development Index (Value): 0.716  
  - Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 102

- **Health**  
  - Physicians density (per 10,000): 20.9  
  - Hospital beds (per 10,000): 37.0  
  - Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): ..

- **Emissions**  
  - CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 7.2  
  - Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 348

- **Protected areas**  
  - Terrestrial (% of total land area): 0.3  
  - Marine (% of territorial waters): 4.3

- **ICT**  
  - Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 119.8  
  - Households with computer (per 100): ..  
  - Internet users (per 100): 20.3
### 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) House of Representatives
- Malta Labour Party (MLP, social democracy) 37
- Nationalist Party (NP, centre-right) 30

#### 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): 1,365
- Total fertility rate (births per woman): 1.42
- Life expectancy at birth: Men/Women (years): 80/84
- Average annual population growth rate (%): 1.2
- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 6

#### Economy

**GDP & Debt**
- GDP (millions $): 11,003
- GDP per capita ($, PPP): 38,206
- GDP growth (%): 5.5
- Public Debt (in % GDP): 56.2
- Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 3.2
- External Debt (millions $): 1,966
- Inflation Rate (%): 0.9

**FDI**
- Inflows (millions $): 3,575
- Outflows (millions $): -5,362

**International tourism**
- Tourist arrivals (000): 1,966
- Tourism receipts (million $): 1,451

**Migrant remittances**
- Receipts (millions $): 203
- Receipts (in % GDP): 2.0

#### 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>13,650</td>
<td>14,116</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>4,876</td>
<td>2,764</td>
<td>-2,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>8,774</td>
<td>11,352</td>
<td>2,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>124.1</td>
<td>128.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Migrant remittances
- Total trade

**Main Trading Partners**
- Import: Russia, Federation (17%), Italy (13%), China (12%), Singapore (6%), Germany (5%)
- Export: United States (24%), Germany (8%), China (7%), Italy (7%), Egypt (6%)

#### Education
- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 91.8/94.8
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 98.4
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 96
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 49
- Mean years of schooling: 10.9
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 7.8
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.80

#### Water
- Water resources (km³): 0.1
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 108
- Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 64
- Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 2
- 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): 39.1
- Hospital beds (per 10,000): 47.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 9.6

**Emissions**
- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 3.8
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 644

**Protected areas**
- Terrestrial (% of total land area): 23.1
- Marine (% of territorial waters): 4.7

**ICT**
- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 124.8
- Households with computer (per 100): 73.7
- Internet users (per 100): 77.3
MONTENEGRO

Official Name: Montenegro
Form of Government: Parliamentary republic
Head of State: Filip Vujanović
Head of Government: Dusko Marković

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)
Democratic Party of Socialists (centre-left) 35
Democratic Front (centre-right) 18
Democratic Montenegro (democrats, centrist) 8
Social Democratic Party (social-democracy) 4
Democratic Alliance (Demo) 4

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 (millions): 0.6
Population age <15 (%): 18
Population density (hab/km²): 46
Population age >64 (%): 14
Average annual population growth rate (%): 0.1

Economy
GDP (millions $): 4,175
GDP per capita ($, PPP): 15,514
GDP growth (%): 2.9
Public Debt (in % GDP): 66.4
External Debt (millions $): 2,707
Inflation Rate (%): -0.3
FDI
Inflows (millions $): 226
Outflows (millions $): -185
International tourism
Tourist arrivals (000): 1,662
Tourism receipts (million $): 978
Migrant remittances
Receipts (million $): 392
Receipts (in % GDP): 9.5

Society
Education
Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 99.4/87.5
Net enrolment rate (primary): 93
Net enrolment rate (secondary): 91
Net enrolment rate (tertiary): 57
Mean years of schooling: 11.1
Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): -
R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.40

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): 23.4
Hospital beds (per 10,000): 40.0
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 6.0

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): 167.5
Households with computer (per 100): 56.0
Internet users (per 100): 69.9

Main Trading Partners
Import: Serbia (30%), Croatia (6%), Germany (6%), Italy (6%), Slovenia (5%)
Export: Serbia (15%), Hungary (10%), Pakistan (9%), China (8%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (8%)
**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) (House of Representatives) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Justice and Development Party (PJD, Islamist) | 125 | Socialist Union of People’s Forces (USFP) | 20 |
| Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM, liberal) | 102 | Constitutional Union (UC, centrist) | 19 |
| Istiglal Party (PI, centre-right, nationalist) | 46 | Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS, communist) | 12 |
| National Rally of Independents (RNI, centre-right, liberal) | 37 | Democratic and Social Movement (royalist) | 3 |
| Popular Movement (MP, conservative) | 27 | Others | 4 |

**Population**

- Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Rabat (2.04)
- Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Casablanca (3.58), Fez (1.22), Marrakech (1.20), Tangier (1.05), Meknes (0.75)

| Area km²: | 446,550 |
| Population (millions): | 35.3 |
| Population density (hab/km²): | 79 |
| Urban population (%): | 61 |
| Average annual population growth rate (%): | 1.4 |

**Economy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP &amp; Debt</th>
<th>Economic Sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP (millions $):</td>
<td>103,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP):</td>
<td>7,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Debt (in % GDP):</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Deficit (in % of GDP):</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Debt (millions $):</td>
<td>46,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate (%):</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI Inflows (millions $):</td>
<td>2,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International tourism Tourist arrivals (000):</td>
<td>10,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Migrant remittances**

- Receipts (millions $): 7,010
- Receipts (in % GDP): 6.8

**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>45,190</td>
<td>36,586</td>
<td>18,848</td>
<td>-17,738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy, Men / Women (%):</td>
<td>80.4/59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary):</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary):</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling:</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public expenditure on education (% of GDP):</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Water**

| Water resources (km³): | 29.0 |
| Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): | 316 |
| Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): | 88 |
| Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): | 2 |

**Security**

| Total armed forces (000): | 246 |
| Military expenditure (% GDP): | 3.2 |

**Main Trading Partners**

- **Import:** Spain (21%), France (13%), China (8%), Germany (6%), United States (5%)
- **Export:** Spain (24%), France (18%), Germany (4%), United States (4%), Italy (4%)
# 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)

<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>Palestinian National Initiative (social-democracy)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Way (centre)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):</th>
<th>Ramallah (0.08) [Administrative capital]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):</td>
<td>Gaza City (0.66); Hebron (0.22); Nablus (0.21); Jenin (0.15); Khan Yunis (0.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area km²:</td>
<td>6,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions):</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km²):</td>
<td>756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (%)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual population growth rate (%)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Economy

#### GDP & Debt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP (millions $):</th>
<th>_</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita ($, PPP):</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth (%):</td>
<td>4.1</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>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDI Inflows (millions $):</th>
<th>269</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outflows (millions $):</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International tourism</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000):</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (millions $):</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Migrant remittances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts (millions $):</th>
<th>1,723</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipts (in % GDP):</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in goods and services (millions $):</th>
<th>7,154</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $):</td>
<td>6,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $):</td>
<td>1,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP):</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Development Index (Value):</th>
<th>0.684</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (Position in ranking):</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physicians density (per 10,000):</th>
<th>_</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospital beds (per 10,000):</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):                | _                                         |

#### Emissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):</th>
<th>_</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Emission (in % of total land area):</th>
<th>_</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marine (of territorial waters):</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Protected areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobile subscriptions (per 100):</th>
<th>76.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households with computer (per 100):</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Main Trading Partners

| Import: Jordan (15%), Egypt (10%), Germany (9%), Turkey (9%), Republic of Korea (9%) | _                                         |
| Export: Israel (88%), Jordan (5%), United Arab Emirates (2%), Saudi Arabia (1%), United States (1%) | _                                         |

### Society

#### Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%):</th>
<th>98.6/95.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net enrolment rate (primary):</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (secondary):</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling:</td>
<td>9.1</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>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water resources (km³):</th>
<th>0.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):</td>
<td>111</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>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total armed forces (000):</th>
<th>_</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military expenditure (% GDP):</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users (per 100):</td>
<td>61.2</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)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party (PSD)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party (PS)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Bloc (BE, socialism / Trotskyism / communism)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic and Social Centre - People’s Party (CDS/PP, Christian democracy)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecologist Party “The Greens” (PEV)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People-Animals-Nature</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Population**

- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Lisbon (2.92)  
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Porto (1.31); Braga (0.19); Guimaraes (0.16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area km²</td>
<td>92,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (millions)</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (hab/km²)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban population (%)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average annual population growth rate (%)</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economy**

- **GDP (millions $):** 204,649  
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 27,705

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Sectors</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Value added (% of GDP): 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Value added (% of GDP): 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Value added (% of GDP): 76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour market</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour participation rate, female (%)</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| External Debt (in % of GDP)            | 129.9                                            |
| Inflation Rate (%)                     | 0.6                                              |

**FDI**

- **Inflows (millions $):** 6,065  
- **Outflows (millions $):** 1,583

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International tourism</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourist arrivals (000)</td>
<td>11,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism receipts (million $):</td>
<td>17,185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Migrant remittances**

- **Receipts (millions $):** 4,582
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total trade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>79,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>64,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>14,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>93,923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>54,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>-10,240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Development**

- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.843

**Health**

- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 44.3
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 34.0
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 9.0

**Emissions**

- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 4.5
- **Passenger cars (per 1,000 people):** 441

**Protected areas**

- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 22.1
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 5.5

**ICT**

- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 109.1
- **Households with computer (per 100):** 71.1
- **Internet users (per 100):** 70.4
SERBIA

Official Name: Republic of Serbia
Form of Government: Parliamentary republic
Head of State: Aleksandar Vučić
Head of Government: Ana Brnabić

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats)

- Serbian Progressive Party 104
- Liberal Democratic Party - League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina - SDA 9
- Socialist Party of Serbia (socialism) 22
- Serbian Radical Party 22
- Democratic Party 15
- Party of United Pensioners of Serbia 9
- Social Democratic Party 10
- Dveri (right wing) 7
- Others 43

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 (millions): 7.1
- Population density (hab/km²): 81
- Urban population (%): 56
- Average annual population growth rate (%): -0.5
- Population age <15 (%): 17
- Population age >64 (%): 17
- Population density (hab/km²): 81
- Total fertility rate (births per woman): 73/78
- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 5

Economy

- GDP & Debt
  - GDP (millions $): 37,745
  - GDP per capita ($, PPP): 13,366
  - GDP growth (%): 2.8
  - Public Debt (in % GDP): 73.1
  - Public Deficit (in % of GDP): 1.9
  - External Debt (millions $): 29,599
  - Inflation Rate (%): 1.1
- FDI
  - Inflows (millions $): 2,299
  - Outflows (millions $): 240
- International tourism
  - Tourist arrivals (000): 1,371
  - Tourism receipts (million $): 1,460
- Migrant remittances
  - Receipts (millions $): 4,171
  - Receipts (in % GDP): 9.4

Total trade

- in goods and services (millions $) Imports: 22,564; Exports: 20,392; Balance: -2,172
- in goods (millions $) Imports: 17,957; Exports: 14,172; Balance: -3,785
- in services (millions $) Imports: 4,607; Exports: 6,220; Balance: 1,613
- in goods and services (% GDP) Imports: 50.1; Exports: 45.3; Balance: -4.8

Society

Education

- Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): 99.5/98.2
- Net enrolment rate (primary): 96.3
- Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 96
- Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 62
- Mean years of schooling: 11.0
- Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 4.2
- R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.90

Water

- Water resources (km³): 8.4
- Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 469
- Water withdrawal by sector (agriculture): 65
- Water withdrawal by sector (industry): 12
- Desalinated water production (millions m³): 30

Securty

- Total armed forces (000): 28
- Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.9

Development

- Human Development Index (Value): 0.776
- Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 68

Health

- Physicians density (per 10,000): 24.6
- Hospital beds (per 1,000): 57.0
- Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 9.4

Emissions

- CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 6.3
- Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 207

ICT

- Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 120.6
- Households with computer (per 100): 65.8
- Internet users (per 100): 67.1
### 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 (DESUS) (single-issue): 11
- Social Democrats (SD): 6

- United Left (ZL) (social democracy): 6
- New Slovenia - Christian People's Party (NSi): 5
- Democratic Pensioners' Party of Slovenia (DESUS): 4
- Group of Unaffiliated Deputies (NP): 2
- Minorities (Hungarian and Italian minorities' interests): 2
- Group of Unaffiliated Deputies: 2
- Unaffiliated deputy: 2

#### 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)
- **Area km²:** 20,270
- **Population (millions):** 2.1
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 103
- **Population age <15 (%):** 15
- **Population age >64 (%):** 19
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** 0.1
- **Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive):** 2

#### Economy
- **GDP (millions $):** 44,727
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 31,340
- **GDP growth (%):** 3.1
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 75.4
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** 1.5
- **Inflation Rate (%):** -0.1
- **FDI Inflows (millions $):** 919
- **FDI Outflows (millions $):** 98
- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 3,032
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 2,627
- **Total trade in goods and services (millions $):** 30,621
  - **Imports:** 24,853
  - **Exports:** 25,944
- **Balance:** 4,232
- **Import % energy used:** 48.5
- **Export: Germany (22%), Italy (10%), Croatia (9%), Austria (8%), Hungary (5%)**

#### Main Trading Partners
- **Import: Germany (17%), Italy (13%), Austria (9%), China (7%), Croatia (5%)**
- **Export:** Germany (22%), Italy (10%), Croatia (9%), Austria (8%), Hungary (5%)
### SPAIN

**Official Name:** Kingdom of Spain  
**Form of Government:** Parliamentary constitutional monarchy  
**Head of State:** King Felipe VI  
**Head of Government:** Pedro Sánchez

#### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (Congress of Deputies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People’s Party (PP, conservative)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE, social democrat)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United We Can - In Common We Can - En Masse (left wing)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens – Party of the Citizenry</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC, independentist regional)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalan European Democratic Party (independentist regional)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Nationalist Party (Christian democratic nationalist)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment Coalition (left wing, environmentalist)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH-Bildu (far left, Basque nationalist)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Population

| Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): | Madrid (6.32) |
| Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): | Barcelona (5.85); Valencia (0.82); Zaragoza (0.71); Seville (0.70) |

| Area (km²): | 505,940 |
| Population (millions): | 46.4 |
| Population density (hab/km²): | 93 |
| Urban population (%): | 80 |
| Average annual population growth rate (%): | 0.0 |

#### Economy

**GDP & Debt**

| GDP (millions $): | 1,232,597 |
| GDP per capita ($, PPP): | 34,873 |
| GDP growth (%): | 3.3 |
| Public Debt (in % GDP): | 99.0 |
| Public Deficit (in % of GDP): | -2.0 |
| External Debt (millions $): | - |
| Inflation Rate (%): | -0.2 |
| FDI | Inflows (millions $): 18,659 |
| Outflows (millions $): 41,789 |
| International tourism | Tourist arrivals (000): 75,315 |
| Tourism receipts (millions $): 60,605 |
| Migrant remittances | Receipts (millions $): 10,352 |
| Receipts (in % GDP): 0.8 |

**Total trade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goods and Services</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (millions $)</td>
<td>371,086.4</td>
<td>407,987.3</td>
<td>36,900.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods (millions $)</td>
<td>300,127</td>
<td>280,855</td>
<td>-19,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in services (millions $)</td>
<td>70,960</td>
<td>127,132</td>
<td>56,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in goods and services (% GDP)</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Trading Partners**

- **Import:** Germany (15%), France (12%), Italy (8%), China (7%), Netherlands (6%)
- **Export:** France (13%), Germany (11%), Portugal (8%), Italy (8%), United Kingdom (8%)

#### Society

**Education**

| Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): | 98.8/97.7 |
| Net enrolment rate (primary): | 99.4 |
| Gross enrolment rate (secondary): | 128 |
| Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): | 91 |
| Mean years of schooling: | 9.9 |
| Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): | 4.3 |
| R&D expenditure (% of GDP): | 1.2 |

**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): | 38.2 |
| Hospital beds (per 10,000): | 30.0 |
| Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): | 9.2 |

**Emissions**

| CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): | 5.3 |
| Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): | 482 |

**Protected areas**

| Terrestrial (% of total land area): | 28.0 |
| Marine (% of territorial waters): | 7.5 |

**ICT**

| Mobile subscriptions (per 100): | 109.7 |
| Households with computer (per 100): | 77.1 |
| Internet users (per 100): | 80.6 |
# SYRIA

**Official Name:** Syrian Arab Republic  
**Form of Government:** Dominant-party semi-presidential state  
**Head of State:** Bashar al-Assad  
**Head of Government:** Imad Khamis

### Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (People’s Council of Syria)
- National Progressive Front (NFP, coalition led by the Baath Party) 200
- Independents 50

### Population
- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Damascus (2.59)  
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Aleppo (3.64); Homs (1.69); Hamah (1.30); Latakia (0.80)
- **Area km²:** 185,180  
- **Population (millions):** 18.4  
- **Population density (hab/km²):** 100  
- **Urban population (%):** 58  
- **Average annual population growth rate (%):** -1.6  
- **Population age <15 (%):** 37  
- **Population age >64 (%):** 4  
- **Population (millions):** 18.4  
- **Population age >64 (%):** 4

### Economy
- **GDP & Debt**
  - GDP (millions $): ..  
  - GDP per capita ($, PPP): ..  
  - GDP growth (%): ..  
  - Public Debt (in % GDP): ..  
  - Public Deficit (in % of GDP): ..  
  - External Debt (millions $): 4,394  
  - Inflation Rate (%): ..  
  - FDI Inflows (millions $): ..  
  - Outflows (millions $): ..  

### Migrant remittances
- **Receipts (millions $):** 1,623  
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 7.4

### Total trade
- **Imports**  
  - in goods and services (millions $): ..  
  - in goods (millions $): 6,036  
  - in services (millions $): ..  
- **Exports**  
  - in goods and services (millions $): ..  
  - in goods (millions $): 2,243  
  - in services (millions $): ..  
  - Balance in goods and services (millions $): -3,793

### Education
- **Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%):** ..../..  
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 66.7  
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 49  
- **Mean years of schooling:** 39  
- **Public expenditure in education (% of GDP):** 5.1  
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** ..

### Water
- **Water resources (km³):** 16.8  
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 863  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture):** 24  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (% industry):** 29  

### Security
- **Total armed forces (000):** 278  
- **Military expenditure (% GDP):** ..

### Main Trading Partners
- **Import:** Turkey (28%), China (18%), Lebanon (7%), Republic of Korea (4%), Russian Federation (4%)  
- **Export:** Iraq (48%), Lebanon (12%), Jordan (6%), Saudi Arabia (5%), Turkey (4%)
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) (Assembly of the Republic)
Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) (conservative) 51
Besa Movement (social conservative) 5
Alliance for The Albanians 3
Democratic Party of Albanians (PDS/DPA, Albanian) 2
Democratic Union for Integration (BDI/DUI, (Albanian minority interests) 10

Population
Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Skopje (0.66)
Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Bitola (0.11); Kumanovo (0.11)
Area km²: 25,710
Population age <15 (%): 17
Population (millions): 2.1
Population age >64 (%): 13
Population density (hab/km²): 83
Total fertility rate (births per woman): 1.52
Urban population (%): 57
Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years): 74/78
Average annual population growth rate (%): 0.1
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 11

Economy
GDP & Debt
GDP (millions $): 10,914
GDP per capita ($, PPP): 13,598
GDP growth (%): 2.4
Public Debt (in % GDP): 39.3
Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -1.4
External Debt (millions $): 7,383
Inflation Rate (%): -0.2
FDI
Inflows (millions $): 397
Outflows (millions $): 5
International tourism
Tourist arrivals (000): 510
Tourism receipts (million $): 283
Migrant remittances
Receipts (millions $): 289
Receipts (in % GDP): 2.8

Total trade
Imports Exports Balance
in goods and services (millions $) 7,000 5,365 -1,635
in goods (millions $) 5,843 3,767 -2,076
in services (millions $) 1,156 1,598 441
in goods and services (% GDP) 65.1 49.9 -15.2

Society
Education
Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%): ...
Net enrolment rate (primary): 91.1
Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 82
Gross enrolment rate (tertiary): 41
Mean years of schooling: ...
Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): ...
R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 0.4

Water
Water resources (km³): 6.4
Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 289
Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 76
Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 19
Desalinated water production (millions m³): ...

Security
Total armed forces (000): 16
Military expenditure (% GDP): 1.0

Development
Human Development Index (Value): 0.748
Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 82

Health
Physicians density (per 10,000): 28.0
Hospital beds (per 10,000): 44.0
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 6.1

Emissions
CO2 Emissions (mt per capita): 3.5
Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 185

Protected areas
Terrestrial (% of total land area): 9.7
Marine (% of territorial waters): 0.0

ICT
Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 100.7
Households with computer (per 100): 68.4
Internet users (per 100): 72.2
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) (National Constituent Assembly)**
- Ennahda (Islamist) 69
- Tunisian Aspiration (secularism, liberalism) 8
- Call for Tunisia (NT) (secularism, social democracy) 4
- Machrouu Tounes 3
- Popular Front (FP) (secularism, socialism) 3
- People’s Movement (secularism, socialism) 3
- Free Patriotic Union (UPL) (secularism, liberalism) 1
- Others 12

**Population**
- **Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions):** Tunis (2.03)
- **Main urban agglomerations (population in millions):** Sfax (0.75); Sousse (0.67); Kairouan (0.57)

**Area km²:** 163,610  
**Population (millions):** 11.4  
**Population density (hab/km²):** 73  
**Urban population (%):** 67  
**Average annual population growth rate (%):** 1.1

**Economy**

**GDP & Debt**
- **GDP (millions $):** 42,074  
- **GDP per capita ($, PPP):** 10,708  
- **GDP growth (%):** 1.2  
- **Public Debt (in % GDP):** 71.3  
- **Public Deficit (in % of GDP):** 3.6  
- **External Debt (millions $):** 28,111  
- **Inflation Rate (%):** 3.7

**FDI**
- **Inflows (millions $):** 958  
- **Outflows (millions $):** 34

**International tourism**
- **Tourist arrivals (000):** 5,724  
- **Tourism receipts (million $):** 1,706

**Migrant remittances**
- **Receipts (millions $):** 1,794  
- **Receipts (in % GDP):** 4.5

**Total trade**
- **Imports:** 21,376  
- **Exports:** 16,705  
- **Balance:** -4,672

**Water**
- **Water resources (km³):** 4.6  
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 304  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (agriculture):** 80  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (industry):** 5  
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** 20

**Security**
- **Total armed forces (000):** 48  
- **Military expenditure (in % GDP):** 2.3

**Society**

**Education**
- **Adult literacy rate, Men / Women (%):** 86.1/72.2  
- **Net enrolment rate (primary):** 98.6  
- **Gross enrolment rate (secondary):** 93  
- **Gross enrolment rate (tertiary):** 33  
- **Mean years of schooling:** 6.7  
- **Public expenditure on education (% of GDP):** 6.3  
- **R&D expenditure (% of GDP):** 0.60

**Water**
- **Water resources (km³):** 4.6  
- **Water withdrawal (m³ per capita):** 304  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (agriculture):** 80  
- **Water withdrawal by sector (industry):** 5  
- **Desalinated water production (millions m³):** 20

**Health**
- **Physicians density (per 10,000):** 16.5  
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 23.0  
- **Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP):** 6.7

**Emissions**
- **CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita):** 2.3  
- **Hospital beds (per 10,000):** 88

**ICT**
- **Mobile subscriptions (per 100):** 125.8  
- **Internet users (per 100):** 49.6

**Development**
- **Human Development Index (Value):** 0.725  
- **Human Development Index (Position in ranking):** 97

**Protected areas**
- **Terrestrial (% of total land area):** 5.4  
- **Marine (% of territorial waters):** 2.7
TURKEY

Official Name: Republic of Turkey
Form of Government: Parliamentary republic
Head of State: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Head of Government: Binali Yıldırım

Political Parties represented in the current Parliament (seats) (Grand National Assembly)
Justice and Development Party (AKP, Islamism, conservatism) 316
Republican People's Party (CHP, social democracy, laicism) 116
Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP, democratic socialist, anti-capitalism) 48
Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, Turkish nationalism) 35
 İYİ Party (centre, Turkish nationalism) 21
Independents 1
Vacant 13

Population
Capital (urban agglomeration population in millions): Ankara (4.95)
Main urban agglomerations (population in millions): Istanbul (14.56); İzmir (3.14); Adana (1.92); Gaziantep (1.60); Konya (1.26)
Area km²: 783,356
Population (millions): 79.5
Population age <15 (%): 25
Population age >64 (%): 8
Population density (hab/km²): 103
Total fertility rate (births per woman): 2.07
Urban population (%): 74
Life expectancy at birth. Men/Women (years): 72/79
Average annual population growth rate (%): 1.6
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 born alive): 10.9

Economy
GDP (millions $): 863,390
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP): 7
GDP per capita ($, PPP): 23,169
Industry, value added (% of GDP): 32
GDP growth (%): 3.2
Services, value added (% of GDP): 61
Public Debt (in % GDP): 28.3
Labour market
Public Deficit (in % of GDP): -1.0
Labour participation rate, female (%): 32.5
External Debt (millions $): 405,856
Unemployment rate (%): 10.8
Inflation Rate (%): 7.8
Youth unemployment rate (%): 19.5
FDI
Inflows (millions $): 11,987
Unemployment rate (%): 10.8
Outflows (millions $): 2,869
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 4.1
International tourism
Tourist arrivals (000): 30,289
Medical tourism (millions $): 2,453
Tourism receipts (million $): 30,290
Import (in % energy used): 75.2
Migrant remittances
Receipts (millions $): 1,169
Energy
Receipts (in % GDP): 0.2
Receipts (millions $): 0.2
Production (millions mt oil eq): 31.7
Total trade Imports Exports Balance
in goods and services (millions $): 213,229 187,827 -25,403
in goods (millions $): 191,014 150,193 -40,822
in services (millions $): 22,215 37,634 15,419
in goods and services (% GDP): 24.7
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 4.1
Development
Human Development Index (Value): 0.767
Human Development Index (Position in ranking): 71
Health
Physicians density (per 10,000): 17.5
Hospital beds (per 10,000): 27.0
Total Health Expenditure (% of GDP): 4.1
Emissions
CO₂ Emissions (mt per capita): 4.1
Passenger cars (per 1,000 people): 135
Protected areas
Terrestrial (% of total land area): 0.2
Marine (% of territorial waters): 0.4
ICT
Mobile subscriptions (per 100): 96.9
Internet users (per 100): 58.4

Society
Education
Adult literacy rate. Men / Women (%): 98.6/92.6
Net enrolment rate (primary): 94.1
Gross enrolment rate (secondary): 103
Mean years of schooling: 95
Public expenditure in education (% of GDP): 4.8
R&D expenditure (% of GDP): 1.00
Water
Water resources (km²): 211.6
Water withdrawal (m³ per capita): 561
Water withdrawal by sector (% agriculture): 68
Water withdrawal by sector (% industry): 8
Desalinated water production (millions m³): 1
Security
Total armed forces (000): 512
Military expenditure (% GDP): 2.0

Main Trading Partners
Import: Germany (13%), China (9%), Russian Federation (7%), Italy (6%), United States (5%)
Export: Germany (11%), United Kingdom (8%), Iraq (6%), United States (5%), Italy (6%)
Malta: The Political Situation

Dr George Vital Zammit  
Deputy Dean (FEMA)  
Lecturer, Department of Public Policy  
University of Malta

On 3 June 2017, Malta went to the polls for the 13th time since becoming an independent state (1964). The election was considered a watershed moment; an opportunity to fold a Labour government (in power since 2013) after a string of corruption and patronage allegations, or renew an administration credited with bringing forth the most prosperous economic times in history. The latter prevailed, and with the second consecutive landslide, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat was re-elected to office (54.8%) with a nine-seat majority. For the first time, the opposition presented itself as a coalition of two parties, the Nationalist Party (led by Dr Simon Busuttil) and the Democratic Party (led by Dr Marlene Farrugia) who garnered 43.3%. Following the electoral debacle, the two leaders in the opposition camp, resigned. This report highlights the context within which this election was held and gives a critical assessment of the salient events that characterized the political situation in 2017.

A National Hobby Called Politics

When called to the polls, Malta, once again, experienced a very high participation rate. For the June 2017 election, out of 341,856 registered voters, 314,696 (92.1%) cast their vote. Although this was the lowest turnout since 1996, it confirms the importance Maltese people give to general elections. The voting turnout trend ranks Malta ninth at the international level, and first in Europe despite having non-compulsory voting. Malta is hooked onto politics in many ways. A highly dense community living within confined spaces, the country offers close proximity to politicians, often considered as the panacea to problem solving. Moreover, the electoral system employed to elect governments, the Single Transferable Vote, renders politicians entirely dependent on the relationship they can cultivate with citizens.

Politics is pervasively present. Malta has preserved a two-party system that gives substantial leverage to the two main parties, the Partit Nazzjonalista and Partit Laburista, which almost share the entire spoils between them. A third party, the Alternattiva Demokratika, formed in 1992, has been unable to go beyond 1.8% of the national consensus (its best ever result in 2013 with 5,506 votes). According to Kenneth Wain, “the politics of polemic are ingrained in our culture and attain the quality of the spectacle in tribal events like the festa and the mass meeting,” where the “politics of tribalism is nurtured” at local and national level. Reactions on most issues in the country often spill over into politics, with respective territories guarded fervidly, assisted (and enabled) by party media (the two main parties own their own newspaper, TV and radio station).

3 SOLOJNOV, Abdurashid. “Voter Turnout Trends around the World,” International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Sweden, p. 50
The Economy

Malta’s economy in 2017 enjoyed an expansion. Despite the tumultuous years experienced by the global recession of a decade earlier, Malta retained an economic output that is 13% higher than the eurozone.5 High ratings were given by Credit Institutions; Moody ranked Malta A3, S&P deemed it A- (positive), and Fitch gave it a score of A+ (Stable).6 Foreign Direct Investment stood at €165.5 billion, while Direct Investment abroad amounted to €62.2 billion.7

The Economic Survey for 2017 reported that during the first six months, the Maltese economy grew at a nominal rate of 8.3% (real rate of 6.3%), outperforming the average growth rate in all other EU Member States and the eurozone. Growth was mostly “the result of a larger contribution from the external side of the economy, as growth in exports was coupled by a decline in imports.”8 Whilst Malta exited the excessive deficit procedure and ended 2016 with a surplus of over €100 million (1% of the GDP),9 a first in the last 35 years,10 government debt (fourth quarter of 2017) still stood at €5.642 billion.11 According to the Ministry of Finance, in the next 100 days after the new Government was sworn in, “Malta was rated to have had the best economic growth within the European Union and to have had the best increase in the creation of jobs within the EU.” It also had 28,000 more people working in the private sector than in 2012 (last financial year of a PN administration).12 The Labour Force Survey estimated that, during the fourth quarter, total employment stood at 203,651 accounting for more than half the population aged 15 and over whilst the number of unemployed persons stood at 7,891 (2.1%).13

The Presidency of the European Union

For six months (January to June 2017), Malta held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, part of the Triumvirate formed with the Netherlands (January-June 2016) and Slovakia (June-December 2016). This was the first time Malta had presided over the Council since joining the European Union in May 2004, and one of the last 13 Member States to do so that have joined since. Preparations for each Presidency start years in advance. The attention is focused on two main concerns: logistical (mainly the remit of the hosting state), and political (in coordination with Brussels and other Member States). The holder of the Presidency chairs meetings and gives political direction for the six months. Malta set six priorities: Migration, the Single Market, Security, Social Inclusion, Europe’s Neighbourhood, and Maritime Policy.14

The Presidency was not without controversy. In fact a general election was called almost a month (3 June) before the end of the Presidency. This has happened only once in the history of the EU Presidency when the then Prime Minister Donald Tusk (now President of the Council) called an election in October 2011, two months before the Presidency ended. Like Tusk in 2011, Muscat was re-elected to office. Besides the national drama, Malta carried out a programme with its Public Service heavily engaged with the political agenda of the Presidency executing a number of objectives, and preparing a few for its successor, Estonia. A number of achievements were scored at the policy level.15 The ‘pro-business’ politics that characterized the government’s programme was also transposed at the European level. In a document signed on 11 May

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5 GRECH, Aaron. The Evolution of the Maltese Economy since Independence, Central Bank of Malta, WP/05/2015
7 NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE (NSO). News Release, 14 February 2018, 024/2018
8 MINISTRY OF FINANCE. Economic Survey 2017. Government of Malta, p.4
9 The Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) underpins the corrective arm of the EU’s Stability Growth Pact. EU countries must demonstrate that: (i) their budget deficit does not exceed 3% of GDP; and (ii) public debt does not exceed 60% of GDP. Accessed on 13 June https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/excessive_deficit_procedure.html
11 Accessed on 10 June 2018 https://tradingeconomics.com/malta/government-debt
12 MINISTRY OF FINANCE. op.cit, p.2
13 NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE (NSO). News Release, 26 March 2018, 048/2018
15 For a synthesis, see report by Politico, 30 June 2017, “Malta’s EU presidency: How it went,” www.politico.eu/article/maltese-eu-presidency-how-did-it-go/
2017, a call was made to encourage more private sector investment and a reduction in what are considered to be barriers to investment. Consensus was gathered on the production of organic food and an agreement signed to reform the Emissions Trading System (reduction of 40% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030). On behalf of the EU, Malta signed an endorsement of the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women. In pursuance of the Digital Single Market, mobile roaming charges were brought to an end, while stronger and more effective rules entered into force on trade defence (anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures). The Presidency found convergence on setting up the European Public Prosecutor’s Office which will bring together European and national law-enforcement efforts to counter EU fraud. To respond better to the challenge of irregular migration, political agreement was reached on the establishment of the EU Agency for Asylum. Malta also managed to keep a united European front during the Brexit negotiations.

**Domestic Reforms**

The election of June 2017, not only retained a strong parliamentary majority after the resounding victory at the polls (nine seats), but also maintained a political landscape with a number of policy priorities at the forefront. Consistent with the conspicuously liberal agenda in terms of promoting minority rights for the LGBTIQ community, the government immediately set in motion the legislative process to pass the Marriage Equality Act (becoming the 14th European country to legalize same-sex marriage), thereby giving access to all existing rights as in heterosexual marriages. This move, followed by the introduction of a Gender Identity and Expression Act, which banned any form of conversion therapy on sexual orientation (in 2016), in addition to references to grant such couples equal parenting rights (reproductive and adoptive), ranked Malta first on ILGA-Europe’s Rainbow Index, for the second consecutive year (out of 49 Council of Europe Member States).

Earlier on in the legislature, the government introduced a number of reforms, such as the Protection of the Whistleblower Act (2013) aimed at protecting people who disclose information regarding improper practices, and amended the Criminal Code to remove prescription on acts of corruption committed by sitting ministers, parliamentary secretaries, Members of Parliament or local councillors. In 2017, the Public Administration Act was amended to scrutinize Heads of regulatory bodies and politically appointed representatives. Despite these efforts, the government’s record in good governance and transparency now ranked 47th place in the Corruption Perception Index 2017. The two people involved in the Panama Papers (2015), Hon. Konrad Mizzi and Mr Keith Schembri, maintained their posts. The former was reappointed as Minister for Tourism, whilst the latter remained Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister.

**Murdered, She Wrote**

On October 16, Malta was jolted by the brutal assassination of journalist, blogger and magazine editor, Daphne Caruana Galizia. Soon after leaving her house, Ms Caruana Galizia’s car exploded, killing her instantly, throwing a dark shadow over a country, until that point considered as relatively safe territory for journalists. Daphne had reported threats and intimidations before, adopting a no-holds-barred approach to anything and anyone. Having been a prolific writer for more than two decades, she took no qualms at hitting where it hurts, probing people who had to be held to account. Her reper-
toire was extensive, mostly (but not only) taking aim at the Labour party, advancing liberal causes such as inclusion and civil rights, and keeping an extensive followership at the national level. Her blog site (still available) was one of the most popular internet sites on the island, often the first source of scoops and breaking news in the political arena. So was her landmark story of 22 February 2016 – “If the (Panama) hat fits, wear it” – that outed the Minister for Energy and Health, Dr Konrad Mizzi as a holder of a bank account in Panama, a haven for tax evasion.25

On October 16, Malta was jolted by the brutal assassination of journalist, blogger and magazine editor, Daphne Caruana Galizia

Ms Caruana Galizia’s article unfolded what became nationally known as Panamagate, a saga full of accusations (and denials) that heavily impacted the political scene. Dr Mizzi had to renounce his candidacy for deputy leader of the party and was stripped of his Portfolio. He did not resign from politics and went on to be re-elected in June 2017. This saga remained on Daphne’s agenda but she continued to grab headlines, such as when she reported the Economy Minister’s presence at a brothel in Dusseldorf, whilst away on government business. The Minister filed three defamation cases against the journalist with the court subsequently issuing a garnishee order of €46,000.26 The assassination of Ms Caruana Galizia plunged Malta to 65th place in the World Press Freedom Index.27 According to Reporters without Borders (RSF), this “car bomb death lifted the veil on the judicial harassment and intimidation to which journalists are routinely subjected in the island state.”28 Towards the end of the year, the government announced that the existing Press Act would be repealed by a Media and Defamation Act,29 with the aim of allowing more journalistic freedom and eliminating the possibility of garnishee orders being imposed in connection with libel suits.30 On 17 April 2018, the Daphne Project, a consortium of international journalists and media houses was launched to continue the investigative work of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Conclusion

The perception of 2017 has been a nuanced one. Malta has taken a number of accolades with its strong economic performance, injecting further confidence in the island. Right in the middle of the Mediterranean, between two continents, Malta continues to forge an essential link at the political and economic level. Whilst hosting the Presidency, many praised the country for its diplomatic and negotiation skills, initiating and bringing to fruition a number of policy proposals. Its domestic front has been characterized by prosperity and employment (with low inflation), variables that secured continuity for the current Labour administration. On the other hand, good governance remains its main Achilles’ heel. The assassination of a journalist actively investigating the government threw a negative spotlight on the country, which raised concerns on a global scale. The perception is that in Malta’s quest for success and public approval, not enough is being done to ensure that impartial institutions (that can guarantee transparency and accountability) are in place.

25 Daphne CARUANA GALIZIA, “If the (Panama) hat fits, wear it,” Running Commentary, accessed 1 May 2018 https://daphnecaruanagalizia.com/2016/02/if-the-hat-fits-wear-it/
30 The Media and Defamation Act was enacted on 17 April 2018.
The results of the 4 March 2018 Italian elections are paradoxical. On the one hand, they clearly show three winners and three losers. On the other hand, they have made Italy enter a stage of extreme political uncertainty.

The losers are, first and foremost, the two main political parties that had been attempting to impose their hegemony for years on their respective ends of the political spectrum. At centre-left, the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico, PD), with 18.7% of the votes for the Chamber of Deputies, suffered a crushing defeat. It has almost disappeared in the south and has lost ground in its bastions in central Italy, which have always been a left-wing stronghold. In power during the last administration, it has been sanctioned for its policies, a sanction that the Italians have systematically applied since 1994, ‘removing the incumbents.’ Indeed, three Prime Ministers who were members of the PD succeeded one another: Enrico Letta, Matteo Renzi and Paolo Gentiloni. During this administration, many reforms were carried out. But they have divided the left, especially those regarding the labour market and school, and have not won over the Italians, who have the sensation, often grounded, that their situation has deteriorated despite a real return to growth. The Democratic Party is also paying for the excessive personalization and media coverage of its leader, Matteo Renzi, who has submitted his resignation in the wake of this disaster. In fact, the PD’s defeat is yet another example of the deep crisis of the entire continental European left. For its part, Silvio Berlusconi’s Forza Italia, with 14% of the votes, has obtained its lowest election results since it was founded in 1994. Il Cavaliere, at 81 years of age, no longer mobilizes anyone but his most diehard followers and no longer aggregates an arc of broader forces behind him ranging from the extreme right to the centre. He has thus been greatly weakened by the results of this election. The exhaustion of his party, which exists nearly exclusively for and by him, attests to a more generalized phenomenon, that of the difficulties of the European right, as can be seen, for instance, in France, Germany, Austria and Spain. In Italy, as elsewhere, the governing parties are penalized. And finally, the third election loser is the small radical left coalition party, Free and Equal, which aspired to weaken the PD and obtain some 6% of the votes, but only garnered slightly over 3% in the end.

The big winner is the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle, M5S) (32.6% of votes for the Chamber of Deputies), an unclassifiable party within the panorama of European populism. It proposes a programme that is at once classic left and post-modern left (citizens’ basic income, for instance) but also ecological and at the same time, rather right-wing in matters of security and immigration. During this campaign, the M5S carried out significant changes from 2013, when it became the leading Italian party with 25.6% of the votes. This time, it is headed by a young leader, Luigi Di Maio, aged 31, who, in contrast to Beppe Grillo, comes off as the leader of a credible party, even insofar as his manner of expressing himself and his ‘bodily hexis’\(^1\). It has mod-

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\(^1\) Bodily hexis is a concept ultimately developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bordieu, which could be summed up more or less as referring to a person’s subconscious use of their body, i.e. body language, posture, bearing, accent when speaking, etc. – Translator’s Note.
erated its criticism of the European Union, the euro and what it formerly called “the immigration business.” And finally, it has accepted the principle of possible alliances with other parties. The M5S, with a general presence throughout the territory, has above all conquered the peninsula’s south, which is in dire social straits. Its electorate is characterized by an overrepresentation of young people, the working class and people with lower levels of education. The League (Lega) is the second big winner (17.3%, as compared to 4% five years ago). Its leader has turned the North League (Lega Nord), a regionalist party hostile to Rome and the south, into a party inspired by the French Front National, deliberately situated at the extreme right, with its virulent criticism of immigrants, insecurity and the European Union. The League, well established in the north, has made inroads in the centre and gained some ground in the south. At its side, the post-Fascist party, Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d’Italia), with over 4% of the votes, doubled its results from 2013. The centre-right coalition of these two parties plus Forza Italia and a miniscule grouping of centre parties has thus shifted strongly further right.

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The electoral progression of the League, Brothers of Italy and the Five Star Movement follow a specific logic, but likewise attest to the depth of Italian discontent

Although an analysis of the election results is simple, future scenarios are unclear because no one party or coalition is in a position to exercise power alone, since they do not have the majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate. The parliamentary democracy and the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, are thus being hard tested. Already the presidents of the two parliamentary chambers were elected on 24 March after an agreement between the Five Star Movement and the League, which imposed the decision on Forza Italia, thus demonstrating its dynamism: in the Senate, Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati, one of Silvio Berlusconi’s people, and in the Chamber of Deputies, Roberto Fico, embodying the leftist tendency of the Five Star Movement and a priori faithful to its founding principles. For the Administration, all the combinations possible will be explored by Sergio Mattarella: a centre-right, centre-left alliance, an M5S-PD coalition, an M5S-centre-right union, an M5S-League coalition or a ‘minority’ administration led by a figure who, for a limited time, would have a narrow parliamentary majority, with the possibility of quickly returning to a vote in case of failure. The formation of the executive is rendered all the more complicated by the fact that the parties’ interests and programmes are incompatible, if not completely opposed. The Five Star Movement, for instance, promised citizens’ basic income during its campaign and must now meet the expectations of a southern electorate that demands social protection and aid from the government, which is not at all
what the electorate of the League—more liberal and
mistrustful of the bureaucratic and administrative
machine—expects. The Italians are thus waiting, as are the Europeans. Especially since these elections have marked a further stage in the major trend that began a quarter of a century ago of disenchantment, discouragement, or even scepticism regarding the EU registered in all opinion polls, whether Italian or European-wide. Of all the eurozone, it is Italy that registers the lowest level of adherence to the single currency. How should we interpret such a change in attitude among Italians vis-à-vis Europe?

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Indeed, Italy was a founding country of the European Community and was very Europhile for a long time, especially since it was a question of breaking with the warmongering nationalism of twenty years of fascism. Historically, at first, the strong Communist Party and the Socialist Party condemned the Common Market, denouncing an Atlanticist, anti-Soviet, capitalist and Christian Democratic Europe, which was in power in Italy and remained in power uninterruptedly until the beginning of the 1990s. The Socialists changed their position first in the 1960s, followed by the Communists in the 1970s, such that a broad, pro-European political consensus characterized Italy as of the 1970s, particularly since building the EU was then synonymous with growth, prosperity, protection and peace. Fissures began to appear as of the mid-90s, when the Maastricht criteria prevented governments from continuing to increase the deficit and public debt, which had allowed them to ensure a sort of social peace.

And again, beginning in 2007-2008, with the financial and economic crisis that severely affected the peninsula and entailed austerity, rigor, recession, unemployment, increased inequality and the growth of poverty. Finally, in 2013 and over the course of the following years, over 660,000 migrants arrived under dramatic conditions on the coasts of Italy and the Italians, with good reason, felt abandoned by the other EU Member States in their attempts to manage the situation. Mainly the League and the Brothers of Italy, but also, to a lesser extent, Forza Italia and the Five Star Movement, deliberately used the migrant question as a political resource, intentionally amalgamating three realities: that of immigrants established on the peninsula and regularized (over 5 million now, four times their number in 2001, which has overwhelmed Italy, unaccustomed to hosting so many foreigners); clandestine immigrants, who often live by their wits, are involved in trafficking of all sorts and practice delinquency; and finally, the inflow of migrants arriving under dramatic conditions after crossing the Mediterranean, over 600,000 of them in five years.

Will Italy continue to be a major protagonist in European construction and its hypothetical relaunch or will it prefer to stand aside? This is the great question that arises after these doubtless historic elections.

It is now a matter of ascertaining what orientation the new executive will take, if the executive can even be formed after the parliamentary vote, knowing that one Italian out of two voted de facto for parties that ultimately mistrust and criticize the European Union, although they attenuated their attacks against it during the election campaign, especially the Five Star Movement, more so than the League. Will Italy continue to be a major protagonist in European construction and its hypothetical relaunch or will it prefer to stand aside? This is the great question that arises after these doubtless historic elections.
The New Government in Macedonia – A Return to the Rule of Law and Democratic Standards

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On 31 May, 2017, a new government led by Zoran Zaev, the leader of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), was elected into office. The coalition government includes the SDSM with 49 MPs in Parliament (out of 120), and two ethnic Albanian parties, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), led by Ali Ahmeti, with 10 MPs, and the Alliance for Albanians, led by Ziadin Sela, with three MPs. A third ethnic Albanian Party, the BESA movement with five MPs, agreed to support the government without being part of the coalition.

The transfer of power was in itself traumatic. It was preceded by the refusal of the President over several weeks to hand over the mandate to form a government despite repeated requests from the international community, while violence erupted inside the Parliament on 27 April causing serious injuries to several of the then opposition MPs, including Zoran Zaev himself, and bringing the country to the edge of the precipice.

Prolonged Political Crisis

The election of the new government marked the end of a political crisis that had consumed the entire country over several years with the then ruling party, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), led by Nikola Gruevski, in power since 2006, imposing an authoritarian rule. Its control over all the state institutions including the judiciary, the media and the electoral process was absolute. In the case of media freedom, the decline was dramatic, Reporters without Borders ranking Macedonia in 111th place in 2017, a huge drop from 34th place in 2009. Civil society organizations were subject to intimidation and harassment by waves of tax inspectors sent by the ruling party, which used fear and intimidation as its weapons of choice to exercise its control over society.

In its Progress Report of 2016, the European Commission stated: “Democracy and the rule of law have been constantly challenged, in particular due to state capture affecting the functioning of democratic institutions and key areas of society.”1 Meanwhile the reports drawn up by the Senior Experts Group on Systemic Rule of Law (the so-called Priebe reports), requested by the European Commission, pointed to the “massive invasion of fundamental rights” and “the capture of the judiciary and prosecution by the executive power” revealed in the wiretapping scandal of January 2015, with evidence of abuse of power and alleged corrupt practices by government ministers and other senior officials from the VMRO-DPMNE.2

But even before 2015, there were warning signs of the deepening political crisis. The forced expulsion of the SDSM opposition MPs from the Parliament chamber together with all journalists on 24 December 2012 was the first of many red lines crossed by

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1 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. 9/11/2016 COM (2016) 715 Final
the VMRO-DPMNE before being voted out of office five years later. Its failure to respect the rule of law and uphold the democratic standards expected of a country aspiring to join the EU should have alerted the EU institutions to the depth of the worsening crisis. Yet, in its Progress Reports of both 2013 and 2014, the European Commission stated that "Overall the country continues to sufficiently meet the political criteria."3

When the EU finally did intervene by mediating an agreement between the main political parties in June/July 2015 and again in July 2016, aimed at restoring the rule of law, it failed to put in place any enforcement mechanism to ensure the proper follow up of all the pledged commitments. This contributed to an increased sense of impunity by the VMRO-DPMNE. The European People’s Party, of which the VMRO-DPMNE is a member, also shares responsibility by continuing to defend the party and its leader even after both he and senior officials from the party were put under multiple investigations for criminal offences.

New Government - Return to the Rule of Law?

After such a prolonged period of trauma, which has left open wounds in a deeply polarized society, it is small wonder that many referred to the task facing the new government as a poisoned chalice. Yet Zoran Zaev and his government lost no time in setting a new tone, adopting the language of tolerance and respect, and replacing the fear and intimidation of the previous regime with one of openness and transparency. It launched an open dialogue with civil society organizations and with the media, and has in its first year in office demonstrated its inclusive approach towards governance. In so doing, it recognized the crucial role played by civil society organizations who had defied the intimidation tactics of the then ruling party by rallying thousands of citizens from all ethnic communities under the so-called ‘colourful revolution’ calling for a return to the rule of law.

This is also an important lesson for the EU, which should do more to recognize and support the role of civil society and the media in governance, not just in Macedonia but also in the entire region. It is they who are best placed to ensure government accountability in the absence of the normal checks and balances we take for granted in functioning democracies.

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The government also demonstrated its commitment to the much needed and long overdue reforms set out by the EU and the recommendations contained in the above mentioned reports of the Senior Experts’ Group. Within two months from taking office, the government adopted the so-called 3-6-9 programme covering the most urgent reforms and recommendations. These relate in particular to the proper and independent functioning of the judiciary, law enforcement and prosecution, reform of the security and intelligence services with effective parliamentary oversight mechanisms, as well as independence of the regulatory, supervisory and oversight bodies, such as the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption. The government’s task however is made all the more difficult by the fact that so many of the officials appointed by the previous regime remain in place. The Prime Minister has been extremely cautious and rightly so, to avoid a repetition of past practices where the criteria for the appointment of senior officials to these bodies was their allegiance to the ruling party rather than their expertise and competence.

‘No Justice, No Peace’

In addition to restoring public confidence in the state institutions, the most urgent priority for the government remains that of ensuring due process for all the

3 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions. 16/10/2013 COM (2013) 700 Final and 8/10/2014 COM (2014) 700 Final
cases of criminal activities, abuse of power and corruption brought to light in the wiretapping scandal, now over three years old. The mantra of the ‘colourful revolution’ was ‘No Justice, No Peace.’ Despite the best efforts of the Special Prosecutor’s Office established in September 2015 to investigate these cases, no one has yet been successfully convicted, adding to the perception of impunity. The legacy of a highly politicized judiciary remains a serious obstacle. Whether the judiciary will of itself undertake the necessary reforms and conduct itself as an independent institution in a functioning democracy based on the rule of law remains an open question. In the partisan politics which dominated the country for so many years, only time will tell whether those judges, however small in number, who acted as agents of the VMRO-DPMNE, will change their behaviour and fulfil their responsibilities as expected from an independent judiciary free from political pressure.

Coalition Dynamics

Another huge challenge facing the Prime Minister is that he is leading a coalition government with competing interests at stake. This was brought to the fore by the insistence of the ethnic Albanian coalition partners, in particular the DUI, for the adoption of a language law, giving increased recognition to the use of Albanian alongside the Macedonian language. Although this was part of the coalition agreement, the manner in which it has been pushed through Parliament has become a source of tension within the coalition government. After the President, who remains closely aligned to the VMRO-DPMNE, refused to sign the bill into law, it returned to Parliament for further discussion and a second vote. The VMRO-DPMNE then tabled 35,000 amendments, even though, according to the DUI leadership, this law had been agreed by the VMRO-DPMNE in their aborted coalition negotiations in January of last year. While the opposition was effectively trying to block the work of Parliament by tabling so many amendments, all attempts by the Prime Minister to gain more time in building a consensus on the way forward with the opposition were rebuffed by the DUI leadership. With the governing coalition’s majority in Parliament being razor thin, the continued support from DUI remains vital for the government’s survival, leaving the Prime Minister with little if any margin for manoeuvre.

Although the adoption of a language law, giving increased recognition to the use of Albanian alongside the Macedonian language was part of the coalition agreement, the manner in which it has been pushed has become a source of tension within the coalition government.

It is worth noting that ever since the establishment of the DUI as a political force in the country following the 2001 conflict and the EU/NATO-mediated Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), it has been in a governing coalition for 13 of those 17 years, first with the SDSM government up to 2006, which successfully spearheaded the constitutional reforms required by the OFA, and then with the VMRO-DPMNE government from 2008 to 2017 (between 2006 – 2008, its rival ethnic Albanian party DPA was in the coalition). By remaining so long within the previous government, even after the corruption revelations and increased inter-ethnic tensions caused by the ruling party’s nationalist behaviour, the DUI party lost a lot of support from its core constituency having had 18 MPs when it first joined the coalition in 2008. The language law thus provided a golden opportunity for it to burnish its image as a defender of Albanian language rights and
the OFA. But the tactics it used in this respect, in addition to its weak defence of the rule of law and democratic standards during the previous government, leave it open to understandable and justified criticism.

**Will the Name Dispute Block EU Accession Negotiations?**

Despite these setbacks, and in view of all the progress achieved since it took up office, the government is expecting the European Commission, in its Country Report to be published on 17 April, to reconfirm the recommendation that a date be set for opening negotiations, following suspension of that recommendation since 2015 because of the political crisis. This would signal an important recognition of the government's efforts and commitment to lasting reforms.

However, a huge hurdle remains with the Greek government's insistence that a solution to the longstanding name dispute must be agreed before Macedonia can move forward to the next stage of opening accession negotiations. Prime Minister Zaev has already taken significant steps in engaging with his Greek counterpart and demonstrating the government's good will to find a mutually acceptable solution. Various symbols of the previous government's heavy-handed populist behaviour aimed at glorifying Alexander the Great are being or have already been dismantled. The government's good faith is further evidenced by the many overtures it has made to strengthen relations with its neighbours, such as the Friendship agreement concluded with Bulgaria in August of last year.

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Will this be sufficient to satisfy the Greek government, which has already taken significant steps in engaging with his Greek counterpart and demonstrating the government's good will to find a mutually acceptable solution. Various symbols of the previous government's heavy-handed populist behaviour aimed at glorifying Alexander the Great are being or have already been dismantled. The government's good faith is further evidenced by the many overtures it has made to strengthen relations with its neighbours, such as the Friendship agreement concluded with Bulgaria in August of last year.

Conclusion

As this article underlines, the challenges facing the new government remain vast and complex. For the Prime Minister to succeed in the long run, he will need to maintain a firm hand on the tiller to keep the ship of state afloat and sailing on an even keel. He will need to keep the coalition united to avoid the danger of early elections which the opposition has been campaigning for right from the beginning. Although the local elections last October gave an overwhelming vote of confidence for the new government with the coalition winning over two-thirds of the 82 municipalities, the government will need more time in order to consolidate the positive change in the political and legal environment.

Support from the EU and the opening of accession negotiations would give the government much needed breathing space. It would also give enhanced legitimacy to the government's efforts to promote inclusive governance based on the rule of law and proper functioning of democratic institutions, which is so badly needed in the Western Balkan region. In other words, strong institutions as opposed to 'strongmen.'

Geographical Overview | Western Balkans

A Step toward Regional Stability: Montenegro Joins NATO

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On 5 June 2017, Montenegro became the 29th member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Not surprisingly, it was almost a footnote in the international agenda of an eventful year; it was also a (seemingly) foregone conclusion since NATO had issued a formal invitation to join the Alliance on 2 December 2015. However its relevance for the region, let alone for the small Balkan country, cannot be underestimated. It further tips the balance toward security and stability. We are still a long way from the ultimate goal, but this is another step in the right direction.

Enlargements, whether through NATO or the European Union, enable new members to move away from instability and, therefore, toward stability. In addition, unlike previous enlargements, Montenegro’s membership comes against the backdrop of rising tensions in Europe and competition for influence in the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean; and it was met with strong opposition from Russia. Although Moscow was eventually unsuccessful, its attempt to derail Podgorica’s NATO membership was indicative of its current hostility towards the Alliance – wherever it may be. Just ten years ago, when Croatia and Albania joined NATO, Russia hardly raised an eyebrow.

The fact that Montenegro’s Atlantic move went almost unnoticed in the Mediterranean context is understandable but short-sighted. True, there are other much more serious concerns, if not emergencies (Syria, Libya, immigration and terrorism spring to mind), but the Adriatic remains part of the Mediterranean. Being on the relative periphery does not shelter it from the dynamics at play in the wider ‘Middle Sea,’ such as, for example, the sudden wave of Syrian refugees along the ‘Balkan route’ in 2015. Podgorica’s entry into NATO does not bring much to the Alliance in terms of military capabilities, but does have wider geopolitical and security implications in Europe and in the Mediterranean. With Montenegro in the Atlantic Alliance the Adriatic has become a NATO lake: its shores are an uninterrupted ring of NATO countries, but for the tiny, 20-kilometre-long, Bosnia-Herzegovina coastline.

In a nutshell, Podgorica’s entry into NATO shows that the process of Euro-Atlantic integration of southeastern Europe has not ground to a halt. This is good news for the other countries that have so far remained outside of the NATO and/or European Union tent. It is good news for NATO that, like the EU, it retains some kind of ‘power to attract’ that pushes candidates toward reforms, rule of law and modernization. It should be encouraging news for an EU that has allowed the Western Balkans’ enlargement to drift to the backburner of the Juncker Commission, but is now trying to re-energize the process. It was bad news for Russia, but only because Moscow chose to oppose it and ended up on the losing side.

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Montenegro’s NATO membership matters for the country itself and for the Western Balkan-Adriatic region as a whole. The two perspectives are interrelated but need to be assessed separately.

Montenegro’s Choice

For Podgorica, NATO membership is a major leap forward toward a Western-oriented future. It obviously comes with the Washington Treaty’s standard guarantees, namely Article 5 on security insurance, and obligations; but above all it has to do with identity and a sense of belonging. By entering NATO, Montenegro has chosen what and where it wants to be: a ‘Western’ nation. There was nothing automatic in squarely positioning itself in the Atlantic quarters; on the contrary, it took a controversial domestic decision and further distancing from Serbia.

For the Western Balkan countries, NATO and the EU are strategic goals. The two organizations also define the identity they are seeking while still emerging from the separation imposed by the Cold War and from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia – similar identity issues, incidentally, apply to the countries of the former Soviet Union. For nearly half a century the Cold War split Europe into two halves. Nations east of the Iron Curtain were cut off politically, economically and culturally from the mainstream of western Europe. To rejoin it – if they choose to – they need to reposition themselves within the multilateral network that was slowly but systematically built in Europe and across the Atlantic after World War II. Richard Holbrooke described it as ‘interlocking institutions,’ including organizations like OSCE and the Council of Europe. The Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are the hard core. While security and prosperity motivate candidate countries to apply for either, or both, the road to membership is also a crucial step in their quest for identity.

For Djukanovic’s strategy to succeed, Montenegro had to differentiate itself from Serbia after independence. Geopolitically, Podgorica’s NATO membership fulfills three strategic purposes: distancing from Belgrade, aligning with its neighbours (Albania, Croatia, and Slovenia) and anchoring the Atlantic community. Not bad for a tiny, ten-year old (when it joined) Balkan country. Psychologically, Montenegro has made a break with the past and chartered a new course into the future. Serbia, where NATO is still a toxic word, is struggling to free itself from the shackles of the past. Therefore, if the rationale for Montenegro’s independence and nationhood hung in the balance in 2006, subsequent developments have vindicated it. NATO membership can offer further consolidation.

The independence drive was led by the then (and current) Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic. The rationale was a thin one: Montenegro could not take the path of democratic and Western-oriented reforms unless it cut its ties with Belgrade and become a sovereign state. According to Djukanovic, being part of the Federation, even after Slobodan Milosevic’s fall, was preventing Montenegro from setting a new course and pursuing it. The independence aftermath has proved him right: Montenegro has ‘moved West’ to an extent that Serbia has been, and remains, unwilling to do. Both countries are now EU candidates: Belgrade has also taken the European path and is not looking back. But NATO makes the difference: Montenegro is a member, while Serbia remains a rather hesitant Atlantic partner.

The Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are the hard core. While security and prosperity motivate candidate countries to apply for either, or both, the road to membership is also a crucial step in their quest for identity.
Regional Consequences

The Western Balkans have made enormous progress since the tragic wars, humanitarian crimes and multiple crises of the 1990s. But much remains to be done. Progress has been unequal. Some countries have advanced well and fast, others at a slower pace, and some risk being left behind. There are major unresolved issues in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Now it has passed the emergency phase, Balkan ‘fatigue’ has kicked in, the focus of international attention has shifted to other parts of the world, local leaders’ political determination to stabilize and reform has often been wanting to various degrees. There are notable exceptions to the latter: countries that keep moving forward. Montenegro is a case in point, as its NATO membership clearly demonstrates.

Beyond its importance for the Montenegrins, entry into NATO is, actually, a small but significant step toward overall regional stabilization for the Balkans, which has been a major challenge on the international agenda for nearly two centuries. Attempts at establishing hegemony (Greater Serbia or Bulgaria and the like), at integration and at disintegration have all failed over time. In the aftermath of Yugoslavia’s implosion, Euro-Atlantic integration – that is merging the region with the rest of Europe and with the Atlantic community – appears to be the only promising option, following in the wake of the Eastern Balkans. The alternative would be isolation, which would inevitably bring with it infighting and decline.

Geography never lies: the Western Balkans have nowhere else to go, except toward the Euro-Atlantic space. A quick look at a map of southeastern Europe shows that the Western Balkans are completely surrounded by EU and NATO countries, on both land and sea. There is not a single centimetre of ‘Balkan’ border that does not meet the Union and the Alliance; the only exception would be the Slovenia-Austria border, since Austria is an EU member, but not in NATO (but Slovenia is both).

The progress report of the Western Balkans Euro-Atlantic journey shows a wildly diversified landscape. Two countries, Slovenia and Croatia, have entered both NATO and the EU; two more, Albania and Montenegro, are NATO members; all the others are in the waiting lines, but at very different stages.

With regard to the EU, all six non-EU members are in the membership pipeline. Serbia and Montenegro have already initiated the long process of negotiating accession; Albania and Macedonia could soon join them following a positive recommendation from the EU Commission (Brussels is making a parallel effort to overcome Skopje’s ‘naming’ dispute with Greece); Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are ‘potential’ candidates only. Sarajevo is largely paralyzed by domestic differences on the electoral law and by its long-term divergence with Republika Srpska; Kosovo is hindered by non-recognition by a number of EU Member States, led by Spain. Nevertheless, Pristina is making progress in its relationship with its neighbours and continues to negotiate with Belgrade through EU-‘facilitated’ dialogue. With regard to NATO, Macedonia is a partner that could easily become a member: only the ‘naming’ dispute stood in its way at the Alliance’s Bucharest summit ten years ago; Bosnia is a partner with little chance to join any time soon; Serbia is a partner not wishing to join; Kosovo would like to be a partner, and subsequently a member, but for the time being cannot be either because of opposition from countries that refuse to recognize it.

The snapshot captures the majority of Western Balkan countries well on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration but still in the grey area of transition and at different stages of advancement. Stability for the entire region will be achieved only when the process is completed and the EU and/or NATO umbrella is extended to all, with no exception. That applies especially to Serbia, which remains the single most important piece of the Western Balkan puzzle. In all likelihood, Belgrade will not seek NATO membership, but it is essential that it be anchored inside the EU. The roadmap will have to include recognition of Kosovo, as the Union cannot afford, and will not allow, to take in a new member with unresolved and pending disputes.

Euro-Atlantic integration is a tectonic regional shift from regional anarchy to stabilization within a more comprehensive architecture. Fits and starts are inevitable. Every new entry into NATO or the EU has the net effect of reducing the grey area, increasing overall stability and keeping momentum. This is exactly what Montenegro’s NATO membership has achieved. The balance has been tipped toward stability. Now, more of the same is needed.
What Protest in Morocco Reveals about Public Trust in Political Parties

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The ongoing wave of social and political protests sparked in Morocco during October 2016 demonstrates the increased frustration among citizens over the country’s political course in the past few years. Popular mobilization (or Hirak) in the Rif as well as in other regions, such as Jerada in the far east of the country, was centred around demands for job creation and the development of much-needed infrastructure. Subsequently, it has grown in reaction to the Moroccan government’s repressive actions against protesters, and it might expand even further if the protesters’ grievances are not properly addressed.

Underlying the protesters’ socio-economic grievances is a deep distrust in government politics and in the formal political process as a whole, as well as a feeling that the role of political parties as reliable mediators between state and society is eroding. This article describes how Moroccan authorities’ conduct has contributed to deepening distrust in party politics, thus fuelling the ongoing protests in the country.

Between 2011 and 2016

The government’s violent repression of the 2016 protests in the Rif, and later in other Moroccan regions, stands in stark contrast to its response to the 20 February Movement in 2011. At the time, the Moroccan monarchy launched a reform package that included both constitutional amendments and a political opening to absorb popular anger. Among the most significant amendments made to the 2011 constitution was the inclusion of articles guaranteeing public freedoms and the right to protest. The constitution also guarantees the right of citizens to propose legislation through petitions and sets limits on the monarchy’s powers in appointing the Prime Minister and the cabinet while enhancing the powers of the Parliament. In addition, the regime’s repression of the 20 February Movement protests was measured and proportional.

At the time, the Justice and Development Party (PJD), which was then in opposition, benefitted from these changes, and was quickly propelled to the helm of the government following the 2011 legislative elections. Its leader Abdelilah Benkirane was named Prime Minister, leading his party into consecutive electoral gains in the 2015 local and 2016 parliamentary elections.

However, since late 2013, the 2011 political opening has gradually closed again. Influenced by the regional political environment, including the anti-democratic developments in the Middle East, the election of President Trump in the United States, and pressure from some Gulf countries, and feeling threatened by the steady electoral gains of Islamist parties, the palace sought to strengthen the executive character of the monarchy by weakening the elected PJD government and galvanizing political parties loyal to the regime.

These actions further discredited the political process and weakened the role of both political parties and formal political institutions. The increased presence of the monarchy in daily politics has triggered doubts about the effectiveness of the elected government in solving socio-economic problems. The ongoing social and political protests are merely symptoms of the absence of the government’s internal and external accountability, and its inefficiency in providing public services due to widespread corruption.
Political Void

One clear example of the absence of accountability in government can be found in the ‘political deadlock’ that lasted for over six months. In March 2017, King Mohammed VI dismissed Prime Minister-designate Abdellah Benkirane after he failed to form a new government. Benkirane’s failure was due to the non-cooperation of pro-palace parties. This led to the replacement of Benkirane by another PJD figure, Saad Eddine El Othmani, who was obliged to abide by the palace’s conditions before being allowed to form his majority government. This move has not only weakened the PJD but also confirmed the palace as the most powerful institution in the country. It confirmed the idea that electoral results are not sufficient to create a government coalition without the palace’s blessings. Moreover, the manipulation of political elites has discredited them in the eyes of citizens, leading to a leadership vacuum in political representation and distrust in the political process altogether.

The increased presence of the monarchy in daily politics has triggered doubts about the effectiveness of the elected government in solving socio-economic problems

The protests in the Rif started during this period of political void in 2016 and 2017. While the palace was focusing on containing and weakening the PJD, protesters were able to occupy the streets and mount a resistance to state repression. Right after the 2016 election, the King left on a lengthy tour of African countries, in preparation for the return of Morocco to the African Union. In the meantime, Benkirane concerted his efforts on building a governing coalition. As interim Prime Minister, his first goal was to form a government. In parallel, the palace was focused on getting rid of Benkirane.

Taking advantage of the political void, protesters in the Rif region seized the death of fish vendor Mouhssin Fikri - who was crushed inside a trash compactor when he tried to save his product from being confiscated by local authorities - to express their grievances. The protests began in late October 2016 with demands for justice and a thorough investigation of the death of Fikri, but evolved into socio-economic demands for jobs and infrastructure. As one protester stated to the media, "there is only one reason behind the protests in the Rif and elsewhere in Morocco: the Hogra (injustice), the oppression, the marginalization and repression that is practiced on citizens in the Rif. The death of (the Martyr) Mouhssin Fikri was just the straw that broke the camel’s back."1

Because of their anger towards the ineffectiveness of the political parties, protesters refused to converse with government representatives as mediators between them and the regime. Instead, Rif protesters wanted direct contact with the King through a delegation of his choosing. In Jerada, protest leaders did meet with the government, but they also continued to protest, as they believed it was the only way to pressure the government into fulfilling its promises. The government’s violent response to peaceful protests damaged any remaining trust protesters had in it.

The Monarchy’s conduct has, intentionally or unintentionally, contributed to this result. In the summer of 2017, King Mohammed VI directly attacked political parties for not being credible.2 Several months later he reiterated his criticism and promised a “political earthquake,”3 ultimately sacking several ministers and bureaucrats. This move has been praised by protesters as a show of goodwill to ascertain accountability. However, the continuous crackdown on peaceful protests and political activists has only eroded public faith in the authorities.

1 “baada itlaki sarahihi.. ahad mu’takali al hirak yahki ma hadat” (After his release.. a Hirak detainee tell his story), Hespress, accessed 17 March, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gB5ZOMOWaz8.
Symptoms of Systematic Corruption?

The fact that the protests have endured, despite official promises, is a symptom of the public’s deep distrust in politicians. The source of this distrust is the real and perceived injustices and systematic corruption in the country. This feeling is not specific to the Rif region, but is spread across the country, especially among youth. For instance, a qualitative study conducted by the NDI after the 2011 election revealed that many Moroccan youth are extremely unsatisfied with the performance of political parties. They have only a very superficial knowledge of party ideologies or platforms, and little knowledge of elections and elected officials. More importantly, they identified unemployment as the most pressing issue facing the country. The government could lose credibility with the youth if it proves unable to reduce the high unemployment rate.4

Protesters in the Rif region seized the death of fish vendor Mouhssin Fikri to express their grievances. The protests began with demands for justice and a thorough investigation of the death of Fikri, but evolved into socio-economic demands for jobs and infrastructure.

Added to that, the poor performance of public services - especially in health, education and the judiciary - has led to a flourishing of informal connections, known in the Middle East as ‘Wasta,’ which has, in turn, enhanced the perception of systemic corruption within the state bureaucracy. In fact, between 2008 and 2017 Morocco ranked between 80th and 90th in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, which might explain why trust in government and political parties is so low among Moroccans.5

In the marginalized areas where the protests took place, unemployment is the highest in the country, and the poor performance of public services is highly visible. For citizens living in these areas, political parties and local elected bodies have done little to improve their socio-economic situation. This has coincided with a decline in the legitimacy of traditional mediators such as local notables, political parties and labour unions, leading to the absence of viable interlocutors between society and the State, and creating a void now being filled by non-state and non-political actors.

Conclusion

Despite the regime’s success at co-opting moderate Islamists, repressing radical elements and winning the acquiescence of political parties, a new generation of activists is emerging. Their evolution reflects both generational and cultural changes. The main challenge to the monarchy does not emanate from political parties or Islamists, but from street protests.

The State’s response to these protests has not been based on a clear strategy, leading to confusion. The monarchy appears to have opted to not reproduce the same concessions as 2011, this time turning to repression to restore state ‘reputation’ (Hibat dawla) or ‘fear,’ while exploring indirect channels for negotiations with separate groups of protesters. In the absence of trust between the contenders, and in the absence of reliable mediators, it doesn’t seem that an agreement between the protesters and the regime is forthcoming.

The Monarchy’s policy decisions during this current political crisis will determine the future direction of the country’s politics. With the failure of political parties to play intermediary roles between the State and society, and the perceived mounting intervention of the palace in daily political management, the palace is likely to face the protests directly, which is likely to jeopardize the country’s stability.

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4 NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE Youth Perceptions in Youth Perceptions in Morocco: Political Parties in the Wake of Legislative Elections, National Democratic Institute, 2012.
5 “Morocco Five Years after the Arab Uprisings: Findings from the Arab Barometer,” Arab Barometer, 8 May, 2017.
Is the Bouteflika chapter about to come to a close in Algeria? To the analyst, this is the diagnosis that common sense dictates. In an article published in last year’s edition of the *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook*, Aurèlia Mañé Estrada was considering the imminent ruptures—historic, economic and political—that the country would be facing, beginning with the end of the rule of a president who had become incapable. She likewise pointed out the uncertainties resulting from the political instability and imbalances caused by a rentier economy.1 Such caution was undoubtedly appropriate, since the Algerian configuration can be surprising. Indeed, with the 2019 presidential elections on the horizon, the first signs of the mobilization of a fraction of the ruling elites in favour of Abdelaziz Bouteflika running for a fifth term has emerged. The atypical Bahaeddine Tliba, a businessman from Annaba who has become the vice-president of the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the People’s National Assembly, announced by surprise the constitution of a national coordination committee for Bouteflika’s fifth term last December.

As has been the custom for several years now, it is tempting to say that the forthcoming year will be decisive for Algeria, in a context where emergencies seem to be multiplying. For the sake of brevity, this article will be limited to three topics which are closely interrelated in any case. The first front is economic and results from the lack of budget revenue due to the fall in oil prices in 2013. The government is striving to prevent an over-indebtedness similar to the one accompanying the country’s plunge into civil war during the Black Decade (1992-1999). The social front is likewise particularly sensitive and connected to the economic situation. The context, marked by growing austerity and actively protesting labour organizations, is potentially explosive. And finally, the last point of tension is associated with the upcoming 2019 presidential elections, where the presidency’s intentions are unknown. In this regard, Ahmed Ouyahia’s return to politics, Ould Abbes’ regaining control of the FLN, and the oppositions’ efforts to put forth a common front are all signs of yet another political reorganization.

**Budget Going Dry and Return to Industrialism**

For several years now, the loss of foreign currency reserves (from 192 billion dollars in July 2014 to 98 billion in November 2017)2 has led to the resurgence of a mobilization discourse marked by the urgency to develop. The government is trying to organize economic restructuring in order to stimulate investment and generate new revenue. Priority has been placed on a number of strategic sectors identified by the National Agency of Investment Development (industry, agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, and communication technologies). Supported by foreign partners anxious to maintain regional stability, this diversification of the Algerian economy should allow
the country to decrease its dependence on hydrocarbons and prevent foreign debt from rising. In public addresses, emphasis has been primarily placed on developing the country’s industrial capacity, particularly in the automotive sector. Algeria is thus experiencing a new industrialist turn, focusing on replacing importation with local production. This policy of replacing importation, once characteristic of developing countries, is now based on attracting private capital and cooperation in order to boost local technical capabilities. For several years now, the government has been intentionally maintaining a form of protectionism while encouraging foreign enterprises to establish their plants in Algeria. Former Minister of Industry and Mines Abdelslam Bouchouareb thus included a special fiscal regime in the text of the 2017 Finance Law, allowing automobile manufacturers with factories in Algeria to enjoy various exonerations as well as a preferential customs tariff of 5%.

The government is trying to organize economic restructuring in order to stimulate investment and generate new revenue. Priority has been placed on a number of strategic sectors: industry, agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, and communication technologies.

Throughout the course of 2017, this policy of economic diversification ran up against various limits, one of the most significant being private partner calculations. Starting in January 2017, Bouchouareb distinguished himself by criticizing in the press groups enjoying state support but not developing their activities quickly enough, in particular the French oil concern, Total. Later, in March, a major scandal hit the automotive industry: a series of snapshots published by some whistle-blowers revealed that the Tahkout group was simply adding the wheels to Hyundai vehicles that had already been completely assembled at their factory in Tiaret. It was in this context that the IMF published its economic forecast of a decrease in growth (1.3% in 2017, 0.8% in 2018) and called for major structural reform.

For several years now, the government has been intentionally maintaining a form of protectionism while encouraging foreign enterprises to establish their plants in Algeria.

The Algerian economy thus has continued to be under pressure and the government has begun to take action to find new sources of foreign currency, for instance, by launching coral-growing farms. In late 2017, the offensive focussed on the tourism sector, particularly thanks to the activism of the new Minister Hacène Mermouri. After following Bouchouareb’s lead by threatening investors with expropriation if they didn’t carry out their projects quickly enough, Mermouri is now negotiating agreements promoting tourism coming from China and Russia. In any case, these efforts bear witness to a widely shared sense of urgency. In the absence of conclusive results, austerity remains the preferred path for partisans of budgetary orthodoxy. Unsurprisingly, the 2018 finance law included a section announcing a tax increase.

### Postcolonial Pact and Social Market Economy

Budget austerity and the government’s will to develop a competitive economy clash with one of the fundamental realities of the Algerian system. Indeed, the authoritarian system in Algeria, as elsewhere in the Arab world, is based on the promise of development and redistribution of wealth. This has sometimes been described as a ‘populist social
This founding principle of relations between governors and the governed is at the antipodes of the structural reforms demanded by international partners, whether they target the labour market or consumer product subsidies. The employment market is thus characterized by both a deficit of qualified workers and a high unemployment rate, which the national statistics office recorded as 12.3% in April 2017. This reveals “a clear increase over the past year, whereas the percentage of unemployed is still particularly high among youth (29.7% in the 16-24 age bracket). In order to adapt the supply of workers to company demand, the government is putting forth initiatives to develop professional training and involve private enterprise in university courses. However, it is the passing of a new labour code introducing greater flexibility that the international financial institutions and employers’ organizations are demanding. The bill currently being considered is awaited with apprehension and a law threatening workers’ rights would most certainly run up against the independent labour unions, which defeated a retirement reform bill in autumn 2016.

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With the support of the IMF, the government is likewise working on reforming the subsidies system in order to reduce the budget deficit. In any case, Algerian leaders are well aware of the role historically played by the suspension of this type of aid in uprisings that have shaken Arab authoritarian regimes since the mid-1970s. When presenting his action plan in June 2017, ephemeral Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune thus announced that the progressive adaptation of the subsidy system would be compensated by social transfers. In the 2018 finance law, the main increases are in fuel and cigarettes, while essential goods have been spared for the time being.

The desire not to frontally offend the population can be explained by the permanent presence of a virulent social movement. Conflicts have been spread over time and attest to tensions between those governing and the governed. Students of advanced teacher training colleges (écoles normales supérieures) started a strike in November 2017, demanding university equivalence for their qualifications. The situation was still at a deadlock in March 2018, despite the paternalist discourse of the minister in charge enjoining the strikers to demonstrate “good sense” and “return to [their] universities. During this time, the resident doctors’ protest has continued to paralyze hospitals. Beginning in October 2017 to protest the deteriorating conditions of treatment and the obligation of completing a civil service, the movement met with brutal repression during a demonstration in early January.

In this context, the authorities are thus attempting to organize the transition towards a globalized economy while shielding themselves against a multi-sectoral social movement that could endanger political balance. When presenting his action plan, Tebboune called for an economic transformation that would allow Algeria to remain a welfare state. A sign of this search for a new paradigm, the theme of a ‘social market economy’ is flourishing in both the public and private press.

**Battle Disarray**

The search aiming to ensure the survival of the Algerian system in the long term continues, on both the economic and political levels. At this point at the end of Bouteflika’s fourth term in office, government instability has taken on new proportions, given that the year 2017 saw no less than three prime ministers succeed one another in the Government Palace. After five years in office, Abdelmalek Sellal was removed in May, clearly the victim of socio-economic circumstances marked by social protest, austeri-

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ty, a slowdown in growth and growing discord between capitalists and the government.

For three months, the Tebboune Administration ran up against the reality of the balance of powers. In order to obtain as broad a support as possible for his reform programme, the Prime Minister announced the desire for national dialogue. He likewise promised to tackle the collusion between political and economic powers. These positions garnered him a certain success among liberal circles and the support of certain independent unions. They also resulted in the constitution of a hostile camp that included the president of the Business Leaders Forum, Ali Haddad, the national secretary of the General Union of Algerian Workers, Abdelmadjid Sidi-Saïd, and the President’s brother, Saïd Bouteflika. Together, these three figures of the collusion between political power and money succeeded in getting Tebboune removed by mid-August.

And this was how Ahmed Ouyahia began his fourth term as head of the Algerian government (after his 1995-1998, 2003-2006 and 2008-2012 terms). In his characteristic register, Ouyahia justified the reforms in the name of the double imperative of making society moral (the ‘work ethic’ must be regained) and combating the chaos that is supposedly threatening the nation. In addition to the announced reform of the labour code, the new Prime Minister announced his intention to use Algeria’s central bank to pay civil servants’ salaries. Known as a go-to man for dirty work, Ouyahia has thus returned to deal with the budgetary emergency and take the helm until the 2019 presidential elections.

In this perspective, the manoeuvres extend to the political arena as well, in particular to the FLN, where the secretary-general, Ahmed Ould Abbes, has focussed in recent months on strengthening his authority. After having made various senior party members, including Bahaeddine Tliba, stand before a disciplinary committee accused of organizing dissidence, Mr. Ould Abbes announced in March 2018 that the FLN would be “cleaned up.”6 The old nationalist party is the only one to take up battle formation. As for partisan oppositions, debates are raging more than ever on the strategy to adopt with regard to the upcoming presidential elections. Divisions remain numerous, on the economic (socialists against liberals), cultural (Berberists, nationalists or Islamists) and strategic levels (participation or boycott). The Opposition Coordination and Follow-Up Body (ISCO) and the Coordination Committee for Liberties and Democratic Transition (CLTD) have for the moment failed to bring a semblance of unity. While some are demanding a single candidacy, namely members of the Jil Jadid liberal party, others, mainly in the Islamist camp, leave the possibility of negotiation with the regime open.

It is certain that successful or aborted reforms will continue to fuel power struggles, and that the Algerians will take action to defend the rights they inherited from their anti-colonial revolution.

Thus, 2017 has brought no answers regarding Algeria’s future, and 2018 looks like it will be marked by the same uncertainty. This does not mean that no choices will be made, since a decision will have to be announced regarding the possibility of a fifth term. While waiting to know more about the form of the future political leadership, economic issues will remain at the heart of the debate, with increased pressure from foreign partners and local supporters of a neoliberal shift. In any case, it is certain that successful or aborted reforms will continue to fuel power struggles, and that the Algerians will take action to defend the rights they inherited from their anti-colonial revolution.

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6 L’Expression, 5 March 2018.
Tunisia: Towards the Return of the Old Regime?

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Seven years after the revolution, the social protests that continue to rock Tunisia bear witness to the stumbling blocks encountered by the transition. Economic and social demands are not being met and the transition from dictatorship to democracy is struggling. Beji Caid Essebsi, the head of state, continues to strengthen his own power and seems to be veering towards absolutism.

The South: Theatre of Major Social Protests

The spring of 2017 was marked by large social movements in various regions of the country, including Kairouan, El Kef and, especially, in the south, more specifically, in El Kef, in the governorate of Tataouine, where the unrest lasted several weeks and protestors clashed with the government. As in other regions, residents claimed they faced social and economic discrimination compared to the coast, which receives more attention in terms of development policy. Around the El Kamour oil site, 120 km outside Tataouine (some 700 km from Tunis), the protest movement was spearheaded by unemployed youth with three main claims. They called for the creation of 1,500 jobs in the various oil companies (including those located outside El Kamour), the creation of 3,000 jobs in organizations dedicated to ‘greening’ the production sites (the so-called environment, planting and gardening companies), and the redistribution of 20% of oil revenues to local communities via a development fund.

On 27 April, the head of government, Youssef Chahed, visited the region, accompanied by several of his ministers (Social Affairs, Environment, and Investment) to try to respond to the demands of the protestors, whose call to strike was blocking the oil site and preventing production. Showing a willingness to dialogue and negotiate, he sought to diffuse the tension, stating that “Tataouine’s right to development is not a favour.” Nevertheless, he was violently challenged by local residents, who revived the flagship slogans of 2011 – “work, freedom, dignity” – whilst demanding a fairer distribution of income at the local level. The spirit of the revolution was alive and well in this stand-off between the head of government and the angry residents.

Despite the measures announced by the Prime Minister,1 and deemed insufficient, the conflict grew more severe, until the head of state announced that the army would be deployed to break up the sit-in, protect the oil sites, as well as the phosphate production sites in the Gafsa region, and prevent the demonstrators from closing off roads. The demonstrations that took place a few kilometres outside of Tataouine show that seven years after the revolution, the country’s interior and south remain poor. Unemployment is particularly high, affecting almost one in two young people. Protesters are also exhibiting more experienced behaviour towards government representatives, gladly reviving the 2011 slogans and demanding the presence of sit-in representatives at meetings held at the governorate headquarters. Meanwhile, the government, which

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1 2,000 of the 4,000 jobs demanded, plus 50 million of the 100 million dinars claimed.
has not undertaken any major development projects in the region, continues to emphasize the damage caused by the halt in production, which has left the country with no choice but to import oil and led to a significant depreciation of the dinar with regard to foreign currency.

Seven years after the revolution, the country’s interior and south remain poor. Unemployment is particularly high, affecting almost one in two young people.

It is in this gloomy economic context that the Prime Minister, who has no true social responses to offer, proposed a plan to fight corruption.

**Declaring War on Corruption**

This visible social revolt in the country’s south, as well as in other regions, has considerably weakened the Prime Minister, who had no political experience prior to his appointment in August 2016. The head of government thus tried to impose himself and turn the situation around by proposing a major project: the fight against corruption. This had been part of the Carthage Agreement, a roadmap signed by nine political parties and three national authorities, and Chahed had also mentioned it in his inaugural address to Parliament, in August 2016. Operation ‘Clean Hands’ was enthusiastically received by both the El Kamour demonstrators and the population at large, especially since the Prime Minister also explained how he intended to carry it out. He wanted to accelerate the implementation of new laws and a legal framework aligned with international standards and reform the government to make all citizens equal before the law. For Chahed, this war on corruption would make it possible to “boost the economy, foster development and regain the trust of Tunisians.” Pledges were made and, on 23 May, the head of government ordered the spectacular arrest of Chaâfik Jarraya, a notoriously shady businessman with ties to the Ben Ali regime. Jarraya was apprehended and handcuffed by special forces as he left a café in Tunis. Other arrests followed, involving smuggling barons, customs officials, and celebrity TV journalists. But the operation is not yet a cause of concern for corrupt politicians, as it has focused not on attacking the system of corruption itself, but rather individual players, most likely not even the most important ones. Not that it matters, since, through this briskly conducted war on corruption, Chahed has managed to remain at the helm of the government, when his departure had once seemed imminent.

Chahed’s popularity has awakened new ambitions in him, and he has dropped hints about a possible run for President in 2019. This independence of action, coupled with his growing ambition, is not to the liking of the two strong men of the political scene, Essebsi and Rached Ghannouchi, leader of Ennahdha. The fight against corruption is destabilizing for them, and they fear their parties and inner circles will be tarnished by the related investigations. They have thus sought in earnest to impede the policy’s implementation. Although the Prime Minister had announced the formation of a new ‘combat government’ to wage his war on corruption and undertake the reforms needed to implement it, 18 ministers (of the 43 who make up the government) were imposed from the old regime, i.e. the ranks of RCD, Ben Ali’s party. Today, Essebsi does not bother to hide his commitment to a policy of restoring the former regime. He is also trying to re-mobilize the base of his political party, Nidaa Tounès, to support him. Ghannouchi is doing the same to rally the ranks of Ennahdha around him.

**Reorientation of the Political System**

In 2012, when Essebsi founded Nidaa Tounès, he called for mobilization to “rehabilitate and save Bourguiba’s modernist project, to restore a state that protects its people.” He thus positioned himself as the champion of the continuity of the political history of independent Tunisia, with the mission of pursuing Habib Bourguiba’s modernizing project. When he was tapped to lead the government in March 2011, he expressed the need to prolong Bourguiba’s modernist project, whilst treating Ben Ali as a traitor to the nation. He depicted the latter’s 23-year presidency as a sort of unfortunate parenthesis in the political history of independent Tunisia.
Essebsi was never convinced by the achievements of the revolution. He has always considered it a moment of disorder that could have led to chaos. In the summer of 2013, when the country was paralysed by a political crisis that threatened to derail the transition, the former Bourguiba minister, who had also headed the government from March to October 2011, made overtures to Ghannouchi, the Islamist leader, with a view to redrawing the political map, replacing the pluralism that had emerged following the revolution with a political bipolarity. Nidaa Tounès is the heir to the Destourien movement, whilst Ennahdha continues to be a player on the political scene, although today it operates in the open. However, both are conservative forces that aim to share power in a political game that the two men are working to lock down, wiping the slate clean of the multipartyism that emerged after the revolution. In terms of communication, the emphasis is placed on the compromise between the two parties, which are natural opponents. Other than the two leaders’ desire to share power, their respective parties have not bothered to build a common project for a Tunisia in transition.

Following the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2014, Essebsi became President of the Republic, although under the new Constitution, his powers are more limited. Under the new semi-parliamentary system, the brunt of the power is held by the Prime Minister, even though the Head of State is elected by universal suffrage. This imbalance between the prerogatives of Parliament, and the actual powers of the Head of State does not sit well with Essebsi’s political culture. He aspires to absolute control of the entire executive and intends to reinstate the past. Over the summer of 2016, he announced a national unity project that seemed to disavow the policy of the then Head of Government, Habib Essid. Essid was soon replaced by Chahed, a man in his forties, who was to implement the Carthage Agreement, a sort of roadmap of his government’s priorities. Essebsi forged a consensus between the political forces based on their participation and acceptance of the rules of the game. The main lines of this agreement reflected the priorities of the moment, with a focus on fighting terrorism and fostering economic growth and regional development by tackling corruption. A few months later, in March 2017, Prime Minister Chahed implemented the line related to the fight against corruption with an energy his mentor Essebsi could not have anticipated. Chosen for his dynamism and youth, Chahed was supposed to have been simply taking orders: although the Carthage Agreement included the fight against corruption, he was not supposed to truly lead it. To counter this ‘war on corruption,’ Essebsi ratcheted up his plan to restore the old regime and consolidate his personal power.

On 13 August 2017, Essebsi reembraced the politics of Bourguiba: modern on social issues and wholly resistant to political openness and democracy. On Women’s Day, on 13 August, he repealed a 1973 circular banning marriage between a Tunisian Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man and revived a recurring debate on gender equality and inheritance. Through these two measures, the Head of State sought to rally around him the modernist opinion that had largely voted for him in 2014 and been disappointed by his policies ever since. Three weeks later, on 7 September 2017, in an interview with a newspaper, Essebsi fiercely criticized the parliamentary system, holding it responsible for the government’s ineffectiveness, questioning the independent institutions, and advocating a return to a strong, fully empowered presidential system. To achieve that, he said, it was necessary to revise the 2014 Constitution and reduce the checks and balances.

Other than the two leaders’ desire to share power, their respective parties, Ennahdha and Nidaa Tounès, have not bothered to build a common project for a Tunisia in transition.

Since 2014, Essebsi has worked tirelessly to consolidate his personal power in various ways. He remains ascendant over the Prime Minister, has sought to neutral Parliament, and prevents it from working independently. He has also set up a National Security Council, which he has installed at Carthage Palace and which he has taken great pains to place under his direct authority. This coun-
cil not only considers sovereign affairs, but meddles in all issues, ultimately acting as a shadow cabinet. This presidentialization of the system, which departs from the 2014 Constitution, is justified by the priority given to two central issues: national security and the fight against jihadism and the need to revive the economy.

Essebsi reembraced the politics of Bourguiba: modern on social issues and wholly resistant to political openness and democracy

The reinstatement of the political staff from the old regime has helped consolidate the main powers Essebsi has granted himself. Since 13 September 2017, officials of the former regime have been protected by a law on ‘administrative rehabilitation.’ This law makes it possible to suspend legal proceedings against them. However, Essebsi has gone even further to protect these former officials, halting two major projects that had been planned as part of the political transition. Fearing disclosures, he has blocked the Truth and Dignity Commission, a body set up in 2014, tasked with taking stock of the human rights violation committed in recent decades. He also called off the Prime Minister’s anti-corruption project.

At 92, Essebsi acts like a man in a hurry, a man who has been weakened by the anti-corruption project carried out by his own Prime Minister. However, he does this because he believes that the time is right, given the lack of any political force with the power to stand up to his absolutism. Deprived of its Qatari ally and somewhat isolated on the international scene, Ennahdha is still keeping a low profile, awaiting better days. Ghannouchi has even abandoned the plan to exclude political officials from the former regime from political life, which his own party had launched, to become an advocate of reconciliation. Meanwhile, the opposition, weak and divided, is in no position to defend respect for the Constitution, nor is it able to propose an alternative project.
Libya remains in limbo of a drawn out political transition process. The 2015 Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) was a UN-backed arrangement for Libya’s, at most, two-year transformation into a stable and possibly democratic government. After its second anniversary, the agreement has stalled in its early stages, and the current dynamics do not indicate a speedy completion. The persisting disorder leaves room for security threats and political spoilers to emerge, begging the question: what comes next?

Background

The main division that exists in Libya today is between those who can live with an authoritarian regime and those who cannot. This polarization has led to a contention within the Libyan society that caused the fragmentation of authority and a high level of conflict between various factions. Both historical and recent causes gave rise to this division. Among the possible historical reasons is the lack of a strong national identity among the population as well as the lack of state institutions that would foster the creation of such a sentiment. Libya, until independence, had never been ruled as a united country, save for the short period of Italian colonization from 1934 to 1939. Even under the Sanussi monarchy, there was no deliberate government effort to create strong institutions that could develop a Libyan national identity. When Muammar Gaddafi intervened and seized power in 1969, his main ideology of pan-Arabism – that later became pan-Islamism and ultimately pan-Africanism – neither contributed to the emergence of a comprehensive identity among Libyans, nor to the establishment of strong national institutions, which, on the contrary, were intentionally kept weak for Gaddafi’s purposes. The moment the regime fell on 23 October, 2011, most state institutions collapsed and the Libyan people turned to local identities and institutions, resulting in the fragmentation that has crystallized over the last few years. The return to local identities and institutions is not a testament to the lack of allegiance to a larger united Libya and it does not deny the fact that, sixty years after independence, some sense of being a Libyan exists among most of the population. Among the more recent causes for the Libyan crisis is the misunderstanding that the 2011 uprisings were a simple revolt of a population against the long-term dictator and his few mercenaries. This narrative completely overlooks the fact that Gaddafi had support in many parts of the country. The role of Libyans fighting on behalf of the regime during the uprisings may categorize the event of 2011 more as a civil war rather than a revolution. Had Libyan elites understood this, they would have organized national reconciliation programs to bring together the population and create a strong base for the development of a democratic Libya. A second reason is that Libya’s revolutionary elites gave all credit to the Libyan identity of the actors that brought down the regime, completely ignoring that what saved the revolt was NATO’s intervention on its behalf. It is clear by now that had the Libyan elites asked for help from NATO to disarm the militias and establish order in the country after the intervention, the subsequent crisis could have been mitigated if not entirely avoided. Instead of pursuing national reconciliation and disarming militias, Libya’s elites held national elections...
in 2012. The elections crystallized the very divisions that sparked the initial 2011 crisis and continue to prevent the establishment of a united government today. Because of the acute exigency in Libya, in 2014 the United Nations (UN) appointed a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to establish negotiations in order to resolve the crisis. By the end of 2017, three special representatives had succeeded each other but tangible results are yet to be seen.

Changes in 2017

The international community has been formally behind the UN’s activity in Libya but some regional powers, for their own interests, preferred to support certain actors over others in the conflict. Egyptian and Emirati support for General Khalifa Haftar and his army have been particularly determinant in bolstering him and his unwillingness to seal a deal with his counterparts in the west of Libya.

An important change in 2017 was the expanded international legitimacy given to General Haftar, who is presently the strongest actor vying for the complete takeover of Libya. European leaders granted positive optics as well as concrete legitimization by inviting Haftar to high level meetings and negotiations. Most symbolically, Haftar and the Prime Minister of the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) Fayez al-Sarraj agreed to a ceasefire and 2018 elections during a highly publicized meeting facilitated by the French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris. Nevertheless, in separate statements to the public, Haftar called on the LPA’s demise and his intentions to take over Tripoli, contradicting what he pledged to Western powers on the international stage. He used the West’s willingness to meet with him as a tool for his political legitimization domestically, thus giving him leverage in both arenas.

The new SRSG for Libya, Ghassan Salamè, continues to grapple with the dilemma of the LPA and the need to amend it. The eastern-based House of Representatives (HoR), elected in 2014 and loyal to Haftar, has refused to ratify the original LPA after its signing, on the basis that some provisions favour the western-based government. In addition to this, in late 2017, the western-based High State Council (HSC), an advisory board to the UN-backed GNA, rejected Salamè’s modified LPA agreement, claiming eastern favouritism in the amendments. In essence, members of the Libyan political circle continue to disagree on the basic power-sharing mechanisms and structure of a new government, preventing them from making permanent agreements and leaving the interim Libyan government in limbo.

Spoilers on the Ground

The situation on the ground among the warring factions is also extremely complex and fluid. Clashes and shifting alliances are an almost daily occurrence. Fighting between militias in the west, particularly around the capital, has increased, constituting an additional problem for the mediation efforts. The GNA-linked Presidency Council’s (PC) coalition of forces often fight among themselves. In recent days, a military operation led by the commander of the western forces under the PC/GNA authority Major General Osama Juwaili was carried out to push back Haftar supporters from Tripoli. Juwaili is rapidly emerging as a leading military figure in the west. Whether he is capable of becoming the western counterweight to Haftar remains to be seen.

On top of the difficulty posed by the fragmentation of authority, Libya is suffering from the actions of various radical Islamic terrorist organizations. In particular, there are signs that the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is potentially resurging in the exact locations it targeted in 2016. This is a serious threat that should be addressed immediately. As ISIS falls in Syria and Iraq, the leadership’s focus will shift. ISIS is directing its fighters to use Libya as a base for recoupment as well as a gateway into Eu-
rope, where known Libyan cells have been linked to attacks. ISIS has restarted a campaign of sophisticated attacks targeting security forces and populated areas in both the east and the west. It is nevertheless clear that terrorism and the widespread criminal networks are the consequence of Libya’s instability, not its cause. Continued attacks will deter foreign diplomatic and UN presence, which will delay the institutional building and political training necessary to maintain a unified government once in place.

The UN Action Plan

As of the beginning of 2018, Libya is approaching four years of two/three governments, none of which hold uniform legitimacy or recognition from all Libyans. The UN plan devised by the latest SRSG Ghassan Salamé was a possible way out. It consisted of various steps to be performed within a one-year time frame, beginning with an agreement between a committee representing the HoR and one from the HSC in Tripoli to modify specific points of the original LPA signed in 2015. This modification would then lead to a second step consisting of the organization of a National Dialogue Conference that, by bringing together most actors, would lay the foundation of a new state. The final step will be the holding of presidential and legislative elections. However, the first step failed to be positively concluded when the two committees withdrew from the negotiations. The second step, the organization of the National Conference, while still advocated by Salamé, is seen by most to be too complicated to organize in a reasonably short time. This prompted both the Libyans as well as the UN negotiators to propose jumping to the third phase, that of national elections. The objections to holding elections in this moment are many, ranging from the lack of a census to clearly define the electorate, to the lack of security in many parts of the country and the lack of a legal framework such as a constitution within which to frame the new institutions. All of these objections are relevant. However, it is understood that holding elections in this historical moment is not the best step, but rather the last resort after the failure of every initiative so far and given the lack of any alternative. Elections would also be the only way to reengage a Libyan population which has been rendered apathetic and distant by the evolution of events in the last few years.

Conclusion

Despite the relatively low level of violence since 2014, Libya should still be treated as a situation that needs to be solved quickly. The stalling of the UN-led plan gives ISIS a chance to resurge along the seams of the civil war, dissolving months of progress made by the GNA-led campaign to run ISIS out of Sirte in 2016. Local militias are defecting to their immediate economic interests, causing violence in populated areas. This stalling is also what is allowing Gaddafi’s son Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi, the time to negotiate his way out of prison and set himself up to run for political office in the upcoming elections. Libya cannot afford to stall anymore. Lack of action incubated the chaos in Libya just as much as flawed actions taken by Libyans and international efforts in the country after the 2011 uprisings. That is why a successful future for Libya can only be guaranteed by coherent and substantial collaboration between Libyans and the international community in carefully setting the steps necessary to move the country out of this painful crisis.

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The Consolidation of Authoritarianism in al-Sisi’s Egypt

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Egypt began 2018 with the announcement by the recently created National Election Authority (NEA) of a presidential election, the third since the outbreak of the revolution in January 2011 that forced Hosni Mubarak to step down. The first round of the election would be held from 26 to 28 March and the candidates would, officially, have barely a month to campaign. Both the calendar and the conditions to be met by those seeking to run against the incumbent President, the military man Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, were designed to ensure that he would emerge as the only option.

And so he did. On 2 April, the NEA announced the final results. Unsurprisingly, al-Sisi was declared the winner, with 97.08% of the votes, practically the same percentage he had won in 2014.¹ His sole rival, Mousa Mostafa Mousa, obtained 2.92%. A low-profile politician and president of the Ghad party, he had been pressured to run at the last minute, whilst seeking endorsements for the re-election of al-Sisi; hence, his nickname, ‘the stooge candidate.’

In light of al-Sisi’s landslide victory, the most important figure from the election was turnout, particularly since the entire opposition had called for a boycott. According to the official numbers, both in Egypt and abroad, 41% of eligible voters turned out to vote, i.e. participation was down 6% from 2014, when it stood at 47%. The percentage of spoiled ballots was 7.27% (up from 4% in 2014), meaning more spoiled ballots were cast than votes for the second-place candidate. According to the NEA, no complaints were received nor any significant violations reported by the candidates or ex officio by any of the 54 national and international organizations and institutions acting as observers.² However, given that all these organizations had been hand-picked by the NEA itself, their observation work might be better described as symbolic, as the legitimacy of the election was never cast in doubt. The foreign institutions and organizations did not include the European Union or Democracy International, which had monitored the 2014 election, and most of the national ones worked in development and had ties to the regime or were even state bodies.

This lack of challenges is surprising given the local and foreign media reports that the government, along with businesspeople who backed the regime, had engaged in all manner of manoeuvres to get out the vote: from extending the last day of voting by an hour to threatening to fine anyone who did not vote 500 pounds, bringing civil servants to the polling places or handing out rice and oil at the exit from the polls.³ All of these moves, made with a view to legitimizing a second al-Sisi term to last until 2022, were simply reflections of an authoritarian tension that highlights the regime’s fragility.

¹ The official results are available on the website (in Arabic) of the National Electoral Authority (ANE) at www.elections.eg/results-2018.
² “Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi wins second 4-year term as Egypt’s president in landslide victory with 97% of valid votes,” Ahram Online, 2 April 2018, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/294901/Egypt/Politics/-President-AbdelFattah-ElSisi-wins-second-fouryear-.aspx.
A Stiffening Political Climate

Al-Sisi had set in motion all the machinery of the State to prevent the participation of potential candidates who might overshadow him or even cause a rift in the army, such as former chief of staff Sami Anan. As soon as they announced their intention to stand for President, they were arrested or forced to withdraw, along with other prominent figures from the Egyptian political scene.4 One of the most significant arrests was that of the aforementioned former chief of staff Anan, who not only had the backing of certain sectors of the army who disagreed with al-Sisi, but also of Islamist forces, such as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). This was immediately followed by the arrest of the former anti-corruption chief Hisham Genena, who had been part of Anan’s campaign team. After that, the 2012 presidential candidate, former member of the MB and founder of the *Misr al-Qawia* (Strong Egypt) party, Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, was arrested after giving a television interview in London in which he harshly criticized al-Sisi. The veteran politician was accused of membership of a terrorist organization and seeking to destabilize the country. Another arrested army officer was Colonel Ahmed Konsowa, who was swiftly tried by a military court and found guilty of “having expressed political opinions as a serving military officer” when he announced his intention to run in a YouTube video. In addition to these cases, the former MP Mohamed Anwar Sadat – nephew of former President Anwar El Sadat – chose not to announce his bid citing security reasons. Mention should likewise be made of the candidate Ahmad Shafik, the last Prime Minister appointed by Mubarak, who came in second in the 2012 presidential election, winning 49% of the vote against the ultimate victor, the Islamist Mohammed Morsi. After announcing his candidacy in November 2017, he was deported from the United Arab Emirates, an ally of the al-Sisi regime, where he had been living in self-imposed exile. From the moment he arrived in Cairo, there was speculation regarding his arrest. His withdrawal closed the door on a candidacy that had the backing of the portion of the business class not linked to the army and of those nostalgic for Mubarak. The last candidate to pull out in protest over Anan’s arrest, and under pressure from certain sectors of his party, Aish we Horreiya (Bread and Freedom), was the progressive lawyer Khaled Ali, who also ran in 2012. Ali had begun to win substantial popular support in 2015, when he led the defence in the courts of Egyptian sovereignty over the Red Sea islands Tiran and Sanafir, which al-Sisi had ceded to Saudi Arabia.

Al-Sisi had set in motion all the machinery of the State to prevent the participation of potential candidates who might overshadow him.

This atmosphere of repression against political opponents led Human Rights Watch and more than a dozen other Egyptian and international associations to release a statement in which they warned that the presidential election would not be “fair nor free” and called upon Egypt’s allies, especially the United States and the European Union, to denounce “these farcical elections.”5

Apparent Economic Stability

President al-Sisi has billed the country’s economic recovery, especially to his foreign partners, as an alleged achievement of his first term. According to the data provided by the Egyptian government itself, there was indeed economic growth – 5.2% of GDP by the end of 2017 – and an increase in foreign cur-

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rency reserves. However, these positive macro-economic results were achieved at the cost of a substantial increase in domestic and foreign debt. During al-Sisi’s presidency, domestic debt increased by 74% and foreign debt by 75%. This increase in the debt was not offset by any structural changes in national production, significant increase in job creation, or improvements in healthcare or education.

The State was able to resolve the foreign currency crisis by taking on foreign debt and devaluing the Egyptian pound 50% – which translated to a reduction of civil servants’ salaries by half – following the liberalization of the exchange rate in November 2016. That same month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the approval of a $12 billion loan for Egypt to be disbursed over a period of three years, the largest loan ever granted by the organization in the region. However, there were no significant improvements to the sources of foreign currency, as tourism revenues did not rebound to the levels they had been at prior to the start of al-Sisi’s first term, nor did exports reach the levels the government projected they would following the currency devaluation. Revenues from the Suez Canal have declined in the last four years, despite promises that they would increase following the inauguration of the massive enlargement project in August 2015. Inflation is one of the most revealing indicators of the effects that the measures put into place by the President have had on the lives of ordinary Egyptians. Average inflation in 2017 stood at 30.7%, with a high of 33%. However, the prices of some goods and services have increased by up to 100%. Although at the start of 2018, the rate dipped 5%, prices have not gone down. This dizzying increase in the price of staple goods has especially impacted the most disadvantaged classes. More than one in four people in the country face extreme economic difficulties: 28% of the population lives below the poverty line, a situation that has worsened in recent years. Should austerity measures continue to be applied, with the resulting price hikes and reductions in subsidies, protests and mobilizations of the most impoverished social classes cannot be ruled out.

The Security Excuse

Hosni Mubarak designed Egypt’s regional leadership based on its role as the ‘guarantor of regional stability’ in the face of the Islamist threat. Since coming to power, al-Sisi has used the same argument both to ratify the strength of Egyptian foreign policy and to bolster his own regime. In this return to the authoritarian paradigm of the 1980s and 1990s, he moreover has the backing of the European and US governments, which see the al-Sisi regime as the best guarantee for restoring security interests.

Al-Sisi implemented this ‘hard line’ approach to the fight against jihadist terrorism in his first term and sought to consolidate it during the election period. In February 2018, the Egyptian armed forces launched a large-scale counterterrorism campaign called ‘Operation Sinai 2018’.* The northern region of the peninsula was completely cut off, although the territory had already been under state-of-emergency law since October 2014, preventing journalists and researchers from accessing it, amongst other things. Coinciding with the war campaign, various US media outlets published accounts by former US officials of hundreds of strikes carried out by Israeli warplanes, drones and helicopters against Daesh and other terrorist groups in the Egyptian Sinai in recent years. The strikes were conducted with the approval of al-Sisi as part of the counterterrorism effort, although neither the Egypt-

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tian nor the Israeli authorities acknowledged it.\textsuperscript{11} Amnesty International condemned the use of cluster bombs by the Egyptian army.\textsuperscript{12}

There was indeed economic growth and an increase in foreign currency reserves. However, these positive macroeconomic results were achieved at the cost of a substantial increase in domestic and foreign debt.

The cooperation between the Egyptian and Israeli governments has grown stronger during the al-Sisi presidency, not only with regard to security, but also trade. Proof of this can be seen in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s celebration of an “historic” agreement signed in February 2018, whereby Egypt – through the private company Dolphinos – would receive $15 billion of gas from Israel over the next ten years.\textsuperscript{13}

A second al-Sisi term means continued prioritization of security issues, not only to secure the country’s borders, but also the regime itself. Al-Sisi’s relentless struggle against Islamist terrorism has served as an excuse to adopt authoritarian measures and to restrict the space for political and associational activity. The state of exception, which has remained in force since April 2017, is renewed every three months. It is worth recalling that throughout the 30 years in which Mubarak was in power, a state of emergency was also in force and completely conditioned the country’s political life. The decision-taking process will become more opaque and the hegemony of the armed forces over the main sectors of the State will be reaffirmed. However, such a concentration of power in a single player can generate intra-regime tensions to control the levers of power, leading to new cracks in the system. The economic situation will also be decisive in how events play out.

References


**Geographical Overview | Middle East and Turkey**

**Jordan in 2018: Too Stable to Fail, Too Small to Flourish**

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Despite the claims often made about Jordan, ranging from the positive view that it is an island of stability in a sea of regional turmoil, to the more apocalyptic predictions of imminent collapse due to insurmountable problems, the one inescapable fact is that the Hashemite monarchy remains and Jordan is stable – even if it is not flourishing. A survey of public dissent in Jordan over the past 20 years found that concerted politically-related public dissent has significantly declined since 2011-2012, and in comparison to neighbouring states, has been very limited over the past two years. Furthermore, this dissent has generally targeted external actors (Israel and the US have been targeted the most) and the Jordanian government and individual politicians. Public dissent directed towards King Abdullah II or the monarchy in general has been limited: only 15 out of 272 occurrences of significant public dissent explicitly targeted King Abdullah over the past decade or so. The Hashemite monarchy does not face an imminent threat to its survival, and neither does Jordan. Furthermore, Jordan’s stability and prosperity remain central to the security of neighbouring states (especially Israel) and the broader Middle East; and the US, European powers and GCC states, in particular, remain committed to supporting Jordan. However, there are serious long-term structural challenges to the country’s political stability and economic growth that command the attention of the government, and other domestic and foreign stakeholders in the short term.

**Economic Liberalization and the Politics of Tradition in Jordan**

Economic liberalization in Jordan has rapidly expanded under King Abdullah, and is presented as a means to transform Jordan into a *business-friendly environment* in order to attract foreign direct investment, kick-start domestic industrialization and improve the well-being of average Jordanians. This programme of reform has its roots in the post-1989 financial crisis recovery directed largely by the IMF, and includes a wide-ranging privatization programme (begun in 2000), World Trade Organization membership (2000), a series of bilateral and multilateral Free Trade Agreements, the creation of the Jordan Anti-Corruption Commission (2004), and the creation of the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Committee (2016). Privatization, free trade and anti-corruption legislation have all exposed Jordanian companies and ordinary citizens to greater competition from the global economy and have subsequently been criticized (with ‘talk on the streets’ that the privatization programme, for example, has been misused by the political elite to fill their own bank accounts). This programme of economic reform is reshaping the ways in which the Jordanian market has traditionally operated, and this has become more evident in the past year. Economic liberalization has begun to alter the socio-economic and socio-political landscape, undermining traditional practices that are not seen as business-friendly. *Wasta,* nepotism

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1 *Wasta* is an Arabic word that refers to a type of social relationship between two or more individuals. *Wasta* refers to having a personal connection that is used in order to attain something that would otherwise be unattainable, or at least very difficult to attain. It derives from the Arabic word ‘*Wasitah*’ which can be translated as ‘medium’ or ‘in the middle.’
and favouritism, for example, are slowly being replaced by an emphasis on meritocracy, productivity and profitability. The creation of a business-friendly and globally-integrated neoliberal economic environment does not sit well with the politics of tradition in Jordan. The Arab Spring experience of 2011-2012, best embodied by the Hirak Movement of East Bank tribal youths (Yom, 2014) provided evidence of the erosion of the traditional monarchical support base. The most vocal and organized dissent since 2011 came from the Hirak Movement, tribal elders and public sector workers. At the centre of this criticism lay concerns with the uneven effects of Jordan’s economic liberalization and political retrenchment. Three primary facets of economic reform have caused most discontent: macro-economic structural adjustments, privatization of national assets, and trade liberalization.

Support for the monarchy has historically come from East Banker communities (what we can term the political right) (Antoun, 2006). In particular, East Bank tribes and the small Circassian community provided the backbone of the public (low level), political (elite level) and defence sectors in Jordan. The East Banker domination of the public, political and defence spheres has traditionally relied on, and in turn fostered, a state-society contract that has embedded Wasta, nepotism, public sector practices of favouring East Bankers over West Bankers, inequitable political representation, and what most would term endemic corruption and a lack of transparency (Loewe et al., 2008). This state-society contract has been most evident in the practice of providing public sector employment (often expected or unofficially guaranteed for East Bankers and/or those with Wasta) with little regard for qualifications and skills. We can best describe this system as one of favouritism with the balancing feature being West Banker domination of the private sector.

But herein lies the root of the emerging crisis in Jordanian politics that is likely to deepen further in 2018. The politics of tradition are being undermined. The economic reforms initially driven by outside actors (the IMF and World Bank) and now driven by domestic stakeholders (including King Abdullah) require a systemic shift away from the embedded traditional structures with an emphasis increasingly being placed on meritocracy, efficiency, productivity and accountability. The business-friendly and globally integrated environment created by neoliberalization means that Wasta, nepotism and corruption have come under greater scrutiny and play a reduced role. But as cornerstones of East Banker support for the monarchy, their decline could weaken the traditional monarchical support base as East Bankers are marginalized from the private sector while at the same time receiving less favours from the State.

A Weathered Democratic Façade

Jordan’s governing system is a classic example of an autocratic constitutional monarchy where the King has a great deal of authority with few real restrictions and little oversight. We can identify moments in Jordan’s political history that represent a carefully managed process of democratization – the legalization of political parties and resumption of parliamentary elections in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example – but we can just as easily say that Jordan has had at best a democratic façade (Milton-Edwards, 1993; Alkadiri, 2007; Ryan, 2013) that has in the past two years or so weathered even further away. Jordanian political parties remain underdeveloped: 22 parties currently operate, but since the last election in September 2016 only nine have members elected to the House of Representatives (Jordan’s lower house of parliament). Combined, these parliamentarians total only 30 out of the 130 seats, with the remaining 100 seats occupied by independents. All 65 seats in the Senate (Jordan’s upper house of parliament) are occupied by independents, and the most important executive level positions, including the Prime Ministership (Hani Mulki since May 2016) are also staffed by independents. No party has a broad popular base and national agenda, and the Islamic Action Front (the political wing of the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood) with the broadest membership and longest history of political participation, only has 10 seats in the House of Representatives. In short, politics in Jordan is still dominated by localized agendas and narrow support bases, determined by tribal affiliations (for East Bankers) and the day-to-day concerns of ordinary citizens (especially for West Bankers). This has led to divisive political discourse at the national level, and narrow, short-
term politics at the local level that do not appear to be going away in the near future. This situation has also allowed the monarchy to re-centralize political power, even to the extent of rolling back political reforms enacted as a response to the Arab Spring.

**Persistent Challenges to Growth and Stability**

As a small, resource-poor and largely arid state, Jordan faces severe structural limitations to its economic development and political stability. At the end of 2017 Jordan’s population approached 10 million (including significant numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees that most estimates put at between 1.5 to 2 million). Its GDP is approximately US$39.5 billion – ranking 91st out of 191 countries according to the International Monetary Fund. The World Bank classifies Jordan as a lower middle-income country, a status demonstrated by its relatively low US$5,092 per capita income (which has remained largely unchanged since the 2008-2009 financial crisis). Jordan has very limited reserves of almost all of the natural resources modern economies need and it continues to rely on imports for 97% of its fuel needs, and large quantities of its food, manufactured goods, chemicals and other high-value-added products. In 2017, imports of hydrocarbons (primarily liquefied natural gas from Qatar and natural gas from Egypt) cost the government approximately US$3.5 billion – the government is the initial purchaser of fuel, which it then sells on to the domestic market. This has put enormous pressure on the government’s budget and accounts for a large proportion of the budget deficit, which hit $2.653 billion in 2017 (equivalent to 6.5% of GDP). As Laurie Brand (1994) demonstrated, regime survival and budgetary security in Jordan are inseparably linked. Jordan’s perennial budget deficit is, therefore, of great concern for the Hashemite monarchy.

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Another key limitation to Jordan’s growth and stability also worsened in 2017: unemployment and underemployment. The official unemployment rate recorded by the Jordanian government is 16.5% of the total working-age population. The official figure is widely regarded as optimistic and the real unemployment rate is likely to be closer to 30%. This is high and is concerning given the need to placate Jordan’s well-educated and young labour force. A large proportion of the population is unable to earn a living wage to support themselves and their dependents which hinders efforts aimed at both poverty alleviation and human development. Furthermore, this high unemployment rate means Jordan’s labour market is saturated, driving down salaries. The problem of underemployment is rarely considered, but is perhaps just as worrying for Jordan in the coming years. Out of the 83.5% of the working age population in 2017 that were regarded as being employed, a significant number are likely to be employed in only seasonal, day-to-day, or part-time work meaning they have little job security and very low incomes. The government does not offer sufficient support to those who are unemployed because of the very constrained government budget. Unemployment and underemployment pose even more serious obstacles to development when in 2017 approximately 55% of the population was re-
corded as being under 25 years old, and unemployment and underemployment are most prevalent in the 15 to 30-year-old age range. The concern for the government in particular, therefore, is that Jordan has an expanding, youthful and educated population that does not have sufficient employment opportunities.

Jordan is one of the five most freshwater poor countries in the world, and it is predicted that this situation is set to worsen with the continued pressure of the more than one million Syrian refugees that have found sanctuary in Jordan since 2011. Over the coming year this could translate into more frustration and dissent on the streets as Jordan’s economy is expected to once again grow very slowly. This will further undermine the government’s attempts at poverty alleviation, which is seen as another factor working against continued political stability. Poverty in Jordan is an enduring problem, with 2017 estimates suggesting that 14.2% of the population lives below the poverty line (which the World Bank puts at US$1.90 per person per day). The inroads made by Islamist extremist ideology and Salafist groups in Jordan’s lower and middle classes (Jordan is estimated to have had the highest per capita rate of extremists fighting with the so-called Islamic State and other jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq since 2014) has in part been fuelled by unemployment, underemployment and poverty. The failure to combat these three problems is, therefore, likely to encourage the spread of Islamist influence in Jordanian society.

Conclusion: Jordan’s Balancing Act

In the second year of its 18th Parliament, Jordan needs to continue its balancing act between responding to long-term challenges to its economic growth and political stability on the one hand, and maintaining short-term budgetary security and pursuing political reform on the other. Underlying macroeconomic weakness combined with the slow marginalization of East Bankers in the era of economic liberalization is likely to undermine the traditional support base of the Hashemite monarchy. Yet, the continued leadership of King Abdullah and the stability of the current government look set to carry Jordan through another year of economic and political challenges through being proactive and realistic.

References


Like a Bumblebee. Politics, Society, and Security in Lebanon

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In a comment made immediately after the parliamentary elections, BBC correspondent Kim Ghattas tweeted on 8 May, 2018: “Here’s my take on Lebanese election results, as someone once said: ‘if you think you understand Lebanon, someone’s just explained it badly to you.’ Lebanon is a country of nuance, not black and white. Maybe bleak, but not black and white.” I guess this point is certainly true about Lebanon and probably about all countries. So at the risk of painting it black and white, I will attempt to give a brief overview of developments in recent years in Lebanon, and readers can feel free to fill in the nuances and colours they believe are missing.

Historical Background

After the First World War, Lebanon came under the control of the French Mandate of Lebanon and Syria and, following military conflicts, the French carved out what is today the territory of Lebanon. In 1943, a new elected government abolished the French Mandate but allied forces kept the new republic occupied during the Second World War, and Lebanon only obtained its independence in 1946. However, from 1943 the establishment of Lebanon as a multi-confessional republic took place based on an unwritten agreement, the National Pact, which divided executive power and political institutions along confessional lines. The idea behind establishing the new republic as multi-confessional by giving different groups and constituencies a predetermined representation in government and parliament, so-called consociationalism, was to secure all groups in the highly divided Lebanese society a share of the power and the ruling of the country, thus avoiding internal conflicts or even civil war. The philosophy was that by giving all publicly recognized confessions, of which there are 18, a part in the political power, through their leaders, it would ease tensions between the groups.

When conflicts arose, first in 1958 and again in 1975, the latter leading to a 15-year long civil war, the system did not exactly fulfil its aim. Foreign interventions and interference from Syria, Israel, Iran, the US, and France, as well as the presence of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, including the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), also contributed to intensifying the conflicts leading to the civil war. However, negotiations in the Saudi Arabian city of Taif in 1989 paved the way for an agreement that ended the war in 1990. With some significant amendments, e.g. representation in the Parliament was changed from the original 6:5 in favour of the Christians to a 1:1 ratio between Christians and Muslims and a reduction of the President’s executive power, the consociational system continued to constitute the basis for the post-war political system. The Taif agreement also stipulated that foreign forces were to withdraw, but Israel continued to occupy southern

Lebanon until 2000, while Syria had forces on the ground until 2005. Only after a US and French-sponsored UN Security Council resolution in 2004 and heavy demonstrations in the streets of Beirut following the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in a bomb explosion in 2005, did Syria leave Lebanon. The Taif agreement further demanded all militias to disarm, but the Shia Muslim party Hezbollah, which Iran established during the civil war, refused and is today stronger militarily than the Lebanese Armed Forces. The consequence of the crisis and the major demonstrations that followed the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005 was the formation of two main blocs in Lebanese politics named after the days of the demonstrations. The first one is the March 8 bloc, comprising Hezbollah, (Shia Muslim) Amal, and the Free Patriotic Movement, a Maronite Christian group headed by the present President Michel Aoun. The second is the March 14 bloc, headed by the Sunni Muslim Saad al-Hariri, son of the murdered Prime Minister, leader of the Future Movement, and supported by the (Christian) Lebanese Forces (LF) and the Druze Progressive Socialist Party.

Politics

Tensions between especially the Sunni Muslims, headed by Saad al-Hariri, and Hezbollah culminated in a direct confrontation in 2008 which was settled by an agreement in Doha in Qatar. From then on, it was clear that neither of the blocs had the strength or could totally dominate the other, a kind of national consensus on security developed. The priority for the power-sharing elite, many former warlords from the civil war, is to sustain their own power and part of the Lebanese cake leading to a massive gap between the State, run by the elite, and society. As a consequence, society is more or less left to its own devices and relies on private initiatives to solve the many social and economic problems that haunt the ordinary Lebanese people, be it reliable electricity and water supply, access to health and education services, unemployment or problems related to the presence of Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Added to that are widespread corruption and a wasta (personal network) system, which is an unavoidable precondition for anyone navigating through the bureaucratic labyrinths of the public institutions to obtain state-authorized documents.\(^3\)

The result is a feeling of mistrust among the Lebanese towards the State, the public institutions and the political system, including the Parliament. Instead, most people rely on their local leaders or family members in the system to get things done. This mistrust became all too evident during the Garbage crisis in the summer of 2015. When the authorities failed to reach an agreement for a new landfill contract to replace one that had come to an end, garbage piled up in the streets of Beirut. The smell was unbearable but the politicians were unable to come up with any new and sustainable solutions. Under the slogan You Stink, young people started organizing demonstrations, which gathered tens of thousands in central Beirut from all over Lebanon.

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Their agenda was a non-sectarian protest against government corruption and inefficiency and the political elite reacted by getting together, creating patchwork solutions to the garbage problem, not really solving it, crushing the demonstrations and intimidating the youth movement by accusing it of sectarianism and even of being infiltrated by jihadists. The crisis ended with no sustainable solution to the garbage problem, a smashed youth movement, and a city centre, where the Parliament and presidential palace are located, completely deserted because of restricted access, enforced in an effort to avoid new demonstrations. The elite survived but the problems continued.

\(^3\) In Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2016, Lebanon is ranked 136 out of 176 states regarding corruption.
However, the success of the *You Stink* movement in mobilizing massive support inspired other civil society activists, university professors, journalists, artists, human rights advocates and many others to form a list under the name *Beirut Madinati* (Beirut, My City) to run for the municipal elections in Beirut the following May in 2016. They gathered around a non-sectarian agenda against corruption and insisting on the city’s sustainable green development and solutions to the infrastructural problems. History repeated itself: the list garnered strong support among the Lebanese people, but the Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri, whose party, the Future Movement, controls the city council, stepped in, backed by the rest of the political elite, and, through legal and, according to civil society sources, non-legal measures, secured victory for his party. Again, the established parties and their leaders from the elite survived the challenge from a civil society-based opposition, while essentially nothing was done to solve the many problems in the capital.4

After nine years of quarrels, discussion and negotiation and, finally, the holding of parliamentary elections, most things seem to be as they always have been in Lebanese politics, with the addition that Hezbollah is politically stronger than ever before.

The panorama remains unchanged: the elite busies itself with internal power struggles in the power-sharing political system, while saving necessary reforms for an unclear future date. The multiple postponements of parliamentary elections is another example: in 2013, the reason was a disagreement over a new electoral law; in 2014 it was due to the complex negotiations to find a new President at the cost of appointing Saad al-Hariri as Prime Minister in 2016. Then, the discussion of the electoral law was again put on the table with the intent of changing the ‘winner-takes-all’ system with proportional representation. However, this could not come about without setting limitations on the proportionality, in order to secure the representation of the established parties’ candidates and avoid any significant progress by independent candidates. At last, in June 2017, they agreed on the new election law and scheduled parliamentary elections for 6 May, 2018 – nine years after the last ones. Unsurprisingly, discussing this issue round the clock left little energy for resolving Lebanon’s social and economic problems. The elections took place as scheduled. Both Hezbollah and Amal got their anticipated victory, thereby enabling them to block all legislation they do not approve of in the new Parliament. Saad al-Hariri and his Future Movement lost seats, as expected, and not many independents made it into the Parliament – and those who did will probably not have much influence. Hezbollah’s victory was cause for concern within the region, as well as speculations over whether the group would leave the unity government. However, a unity government with a weaker Saad al-Hariri as Prime Minister was a favourable outcome for them – after all, Hezbollah is now in control of the Parliament. When Saad al-Hariri, while on a visit to Saudi Arabia in November 2017, surprised everyone by resigning, under pressure from the Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman in Riyadh, it was Hezbollah and Michel Aoun that made every effort to get him back in. In war-torn Syria, Hezbollah and its patron, Iran, have gained a stronghold and will probably let neither internal sectarian conflicts nor a war with Israel endanger this year-long endeavour (but there is concern over the possibility of a new Israeli-Lebanese war in the near future). Analysts are therefore predicting that, despite its electoral victory, Hezbollah will show some restraint in both domestic politics and its actions re-

regarding Israel. Hence, after nine years of quarrels, discussion and negotiation and, finally, the holding of parliamentary elections, most things seem to be as they always have been in Lebanese politics, with the addition that Hezbollah is politically stronger than ever before.

**Syrian Refugees and Social Problems**

When the Syrian war sent a million refugees to Lebanon in less than two years, the Palestinians and Lebanese welcomed them. They were familiar with working with Syrians who often migrated between Syria and Lebanon for work. Nobody knows how many Syrians actually lived and worked in Lebanon before the refugee crisis but many estimate that the number is in the region of half a million. Today, many of these migrants have been termed refugees by the Lebanese and Palestinians, local residents therefore fearing these new ‘refugees’ will take their jobs, create inflation and are the cause of all kinds of problems in Lebanese society, today, such as a fast-growing drug problem and related criminality, including rapes and child prostitution.

All parties want their share of the cake, and none will give up what they already have, which makes Lebanon a very weak state when it comes to dealing with the enormous problems that face Lebanese society, whether that means the refugee crisis, poverty, infrastructural problems or social affairs.

Thus, exposed to increasing unemployment and social problems, the Palestinians and Lebanese are buying into the government’s discourse, which is that the cause of their misery is having approximately one and half million refugees living in their country. Their attitudes towards the Syrians have thus transformed from kind hospitality to mistrust, anger and enmity, which causes violence and tension between the different populations. The problems are especially manifest in the slums and in the Palestinian refugee camps where unemployment, drugs, and criminality are increasingly challenging life for the people who are most vulnerable in Lebanon. In addition, Lebanese citizens from the so-called middle class believe that Syrians are taking all the jobs in bars, restaurants and hotels. The response from the government is increasingly to work towards returning the refugees to Syria, and it has already deported thousands to so-called safe areas.5

**Perspectives**

Given the state of Lebanese politics in general, the emergence of a consensus across the government parties when it comes to national security might seem to contradict the ongoing political paralysis that prevails when it comes to reforms, the economy, infrastructure and social affairs. Political news in Lebanon is essentially a never-ending repetition of disagreements on the same issues. This is because all parties want their share of the cake, and none will give up what they already have, which makes Lebanon a very weak state when it comes to dealing with the enormous problems that face Lebanese society, whether that means the refugee crisis, poverty, infrastructural problems or social affairs. Left on its own with not much help or assistance from the State, Lebanese society is managing to get by thanks to the support of the international donor community, which has been the main actor in helping the refugees and in developing the health and education sectors. Thus, Lebanon is a strong state concerning security but a very weak state when it comes to managing a poor economy and increasing social problems. Looking at the vast amount of problems in the tiny republic, Lebanon is surprisingly stable and society goes on. Indeed, the country is not unlike a bumblebee: against all the odds it still manages to fly.

Syria 2017: Taking Stock of a Multifaceted War

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In the long and complex war that is sweeping Syria, 2017 was the year of the military victory over ISIS and the emergence of the Kurdish question. However, as in previous years, this did not bring the conflict any closer to a solution. What began in 2011 as a popular uprising against the despotism of the regime swiftly became a bloody war in which, first, other regional states and, later, international ones became involved. The devastating humanitarian crisis has already left around half a million dead, more than five million refugees and several million internally displaced persons. The irruption of ISIS in the Syrian war, expanding territorially from its birthplace in Iraq, triggered a military response that seems to have set off a sort of regional and international integration, placing Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Russia and Western governments, as well as non-state actors such as the Kurds and Hezbollah, on the same side. However, that common objective intrinsically lacked any joint vision to unite all the players. On the contrary, they were split by deep divisions and conflicting interests. Beyond the consensus that ISIS was a threat, they differed, ideologically and geopolitically, on what kind of regional stability should prevail and which players to support on the ground.\(^1\) Hence, the military victory over ISIS, grandly proclaimed by Putin in December 2017, was neither a window of opportunity to settle the Syrian conflict nor a definitive political victory over the radical movement. Moreover, it has further intensified the conflict in the northeast of the country, where the confrontation between the Kurds and Turkey has added another facet to the conflict, whilst also helping to create another territorial enclave in the already highly fragmented Syria.

The Kurdish Sub-conflict

Initially, Turkey refrained from becoming directly involved in the war, and it opposed the direct participation of Russia in Syrian territory when Moscow launched its military intervention in September 2015 (officially to fight ISIS, but in fact to save Bashar al-Assad’s regime and finish with its opponents). Several factors prompted Erdogan’s government to change that position. The vulnerability felt as a result of the attempted coup in July 2016, belatedly and halfheartedly denounced by its Western allies, increasingly fraught relations with Europe, and the troubling evolution of Kurdish territorial power on the Syrian border with Turkey combined to convince Ankara to strengthen its cooperation with other governments, such as those of Iran and Russia, and, thus, to embrace the policy of resolving tensions with Moscow. The US initiative, seconded by the European countries, of delegating the fight against ISIS to the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) – the Syrian branch of the Turkish PKK – supplying them with training, weapons and funding, had the effect of strengthening the PKK. Although some Arab groups fight in the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), they are nevertheless entirely dominated by the KDP. As the KDP-SDF drove ISIS out of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, they gained control of the north-eastern region of Syria, bordering with Turkey, implementing their own plans for Kurdish self-government and bolstering their patron, the Turkish PKK. As a result, Turkey

began to view this gradual increase in Kurdish power on its border with Syria as a threat and launched a direct military intervention in northeast Syria. Despite the ties cultivated by Russia with the Kurdish parties, Moscow, seeking to reconcile with Ankara, a strategically important move for the Kremlin, approved the Turkish offensive. Meanwhile, the US found itself in an uncomfortable and complicated situation, caught between its declared support for the Kurds and its relations with its NATO partner. However, the US needs an ally in Syria, and the only candidate it has is the Kurds.

What began in 2011 as a popular uprising against the despotism of the regime swiftly became a bloody war in which, first, other regional states and, later, international ones became involved.

The powerful alliance between Turkey, Iran and Russia was on display at the trilateral summit held on 22 November 2017 in Sochi between Putin, Erdogan and Rouhani to push for an end to the conflict in Syria following the victory over ISIS. It took place just days before the start of a new round of UN-backed talks between representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition on 28 November. Both initiatives proved unsuccessful. In the meantime, this Kurdish sub-conflict, grafted onto the already multifaceted space of the war in Syria, has provoked its own tensions, which began to surface in 2017. First, there is the internal Kurdish tension between the Turkish PKK and its Syrian branch, the KDP. The increasing power acquired by the latter as it took over parts of northeast Syria previously occupied by ISIS was fuelling desire amongst its leadership for a local Kurdish ethnic project, to advocate self-govern-ment in Syria, something it has already imposed de facto. In contrast, the historical vision of its patron, the PKK, which has always opposed the creation of an Iraqi Kurdistan, is to build a non-ethnic global state that should begin with the Turkish part, which is both home to the largest segment of the Kurdish population and its historical birthplace. Another issue arising from this situation, which will play an important role in the future stability of northeast Syria, is the peaceful coexistence between Kurds and Arabs. Many Arabs from these regions, including those who have swelled the ranks of refugees and hope to return, believe that the Kurds are determined to take advantage of this situation and of US support to establish a "Syrian Kurdistan." They fear the type of ethnic cleaning that certain episodes occurring during the recovery of the territory occupied by ISIS already gave the impression of in 2017. At the same time, on 20 January 2018, Turkey initiated a military offensive in Afrin, controlled by the Kurds, which, by mid-March was under Turkish control, with the support of factions of the Free Syrian Army. However, although the Turkish victory over Afrin had considerable symbolic value insofar as it conveyed Ankara’s firm commitment even to use military means to deal with the Kurdish issue on its border with Syria, it was a relatively easy choice, given that Afrin is separated from the main Kurd-dominat-ed territory east of the Euphrates (between Manbij and the Iraqi border) under direct US protection. In fact, it was little more than the announcement of the start of a new sub-war within an overall Syrian war that, in itself, has already generated a great implosion and territorial division: areas under the control of al-Assad’s army, others controlled by the anti-Assad opposition (which, in turn, is fragmented and supported by diverging regional players, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia), and others dominated by the pro-Turkish, pro-Iranian or Kurdish militias. How to resolve the distribution of power between all these players with a view to a prospective solution? How will the al-Assad regime, definitively saved by Russia but which seeks to restore its hegemonic power throughout Syria, deal with this distribution of power in light of the changes being imposed by the war?


4 In June 2017, a regime official responded to a question on the prospects for reconciliation as follows: "We will reconcile with the land, not the people." This statement shows that the al-Assad regime’s priority is to recover the territory, not the citizens who live there, for whom it has always shown a despicable lack of empathy. Interview by KHADDOUR, op. cit. p. 8.
Russian Leadership and the US Withdrawal

The Russian bid in Syria has undoubtedly yielded considerable gains for Putin, whilst the US has shown scant leadership and lost influence in the region. The Kremlin’s main geopolitical victory in the Syrian theatre was achieved at the international level, reinserting Russia into the game of the great powers. Furthermore, the great diplomatic activity deployed by the Kremlin has positioned it at the centre of the communication with each of the parties involved in the conflict, whether Iran or Saudi Arabia, Israel or Hezbollah. Likewise, it was Russia that spoke with Erdogan to discuss the offensive against the US-backed Kurdish militias in northern Syria and that spoke to Netanyahu to contain the military escalation of the US’s great ally after it bombed Syrian targets in response to the incursion of an Iranian drone. In short, Putin has emerged as a very powerful interlocutor in the region.

Another strategic change that Russia has achieved in the Syrian conflict has been to weaken US interests by eliminating the goal of regime change, the great American desideratum in Syria. Al-Assad’s political removal was considered a sine qua non in the US position from the start of the war and for any solution to the conflict. This once indispensable requirement has today disappeared from the agendas and political discourses.

The irruption of ISIS in the Syrian war has changed this parameter. It has meant obviating the pro-democracy causes radically advocated by Arab societies, including Syria’s, in the revolutions of 2010-2011, with the consequent return to the drift towards despotism, the chaotic interventionism of regional and international players in the conflicts, and the misinterpretation of the conflict surrounding Sunni/Shiite sectarianism. Far from a humanitarian, social and political response to these key issues, only the military strategy has been imposed.

In this amalgam of players and interests, the battle against ISIS failed to pay the necessary attention to attacking the political causes that fuel it. The region’s totalitarian powers, including al-Assad, have recovered their strategic value, and no heed is paid to the consequences of the social frustration they generate and the increasing radicalization that they provoke. Furthermore, seeking to delegitimize the opposition that has fought against it since the start of the revolution in 2011, which it has always labelled ‘terrorist,’ the Syrian regime will encourage radical outgrowths, such as ISIS, so that all means will be placed at its disposal to fight terrorism, ignoring or downplaying its own exercise of terror.

Once ISIS became entrenched in Syrian territory, Washington shifted its focus to defeating ISIS, forgetting regime change. This has been a victory for the regime in Damascus that the US has been unable to confront, because it has also been unable to define its objectives in the Middle East once ISIS has been defeated, at least for the time being. Will it maintain its military presence in Syria and intervene in other emerging scenarios? Will it continue to support ‘Syrian Kurdistan?’ And, if so, how will it manage its important relations with Turkey? After the parenthesis of the intervention against ISIS, nothing suggests that the Trump administration will change that ambiguous and ill-defined positioned. Even less so, when its stated priority is ‘America first’ and given the low profile maintained, for example, in the dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Everything seems to indicate that US leadership sees few reasons to increase the country’s involvement in the Middle East, except for the occasional reaction without any sort of long-term strategy.

One might thus be tempted to ask whether any peace ultimately achieved in Syria will be a ‘pax Russica.’ Moscow will no doubt wish to impose it, although it will first seek to ensure that the rebel strongholds are thoroughly destroyed, as is occurring in the case of the Guta region, which has been subjected to a relentless siege and bombardment since February 2018. Likewise, it is not clear how the enormous challenge entailed by a Russian military withdrawal from the conflict can be handled without leaving al-Assad vulnerable. However, it is also true that Moscow is already thinking about the next, extremely lucrative Syrian chapter: reconstruction.5

5 On 20 September 2017, the “Syria Reconstruction Fair” was held in Damascus, with a large Russian, Chinese and Iranian presence.
Israel: between Political Crisis and Regional Challenges

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2 April was an eventful day for the Israeli political system. In the early afternoon, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called an unexpected news conference, in which he announced the signing of an agreement between Israel and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). According to the deal, Israel was to grant temporary residency status to half of the more than 32,000 African asylum seekers within its borders, and the other half would be resettled in Western countries.

Prime Minister Netanyahu described the agreement as “an unprecedented achievement,” but he failed to anticipate the backlash from the right. In the hours that followed, thousands of Israelis posted social media comments – many of them on Netanyahu’s own Facebook page - against allowing even half of the asylum seekers to stay; several pundits and ministers followed with criticism and warnings. Netanyahu changed course immediately. By midnight he decided “to reevaluate” the deal, and by lunchtime the following day, he abandoned it altogether. Instead, he announced his intention to renew forced deportation, if necessary through legislation that would also limit the High Court’s ability to intervene on the asylum seekers’ behalf.¹

The entire affair was another example of the way immigration became a defining political issue for nativist forces on the right, as well as for their liberal opponents. In Israel more than in many other countries, it is this ‘new right’ that became a dominant political force, to which the Prime Minister’s political fate is attached.

Entering its 8th decade since independence, Israel seems more stable and prosperous than ever. But the Jewish society is torn in a battle between right-wing populism and ‘the old elites;’ and the political system is transfixed by the drama surrounding the criminal allegations against Mr. Netanyahu, the country’s most powerful leader in recent history and its longest serving one.

As the Asylum Seekers fiasco suggested, these tensions limit the manoeuvring abilities of the political leadership and make the use of force and coercion the only available policy tools. And all this is happening at the same time as the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza is becoming less and less stable, and Israel is faced again with the one issue that it was never able to solve – reconciling the idea of an exclusive Jewish State on the historic land of Israel, with the presence of an indigenous population, equal in its size today to the number of Israeli Jews.²

A Decade of Political Stability and Prosperity

On the surface, things have never been better for Israelis. The country has dodged the financial crisis of the previous decade, and the high-tech sector continues to lead the entire economy on a steady growth.³

Israeli start-ups are sold to foreign investors at record prices, and vast natural gas discoveries guarantee major foreign currency income for the foreseeable future. Unemployment has been low for several years and government tax collecting is at a surplus, resulting in several rounds of tax cuts. In recent years, the government completed or is about to complete major national projects – such as the desalination plants, which prevented a national water crisis, a new and fast Tel Aviv-Jerusalem train line, and a new international airport near Eilat. Even a long-awaited Tel Aviv light rail is being built. Inequality is still relatively high and the rising cost of housing are a source for ongoing complaints, but a major wave of middle class protest, like the one Israel experienced in 2011, seems unlikely. The political instability which seemed to characterize Israel is gone – Netanyahu has been in power since 2009, and his current government could complete more than four years in office.

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Many recent events have also played into Israel’s hands. The Arab Spring shifted the regional focus from the Palestinian issue to events in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Iraq. More importantly for Israel, it aligned powerful stakeholders with Israel in a way few diplomatic breakthroughs ever did. The most surprising turn of events is the cooperation with Saudi Arabia, which has become such an open secret, that the IDF’s chief of staff was interviewed by a Saudi publication based in London, while Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told ‘The Atlantic’ that “Jews deserve the right to their own land.” The Saudis and some of their Gulf partners seem eager to become Israel’s – and the US’ – partners in a looming confrontation with Iran, either in Syria or due to a strike against the Iranian nuclear facilities, while Egypt is receiving some military help from Israel in its battle against the Jihadi groups in the Sinai peninsula. All these developments, which seemed unthinkable just several years ago, are not just the result of the geopolitical changes, but of Israel’s own emergence as a regional superpower, whose policy is politically and economically independent of its Western allies. Yet despite all this, Israel is unable to translate its strength to major long-term achievements. Relations with Arab states are limited to security issues, and are conducted mostly in the dark; despite an American decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, Israeli annexation of the eastern city is still unrecognized by the entire international community; and most importantly, Israel hasn’t been able to reach an internal consensus (let alone an internationally-recognized agreement) regarding the Palestinian issue, which remains the unsolved existential challenge the State is facing. The Palestinian question is not just a security or diplomatic problem. Rather, it cuts to the core of the Israeli identity, and to the various tensions that are at the heart of the idea of ‘a Jewish and Democratic State’ – the common phrase used in Israel to describe the constitutional definition of the State (the built-in contradiction in the formula accounts for the reason Israel has no constitution).

A Prime Minister under Investigation

Since he reentered the Prime Minister’s office in early 2009, Prime Minister Netanyahu has made the preservation of the status quo in the West Bank and

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Gaza into his trademark policy. He was able to manoeuvre himself out of the peace initiative presented by the Obama Administration; and while he initiated three military campaigns in Gaza, he didn’t try to reconstruct the political reality by toppling Hamas, or by annexing new territories, as the most expansionist elements in his coalition sometimes demanded. Netanyahu understood that the status quo provides Israel with the highest reward, at the lowest price. It brings Israel many of the benefits of peace, without requiring it to pay in territory. The military regime that governs the West Bank not only makes settlement efforts easier (since the government is not bound by the constraints of the civilian legal system) – it allows the State to maintain a separation between Jewish settlers, who are full citizens and governed mostly by civilian authorities, and the Palestinian civilian population, which is governed by the army’s civilian authority. From the Israeli perspective, annexing the land – the Israeli version of the one-state solution – simply makes no sense.

Netanyahu understood that the status quo provides Israel with the highest reward, at the lowest price. It brings Israel many of the benefits of peace, without requiring it to pay in territory.

Israel’s occupation is not recognized by the world, but it is tolerated. Predictions of international pressure and isolation turned out to be grossly exaggerated, and Netanyahu was rewarded by Israelis in the polls again and again. He was supported by a coalition of smaller parties, representing Jewish Orthodox, the settlers, Mizrahi Jews (Jews who came from Muslim countries; many have a lower social status or live in Israel’s periphery), and immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In Netanyahu they saw not just the opportunity to strike a fatal blow to the two-state solution (which many of them opposed), but also a man who could lead a vast social and cultural change within Israel: taking down ‘the old elites’ of the upper middle class, mostly European Jews, and replacing them within Israeli bureaucracy and institutions with their own people. This dual role was and remains the key to Netanyahu’s success.

In recent years, the dominant voice in Netanyahu’s coalition is ‘the new right,’ led by young populists and settlers. Unlike the old right, their focus isn’t (just) on the West Bank. Their demands are to make the entire state ‘more Jewish’ – to limit the power of the Supreme Court; to make the school curriculum ‘more Zionist’ and religious; to limit critical views in state-owned media; to ban foreign-funded human rights organizations; to promote right-wing and religious security officials; to deport all African asylum seekers; to speed up the construction of new Jewish settlements and to limit Palestinian construction on both sides of the Green Line. It was this new right that went to the polls in record numbers in 2015, and delivered Netanyahu with a surprising landslide victory. Since those elections, the public debate became increasingly toxic; with the right speaking of ‘an institutional revolution,’ while the left warns of ‘the end of democracy.’

The criminal investigations against Netanyahu and his wife have turned this confrontation into an all-out political war. Netanyahu is involved in several cases, mostly dealing with alleged attempts to manipulate the media in his favour in exchange for regulatory benefits (another case centres on lavish gifts Netanyahu and his wife demanded and received). Early in 2018, police recommended filing criminal charges against the Prime Minister. Netanyahu refused to resign, and hinted that if taken by the attorney general to court, he might conduct his trial from the Prime Minister’s office. The allegations actually have made Netanyahu more popular with his base, which views the affair as a conspiracy by the old elites and by the 

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State’s bureaucracy to take down their leader. It seems that the entire country is headed for an unprecedented legal and political crisis.

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At the same time, developments in the occupied territories are challenging the status quo. In Gaza, the humanitarian toll of the decade-old blockade on the strip is putting pressure on both Hamas and Israel, and could lead to a new military confrontation. In the West Bank, the wave of stabbing and ramming attacks of 2015-2016 has subsided, but the violence has never returned to the pre-2013 levels, which was one of the lowest on record. The coming end of Mahmoud Abbas’ term as the head of the Palestinian Authority will bring uncertainty to a new level. Abbas, the last founding father of the PLO still active, kept a close military coordination with Israel, which his predecessors would find difficult to maintain without losing their local credibility.

Faced in the past with Palestinian uprisings, Israeli leaders were able in the past to initiate pragmatic moves, such as the signing of the Oslo deal or the disengagement from Gaza, which allowed them to hold on to all the major assets in the land. The toxic political atmosphere and the strength of the new right will make it very hard for any leadership to follow these examples. The temptation to answer every challenge with military force – already very high in Israel – would only increase.

This is also true for internal issues – from the fate of asylum seekers to the challenge to Israeli identity posed by the Palestinian citizens of Israel (the ‘Palestinians of 48’ make up more than 20% of the population). The ability of the political system to create consensus seems at an all-time low, and politicians are increasingly moving towards direct coercion. Adding to all this is a looming confrontation with Iran, not over the nuclear issue, as everybody expected, but due to the permanent presence Tehran aims to maintain in the post-civil war Syria – a step Jerusalem views as an act of direct aggression. Israel has enjoyed a decade of growth and relative stability as the entire world around it shook, but storm clouds are gathering fast.

12 Loveday Morris and Hazem Balousha “Behind bloody Gaza clashes, economic misery and piles of debt,” The Washington Post, 23 April 2018
Palestine’s Impasse: Israeli Occupation, Regional Conflicts and Internal Division

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Profiling Palestine is certainly far from straightforward. Providing a general overview based on headings and subheadings that are typically used to review other countries could seem tedious if not misleading. Unlike other situations, the principal context that shapes almost all of Palestine’s various political, economic and social dynamics, as well as all other aspects of Palestinian life, is the omnipresent Israeli military occupation. The pressures and impositions of this occupation continue to control the present reality of Palestine and the Palestinians, informing any overview of today’s Palestine. This does not mean that the Palestinian leadership and various factions are absolved from any responsibility. Dysfunctional Palestinian politics, plagued with internal divisions and a lack of institutional transparency and accountability, have their share of the blame both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, the impact of the Israeli military occupation remains paramount and thus merits thorough analysis first and foremost.

Neither Peace nor Process

The conflict started in 1948 with the creation of the State of Israel, the destruction of Palestine as a national entity and the expulsion of half of the Palestinian people, who, ever since, have had refugee status. In 1967, a reinforced Israel occupied the parts of Palestine that had remained in the hands of the Arabs (The West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, along with other Egyptian, Syrian and Lebanese territories). In spite of a series of UN resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation of these parts, the de facto term, Palestine, had become reduced to denoting the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. After more decades of conflict and several wars, the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference in 1991 set forth a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians that culminated in the Oslo Accords in 1993. These Accords stipulated a five-year interim phase of negotiations that was supposed to lead to the creation of an independent Palestinian state and a lasting peace deal between the two parties. All major contested issues were to have been resolved, during that interim ‘Peace Process’ phase, through negotiations. Chief among those issues were the Jewish settlements that had been established in the Occupied Territories, the status of East Jerusalem as psychical capital of Palestine, security and border issues, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and water and natural resource rights.

Not only did the parties fail to adhere to the timeline set out by the Oslo Accords, but the ‘Peace Process,’ which had dragged on since 1993, became torturously reduced to ‘a process without peace,’ a cynical cliché that perfectly captured the futility of countless years of negotiations. Depressingly, that grim cliché has become even more meaningless today. What we observe now is neither peace nor process, but rather further deterioration for the Palestinians on several fronts – politically and economically, as well as in terms of security and internal politics.

Fulfilling Israeli Security Concerns

After almost a quarter of a century, Israel has now managed to transform these still-limping Oslo Accords into mere security arrangements founded
Settlements

Concerning the settlements issue, particularly in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the rate of settlement construction and the expansion of the existing blocs continue to rise. These settlements, along with the land that is controlled by Israel around them under the pretext of 'security considerations,' eat up some 80% of the entire West Bank. These settlements are considered illegal by international law, and the Oslo Accords were hoped to have dismantled them. Instead, the numbers of settlers and settlements since 1993 have multiplied 600% since the Oslo Accords were signed. To further complicate matters, the current American position toward the illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is slipping towards that of Israel; the American ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, repeatedly states that expanding existing settlements, as well as the building of more new ones, falls within Israel's rights, as these settlements are part of Israel. Friedman's public and solidly pro-Israel views, including his dismissal of any 'two-state' solution, has infuriated Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to the point of his publically calling Friedman a 'son of a dog.'

Jerusalem

The status of Jerusalem, according to the moribund Oslo process, is one of the major issues that the 'peace negotiations' were supposed to resolve. Instead, the rate of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied eastern part of the city, which was hoped to become the capital of the independent Palestinian State, has exceeded the rate of illegal settlements in the West Bank. Israel unlawfully annexed East Jerusalem in 1980, and since then Israel's official policies have aimed to achieve the de-Palestination and further Judaization of Jerusalem as a whole, eventually ensuring a Jewish majority. Jerusalemite Palestinians face a matrix of purposely-designed land expropriation and building restriction laws, as well as targeted harsh economic and social conditions meant to force Palestinians to leave the city. Inversely, Israeli policies have been made to favourably facilitate the settlement of new Jewish communities in East Jerusalem. As an accumulative consequence, almost 86% of East Jerusalem is now under direct Israeli or settler control, with more than 200,000 settlers living in what used to be Palestinian areas and houses.

1 See the continuous increase in violence by settlers against Palestinians in the UN reports: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) occupied Palestinian Territory (oPT). Increase in settler violence during the first half of 2017, July 2017 www.ochaopt.org/content/increase-settler-violence-during-first-half-2017
any ‘negotiation’ over the future of East Jerusalem as a part of, and the capital of a Palestinian state extremely difficult.

Within the broader context, and amid continuous regional turmoil centered on the seven-year Syrian conflict and the Saudi/Iranian rivalry, which also involves Israel, the Palestine question has suffered even more marginalization.

To make things even worse, in December 2017 the Trump Administration recognized Jerusalem, not Tel Aviv, as Israel’s capital, challenging a long-held international consensus that East Jerusalem is a part of the occupied territory. This recognition has in fact placed the US squarely on Israel’s side on one of the thorniest issues of the conflict. This dramatic decision has effectively ended the US role as a broker of the peace process, prompting the Palestinian President to stop any official dealing with US politicians, and declaring that the US is ‘no longer qualified to sponsor the peace process.’

Dangerous Regional Context and Conflicts

Within the broader context, and amid continuous regional turmoil centered on the seven-year Syrian conflict and the Saudi/Iranian rivalry, which also involves Israel, the Palestine question has suffered even more marginalization. The looming, and to a degree surprising, alliance between Saudi Arabia and Israel against Iran has suddenly manifested itself, not as the fluke, but as the cornerstone of the Trump Administration. Trump’s hostility to Iran and the nuclear agreement that his predecessor Barack Obama concluded with Tehran, is in perfect line with the individual Saudi and Israeli hostilities against the same ‘enemy.’ Yet the prerequisite to forging a public alliance between the Saudis and Israelis would have to be a solution, even if a hasty one, regarding the Palestine question. Despite the fact that US policies on Palestine have so far eroded any slim chance of reaching such a meaningful solution, Trump is publicizing this as the ‘deal of the century.’ What has been understood from the ensuing media fuss is that such a ‘deal’ could end the conflict not only between Israel and the Israelis, but also the entire Arab world. Little is confirmed about the contents of such a deal, however. But the logic behind it far from fulfills Palestinian aspirations of self-determination and independence; it rather simply would be responding to Israeli fears concerning an imagined or real Iranian nuclear threat, and allying with Saudi Arabia in the same camp. By removing the Palestinian issue through some regional deal would thus lead to normalizing Arab-Israeli relations, and subsequently allow for building a Saudi-Israeli alliance against Iran. Compared with such a major confrontation between Iran and a US-Israel-Saudi Arabia alliance, the Palestine question would be dwarfed. This would certainly serve the Israeli agenda and weaken the Palestinians.

Divided Palestinian Politics

Internal Palestinian relations marked by the division between the PA in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip is yet another devastating feature of the current Palestinian reality. This division was consolidated in 2007 after Hamas took military control of the Strip following an unwillingness to hand real authority over to Hamas after its electoral victory in 2006. The decision of Israel, the US and Europe to disengage with any Hamas-led Palestinian Authority after that election complicated the situation and pushed matters to the brink. The end result was a de facto split in the Palestinian geography, demography and leadership that has continued to erode any Palestinian unity right up to the present day. Israel has continued to impose its blockade on the Gaza Strip making conditions there increasingly ‘unlivable.’ The devastating effects of the blockade have been multiplied by Israel’s three wars against Gaza in 2008/9, 2012 and 2014 that caused thousands of deaths and accelerated the destruction of its cities and infrastructure.

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Amid all this, Hamas is clinging more stubbornly to its powerful military and security forces, making any reconciliation with the PA in the West Bank, whose conditions for such a reconciliation include the control of the Strip’s internal security, more difficult.

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The legitimacy of Hamas’ rule in Gaza and that of the PA’s rule in the West Bank (anchored in the election of the current Palestinian President in 2005) is very weak, as both have exceeded their electoral mandates according to the Palestinian Basic Law. Under this law, the Palestinians should organize national presidential and legislative elections every four years, but both parties have dug their heels in. However, maintaining this impasse and the status quo of ‘no peace, no process’ plays in the interest of Israel, hence the ongoing Israeli de facto veto on any serious PA rapprochement with Hamas.

Gaza: an Upcoming Explosion?

Within the framework of this inhumane blockade, the main victims of the continuation of this status quo are the two million Palestinians in the Strip. Health, employment, education, food supplies, poverty and unemployment levels, as well as all other aspects of life have been badly hit by the blockade. This depleting of the Gaza Strip, according to UN reports citing its rapid de-development, will render it ‘uninhabitable’ by 2020. This mounting pressure on Gazans is only meant, according to Israeli officials, ‘to put the Palestinians on a diet’; not starve them to death. However, according to World Bank reports published in March 2018, Gazan economic growth has decreased to a mere 0.5% and unemployment rates have soared to 44%; while access and quality of basic services such as electricity, water and sewerage is rapidly deteriorating and posing grave health risks. The actual factors behind the continuous deterioration in Gaza have been attributed to the Israeli-Egyptian blockade, the Palestinian political split and the (American) cuts in funding to UNRWA whose services are fundamental to 1.3 million Gazans. The World Health Organization issued a donor alert in January 2018 warning that health standards are steadily worsening in the Gaza Strip, where household water and electricity supplies are limited to 3–5 hours a day, and 96% of the water is not suitable for human consumption – increasing the [outbreak] risk of waterborne diseases. In light of these reports and those of many other specialized agencies that share the same concerns, it seems that a large-scale explosion in the Strip with perhaps an unknown nature and unpredictable consequences is not a far-fetched idea. Perhaps a rehearsal of just such an explosion was seen on the Fridays in April and May when masses of Palestinians gathered along the border fences with Israel in what the Palestinians called ‘The Great March of Return.’ These confrontations have exposed the extremely dan-

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8 Amira Hass. “2,279 Calories per Person: How Israel Made Sure Gaza Didn’t Starve,” Haaretz, 17 October 2012, showed how Israeli restriction on the food supply to Gaza was calculated according to the minimum calories needed by every Palestinian in Gaza to just stay alive. See www.haaretz.com/premium-israeli-s-gaza-quota-2-279-calories-a-day-1.5193157
10 In January 2018, the Trump Administration announced cutting its funding to the UNRWA, depriving the organization of $125 million.
12 This is a popular movement that vowed to protest non-violently on each of the six Fridays preceding 15 May, the date that the Palestinians called Al-Nakba, commemorating their mass expulsion during and because of the 1948 war and the creation of the State of Israel. The Israeli army fired against protesters and killed 47 Palestinians and nearly 7,000 wounded (updated: May 10th 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/05/10/world/middleeast/gaza-protests-yehya-sinwar.html).
dangerous Israeli determination to keep the status quo at any cost. For instance, Avigdor Lieberman, the Israeli Defence Minister, stated publicly that there are 'no innocent people in Gaza,' justifying the killing of more than 30 Palestinians and the injuring of hundreds more during these peaceful demonstrations.\(^\text{13}\)

Equally, the economic and social indexes in the West Bank are far from healthy. The unemployment rate there in recent years hovers around 24%, with most of the economy financed by external funding and thus accentuating a non-self-sustained development. This external funding, particularly by the US, is politically conditioned and, in effect, cripples the PA when it comes to adopting any political line that could change the internal Palestinian political landscape, such as advancing any reconciliation with Hamas and reuniting with Gaza. The same applies to Palestinian moneys that are hijacked by Israel and used in a carrot-stick fashion to pressure and blackmail the PA politically. Israel keeps withholding in excess of $3.6bn dollars generated by taxes and other duties that should be given to the PA.\(^\text{14}\)

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If there really is serious thinking about any ‘grand deal’ in the region it should include at its core the rescuing of Palestine and the Palestinians from the destructive and inhumane reality they are facing. Today’s grim Palestinian reality is a source of future explosions as well as the pretext and context for the rise of further extremism in the region.

\(^{13}\) “No innocent people in Gaza” says Israeli defence minister,” Middle East Eye, www.middleeasteye.net/news/no-innocent-people-gaza-says-israeli-defence-minister-1155018849

\(^{14}\) The figure of $3.6bn is from a 2016 report issued by the Government of Palestine to the ad hoc Liaison Committee Meeting, Stopping Fiscal Leakages, Brussels: 19 April, 2016 www.lacs.ps/documentsShow.aspx?ATT_ID=27508.
Turkey: Climbing the Ladder of Authoritarianism

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Turkey will face a number of domestic and foreign policy challenges in 2018. Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s tutelage, Turkey has all but abandoned its democratic past – as imperfect as it may have been – and is fast becoming another, almost ordinary, one-man authoritarian country. As if this were not enough, developments in Syria are pushing Ankara towards a new conundrum to which there is no end in sight, a deepening conflict with Turkish and Syrian Kurds and, potentially, towards a confrontation with its most important NATO ally, the United States.

Almost two years after the failed coup in July 2016, the Turkish government is having trouble reasserting its primacy at home without resorting to authoritarianism. In an effort to purge supporters of the exiled cleric Fethullah Gülen, who the Turkish leadership blames for the coup, government-initiated waves of repression have affected large segments of a once vibrant and effervescent society, effectively neutering it. Some 50,000 people have been jailed and another 160,000 dismissed from their jobs with calamitous results, having lost their savings and access to basic services, such as medical care. An errant tweet, an overheard conversation or an imagined insult is sufficient for someone to find themselves incarcerated for indefinite periods of time.

The new populist authoritarianism has been accompanied by a deliberate state-sponsored and manufactured campaign of nationalism that has served to further restrict free speech and opposition to Erdogan’s leadership. The decision to initiate hostilities against Syrian Kurds in Afrin has been the pretext for a new wave of constraints and a wave of repression, with anyone who opposes the operation being branded ‘a traitor’ and subject to imprisonment and prosecution.

The astonishing aspect of these developments is that they are happening in a country that only 10 years ago was celebrated as being up and coming, democratizing, prospering and making serious advances along a path towards European Union membership. Such reminiscences today are simply that; Turkey has seriously, and perhaps definitively, compromised its once promising course. Nevertheless, Turkish society, despite impressions to the contrary, is resisting this rapid descent into authoritarianism. For the most part, this resistance is not organized, often being haphazard and episodic. By eschewing traditional forms of acquiring legitimacy, the regime is increasingly creating the conditions for instability and unpredictability.

Erdogan is omnipresent; he is setting the stage for a long stay as the country’s sole leader. As he labours on to create the institutional, political and social conditions necessary for his extended rule, he will be challenging Atatürk’s place in history, the country’s founder. He has already been in power as long as Atatürk and plans to remain there, possibly until 2033. More importantly, as he puts his own stamp on Turkey, he is systematically undermining the founder’s legacy by redefining the role of religion in society or by simply challenging history. Atatürk was no democrat but neither is Erdogan. The difference is that democrats were not the norm but rather a curiosity at the beginning of the 20th century.
How Did Turkey Get Here? Erdogan vs. Turkey

Erdogan had built his reputation as a pragmatic and maverick politician; after all he emerged from the ranks of a hardline Islamist party, the National Salvation Party. He successfully dissociated himself from his past comrades-in-arms to form the Justice and Development Party, AKP. His party won the 2002 elections and he assumed the position of Prime Minister in 2003. His success in the early years was due to two factors. First, it was the good stewardship of an economy that, thanks to Prime Minister and later President Turgut Özal’s earlier structural reforms, had become dynamic and increasingly export-oriented; and second, the moderate image he cultivated and projected at home and abroad. Domestically, to populate the bureaucracy, he relied on the cadres that the Gülen organization supplied him with. The two allies, Gülen and Erdogan, had one common enemy: the alliance between the military and the military-backed state elites. In 2007 in a confrontation over the choice of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül as President, the armed forces leadership overplayed its hand; in the ensuing elections called to ratify Gül’s selection, Erdogan and the AKP won a decisive victory effectively terminating military tutelage of Turkish politics.

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The Erdogan-Gülen alliance would continue through the 2010 constitutional referendum that putatively strengthened democratic standards and further curbed the military’s prerogatives. The two would part ways soon thereafter; they had emerged as the two most powerful forces in society and a power struggle was bound to ensue, first in the form of skirmishes and later on as a full-blown conflict. Erdogan would successfully manage to upstage Gülen at every turn.

More importantly, freed from any political and military opposition, Erdogan began to systematically reshape and undermine the institutions that most Turks had grown up with. These institutions were not perfect, by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, they were quite limiting, if not oppressive, especially if you happened to be a member of a disfavored ethnic or political group. Nevertheless they worked in a way that provided a degree of predictability.

As Erdogan labours on to create the institutional, political and social conditions necessary for his extended rule, he will be challenging Atatürk’s place in history, the country’s founder.

Today, the judiciary, military, educational system, press, financial system, bureaucracy, parliament and electoral system have all been subjugated to Erdogan’s will. He has used a myriad of tactics to achieve the emasculation of the Turkish State. The military was purged wholesale after the attempted coup in July 2016. Some 149 generals and admirals were dismissed almost overnight, representing roughly 46% of all personnel of that rank, despite the number of soldiers out on the street the night of the coup being nowhere near commensurate with the troops these officers had commanded. Similarly, hundreds of staff officers with the ranks of colonel, major and captain, representing the top officer cadres, were also ousted.

The bureaucracy, under the guise of eliminating all Gülenist followers, was also cleansed of people thought not to be sufficiently loyal to Erdogan. The judiciary was cowed into submission as judges and prosecutors heeded the preferences of the AKP leadership, primarily Erdogan’s, as decisions were taken in line with his wishes. Those who did not, found themselves removed, ‘exiled’ or relocated to other jurisdictions. The most absurd case occurred when the Constitutional Court, which has occasionally tried to buck the trend of political intrusions, found, in a most brazen form of abuse of
power, that one of its decisions to release two journalists from jail was overturned by a lower court.

One of the most dramatic turnabouts occurred in the press. Not always known for its high journalistic standards, the Turkish press was nonetheless a vibrant and muckraking assortment of journalists and newspapers. Erdogan has succeeded in establishing hegemonic control over the press. Almost 90% of outlets are either under his direct control or that of his family or friends, and any that are not have been made to fear his power. Turkey has the highest number of journalists behind bars of any country in the world. They are likely to find themselves incarcerated for long periods of time before they get their day in court. When found guilty, the verdicts have been unforgiving. The pressure to support the government has resulted in a supplicant Turkish press that is replete with widely exaggerated stories of Turkish leadership successes at home, in the Middle East and everywhere beyond.

The judiciary, military, educational system, press, financial system, bureaucracy, parliament and electoral system have all been subjugated to Erdogan’s will

Many academics have been fired from their universities for having signed a petition criticizing the government’s Kurdish policies. The resulting, chilling effect has forced many to leave the country or refrain from researching what some may consider sensitive topics, although the definition of the latter has been left to the government.

Parliament has been reduced to a do-nothing body that agrees with everything the presidential palace commands. The leaders of Turkey’s third largest party, the pro-Kurdish People’s Democracy Party, HDP, have been hauled to jail, many members of parliament, including those from other parties, finding that the concept of ‘immunity from prosecution’ has been nullified.

What’s Next?

Erdogan did not introduce such draconian measures overnight. The process has been gradual and composed primarily of two tactics. The first was the creation of a charismatic personality, through the control of the media, thereby enabling him to eschew rules and institutions. The second consisted in manipulating the electoral system. When his party was defeated in the June 2015 parliamentary elections he manoeuvred to block the formation of a government. He forced a second election in November 2015, which was conducted during a period of heightened conflict with Kurds in Turkey’s southeast, allowing the AKP to regain its majority.

The single most determining event was the April 2017 referendum that expanded presidential powers, effectively making the office the sole governing node of the country. The AKP managed to eke out the barest of majorities (51-49) despite a one-sided campaign conducted under state-of-emergency conditions, in which the opposition was almost completely banned. Evidence of stuffed ballots and last-minute shenanigans have convinced many, including at least one academic study, that Erdogan lost the vote by a close and similar 51-49 margin. These results are telling; despite the heavy-handed pressure emanating from the State, half of the public still stood up to Erdogan. This does not mean that the opposition to Erdogan is by any means united and in a position to prevent him from running the country. However, what the referendum results signal are the potential dangers that lie ahead. It has already pushed Erdogan into making an alliance with an extreme right-wing party, the Nationalist Action Party, MHP, in the run-up to the next elections. The MHP is virulently anti-Kurdish, anti-European and prioritizes Turkish nationalism over all other issues. Erdogan, in his determination to ensure his own election in 2019, and because he knows of the strong opposition to his rule, is willing to intensify pressure on society. Nothing is being left to chance; electoral laws have been amended to ensure that the government will be able to influence results. With Turkey, already downgraded in many worldwide indexes to a status of ‘unfree,’ the likelihood of a backlash in Europe and the US is growing.
In the short-term, this backlash is likely to benefit Erdogan as his brand of Turkish authoritarianism, not unlike others, is imbued with significant amounts of dislike of ‘the other,’ be they ethnic or religious minorities or simply foreigners. The recent military operation in Afrin has already demonstrated his willingness to manipulate these sentiments. The vehement anti-American animosity displayed daily by authorities and the media has already affected bilateral relations. Efforts at containing the negative language, especially by senior Americans, have, for the most part, been ineffectual. In turn, the rhetoric is creating the conditions for a major miscalculation or mistake that could significantly derail bilateral relations.

Beneath the verbal animosity lie important differences, the most important of which is the question of the Syrian Kurds. Some 2,000 US military personnel are working to defeat the remnants of the Islamic State in close alliance with the YPG, People’s Protection Units, who are closely affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, in Turkey. For the Turks, the emergence of a Kurdish zone, especially one protected by the American military is reminiscent of the post-Kuwait and Iraqi war encounters that ultimately produced a federal arrangement in that country. A repeat of this experience across its southern border in Syria, especially considering that the future of that country remains much in doubt, would be strategically problematic if not unacceptable to Ankara. Turkish troops and Turkish-armed extremist Syrian oppositionists operating in northern Syria in close proximity of and at cross purposes with Americans and their allies is a situation unlike any other in the history of the NATO alliance.

Erdogan did not introduce such draconian measures overnight. The process has been gradual and composed primarily of two tactics: the creation of a charismatic personality and the manipulation of the electoral system.

Herein lies the greatest challenge: what happens next depends very much on Erdogan. He has become accustomed to getting his way, at least at home. In the absence of a system of checks and balances in Turkey, his calculations will be a decisive factor for future developments.
The isolation of Qatar by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has substantially failed, not only because of the immediate solidarity shown since June 2017 by Turkey and Iran, but also because Western states have not diminished their relations with Doha; indeed, some countries such as Italy have even intensified them. All the major countries, from East to West, were present at the Military Maritime Fair in Qatar in March 2018, an unequivocal sign that none of them intends to isolate a country that is one of the greatest producers of gas in the world, a strong purchaser of arms and an important investor in financial and real estate markets.

Qatar under the Al Thani Dynasty has proven much more skilful than the coalition led by the Saudis and the Emirates on the main battlefields: media propaganda; economic pressure and related costs; legal disputes regarding international conventions on the rule of law; and finally, public opinion dynamics and international reputation on the global stage.

For years, the Saudis and the Emirates have tried to severely punish Qatar for its presumed support to terrorism and for having threatened their security. The problem in displaying such political bravado is that such an attitude does not convince other countries. This is because the accusations are clearly disproportionate, apart from hypocritical insofar as certain central elements such as financing Islamist movements, relations with Iran and interference with the affairs of other countries.

Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar have funded radical Islamist groups warring in Syria, a sort of conflict by proxy against Iran's greatest ally, in an attempt to reduce the Shiite Crescent's influence in the Middle East. This has failed, above all because of Russia's intervention on 30 September 2015.

And not only. To stop the rise of Syrian Kurds, Turkey, under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, had to ally itself with Moscow and Teheran. A devastating result for the Saudis, who were obliged to likewise come to a secret agreement with Israel to deter the expansion of the Shiite forces and the Lebanese Hezbollah. The quasi-abduction of the Lebanese politician Saad Hariri in Saudi Arabia, with nearly tragicomic repercussions on the international stage, was a sign that Riyadh's diplomacy seriously felt the blow of defeat in Syria, aggravated by the military stalemate in Yemen, a war that the Saudis have not managed to win in three years.

In this international context, the economic pressure and costs sustained by Qatar for not being able to access the land, marine or aerial spaces of its besieging neighbours was only momentarily traumatic, quickly overcome when various countries came to its rescue. The supplementary costs for having to use longer sea and air routes are insignificant compared to Qatar's financial reserves.

The political and economic ties that Qatar quickly established with both neighbouring and distant countries, among them such powerful ones as Iran, Turkey and India, far outweigh the costs in the short run deriving from having to pay more air transport fuel and other costs associated with the siege. Moreover, they have strengthened the country on the diplomatic level.

You could say the besiegers have made Qatar stronger both at home and abroad, and not the other way around.

To international public opinion, but also to other countries, Qatar has appeared much more reason-
able and coherent, whereas the countries led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE have only expressed fear and anger, as well as a certain arrogance, accompanied by unrealistic, irrational requests, not to mention an inability to provide concrete proof to back up their accusations.

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Among the 13 demands Saudi Arabia made of Qatar, as if in ultimatum, there was the demand to completely shut down the Al Jazeera media group, which is based in Doha. Qatar was also to suspend all contact with the Muslim Brotherhood, a mainly non-violent and democratic Islamic movement that had been one of the driving forces behind the Arab Spring in 2010 and 2011. It was to stop supporting radical Syrian Islamist rebel groups, in particular the organization known until the end of last year as the al-Nusra Front (before changing its name to conceal its ties to al-Qaeda).

Qatar was likewise supposed to hand over all individuals accused of ‘terrorism’ (a very broad term in the four countries carrying out the blockade). And it was to expel all citizens from these countries living in Qatar. And finally, Qatar was to suspend practically all diplomatic and commercial contact with Iran, despite the fact that nearly all of its income derives from the enormous gas fields that it shares with Teheran. And as if this weren’t enough, it was also supposed to pay compensation for the inconvenience caused and accept regular monitoring to ensure it abided by these conditions over the next ten years.

Qatar would thus need to align itself “militarily, politically, socially and economically, as well as financially,” with Saudi Arabia and its allies. In practice, this would mean no more independent foreign policy and tighter control at home.

The terms presented by the hereditary Saudi prince Mohammed bin Salman to end the blockade of Qatar were so harsh as to be the equivalent of an unconditional surrender, and they were presented in such a manner as to suggest that in reality, he wanted them to be rejected.

Saudi Arabia’s diplomatic attack on Qatar was actually the consequence of the failure of the Syrian war against Assad and Riyadh’s frustration at not managing to win any war against Iran, its main rival in the Gulf.

To international public opinion, Qatar has appeared much more reasonable and coherent, whereas the countries led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE have only expressed fear and anger not to mention an inability to provide concrete proof to back up their accusations.

Saudi Arabia is not in a position to directly wage war against Iran, but if it did, it would only be viable with decisive American support. And nevertheless, Riyadh’s defence expenditure in 2016 was circa 64 billion dollars while that of Iran amounted to 12. Economic figures are likewise clearly higher on the Saudi side, which boasts a GDP of 650 billion dollars while Iran’s is around 400 billion dollars. And this not to mention oil production: Saudi Arabia’s more than doubles that of Iran. The confrontation between the two economies could become further penalizing for Iran if the Americans decide to impose new sanctions on Teheran.

Data on military power in Iran shows strength in number of soldiers and in certain sectors, but the Saudis have a technologically more advanced arsenal. And yet the Saudis, who also enjoy American aerial support, cannot even beat the Zaydi Shiite Houthi resistance of Yemen.

The war between Riyadh and Teheran will always remain a war by proxy, and you could also say by luck: simply consider what it could mean in terms of oil supply on the market to see the Gulf terminals in flames.
The Saudis thus vented their frustration against Qatar, believing they would gain an easy victory. But it is known that both countries have funded the al-Nusra Front, turning a blind eye to its ties with al-Qaeda, from the moment it was fighting the Alawi regime of Syrian President Assad, an ally of the Shiites. The funds disbursed by both countries were often delivered in bags filled with cash deposited in Turkish hotels, thus it is probable that part of it reached the hands of the Caliphate, especially when in recent years the various Islamist factions have been divided regarding whether or not to support ISIS.

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In sum, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have accused and condemned Qatar for something they had just stopped doing. And this is also why Saudi action against Qatar has been a substantial failure: it has been perceived internationally as a hypocritical pretext. And probably also as an attempt to domesticate Doha in order to take over management of their resources. In these years, Saudi Arabia has paid, much more dearly than Qatar, for the forced oil price war, directed especially against US shale oil, impoverishing government funds and the private income of the Wahhabi Kingdom.

To grasp the underlying reasons for this conflict between Qataris and Saudis, we must also take a look at economic data. Qatar has a sovereign fund of 355 billion dollars, 30 billion in stocks and bonds, and a colossal sum in other investments abroad. The Saudi royal house, on the other hand, pays a steep price, with a public debt that would have forced Riyadh into default by 2018, corresponding precisely to the huge amounts of aid granted to terrorist organizations in Syria, Yemen and Iraq, all jihadi militants now outside the new balance and defeated by the Russia-Iran-Syria triangle, which Turkey has joined after making agreements with Moscow and Teheran.

The isolation of Qatar has failed, true, considering that it even hosts an American military base, and a Turkish one as well, but the friction between Doha and Riyadh remains. On the other side of the Gulf, the Iranians are observing this with some satisfaction: the Arabs have given another political gift to the Islamic republic.
Political Change in Saudi Arabia

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The defining political developments in Saudi Arabia centre around the King’s son, Mohammed bin Salman (‘MBS’), who took the role of Crown Prince in 2017, and has quickly moved against many of the country’s previously established royal, political and business elites. MBS has been restructuring his power base, taking steps to rein in the role of religious clerics and traditional business elites, while giving more prominence to international investors and to a large but politically amorphous youth constituency. The traditional pillars of Al-Saud rule – the large royal family, the informal pact with religious clerics, and oil wealth – are all being weakened, and the leadership is turning to a new authoritarian populism, centring on a discourse of security, technological advancement, youth, social and economic liberalization, and nationalism. This change is intended to preserve the power of the monarchy while transforming it dramatically from within. Meanwhile, in foreign policy, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have led a boycott of neighbouring Qatar and have continued to pursue their military intervention in Yemen, indicating a far more assertive regional role than they have played in the past.

The New Crown Prince

In June 2017 King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud declared that his son Mohammed would become Crown Prince, taking the position from his cousin, Mohammed bin Nayef (‘MBN’). MBN had been appointed Crown Prince by King Salman in 2015, and was also the Interior Minister, a position he had in effect inherited from his father, Nayef, Salman’s more socially conservative half-brother. MBN had been held in high regard by Western governments. He was seen as the man who had spearheaded Saudi Arabia’s counterterrorism efforts, with significant success in combating al-Qaeda in the kingdom. Yet he was reportedly surprised by security forces and held incommunicado overnight until he agreed not to fight his removal.

MBN was replaced as Interior Minister by a younger relative, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef – keeping the important Interior Ministry within the Nayef branch of the family but with a less experienced and well-connected leader, likely to be more directly beholden to Salman and MBS. The Interior Ministry was also stripped of many of its powers, as the special forces and key counterterrorism functions were moved to a new homeland security agency reporting to the King.

Domestically, MBS has pitched himself in particular as a champion for Saudi youth that want more social freedoms as well as a more level playing field in the economy. The notorious ban on women driving was lifted, as was the prohibition on cinemas, both to take effect in 2018 (NB: by the time of publication, cinemas will have reopened – due on 18 April). Some of the youth have certainly applauded his moves to reduce social restrictions and tackle corruption, but he has also faced criticisms over the pace and nature of the changes. No organized opposition has emerged, partly because a number of senior Islamist figures have been in prison since 2016, deterring others from actively resisting the changes that are underway. Nonetheless, criticisms could become more vocal in the years to come if MBS struggles to deliver progress on the economy – especially jobs, access to
services, and the cost of living. The IMF forecast in July 2017 that economic growth would be “close to zero” during the year, while the World Bank said in October 2017 that the economy had contracted slightly in the first quarter because of OPEC-mandated oil output cuts. The government continued some fiscal reforms. It introduced an excise tax, dubbed ‘sin tax’ on cigarettes, energy drinks and fizzy drinks, in 2017, and in early 2018 it introduced a 5% VAT and slashed subsidies on fuel. It has also introduced a ‘citizen’s account’ programme where the various government benefits are consolidated and streamlined into a single account, and, importantly, are targeted on the basis of income, rather than being universal.

The various moves illustrate the tricky balancing act for a government that is confronting the need to reduce its long-term dependence on oil, but is also concerned with the potential political risks that could emanate from austerity.

At the same time, however, some austerity measures introduced in 2016 were eased slightly, as a partial recovery of oil prices took some of the pressure off the public finances. Notably, in April 2017, King Salman reinstated a variety of benefits and allowances for public sector workers, which had been removed in September 2016 (the cuts had caused controversy as the various benefits accounted for 20-30% of take-home pay for many employees), and in early 2018 gave public sector workers and the military a pay rise. Improving the benefits in the public sector contradicts the longer term policy aim of incentivizing Saudis to work in the private sector.

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Corruption Crackdown

The restructuring of power within the royal family was again demonstrated dramatically on 4 November 2017, when several hundred people were arrested overnight as part of a sweeping anti-corruption purge, and detained with much fanfare in Riyadh’s five-star Ritz Carlton hotel. Those arrested included senior royals, businesspeople, current and former ministers, and media owners. The most prominent royal arrested was Prince Miteb bin Abdullah, a son of the previous King, who headed the National Guard, a tribal fighting force, and who was once seen as a possible contender to the throne. Like MBN, he had been seen as a powerful figure with a large base of patronage and support, but there were no obvious indications of dissent within the National Guard when he was removed from his position and replaced by the less experienced Prince Khaled bin Ayaf Al Muqrin. Miteb was freed three weeks later after reportedly agreeing to pay the government some $1bn in an out-of-court settlement, portrayed by the authorities as compensating the public finances for his past involvement in corruption. Officials said that they aimed to raise $100bn in similar settlement deals with those arrested, none of whom are believed to have gone to the slow and over-burdened Saudi court system.

Others arrested included the Economy Minister, Adel Fajh, and the veteran Minister of State and Former Finance Minister, Ibrahim Assaf as well as major businesspeople including the country’s richest man, Prince Waleed bin Talal, and the leaders of some of Saudi Arabia’s best-known businesses and media companies, some of whom were closely associated with former kings and their immediate families. These included the head of the broadcaster MBC, Waleed al Ibrahim, who had resisted efforts by MBS to buy the firm.

The corruption crackdown was a populist move at a time of austerity, which also enabled MBS to send certain messages to the country’s traditional elites. On one hand, it signalled to the elites they would no longer enjoy impunity for siphoning off state resources. On the other hand, there is now also an implicit threat that corruption charges could be utilized for political reasons against opponents of MBS. While some of the figures arrested were widely reputed to be corrupt, corrupt practices such
as kickbacks and nepotism in the awarding of contracts have been so widespread in Saudi Arabia as to be systemic. There are other individuals who have been involved in high-profile corruption scandals but have so far escaped censure. The fact that the country’s new anti-corruption body is chaired by MBS has given it teeth, but has added to the perception that the corruption purge is likely to be politically selective. For this reason, it has added to the concerns that international investors have about political risk in the kingdom. The local business community is also struggling to adapt to the uncertain new environment.

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The removal of MBN and Prince Miteb, and the arrests of several princes, marks a significant change in the power-sharing politics within the royal family. For decades, power within the Al-Saud family was distributed among a number of senior princes, who ruled their ministries as fiefdoms within the State, with major patronage bases of their own. The previous King, Abdullah, was often constrained in his decision-making by the perceived need to consult his influential half-brothers (including Salman and Nayef). King Salman and MBS appear to be reacting against a period where internal family consensus-building had become slow and unwieldy — not helped by the fact that the senior princes were all advanced in years. Power has now been centralized around the Salman branch of the family to a degree that is unprecedented for the Al-Saud. This has the advantage of enabling the leadership to be more agile and decisive. It may also have political risks; most of the Gulf monarchies, barring Oman, have adopted a model of dynastic rule where the ruling family works together to uphold the governing regime. Indeed, political scientist Michael Herb has argued that in the Middle East it has been dynastic monarchies that have tended to be most resilient, compared to the more centralized monarchies that collapsed in the twentieth century.

There are certainly signs of discontent within the Al-Saud — it would be strange if there were not, since the wider family appears to have been put on notice that their traditional privileges can no longer be taken for granted. Equally, however, there are no obvious rivals to MBS. And of course, internal royal-family dynamics are largely opaque to outsiders, so the chance of family members mobilizing against MBS are almost impossible to assess. One scenario is that there could be pushback against MBS when King Salman passes away; currently, King Salman, long known to be a king-in-waiting, acts as a bridge between the traditions of the older generation and his son’s newer style of decision-making, and his stature in the family seems to ensure deference. There was a recurring rumour in 2017 that King Salman was preparing to stand down in favour of his son in order to ensure his son’s passage to the throne faced no obstacles — though this did not in fact materialize. Meanwhile, diplomats and other observers recall that a former Saudi king, Faisal, was assassinated by his nephew and wonder if a similar scenario could recur.

The Changing Role of Religious Clerics

As the leadership has reconfigured power within the royal family, and has begun to confront the structural changes in its traditional economic base, it has also sought to alter the role of the religious clerics. This is partly about social change, partly about countering extremism, and partly about new methods of social control. In September 2017 the King announced that women would be able to drive from June 2018 — ending a de facto ban which had been unique in the world. The driving ban had faced international opprobrium for years, but was seen by conservative religious authorities as one of the prime symbols of Saudi Arabia’s religious morality and as a key differentiator from the Western world. The leadership also announced that women would no longer need the permission of a male ‘guardian’ to...
access government services, and in 2018 allowed cinemas to open despite the Grand Mufti’s view that they could lead to immorality. These changes are not so much driven by the economy, though being more socially liberal will help attract investment and talent, as by the leadership’s sense that clerics had become too powerful – constraining the powers of the leaders, and sometimes being a breeding ground for opposition. King Abdullah had already taken steps to reduce the powers that clerics held over education and the justice system, but appeared to think that it was important to keep appeasing them where social life was concerned.

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The Grand Mufti and the state-appointed religious scholars have always ultimately deferred to the royal family. But Sunni Islam has a wide range of religious authorities, which individuals can choose to follow regardless of whether they’re appointed by the State. These independent clerics, known as the sahwa, were sources of significant Islamist opposition in the nineties, in particular. As Interior Minister, MBN engaged with them as allies against the more violent Islamists, al-Qaeda and ISIS. By contrast, the new leadership has cracked down on the sahwa as well as violent groups.

MBS has talked about the need to return to moderate Islam, and has said that ever since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, previous Saudi leaders did not understand how to confront extremism (implying that they were running scared of religious conservatives and appeased them too much). These sentiments have been welcomed internationally, but there is still a lack of clarity about what a religious reform process will entail, and, if it is state-led, how it will build credibility. In one interesting and little-noticed move in September 2017, the Saudi government said that female Islamic scholars would be allowed to issue fatwas.

**Foreign Policy**

In terms of foreign policy, Saudi Arabia has become aligned more closely than ever before with the United Arab Emirates. This pairing has emerged over the past two years as a more important alliance than the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, a forty-year-old trade and political bloc. Indeed, the GCC’s future has been cast into doubt by a politically motivated trade embargo that Saudi, UAE and Bahrain placed on another of its members, Qatar, in 2017, in an attempt to press Qatar to change its foreign policy. This marks a significant change from the Saudi leadership’s previous support for a GCC union.

Also on the foreign policy front, the war in Yemen has continued into its third year. As part of this conflict, Saudi Arabia found itself for the first time under attack by missiles fired into its territory by the Houthi militia, which now holds de facto power in Yemen’s capital. Saudi officials blamed Iran for developing the Houthis’ missile capabilities, raising fears of a further escalation in the Saudi-Iranian ‘cold war.’
The War and Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen: A Forgotten Conflict?

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The war in Yemen has long been described as hidden or forgotten. It has been going on, however, for over three years and it immediately generated a large-scale humanitarian crisis, described by international humanitarian agencies as the worst in the contemporary world. The cholera epidemic that gripped a million Yemenites in 2017 is one of the indications, but the figures circulating on the humanitarian situation are sometimes difficult to grasp and are actually generally unknown. Thus, the UN usually refers to 10,000 deaths caused by the war, but this estimate, generally repeated by the media and in reports, is very certainly under the mark, since the figure dates back to the summer of 2016. All of them have thus ceased to keep the macabre count.

A Long-Hidden War

In any case, it would seem that the disdain towards Yemen can also be ascribed to other factors, namely, the complexity of a war that is beyond any Manichaean reading. The intervention of the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates was done, within a legal framework endorsed by the UN Security Council’s Resolution 2216, in order to restore the President qualified as legitimate – Abderabuh Mansur Hadi – to power. Although most of the destruction and the civilian victims can be ascribed to the coalition bombarding the country and severely limiting its imports, the Houthi rebellion that took over the capital also violates quite a few international conventions. Moreover, its anti-American and anti-Semitic slogan as well as its de facto alliance with Iran do not make it a group easy to identify with. Sudden changes in alliance – such as the one that led to the assassination of former President Ali Abdallah Saleh by the Houthis last December – the growing weight of local identities, primarily in the south of the country, as well as the sometimes-shady games of the coalition armies also blur the readability of the conflict. This limits the media’s and policymakers’ capacity to speak of a war that moreover (and very wrongly!) appears to be far removed from European or North American concerns.

The scant interest in the Yemen situation, however, can also most certainly be ascribed to the complexity of Western governments. In fact, the latter do not encourage putting the matter on the media or diplomatic agenda at all, and have repeatedly blocked initiatives by certain actors of the international community. In 2016, for instance, responding favourably

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1 Author of Le Yémen : de l’Arabie heureuse à la guerre, Fayard, 2017
to pressure exerted by Saudi Arabia, Western diplomats prevented the creation of an independent commission to investigate potential war crimes. The military engagement of the coalition armies is, moreover, directly supported by the United States, the United Kingdom and France (though each to different degrees) through technical support to the belligerents, as well as through arms contracts of the past that are continually renewed. Since the onset of the war, France has doubled the amount of its sales to Saudi Arabia. The United States, during Donald Trump’s visit to Riyadh in May 2017, signed arms contracts with the Kingdom amounting to US$110 billion. In the face of such budgets, the economic trade-off done by Western governments may be perceived as rational, but it also proves to be constraining on the diplomatic level.

Progressively Entering the Agenda

In any case, the entrenchment of the war has gradually led to a certain awareness. Describing the conflict in Yemen as hidden is certainly now slightly exaggerated. In 2017, coverage of the crisis in Western media improved considerably, even if still unsatisfactory. A growing number of foreign reporters have been able, though under difficult, if not outrageous conditions, to cover the conflict from Aden, or more rarely by travelling to Sanaa, an area held by the rebels.

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Public and political debate has taken up the Yemeni issue, though very timidly as yet. Discussions have taken place in British Parliament and the American Congress (where a vote with a very close outcome concerning military support to the coalition was called by Democrat Bernie Sanders in March 2018). The questions addressed to the French government at the National Assembly, in particular by majority MP Sébastien Nadot, as well as the sit-ins organized during Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed ben Salman’s visit to European capitals also indicated how Western countries have become aware of the impasse of the military strategy chosen by the Arab coalition. In the face of this process whereby the Yemen issue is gradually being put on the agenda, an independent UN inquiry commission was finally accepted in October 2017. The Tunisian human rights activist, Kamel Jendoubi, is heading it.

The scant interest in the Yemen situation, however, can also most certainly be ascribed to the complicity of Western governments.

This process is essentially taking place along two lines: the humanitarian situation, on the one hand, and the matter of arms contracts on the other. Since the outbreak of the war, NGOs and UN humanitarian actors have been alerting about civilians’ extreme dependence on international aid, describing a pre-famine situation potentially affecting many millions of Yemenites. The catastrophist discourse that in 2015, for instance, described Yemen as in a situation worse than Syria, very fortunately did not come to pass. The relative resilience of economic structures (primarily through contraband) as well as the continued functioning — during over a year and a half of war — of a central bank that could pay the salaries of all civil servants, served for a time as a security net. But these funds have been exhausted or have even disappeared.

Over the course of 2017, the description of the cholera epidemic as the largest and most brutal ever recorded got the media mobilized and raised public awareness. Regardless of the fact that cer-
tain international NGOs then denounced both the instrumentalization of this epidemic and the exaggeration of the official figures provided by the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), this war doubtless needed a symbol to catalyse its placement on the international diplomatic agenda. The countries of the Arab coalition, sensitive to the deterioration of their image in the West, have attempted to make up for this indictment by promising massive funds for NGOs and UN agencies intervening in Yemen. Making the distribution of these funds operational remains subject to scrutiny, since humanitarian actors’ access to these funds are being restricted by the coalition.

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The matter of Western complicity through arms contracts constitutes the second line of pursuit by the media and of criticism of the coalition’s intervention in Yemen. The engagement of associations and elected officials in the United States and Great Britain in this matter has preceded the mobilization in France and other European countries (Belgium, Germany and Italy, for instance). The February 2016 passing of a European Parliament resolution calling for an embargo on arms sales to Saudi Arabia has had no substantial effect and has not really generated any significant debate.

In 2017, in any case, initiatives have been undertaken by various countries. Finland and Norway – who, by the way, are not among the main suppliers to the Gulf monarchies engaged in Yemen – have officially set up embargos. The government agreement ratified in early 2018 between Angela Merkel and her Social-Democrat partners in Germany contains an explicit resolution ending weapons sales to Saudi Arabia due to its intervention in Yemen and the civilian victims. Petitions in France, insistent questions posed by journalists, to which political leaders, including the Defence Minister Florence Parly, have supplied often awkward answers, as well as a poll taken by an NGO showing that 75% of French citizens reject arms contracts being signed with coalition countries indicate to what extent the Yemen issue is no longer really being ignored.

An International Issue

This public awareness is a necessary stage. It is understood that the international pressure exerted on the warring parties provides strong leverage, whether over Saudi Arabia or even Iran, whose involvement is increasingly substantiated after having been uncertain for a long time. But the placement of the Yemen conflict on the international agenda is important as well because this war has implications that go beyond its territory. The fate of Yemen concerns the Middle East and most certainly the world. The country’s location at the crossroads of trade routes make it a significant issue, where its destabilization could prove very costly.

Since the outbreak of the war, NGOs and UN humanitarian actors have been alerting about civilians’ extreme dependence on international aid, describing a pre-famine situation potentially affecting many millions of Yemenites

The structure of the conflict, marked by confession-alization dynamics similar to those observed in Syria and Iraq, also fosters jihadist groups. The latter have developed a territorial base in the country. Recall that it was the Yemeni branch of al-Qaeda that


claimed authorship for the January 2015 attack against Charlie Hebdo in Paris. These armed groups directly benefit from the situation of chaos and the collapse of state structures encouraged by the conflict. In addition, designating the Houthis as Shiite heretics associated with Iran legitimizes the confessionally-based propaganda of jihadi actors.

The matter of Western complicity through arms contracts constitutes the second line of pursuit by the media and of criticism of the coalition’s intervention in Yemen

Thus, for instance, the Organization of the Islamic State, in competition with al-Qaeda, has emerged in this context of war and has been carrying out activities in the southern provinces. It particularly targets government leaders but has also deployed openly anti-Shiite violence, attacking mosques, for example. Although the jihadis have continued to be the targets of US drones since the beginning of the conflict and some of their leaders have been eliminated, at the same time, these movements have become established among the population in a context imbued with violence. Many Salafist combatants, though not necessarily directly affiliated with any transnational jihadi organization, have also been co-opted by the coalition into the war effort against the Houthis, blurring certain categories but contributing to generating a problem that could well resurface and project its violence beyond Yemen.

UN figures indicate 3 million displaced people, of which some 500,000 are abroad, mainly in Arab capitals. The more the conflict becomes entrenched, the greater the risk that the number of refugees will rise, the latter progressively entering migratory networks that go from the Arabian Peninsula to Eastern Africa and then turn north to cross the Mediterranean. These flows towards Europe, which remain marginal for now, are not the only ones to generate political controversy in the more or less long term. The flows towards Gulf States in particular could lead to significant migratory pressure, especially since the border with Saudi Arabia remains permeable. Demographic data (an annual population growth of 3%) and the exhaustion of water resources in many Yemen regions will foster translational migration in any case. The war, however, accentuates and accelerates these dynamics, which will come at a cost for the region and the world. It also takes precious time away from attempting to find solutions to these structural challenges.
Geographical Overview | The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and Other Actors

From the Euro-Arab Dialogue to a Euro-Arab Summit: Revamping the EU-Arab Partnership

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Since most Arab countries gained independence, structured Euro-Arab partnership has been characterized by a pattern of discontinuity to the extent that the EU has never held a Summit of Heads of State and Government with the Arab group. In contrast, the EU conducts international summity, both bilaterally and interregionally, with all world powers and regions, notably with the US, China and Japan or through the Asia-Europe Summit, the EU-Latin America Summit or the African Union-EU Summit, among others.

The biggest problem of a multilateral Euro-Arab exercise is that it has always encountered political difficulties, or, otherwise, has been overlooked entirely, amidst the constant fragmentation of the Arab regional system and little appetite from Europe’s side to antagonize a United States which has traditionally conducted its own policy towards the Middle East and the Arab region at large. Unlike with the other interregional dialogue exercises, EU-Arab cooperation has been dominated by purely political and security questions, and not economy and trade.


It would be simple – and somehow unmistakable – to present the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) as the story of a failure. Nevertheless, if the EAD is to be recalled as a milestone in Euro-Arab relations, it is because it engendered an unprecedented attempt, within a longstanding relationship, to undertake an interregional discussion. Behind that turning point lay the Arab need for support in the Palestinian cause and European reliance on Arab oil resources. Against the backdrop of the oil embargo, the European Economic Community (EEC) and Arab Countries would agree in the 1970s to settle a bilateral discussion that overcame the boundaries of national interests. Indeed, the challenge of the EAD was not only dictated by the difficulty in achieving mutually satisfying compromises through bilateral conversations. It was also given by the difficulty for each interlocutor to speak with one voice. In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur war, the balance of power in the Mediterranean was built on a complex system of dependencies. The Arab region, endowed with abundant oil resources, was the EEC’s main trading partner, especially for France and Italy. For its part, the EEC had recently declared its endeavour to strengthen its role as a political actor, particularly in the Mediterranean. The circumstances were such that, whereas Arab countries held the economic means to force political negotiation, Europeans had the opportunity to use their political influence for achieving their economic goals.2

Three years before, instability in the Mediterranean and the lack of a coherent roadmap in the region raised European awareness on the urgency of comprehensive solutions. The launch of the European Political Cooperation (1970) responded to the need for a common foreign approach beyond communitarian borders. Indeed, the ‘Global Mediterranean Policy’ (1972) would be the first articulated attempt by the EEC to give coherence to the wide array of bilateral agreements coexisting in the Mediterranean. Within this framework, the EEC sought to strengthen its commitment in the area through economic and technical cooperation. However, Arab countries expected greater political involvement from the European side.

Since most Arab countries gained independence, structured Euro-Arab partnership has been characterized by a pattern of discontinuity to the extent that the EU has never held a Summit of Heads of State and Government with the Arab group.

On 6 November 1973, in Brussels, the foreign ministers of the nine EC Member States expressed their intention to renegotiate their ties with the southern Mediterranean countries and manifested their support to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 regarding the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel since 1967. A few days later, an Arab Summit in Algiers called for European cooperation on behalf of their “deep affinities of civilization and by vital interests which could not be developed except in a situation of trusting and mutually beneficial cooperation.” In the Copenhagen declaration of December, Europeans would acknowledge the message and assert their will to negotiate comprehensive agreements with oil-producing countries comprising cooperation for economic and industrial development in exchange for stable energy supplies. Unexpectedly, four Arab ministers had attended that gathering to express their desire for long-term cooperation in economic, technical and cultural fields. In this regard, there is no consensus on who started the EAD, but it seems evident that both parties had numerous reasons for pursuing dialogue.

The EAD was formally established in Paris on 31 July 1974 with the foreign ministers of France and Kuwait as representatives of each part. It was agreed that a general committee and several working groups would be further constituted to handle the discussion. Notwithstanding, the first plenary session would be postponed for months due to the tensions nourished by the Arab-Israeli conflict. The signing of an association agreement with Israel, on the one hand, and the request by the Arab League (LAS) for the participation of a PLO delegation in the EAD, on the other, complicated the conversations. The ‘Dublin formula’ (1975) would solve the latter concern by establishing two homogenous delegations that blurred the links between representatives and nations.

The first plenary sessions took place in Cairo in June 1975, where the working committee structure was divided into seven categories: industrialization, infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, financial cooperation, trade, scientific and technical cooperation, as well as cultural-social-labour issues. Nevertheless, political divergences appeared during the subsequent gatherings of the working committees in Rome and Abu Dhabi. The European counterpart was perceived by the LAS as too ambiguous regarding the Palestinian issue. In fact, the approach of the European delegation in sessions of the EAD’s committee were restricted to policy statements already made at higher levels by the Nine as a group. Indeed, the Brussels Declaration on the Middle East had been the farthest-reaching commitment they had been able to endorse. Beyond that border, there were evident internal divergences on the approach towards Israel.

Political and economic differences were even more visible among the members of the LAS, whose only subject of consensus lay precisely in their total opposition to the Arab-Israel status quo. In a nutshell, at the level of foreign policy towards the Middle

3 http://aei.pitt.edu/7824/1/31735055281335_1.pdf
4 According to Taylor (1978, p. 431): “The Foreign Ministers of Algeria, Tunisia and Sudan and a Minister without Portfolio from the United Arab Emirates arrived in Copenhagen without invitation on this occasion.”
East, the main source of agreement among Arab countries coincided exactly with the main subject of controversy among the Nine. This reveals the extent to which the EAD was hampered by the shadow of a conflict that precipitated both its birth and death. Also, in both sides of the dialogue, the degree of commitment was diverse among countries. If, among Europeans, only the Mediterranean countries showed a strong involvement throughout the whole process, within the Arab region resource-poor countries were significantly more engaged than resource-rich ones. The latter, together with the harsh reaction by the US to the EAD, which Nixon’s Administration interpreted as a sort of European interference into its Middle East affairs, weakened the project from its very beginning.⁵

EU-Arab cooperation has been dominated by purely political and security questions, and not economy and trade

Only four meetings⁶ were held during the 1970s by the General Committee, which paradoxically left aside the two main topics, having unleashed the dialogue. Meanwhile, the working committees tried to define potential areas of economic cooperation. In this regard, Arab partners prioritized requests on industrialization and technology transfer, particularly concerning their petroleum refining facilities. This, however, was a sensitive point for their European counterparts. The same can be said about financial cooperation and labour relations, where the requests of Arab countries were too close to the Community’s red lines. Yet, a couple of events in 1977 revived hope on the possibilities of the EAD. The meetings held in Tunis and Brussels seemed particularly fruitful because they agreed on the implementation of several specific projects⁷ and the commitment by both parties to invest in the EAD. Moreover, at the London summit in June, the Nine Heads of State and Government of the EC took a further step in their support to the Arab cause. They asserted the necessity of “giving effective expression to Palestinian national identity” and called for a “homeland for the Palestinian people.” However, the start of the Camp David process with the visit to Israel of the Egyptian President Sadat would bring the EAD to a stalemate. After the expulsion of Egypt from the LAS in 1979, Arab countries suspended the dialogue. During the following years, the EEC would try to re-launch the initiative by committing itself, through different means, to deeper political involvement in the area. The Venice Declaration (June 1980) was the greatest of these attempts. Notwithstanding, any intent would prove unsuccessful until the return of Egypt to the LAS in 1989. However, once more, delicate circumstances would soon bring the dialogue to another deadlock. The outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990 brought a definitive close to the conversation.

Towards a Euro-Arab Summit

Since the last Euro-Arab Ministerial Conference convened in Paris in December 1989 by then French President François Mitterrand, Euro-Arab cooperation has been conducted through an increasingly more structured dialogue enhanced by EU institutions and the Secretariat of the Arab League (LAS). The capacity and powers of EU institutions to politically relate with other external regions has evolved in accordance with the EU Treaties modifications. Likewise, it was not until 2007 that the 19th Arab League Summit held in Saudi Arabia mandated the LAS Secretary General to pursue efforts and contacts with the Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission to develop collective Arab-European relations.⁸

⁵ As Eleonora Guasconi recalls, the impasse spurred by the US reaction was overcome with the ‘Gymnich Compromise.’ Under this German initiative, a compromise was found by allowing for consultation with the US on a case-by-case basis.
⁷ Among those projects, a Euro-Arab centre for the transfer of technology, a multilateral Euro-Arab convention for protection and promotion of investments or improved conditions for Arab workers employed in Europe were foreseen.
⁸ Arab League Summit decisions, Riyadh 2007 English Text, in The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: An Interactive Database, Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF), http://ecf.org.il/media_items/519
With a view to structure a cooperation format that could effectively address common and regional threats that both sides were facing, one year later, in February 2008, a first EU-LAS Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs was held in Malta following the so-called ‘Malta initiative’ launched in 2006. Similarly, this first ministerial meeting was followed by three other meetings at the level of ministers of foreign affairs in Cairo in 2012, in Brussels in 2014 and in Cairo in 2016. Ministerial meetings on foreign affairs are expected to be held alternatively in either one of the two regions every two years.

In particular, after the appointment of the EU High Representative Mogherini, bilateral cooperation between the European External Action Service and the Secretariat of the Arab League has been reinforced. In 2015, a strategic dialogue was launched and a MoU was signed between the two institutions, which has entailed the establishment of more avenues of discussion on priority issues, as well as the activation of some working groups on political and security matters, particularly in the fields of conflict prevention, early warning and crisis management, humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, transnational organized crime and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms control.9 In addition, the traditional invitations addressed to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs to attend the LAS Summits have been consolidated, and, in return, official meetings of the LAS Secretary General with the EU Foreign Affairs Council have also taken place. Upon the initiative of the LAS, in March 2017, the EU joined the so-called Libyan ‘Quartet,’ an initiative pushed forward by the latter along with the United Nations and the African Union.

The prospects for a steady, reinforced cooperation were reflected in the conclusions of the last EU-LAS Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs,10 held in Cairo in December 2016, whereby the idea of calling for a joint Euro-Arab Summit was made explicit, along with the possibility of holding sectoral ministerial meetings. In spite of clear indications from the Arab side to move forward in the organization of the joint summit as endorsed by the LAS Summit in Jordan in March 2017 in the presence of HRVP Mogherini, the EU should now take the initiative and fix the forthcoming meeting in its calendar. It is up to the presidency of the European Council to decide when preparations should begin.

With part of the Arab region in disarray, autocracy or even war, Europe is and will continue to be in the future the main source of foreign investment, trade and development aid in the Arab region and has a vital self-interest to promote state and societal resilience, as well as human and sustainable development. Despite new internal divisions that emerged in 2017 on the Arab side, namely the crisis over Qatar, which severely hit most of the countries in the LAS, the time has come to move forward and organize a summit.

In the light of an existing summit fatigue within the EU, this meeting should bring concrete results and avoid the typical vacuous declarations. To this end, the purpose of this summit is to enhance political dialogue and intensify security-related issues amongst the 50 states that take part in this exercise. Consequently, it is of paramount importance that, first, the summit is planned with a view to being convened again in the future following a certain pattern of regularity, as is the case with other inter-regional dialogues that the EU conducts worldwide. Secondly, it would be desirable that the exchanges at regular meetings of the EU’s Political and Security Committee and the Arab Permanent Representatives could be densified and held twice a year at least.

Thirdly, it is also relevant to properly engage the existing multilateral framework of cooperation in which EU Member States partner with part of the Arab group, namely the Union for the Mediterranean, which encompasses 10 of the 22 Arab states.11 This is what happened at the last EU-LAS Ministerial Meeting on Foreign Affairs held in Cairo in December 2016, where the UfM Secretary General was invited to attend the meeting and some of the regional projects and results of the organization

9 These working groups gather in between meetings of senior officials, which are held twice a year between the representatives of both institutions.


11 Notwithstanding the fact that Syria’s membership has been suspended since December 2011 and Libya has observer status.
were reflected in the final declaration. The long-forged Euro-Mediterranean cooperation has produced an acquis, which could bring value added to the EU-Arab partnership, without mixing or replacing processes whose nature and objectives are intrinsically different.

A Euro-Arab Summit in itself would certainly not bring peace to the Middle East, but it could give momentum to efforts in finding solutions.

With the aim of densifying and widening the scope of this strategic dialogue, the latter cannot be limited to purely security matters, and should also address whether the current state of the region is also an effect of the discouraging lack of progress on regional integration. In spite of the LAS being one of the oldest regional institutions, the organization lacks leadership capacity, both internally and externally, as well as internal cohesion. Closer cooperation with the EU could reinvigorate the credibility of the organization with its own membership and Arab citizens at large. Furthermore, the EU, by upgrading the political dialogue with the LAS and, thereby, promoting greater interregional and, particularly, intraregional integration with more impetus, would unequivocally help build and strengthen the region, but also its own interests. Intraregional economic links, especially in trade, remain very weak. Finally, sectoral ministerial meetings complementing the political dialogue by addressing the key strategic thematic priorities in interregional cooperation should become an important asset of the political dialogue. Without necessarily launching too many ministerial formats, it seems conspicuous that many of the common challenges that the partnership faces in areas that range from mobility, energy, job creation, terrorism, sustainable development, investment and arms control require an upgrade of the existing mechanisms of cooperation between the EU and the LAS secretariat. A Euro-Arab Summit in itself would certainly not bring peace to the Middle East, but it could give momentum to efforts in finding solutions. Focusing on cross-cutting matters of shared concern would certainly help overcome two major setbacks that have long hindered cooperation and mutual understanding: the prevalence of national interests over regional goals and the lack of a coherent roadmap towards balanced relations with a long-term vision.
Strategic Sectors | Security & Politics

Jihadism in the Sahel: Exploiting Local Disorders

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A Resilient Jihadist Threat

Since the ignition of the 2012 Malian crisis, violent armed movements claiming to fight in the name of Islam, known as jihadist groups, have become a major security threat for the countries of the Sahel, a region separating North and Sub-Saharan Africa comprising Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. In 2017 alone, jihadist groups reportedly perpetrated 276 attacks in the region (Long War Journal, 2018). To combat this threat, Sahel states and their partners have deployed multiple military operations on the ground. Since 2013, thousands of French soldiers have been operating in the region and about 800 US soldiers are now deployed in Niger alone. In late 2017, the regional G5-Sahel joint task force, a military cooperation of the Sahel states conceived in 2014, began counter-terrorism operations at the three-border area (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso). Despite military efforts, jihadist groups have proven resilient and even extended areas of activity, as illustrated by the 13 March 2016 jihadist attack of Grand Bassam in Ivory Coast.

This article will go some way to showing that the resilience of jihadist groups can be partly explained by a twenty-year history of securing anchorages in the Sahel and, especially after the 2013 French military intervention, partly owes to their implanting and exploiting of local disorders in rural marginalized areas. This strategy has proven effective and requires Sahelian states and their partners to re-evaluate current counter-terrorism strategies.

The Sahel: from Rear Base to Frontline

Jihadist implantation in the Sahel can be traced back to the end of the Algerian civil war (1991-2002), which pitted security forces against Islamist armed groups (GIA). After years of fighting, reportedly claiming the lives of 60,000 to 150,000 people, Algerian authorities implemented the 1999 ‘Concorde civile’ that granted amnesty to thousands of GIA members. While most accepted amnesty, some militants created the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 1998, and continued fighting the regime (Interview, Algerian Diplomat, Niamey, 2017). Hunted by Algerian security forces, and lacking popular support, the GSPC was however in need of backing. In 2006, the group pledged allegiance to jihadist organization al-Qaeda, and was rebranded al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2007. While AQIM elements in Algeria remained under military pressure, some members moved to northern Sahel and concluded alliances with local communities, mostly through marriage (Ould Salem, 2014: 56-59).

For years, AQIM used the Sahel as a rear base to gather wealth, arms and local recruits (Lacher, 2016). This article focuses on central Sahel (Mali, western Niger and northern Burkina Faso), as the main area of jihadist activity in the region.

1 In January 2013, at the request of the Government of Mali, France deployed ‘Serval,’ a 4,000-man-strong military operation against jihadist groups in northern Mali, followed in 2014 by the ongoing 3,500-man-strong ‘Barkhane’ operation deployed in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad.


Steinberg, 2015: 71). This led jihadist groups to develop on a more Sahelian basis. According to Algerian security reports, out of 108 AQIM members in the Sahel identified in mid-2010, only 21 were Algerians (Lacher, Steinberg, 2015: 75). The Movement of Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), created in 2011, while including some North African members, was first led by Hamada Ould Mohamed Kheirou, a Mauritanian Arab, and was mainly composed of combatants from the Sahel countries. While referring to Osama bin Laden as an ideological reference, MOJWA also placed emphasis on West African figures such as Usman Dan Fodio, founder of the 1804 Sokoto Caliphate, in northern Nigeria (Cristiani, 2012). However, until 2012, and despite several attacks in Mauritania, “AQIM operations in Algeria still far exceeded the type and number of operations it carried out in the Sahara-Sahel” (Roussellier, 2011: 5). Indeed, MOJWA’s first claimed operation was the kidnapping of three Westerners from a Polisario Front refugee camp in southern Algeria in October 2011 (Lacher, Steinberg, 2015: 76).

The implantation of Jihadist groups in the Sahel has been a twenty-year process, which adapted to the 2013 French military intervention by exploiting rural insurgencies

This changed in 2012 when armed groups, mostly comprising Malian Tuareg and Arab fighters coming back to Mali following the fall of Muammar Gaddafi’s regime in Libya, launched an armed insurgency in January 2012 and won control of the north of Mali. Seizing this opportunity, AQIM and its local offshoots briefly backed the Malian insurgents before chasing them out of the three main northern cities, Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao, which they ruled from April 2012 to January 2013. They administered the north and parts of central Mali (Mopti region) based on Sharia law and trained more locals in jihadist warfare (Interview, former jihadist, 2017). In January 2013, however, the French military operation Serval chased jihadists out of their urban strongholds. Despite losing fighters and control of the northern cities, jihadists managed to survive by scattering to rural Sahelian areas (Sandor, 2017: 15). On 2 February 2013, although victorious, French President François Hollande announced in the Malian capital Bamako: “the fight isn’t over”. Indeed, the Sahel had just become a new jihadist frontline.

A Rural Jihad?

In March 2018, Djamel Okacha, alias Yahya Abu al-Hamam, number two of the al-Qaeda-linked Group for the support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM),5 declared in an audio message that if France “succeeded in part, by distancing the mujahideen from the cities and causing them to retreat (…) the results were the opposite: French intervention led directly to the spread of the Da’wa, the numbers of mujahideen multiplied, people of religion and manhood from Fulani, Tuareg, Arab, Bambara, and Songhay tribes responded to support mujahideen and defend their land.”6 Despite coming from an anti-French propaganda video, this statement offers a relevant picture of the impact of the 2013 French intervention on jihadist tactics. There is no doubt that French military operations weakened jihadist groups to some extent and forced them out of towns (Foucher and Jezequel, 2017). However, it also led jihadists to pose as protectors of Sahelian populations fighting a “foreign military force supported by corrupted Sahelian governments” (Interview, former jihadist, 2017). Jihadist groups opted for “a more discreet occupation of neglected rural areas,” particularly in central Mali, northern Burkina Faso and western Niger, where they thrived by exploiting local grievances and disorders (Foucher and Jezequel, 2017).

For years, these areas have been marked by insufficient state-sponsored services (Education, Justice), under-representation at local and national po-

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5 GSIM, created in March 2017, is led by Malian Tuareg Iyad Ag Ghali and comprises members from AQIM, Al-Mourabitoun and the Katiba Macina.

Political levels, and inter-communal tensions (Sandor, 2017). For some communities, the State and its representatives were either absent or perceived as predatory forces. Following the 2013 French intervention, in parts of central Mali previously under jihadist control, “when state security forces returned they committed abuses, particularly against nomadic Fulani and Tamashq communities” (ICG, 2016: Executive summary). In several instances, jihadists filled a vacuum and replaced the State. In central Mali and western Niger, jihadists protected herders’ cattle from bandits, implemented various forms of Sharia-based justice, and provided youth from marginalized communities with weapons and training (ICG, 2016: 4; Interview, Fulani representatives, Niamey, December 2017). In a context of land disputes, access to military weapons was a game changer as it allowed semi-nomadic communities, such as Fulani groups who felt threatened by other groups (Tuareg and Daoussahak) that had earlier access to arms and better political representation, to protect themselves and shift local power balances. In these marginalized areas, the provision of such services led most locals to increasingly favour jihadists over state representatives.

Sahel states and their partners have been unable to sustainably neutralize these groups, and instead jihadist recruitment has improved and the level of armed violence has increased.

However, jihadist occupation of rural areas was also based on intimidation and violence against the population. In northern Burkina Faso, local jihadist group Ansarul Islam, allegedly connected to GSIM, reportedly targeted civilians accused of opposing the movement (ICG, 2017: 11). Furthermore, most locals joined jihadist groups out of pragmatic needs more than religious beliefs (ISS, 2016). While some became hard-core extremists, many used jihadist groups to defend their communities, get back at state representatives or shift local power balances. This sometimes led the jihadist and local fighters’ agendas to clash. Jihadist leader Hamadoun Kouffa, a Fulani preacher from central Mali and head of the ‘Katiba Macina,’ complained about Nigerien combatants leaving the group to defend their home communities (Audio records accessed in 2017). Although jihadist groups managed to spawn local insurgencies, armed violence seemed to be fuelled more by local grievances than religious extremism. Implanting in rural areas nevertheless permitted jihadists to blend with the local population. Jihadist groups adapted to an increased military presence and developed guerrilla-based tactics such as the use of improvised explosive devices (IED) against security forces’ patrols in northern and central Mali.7 Furthermore, jihadists benefitted from a pool of local combatants that could be used to launch asymmetrical attacks against security forces. The 4 October 2017 attack in western Niger, claimed by the Islamic State branch in the Sahel (ISGS), which killed four US and five Nigerien soldiers, was reportedly led by dozens of local Fulani combatants (Cherib and Jezequel, 2017).

Beyond Military-Focused Strategies

Jihadists’ implantation in rural areas has rendered military operations difficult as “it has become complicated to distinguish civilians from terrorists” (Interview, Nigerien security officer, Niamey, 2017). Due to a history of neglect from central states, national and international security forces tend to be perceived as an invading force by some rural populations. Upcoming operations of the G5-Sahel force in western Niger prompted rumours that “the G5 is coming to kill the Fulani” (Interview, Fulani representatives, Niamey, December 2017). Rumours aside, military operations have been tainted with reports of human rights abuses. In Mali, the United Nations reported 288 alleged cases of human rights violations “attributable to state actors” between January 2016 and June 2017, including in ‘counter-

terrorism’ operations by Malian security forces (MINUSMA and OHCHR, 2018: 1). Moreover, Sahel states and their international partners increasingly rely on ethnic based armed groups to proxy the fight against jihadist groups.8 In July 2017, Nigerien authorities reportedly allowed two Malian armed groups, the Tuareg, Imghad and Allied Armed Group (GATIA), a militia formed by Tuareg fighters, and the Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MSA), a mostly Daoussahak armed group, to lead operations in western Niger (Cherbib and Jezequel, 2017). However, the use of ethnic militia to proxy counter-terrorism tended to prove counter-productive. Indeed, local sources have accused the GATIA and the MSA of killing dozens of Fulani civilians under the cover of counter-terrorism.

To limit jihadist groups’ ability to recruit from marginalized communities and implant in rural areas, Sahelian states should work at restoring capacities to deliver services and peacefully manage local conflicts.

Targeted communities were reportedly defended by jihadist groups, which, in return, saw an increase in recruitment into their ranks (Interviews, Fulani representatives, Nigerien security officer, Niamey, December 2017). While producing some limited results, counter-terrorism strategies implemented so far appear to have rather fed jihadist propaganda and recruitment.

Conclusion

The implantation of Jihadist groups in the Sahel has been a twenty-year process, which adapted to the 2013 French military intervention by exploiting rural insurgencies. Overall, this strategy allowed groups to blend with the local population, find new recruits and fight security forces through guerrilla tactics. So far, Sahel states and their partners have been unable to sustainably neutralize these groups, and instead jihadist recruitment has improved and the level of armed violence has increased. In order to break what amounts to a vicious cycle of military operations feeding local jihadist insurgencies, Sahelian states and their partners should consider alternative options. There is a need to tackle the root causes of armed violence in rural areas, often more connected to socio-economic grievances, inter-communal tensions and a loss of faith in the State rather than violent extremism. To limit jihadist groups’ ability to recruit from marginalized communities and implant in rural areas, Sahelian states should work at restoring capacities to deliver services and peacefully manage local conflicts.

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INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES. Mali’s young ‘jihadists’: Fueled by faith or circumstance?, 26 August


The Kurdish Question in the Middle East: Regional Dynamics and Return to National Control

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The past four decades have seen an increasing regionalization of the Kurdish question on the Middle East scale. The Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the 1991 Gulf War and its consequences throughout the 1990s, US intervention in Iraq in 2003, the Syrian revolution and its repression as of 2011 and finally, the increasing power of the Islamic State as of 2014 have been important vectors for the expansion of Kurdish issues. There has likewise been a diversification and strengthening of non-state actors, and in particular, political parties on the regional level. Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, who, since 1923, seek to maintain “the status quo, which consists of collectively combatting Kurdish dissent,”¹ have been obliged to deal with the interventionism of the US and international organizations, whose promoters had neither anticipated nor planned the consequences of the 1991 Gulf War. Hence, for instance, the Iraqi Kurds, through the intermediary of the PDK and the UPK,² progressively gained autonomy from Baghdad after the establishment of the no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel, to the point where they formed a federated autonomous state within Iraq after 2005. By the same token, the threats of US intervention in Iraq led the PKK – originally from Turkey but having its rearguard in Syria, then in Iraqi Kurdistan – to create sister organizations that have allowed it to expand its influence in Iran (via the PJAK), in Syria (via the PYD and its SDF, which now control numerous Kurdish and Arab territories) and even in Iraq, near Mont Qandil where it is based, but also in the Maxmûr Kurdish refugee camp in Turkey and the Yazidi regions of Sinjar. In sum, the past few decades have seen a rise in power of Kurdish political parties, which have managed to profoundly regionalize the Kurdish question by allying themselves with regional or global powers. At once both the life-blood and consequence of this regionalization, the rivalry between the conservative, liberal pole embodied by Barzani’s PDK and the post-Marxist revolutionary pole embodied by the PKK has led to greater interconnection of Kurdish issues in different countries.

A Halt to the Regionalization of the Kurdish Question?

However, the most recent events have called these dynamics into question. In Turkey, the resumption of the armed struggle between the PKK and the Turkish Army – after a ceasefire that had been observed by both sides but that only led to sham negotiations beginning in 2013 – has led to a re-nationalization of the Kurdish issue after 2015, heightened by the massive repression following the failed July 2016 coup. In Iraq, Masoud Barzani’s hopes for independence have been crushed by the lack of international support and the central government’s reaction after the referendum on self-determination in September 2017 that led to the loss of Kirkuk. In Syria, despite the first local elections organized by the PYD and held that same month, the territorial defeat of the Is-

² See the list of abbreviations and acronyms and their expansions in the box in this article. Translator’s Note.
Islamic State allowed Turkey to take control of the region of Afrin (one of the three Kurdish enclaves in Syria, having the consent of Russia and the United States) in March 2018, demonstrating that state actors in the region still had the means to rally or to oppose the major powers and contain these dynamics of regionalization. Finally, in Iran, the end of the armed struggle of the PJAK (2004-2011) coinciding with the onset of the Syrian uprising, as well as intra-Kurdish political rivalries (between the PDKI, the Komala and the PJAK) and the diplomatic influence of the Iranian government in Iraq and Syria (via the Shiite militias and Lebanese Hezbollah) seems to have kept Iranian Kurdistan (at least for the time being) from the regional dynamics of the Kurdish issue.

The past few decades have seen a rise in power of Kurdish political parties, which have managed to profoundly regionalize the Kurdish question by allying themselves with regional or global powers.

It thus seems that government entities are regaining ground in the Middle East; that the Kurdish parties were too optimistic in banking on the collapse of the states in the region and on the support they could mobilize on the international level. But though we are witnessing an ebb in regional party dynamics, nothing would indicate that the states have again become ‘strong’, capable of legitimizing their power in all areas considered under their control. In fact, domestic unrest (protests against the Erdoğan regime in Turkey, the civil wars still underway in Iraq and Syria, economic crisis in Iran, heightened by the US’s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal), socially and geographically localized, limit countries’ room for manoeuvre, incapable of containing this diversification of political actors and their cross-border, transnational connections. The defeat of the Islamic State does not mean the end of History in Kurdish regions and growing local tensions are vectors for new mobilizations.

The Kurds in Their Respective Countries

In Iraq, the Mosul victory against the Islamic State has effectively allowed the central government to regain ground in vast territories, in particular Sunni areas. The regional Kurdish government, which had granted itself greater autonomy than established in the 2005 constitution and had taken control of certain ‘disputed areas’ in 2014, such as the city of Kirkuk, has had its perspectives cut short by a blockade from Baghdad after the September 2017 independence referendum. This redeployment of the central government in the northern region of the country, particularly in the ‘disputed areas,’ usually characterized by ethnic and confessional diversity, however, has been carried out thanks to local militia elites co-opted by the large national Shiite parties, in other words, a model unlikely to ease relations between the State and populations, and which could also “foster the return of an organized armed resistance.”

The victory of Moqtada al-Sadr (a Shiite nationalist) in the May 2018 legislative elections, and his plans of alliance with the pro-Iranian Shiite Hadi al-Ameri (head of the national militia organization, Badr) will probably not do much to improve these dynamics, nor will it allow a cooling down of relations with the Kurds. After a number of protests against the ‘traditional’ political parties in December 2017, the population of Kurdistan still managed to send 58 MPs (out of 320) to the Iraqi Parliament in May, that is, only four less than in the preceding legislature. But the parties are more divided than ever, and disputed, and the economic crisis weighs heavily on these political challenges, with the not-entirely-resolved matter of the share of the national budget allocated to the KRG and the chronic powerlessness of the Iraqi political institutions. The population could also organize outside of parties to struggle for their economic and political survival, above all if intercommunity clashes take place in Kirkuk or other ‘disputed areas’.

By the same token, in Syria, Russian and above all Iranian support (through Hezbollah) have allowed the Bashar al-Assad Regime to consolidate its power: whereas the Syrian government probably controlled less than 20% of the territory, by the end of September 2015, it controlled over 60%. On their part, the Kurds, who were enjoying unprecedented international enthusiasm and had calmly organized the first local elections in September and December 2017, had to back down before the Turkish forces in Afrin and withdraw from the majority Arab city of Manbij after negotiations between Russia, the United States and Turkey. In any case, it remains to be seen whether the pro-Turkish forces will be able to hold Afrin in the long term, given that abuses against the population, in particular against the Yezidis, have been regularly reported since March 2018. Moreover, the PYD, the YPG/YPJ and the SDF continue to control 25% of the Syrian territory, contributing to institutionalizing the Kobanî and Cizirê (Jazira) Cantons. Reconstruction, which is very slow because it is being done under extremely difficult conditions, has even allowed the Hasakê-Qamislo-al-Yaarubiyah rail line, which had not been running since 2005, to be reopened in December 2017. Growing tension with the regime, while a tacit, tactical pact of non-aggression – or even co-operation – links the PYD to the Bashar al-Assad forces, are also revealing signs of the real autonomization of Rojava, and of the interest held by the United States in stabilizing Syria’s north-east area. In fact, despite the little international protest following the Turkish invasion of Afrin (which was not a strategic region for the United States), the Kurds are still crucial actors in the Syrian conflict.

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On the international scale, Turkey has likewise lost the credit it had gained in the early 2000s, namely due to its rupturist posture: a NATO member but at odds with the West regarding the Kurds in Syria, becoming increasingly close with Russia while still officially aiming for the departure of Bashar al-Assad, the Turkish government no longer seems to have a strategic vision other than the fight against the Kurds. In short, Turkey’s ‘renationalization’ of the Kurdish question could be but temporary, especially since threats of intervention in Iraq against the PKK have incited the guerrilla to undertake new action. And finally, in Iran, Hassan Rohani’s re-election in May 2017 has not changed Kurdish relations with Teheran. Victims of an unprecedented economic cri-

4 Bulletin de liaison et d’information de l’Institut kurde de Paris, No. 393, December 2017, p. 3.
sis aggravated by the closing of the border with Iraqi Kurdistan, the Iranian Kurds seem to have been sidelined from the regionalization dynamics. However, the numerous social and political protests in December 2017 and January 2018 as well as the strike movement demanding the borders be re-opened that began in May and June 2018 demonstrate that the Kurdish society remains mobilized despite the repression. Especially since these protest movements arise after the PDKI’s decision to heighten the struggle against the regime and since the different Kurdish parties are trying to coordinate their action more. In February 2018, protests in support of the Afrin Kurds also revealed Teheran’s inability to completely suppress these cross-border solidarities.

Kurdistan is subject to a sort of pendular motion between regional dynamics and a return to being under national control. The action of international powers has both strengthened Kurdish political parties and given states margin for manoeuvring.

Thus, Kurdistan is subject to a sort of pendular motion between regional dynamics and a return to being under national control. The action of international powers such as the US or Russia, decisive in the Syrian conflict but devoid of long-term vision, has both strengthened Kurdish political parties and given states margin for manoeuvring. But the growing social and political tension in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, far from diminishing with the defeat of the Islamic State, emerges today as a powerful catalyst for renewed regionalization.

Abbreviations Cited in the Text

**AKP**: Adaletve Kalkınma Partisi, Justice and Development Party, a conservative Islamic party. The party of the President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

**KRG**: Kurdistan Regional Government, an autonomous government established by the 2005 Iraqi constitution, dominated by Barzani’s PDK.

**HDP**: Halkların Demokratik Partisi, Peoples’ Democratic Party, the legal pro-Kurdish party of Turkey, active on the national level since 2014.

**SDF**: Syrian Democratic Forces (Hêzên Sûriya Demokratîk, HSD), a military coalition led by the YPG and, since late 2015, consisting of Kurdish, Arab and Assyrian groups (pro-PYD/PKK).

**Komala**: Revolutionary Workers’ Organization of Iranian Kurdistan (Komalay Shoreshgeri Zahmatkeshani Kurdistanî Iran), an organization founded in 1969 in Iranian Kurdistan.

**PDK**: Partîya Demokrata Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Democratic Party, founded in Iraq in 1946 and led first by Mustafa then Masoud Barzani, President of the KRG until the September 2017 referendum.

**PDKI**: Partîya Demokrata Kurdistanê Iran, Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, founded in 1945.


**PJAK**: Partiya Jiyanazad a Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Free Life Party, sister organization to the PKK created in April 2004 in Iran.

**PYD**: Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat, Democratic Union Party, sister organization to the PKK created in September 2003 in Syria.

**UPK**: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Yekîtiya Nişîmanîya Kurdistan, YNK), a splinter party from Barzani’s PDK splitting in 1975 and founded by Jalal Talabani (the former Iraqi President from 2005 to 2014 who died in Berlin in 2017).

**YPG**: Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, People’s Protection Units, the armed branch of the PYD in Syria (pro-PKK).

**YPJ**: Yekîneyên Parastina Jin, Women’s Protection Units, the female armed branch of the PYD in Syria, the female counterpart of the YPG (pro-PKK).
The Recovery from Crisis in Southern European Countries: Labour Markets and Job Quality

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The economic crisis of 2007-08 and the Great Recession that followed left deep scars in European labour markets. It is certainly of no surprise that the first signs of resumed job growth and falling unemployment rates have been eagerly taken as firm proof that the crisis is finally over. However, when we step back and examine labour market and social change from a more long-term perspective, we see that the crisis took us back by nearly a decade in terms of social progress and development. The EU countries in the Mediterranean region were particularly hard hit and as a result were also prescribed the crisis ‘remedy’ of austerity measures and deregulatory structural reforms, which were applied with an exceptional intensity. The question is, have these policies delivered on their promises? And how far along are the southern EU countries on their path to recovery?

Resumed Employment Growth…

After almost 10 years of declining and then stagnating (at very low) growth rates, the economic forecasts for Europe are currently looking more positive, and several headline labour market indicators are also pointing in the right direction. Employment rates seem to be on the rise and unemployment rates are declining. Are we therefore now past the period of labour market slack and untypically low wage growth? Employment rates, which show what proportion of the working age population is in employment, have certainly rebounded from their dire levels at the height of the crisis. By 2017, the EU average employment rate had caught up with its pre-crisis levels. However, the situation varied substantially across the Mediterranean region. Despite an overall upward trend after 2013, in most countries, including Greece, Italy, Croatia, Spain, Cyprus and Portugal, employment rates in 2017 were still below their 2008 levels (Chart 3). A particular cause for concern is that the countries with the worst employment situations are also where the recovery has been the slowest. Instead of convergence, there has been a deepening divergence across the region. On a more positive note, however, there has been a steady improvement in Malta’s employment rate, bringing it close to the EU average and making it the biggest improvement in the Mediterranean region.

…Yet Still a Long Way to Recovery

However, while this slow and uneven growth in employment rates may be an improvement on previous years, unemployment rates remain high. In the period of resumed job growth, between 2013 and 2017, unemployment rates fell in all Mediterranean EU countries, but in all countries bar Malta they have remained well above their pre-crisis levels (Chart 4). The situation is particularly bad in Greece and Spain, where about every fifth person active in the labour market cannot find a job. The number of unemployed remains unacceptably high, now standing at 11 million in the Mediterranean region of the EU. The nine countries of this region thus account for more than half of all currently unemployed persons in the EU28. What is more, a substantial share of these (5.6 million) have been unable to find paid work for 12 months or more, putting them in the high-risk category for long-term unemployment.
A Higher Employment Rate Doesn't Always Mean More Jobs

Headline labour market indicators, such as employment and unemployment rates, paint a picture of recovery: a very sluggish one, yet perceptible both in terms of improving participation in employment and the slowly declining share of those unable to find work. However, these indicators oversimplify a reality that is far more complex. Many of the improvements are driven by demographic processes rather than improved labour market performance. For instance, a recovery in the employment rate is not the same as a recovery in the number of jobs. We need to bear in mind that the crisis pushed many people to leave the most troubled regions. Between 2008 and 2016, the working age population in Spain shrank by nearly 1 million, in Greece by 430,000, and in Portugal by 340,000 (Eurostat data). Therefore, even with an unchanged number of jobs in these countries we would still see an improvement in the employment rate.

In fact, although some countries did see increases in the number of jobs in the most recent period, the growth was much weaker than the employment rates suggest. Similarly, the overall impact of the crisis tends to be underestimated by focusing solely on changes in employment rates. For instance, between 2008 and 2017, the employment rate in Greece declined by 12.6% while the number of jobs dropped by 18.2%. Such an underestimation of actual job losses was also the case for Spain (6.2% drop in the employment rate and 9.1% of jobs lost), Croatia (a loss of 1.7% and 6.8% respectively) and...
Portugal (a loss of 1.3% and 6.5% respectively). This weak recovery in the number of jobs (total employment) is shown in Chart 5.

A Non-Standard Recovery

Another characteristic of the recovery period in the southern EU countries is a prevalence of non-standard employment, such as temporary contracts and part-time jobs (Chart 5). Currently almost every new contract being signed in Spain is temporary. Short-term work represented almost 90% of new hires in the first two months of 2018 (according to data from Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal). Moreover, the duration of temporary contracts is becoming ever shorter. For instance, in France and Spain there has been a rapid growth in contracts lasting no more than one week, amounting to every fourth new temporary contract in Spain.

Not surprisingly, temporary employment is currently a primarily employer-oriented solution, with most short-term positions taken up by workers involuntarily: that is, due to the unavailability of permanent jobs. In Croatia, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus, the involuntary temporary employment rate exceeds 80% (according to Eurostat).

These developments are testimony to the ineffectiveness of many of the post-crisis policy measures that aimed at making permanent employment more ‘attractive’ to employers, mainly via deregulatory measures or subsidies. Reduced protection for even just a few groups of workers has in fact proven more likely to spread precariousness across the entire workforce than promote the creation of good-quality jobs.

The Need for Better Jobs

Even in difficult economic conditions one should not lose sight of the aim of creating good-quality jobs. Stable and regular employment supports higher productivity through investment in skills and retention of talent, stabilizes the economy and domestic demand in a downturn, and creates a fiscal base for social protection systems. But there is more to a good-quality job than job security. While permanent contracts generally come with higher wages, better quality of working time and better working conditions than fixed-term contracts, stating that all permanent jobs are of good quality (or that all temporary jobs are bad) would be an oversimplification.

A useful tool for analyzing trends in job quality on many dimensions is the European Job Quality Index (JQI). The European JQI takes a broad perspective of the characteristics of work and assesses jobs along six dimensions: (1) wages; (2) forms of employment and job security; (3) working time and work-life balance; (4) working conditions; (5) skills and career development; and (6) collective interest representation. It allows comparison between the
quality of different jobs held by European workers and analyzes trends in job quality over time. The job quality ranking of the southern EU countries in 2015 is shown in Chart 6. Malta and France stand out as the best performers, while in Greece the quality of jobs is markedly lower. The unfavourable conditions in Greece are to a large extent a consequence of the recent crisis. As Chart 7 shows, between 2005 and 2015, job quality declined the most in Greece, Cyprus and Slovenia (for the sake of clarity we leave out wages from the trend analysis). The most positive developments were observed in Malta, with steady improvements not only in the quantity but also the quality of jobs. Moreover, in France and Croatia job quality declined during the crisis, but by 2015 had recovered and surpassed its 2005 levels.

Mounting Challenges for Southern Europe

The revived economic growth has brought high hopes and an improvement in leading labour market indicators, such as the employment and unemploy-
ment rates. However, a closer look at the quality of jobs created and the real demand for labour reveals a rather bleak picture in many parts of the Mediterranean.

Stable and regular employment supports higher productivity through investment in skills and retention of talent, stabilizes the economy and domestic demand in a downturn, and creates a fiscal base for social protection systems.

For most of the countries in the region, this can be considered a ‘lost decade’ in terms of labour market developments. Convergence between countries can be seen mainly in the trend towards more precarious and non-standard forms of work, but not in the improvement of work and employment conditions. A particularly worrying development has been the growing distance between the most struggling countries and the better performers.

The recovery in the real demand for labour (as measured by the total number of hours worked by all employed in a given country) has been lagging in comparison to the recovery in the number of jobs. This translated into a growth in involuntary part-time or short-hour jobs with low incomes. The recovery period has also seen a resumed growth in temporary employment, which is increasingly difficult for workers to escape. This growth in non-standard employment is putting workers and their families at risk of poverty and social exclusion, a risk that has substantially intensified since the onset of the crisis.

Investment in skills and competences is necessary to ensure economic progress and competitiveness in the context of technological transformation and demographic and environmental change. However, recent trends indicate that highly skilled workers are very often employed below their qualification levels, and that young graduates still have difficulty in making transitions into quality jobs in the labour market. Therefore, policy should not limit its focus to education systems and the quality of human capital but should also give attention to the quality of jobs created. Moreover, public expenditure on labour market policies has not been increasing at a sufficient rate to cope with the rapidly increasing numbers of unemployed, with cuts affecting labour market services as well as activation and income support policies. With persistently high unemployment rates and a high share of long-term unemployed, these developments are undeniably cause for concern. The lost potential over the past decade now means that greater efforts will be needed to face the challenges ahead.
Peace, stability and a climate of collective confidence in society constitute essential determining factors for any agricultural development and food security strategy. Without these decisive components, the historic equation to solve for agriculture – namely, feeding a growing population with constantly evolving consumer habits – becomes highly complex. Agricultural problems can become even more aggravated if the geographic conditions prove particularly unfavourable. The scarcity of water, land ownership boundaries and climate stress undeniably accentuate pressure on agriculture.

In this regard, there has always been a close connection between geopolitics and food security. Though this conflict dynamic is not new, it could intensify in the future. Such a world-wide observation takes on an exacerbated dimension in the Mediterranean Basin. To understand the interactions between agriculture, food and security, it is useful to put the challenges posed into perspective over time and recall certain factors.

**Taking a Step Back: The Importance of the Long Term**

The history of the world and of the Mediterranean region is full of events during which agricultural and food issues played a significant role in the deployment of power strategies, the triggering of crises or the course of wars. In Antiquity, both in Athens and Rome, the powers that be worked to build their City-States and their social pact without ever underestimating the centrality of food in their political vision. The same is true in later times, during the centuries of Arab or Ottoman domination: agriculture appeared as a pillar of socio-economic balance and every extreme meteorological episode caused food shortage and insecurity, weakening societies. Risks of popular revolt progressed systematically when hunger gained ground.

Closer to the present day, the colonial period should also be read as the will of European nations to conquer basic resources abroad that they did not have at home. It must also be kept in mind that the Europeans began to benefit from substantial food security as of the point when they ceased to wage war against one another! The construction of a unified Europe, which began after the Second World War, and the Common Agricultural Policy that consolidated it as of the 1960s are the key examples of virtuous agricultural geopolitics when weapons ceased to sound and peace settled in for the long term in territories.

In saying this, we find an obvious echo of the reality of a Mediterranean too imbued even today with rivalries or wars. Simple correlations show that the levels of food insecurity and chronic or acute malnutrition are higher in countries involved in violent or hidden conflicts.

**A Persistent Constant: The Vicious Cycle of Misfortunes**

If agriculture and food so often go hand in hand with geopolitics, it is because the interactions can go both ways in this cycle. Indeed, on the one hand, agricultural and food insecurity (at times with their underlying climate reasons) can cause social un-
rest, render individuals vulnerable or force them to migrate, thus potentially influencing revolutionary movements such that they could become political crises or even worse, conflicts. On the other hand, war situations lead to physical insecurity for populations, true, but also generally to economic and food insecurity as well.

The history of the Mediterranean region is full of events during which agricultural and food issues played a significant role in the deployment of power strategies, the triggering of crises or the course of wars.

Poverty and hunger spread in areas where combat predominates. The longer the latter lasts, the greater these human insecurities grow. Access to food automatically erodes for various reasons that are, moreover, the pillars of food security: less availability in terms of in-country production and import capacity (i), greater irregularity in harvests or the supply chain (ii), greater constraints in access due to diminishing purchasing power, damaged infrastructure or covetousness among actors, considering the power relations at play (iii), less nutritional value and safety of foods due to deteriorated sanitary conditions and less varied consumption for individuals (iv).

The example of Syria alone shows us to what degree this vicious cycle works both ways. Though the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011 naturally cannot be exclusively attributed to the droughts and migrations of distress by rural populations in the late 2000s, these factors cannot be ignored. By the same token, though the agricultural and food problems in Syria do not epitomize the scope of the human tragedy gripping the country since 2011, there is no denying that migrations by populations in distress have skyrocketed, that hunger affects a significant proportion of the population and that agricultural lands have been ravaged by combat. If peace comes to Syria tomorrow, it will take years to rebuild the country’s agriculture and the basic conditions for food security.

Various Scales of Conflict

Agricultural and food tension exists inevitably, therefore, in periods of conflict. They globally leave a mark on societies, but also affect different population grids to different degrees. The inhabitants of rural areas can lose their work tool and their food security at once. They suffer a double penalty when war is waged in their territories. Fishermen are likewise affected: if coastal control is subject to the harsh reality of combat, fishing activity is just as compromised as agriculture. In the Mediterranean, food security rests as much on land production as it does on fish and seafood.

Moreover, each conflict transforms the parameters of local and international commerce. Political alliances can redesign trade and the flow of merchandise. Barriers can also obstruct its operation. Practices of corruption or resource pillaging sometimes disrupt local or national food systems as well. Daesh, with its territorial and societal ambitions, has been a good example of this over the past few years.

On a more macroeconomic level, the power plays of those involved in the theatre of conflicts in question raise the spectre of the use of food as a weapon, whether to weaken an area or actor, or on the contrary, come to their aid. In this agricultural geostrategy, whether contingent or longer-term, constraining or even aggressive trade measures flourish (financial sanctions, embargoes, blockades, diversions, etc.).

To these ‘physical’ aspects, we must also add the entire panoply of food risks that can further arise in cases of conflict: inflation of food prices and the phenomenon of speculation, cold chain interruption or disruption of storage capacity, proliferation of animal or plant diseases, onset of malnutrition…Added to the socio-political violence are thus potential economic, logistic, health and nutritional shocks. This is applicable to the warring country and its regional neighbourhood, experiencing this poly-crisis by ripple effect. Again, using the example of the war in Syria, we are finding agricultural and food difficulties have been projected across the entire Middle East over the past years, not to mention the emission of ‘shocks’ from Yemen, Iraq or other pockets of violence in this chronically unstable area.

In any case, beyond the conflict dynamics described, it seems useful to complete the analysis of
interactions between geopolitics and agriculture with the consideration of a series of issues that are at times less visible but just as strategic in the region. First of all, the demographic challenge posed to food security is real. The Middle East North Africa (MENA) region went from 100 to 500 million inhabitants in the space of a half century (1965-2015). The population is set to reach 700 million by 2050, a number that remains very uncertain due to the number of potential candidates for exile but also immigrants arriving from Sub-Saharan Africa, where demographic growth is colossal.

More mouths to feed in the region over the past few years, therefore, but less resources for agricultural production! Water poverty is the most pronounced on the planet and nearly all arable land is already being farmed. Conflicts between water users will likely escalate, as well pressure on land resources in countries where construction takes precedence over the preservation of agricultural land. These geographical constraints, that only technical and technological response will attenuate, are multiplied by the acceleration of climate changes massively affecting the region. They also reveal the governance shortcomings prevailing in many Mediterranean countries despite their nominal commitment to follow the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda.

Added to the socio-political violence are thus potential economic, logistic, health and nutritional shocks. This is applicable to the warring country and its regional neighbourhood, experiencing this poly-crisis by ripple effect

Another major challenge: the inclusion of rural communities in economic growth and modernization of living conditions. The precariousness of women in the rural milieu or the lagging digital connectivity for youth in these areas are insidious problems threatening the stability and cohesion of countries. In Tunisia, this geographical divide between the urban populations along the coast and the rural ones inland is not going away, despite the fact that it was one of the determining factors of the 2011 revolution. The lack of employment and perspectives in these peripheral regions, where agricultural activity predominates without significant advantages in terms of food processing or market entry, have long been the main instigators of rural exodus. And they may be even stronger tomorrow, but with people moving internationally, since local urban prospects are drastically diminishing. And finally, how can we not mention that the farmers’ geographic and social isolation can at times hamper their capacity for development, a phenomenon aggravated in times of war or instability. Farmers thrive on exchanges with their peers, but also with the population at large, to comprehend their needs or expectations. Farmers should need access to information, financing and markets; and all of these prerequisites for their economic activity require communication, openness and confidence.

Looking Ahead

Water shortages and competition for its use, land shortage and deterioration of agricultural land, increasing climate constraints and weather disruptions, rapid changes in food demand in the production context with limited opportunities, marginalization of rural regions and frequent contempt towards farming populations: these are many invisible conflicts that are unfortunately heightening food tensions in the southern and eastern Mediterranean. Though the North Shore is not exempt of difficulties in regard to these issues, which lie at the base of human security, the demographic, legal and above all political situations are completely different. Peace for decades, a solid body of rights to assert and rules to abide by, professional organization by sectors for farmers and the agri-food industry but also cooperation at all levels – local as well as national, not to mention supranational with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – have allowed European countries to reach an exceptional level of food security (quantitative and qualitative). This was enabled by the coexistence of a significant number of decisive factors for such structural development: a long-term geopolitical vision for the construction of
the EU wherein food was considered a priority, confident mobilization of the agricultural and rural forces, well accompanied by authorities convinced of the strategic dimension of agriculture, research and training adapted to social, technical and environmental change… But above all it is the stability and absence of conflicts over time – i.e., a favourable geopolitical context – that has allowed the development of competitive agriculture and established effective food security.

Geopolitics are essential for understanding the agricultural vulnerabilities of this region. As in the rest of the world, Europe and the Mediterranean region remain dependent on this tenacious agricultural history.

Recalling these obvious facts is not trivial at a time when Europe is considering its future prospects, sometimes forgetting the essential issues in ongoing food debates. This reminder is also being made for the Mediterranean area, still beset by divisions and conflicts. Geopolitics are essential for understanding the agricultural vulnerabilities of this region. As in the rest of the world, Europe and the Mediterranean region remain dependent on this tenacious agricultural history.

Respecting the diversity of the agricultural world is a necessity, but this wealth cannot flourish without stability. It is thus all the more shocking to see how this issue is at times downgraded on the strategic agenda for development or security. “Few phenomena have influenced the political behaviour of peoples as intensely as the food phenomenon and the tragic need to eat” – it was these words that Josué de Castro wrote in the preface to his book, Geopolítica da fome (The Geopolitics of Hunger), first published in 1951.

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Technological Innovation: Growth without Occupation. An Overview on MENA Countries

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Automation could displace up to 800 million workers globally in the next few years; furthermore, as many as 375 million may need to learn new skills to adjust to the changing working environment (McKinsey Global Institute, 2017). As technology improves, jobs previously requiring manual oversight will become scarcer, leading to a decline in the demand for work. This revolution, in a situation of growing populations1 and high unemployment (especially youth unemployment), is likely to affect developed and developing countries, and different sectors, in different ways.

A World Bank report (2016) maintains that from a technological standpoint, in developing countries, two-thirds of all the jobs are susceptible to automation. “The share of occupations that could experience significant automation is actually higher in developing countries than in more advanced ones, where many of these jobs have already disappeared.” (World Bank, 2016). If many activities have the potential to be automated, technologies, such as robotics, machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence, are also likely to trigger higher productivity and increase efficiency, with a positive overall impact. A recent Price Waterhouse Coopers analysis on 29, mostly OECD, countries shows that by the mid-2030s, smart automation may have the potential to make a contribution of $15 trillion to global GDP. The same PwC report shows that up to 30% of jobs could be automated (PwC, 2017) and that there are many cases of partial automation (where only some activities that make up a job are automated). Hence, for developing countries, automation may result mainly in the substitution of workers, while for developed countries, the worker substitution effect could be offset by the so-called capitalization effect: the demand for other goods and services increases, and new occupations and industries are created (Frey & Osborne, 2015). These trends could increase inequality between and within countries.

In addition, automation is most likely to affect jobs in the manufacturing industry, such as automotive, electrical and electronics manufacturing, and metal and machinery industries, where routine jobs can be more easily replaced, and agriculture, although a number of service sectors -such as postal and courier services, land transport and food services- could also be vulnerable. Hence, sectors are also affected differently with implications on countries’ varying specializations.

The potential disruptive effects that technological innovation and automation may have on employment has been the object of an ongoing debate. There have long been fears that machines might substitute workers, and even Keynes warned against the possibility of widespread “technological unemployment”: our discovery of the means to economize the use of labour outrunning the pace at which we can find new uses for that labour (Keynes, 1933). More recently, several reports have dealt with actual figures and impact (see UN, 2017b).

What is unprecedented in the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) is the speed at which technol-

1 The world population will reach 9.8 billion people in 2050 with over 6 billion in working age (UN, 2017a).
ogy is developing, and the scale at which it is likely to change the labour market. Furthermore, today automation no longer concerns only routine and low-skilled tasks. Thanks to an increasing availability of big data, new technologies mean that even some highly cognitive and creative jobs are now substitutable. The realization that even legal services, a task which has always been considered as protected from competition, are affected by this transformation, since algorithms can substitute the works of paralegal and contract lawyers in the pre-trial research, has also raised awareness regarding those who thought automation was a problem confined to low-skilled sectors. For instance, the Symantec’s eDiscovery platform is able to perform all tasks “from legal holds and collections through to analysis, review, and production,” and proved capable of analyzing and sorting more than 570,000 documents in two days (Markoff, 2011). These patterns worry people around the world and trigger responses from the public and private sectors to ‘prepare’ for changes, i.e. to retrain, reskill and empower workers for the challenges.

Let us confine the analysis to a particular subset of developing economies for which, to our knowledge, no specific analysis currently exists: the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) countries. Indeed, we think the MENA region countries show some job market peculiarities worth investigating: low but increasing levels of workforce participation by women; high rates of unemployment and underemployment, especially among the young and relatively well-educated; and large but decreasing shares of public sector employment. These features raise concerns. Among them, probably the most serious challenge in these countries is the high youth unemployment rate. This has been considered as one of the sources of malcontent and a reason behind the uprisings in the spring of 2011 and after. “The Middle East and North Africa regions continue to show by far the highest youth unemployment” (ILO, 2015) (Chart 8, 24% and 42% of male and female). Furthermore, more than half of the MENA region’s total labour force comes from labour-abundant countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, where a common characteristic of employment is job informality: 75% of recent labour market entrants in Egypt are estimated to be employed in the informal sector (ILO, 2017a).

Moreover, the unemployment patterns are unusual. If we disaggregate the unemployment rate for different levels of education by country, as shown in Table 7, the rate of unemployment among educated youth is higher than the unemployment rate among youth with lower education, even though, given the demographic structure of the population, “the bulk of the unemployed have lower education […] or in other words, a larger number of youth with lower education are unemployed overall” (Subrahmanyam & Castel, 2014). This pattern is particularly strong in Egypt, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Tunisia. The contradiction lies in the fact that MENA countries display such high rates of unemployment, notwithstanding the significant progress that has been made across the region regarding the increases in enrolments in education (ILO, 2017a). The situation
is particularly worrying for women, who, despite their substantial progress in school attendance and lower rates of fertility and maternal mortality, rank bottom in labour market participation. The phenomenon is so evident that the literature refers to it as the 'Mena Gender Paradox.'

According to a report from the World Government Summit, written in collaboration with the McKinsey Institute, in the Middle East, 45% of existing work activities are automatable, based on current technology. Hence, advanced technology could displace 20.8 million employees (World Government Summit, 2017). In percentage terms, “5 percent of occupations can be fully automated, while about 60 percent of occupations have at least 30 percent of activities that can, technically, be automated” (World Government Summit, 2017).

In particular, in Morocco, 51% of all work activities may be susceptible to automation, in Egypt 48%, in the UAE 47%, in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia 46% and in Kuwait 41% (Chui, Manyika & Miremadi, 2017). The Report estimates that $366.6 billion in wage incomes and 20.8 million full-time equivalent (FTE) workers are associated with activities which are already technically automatable today, with Egypt (with almost 12 million FTE workers currently employed in automatable activities) topping the list in terms of the labour share and Saudi Arabia in terms of wage levels.

The high vulnerability of the region to the risk of automation seems to suggest that MENA countries are bearing a double burden since they tend to be specialized in labour-intensive sectors, where jobs are more likely to be automated. Not only are workers at risk of being replaced by robots in loco, but also, the increase of automated processes in industrial countries is leading to reshoring. Hence, MENA countries can lose their comparative advantage in labour-intensive sectors and may not be able to continue exploiting the export-led development path (World Bank, 2017).

At the same time, MENA countries, on average, lack an adequate institutional environment and a sound and internationally integrated private sector that might enable the development of research centres where digital technologies are created. Hence, the region is encountering difficulties in exploiting the potential positive effects associated with these technologies, in terms of creation of new jobs, goods and services. The risk is that the region lags behind and the technological gap widens with respect to other developed and emerging countries. Moreover, by their very nature, technological innovations may also further widen the gender gap in many industries. Women in MENA countries are witnessing a stagnation, or, as in the case of Jordan, even a decline in their participation in the job market. Skill-biased technological change may have disproportionally hampered the relative position of women in the labour market for two main reasons; first, since women are usually more often employed in low-skilled positions, the new wave of technological change may have accelerated the substitution of female workers for automatic processes in sectors where women are relatively more present (textiles, garments, clothing), also widening the gender wage gap\(^2\). Second, although women’s schooling achievements often exceed those of their male counterparts, girls outperforming boys in

\(^2\) An empirical confirmation of this hypothesis can be found in the work of Al-Azzawi (2013).
maths and science tests (UNESCO, 2017), sectors like Computing, Mathematics and Engineering, where the highest employment growth is expected, have some of the lowest female participation rates and have above average difficulties in recruiting skilled female workers.

The high vulnerability of the region to the risk of automation seems to suggest that MENA countries are bearing a double burden since they tend to be specialized in labour-intensive sectors, where jobs are more likely to be automated.

On the other hand, the great potential of the MENA countries lies precisely in its younger, educated population. As already mentioned, this young part of the population resulting from a late conclusion of the demographic transition, has attained high levels of higher education, with Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt having a pool of working-age adults holding tertiary qualifications above or near the global average (17%) (WEF, 2017). Still, the region suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates worldwide, with young people, on average, almost five times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts (ILO, 2017b). As pointed out by Biltagy (2018), in her focus on Egypt, reasons for this mismatch between the demands of the labour market and the skills provided by the higher education institutions are, among others, a lack of computer knowledge, expertise, adequate English, and weak analytical abilities and data unavailability for labour market needs. Therefore, an opportunity for these countries would be to channel the potential contained in their more educated and younger population sectors, by laying the digital foundations for long-term economic development and by creating value-adding formal sector jobs in a number of areas. Indeed, if harnessed in the right way, the heavy burden of educated youth unemployment could be transformed into the engine of a successful international integration of MENA’s industries, especially the long-established, knowledge-intensive ones operating in the aviation, oil and gas and transportation sectors, which are highly likely to be the most vital in the fourth industrial revolution.

These issues, which are also part of Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, referring specifically to the need to incorporate youth policies into development strategies, are crucial for a region where, in the next five years, over 52 million new people will be of working age and over 27 million will be seeking jobs. The potential chances, but also threats, that the MENA region might experience from the fourth industrial revolution have recently been analyzed by both MENA’s business and civil society leaders. The World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa held at the Dead Sea in Jordan in May 2017 focused on the region’s commitment to prepare and enable itself to deal with the possible disruption of jobs due to technological change. Policymakers need to have a clear understanding of the risks and potential of new technologies. They have to start rethinking and redesigning labour market policies, social security schemes and taxation systems, for the young to adapt to a future that is already happening. In other words, economic and political reforms should be designed to enable regional entrepreneurs to thrive.

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3 The MENA region is the second youngest region in the world, with more than 60% of the population under the age of 30, (IMF-Opportunity for All, 2018).


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FDI in the MENA Region: Factors that Hinder or Favour Investments in the Region

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A striking feature of the new globalization process is the role played by multinational enterprises (MNEs) in generating employment, growth, productivity gains, technology transfers and in opening a gateway to a better integration in global value chains (Harrison, 1994; Del Prete et al., 2018). Attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), therefore, is placed at the top of the agenda for most countries.

From the investors' perspective, political risks is, after macroeconomic instability, the factor that poses the greatest constraint on investments in developing countries (MIGA, 2014). Within political risks, adverse regulatory changes and breach of contract are the troubles that investors fear the most. This issue has been exacerbated by the Arab Spring, as it brought a surge of political instability and violence in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This article builds on the limited research which focuses on this region and on our own study (Carril-Caccia et al., 2018). We delve further into MENA region capacity to attract FDI, highlighting the role played by institutions and violence.

The Main Characteristics of FDI in MENA

As shown in Table 8, during the period 2003-2012, greenfield investments (GI) were the mode of investment preferred by multinational enterprises (MNEs) in MENA. In most countries, greenfield investments represent over 80% of total FDI projects. These new foreign firms directly created more than 50,000 jobs in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates, contributing to the fight against high unemployment. On average, greenfield investments represent 4.86% of MENA GDP, with Kuwait, Iran and Lebanon at the bottom of the distribution and Qatar, Bahrain and Tunisia at the top.

As regards its evolution, the Great Recession and the Arab Spring have brought about a sharp decrease in FDI in the region (Map 1). This significant drop in FDI is not surprising since Western countries, the main investors in MENA, are the countries who suffered the most from the crisis, hampering their capacity to invest abroad. At that time, the Arab Spring brought a surge in political instability and violence, aspects prone to deterring FDI.

Which countries invest in MENA? As illustrated in Chart 9, Europe (especially France and the UK), the US and UAE have a prominent role in the region. Then, China, India and Japan are also relevant investors for certain oil producers. MENA non-oil producers attract investors from closer countries (the US is an exception), while oil producers are able to attract capital flows from further afield.

The Determinants of FDI: Specificities of MENA

Firms’ motivations to invest abroad are usually classified according to conventional FDI theory (Dunning 1993). Developed countries are natural recipients for market and strategic asset seeking FDI, which is positively related to market size and capital-labour intensity. In contrast, FDI in developing countries like MENA may respond to other motiva-
tions such as efficiency or resource seeking. The former, vertical in nature, aims to reduce costs and is therefore sensitive to trade costs, accessibility, infrastructure and labour costs (Hanson et al., 2005). Alternatively, the latter is conditioned by the availability of natural resources.

Based on bilateral greenfield investment data for 160 countries during the period 2003-2012 (retrieved from fDi Markets), this study unearths the particularities of FDI determinants in MENA. To this end, we estimate a gravity model that allows us to disentangle the role of market size, geographic and cultural distance, historical ties, free trade agreements (FTA), bilateral investment treaty (BIT), and institutional frameworks. Moreover, we assess if the factors driving FDI are different whether the host is an oil producer or not.

Concerning possible specificities of MENA as host countries, our results suggest that cultural ties trigger FDI in MENA: sharing the same religion and language fosters investments in these countries more than in any other region. Colonial ties are meaning-

### TABLE 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>GI/GDP</th>
<th>GI/Total FDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>DZA</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>32,659</td>
<td>58,581</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>BHR</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>18,033</td>
<td>30,999</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>DJI</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,658</td>
<td>2,988</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>EGY</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>55,502</td>
<td>91,183</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>IRN</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>18,123</td>
<td>22,369</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>IRQ</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>22,845</td>
<td>16,088</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>JOR</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8,622</td>
<td>23,198</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>KWT</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4,242</td>
<td>6,251</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>LBN</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3,921</td>
<td>12,187</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>LBY</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>32,965</td>
<td>21,264</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>26,683</td>
<td>97,676</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>OMN</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>23,684</td>
<td>29,103</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>QAT</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>71,780</td>
<td>42,920</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>96,587</td>
<td>84,112</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>SYR</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17,216</td>
<td>27,712</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>TUN</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>30,440</td>
<td>51,600</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>ARE</td>
<td>1,732</td>
<td>75,106</td>
<td>147,582</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>YEM</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4,039</td>
<td>2,414</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Greenfield investment data has been retrieved from the Financial Times service fDi Markets. Volume is in millions US$, and its percentage over GDP is calculated by taking the GDP from the World Bank’s Development Indicators. The data from the last column refers to the percentage of greenfield investment projects over total investment projects in each country (greenfield investment and Mergers and Acquisitions/MA). The ratio is calculated based on data retrieved from the World Investment Report 2015 annex tables 11 and 25. UAE refers to United Arab Emirates.
ful for new projects (extensive margin). Transport costs, proxied by distance from the investors, hamper bilateral greenfield investment to a larger extent for MENA non-oil producers than for the rest of the world. However, distance is irrelevant when it comes to explaining capital flows into MENA oil producers, as previously suggested.

Another specificity of MENA countries (especially non-oil producers) is their reluctance to invest in their neighborhood. As regards trade policies, the existence of FTAs does not significantly drag inward investments in MENA, while FTAs with non-oil producers could even repel new greenfield projects aimed at serving domestic markets. Regarding BITs, they would stimulate capital flows into non-oil producers (intensive margins).

The factors pulling investors to oil producers definitely differ from the ones attracting them to oil scarce countries. When setting up new projects in the more diversified economies within MENA,
MNEs are particularly interested in reducing transport costs and other indirect trade costs, since their investments are more efficiency seeking. In contrast, oil producers attract lower amounts of FDI in terms of their national production (or are less dependent on foreign capitals). Countries with an abundance of natural resources tend to attract FDI in the extractive industry while investments are crowded out in the non-resource sector. Indeed, foreign investors are not discouraged by distance, meaning that they are mainly resource seeking.
MENA accounts for more than one third of the world’s oil production.1 Accordingly, oil rents account for large shares of the national revenues of MENA countries, except Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Obviously, these huge oil reserves may attract FDI but, overall, the MENA countries which attract larger amounts of greenfield investments are not the main oil producers (Chart 10). The low amounts of FDI flowing to MENA oil producers stems from different reasons: 1) Countries may exploit their resources mostly with national capital (Rogmans and Ebbers, 2013); 2) Investments may crowd out productive activities (Sachs and Warner, 2001); 3) Ill-functioning institutions repel FDI and natural resources breed corruption (Alekseynska and Havrylychyk, 2013), raise expropriation risks (Hajzler, 2014) and increase the likelihood of bad governance (Van der Ploeg, 2011). Conversely, MNEs investing in the extractive industry may prefer defective institutions (Burger et al., 2015; Poelhekke and Van der Ploeg, 2013) and stable autocracies (Asiedu and Lien, 2011). On balance, inward flows in oil may not compensate for the disinvestments in the non-resource sector (Poelhekke and Van der Ploeg, 2013).

Turning to the quality of institutions in MENA compared with other regions (Table 9), the picture is worrisome. MENA’s stand out for their low level of democratization, high political instability and significant violence both domestically and in the neighbourhood. In fact, most MENA oil producers are almost full (or full) autocracies. In addition, during 2003-2012, the MENA region suffered from 69% of the world’s total terrorist attacks, Iraq being the most affected country. In contrast, MENA performs better than other developing countries in terms of rule of law and lack of corruption.

What Can Be Expected in Terms of FDI from Institutional Improvement?

Institutional quality improves the prospect of weaving new bilateral relationships with foreign investors (Chart 11). Among MENA countries, oil producers would benefit the most by reforming their institutions. This is particularly true for the political system: all else being equal, a one-point improvement in the democracy scale could boost the number of greenfield projects by almost 10%, against 2.4% for the rest of the world. For instance, if democracy in Iraq were similar to that of Lebanon, the number of greenfield projects would increase by 29%. In contrast, an equal improvement in a country like Ecuador would only lead to a growth of 7%.

Concerning possible specificities of MENA as host countries, our results suggest that cultural ties trigger FDI in MENA: sharing the same religion and language fosters investments in these countries more than in any other region.

Interestingly, raising the compliance of rule of law and reducing corruption would also augment FDI in MENA oil producers to a larger extent than elsewhere. Improving each indicator by one percent could respectively increment the number of greenfield projects by 2.1% and 3.6%.

Greenfield investment in MENA is exceptionally sensitive to instability and violence. Indeed, while a one-percent improvement in political stability is expected to increase the number of greenfield investments by a similar amount, for MENA oil producers the growth would be by 1.3%. Similarly, while terrorist attacks do not seem to play a relevant role on a global level, for MENA, a 128% increase in this variable, as suffered in Iraq between 2004 and 2005, can lead to a fall in investment by 15-23%. In addition, in contrast to the rest of the world, foreign investors do not draw distinctions between the different MENA countries regarding the risk of violence and violent episodes; a surge of violence in one country prejudices the whole neighbourhood. Oil producers are characterized by especially low levels of democracy and a high degree of violence.

1 Oil production statistics for the period 2003-2012 have been retrieved from the Thomson Reuters Eikon platform.
Improving this environment would be especially FDI-attracting. These results challenge the idea that MNEs investing in natural resources might feel more comfortable with autocracies and corruption. This may be another particularity of the region that stems from the fact that low institutional quality has limited the region’s participation in the world economy (Méon and Sekkat, 2004).

**Conclusions**

Greenfield investments are the predominant mode of FDI in MENA and are more relevant for non-oil producing economies. After 2009, investment flows into the region experimented a negative trend, mirroring the fact that political stability is a major concern for foreign investors. Another particularity of MENA is that colonial ties, religious affinity and common language are especially influential on FDI in the region, meaning that informal barriers to invest in these countries are higher than elsewhere. Changes in the political system and improvements in the legal framework for doing business also have to be accompanied by an increase in stability and reduction in violence. This last dimension is paramount and should be tackled at the regional level. From a foreign investors’ viewpoint, major violence in one of the MENAs is assimilated to regional instability, thus spreading the idea that MNEs would not be safe in the neighbourhood either.

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The role of place in human affairs has special significance when it comes to the impacts of climate change. Shifts in temperature, precipitation, weather patterns and variability, and the incidence and seriousness of extreme events such as storms, floods and heatwaves, will differ depending on locality. Their impact will have differing but potentially profound effects on the functioning of the societies where they play out.

To an extent these shifts can already be perceived on the ground, offering unexpected surprises to those developing increasingly refined and precise climate models and projections. The sustained cold spell in much of Europe in February - March 2018 while the Arctic was 20 degrees warmer than normal is a dramatic example of what may lie ahead. But for all intents and purposes we are at the beginning of experiencing what a changing climate means. Even with immediate success in curbing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing their atmospheric levels, the physical, biological and societal effects of what has already been emitted will be increasingly felt for decades and centuries to come. In the wider Mediterranean, including coastal nations and the Mashreq countries, climate change geopolitics are determined by the region’s great biophysical, socioeconomic and political diversity. It is both a major oil exporting region, exposed to the uncertain evolution of energy markets, and a region where temperatures and rainfall will change more drastically than in many other parts of the globe. And they will find their expression where political turmoil, armed conflict, deep environmental crisis and extreme dependence on other regions for food and water already provide an extraordinarily challenging context.

Analyses of likely climate impacts are sometimes single-phenomenon and narrow, looking at one parameter at a time. In reality climate effects occur within complex and interlinked systems, where nature and environment interact with society in unpredictable and non-linear ways. Adequate policy responses must identify robust elements, relevant under a range of potential scenarios, which will protect people and build societal resilience in the mid- and long-term, while already making sense today. So far, we have seen little of deliberate and detailed policy designs with such aspirations in the region.

What Lies ahead?

Through recent work by regional institutions we now have access to increasingly detailed and high-resolution climate projections for the Maghreb and Mashreq sub-regions (ESCWA, 2017b), as well as for the northern shores of the Mediterranean, presenting not only climate data but also assessments of impacts in sectors such as water, agriculture and health. Projections show consistent rapid warming trends in an already hot and dry region. This means a sharp increase in the number of warm days and nights, and more days of extreme heat. A belt of low-pressure warm air would link South Asia with the western Mediterranean and a trough over the Sahara.

In a scenario where greenhouse gas emissions begin to recede mid-century, a temperature rise would become more moderate, while in the business-as-usual scenario, where emissions continue to increase, so would the number of warm days and nights. Today, the average duration of warm spells in
the region is 16 days. Under the more optimistic scenario, warm spells would increase to about 80-120 days with peak averages at 47 degrees C. If emissions continue unabated warm spells could reach 200 days, i.e., more than half of the year, with average peak temperatures at nearly 50 degrees C. The resulting heat stress, particularly in areas with high humidity, will make outdoor physical labour highly hazardous with severe impacts on human morbidity and mortality. Parts of the region could become uninhabitable for humans.¹

Although the region can expect a generally drying trend, projections are less certain in terms of rainfall distribution in space and time, as well as for extreme precipitation events. The most significant reduction of rainfall will occur in the western Mediterranean², in the Atlas Mountains, and in the upper Euphrates and Tigris basin (ESCWA, 2017b). Increased precipitation is projected in the south-eastern Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region, although absolute amounts will still be low in this dry sub-region. Because of higher temperatures, evapotranspiration from surface water will increase, further reducing water availability.

Layer upon Layer of Crisis

Changes in temperatures and rainfall will express themselves within the complex natural and societal systems of the region. But that is not enough. They are superimposed on a severe water crisis (World Bank, 2017), political turmoil and a web of intersecting violent conflicts.³

Over 60% of the population in the Middle East and North Africa live in areas with high or very high surface water stress (World Bank, 2017), meaning that more surface water is used than is replenished. Water is drawn from rivers and aquifers in unsustainable volumes and fossil water is mined at high rates. Few of the countries use pricing policies and incentives to encourage good water management and judicious use of a scarce and vital resource. Most water policy measures are aimed at increasing production and output rather than ensuring efficient management and saving water. Some Gulf countries have invested heavily in desalination but more than 80% of the region’s wastewater that could be used for irrigation or industrial processes becomes an untreated pollutant or, if treated, is lost.

No country is sovereign as far as its water resources are concerned. All Middle East and North Africa countries share at least one aquifer, while some 60% of its rivers and lakes cross borders. But the resulting interdependence is not matched by corresponding agreements and plans for joint management of transboundary water, albeit with a few exceptions.

Increasing temperatures and reduced rainfall brought about by the changing climate further undermine the region’s ability to feed itself. Food sovereignty has become an increasingly distant mirage.

Growing water insecurity translates into increasing food insecurity (ESCWA, 2017a). Agricultural productivity increases have been sluggish over the past decades in the Middle East and North Africa, with Egypt as the exception. The rapidly growing population requires a steadily rising level of food imports. In 1990, there was a 30 million metric ton gap between production and consumption of cereals (see Chart 12); in 2016 it had risen to 100 million metric tons, meaning that the region imports 65% of its consumption. With only 5% of the world’s population, the region imports 25-30% of its traded food. Importing food means importing water – each ton of wheat produced in the US, a major exporter to the region, requires around 850 tonnes of water (CRCW, 2007). The MENA region’s imports of such virtual water is illustrated in Map 2. Further hedging of food supplies is done through the purchase or leasing of land in other regions, where some Gulf countries are among the leading ‘land importers’.

Increasing temperatures and reduced rainfall brought about by the changing climate further undermine the region’s ability to feed itself. Food sovereignty, often expressed as national goals, has become an increasingly distant mirage.

A Reversal of Dependencies

Through imports of food, land and water the region consequently finds itself more and more dependent on what happens elsewhere. It must rely on the stability of agroecosystems and markets in other parts of the world, and on the ability of other countries to manage and adapt to the effects of climate change in order to meet the food needs of a growing global population. It has been something of a geopolitical truism that the world depends on stability in the MENA region to safeguard a regular supply of oil. Climate change, environmental crisis and population increase have turned dependence on its head, however, when the integrity and stability of the globe’s food and water systems have become of vital interest to the MENA region. Thus, the global food crisis in 2008 constituted a scare of existential proportions. A combination of high oil prices, low global food stocks and freak weather in some major grain-producing countries, probably triggered by climate change, led to skyrocketing food prices that shocked food markets in the Middle East (Woertz, 2013), particularly hitting the poor, for whom food represents a major part of a household budget. The sense of dangerous dependencies was exacerbated when export bans were issued by Russia and some other producers. Although the food crisis has not been repeated and some mitigating measures have been put in place, the global food system remains fragile, particularly as climate change increasingly affects productivity. And the region’s water interdependencies remain unresolved. Its fractured state since the disastrous invasion of Iraq in 2003 was further exacerbated as the ‘Arab Spring’ unfolded in 2011. What the International Crisis Group recently characterized as clusters of conflicts, connected through concentric circles (Hilterman, 2013), including Iran–Saudi tensions at an all-time high, and weak regional political institutions, together make the region exceptionally ill-equipped to address its shared natural resource challenges at a moment when climate change makes collaborative approaches imperative. As an example, efforts at re-

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7 Hilterman, op cit.
solving tensions around the Euphrates and Tigris basin between Syria, Iraq and Turkey,8 the latter being the upstream ‘riparian hegemon,’ have not been successful, and are less promising than ever given the state of the conflict. Now the Basin faces a reduction in rainfall and increasing evapotranspiration, while reduced flows downstream caused by hydropower and irrigation projects in Turkey, along with sea level rise, lead to saltwater intrusion in aquifers in southern Iraq. A shared and sub-regional approach for the Euphrates-Tigris basin has never been more needed and more distant.

Climate Change and Regional Security

Much has been made of the effects in Syria of the extreme drought and subsequent displacement of farming families from rural to urban areas during the years preceding 2011. Some argued that the drought, which, with a high degree of certainty, was a climate-change-induced anomaly, was a major triggering factor behind the outbreak of violence9, making the Syria crisis effectively a climate conflict. Others reject this as a simplistic notion without denying that climate change played a role10. Instead, they point to the disastrous effects of the Syrian regime’s agricultural policies and the removal of subsidies at the very moment of severe crisis, which led to the destitution and displacement of hundreds of thousands of rural families. Similarly, food price hikes in Egypt caused by the food crisis in 2008 may have contributed to social unrest but was clearly not the main factor behind the Egyptian chapter of the Arab Spring. As far as the relationship between climate change and security is concerned, violent conflicts never have single causes but develop in complex, highly contextualized and often unpredictable ways, where the ability and legitimacy of local and regional institutions in finding and negotiating solutions is central. In some contexts, climate change impacts on natural resource access and livelihoods may be contributing factors in multi-causal conflict dynamics. For example, it has been pointed out that ISIS’

recruitments were helped when worsening droughts in Sunni areas of Iraq undermined farmers’ livelihoods\textsuperscript{11}, with no alternative income available and no relief provided by the central government. Earlier concerns about the risk of ‘water wars’ due to increasing competition for transboundary water have not become reality, as river basin commissions have enabled riparian countries to negotiate solutions in everybody’s interest. But the security dimension of dwindling water availability for the agricultural, industrial and domestic needs of the growing population in the Middle East and North Africa does not give room for complacency.

**Prospects for Collaboration**

Proposals to deal with the effects of climate change and water and food insecurity are being developed by regional institutions at a technical level, supported by multilateral actors and a few donor countries. For example, it has been suggested that food security could be strengthened and costs lowered (ESCWA, 2017a) with a regional and coordinated diversification of trading partners, shared storage facilities and joint long-term purchase arrangements. There is also an enormous untapped potential for increased intra-regional food trade between Arab countries. But these proposals are yet to be translated into national and regional policy – the attention of the political class in the region is mostly elsewhere.

Protecting the population and safeguarding development in the face of climate change requires adaptation planning by well-resourced, representative and responsive public and private institutions. This happens least in countries directly involved in conflict. The preoccupation with daily threats to security stands in the way of any considerations of longer term trends that could undermine hopes for a more stable future. This goes for individuals as well as for local and central authorities. There is only so much attention and energy that can be devoted to what lies beyond immediate needs, creating a psychological barrier even among those who have the contextual knowledge and environmental and political insights necessary for the required development of new climate policy. It adds to the human tragedy of countries in conflict that they are also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

**Concluding Remarks**

The confluence of severe climate change impacts, deep environmental crisis and a web of conflicts is reason for serious concern when it comes to the future of the wider Mediterranean region. A perfect, tragic storm is already looming on the horizon. Any plans for post-conflict rehabilitation must address the emerging threats to the region’s population. Sound proposals must reach the rooms where policy is made. The stewardship of natural resources must become a shared responsibility.

**Bibliography**


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In order to adequately assess the development processes under way in the Mediterranean transport sector and related infrastructure services, a general consideration should be introduced about the evolutionary situation in the whole region.

The New Global Centrality of the Mediterranean

In fact, the Mediterranean area, which even just a few years ago seemed to be placed at the margins of globalization processes, is currently deeply involved in it. In a framework, like the current one, which sees the Mediterranean suffer for the tragedies of war, political clashes and migratory flows, there are still unforeseen internationalization processes of its economic and social systems, which, alongside the traditional public and private players who refer mainly to the European Union, increasingly involve new non-European subjects, coming from other continents.

This unprecedented situation is progressively changing the conditions for the future economic and social development of the whole area, creating new references for businesses and flows of people, with new forms of competition between the different systems, as well as individual operators. This situation is marked, in particular, by the increasingly active and incisive role played by the member states of the BRICS international coordination: Brazil, China, India, Russia, South Africa.

A report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Government (MAECI) and officially presented at the 3rd edition of the Mediterranean Dialogues-MED 2017, held in Rome, 30 November, 2017 - “Italian strategy in the Mediterranean: stabilizing the crisis and building a positive agenda for the region” - defines the Mediterranean as “a geopolitical paradox” because it has become “an increasingly fragmented region and - at the same time - more interconnected.”

The Italian government’s report highlights, in particular, the extent of three processes intensified in recent years, making the Mediterranean area “wider, more fragmented, more interconnected.” Wider, because this space has long involved, in its complex and tumultuous evolutionary processes, other vast areas that go well beyond the perimeters of its coasts, including the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, the Balkans and North Africa; more fragmented, because it is divided into new areas of confessional, political, military and economic influence; more interconnected, because many open questions arise on the international and European agenda, from military tensions to the fight against terrorism, and from important aspects of economic competition to major infrastructure projects, which may also be closely linked to what happens in the Mediterranean area. The new global centrality of the Mediterranean is the result of the interrelationship between these three processes and, we could add, what happens in the specific sector of transport and infrastructure services confirms the validity of this general political evaluation.

Main Features of BRICS Penetration in the Mediterranean

The impact on the transport sector of the intense BRICS penetration in the Mediterranean is conditioned by two specific elements: a) the BRICS evaluations of the geo-economic role of the area and b)
the extent of the cooperation agreements signed with the non-EU Mediterranean countries.
The first element, that of their evaluation, presents a contradictory character because no explicit reference to the ‘Mediterranean area’ has so far appeared in the official documents related to the common strategies to be implemented by the coordination. See, for example, the Final Declarations of the last BRICS Summits in 2016 and 2017. As a result, there is no active coordination of the BRICS states’ initiatives in the area in question, but rather only individual actions.
The second element, related to the cooperation initiatives promoted in the Mediterranean area by the BRICS states, is highly effective because it applies an articulated approach with a combination of bilateral and multilateral agreements which are at the origin of investments policies directly or indirectly affecting the Mediterranean transport system.
With reference to bilateral agreements, we could recall the following initiatives: China has signed bilateral agreements in terms of strategic partnership with Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Turkey, which concern co-development actions and, in particular, large infrastructure investments like road and railway works, ports and civil constructions. Russia has also signed agreements in terms of strategic partnership with Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, in particular for joint development actions in the energy, defence and food sectors. Brazil, which incidentally has in Egypt the main recipient of its exports, has signed agreements of commercial preference with Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt and Israel, in particular with reference to the food, chemical, oil and gas sectors. India has a bilateral strategic partnership agreement with Morocco and a trade agreement based on the ‘most favoured nation’ clause with Egypt. South Africa has collaboration agreements with Egypt and Morocco.
As regards multilateral agreements, real co-development platforms, the following cases can be recalled: Brazil, since 2005, shares a permanent cooperation platform with the Arab world (South American and Arab Countries Summit (ASPA)); has promoted agreements between the states of the southern and eastern Mediterranean shores with MERCOSUR (Egypt, the first African state, Israel, the first Middle Eastern state), that is, with the market organization of the whole of Latin America; has organized a permanent South-South cooperation platform between Latin America and Africa (Africa-South America Process (ASA)).
India, since 2008 India has promoted the “India - Africa Forum” for a cooperation covering the whole African continent and in this context has a “Duty Free Trade Preference Scheme (DFTP)” which became fully operational in 2012 with most of the African states. This scheme enabled 34 African countries to significantly increase their exports to India over the past few years.
South Africa participates in the African Union-AU, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the Tripartite Area for Free Trade (TFTA) with the aim of organizing a Customs Union and a Common Market (COMESA), for the countries of southern and eastern Africa.
Russia and China participate respectively in co-development platforms with the Arab world and with the African world. Russia has the status of ‘observer’ in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), regularly participates in the Russia-Gulf Cooperation Council and has promoted the Russian-Arab Council for Economic Affairs. Furthermore, Russia offers to the partners of the bilateral and multilateral agreements the opportunity to extend them to the EAEU Eurasian Economic Union, in which Russia participates. China has promoted two permanent platforms: in 2000, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), for the cooperation with the African continent and in 2004 the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum for cooperation with the Arab world.

Land Transport and Service Infrastructures
In recent years, states in the southern Mediterranean have offered significant opportunities to investors in the construction of major infrastructure works for land transport, railways, roads and motorways. In general, these are big projects aimed at linking population centres, economic zones and new development poles, and thus creating an indispensable basis for supporting the overall economic and productive development policies. The active participation of BRICS countries in the realization of these strategic works is a clear indication of their positive evaluation, as well as of their capability to take these opportunities.
China is particularly active in this sector. Here are some emblematic examples: in Algeria, since 2015,
China, with the state enterprise CSCEC, has committed to building a section of the more than 1,000-kilometre-long motorway with the aim of connecting the north and south of the country, from Algiers to In-Guezzam, on the Mali border; in the period 2007-2010, China signed contracts worth over 4.1 billion dollars for projects to improve the Algerian railway network. At the same time, since 2016, China has committed to the construction of part of another motorway connecting the east and west of Algeria.

China, along with investments in the Suez Canal and others in many ports of the Mediterranean region, has benefitted, so far, from two key situations: the port of Piraeus (Greece) and the new port of Cherchell (Algeria).

In Egypt, Chinese companies participate, in particular, in the construction of the new high-speed railway line, which connects the north and south, from Alexandria to Aswan, on the Sudan border; to the construction of railway lines serving the new development poles, economic zones and the new Egyptian administrative capital, from El-Salam City to Belbeis and Sharquya, in Cairo; to the improvement of the Alexandria port platform. In particular, in the Suez Canal since 2016, China has participated in the construction and management of the new special economic zone: China-Egypt Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, with investments amounting to 2.5 billion dollars. In Libya, China has recently resumed negotiations for the project to build the railway line connecting the east and the west of the country, suspended due to civil war; the contract had already been entrusted to the Chinese company CRCC. In Turkey, China completed part of the new Istanbul-Ankara high-speed railway line in 2014 and is participating in the construction of two Baku-Tbilisi-Kars and Edme-Kars railway lines and the new Marmaray railway tunnel under the Bosphorus.

India, with the Indian company Mahindra, built the first truck production plant of the entire African continent, in Sousse, eastern Tunisia. In Turkey, Indian companies have worked on the modernization of Istanbul International Airport.

Russia, like China, is participating in Egypt in the construction of a special economic zone along the Suez Canal, east of Port Said, called a "priority project" by the Egyptian president Al-Sisi (2015). With Libya, before the outbreak of the civil war in 2011, in the transport infrastructure sector, Russia had agreed in 2008 the start of projects for the construction of road (worth 2.2 bn US $) and railways connections (worth 4.5 bn US $) between the cities of Benghazi and Sirte. An extension to Egypt was also planned. In particular, concerning the railways connection, the Russian State Railways Company RZD had already started in 2010 the construction of a first section of the new line (554 km of high-speed railway), then blocked due to the war. In February 2013, the Russian-Libyan negotiations were restarted to resume and implement these projects. In Morocco, Russia participated in the construction of the motorway between Taza and Al Hoceima. With Tunisia, in 2016, Russia launched its first direct air and sea connection, a direct Tunis-Moscow flight and a maritime line for commercial traffic between Sfax in Tunisia and Novorossiysk in Russia, near Crimea; moreover, between the two countries a new system of telematic customs came into force, a product of the information revolution destined to mark an epochal change between customs operators, while an intergovernmental commission is developing a single customs code between Russia and Tunisia.

South Africa. Since the end of the 1990s, immediately after the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has been the main promoter of African regional and continental integration. Under the Mbeki administration, the country played a key role in setting up the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and launching the African Union (AU), and still pursues, as a priority objective, the political and economic integration of the whole continent, including, therefore, the North African countries of the Mediterranean region. This is all according to the strategic document Africa 2063 Vision, approved by the AU in 2013, together with its first ten-year plan. Within this framework are included the agreements signed by South Africa with Morocco and Egypt, considered as reference countries to facilitate the penetration of BRICS in the African continent along the north-south axis, from the Mediterri-
nean area. To this end, an important contribution can arise from the new BRICS Plus strategy, approved by the 9th BRICS Summit 2017, and from the fact that South Africa has become the seat of the African Regional Centre, the reference structure for the entire African continent of the New Development Bank-NDB, the credit institute organized by the BRICS coordination. Among the numerous projects, already launched in Africa, as a result of continuous international investments, including those by single BRICS states, it is worth mentioning the projects for the construction of pan-African multi-modal road and rail corridors for the following connections: a) on the north-south axis: Cairo-Dakar, Dakar-Lagos, Algiers-Lagos, Cairo-Gaborone-Cape Town, Tripoli-Windhoek-Cape Town; b) on the east-west axis: Dakar-N’Djamena, N’Djamena-Djibouti, Lagos-Mombasa, Beira-Lobito.

Maritime Traffic in the Mediterranean and the Great Protagonism of China

Overall, maritime traffic in the Mediterranean represents 19% of global traffic and 25% in terms of routes (UNCTAD, 2016). The flows affect the following four geographical areas of origin/destination of the traffic: a) northwestern Europe, b) Asia and Southeast Asia, c) the Red Sea, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Pakistan and India, d) the western and eastern Mediterranean. It should be noted that the works of enlargement and doubling the Suez Canal - 72 km of work, completed in 2015 - have enabled ships to reduce waiting times from 18 to 3 hours and shorten the transit from 16 to 11 hours, also favouring the passage of large ships that had previously used the African circumnavigation routes. In 2017, 17,550 ships passed through the Suez Canal, a number lower than the peak of 2008, the year in which the serious international financial and economic crisis exploded, which amounted to 21,415 ships; but this decrease is well compensated, especially for container ships, thanks to the doubling of transported goods, rising from 8,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) in 2008 to about 18,000 TEUs in 2017. It should be added that in 2016, 56% of the traffic travelling through the Suez Canal stopped at Mediterranean ports (in 2001 the percentage was 34%): this increase is a precise indicator of the great potential for development open to these ports. In particular, the goods container traffic registered very diversified trends between the ports of the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. In the period 2008-2014, the overall traffic growth was equal to + 33.7%, but a clearly differentiated trend was registered between the north and south of the Mediterranean: in fact, the growth of the movement of goods in the southern ports recorded a level of + 52.3% compared to the growth of the northern area which was equal to + 23.9%. As a consequence, the world market share fell from 6.4% to 6% for the northern ports, while it rose from 3.3% to 3.8% for the southern ports. In this situation, two cases stand out for their exceptionality: on the southern shore, in Morocco, the traffic growth in the Tanger Med port (+ 233.9% of transported containers) and, in Greece, the Piraeus port, where, following the investment of the Chinese COSCO in 2009, growth was exponential, equal to + 484.3%. Faced with these trends of continuous growth, Morocco, for example, decided to build five other ports by 2030, three of which are in the areas hosting a customs free zone (Nador) and two in export-free zones (Kenitra and Dakhla); Algeria decided to entrust China with the construction of a new mega container port in Cherchell; in 2016, the Prime Minister of the Libyan government of Tobruk (Abdullah Al-Thinni) announced the launch of a major Chinese investment plan in Cyrenaica, in the Tobruk area, in the infrastructure sector. China will fund, in particular, a large and complex project that includes: the construction of the country’s largest deep water port, as well as a commercial airport and a railway line to the border with Egypt, in the direction of Sudan. Also in Libya, Russia is interested in recovering and re-establishing a 2010 agreement that gave it the Benghazi port. In this context of continuous expansion of traffic in the Mediterranean, China, along with investments in the Suez Canal and others in many ports of the Mediterranean region, has benefitted, so far, from two key situations: the port of Piraeus (Greece) and the new port of Cherchell (Algeria).

China and the Port of Piraeus (Greece)

At the end of February 2018, the 400-metre-long Taurus cargo ship, owned by China’s COSCO Ship-
ping, one of the world’s largest companies, docked at the Port of Piraeus, Greece, thus inaugurating the third berth for ships of over 20,000 TEUs. The inauguration of this new structure is only a part of the Piraeus port development programme, which includes logistics services and rail links, and which was initiated by PCT, a subsidiary of the COSCO Shipping Corporation, since it was given the concession to manage the site for a period of 35 years. In 2016, following an international tender, COSCO strengthened its role in the Port of Piraeus, also taking control of the Port Authority-PPA, guaranteeing further investments and a Sino-Greek cooperation of mutual benefit.

Piraeus is thus becoming the largest distribution centre for computers and mobile phones in central, eastern and southern Europe and the Black Sea area.

The goal, declared by the PPA managing director, the Chinese Fu Chengjiu, on the occasion of the inauguration of the new terminal, is to make Piraeus the Mediterranean’s main port within the next two or three years and one of the thirty largest ports in the world; in other words, according to the Chinese strategy, the Greek Port of Piraeus, which is well-connected with the Balkan terrestrial route, along a south-north axis, is destined to become one of the most important hubs of the great project of the Maritime Silk Road in the Mediterranean region. The results achieved so far are clear: under the Chinese impulse, Piraeus recorded a faster growth rate that any other container port in the world, as recognized in the Dutch Clingendael Report, 2016; and the Italian institute ISSM-CNR adds its near-future prediction for it to be able to mobilize 6.2 million TEUs, constituting a great challenge for Italian, German and Dutch ports. A very important signal of the great potential for expansion of the Piraeus port was recorded in 2012 when the multinational Hewlett-Packard, the computer manufacturer, decided to move its distribution activities from Rotterdam to Piraeus, generating, as is understandable, major concerns among Dutch operators; similar decisions to concentrate distribution centres in Piraeus have been taken by other multinationals of the sector: Huawei, ZTE and Samsung. Piraeus is thus becoming the largest distribution centre for computers and mobile phones in central, eastern and southern Europe and the Black Sea area.

China and the New Mega Port of Cherchell (Algeria)

In 2016, the Algerian Transport Minister and the Chinese companies, China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) and China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) signed commitments for the construction of the new large container port of Cherchell. The goal is the establishment of a consortium that will build the new port in the central part of the country, west of the Algiers capital. The project will be completed in seven years. The new port will be equipped with 23 docks able to manage 6.5 million containers (20-feet) and 26 million tons of goods each year. The forecasts to 2050 calculate that the port will manage 35 million tons of goods per year. The management of the structure has been entrusted to China’s Shanghai International Port Group, a choice that will allow both to better orientate the traffic coming from Southeast Asia, and to make the best use of Algeria’s motorway and railway network for transferring the containers within the African continent.

China and the Agreement for a Coordinating Agency

A major agreement aimed at increasing the presence of Chinese shipowners in the Mediterranean was signed in France in May 2015. The agreement was signed by the Chinese company China Shipping Container Lines (CSCL), which was already active in Morocco, with the United Shipping Agency Network (USAN) and plans to open an agency in France, in Aix-en-Provence, for the coordination of all activities in the Maghreb and Malta. The agency is called China Shipping North Africa Services. It is worth remembering here that the Ocean Three alliance, of which China Shipping is a part, along with the companies CMA-CGM and UASC, manages 27% of the maritime traffic between Asia and the Mediterranean.
and 19% between Asia and northern Europe. (The competitors, known by the acronym 2M, i.e. the Maersk and MSC companies, manage, respectively, 39% of the traffic between Asia and the Mediterranean and 32% between Asia and Europe).

European Transport Policy in the Mediterranean: Limits and Perspectives

In general, European transport policy from the beginning, in the 1990s, has mainly been directed towards serving the internal market and free movement of people and goods in the Community area, while actions in the Mediterranean region have mostly been considered as non-strategic, that is to be settled on the basis of bilateral agreements between the states, mainly in the field of short sea shipping connections (Mediterranean cabotage of RO-RO services). According to this vision, European policy has focused mainly on carrying out the big project of the TEN-T networks (Trans European Network - Transport): nine multimodal transnational corridors (railways, roads, waterways) to be completed by 2030 among the Member States in the territorial area of the Union (Core network) and which will stretch outside, to the east and to the south, by 2050 (Comprehensive Network).

The TEN-T project, which is currently still the main strategic reference for European transport policy, has been the object of precise checks and revisions carried out on the basis of the following criteria: facilitating the mobility of European citizens, satisfying the internal demand of Member States, promoting environmental sustainability, organizing financial planning related to Member States’ resources, EU budget policies and, in recent times, the introduction of new financial instruments according to a partnership logic between public and private capital PPPs. Overall, for the 2014-2020 period, the EU has made available a networks connectivity fund, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), of 26.25 billion euros (the previous budget for TEN-T in the period 2007-2013 was equal to 8.013 billion euros). It should be noted that only 5% of this CEF 2014-2020 fund is allocated to the global network.

A first indication of greater attention being paid to EU-Mediterranean relations came in 2001, during Romano Prodi’s Presidency of the Commission, with the initiative of the EU Vice-President and transport commissioner Loyola de Palacio and the publication of the White Paper “Time to decide”; but it is only since 2003 that the European Union, when revising the guidelines of the TEN-T networks, has defined a broader strategy aimed at using the set up of the new land corridors, appropriately integrated with new maritime corridors, as tools to extend the economic space of the internal market and better project the EU towards the eastern states (Russia, Black Sea, TRACECA countries) and towards the Mediterranean (Maghreb countries), and, more generally, to promote economic cooperation with the whole Mediterranean region. The new EU strategy is illustrated in the Wider Europe programme (2003-2007) in the implementation of the 2001 White Paper the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) project, which deals with opening access from the sea to the TEN-T networks and promotes short sea shipping. It focuses on maritime corridors organized with infrastructure that is useful for enhancing maritime services, to develop inter-modality in ports, thereby rendering the whole maritime transport chain, including logistics services, more efficient. This is all done with the dual strategic objective: a) to stimulate the transfer of the road traffic to RO-RO maritime transport, with economic and environmental benefits; b) to facilitate the connections between the seas surrounding the EU states, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, North Sea and Baltic Sea. The endowment fund amounts to 450 million euros for the period 2014-2020. The MoS identified by the EU are the following (ports and lines): Tunis-Rades-Marseille; Tunis-Rades-Genoa, Bejaia-La Spezia-Marseille-Barcelona, Oran-Valencia, Haifa-Trieste-Koper, Haifa-Marseille, Alexandria-Trieste-Koper, Agadir-Port Vendres, Aqaba-Genoa-Beirut-La Spezia-Marseille-Castellon de la Plana, Alexandria-Istanbul. As part of this initiative, collaboration agreements (MoU) have been signed between the ports of Genoa and Aqaba, and Marseille and Rades.

The Marco Polo programme (2004-2010) had the environmental aim of reducing greenhouse gas as well as CO₂ emissions, achieved through the transfer of large amounts of freight and passenger traffic from the road to short sea shipping services. During the application period of the Marco Polo EU legislation, intermodal transport projects on the maritime corridors were co-financed for around 450 million euros. The EU contributions have enabled 150 new
international sea lines to be activated in the Mediterranean, creating the economic prerequisites for the Motorways of the Sea project.

Another important turning point in the launch of a cooperation policy between the EU and the Mediterranean countries was marked by the *Euro Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport held in 2005 in Marrakech (Morocco)*, which confirmed the ministers’ commitment to implement the main cooperation objectives defined by the Barcelona process, launched in 1995 between the EU and the Mediterranean states, and to create an integrated Euro-Mediterranean system in the transport sector: a real Euro-Mediterranean network to be built in synergy between the EU partners and extra EU partners of the Mediterranean region.

Subsequently, the *Conference of EU Transport Ministers* held in 2007 in Lisbon under the chairmanship of the Transport Commissioner, Jacques Barrot, proceeded to define the terms for the extension of the main trans-European transport axes (TEN-T) to the whole Mediterranean area. To this end, it also proposed a specific *Regional Transport Action Plan RTAP (2007-14)*, which, acting above all on the harmonization of norms and regulations and training and technical assistance, should have allowed for the definition of European planning that could ensure consistency between the TEN-T corridors and their projection towards the Mediterranean area. This refers, in particular, to four of the nine corridors defined as priorities and projected towards the Mediterranean region: a) the *Scandinavian-Mediterranean corridor*, along the north-south axis, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean ports of Italy and Malta; b) the *Adriatic Baltic corridor*, along the north-south axis, from the Polish and German ports to the Italian ones of the upper Adriatic; c) the *Rhone-Alps corridor*, along the north-south axis, for connecting the ports of northern Europe, Antwerp and Rotterdam, with the Mediterranean ports of the upper Tyrrenian, Genoa and Marseilles; d) the *Mediterranean corridor*, along the east-west axis, for the connection of the Spanish, French and Italian port system with non-EU countries of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The *Paris summit in 2008*, which constituted the Union for the Mediterranean UfM, confirmed in its final declaration its commitment to promote enhanced cooperation throughout the region also in the transport sector, based on a permanent dialogue and technical cooperation. From that event came a commitment to start, among other things, periodic meetings to check projects and programmes to be carried out for the creation of a Mediterranean transport network: the *Euromed Forums*. These meetings take place annually at the highest level and are coordinated by a group of representatives from five EU countries of the western Mediterranean GTMO (Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, Malta) and five non-EU countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt), the so-called 5 + 5 group.

The Motorways of the Sea project focuses on maritime corridors organized with infrastructure that is useful for enhancing maritime services, to develop inter-modality in ports, thereby rendering the whole maritime transport chain, including logistics services, more efficient.

The *European Council held on 6 October 2011* with the aim of strengthening transport cooperation with regions bordering the EU, in the framework of the *European Neighbourhood Policy*, confirmed in its final declaration the European Union’s support to the UfM to promote concrete priority projects in trans-Mediterranean transport.

The value of this activity was further recognized by the *Ministerial Transport Conference promoted by the UfM in Brussels on 14 November 2013* which confirmed the two complementary pillars on which Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the transport sector is based: a) the regulatory reform and b) the convergence of initiatives promoted in all relevant transport sectors (maritime, road, rail, civil aviation and urban transport). The conference approved the establishment of the *Trans-Mediterranean-Network-Transport-TMN-T*, to be connected to the TEN-T corridors, underlined the progress made in implementing the RTAP plan (2007-2014) regarding the TMN-T project, as well as the definition of the legal and regulatory framework and, finally, defined the new guidelines of this regional RTAP plan for the period 2014-2020.
Regarding the support actions implemented with EU financial instruments, the final declaration of the transport ministers (Ministerial Declaration) confirmed the importance of CEF funds for the TEN-T networks dedicated to the MoS project, as well as of the strategic actions of the Mediterranean partners set up to implement the TMN-T project in the framework of European cooperation with the following bodies: the AMU (Arab Maghreb Union), CETMO/GTMO 5+5 (Study Centre for Transport in the Western Mediterranean and Transport Ministers Group of the Western Mediterranean), 5- France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and 5- Algeria Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia), the ESCWA (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia). Finally, the final 2013 Ministerial Declaration underscored the importance of the EU-EIB Technical Assistance Programme “Neighbourhood Programme Management and Support in the Transport Sector, Southern Neighbourhood,” which promotes financial support for infrastructure projects and innovative technologies to be applied in order to improve air traffic and maritime control and logistics services in ports.

On 27 April 2017, during the semester of the Maltese EU Presidency, the European ministers responsible for the “Integrated Maritime Policy on Blue Growth” confirmed the importance of the initiative carried out by governments in the western Mediterranean transport system where the GTMO 5+5 countries operate and decided to extend this initiative to the entire Mediterranean region. The ministers also confirmed financial support for the Blue Maritime Economy programme with the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, a financial tool to facilitate investments in research and innovation programmes aimed at blue growth (Blue Med Initiative project).

The reference to the EU-EIB programme “Neighbourhood Programme Management and Support in the Transport Sector, Southern Neighbourhood” reveals an important aspect for understanding not only the value, but also the limits, of European cooperation in the Mediterranean area, real shortcomings that have contributed greatly to creating opportunities for substantial penetration of non-European competitors. In general, it can be said that the prevailing orientation in the use both of the European TEN-T CEF budget funds and the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) referring to the MED programmes “Europe in the Mediterranean” has favour technical assistance for studies and research projects, the adjustment of regulatory systems and operating standards, without entering directly and massively into the construction of infrastructure. On the basis of the aforementioned programme, the EIB is the only institution that has cooperated - and still intervenes - in the infrastructure building of non-EU Mediterranean partners, acting with the tools of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in collaboration with other international financial institutions and the World Bank. In fact, in the Mediterranean area, the EIB has so far invested 13 billion euros through important projects in the transport sector. Here are some examples: the EIB contributed to Morocco through the construction of the ‘Autoroute du Maroc’ with an investment of about 1 billion euros and participated in the development of the Tangier port; in Tunisia, the EIB financed the ‘Autoroute du Sud’ and the Sfax-Gabes, as well as other priority routes; in Turkey, the EIB was one of the major financiers of the tunnels - road and rail - under the Bosphorus and participated in the financing of the high-speed Ankara-Istanbul line; in Jordan, the EIB financed the connections around Amman; in Lebanon it financed motorway works, to mention just some of the major interventions.

In general, in the transport sector, the fact that the EU has so far prioritized its own internal market, in terms of investment goals and structure, has ended up highlighting the main weakness of its programme in Mediterranean cooperation, influencing the decisions by North African states on infrastructure development and objectively leaving space to extra-EU international investors. In summary, for the EU, the prospects for recovering and improving its position in the Mediterranean region are substantially linked to a profound change in the guidelines of its budgetary policies to be defined for the period 2020-2027, in particular with regard to strengthening cooperation between Mediterranean countries launched with the ENI-Med programme started in 2016.

A decisive contribution could come from the establishment of a European Fund for Africa, with financial programmes coordinated by the World Bank, EIB, international financial institutions, private banks and international funds. The general strategic objective is already well defined: it is based on carrying out the Trans-Mediterranean Network (TMN), whose features were outlined in the conference of
transport ministers held in Marrakech in 2005 and subsequently approved in the conference of transport ministers promoted by the UfM in Brussels in 2013. Therefore, in specific terms, the goal is also to use the creation of the European TMN network to promote the connection between the TEN-T corridors with the Silk Road network launched by China. To this end, which can also be achieved in the short term, the following available funds could be used: a) CEF TEN-T, to extend to all Mediterranean countries, b) the funds for the projects of the Motorways of the Sea (MoS), c) the funds already made operational by the EIB.

Finally, it is important to consider the value of the primacy that the big European companies in the infrastructure sector still hold at the international level, which is a real potential that could be put at the service of the Mediterranean network, with more decisive strategies and a far greater commitment than the one they have made so far. In fact, in the international infrastructure and construction market, European companies prevail among the top ten (2017): 52 European companies have a turnover of 212 billion dollars, followed by 65 Chinese companies with a 94-billion-dollar turnover, US with 47 billion, Korean with 40 billion, Japanese with 25 billion, Turkish with 22 billion and Brazilian companies with a 16-billion-dollar turnover. This current primacy of European companies is the true value to be mobilized.

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The Impact of Global Decarbonization Policies and Technological Improvements on Oil and Gas Producing Countries in the Middle East and North Africa

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Endowed with half of the world’s known oil and gas reserves, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region became – particularly during the second half of the twentieth century – a cornerstone of the global energy architecture.

This architecture is currently undergoing a structural transformation, prompted by two different forces: decarbonization policies and technological improvements.

The adoption and quick entry into force of the Paris Agreement marked a major step forward in international efforts to address global warming. For the first time, developed and developing countries committed to act in order to limit global average temperature increase to well below 2 °C, and to pursue efforts to further limit this to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. This should reinforce strong decarbonization measures already being undertaken in different parts of the world, such as in Europe.

Meanwhile, technological improvements have significantly increased the cost-competitiveness of low-carbon technologies such as solar and wind power generation, power storage technologies and electric vehicles (IRENA, 2017). This has already started to reshape the global energy system, notably by giving a greater role to solar and wind in the power generation mix. Global energy outlooks generally see these trends as continuing in the future. Some outlooks even see these trends further accelerating, leading to a peak in global oil demand in the 2020s.

By transforming the global energy architecture, international decarbonization policies and technological advancements could have an impact on the world’s key oil and gas producing regions, such as the MENA. Let’s see how.

The Macroeconomic Context of the MENA Region

The MENA region presents a heterogeneous macroeconomic context, which reflects the irregular distribution of oil resources throughout the region. For five regional oil exporters (Libya, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia), more than 40% of their GDP is based on oil and on government activities that are heavily funded from oil revenues. In four other oil exporters (Qatar, Algeria, UAE, Bahrain) this share varies between 40% and 20% (Chart 13).

In all these countries, activities in non-oil and non-government sectors are also often linked to oil and government activities. The main sources of manufacturing value-added tend to include refinery, chemical and other mining/extractive industries, while some non-oil sectors, such as construction, depend heavily on government contacts (IMF, 2016).

In the same oil-exporting countries, oil is the primary source of fiscal revenues (Chart 14), and non-oil fiscal revenues are themselves mainly related to oil.

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1 We define MENA as including the North African countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt), the Levant countries (Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine), the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates), Iraq and Iran.

2 For simplicity, the article uses the term ‘oil’ to mean hydrocarbons. In some countries (eg. Algeria, Qatar), hydrocarbon production includes a significant share of gas.
Oil makes up more than 50% of total exports from MENA oil exporting countries (Chart 15). This further illustrates the predominance of the oil sector in these economies, and their consequently limited level of economic diversification3. The compositions of GDP, fiscal revenues and exports illustrate how oil represents a fundamental difference in the MENA macroeconomic context between oil exporters and oil importers. But oil also impacts other macroeconomic variables, such as employment and labour productivity. In oil-exporting countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, more than 60% of nationals are employed in the public sector. This situation sub-

3 It should be noted that the low shares of oil in exports from the UAE and Bahrain are because non-oil exports include a large share of re-exports (IMF, 2016).
High shares of public employment, generally characterized by protected jobs with high wages (WEF, 2014), have contributed to lowering the labour productivity of MENA oil-exporting countries. This trend has become more entrenched since the 1980s, as MENA oil exporters have increasingly imported cheap non-national labour, reducing labour productivity also in the private sector. As a result, the trajectories of labour productivity in MENA oil exporters and oil importers have profoundly diverged over the last few decades (Chart 16). This low level of labour productivity is one of the major barriers for economic diversification in MENA oil exporters (Hertog, 2013). It prevents the development of an internationally-competitive private sector. Furthermore, it should be outlined that high percentages of nationals employed in the public sectors of...
oil-exporting countries go in tandem with small percentages of nationals employed in the oil sector. This is an important aspect of the social contract in MENA oil-exporting countries, because it shows that only a small fraction of each national population contributes to the generation of the revenue that is used to financially support the vast majority of each population. The support is mainly based on oversized public sectors, but also on expensive and economically inefficient subsidy schemes, such as those for energy.

This **excursus** through the macroeconomic context of the MENA region illustrates the persistent over-reliance of oil-exporting countries on oil revenues.

**The Potential Impact of Global Decarbonization on MENA Oil Exporters**

Since the 1980s, global oil demand has constantly risen, while between 2000 and 2014 oil prices boomed. In such a favourable context, MENA oil exporters have had little incentive to diversify their economies, and to evolve from rentier to production states. With global markets demanding increasing volumes of oil, and even at increasing prices – at least up to 2014 –, why would MENA oil exporters change course and put at risk their established social contracts?

After all, should oil production continue at current levels, MENA oil exporters still have a long way to go before depleting their reserves (Table 10).

Because of decarbonization policies and technological innovation, these reserves might become stranded before they are depleted. This is particularly the case for oil reserves. For gas the situation is different because gas is an important component of global decarbonization due to its key role in displacing coal from the energy mix.

With the Paris Agreement, global leaders have committed to strengthening the global response to the threat of global warming by keeping the global temperature rise this century well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels. Climate scientists have estimated that, to have at least a 50% chance of keeping the global temperature rise below 2 °C throughout the century, the cumulative carbon emissions between 2011 and 2050 need to be limited to around 1,100 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide (Gt CO₂) (Meinshausen *et al*, 2009).

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contained in the present estimates of global fossil fuel reserves are estimated to be about three times greater than the global carbon budget (Meinshausen, 2009; Rau-pach, 2014).

On this basis, McGlade and Ekins (2015) explored the implications of this emissions limit for fossil fuel production in different world regions. According to their study, a third of global oil reserves, half of gas reserves and over 80% of current coal reserves should remain unused from 2010 to 2050 in order to meet the 2 °C target. In this context, they estimate the Middle East to be able to exploit only about 60% of its oil reserves – leaving more than 260 billion barrels underground – and about 40% of its gas reserves (McGlade and Ekins, 2015, p. 189).

Such a development would represent an unprecedented challenge for MENA oil exporters. Their entire economic and socio-political models would need to structurally change in order to adapt to the new reality.

**TABLE 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oil</th>
<th>Gas</th>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>196</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>118</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>112</td>
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*Source: produced by the authors from BP 2017.*
The drop in oil prices that started in 2014 has functioned as a catalyst for new thinking throughout the MENA oil exporters about the unsustainability of their high reliance on oil and about the consequent needs for economic diversification (El-Katiri, 2016). All regional oil exporters have adopted economic diversification strategies, generally based on the targets of increasing the private sector’s role in the economy, developing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), creating jobs, investing in education and innovation (Table 11).

These strategies reflect the economic policy guidelines generally aimed at MENA oil exporters, developed by international organizations and academics. However, it should be outlined that these kinds of economic diversification plans have been part of MENA oil exporters’ rhetoric for a long time. For instance, the Kuwaiti government was already discussing the need for economic diversification during the 1950s. After 60 years, oil continues to represent more than 60% of Kuwait’s GDP, and more than 70% of its fiscal revenues.

MENA Economic Diversification Strategies

The drop in oil prices that started in 2014 has functioned as a catalyst for new thinking throughout the MENA oil exporters about the unsustainability of their high reliance on oil and about the consequent needs for economic diversification (El-Katiri, 2016). All regional oil exporters have adopted economic diversification strategies, generally based on the targets of increasing the private sector’s role in the economy, developing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), creating jobs, investing in education and innovation (Table 11).

These strategies reflect the economic policy guidelines generally aimed at MENA oil exporters, developed by international organizations and academics. However, it should be outlined that these kinds of economic diversification plans have been part of MENA oil exporters’ rhetoric for a long time. For instance, the Kuwaiti government was already discussing the need for economic diversification during the 1950s. After 60 years, oil continues to represent more than 60% of Kuwait’s GDP, and more than 70% of its fiscal revenues.

MENA oil exporters have often set out similar strategies in times of low oil prices, and then rapidly dismissed them once prices recovered. As Hvidt (2013) outlines, MENA rentier states easily give up their well-argued and planned policies when under pressure and fall back on established ways of doing business, namely through patronage and the predominant role of the public sector. There is, therefore, a risk that current strategies could also be quickly forgotten if/once oil prices recover from the current low levels (IEA, 2017).

This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that when oil prices are high, non-oil exporting and import-substituting sectors of the economy become less competitive, because the exchange rate appreciates. Being aware of this problem, private investors tend not to invest in non-oil sectors, even when oil prices are low. This creates a vicious cycle that helps to explain MENA oil exporters’ small private sectors. However, there are remedies to this prob-
lem. For instance, sovereign wealth funds could be used to strategically invest in the creation of productive domestic private sectors, instead of being used as tools to perpetuate the rent via financial or real estate speculation. Of course, to be implemented, such strategies require strong governance and forward-looking visions on the part of governments.

Conclusions

MENA oil and gas exporters should look at international decarbonization policies and at low-carbon technology advancements as an opportunity to develop forward-looking strategies to transform their economies.

Sovereign wealth funds could be used to strategically invest in the creation of productive domestic private sectors, instead of being used as tools to perpetuate the rent via financial or real estate speculation.

This transformation should be considered by MENA oil exporters as a structural path, to be pursued without deviation in order to ensure both political stability and socio-economic prosperity – even in a decarbonizing world. Should the world factually pursue the decarbonization pathway agreed in Paris and should MENA oil exporters continue to be unprepared for that, the consequences could be dramatic, socio-economically and geopolitically, for the MENA region and the overall international equilibrium.

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The State of Arab Media since 2011

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The last seven years will perhaps be remembered as a time of re-drawing the political map of the Middle East. The uprising in Tunisia, which gained momentum on the eve of 2011, sparked the upheavals in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The wave of protests also extended to the Gulf region: a series of anti-government protests arose in Bahrain between 2011 and 2014, suppressed only by the military forces of neighbouring armies, particularly Saudi Arabia and UAE. In Egypt, what began as an admirable peaceful collective action turned into violent outbreaks in a nation that has become divided between diverse ideological camps, chief among them being the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists. Each camp unleashed a new wave of newspapers and broadcasting projects as platforms for both the anti-government and anti-opposition voices. Between 2011 and 2014, Egypt saw the rise and fall of four different ruling powers (the military, the Muslim Brotherhood, the head of the constitutional court followed by el-Sisi). In Syria, more than a quarter of a million Syrians lost their lives and more than 11 million others were forced to flee their homes in what began as peaceful anti-government protests in 2011 and turned into a full-scale civil war, which has been raging ever since. The rebellion soon became an armed Islamist faction, with the rise of so-called ISIS. This group took control of large strips of Syria and neighbouring Iraq, declaring the area as its ‘caliphate’ in 2014. This fictive state managed to attract thousands of European Muslims, or so-called ‘foreign fighters.’ The Gulf states’ meddling in the Syrian conflict, regarded as a proxy war between Iran and Syria supported by Russia, on the one hand, versus the Gulf states and the US, on the other, eventually fractured the relations among the Gulf states, igniting the ongoing blockade against Qatar.

Amidst these ensuing conflicts, Arab media have been used as a propaganda tool in accentuating discord among Arab states, which further divided the region into sectarian, economic, and political loyalties, and divided each Arab society into groups that deemed themselves true representatives of an indigenous identity, versus those who did not.

In this article, I elaborate on two functions of Arab media since the beginning of the so-called Arab Spring, namely as a tool for enforcing national identity and as a tool for re-drawing historical ties with neighbouring states.

Nationalism — Dead or Alive?

The Gulf states have long ascribed to a pan-Islamist identity that would bind them to other Muslim-majority nations, as an alternative to the threatening nationalist mobilization; however, they recently undertook several steps in the opposite direction by promoting their own unique sense of identity. It is true that the Gulf national identity is usually enforced through tribal linkages, which, ironically, marginalize certain internal voices, such as the so-called Bedoon or tribesmen, who do not have formal citizenship rights and whose ancestors had settled in the Gulf but were excluded from registration of citizenship at the time of

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the formation of several Gulf states. Nonetheless, each Gulf state is now striving to inculcate a strong sense of nationalism among its citizens through a range of initiatives such as national days, national museums, and heritage projects. This sense of nationalism even extends to foreign wars such as that in Yemen, which was launched to undermine the perceived threat from Shiite Iran. The Saudi State strove to imbue patriotic sentiments in various demonstrations, in an attempt to garner support for its war on Yemen. The State has actively used social media platforms to enforce this support while engaging in a virtual proxy war with Iran via Twitter, by accusing Iran of harbouring terrorism and sectarian hatred; on the other hand, Iran blamed the rising terrorism on the Wahhabi ideology which originated in Saudi Arabia. A Saudi animated video recently went viral on YouTube and other social media platforms featuring a full-scale Saudi military attack, led by the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, against Iran; the video was in English with subtitles in Arabic and Farsi. The animation was reported to be in retaliation to a previously released Iranian film in 2016, simulating missile attacks on Saudi targets.

On the other hand, various media have been used by Arab states as platforms from which to launch verbal attacks on neighbouring states. A number of prominent singers from UAE and Saudi Arabia, for instance, launched a new song attacking the Qatari Emir and his father’s policies. The song entitled golol Qatar or Tell Qatar, sent a harsh message to the Qatari leadership regarding the possible consequences of its tactics against neighbouring countries, while praising the Saudi leadership’s role in standing up to Qatari policies. Qatar, on the other hand, marked its national day in 2017 with a massive celebration, unlike any other year, as a sign of defiance to the imposed blockade by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt. Moreover, Saudi Arabia celebrated its 87th National Day in September 2017: various ceremonies were held in public places, in which streets and houses were covered with green paint (the colour of the Saudi flag) and pictures of the Saudi King Salman and the Crown Prince, in a bold display of patriotism and an inflated expression of loyalty to the current Saudi leadership. The UAE also used its national day to create a sense of belonging to one nation through the slogan ‘Mutaheda’ or ‘United,’ and a film of the same title featured on local television channels.

Arab media since the beginning of the so-called Arab Spring has functioned as a tool for enforcing national identity and as a tool for re-drawing historical ties with neighbouring states.

In Egypt, mainstream media outlets, whether state-funded or privately owned, had no shortage of patriotic songs. They praised the Egyptian military under the leadership of el-Sisi for delivering the nation from the short-lived Muslim Brotherhood (MB) rule. A good example was one called Teslam el-Ayadi or May these hands be safe, which referred to the strong hands of the Armed Forces in toppling the MB regime; the song became an embodiment of Egyptian military power in ‘rescuing’ Egypt from the MB nightmare. Closure of MB and Salafist media outlets in Egypt soon followed. The massive exodus of thousands of MB members and supporters fleeing to Qatar and Turkey allowed many new MB-supporting outlets to appear, such as Mekameleen and el-Sharq television channels beaming from Turkey. These out-

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8 Mutaheda (official version) https://vimeo.com/14002184
lets promoted a cyclical view of history as a repetitive series of events by moving the MB up and down the ladder of power, as I discuss in a recent analysis of the MB media. The MB, and indeed other Islamist media, usually focus on the metaphor of a constant historical battle against Western political and cultural incursions. One example of this ‘blame game’ was shown in the Arab media response to the Syrian refugee crisis, which held Europe responsible for the disaster, citing the history of European imperialism in the region since the Sykes-Picot agreement. There were some media outlets which claimed that Germany only accepted so many Syrian professionals to meet their needs for new, cheap labour, thus causing a major Syrian ‘brain drain’; other voices blamed the Arabs themselves for abandoning their fellow Arabs in Syria, in what was seen as contempt for the long-held slogans promoting Arab fraternity.

Fake News or Fake History?

There are several Arab outlets, particularly Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain, which stand in opposition to Qatar and Turkey. They have called for a revisit of the historical accounts of Ottoman rule and its role in ‘weakening the region,’ including Egypt, in which historians argue that, Ottoman rule imposed isolation on Egypt. Likewise, Syrian media have circulated calls to revise history curricula for primary schools to replace positive terms about Ottoman rule with negative ones such as ‘usurper,’ the Syrian government has also been calling to stop the flow of Turkish TV series, which used to be dubbed in Syrian dialect before being distributed to many Arab television networks. The Turkish President Erdogan and the UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed posted comments on a shared tweet on Twitter. Their dispute was about whether or not Ottoman troops had stolen material wealth and manuscripts from Medina, now part of Saudi Arabia, in 1916. This tension was exposed yet again in December 2017, when the extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was held to protest against President Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. The summit was attended by only 16 Heads of State and had no representation from several Arab countries. The upheavals in the region, ever since the Arab Spring, were claimed to have drawn the Arab leaders into close alliance with Israel, although in public, they still declared Israel as the number-one enemy. Egyptian talk show hosts were also allegedly briefed by Egypt’s intelligence services to tone down opposition to Trump’s decision.

There are several Arab outlets, particularly Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, and Bahrain, which stand in opposition to Qatar and Turkey

Al-Jazeera Arabic, on the other hand, was accused of propagating hatred in its coverage of reactions to Trump’s decision. The channel found itself embroiled in the recent crisis triggering the blockade against Qatar; the Arab coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, called for the closure of Al-Jazeera and all other Qatari-owned outlets. The crisis was not about Al-Jazeera per se, but an attempt to silence the Qatari voices and clip Qatar’s wings regarding its foreign policy. The real question is, what Al-Jazeera will look like if it survives the current crisis. If it does, it would very likely tone down its coverage of other states in the region, which means a further loss of its credibility. The use of Al-Jazeera as a tool in Qatar’s foreign policy

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only proves that no news outlet in the Arab region is truly independent. Al-Jazeera made a huge difference to the previously stagnant Arab news market when it appeared in 1996 — Arab audiences were following outlets like the CNN and BBC for news about their region at the time — but it later lost part of its credibility for its coverage of the Arab uprisings, thus triggering a wave of resignations18 by presenters and producers who claimed the channel’s coverage was aligned with Qatar’s foreign policy. Later, Qatar accused the UAE of hacking Qatar’s state news agency,19 and planting fake news that led to the recent diplomatic rift in the region, which had not happened in years. There were also claims that fake news was being circulated online, such as that Arab nations had demanded that FIFA strip Qatar of the 2022 World Cup.20 Al-Jazeera Arabic responded by claiming that, Saudi Arabia and UAE wanted to champion a new form of “liberal Islam” and a “secularist trend.”21 In retaliation, the Saudi television channel Saudi 24 ran a whole episode in September 2017, condemning what it called “Qatar’s carrying of the banner of Christian evangelism,”22 on the grounds that, the Catholic Church in the religious complex in Qatar, was part of an ongoing strategy to convert Arab Muslims.

Can Europe Help?

The chaos and turmoil characterizing the region impelled many Arab states and groups to appeal to the EU for support and moderation. The EU was called on to mediate, and to help de-escalate the ongoing tensions between Qatar, on the one hand, and the blockade coalition led by Saudi Arabia, on the other. The EU was also called upon to reaffirm its support for Lebanon, following the sudden resignation of Saad al-Hariri. There have been additional calls for the EU to play an active role in reviving the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, subsequent to the American President’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, at a time when the EU is still battling with an ongoing refugee crisis.

Al-Jazeera made a huge difference to the previously stagnant Arab news market when it appeared in 1996 but it later lost part of its credibility for its coverage of the Arab uprisings.

The Arab region has seen tough times during this period.23 The collapse of oil prices and dwindling revenues in the wealthy Gulf states have resulted in Arab expatriates being replaced by natives or a cheaper Asian labour force. This has had a negative impact on the flow of remittances, which are used to subsidize poorer Arab countries. Although the region’s leaders and populations still blame the current morass on decades of meddling in the region by the Americans and Europeans, it has become impossible not to admit the region’s own weaknesses in inflicting pain on its own peoples. The prevalent insecurity is, moreover, not confined to the Middle East – in 2014, the region accounted for 45% of the world’s terrorist attacks,24 68.5% of its battle-related deaths, and 57.5% of its refugees.

Meanwhile, Arab media seems to be sticking to its customary role: a propaganda tool in the hands of statesmen and religious groups stirring not only anti-Western discourse, but also animosity, often against selected neighbouring Arab states, instead of facilitating useful debate about possible solutions for the current stalemate. There is dwindling hope that Arab media will ever be able to separate itself from the ensuing political upheaval, despite the huge amount of European funding being poured into training Arab journalists and supporting various media projects.

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What Is Academic Freedom?

This contribution defines academic freedom in a negative way, relating it to the absence of legal, physical, or structural interference by state or non-state actors in a researcher’s personal autonomy, independence and integrity (Grimm and Saliba, 2017: 47). Thus, hereafter, violations of academic freedom refer to any infringements of these freedoms, such as regulatory interference in the governance of higher education institutions, retaliatory discharge of researchers or students, arrests of students or university personnel or more severe infringements of their physical integrity.

Increasingly under Pressure: Academic Freedom in the MENA Region since 2011

Before 2011, in some countries throughout the Arab world, universities were the safe havens of relatively free speech and, at times, even critical debate in an otherwise dominant picture of heavily censored public political discourse. Many researchers in the Middle East and North Africa had hoped that the spark that lit the wave of mass protests during the spring of 2011 and the political change (where it was manifested) could also reignite the light of academic freedom and end widespread political control over and censorship in higher education and research throughout the region’s universities.

Taking stock seven years later, unfortunately, the general trend has gone the opposite way: universities, academics and students throughout the Middle East and North Africa have increasingly been targets of censorship, state interference and political violence since the uprisings in 2011. Higher education institutions, their students and their staff have not gone unaffected by the broader political developments in the MENA region in recent years. Since the uprisings in 2011, which shook the political landscape of many countries in North Africa and the Middle East, an increasing number of violent conflicts, state collapses and resurgence and continuation of overtly repressive autocracies has defined the political context in which academics work and students learn across the region. Universities in many countries have been heavily affected by these developments. However, different patterns have emerged across the MENA region.

Patterns of Contentious Politics and Academic Freedom since 2011

One group of countries devolved into violent conflict (Libya, Yemen, Syria). As a consequence of political violence and state failure, universities were barely able to continue to function in a regular manner. Even where teaching and research activities continued, scholars, as well as students, perceived critical to groups controlling the territory on which universities are located, are subject to intimidation, violence, disappearances, imprisonment and even torture and killings. According to Hattam, the war in Syria alone displaced at least 2,000 scholars (2017), although the estimated number of unrecorded cases is probably much higher.
Another group of countries witnessed relative continuity, despite protests erupting (Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Iran, and most of the Gulf monarchies). In these countries, the situation regarding academic freedom remained more or less stable, however, the persisting restrictions of academic freedom either remained the same or deteriorated in some cases, as governments increasingly tried to tighten their control over higher education institutions. This was especially apparent in Iran, where scholars continued to be persecuted and banned from their work based on their opinions and the content of their work. In Lebanon, however, the level of academic freedom has remained relatively high and universities continue to provide a safe space for open and critical political debate. After the revolution in Tunisia, a similar picture emerged and the level of freedom increased in terms of teaching, free speech on campus and publication. 

In a third group of countries (Turkey and Egypt), political mobilization and contestation at universities by scholars and/or students in recent years has led to a systematic crackdown on critical students and researchers. In both countries, students and academics were increasingly targeted for their political involvement in protests or for raising opinions not in line with their governments’ policies. Political mobilization and organization in universities, led to a crackdown that resulted in arrests, retaliatory discharges, expulsions, disciplinary measures and more political control over the higher education sector through new regulations and political appointments of management staff at higher education institutions.

Academic Freedom under Threat in Turkey

In Turkey, the restriction of academic freedom in the form of mass expulsions of researchers and students amounts to an attempt to ‘cleanse’ the public sector (Özkirimli, 2017) of unwanted individuals. Professors and lecturers from nearly all universities have been targets of prosecution due to alleged ties to the Gülen movement, which the government blames for the 15 July 2016 military coup. The cases of hundreds of Turkish academics who lost their positions at public institutions are just one example of this trend of political backlash against academics who dare to speak out and challenge the positions of the government. Many scholars left Turkey in order to pursue their academic careers abroad. This situation provoked a true exodus of researchers, and, what’s more: this ‘brain drain’ puts independent and free research and teaching at Turkish universities at risk. The UK-based Council for At Risk Academics (CARA) and the German Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, for instance, report skyrocketing numbers of applications by Turkish academics for support grants since 2016.

The cases of hundreds of Turkish academics who lost their positions at public institutions are just one example of this trend of political backlash against academics who dare to speak out and challenge the positions of the government.

The Academic Freedom Monitor verified 111 cases of violations of academic freedom in Turkey, ranging from violence and imprisonment to loss of position and travel restrictions, since the coup attempt in June 2016. This marks an extreme rise in violations compared to the 23 in the period from 2013 until the coup in summer 2016. Furthermore, the Middle East Studies Association has documented hundreds of student arrests.1 In March 2018, students at Bogaziçi University in Turkey who peacefully protested against the Turkish army’s offensive in Syria were publicly accused of being terrorists by president Erdogan; 11 of them were detained.2

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1 MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION, COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (MESANA). Incarceration of nearly 1000 students, March 2017 https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2017/03/02/incarceration-of-nearly-1000-students
Dogan stated: “we will find these terrorist students and do what's necessary. The academics in our universities must also be very careful. When we establish a link between these students and the academics we will also do what's necessary about them.” This exemplifies how much universities have become a central battleground for the Turkish government in their recent crackdown on Turkey’s political opposition.

Universities as Battlegrounds and Gross Violations in Egypt

In Egypt, the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE) documented 2,138 violations of students’ rights between 2013 and 2016, including 21 extrajudicial killings and 1,181 student arrests. The treatment of universities as military facilities that fall under military jurisdiction illustrates the extent of the campaign to stifle dissent at universities by the state security apparatus in Egypt, since the coup in 2013. According to AFTE, at least 65 students have been referred to military trials since the coup. While arrests at universities have ebbed from 998 in the academic year 2013/2014 to around 21 in the academic year 2015/2016, state control over higher education institutions in Egypt remains at unprecedented levels, with police presence on campuses and riot police permanently stationed at entrances and new restrictive laws governing universities being put in place. In the academic year 2014/15 “alone, 761 students have been arrested and 281 expelled for participating in political activities on campus.”

The tragic case of the Italian researcher Giulio Regeni, who was found dead with marks of extensive torture on the side of the road between Cairo and Alexandria on 3 February 2016 has led to a diplomatic crisis between Egypt and Italy. On 8 April 2016, Italy recalled its ambassador from Egypt. However bilateral relations have increasingly normalized in recent months, with Rome appointing a new ambassador to Cairo. The Egyptian secret service has since admitted that the Italian PhD student was under their surveillance at the time when he disappeared on 25 January (the day of the fifth anniversary of Egypt’s January 2011 revolution) nearby Tahrir Square, which was heavily secured by numerous Egyptian security forces. In 2018, marking the second anniversary of Giulio’s disappearance, the Italian State Prosecutor claimed that Giulio was targeted by the Egyptian security apparatus because of his work on independent trade unions in Egypt. This case stands out as one example of the most outrageous and horrifying violations by Egyptian authorities against not only academic freedom, but also fundamental human rights, such as the right to a fair trial, the absence of torture and violence, among others.

Internationalization of Higher Education in the Gulf

An interesting trend to watch is the increasing internationalization of higher education through, on the one hand, sending students abroad to study, or through the opening of manifold satellite campuses by prestigious North American and European universities in the Gulf region and beyond. While at the same time a crackdown on academic freedom continues unabated. Scholars are jailed, as has been the case in the UAE or Iran, and, in some cases, have even found themselves on death row.
Region-Wide Numbers and Trends

The Academic Freedom Monitor project from the scholars at risk network has verified 48 incidents of violations of academic freedom for North Africa and 183 for Western Asia (Turkey and the Middle East) since 2011. These two regions combined constitute the vast majority of the cases verified by the Academic Freedom Monitor, which has documented incidents from travel bans and losses of positions to enforced disappearances and killings of students and scholars throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Despite the fact that none of these data sources can be taken as systematic and reliable data, due to their limit in scope and methodology (Grimm & Saliba, 2017: 51f.), they do indicate the dire state of academic freedom in the MENA region since 2011, and, especially, the increasing violations of academic freedom in recent years. However, as stated above, this general trend does not mean that the situation in all universities in every country of the MENA region has necessarily deteriorated.

Conclusion

Violations of academic freedom in all forms, through legal means, retaliatory discharge, travel bans, prison sentences, death penalties, and extra judicial killing have been documented. Since 2011, political activities on and around several universities has intensified, often through independent student unions and protests. Since 2013, we can observe a spike in crackdowns on higher education accompanied by mass arrests. To sum up, the picture looks grim for academic freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, as there is an evident trend of violations and violence.

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The New Culture of Youth in the Mediterranean Region: Media, Technologies, Politics, Economy and Youth

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In 2011, young people looked across the Mediterranean and saw other young people. Whatever else the Arab Spring might have achieved, the global attention it attracted created a moment of recognition between the North and the South especially among young people. This group’s shared set of problems, albeit experienced at vastly different degrees of intensity, was highly visible, including among others: inequality, precarity, indebtedness, the weight of gerontocracy, failed political classes and a collapsed political system, corruption, the privatization of common goods, environmental degradation. The early victories in Tunisia and Egypt meant that a repertoire of political acts (occupation of squares, for example) and strategies (social media, for example) carried a new potency, and symbols and discourses of rage and revolution were created. *Time* magazine put an anonymous young rebel as its person of the year in 2011. The Mediterranean was once again, in some sense, the central sea of the world, and the ‘youth,’ whoever they are, were apparently its most potent inhabitants.

After Puerta del Sol, Occupy, Gezi park, the Colourful Revolution in Skopje, Syntagma, Nuit Debout and many other such focal points of youthful rebellion, by 2018 perhaps we now have enough distance to ask whether 2011 marked the emergence of a ‘youth culture’ and collective generational identity across the Mediterranean with its own dynamics, or whether the idea of the youth saying ‘Mare Nostrum’ (‘our sea’) is just one more deceptive illusion for a sea that has a long history in this line.

The Young Mediterraneans?

The emergence of any new youth culture in the Mediterranean needs to deal with its own precedents. The Springtime of the Peoples of 1848 (and its activist groups like Young Italy, Young Hegelians, Young Ottomans...) carries its own paradigms of revolution, nationhood and youth. 50 years ago this year, ‘les événements’ of May 1968 arguably marked the popular eruption of ‘youth culture’ as a socio-political force. The Algerian war, the Iranian, ‘velvet’ and ‘colour’ revolutions, all form part of what we collectively see as potential models or warnings for what could happen in different parts of the Mediterranean. Such events have shaped popular ideas of what youth is, scholarly cultures of studying it, models of education and policing strategies of control, all of which have been spread, sold, volunteered or imposed across the Mediterranean societies.

After all, history in the Mediterranean is contested territory, a terrain of struggle in which memory is constantly redeployed as claims over the meanings of terms like youth, equality, freedom and development. For all the ideas connected with a new birth, and the coming Spring, this cycle is not one young people are able to break out from: the movement of Mediterranean time itself seems to oblige their passage into this shadowy underworld of pasts and futures, as a common poetic tradition from Homer and Virgil to Darwish and Di Lucca has constantly reminded us. This rite of passage is perhaps both individual and collective, each new generation facing its history and getting only fleeting glimpses of what might follow it. Like Odysseus or Aeneas, the youth of the Mediterranean seems obliged to cross over into a land of memory – which may not be Hades.
the Elysian fields or Paradise – but in which they are tested in their determination to break from the past and create change in this world.

Amongst the words of warning that hang over the entry gate of this underworld of living memory, one is particularly pertinent: the idealization of youth and the dream of a united Mediterranean found its most ugly and destructive combination in fascism, and the recent surges in support for neo-fascist groups requires a strong sense of vigilance when dealing with these themes.

Some key moments of a newly emerging rite of passage in the Mediterranean, which exist simultaneously and mark the conscience of a generation, can perhaps be described sequentially as follows: youth frustrated, youth embattled, youth detained, youth violated, youth drowned and saved, youth regenerates. These moments can be thought of as characteristic for many youth in the Mediterranean, and each young person must somehow come to terms with and face. They are not experiences each young person will necessarily have directly – in the same way that not every young person was involved in uprisings or protests – but experiences of a generation which each young person will be aware of: ghosts that will in some sense follow them, and to which they may be able to give names and faces, or which they will only see as anonymous representations of a collective condition. The unprecedented degree to which these experiences are shared across internet platforms, new media as well as 24-hour television news leads to significant levels of mutual awareness between young people, but does not in itself imply any common interpretation or reaction to what is shared. Not only is the experience of each young person informed to very different degrees, but each of the moments of the emerging youth generation creates radically different political and cultural effects in different contexts.

**Youth Frustrated**

Levels of frustration in the Mediterranean region are extremely high following high expectations. Many people have a sense that the clock of progress has stalled and that their lives are now trapped in perpetual suspension. This is in marked contrast with some neighbouring regions like the Gulf states or northern Europe, where the youth tend to be more optimistic.

Many of the ‘political’ reasons for this sense of frustration amongst young people are widely known and widely shared, from military rule to unaddressed social problems to geopolitical conflict. Such blockages in the Mediterranean region are not only blockages for young people, of course, although young people bear specific costs arising from them in terms of their inability to construct their lives in a sustainable way where the State is either absent, dysfunctional or pulling back from providing public goods, where jobs are hard to come by, demand maximum flexibility and pay minimally, and where geopolitical danger is constantly present.

A couple of political experiences from 2017 may have had a greater impact on young people than other parts of the population, and so are worth mentioning: the constitutional crisis in Catalonia divided young people across the European continent around questions of nationality and identity, but also exacerbated divisions inside Podemos, which was the focus of many young people’s hopes, and poses problems for the international reputation of the municipalist movement which Barcelona’s Ada Colau champions. Nevertheless, a sign that municipalist politics and the new relationship it promises between citizens and local governments continues to inspire came from the relative success of Zagreb Je Nas (Zagreb is Ours!) in the Zagreb elections (winning four seats in the assembly). Nearby in Macedonia, the new government of Zoran Zaev populated by relatively young people and replacing the previous corrupt regime marked some success of the Colourful Revolution, and acts as a sign of hope for youth in some nearby countries. The feeling of frustration is not only caused by ‘formal’ politics and the institutions of state. Leading precarious lives leads to a generation of cultures and strategies which are disconnected from the staid institutions of society, and yet those same institutions of society are highly resistant to change. Dependence on parents for financial support reinforces generational power imbalances. A common sentiment is that the ambient society is hypocritical, professing one thing in public but actually maintaining the opposite through immobilism, religious conformism, patriarchy, propaganda or outright repression. The sentiment is nothing new of course, and indeed the title of the famous Egyptian novel from 1949, (and later classic film in 1968), ‘Land of Hypocrisy’ could easily be reused today in every country in the region, but the multiple interconnected causes of youth
lacking autonomy are perhaps more intractable than they used to be.
We know historically that such prolonged moments of frustration and alienation verge on cynicism and are apt for dangerous political movements.

Youth Embattled

The idea of being involved in a war is an important one in youth culture in general. Perhaps a constant feature of masculine adolescence in particular, in today’s Mediterranean it finds specific forms.

For some people, in Syria, on the borders with Iraq and Turkey for example, there is a real, military war, and Palestine and Israel are fighting their own asymmetric conflict. Many young people across the Mediterranean are following the war in Syria with some attention, and international inaction against what seem to be war crimes, whether the use of chemical weapons by Assad or the Turkish military offensive in Afrin, promotes indignation amongst a certain part of the Mediterranean youth. This has of course been the case with Israeli actions in Palestine for some time, and the recent speeches of Donald Trump related to the issue have their own effects on this issue.

These real situations of conflict have implications outside the countries and citizens directly concerned. The imagery of war is spread deliberately by terrorist organizations that occasionally find a receptive audience in young people, and also by politicians wanting to sound strong in the context of uncertainty, or justify actions of the State. Refugees escaping from conflict zones act as signifiers of war, leading to different reactions from different people.

These experiences and images, reinforced by tendencies in popular culture and mass media, a sense of political impotence and ever present risk, can lead to young people conceiving themselves as somehow engaged in a war. Whilst this only occasionally leads to radicalization, the effects on the generation as a whole and the way it conceives of itself are much broader.

Youth Detained

The large numbers of people detained, tortured and disappeared in recent years in Egypt and Turkey in particular, but not exclusively in the region, is widely reported. In the southern Mediterranean police detention can extend not only to those protesting, but also to people going about their regular work in civil society, journalists, or workers in the informal economies who are vulnerable to exploitation or abuse by corrupt state-backed authorities. The effects of this abuse have a profound effect on not only those directly involved, but families, friends and the wider culture.

In the northern Mediterranean, perceptions of racial profiling and targeting by the police, specifically of young people, have caused outrage amongst minority populations in France, Spain and Italy over the past year.

The ‘administrative’ detention of young migrants in all Mediterranean states is an extreme symbol of unequal mobility rights. New cultures of camps have been fostered by young people both living in the camps and coming in solidarity from outside, establishing theatres, writing workshops, circuses, cinemas and other artistic spaces, often facing down the reticence of the authorities or, on occasion, tear gas attacks by the police.

Youth Violated

2017 and 2018 have been marked by massive online mobilization in the #metoo protest across large parts of the world, and was met in southern Europe, like elsewhere, by a reactionary misogynist backlash, in which the mocked-up images of severed heads of female politicians, online and offline threats and acts of sexual violence failed to silence women’s calls for equality and freedom.

The sexual harassment of women and gender inequality in the southern Mediterranean was an important undercurrent of the 2011 uprisings and has received more substantial media coverage and international attention since. The systematic use of sexual harassment by state authorities continues in Egypt notably, and the UN, among others, has revealed the state-sponsored use of rape against women, men and children in Syria. Despite everything, Egypt has seen some relatively high-profile judicial sentences handed down for sexual violence in early 2018 and has taken some steps against female genital mutilation, which remains prevalent in society. In July 2017, the Tunisian parliament voted a historic law against sexual harassment, and changed
the shameful law that gave dispensation in cases involving non-violent sexual relations with anyone under the age of 15, if the perpetrator agreed to marry the victim. In 2018, the French government is presenting a new law to fight against gender-related violence, and is likely to change a similar dispensation relating to ‘consensual’ sexual relations with minors following a public outcry.

Youth Drowned and Saved

Whilst the Mediterranean Sea may briefly have been the symbol of youthful rebellion in 2011, it is safe to say that its global image now is one of a watery hecatomb. At least 3,100 people died trying to cross the Mediterranean in 2017 according to the UN, and whilst both sea crossings and deaths are down compared with 2015, this is the result of controversial deals between European countries and Turkey and Libya in particular, where migrants are often held in detention centres and subject to abuse. Young people have organized solidarity and welcome initiatives with migrants throughout the region: the City Plaza hotel in Athens, Baobab experience in Rome, the thousands of young volunteers on Greek islands are some of the experiences that are marking a generation. Like the Arab Spring in some countries, the lack of political change to fundamentally address the underlying issues risks creating the lasting impression among some young people that these initiatives were naive. The increased attractiveness of far-right nationalism can be partly explained from this perspective, even as other majoritarian parts of youth maintain a deeply cosmopolitan and humanitarian outlook.

Youth Regenerates

If youth is understood as a rite of passage between childhood and adulthood, then the ways that youth reproduces is of defining importance. Young people in general in the Mediterranean increasingly find themselves in a prolonged period of transition, conditions of neoliberal precarity meaning they are unable to liberate themselves from parental dependence, and, as a consequence, delay marriage and reproduction. The current demographic ‘youth bulge’ in the south of the Mediterranean may look very different in some years as a result. The mixed results of the uprisings from 2011 onwards in terms of political and economic change, are likely to deepen processes of financialized globalization and the precarization of the economy on both sides of the Mediterranean, and do not suggest a stable ending is in store for a period of youthful transition. Where the current Mediterranean youth has had to invent strategies of survival and creation in uncertain, fragmented and shifting social and political landscapes, which are very different from the life-skills of their parents, the children of the current youth generation are likely to need exactly these kinds of skills. What the cultures of Mediterranean youth are prefiguring may therefore be a more profound restructuring of family relations, social reproduction and transnational economic interdependency than can be contained in the cultural concept of ‘youth.’ What values, customs and rights this new society will transmit through its reproduction over time is still very much a matter of political and cultural struggle. Whether something called ‘the Mediterranean spring’ starting late 2010 onwards really happened, whether it is now finished, and what it ultimately signifies is still very much our collective responsibility. Where Aeneas had the guidance of his father, and Dante the guidance of his ancestors, in the uncertain underworld of past and future our predicament may be more like that of Odysseus, relying on cryptic prophets, shape shifting sorcerers and our own wily cunning against the hand of fate.

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Short-term Wins, Long-term Risks: Human Trafficking and People Smuggling in the Mediterranean Area

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As has been the case over the past three years, 2018 has been characterized by the increasingly urgent efforts by European states to quell the flow of irregular migrants across the Mediterranean, put to sea in lethal ways by human smugglers in Libya. And 2018 is worthy of note, because it appears that those efforts are finally beginning to take hold: sea arrivals in Italy have dropped by almost 75%.1

Since the Valletta Summit held at the end of 2015, the European Union (EU) as a bloc and more so through the direct initiatives of some if its Member States has expanded its efforts to address the ‘migrant crisis.’2 The summit marked the launch of the EU’s Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which included a range of incentives to African states to partner more forcibly in the quest for migration control.3 It included, for example, a significant package of support to Niger, whose northern border with Libya was seen as a key staging post for West Africans heading towards Libya’s coast. It also included investments in Sudan and Chad, which, despite their complex political and human rights records, were seen as crucial partners if flows of people from East Africa and the Horn were also to be reduced. Individual Member States are reducing their investments in downstream development programming in order to support enhanced border security objectives.4

These efforts have borne the intended fruit, in terms of reducing migratory flows, though not without the ethics of the EU being called sharply into question. In Sudan, a part of the efforts to interdict migrants have been carried out by former Janjaweed fighters, resulting in NGOs reporting grave human rights abuses by those forces against migrants and in border communities.5 The Nigerien government, having agreed at the behest of the EU in 2015 to criminalize smuggling through a new law,6 has clamped down aggressively on the smuggling trade. Despite the strain that this places on the economy, sustainability and stability of the country’s fractious northern regions, the government took steps to close down the migration hub of Agadez, arresting (largely low-level) smugglers and agreeing to take and dispatch migrants returned from Libya.7

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1 According to UNHCR arrivals data, 3,171 migrants crossed the Central Mediterranean between January and April 2018 compared to 12,943 during the same period in 2017. See: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205
5 Suliman BALDO, Border control from hell: How the EU’s migration partnership legitimises Sudan’s militia state, Enough Project, April 2017, https://enoughproject.org/files/Border_Control_April2017_Enough_Finals.pdf
Italy Co-opts Militias to Reduce Migrant Departures, at the Cost of Migrant Rights

The intensity of these efforts has been seen in Libya, where an Italian strategy may have shown short-term results in reducing the number of boat departures, but in the long term may prove divisive and counter-productive for Libya’s stability at a pivotal stage in its ongoing political transition.

The Italian intervention, with the aid of EU programmes, has led the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) to reclaim authority over its maritime search and rescue zone. NGOs operating in the central Mediterranean have seen their efforts stifled by judicial targeting, and the pitting of their rescue efforts against the Libyan coastguards. The EU has bolstered the capacity of Libyan coastguard militias to intercept migrant boats and tow them back to Libyan shores, a practice that human rights and migration advocates have decried as being a violation of refoulement principles.

More significantly, unilateral action by Italy – in competition with France over the control of the Libya file – pushed the GNA to co-opt a militia identified by the UN Panel of Experts as being heavily involved in smuggling and turn them into law enforcement entities in a mere six months. The move ended up destabilizing local political economies, triggering violent competition between militia groups in the coastal embarkation hub of Sabratha. The result was a 19-day war in which more than 40 people were killed, 350 injured, and 15,000 displaced.

With opportunity for onward movement stifled, the risk to migrants stranded in the country has increased with smugglers and militias seeking other means to monetize and exploit migrants, not least through the country’s infamous detention system, or in unofficial smuggler facilities, facing harsh detention conditions, physical violence, abduction, extortion, sexual violence and forced labour.

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The investment of considerable political capital by the European Union and its members in ending the migration crisis is understandable. Across the continent, elections are being lost, democratic norms and the rule of law eroded, and the strength of the Union has been weakened over the polarizing issue of migration. At the same time, however, the nature of the response is compromising much of the EU’s moral capital, making it harder to advocate for partner states to hold higher governance standards themselves. For example, the EU was in no place to protest when Niger re-
turned more than a hundred Sudanese migrants to Libya without consideration of their asylum rights, given that – despite all the evidence to the contrary – recognizing Libya as a safe destination for migrants was a necessary part of their own migration response.14

**Growing Threats from Organized Crime**

As far as the threat of criminal networks is concerned, the efforts to stem the irregular migration flow come late in the day. The protracted nature of the migrant crisis, which ran largely unchecked between 2013 and 2016, has had implications for the growth, connection and consolidation of criminal networks.

The nature of the response is compromising much of the EU’s moral capital, making it harder to advocate for partner states to hold higher governance standards themselves.

Groups involved in the smuggling of migrants, which in 2013 might have been best characterized as a loose network of opportunistic ad hoc players, with the benefit of repetition have consolidated into profit-driven, exploitative criminal groups with true transnational reach. Furthermore, the massive profits to be made on the migrant trade from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe (which, according to EUROPOL, was valued at between €3 billion and €6 billion in 2016)15 has attracted criminal groups of other ilk, both in Africa and between Africa and Europe.

The smuggling trade has proved a boon to counterfeiters, document fraudsters and to corrupt officials along all of the routes.16 Closing down the established routes from Niger to Libya has dispersed migrants across other territories, using and enabling networks across North Africa.17

Nigerian groups with a long history in the human trafficking of women to Europe have taken advantage of the Libyan migrant routes and falling costs of passage to traffic vulnerable women into sexual exploitation in Europe.18 Camps of asylum seekers and refugees in Greece are reportedly a recruiting ground for smuggling networks and organized crime.19 Human trafficking groups across the Balkans have turned their hand to smuggling migrants desperate to get out of Greece and to continue to western Europe.20 In Italy, the Italian mafia has infiltrated and captured many of the lucrative public contracts for the detention and processing of asylum seekers.21 The large population of migrants in Italy and beyond are also seeking employment in the informal and grey economies across Europe, are preyed upon by criminal groups, or disappear into the underworld when asylum claims are rejected. Most notable here is EUROPOL’s claim that 10,000 unaccompanied child migrants have gone missing, assumed trafficked into forced labour, prostitution and forced begging rings.22

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Long-Term Risks

As populist and anti-immigrant rhetoric continues to hold sway across Europe, the fear that migrants bring with them crime and possibly terror remains a strong rallying cry for right-wing politicians.\textsuperscript{23}

The response from the Union and its Member States to human trafficking and people smuggling across the Mediterranean continues to trade short-term wins, with questionable sustainability, against a serious escalation of the long-term risks of instability, criminality and possibly violent extremism.

In several countries, laws are being changed to make it harder for asylum seekers to make a successful claim, to legally compete for domestic employment, and for refugees to reunify with their families or access citizenship.\textsuperscript{24} The hope appears to be that these measures will reduce Europe’s appeal for economic migrants. But, as with the interventions in Africa, it is dangerously short-sighted and arguably counter-productive. By restricting their access to legitimate employment opportunities, asylum seekers and migrants are forced into the underground economy. With the vast majority of migrants being male and within the young adult age range, depriving them of their families is to restrict access to a source of stability and an incentive to build a local community. The growing populist rhetoric in the European host populations increases migrants’ sense of being alienated and undesired, making them more vulnerable to recruitment by criminal groups and to the narratives of violent extremism.

Both within and beyond EU borders, therefore, the response from the Union and its Member States to human trafficking and people smuggling across the Mediterranean continues to trade short-term wins, with questionable sustainability, against a serious escalation of the long-term risks of instability, criminality and possibly violent extremism. Democratic and human rights principles are being pushed aside by the political imperative to reduce migration flows. Sacrificing these principles and instead investing in securitized border control in countries of origin and transit with weak state institutions, damages the EU’s leverage and credibility to demand better democratic governance from the states in question, a number of which are their own citizens’ primary security threat.

Southern European Migration Towards Northern Europe

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In this article, we choose to speak of migration and not mobility to designate these flows of European citizens moving from South to North within the EU during the economic crisis. Although we acknowledge that these individuals enjoy a greater ease of movement thanks to their EU citizenship, we likewise consider that the use of the concept of mobility applied to EU citizens and not to migrants from third countries poses a problem. This distinction generally gives the impression that the former move necessarily in a voluntary manner and with the acceptance of the host societies whereas the latter are compelled to migrate and perceived as undesirable by the host societies. By revealing certain similarities between old and recent South-North flows within Europe but also between recent migrations by southern European citizens and non-EU migrants, we will call these implicit hierarchies into question.

Economic Crisis and Migrations in the European Union

Although it was qualified as ‘global’, the 2008 economic and financial crisis did not produce identical effects in all parts of the globe. Even in the isle of prosperity that is the European Union (EU), the economic crisis hit the South much more severely than the North. Affected by long-term financial instability, high unemployment and a severe deterioration of their standards of living, many a southern European citizen has had to develop a series of strategies to deal with the crisis. Among these strategies are the options of training in order to adapt to the new needs of the job market, moving back in with one’s parents to limit housing expenses or participating in social movements to contest austerity measures.

Characteristics of New South-North Migration

South-North migrations within Europe are not new. During a large part of the 20th century, especially shortly after World War II, different north European countries such as Germany, France or Belgium actually called for workers from the Mediterranean Basin to meet their heavy industries’ labour needs. According to certain estimates (Zimmerman, 1996), no less than 5 million people migrated from the Mediterranean area (including Turkey) towards northern Europe between the end of World War II and the oil crises of the 1970s. Nearly a decade after the start of the 2008 economic and financial crisis, the South-North flows within the EU are of a significantly smaller dimension and remain well below the mi-
gratory flows from central and eastern European Member States.
Measuring South-North migratory flows within the EU with precision is a complex feat, in any case. It is at times difficult to calculate the movement of people who do not declare their departure to the authorities when they migrate because they are uncertain of the potential duration of their stay abroad. By the same token, the disparity between the statistics of countries of origin and those of destination are often significant (see Lafleur & Stanek 2017 for a discussion of migratory flows during the economic crisis and their characteristics).

To understand the acceleration of South-North EU migration during the economic crisis, we could consider the fact that the annual flow of Spanish, Greek, Italian and Portuguese migrants to Germany, for instance, was under 45,000 individuals in 2006 before the crisis broke out, whereas it surpassed 140,000 entries in 2013. Belgium experienced a similar phenomenon with annual Italian arrivals doubling from 2006 to 2012 (going from 2,600 to 5,200). Statistics from the countries of origin provide an identical image of acceleration of migratory flows during the economic crisis. In Spain, for instance, no less than 700,000 people emigrated between 2008 and 2012, according to certain estimates (González-Ferrer, 2013). In Portugal, on the other hand, a relative stability of flows was observed both before and after the crisis because Portugal, in contrast to Italy, Greece and Spain, had never truly ceased to be a country of emigration.

The transformation of southern European economies between the 1960s and 2008 has had clear consequences on the composition of new South-North migratory flows. First of all, since the end of the 20th century, southern Europe has mainly become an area of immigration rather than emigration (including Portugal). The foreign population residing in Spain thus went from 350,000 individuals in 1981 to 5.3 million in 2001. This means that, among the new south European migrants, some are immigrants of non-European origin (for instance, North Africans or South Americans) having spent enough time in a south European Member State to gain nationality. These populations, more exposed to discrimination and social exclusion by definition, have been the hardest hit by the economic crisis. They have thus been among the first to return to their countries of origin or, on the contrary, undertake a new stage of emigration, this time towards northern Europe, as permitted by the EU passports.

The transformation of southern European economies between the 1960s and 2008 has had clear consequences on the composition of new South-North migratory flows. The new south European migrants moving north display two significant characteristics: first of all, they are a young population, with the under 30 age group being particularly well represented; and secondly, they have a high level of qualification, even higher than the EU average insofar as new Spanish and Italian migrants. This phenomenon can of course be ascribed to the general progression of educational levels among southern European populations, but also to the growing selectiveness of the labour market, explaining why qualified individuals today have a greater chance than others of entering the work force in northern Europe.

Political Response in Host and Origin Societies

Few issues cause as much debate in European societies as migration. With the intensification of migrant flows during the economic crisis in conjunction with the opening of borders to free circulation by EU citizens from central and eastern Europe, migration has become a burning issue in both societies of origin and arrival of these new migrants. In southern Europe, the departure of thousands of young graduates during the crisis has led to particularly virulent debates among the Spanish and Italian political class. In Spain, despite quarrels about the scope of the phenomenon, it is truly the causes of migration that have been at the heart of debate. While for the Rajoy Administration, this new Spanish emigration was not at all a matter of concern but rather could be attributed to Spanish youth’s desire for new experiences, the opposition saw a clear
sign of disagreement with the austerity policies instituted by that administration. In Italy, whereas the country experienced a number of departures of graduates proportionally comparable to other European countries, it was the risk of experiencing the effects of brain drain that occupied the political agenda during the economic crisis.

The new south European migrants moving north display two significant characteristics: they are a young population and they have a high level of qualification, even higher than the EU average.

In host countries, the increased south European immigration has at times gone unnoticed due to the much higher number of migrants arriving from central and eastern Europe. Nonetheless, reactions have been likewise varied. At the beginning of the economic crisis, Germany quickly saw an opportunity to attract young graduates to meet its labour needs. To do this, the government launched the programme “The Job of my Life” in 2013, through which thousands of young Europeans (60% of them from Spain) applied to train then do an internship at a company. In Belgium, on the other hand, the growing arrival of migrants from southern and eastern Europe caused tension among the political class, historically principally in favour of the free circulation of people within the EU. In particular, less qualified European migrants and beneficiaries of social aid have been the object of increased inspections leading to over 8,000 withdrawals of residency permits from 2011 to 2014.

This politicization of European migration in Member States experienced a particularly acute episode in 2013 when British, German, Netherlands and Austrian ministers jointly demanded the European Commission take measures to limit mobility of EU citizens accused of being a burden to the cities where they settle. Although other European governments as well as the European Commission then publicly defended the principle of free circulation, this tension remains largely unresolved today, as attested by the centrality of EU migration in debates before and after the British so-called ‘Brexit’ referendum.

**European South-North Migration: What Lessons Can Be Learned for the Future of Migratory Policies between Europe and the Rest of the World?**

The combined effect of the economic crisis and enlargement of the EU towards central and eastern Europe has not only produced an intensification of intra-European migratory flows, but above all a growing politicization of the issue. This politicization is reminiscent of debate on taking in migrants and asylum seekers following the so-called ‘migrant crisis’ that began in 2015. Putting these two recent phenomena in perspective within European migratory history allows us to draw three preliminary conclusions on contemporary migratory policies in Europe.

*Migratory Policies Produce Inequality*

We have demonstrated above that all EU citizens are not equal in the face of migration in periods of economic crisis. Whereas qualified migrants are particularly sought after and in certain Member States are even the object of policies to attract them, others, because they are less qualified or considered a burden to the welfare state, find their right to migrate restricted. This approach obviously echoes the treatment of asylum seekers recently arriving in Europe.

In southern Europe, the departure of thousands of young graduates during the crisis has led to particularly virulent debates among the Spanish and Italian political class.

Indeed, migration authorities in Member States generally base themselves on the principle that their request for protection conceals an economic motivation for migration, which would be by nature illegitimate and in itself would justify externalizing
asylum procedures to Turkey. In this regard, such treatment is quite different from the one the EU tries to offer highly qualified non-Europeans through its ‘Blue Card’ policy.

Social Policies Are Placed at the Service of Migratory Control

The reaction of different EU countries such as Belgium to the growing European migratory flows has been to intensify withdrawal of residency permits for migrants considered undesirable because they are temporarily unproductive and dependent on the social welfare system.

The combined effect of the economic crisis and enlargement of the EU towards central and eastern Europe has not only produced an intensification of intra-European migratory flows, but above all a growing politicization of the issue.

This use of social policies to migratory control ends also echoes policies of family reunification which, in the EU, today frequently contain economic criteria that often exclude non-European citizens with limited income from the right to live with their families.

Emphasis on ‘Brain Drain’ Instead of a Policy for ‘Brain Circulation’

The controversy emerging in southern Europe on the departure of young graduates during the economic crisis curiously resembles the long-term debates held in African and South American societies. With the implementation of ‘brain attraction’ policies during the crisis period, certain southern European observers have become aware of the fact that unequal circulation of talent within the Single Market could be detrimental to their economic reconstruction efforts after the crisis. In this regard, they are faced with the same dilemmas as so-called ‘developing’ societies, attempting to limit the departure of their graduates. In both cases, limiting the migration of individuals having the greatest possibility for success abroad seems unrealistic. It would be better to consider true brain circulation policies allowing migrants wishing to temporarily or definitively return to their societies of origin to maximize the benefits of their stay abroad.

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Rural Migrations and Mediterranean Agricultural Systems

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As a result of the global incorporation of local economies, the Mediterranean rural world is undergoing an intense ‘modernization of its agricultural sector.’ The spatial polarization and social differentiations such restructuring have generated entail dramatic implications in economic, social and territorial terms. Also pushed by an intense environmental change, these dynamics have greatly contributed to decreasing livelihood opportunities, boosting youth migration out of rural areas, in search of a more promising future in areas with higher economic potentials. This eventually results in agrarian worlds facing growing problems related to a rapidly declining and ageing rural population.

A major challenge for communities inhabiting rural areas in the Mediterranean’s southern regions (MENA) is to access productive land resources for agricultural purposes so as to provide food, income and employment for a fast-growing population. The situation is quite the opposite on the Euro-Mediterranean flanks (EUMed), where low fertility rates and rural population decline pose serious problems related to demographic ageing, lack of agricultural workforce and generational renewal. This is the context for the ongoing rural migrations in the region and beyond - and policy making has to be informed accordingly.

Environmental Asymmetries and Changes

The Mediterranean is characterized by a relevant asymmetry between its northern and southern and eastern rims. In agro-ecological terms only 14% of land is suitable for agricultural production in the region, with averages of 34.4% for the northern EU Mediterranean countries and only 5% for countries in southern and eastern rims. The rest of the Mediterranean territory is classified as 15% rangeland, 8% forest/woodland and 63% either mountainous or semi-arid land with production constraints – also defined as ‘marginal’ territory. Agriculture in its many and diversified forms plays a major role for regional food security, national economies and income and employment at the local level. It ranks high on the agenda of all countries in the region. In this agro-ecological setting, intense environmental change is also playing a role in reshaping food production and the management of the rich but fragile natural resource base. The overlapping impacts of climate change dynamics and a growing human pressure have visibly different impacts on the diverse portions of the region.

The Mediterranean population has increased dramatically in the last four decades, today numbering around 500 million people. From a regional perspective, demographic trends present diverging patterns - between an ageing population in the Euro-Mediterranean, and fast-growing population rates on the African and Asian shores. Furthermore, economic and political crises in neighbouring regions have also triggered in-migration from

1 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) comprises all countries facing the Mediterranean Sea on the southern and eastern shores, and beyond inland.
2 EUMed mostly refers here to Spain, Italy and Greece, and southern France and Portugal to an extent.
3 The five EUMed countries ranking amongst the top 21 in the world (an average life expectancy at birth of over 80 for 2013, OECD data).
4 MENA is characterized by high fertility rates - 2.35% yearly growth as an average for the last four decades.
other areas of the globe to the Mediterranean, at the historical crossroads between three continents. Intense climate change also contributes to amplifying the vulnerability of rural livelihoods and the differentiation amongst communities whose natural resource endowment is historically different. Following a pattern that originated in its southern flanks, the region is becoming hotter and drier, with significant implications on the health of ecosystems, animals and people alike. These provide important challenges to resource management and governance patterns, with major consequences for the socio-economic, environmental and political settings. This context provides the background for current mobility patterns as attested by the intensification of south-north and east-west migratory flows, towards the European flanks. This is nothing new to the region, which interfaces three continents and has traditionally been a crossroads for different flows of trade, cultures and people.

The overlapping impacts of climate change dynamics and a growing human pressure have visibly different impacts on the diverse portions of the region.

Overall, when looking at figures that interrelate population growth with the availability of agricultural resources, food security projections become an increasingly critical variable in the MENA, raising concerns over the differential between resources, production and demand. The recent socio-political tensions and civil conflicts that have ravaged the region in the last decade are somehow related to food security matters, and to the agrarian world more generally. In such contexts, emigration increasingly represents a key component of livelihood strategies for many rural households. The phenomenon could be indicative of failures in the institutional and/or market domains, whereby agriculture does not provide for decent and sustainable livelihoods. It might also be conceived as an adaptive measure, providing the world’s most food-insecure regions due to its reliance on food imports. As agriculture remains a main source of employment and income for a large number of communities, the MENA countryside is mostly resource-poor and labour-abundant. This results in the average farm size being small compared to the average household size, with limited pro-capita productivity rates. These factors leave the rural population particularly vulnerable to climatic and economic volatility.

**Two Agrarian Worlds Mirroring Each Other across the Sea**

Recent evolutions in the African and Asian rims of the Mediterranean have therefore been characterized by high population growth in areas where capacities to produce food are limited by agro-ecological conditions in terms of fertile land and water availability. Despite consistent investments, most farming systems rely on rainfed production and agro-pastoralism. Most MENA countries are less than self-sufficient in agricultural commodities, with imports accounting for 25-50% of consumption, particularly for cereals, of which the region is the world’s largest importer. Together with the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, MENA is classified among the world’s most food-insecure regions due to its reliance on food imports. As agriculture remains a main source of employment and income for a large number of communities, the MENA countryside is mostly resource-poor and labour-abundant. This results in the average farm size being small compared to the average household size, with limited pro-capita productivity rates. These factors leave the rural population particularly vulnerable to climatic and economic volatility.

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Overall, when looking at figures that interrelate population growth with the availability of agricultural resources, food security projections become an increasingly critical variable in the MENA, raising concerns over the differential between resources, production and demand. The recent socio-political tensions and civil conflicts that have ravaged the region in the last decade are somehow related to food security matters, and to the agrarian world more generally. In such contexts, emigration increasingly represents a key component of livelihood strategies for many rural households. The phenomenon could be indicative of failures in the institutional and/or market domains, whereby agriculture does not provide for decent and sustainable livelihoods. It might also be conceived as an adaptive measure, providing the

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5 The Mediterranean is considered the world’s second region in terms of exposure to climate change impacts. Projections up to 2050 indicate an average reduction in rainfall of 4% in northern countries, and 27% in southern ones; drought events will become regular even on the EU shores, where every second year is predicted as potentially dry.
opportunity to ease the human pressure on a dwindling resource base and to alleviate rural unemployment. Emigrating might also represent a response to the collapse of traditional organizational and/or governance mechanisms due to the growing pressure of these processes (Nori, 2018).

Together with the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, MENA is classified among the world’s most food-insecure regions due to its reliance on food imports

While the share of MENA population living in rural areas today is 40% as an average, it is only about 20% in EUMed countries. Rural populations in EU continue have declined and many rural communities are persistently socially and politically marginalized, despite major investment in ‘European rural welfare’ through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). As a central founding pillar of the Union, CAP finances account for about 40% of the overall EU budget. After decades focusing on enhancing productivity and output performances, this policy and its related funding have been reframed with a more multifunctional perspective. The document introducing the forthcoming reform scheduled for 2020 makes specific mention of generational renewal and the integration of migrant workforces as major areas of concern. Despite lower population figures, higher agro-ecological potentials and conspicuous policy support, living and working in the countryside often represent unattractive options for European populations. The exodus of rural youth leads to demographic decline and ageing, triggering problems in terms of workforce availability and generational renewal for agricultural enterprises and rural villages alike. All in all, the labour force in agriculture is older than in any other sector of the EU economy. While the phenomenon is common throughout the Union, rates are particularly worrying in Euro-Mediterranean countries, where agriculture is losing 2-3% of its active population per year. Today only about 10% of farmers across the EUMed are younger than 35, less than half the percentage of those aged over 65. Portugal leads the group with 22.7% of its rural population in this age group, followed by Greece (21.4%), Spain (21.1%), Italy (20.9%) and France (20.8%). These figures lead to serious concerns about an increasingly ageing and dependent population in many rural areas, as a young workforce is critical for a healthy and vital countryside.

**Territorial Reconfiguration**

A key factor that has effectively helped to counterbalance the rural exodus in the EUMed is the significant proportion of migrants that have come to inhabit and operate in the countryside in recent decades. This inflow makes a significant contribution to tackling the social and economic mismatch of the labour markets by filling the gaps left by the national population (Kasimis, 2010). Today, in many parts of the EU, foreign workers – both legal and illegal – make up a huge portion of the agricultural labour force and a significant part of the rural population. In countries such as Spain and Italy, official data indicate that in 2015, immigrants constituted over one-third of the salaried workforce in agriculture. This pattern is likely to continue and accelerate in coming years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 13</th>
<th>The Proportion of Immigrants in the Agricultural Workforce throughout the Crisis (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Eurostat; National statistics; Caruso, Corrado, 2015 in Colucci, Gallo, 2015.

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6 From 1960 to 2011, the average share of the population living in rural areas dropped by almost 40% to 22.7% (simple average of all 15 countries), World Bank data.
The rural world has indeed proved itself to be a ‘refuge’ sector for migrants during harsh economic periods. Research shows that throughout the last decade, EU metropolitan areas have been less attractive to immigrants, as the crisis expelled a consistent workforce from the secondary and tertiary sectors (Colucci & Gallo, 2015). Green areas have instead provided easier chances for sources of basic livelihoods and employment opportunities for newcomers. The rural world, furthermore, offers degrees of non-visibility and informality that help to accommodate the precarious situation of many migrants. According to OECD, in 2012 in EU Mediterranean countries agriculture represents the main sector where migrants are recruited without a regular contract. These grey zones provide a breeding ground for illegal practices and harsh exploitation, with significant social cost.

A key factor that has effectively helped to counterbalance the rural exodus in the EUMed is the significant proportion of migrants that have come to inhabit and operate in the countryside in recent decades.

The overrepresentation of immigrants is particularly visible in certain areas and sectors, and gives way to related phenomena of territorial reconfiguration and ethnic- and gender-based specialization, with distinct communities occupying specific ecological and productive rural niches. As has already been the case in the past, generational change is always accompanied by an ethnic one.

Migrations Contributing to Rural Resilience

Migrations play a primary role in reshaping rural landscapes and agrarian worlds in the Mediterranean. Though emigration out of rural areas is a global phenomenon throughout history, the current drivers, pace and trajectories of this process raise emerging questions and challenges. The Mediterranean has shown itself to be a significant setting for exploring the interfaces of agriculture and rural development with migration studies.

People mobility carries important implications on both rims of the region, and both sides of the migratory process. In rural areas of origin, such as in parts of MENA, migration represents a key component of livelihood strategies for many rural households, as a way to expand, diversify or protect local livelihoods, as people seek opportunities to pursue better living conditions, diversify household resources and provide alternatives for employment and income. Research attests to the fact that in many rural areas remittances have overtaken agriculture as the main source of income and investment, and the exposure to different farming systems and agricultural techniques has represented a relevant development factor. In this way migration represents a considerable resilience factor for the livelihoods of rural communities and the development of areas of origin (Zucconi et al., 2018).

While emigration of rural youth is also a current issue in the European rims, the EU countryside seems to be capitalizing, to an extent, on current migratory dynamics, by tapping into migrant arrivals to repopulate rural areas subject to abandonment and to provide workforces for an agricultural sector which is of little interest to local populations (Ortiz-Miranda et al., 2013; Corrado et al., 2016). For the EU countryside, intense immigration has definitely represented a key factor of resilience, as it has enabled many farms, rural villages and agricultural enterprises to stay alive and productive throughout the difficult times dictated by the crisis (Kasimis, 2010; Colucci, Gallo, 2015; Nori, 2016). The limited recognition of these contributions of the immigrant workforce, the grey dynamics concerning contractual relationships and the particularly scant prospects for socio-economic upgrade undermines the ability of the incoming population to contribute to the sustainable development of agriculture and rural development in areas of destination (Corrado et al., 2016).

7 As attested by the well-known cases of El Ejido, 2000 in Spain, Rosarno, 2010 and Ragusa, 2015 in Italy, or Manolada, 2013 in Greece – to mention but a few.
Need for a Coherent Policy Framework

The production of food and the management of the natural resource base represent two basic pillars of every civilization at any time in history. Today though, agriculture does not seem to provide decent livelihoods in many parts of the world, including in the Mediterranean. Increasing rates of poverty, unemployment, marginalization and socio-economic vulnerability affecting rural communities push local youth to emigrate in search of alternative living and working conditions.

A sustainable rural world and agricultural sector need to be attractive to a young, skilled and motivated workforce, as a dynamic and productive countryside is critical to ensure food production, healthy ecosystems and territorial integration.

In spite of relevant public engagements in political as well as financial terms, rural areas and agricultural production systems remain marginalized. Rural out-migration and population decline trigger problems of demographic ageing, workforce availability and generational renewal in the countryside. From a regional perspective, this provides push and pull factors for ongoing population movements. A sustainable rural world and agricultural sector need to be attractive to a young, skilled and motivated workforce, as a dynamic and productive countryside is critical to ensure food production, healthy ecosystems and territorial integration. A main starting point for forging consistent strategies towards a more appropriate engagement in political and investment terms should consider an improved articulation of agricultural and rural development policies with those that pertain to other significant realms, such as trade, employment and, indeed, migration. This applies to reception and origin countries alike.

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On the Urgency of Combatting Stereotypes about Violent Extremism in Europe

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The terrorist attacks in Europe over the past few years have left traces; traces which the perpetrators of these attacks specifically and scrupulously intended to leave. Among them: crumbling societal cohesion, rampant Islamophobia, increased room for manoeuvre for populist movements and prejudices that are becoming consolidated in the public opinion. In this context, it is urgent to counter a number of stereotypes and recall certain fundamental tenets regarding violent extremism, obvious for some but unfortunately difficult to spread among public opinion. This is one of the aims of the Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors that the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) conducts every year: to make a greater number of people aware of the voice of experts engaged in one way or another in Euro-Mediterranean relations in order to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices. The eighth edition of the Euromed Survey, taken in 2017, was precisely dedicated to violent extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the results lend themselves to questioning certain Eurocentric reflexes.¹

European Union Member States Are Neither the Only Countries Hit nor the Most Deeply Affected by Violent Extremism

A number of European countries have been struck by terrorist attacks over the past few years. According to the Eurobarometer, for the first time, terrorism was perceived in Spring 2017 as the most important problem facing the EU. To the question: “What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?”; 44% of Europeans surveyed answered “terrorism.”²

Moved, at times blinded and misinformed by the media, Europeans have a tendency to view their territory as the main target of terrorism coming from elsewhere. However, we must recall that violent extremism strikes well beyond the EU borders. In the Euro-Mediterranean region, it even strikes the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries more. According to an American study,³ in 2017, 19,121 people were killed in terrorist attacks in the MENA region while 238 were killed in western Europe.

The results of the Euromed Survey allow us to re-situate debate to bring it into accurate proportion and recall that the EU is not, in fact, the main victim of violent extremism. As illustrated in Chart 17, survey participants only identified a single European country among the five they singled out as most likely to be exposed to violent extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean space in the forthcoming years.

Violent Extremism Is Not a Phenomenon Imported to Europe from the South Mediterranean Region

The corollary to the preceding idea is that violent extremism is too often perceived in Europe as a phenomenon imported from the southern Mediterranean region. Two remarks are in order to counter this idea, existing diffusely in European public opinion.

² Study carried out by TNS Opinion & Social at the request of the European Commission (Spring 2017), Standard Eurobarometer 87, QA5, available at the following URL, clicking on “Public Opinion in the European Union - Presentation”: http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2142
³ Global Terrorism Database, US National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, www.start.umd.edu/gtd/
First of all, it is worth remembering that violent extremism is also generated within the EU borders. The process of radicalization of the majority of the perpetrators of attacks in European countries over the past few years most often took place within the European countries themselves. According to a recent study, 73% of perpetrators of terrorist attacks in the West between 2014 and 2017 were citizens of the countries where the attack took place. Unfortunately, confusion between the origins of perpetrators of terrorist acts and their nationality is frequent. To some extent, the debates in France on the revocation of nationality illustrates the difficulty some people have in accepting that some of the perpetrators of terrorist acts could be French and could have been radicalized in France. By the same token, the absurd contests between countries consisting of stating that a greater number of ‘foreign fighters’ comes from the other country or accusing the other one of being responsible for a terrorist with dual nationality, are all signs demonstrating the absence of serious reflection on the matter of responsibilities.

Secondly, violent extremism also refers to the abuses and crimes committed in conflict zones, and in particular in Syria by Daesh recruits from all over the world, and particularly from European countries. According to a study by The Soufan Center, in October 2017, the total number of foreign fighters from western Europe was 5,778. The increasing tension in debates in certain countries on the return of foreign fighters (and in this case, not only in Europe, but also in countries such as Tunisia) has had the effect of obliterating the issue of the crimes committed by Europeans in other countries. Once again, the results of the Euromed Survey call for this dimension not to be neglected.

Europe Bears a Serious Responsibility in the Emergence of this Phenomenon

European countries should also acknowledge their own responsibilities and the mechanisms driving youth growing up in Europe to turn to violent extremism. This is what the Euromed Survey participants seem to be saying when they identify the governments of Western countries as the main actors responsible for the emergence of violent extremism, a result that should not be overlooked and that the respondents explain in reference to the consequences of certain military interventions, weapons exports by certain European countries to south and east Mediterranean countries or to some of their neighbours, and to rising populist and Islamophobic trends.

Relativizing the Preponderance of the Religious Factor in the Phenomenon of Violent Extremism

Despite fierce debate among researchers as to the role of religion in the process of radicalization, European public opinion has a tendency to associate, without a great deal of scruples, the phenomenon of violent extremism with a particular religion, and to assign the perpetrators of terrorist acts motivations of a religious order.

Euromed Survey respondents are inclined to believe that, at the root of the process leading to violent extremism, there is more a perception of discrimination, injustice or humiliation than a religious approach (Chart 18) and according to them, it is not primarily in religious communities that an individual is the most likely to become a violent extremist (Chart 19). These results thus tend to support the argument that ‘Islamism’ is not involved in the onset of the radicalization process but can become a dressing in later stages of radicalism. Motivations of a material or social order, however, must not be underestimated either as sources driving individuals to join the ranks of Daesh, eager for recognition and resources.

**CHART 18** Drivers of Violent Extremism (Euromed Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>EU Countries</th>
<th>Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the country of residence: political exclusion, discrimination, injustice or repression, Islamophobia</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak state capacity and failing security</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role and impact of global geopolitics, including perception of political exclusion, discrimination, injustice or repression of certain groups in other countries</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic exclusion and limited opportunities</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHART 19** The Breeding Grounds of Violent Extremism (Euromed Survey)

In which environments and contexts are recruiters more likely to successfully turn an individual into a violent extremist? Please choose three and rank them. (results show the first choice out of three)
Moreover, and although one admits that a certain type of violent extremism could be linked with ‘Islamist’ drift, we must be careful not to simplify violent extremism to only the latter cases. Violent extremism comes in multiple forms and can, for instance, be carried out by extreme right-wing fringe groups whose strength in certain European countries and in the United States is disturbing.

The Number of Victims of Violent Extremism Is Just the Tip of the Iceberg

The human toll of terrorist attacks in the Euro-Mediterranean area over the past few years is intolerable. Nonetheless, beyond the security dimension, violent extremism carries the seeds of more insidious threats to the very cohesion of our societies, and these threats are certainly grasped much less clearly by public opinion. Euromed Survey participants were not wrong when they indicated that one of the collateral effects of violent extremism is that it provides a tool for legitimation of authoritarian trends in some south Mediterranean countries, and for populist and nationalist trends in some north Mediterranean countries.

The Security Response Will Not Suffice

It can be inferred from all of the above that an exclusively security-oriented approach will not suffice to stem the phenomenon of violent extremism. On the contrary, tackling structural elements such as economic and social conditions that offer no future perspectives for young people, unresolved conflicts that feed resentment and chronic instability, or fostering good governance, democracy and human rights are all fronts that must be taken up to provide more effective responses for the long term (Chart 20).

As long as the factors identified in this article are not understood, cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean area in the struggle against violent extremism will continue to resemble a dialogue of the deaf where, in reality, no state seems ready to assume its responsibility, international conferences on violent extremism will continue to look like beauty contests, where each participant will continue to extoll the merits of measures implemented, and colossal sums will continue to be spent in vain on programmes intended to contribute to preventing or combatting violent extremism.
This year is the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The EU has been struggling with an existential crisis for more than a decade. Too many doubts lead us to focus on what we feel secure about: a golden age, some glorified past, a common world, the roots of who we are and what we would like our ancestors to inherit from us: our heritage. In times when a New Narrative for a European Renaissance has failed to emerge, the recourse to heritage both as a source of self-confidence as much as a source of trust in the future, is almost inevitable.

From the Mediterranean angle, three myths, according to Jean-François Daguzan, have vanished: the lost paradise described by Fernand Braudel, the Al-Andalus’ peaceful coexistence and the American neconservatives’ New Middle East.

This short article explores whether there is something left of what has been considered so far in regional policy frameworks as shared tangible and intangible heritage in the Mediterranean region: a history of flows and tensions as well as united, coexisting or fragmented communities composing mixed societal models, religious references and sources of dialogue. Beyond a review of existing and past technical initiatives and toolkits, and instead of relying on the notion of cultural citizenship that would minimize cultural differences, this article considers multi-dimensional creative partnerships as avenues towards the (re)composition of cultural commons around cultural heritage.

A Petrified Mediterranean Heritage?

Ironically, while science has never helped us so much to recognize that there is indeed a shared cultural heritage around the Mediterranean Sea, interconnectivity does not mean cultural convergence and mobility, technological progress does not mean mutual understanding and geographical proximity does not mean enhanced trust. The Mediterranean has been analyzed as a space and a sea that both unites and divides.

What remains from the idea of a shared Mediterranean culture is mostly related to ancient cultural heritage. Today’s regional dynamics are not very encouraging for the idea of a shared Mediterranean space: tensions around migration management have not diminished; conflict in Syria and instability in Libya undermine mutual understanding in the region.

The history of the twentieth century revolves around a common past made of conquests, joint battlefields, independence struggles and the Cold War, but not necessarily shared memories and heritage. Unlike the US in Saudi Arabia, the EU does not have its ‘best enemy’ in the Mediterranean. Instead, it has created the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), an institutional forum in which shared heritage is not really

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at the core. State diplomacy has maintained relations with regimes according to the ‘authoritarian stability’ principle (Védrine). The issue with this approach is that as a rule (and there are nuances in each country) it fuelled even more distrust in Arab societies’ perceptions of the EU and Europe (the case of Israel and Turkey are perhaps more specific).4

The region therefore seems to be ‘petrified’: it has become more and more challenging to give speeches emphasizing ‘common values’ while the space for democratic practices is shrinking.

Migration, as an historical phenomenon, has also been part of the region’s heritage for centuries. It has now been denied as such by the new narrative on the ‘root causes of migration’. Think tanks have hardly confronted this new policy line.

Interconnectivity does not mean cultural convergence and mobility, technological progress does not mean mutual understanding and geographical proximity does not mean enhanced trust. The Mediterranean has been analyzed as a space and a sea that both unites and divides.

Transformations in the Arab world indicate that instability is here to stay. Recent EUISS foresights for the region in Arab Futures are gloomy, implying that joint Mediterranean efforts to protect heritage will neither be a priority for all nor the result of an easily achieved shared vision.

Based on the assumption that the very idea of ‘the Mediterranean’ will be questioned (“La Méditerranée se retrouve encore une fois sans vision”) and needs to be refreshed, the prospects for heritage protection will also require thorough exchanges between experts, societies and policy makers.

Moreover, Technological transformations add to the current political challenges already facing regional heritage policies: the 4th industrial revolution (Digitalization, 3D reproduction, globalized and transnational cybernetworks) brings with it new questions (where do authenticity and ownership lie?), dilemmas (do we want to recreate destroyed heritage and for what purpose?) and opportunities (virtual safeguard) for the cultural heritage sector.

The realm of heritage policies in the Mediterranean is undergoing profound mutations: their scope has become wider and deeper. It now includes landscapes, gastronomy (the Mediterranean diet), and tourism strategies (territorial branding towards a variety of audiences from the Gulf, Asia or the US). It also has global or intercontinental ramifications (for instance the zalabia7 sweet pastry could be seen as shared heritage with parts of Asia). In this moving and opening environment, new tools and new skills will be needed for cultural heritage management adaptation. Is the Mediterranean framework fit for this purpose?

Cultural Heritage and the Reinvention of Shared Purposes

The scope of cultural heritage management is widening and it is expected that it contributes to sustainable development. In conflict settings, it has also become part of a fundamental struggle against violent and nihilist ideologies aiming at the complete destruction of civilizations’ remnants. In this new equation, variables have changed. Those living and working around the Mediterranean are adjusting to new assumptions, new methods, new purposes, and, sometimes, with new partners.

Mediterranean myths and grand visions do not make people dream anymore. Massacres and conflict in Syria challenge our humanity and our belief in the ex-

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6 Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry, for instance, is a journal publishing numerous articles on technological methods in cultural heritage management. www.maajournal.com/

7 alabia (Juwbli, with many variations in different languages) are deep-fried flour batter in (most frequently) circular shapes and then soaked in sugar syrup. (Various versions are described by Wikipedia articles)
istence of a common humanity. For those who live in peaceful settings, networks and groups seize all opportunities to protect and promote their heritage if it brings them immediate benefit. This is why the cultural tourism paradigm has remained paramount in Turkey, the Adriatic coast, southern France, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Israel. In crisis-prone territories, heritage is at risk but a far lesser priority for those struggling to survive. New threats have rebalanced attitudes towards cultural heritage. Although it is still deemed essential, heritage has become a luxury or the memory of a golden age. Where it has disappeared, it leaves a scar, a wound, a hole that life has to fill again with reinvented identities.  

In crisis-prone territories, heritage is at risk but a far lesser priority for those struggling to survive. New threats have rebalanced attitudes towards cultural heritage. Although it is still deemed essential, heritage has become a luxury or the memory of a golden age. 

As for those crossing the Mediterranean from further afield (East, West or Central Africa), they bring their often unknown and unseen heritage with them. The Mediterranean ‘cemetery’ and states’ bargains on migration management have also become part of our shared heritage. This situation will have an enduring effect on mutual perceptions. The rhetoric of the ‘root causes of migration’ (as if migration were both fundamentally negative as well as a problem to be solved by ‘Africa’s development’) and the image of ‘Fortress Europe’ are preventing the emergence of new Mediterranean imagined myths and remembrance. Investments in intercultural dialogue and youth exchanges, as useful as they are, will hardly compensate the damage made by hindering mobility. 

For heritage protection in the region to become meaningful again and not limited to regional archaeological cooperation programmes therefore requires new purposes. Many debates and strategies across the Mediterranean have key priorities in common, such as: youth, jobs, migration and interreligious relations. One approach to elaborate on those purposes is perhaps to search for new partnership models to develop and promote the specificities and richness of each group’s heritage. This approach, as simple as it looks, is a real challenge when violence, migration policies and undemocratic governance fuel, at best, frustration, and, more often, mistrust and hatred among young generations. 

Trust among people, if nurtured creatively by initiatives managed as closely as possible to communities, also generates self-confidence, entrepreneurship and a sense of belonging. Countries and international organizations around the Mediterranean will have to arrive on time at the ‘meeting they have with each other’ if they want to mix all the ingredients needed to reinvent a positive attitude towards each other through all forms of heritage. 

Belief and hope in new purposes might often emanate from urban areas, but not exclusively. Socio-economic gains obtained from the opening of public spaces in cities favour creative expression and give greater emphasis to heritage. This was tried during the 2011 Arab revolutions. Unless the region is at ease with itself, how can it expect to attract new partners to promote its rich cultural heritage? 

Beyond Resilience: Heritage Protection versus Violence 

What is the horizon then? How could the Mediterranean remain the same while everything is now upside down? Will new methods, new action make the difference?

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8 UNESCO. The Value of Heritage, video for the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage, UNESCO programme funded by the European Union. www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1_f-GqaHHo
Bloodshed, war and repression make it impossible today to make any promises about cultural heritage protection: the focus is on resilience across the board. It is about emergency protection and safeguarding. Crisis situations require legal paradigm shifts to prosecute those who have committed crimes against cultural heritage. Security systems have to adjust their capabilities to respond to new threats against cultural heritage. Lessons from Syria also show that aid money could partly go to communities to help them protect their heritage.

Although it is difficult to imagine creative partnerships that would be exempt from political interference, cultural clusters could still act as trust-building spaces and places for the reinvention of cultural heritage in museums, sites and resorts, in physical or virtual forms.

Looking at the next decade though, an upgraded EU cultural heritage protection agenda addressing conflict areas looks very much within reach. It is even in its interest. At a limited political cost, the EU could become a leader in heritage protection in conflict areas. It would benefit European heritage experts and would position Member States and the EU as the main enabler in the field of access to protected heritage.

Beyond conflict zones, there is also great potential for cultural heritage policies as part of the EU’s international cooperation. Heritage is one of the three pillars of the 2016 strategy for EU international cultural relations.

A new policy-making method has to be pursued by the EU, in line with its 2016 strategy on international cultural relations: the systematic co-design and composition of country-specific cultural relations strategies between EU institutions, Member States and Mediterranean partners.

Dialogue and exchanges on cultural relations strategies could include the composition of more explicit approaches to cultural branding (how and if respective societies, cultural groups and societies seek to promote themselves externally) and external perceptions management (whether or not they are equipped to do it). Designing cultural strategies will also clarify where new priorities lie and the kind of space the EU and its interlocutors in the region want to dedicate to ‘Mediterranean’ frameworks when it comes to making cultural relations flourish. Respective roles of states, local and global markets, as well as international partners, would also become clearer and pave the way for the launch of new creative partnerships and the (re)composition of some shared commons. Although it is difficult to imagine creative partnerships that would be exempt from political interference, cultural clusters could still act as trust-building spaces and places for the reinvention of cultural heritage in museums, sites and resorts, in physical or virtual forms.

New technologies in heritage protection are developing so fast that innovative public-private partnerships will rapidly emerge in the region. Structural transformations of the 4th Industrial Revolution will not only bring about technological innovation but also new social innovation methods that will impact on Mediterranean societies in a diverse fashion. The future of cultural heritage in the region will probably lead to increased diversity in societies’ and individuals’ experience. However, one shared need that is likely to remain – apart from sustainable peace – will be mobility. It is to be hoped that people’s mobility will find pragmatic innovative solutions to transform humanitarian crises and drama into previously unthinkable common visions of the future: tomorrow’s cultural heritage of its own kind.


Training of Imams and the Fight against Radicalization

Frank Peter
Assistant professor
Hamad Bin Khalifa University,
College of Islamic Studies, Doha

Public concern about the training of imams has been a shared feature of debates in many European countries for more than a decade now. While attempts to promote the establishment of European training facilities for imams date back to the 1980s in some countries, the theme did not become a common denominator of European debates until the 2000s. By the middle of that decade, the potential role of imams in processes of radicalization was a recurrent item in debates about Islam. This article will, first, briefly retrace how the training of imams was dealt with before concerns about radicalization emerged in the early 2000s. The concept of radicalization will, secondly, be examined more closely. What exactly does the term designate in policy discourse and do the omnipresent references to it allow us to conclude that it constitutes a common focus in policy-making? In a third step, I will examine the outcome of efforts undertaken in the past decade and identify structural obstacles to training.

Diversity

Before radicalization became a shared European concern and generated specific policy strategies – notably in the aftermath of the assassination of Theo van Gogh and the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London – the training of imams had already been on the public agenda, especially in relation to ‘integration’ policies, although only in a very small number of countries.

In the Netherlands, training for imams was first placed on the political agenda by the Waardenburg Commission (Werkgroep Waardenburg) in 1982. It was the first time that the new ‘ethnic minorities’ which had attracted the attention of the Dutch government since the late 1970s were considered from a religious perspective. One of the Commission’s recommendations was, in fact, to establish training options for imams in the Netherlands with state subsidies. The rationale given for this measure in the report prefigures much of the thinking which was to shape later debates in other European countries. Referring to the different context of the largely secularized (and traditionally Christian) Western societies in which Dutch Muslims were living, the report argued, the basic tasks of the imam had been redefined. Whereas the essential qualification of imams in Morocco or Turkey was knowledge of the Islamic tradition, the Dutch context required imams to answer questions facing Muslims there. Thus, a profound knowledge of Dutch society, language and norms were now essential skills for the imam. In light of this requirement, the training of imams in the Netherlands, along with a series of other measures, found approval.

In France, similar arguments have been made since the late 1980s, and indeed continue to be made to this day. From the late 1980s, the threat of ‘fundamentalist Islam’ led the government to strengthen cooperation with governments in North Africa and Turkey and to establish tight control of visa applications by imams, triggering the first debates about

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2 Welmoet BOENDER. Imam in Nederland. Opvattingen over zijn religieuze rol in de samenleving, Amsterdam, Bert Bakker, 2007.
training imams in France. As in the Dutch case (and later in all countries), imams were identified as leaders of the ‘Muslim community’ and seen as crucial actors in integration or segregation processes. (As we will see below, achieving the declared aims proved extremely difficult.) In other countries, governments focused attention on another group of actors, namely teachers of religious education in state schools. In Belgium, for example, Islam had already been recognized as a religion in 1974 and Islamic religious education was introduced in state schools the following year. From the late 1980s onwards, anxieties about foreign influence on Islamic religious education increased considerably. Against the background of an emerging policy of ‘integration,’ measures were taken during the 1990s to create training facilities in Belgium so as to reduce the dependency on foreign-trained teachers. In Austria, Islamic religious education had also been introduced at a comparatively early stage in 1982. Curricula content and teacher training were subject to close public scrutiny in the 2000s. In both countries, debates about training imams were of minor importance for a long time.

‘Radicalization’

The concern over radicalization and ‘home-grown terrorists’ which emerged in the early 2000s may appear, at first sight, to have been a unifying factor in this diverse landscape of western Europe. Indeed, in 2005, the EU adopted a strategy for ‘combating radicalization.’ Moreover, given the recurrent references to specific mosques, imams and preachers in accounts of radicalization, one might expect the dramatically heightened concern with radicalization processes – and, with their prevention or with deradicalization – to generate more interest in the role of imams and their training. In fact, policies on imams were affected in much more complex ways by the turn towards various forms of ‘combating radicalization.’ While this is not the place to survey developments in different European countries, two general remarks about the concept of radicalization are in order here.

The term ‘radicalization’ is regularly used in public debates, as if it functions as a general concept while in fact it is being used differently depending on the specific policy context.

First, it is important to reflect carefully upon the conceptualization of radicalism itself. The definition of the cluster of terms ‘radical,’ as has been pointed out, is very much contested and relates to a number of other equally contested terms, notably ‘extremist.’ For this purpose, it is worth mentioning that it is not certain that the notion of radicalization indicates a policy field with relatively unified objects and aims. In his critical review of the concept in 2010, Mark Sedgwick argued that the term ‘radicalization’ was a “source of confusion.” This is partly because the term is sometimes treated as self-evident, as if the distinction between ‘radical’ and ‘moderate’ does not need to be made explicit (which, more often than not, is incorrect). It also has to do with the fact that the term ‘radicalization’ is regularly used in public debates, as if it functions as a general concept – i.e. as if it can be applied identically in all policy fields – while in fact it is being used differently depending on the specific policy context. Thus, references to radical(ism) in the field of security, or in the field of integration, or for-

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eign policy, do not necessarily coincide in their meaning in any given country. Put differently, the aims pursued in these different institutional fields – whether by government institutions or other actors – are not necessarily identical nor do they cohere with each other. Obviously, the salience of Sedgwick’s observation will vary from one place to another. Here, it serves as an important general reminder that common references to the fight against ‘radicalization’ can imply different frames and may produce quite diverse actions.

While ideology is, today, arguably considered by many to be the main factor in radicalism, there is an increasing awareness that ideology does not translate easily into clearly defined, homogeneous organizations or spaces. The focus of more recent efforts to combat ‘radicalization’ or promote ‘disengagement’ is consequently much wider and goes far beyond mosque and community structures and actors.

A second remark more directly concerns the place of imams in state policies. There is a strong tendency in debates – and studies – about radicalization to conceive of such processes as being highly individualized. Implicit in this view is a relative downgrading not only of ‘politics’ (e.g., government policies as a potential causative factor for radicalization), but also of religious community structures including the function of the imam. This is not to say that community in its various forms is simply disregarded in strategies for combating ‘radicalization.’ Concern about Salafi groups is now, for example, widespread and other examples could be cited. However, in the light of the complex interplay of a multitude of factors flagged up by analyses of radicalization processes, it is difficult to simply consider mosque spaces or imams as key factors at play. In other words, while ideology is, today, arguably considered by many to be the main factor in radicalism, there is an increasing awareness that ideology does not translate easily into clearly defined, homogeneous organizations or spaces. The focus of more recent efforts to combat ‘radicalization’ or promote ‘disengagement’ is consequently much wider and goes far beyond mosque and community structures and actors.

**Differentiating Results**

The concern with radicalization has generated complex effects on how governments approach the issue of imams and their training. While more attention is certainly given to imams, new policy measures have not necessarily followed. Indeed, when considering the current situation and the developments of the past decade in the western European context, one observes, primarily, a lack of substantial achievements in the creation of imam training facilities. The obstacles standing in the way of national training for imams are more clearly recognizable today. These factors may be divided here into two groups. Some relate to the legal and political conditions for setting up training programmes. Does the State have a legal basis, for example, to contribute or intervene in programmes and funding? Which criteria does the government apply when identifying ‘acceptable’ Muslim partners in such ventures? Etc. Then there are factors determining the viability

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10 “The thought involved in non-violent radicalism may well be a threat to integration, but it is especially action that supports violence that is a security threat. The thought involved in non-violent radicalism, however, is also relevant to terrorists’ supportive milieu and to terrorists’ wider constituency, and so does require attention. It is not self-evident, however, that the agenda of the integration authorities determines the appropriate variety of attention.” (Sedgwick, 489)

11 See notably the discussion of this issue by Lene Kühle, who introduces the concept “cultic milieu” in order to analytically grasp the environment of radicalization processes. See Lene KÜHLE and Lasse LINDEKILDE. Radicalization among Young Muslims in Aarhus, Aarhus: The Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalisation & Department of Political Science, Aarhus University, 2010.

of training programmes on the academic market. These have to do with more durable structural features and it is partly for this reason that they deserve particular attention. On proper scrutiny, one finds that some of them pose major obstacles to the creation of national training programmes, quite independently of the visions and aims of the government. The case of the Netherlands, where three programmes for Muslim chaplains and Islamic theology were set up in universities with government support in 2005/6, is instructive. In 2013, two of them announced their closure. The lower than expected intake (in all three places) and a high drop-out rate sealed the fate of these programmes. The basic problems they faced can be observed today in many contexts. At the most general level, mention needs to be made of the relatively low degree of professionalization of the imam function, which limits the scope and impact of these training programmes from the outset. Another basic problem is the lower salary paid to imams in European mosque communities (the case of chaplains differs notably), which is starkly at odds with the considerable investments which have to be made by prospective imams; this further reduces the scope for potential applicants. Furthermore, Islamic study programmes in European universities – existing or planned – are, more often than not, recognized only as second best in comparison to programmes in the Islamic world. The fact that moves to create imam training programmes are often a more or less direct response to anxieties about the ‘integration’ of Muslims may also weaken the appeal of these initiatives; it diminishes their competitive position in relation to independent Islamic institutes for higher education in European countries.

The concern with radicalization has generated complex effects on how governments approach the issue of imams and their training. While more attention is certainly given to imams, new policy measures have not necessarily followed...
Appendices
The Lebanese electoral system uses ‘confessional distribution’: each religious community has an allocated number of deputies in the Parliament.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Confession</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
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<td>Sunni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shi’ite</td>
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<td>Alawite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Druze</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maronite</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greek Orthodox</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melkite Greek Catholic</td>
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<td>Armenian Orthodox</td>
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<td>Evangelical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Christian Minorities</td>
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The percentage of the most voted list is as follows:

- Less than 40%
- From 40% to 45%
- From 45% to 50%
- From 50% to 75%
- More than 75%

The IDI is a composite index that combines 11 indicators into one benchmark measure that can be used to monitor and compare developments in ICTs between countries and over time. The IDI is divided into three sub-indices: Access sub-index, Use sub-index, and Skills sub-index.

**Access sub-index** captures ICT readiness and includes five indicators: fixed-telephone subscriptions, mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions, international internet bandwidth per Internet user, households with a computer, and households with Internet access.

**Use sub-index** captures ICT intensity and includes three indicators (individuals using the Internet, fixed-broadband subscriptions, and mobile broadband subscriptions).

**Skills sub-index** seeks to capture capabilities or skills that are important for ICTs. It includes three proxy indicators (mean years of schooling, gross secondary enrolment, and gross tertiary enrolment).
MAP A.3 | Climate Change in the Mediterranean

Temperature Change (°C), Meteorological Year

- 0.5 - 0.8
- 1.0 - 1.3
- 1.5 - 2.0
- 0.8 - 1.0
- 1.3 - 1.5
- Data unavailable

Note: Temperature changes indicate observed mean surface temperature changes by country over the period 1961-2017 with annual updates, with respect to a baseline period (1951-1980). Data are based on the Global Surface Temperature Change data of the NASA-GISS. Last update: 2017.

Own production. Source: FAO.
Total Official Flows from European and Mediterranean Donors to Euro-Mediterranean Countries (in millions $)

Highest Bilateral Official Flows from European and Mediterranean Donors to Euro-Mediterranean Countries (in millions $)

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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>68</td>
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Own production. Source: OECD.
MAP A.5a | Forests in the Mediterranean

Forest Area (% of Total Land)
- More than 60%
- From 35% to 45%
- From 20% to 35%
- From 1% to 5%
- From 5% to 10%
- Less than 1%

Evolution of Forest Area (in ha)

Area Burned in Fires over 30Ha. (in Ha.) (2011-2016)

Number of Fires over 30Ha.

MAP A.5b | Forests in the Mediterranean

Forest Designated for Production (% of total forest areas)

- More than 75%
- From 60% to 75%
- From 45% to 60%
- From 30% to 45%
- Less than 15%
- Data unavailable

Wood Products Trade (in thousands $)

- From 60% to 75%
- From 30% to 45%
- Less than 15%
- 0%
- More than 75%
- Data unavailable

Forestry Production 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Items Measured in thousands m³</th>
<th>Main Producers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood fuel; 101,032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sawlogs and veneer logs; 45,446</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plywood, round and split; 39,615</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood chips, particles and residues; 38,662</td>
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<td>Wood baled packages; 25,780</td>
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<td>Sawnwood; 25,030</td>
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<table>
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<th>Products</th>
<th>Items Measured in thousands Tm</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recovered paper; 22,948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrapping and packaging paper and paperboard; 17,781</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovered fibres pulp; 13,823</td>
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<td>Wood charcoal and pellets; 7,281</td>
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<td>Wood pulp; 6,897</td>
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SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets:
1. End discrimination
2. Eliminate violence
3. Eliminate harmful practices
4. Recognize care and domestic work
5. Ensure participation and equal opportunities
6. Ensure reproductive health
A. Equal Rights to economic resources
B. Enhance use of Technology
C. Policies and legislation for gender equality

Appendices
Maps
IE
Med.
Mediterranean Yearbook
2018

MAP A.6 | Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender (Selected Indicators)

The Proportion of Seats held by Women in National Parliaments (2017)

Adolescent Fertility Rate (births per 1,000 women, ages 15-19), 2015

Proportion of Women aged 20-24 Years Who Were Married or in a Union Before Age 15 and before Age 18 (2009-14*)

The Proportion of Women in Managerial Positions (2015)

Proportion of Time Spent on Unpaid Domestic and Care Work by Gender (2009-15*)

Individuals Using the Internet, by Gender (%) (2016-2017)

Proportion of Employed Who Are Own-account Workers by Gender (2014-16*)

Proportion of Women and Girls aged 15-49 Subjected to Physical or Sexual Violence by a Current or Former Intimate Partner in the Previous 12 Months (2012-2014)

* Latest data available from this period. Own production. Source: UNSTAT; ITU and ILO
MAP A.7 | Gender and Tertiary Education

Percentage of Students in Tertiary Education Who Are Female (%) (2014-16*)

- More than 60%
- From 57.5% to 60%
- From 55% to 57.5%
- From 52.5% to 55%
- Data unavailable
- Less than 47.5%
- From 47.5% to 50%
- From 40% to 45%
- From 25% to 30%
- Less than 20%

Percentage of Graduates in Selected Programmes in Tertiary Education Who Are Female (%)

- More than 30%
- From 20% to 30%
- From 15% to 20%
- Less than 15%
- Data unavailable

* Latest data available from this period. Own production. Source: UNESCO
MAP A.10 | Economic Recovery and Jobs in European Countries

Notes: 1. A job is temporary if its end is determined by specific date, completion of a task or return of another employee. 2. Long-term unemployment rate refers to 12 months and more, people aged at least 15, without work for the next two weeks but available to start work and that are seeking work. 3. The percentage of people who cannot afford paying for one week annual holiday away from home, regardless if they want it. 4. Percentage of people that see themselves as having great difficulties in making ends meet, assessment based on a subjective non monetary indicator (values from 1 to 6).

Own production. Source: Eurostat
Container Port Throughput (thousands TEU), 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>TEU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valencia</td>
<td>5,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeciras / La Linea</td>
<td>4,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gioia Tauro</td>
<td>3,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piraeus</td>
<td>3,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Said</td>
<td>3,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsaxlokk</td>
<td>5,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanger</td>
<td>4,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambarli</td>
<td>3,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genoa</td>
<td>2,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>2,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Spezia</td>
<td>1,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashdod</td>
<td>1,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icel (Mersin)</td>
<td>1,406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haifa</td>
<td>1,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marseilles</td>
<td>1,263</td>
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Linear Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI), 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>LSCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>665</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>511</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>466</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>448</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>447</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Algeria</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Libya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Container port throughput measures the total n. of containers handled by the ports of a country, expressed in 20-foot equivalent units (TEU). LSCI indicates a country’s integration into global liner shipping networks. It is built on the: a. n. of ships; b. total container-carrying capacity of those ships; c. maximum vessel size; d. n. of services; e. n. of companies that deploy container ships on services from and to a country’s ports.

Number of Ships of the Merchant Fleet, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>2,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1,022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality of Port Infrastructure

It measures business executives’ perception of their country’s port facilities. Scores range from 1 (extremely underdeveloped) to 7 (efficient by international standards). Respondents in landlocked countries were asked how accessible port facilities are (1 = extremely inaccessable; 7 = extremely accessible).

MAP A.12 | Financial Integration

Financial Development (FD) Index, 2015

FD groups the Financial Institutions (FI) Index and the Financial Markets (FM) Index. FI and FM capture each of the three dimensions: depth, access and efficiency of financial institutions or financial markets.

Relative Contribution of Financial Institutions (FI) Index and Financial Markets (FM) Index to Financial Development Index

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) per 100,000 Adults, 2015-16

Account Ownership at a Financial Institution or with a Mobile-Money Service Provider (% of 15+), 2017

Own production. Source: WB & IMF
MAP A.13 Chinese Trade with Mediterranean Countries (2016)

Chinese Trade with Mediterranean Countries (in thousands dollars) 2016

Evolution of Chinese Trade with Mediterranean Countries (1995-2016)

- More than 20,000,000
- From 10,000,000 to 20,000,000
- From 5,000,000 to 10,000,000
- From 2,000,000 to 5,000,000
- From 1,000,000 to 2,000,000
- From 500,000 to 1,000,000
- From 250,000 to 500,000
- From 100,000 to 250,000
- From 20,000 to 50,000
- Less than 20,000

Own Production. Source: UNCTAD
MAP A.15 | Foreign Direct Investment in Mediterranean Countries

Inflows of Foreign Direct Investment in Percentage of Gross Domestic Product (2016).

- More than 20.0%
- From 7.5% to 10.0%
- From 5.0% to 7.5%
- From 2.5% to 5.0%
- From 1.5% to 2.5%
- Less than 1.5%


(Dollars at current prices in millions)

FDI: Inflows in Mediterranean Countries as % of World Total

Source: UNCTAD

Own production.
From 1 million to 500,000.
ES (Valencia; Sevilla; Zaragoza; Malaga) FR (Toulouse; Bordeaux; Nice-Cannes; Nantes; Toulon; Grenoble; Douai-Lens) IT (Bergamo; Palermo; Bologna; Firenze; Genova; Padova; Varese; Venezia; Bari; Verona; Serenego; Catania) HR (Zagreb) MK (Skopje) GRC (Thessaloniki) TR (Diyarbakir; Mersin; Kayseri; Eskişehir; Gabor; Denizli; Samsun; Sariyer; Kahramanmaras; Sakarya) SY (Hamah; Latakia; Raqqa) PE (Gaza) IL (Jerusalem; Be’er Sheva) PS (Gaza) JO (Zarqa; Irbid; Russeifa) EG (Port Said; Suez; Mansourah; El Mahalla El Kubra) LY (Bengazi; Misratah) TN (Sfax) DZ (Ouargla) MA (Marrakech; Agadir; Meknes; Oujda)

Mediterranean Countries with 2 Million Inhabitants or More in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2033</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>14,534</td>
<td>20,076</td>
<td>27,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>9,948</td>
<td>10,901</td>
<td>11,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>9,722</td>
<td>14,751</td>
<td>17,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>5,230</td>
<td>10,901</td>
<td>11,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>4,490</td>
<td>5,494</td>
<td>6,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>3,765</td>
<td>5,086</td>
<td>6,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>3,740</td>
<td>5,118</td>
<td>6,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankara</td>
<td>3,444</td>
<td>5,118</td>
<td>6,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casablanca</td>
<td>3,242</td>
<td>4,548</td>
<td>4,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>3,183</td>
<td>4,449</td>
<td>4,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>3,991</td>
<td>4,186</td>
<td>4,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel Aviv-Jaffa</td>
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<td>3,132</td>
<td>3,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon</td>
<td>2,714</td>
<td>2,937</td>
<td>3,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleppo</td>
<td>2,434</td>
<td>2,678</td>
<td>3,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İzmir</td>
<td>2,354</td>
<td>2,684</td>
<td>3,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>2,323</td>
<td>2,980</td>
<td>3,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algiers</td>
<td>2,224</td>
<td>3,202</td>
<td>3,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td>3,291</td>
<td>3,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>2,389</td>
<td>2,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>2,196</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>3,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antananir</td>
<td>2,060</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>2,982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>3,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homs</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>2,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>2,097</td>
<td>2,332</td>
<td>2,982</td>
</tr>
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</table>


- Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries
- Northern Mediterranean Countries
Deaths in the Mediterranean by Region of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>2,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East/South Asia</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horn of Africa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asylum Applicants in EU Member States in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Countries of Origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Routes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Routes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Routes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Countries</td>
<td>More than 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 5,000 to 20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1,000 to 5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAP A.17b | Migrant Mediterranean Routes

Recorded Migrant Deaths by World Regions and by Year

Death by Mediterranean Routes and by Year

Proportion of Death vs Arrivals by the Mediterranean in 2017

Migrant Arrivals in Europe Through Mediterranean by Year

Arrivals in 2017 in EU Mediterranean Countries

Monthly Arrivals to Italy by Sea: The Effects of the Italy-Libya Agreement

January 2017

In France, Benoît Hamon is elected as the socialist candidate for the presidency of the Republic. François Fillon, the candidate for the conservative party The Republicans (LR), comes under investigation for misuse of public funds. In Italy, the Constitutional Court vetoes two of the main electoral law reforms. Malta assumes the EU Presidency. Slovenia approves the possibility of closing its borders to guarantee national security. The Republika Srpska suspends contact with the High Representative of the International Community. In FYROM, Nikola Gruevski is unable to form a government. Tensions mount between Belgrade and Pristina and between Athens and Ankara. In Turkey, there is a Daesh terrorist attack in Istanbul, the purge sparked by the attempted coup in July 2016 continues and the Parliament approves the constitutional reform to transform Turkey’s government system into a presidential one. Indirect negotiations are held in Astana between the Syrian government and seven opposition groups and Russia proposes a draft constitution for Syria. In Jordan, several reformist leaders are arrested. In Egypt, new sentences are handed down to members of the Muslim Brotherhood and the High Administrative Court blocks the ruling to transfer the Islands of Tiran and Sana-fir to Saudi Arabia. In Libya, the eastern armed forces expel the Islamist militias from practically all of Benghazi. In Tunisia, there is unrest in Ben Gardane. Algeria announces a state of emergency on its borders. Morocco rejoins the African Union (AU).

Portugal

- On 7 January the founder of the Socialist Party and former Prime Minister Mário Soares dies.
- On 10 January Portugal presents a formal complaint to the EU over Spain’s decision to build a nuclear waste storage facility at the Almaraz Nuclear Plant, close to the Portuguese border.

Spain

- On 1 January around a thousand Sub-Saharan immigrants attempt to jump the Melilla border fence.

France

- On 1 January the new employment law comes into force which obliges companies to respect the right of their workers to disconnect from technology outside of working hours.
- On 29 January Benoît Hamon is elected as the candidate to dispute the presidency of the Republic for the Socialist Party (PS). 17 deputies from the more liberal wing of the PS announce that they will not support Hamon unless he moderates his programme, which they consider to be too close to the radical leftist of Jean-Luc Mélenchon.
- On 30 January François Fillon, the LR candidate to the presidency, and his wife Penelope, are interrogated by police as part of the investigation into the latter’s alleged fictitious employment, uncovered by the weekly newspaper Le Canard Enchaîné.

Italy

- On 6 January the European Commission urges Italy to accelerate the deportation of people without right to asylum faced with the increase in arrivals through the central Mediterranean, which reached 181,000 in 2016, almost 20% more than in 2015.
- On 13 January around 550 immigrants are rescued in the Strait of Sicily.
- On 25 January the Constitutional Court issues a ruling on the electoral law approved by parliament in May 2015, bringing into force the possibility of calling elections in 2017. However, the court rejected two of its main points: the possibility of a second round between the two most voted candidates if none win 40% in the first round, and the possibility of the candidates heading the lists to run in up to 10 constituencies.

Malta

- On 1 January Malta assumes the EU Presidency with the priorities of tackling the migration crisis, further developing the single market, strengthening security and improving social inclusion.

Slovenia

- On 26 January the Parliament approves modifications in the migration laws that will allow borders to be closed to guarantee national security.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 12 January the Republika Srpska suspends contact with the High Representative of the International Community Valentin Inzko for having compared the Bosnian Serb national holiday of 9 January with a Nazi celebration. The holiday goes ahead despite the Constitutional Court’s ban, describing it as discriminatory.
Serbia

- On 12 January Doctor without Borders (MSF) reports that it has already registered deaths from freezing among the 2,000 migrants trapped in Belgrade.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 4 January the former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj is arrested in the EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg by the French authorities acting on a Serbian arrest warrant for war crimes as commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK). On 6 January Kosovo announces a “revision” of its relations with Serbia. On 12 January Haradinaj is released on bail by a French court causing Belgrade to threaten France that it will not extradite anyone under a French request if Haradinaj is not extradited to Serbia.

- On 27 January the intelligence chief Agron Selimaj resigns citing personal reasons, amid rising tensions with Belgrade over a train travelling from Serbia that was stopped from crossing the border into Kosovo on 14 January because it was painted with the colours of Serbia’s national flag and the slogan “Kosovo is Serbia.”

- On 11 January a grenade is thrown at a government building in Mitrovica which was recently opened by the Kosovo authorities as part of efforts to consolidate their power over the Kosovo Serb territories.

- On 24 January the Prime Minister Isa Mustafa appoints the commission charged with officially mapping the Kosovo territory for the first time since its self-proclaimed independence and despite the Parliament not yet ratifying the border agreement with Montenegro.

Albania

- On 17 January Bleta Shqiptare (Albanian Bee) is launched, a citizen movement founded by Shenasi Rama, Grid Roj and Valentina Karanxha, with a view to forming a party and seeking alternatives to the two main parties, the Socialist Party (PS) and the Democratic Party (PDS). This is the third movement to appear before the legislative elections in June, along with Libra, a centre-left party founded in November 2016 by former PS members Ben Blushi and Mimoza Hafizi; and the centrist Sfida (Challenge), created in January 2017 by Gjergj Bожахi, former head of the country’s energy company.

Greece

- On 16 January the Court of Auditors approves the sale of the Greek railway operator Trainose to the Italian group Ferrovie dello Stato for 5.8 billion euros.

- On 28 January the Supreme Court rules against an extradition request from Turkey for eight soldiers who fled to Greece after the attempted coup in 2016, where they are under arrest for illegal entry and are awaiting a decision from Athens regarding their asylum request. Turkey threatens to revise its migration agreement with the EU if the soldiers are not returned.

- On 31 January the Moria refugee camp in Lesbos is partially dismantled following the confirmation that a third migrant has died due to the facility’s poor conditions.

Turkey

- On 1 January at least 39 people are killed by gunfire in a Daesh attack at the Reina nightclub in Istanbul.

- On 3 January the government decides to extend the state of emergency by three months, declared after the attempted coup in 2016.

- On 5 January the provincial government of Diyarbakir imposes a curfew in 16 villages, due to clashes between the army and the terrorist organization the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK).

- On 6 January the Gendarmerie publishes a report that points to links between the Hizmet (Service) movement of Fethullah Gülen with the PKK and Daesh during the attempted coup in 2016.

- On 8 January the leader of the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party Serdar Yesilmak is arrested, accused of having links with the PKK.

- On 17 January after a tense week of parliamentary clashes, the constitutional reform to transform Turkey into a presidential state is approved in its totality.

- On 18 January Istanbul’s public prosecutor orders the arrest of 243 members of the army in relation with the attempted coup in 2016.

- On 28 January some 40 Turkish soldiers serving in NATO bases in Germany request political asylum faced with the purge in Turkey following the failed coup attempt in 2016.

Cyprus

- On 12 January the year’s first meeting of reunification talks concludes without an agreement despite the advances made in 2016. The presence of 30,000 Turkish troops in the north of the island, which Turkey says it will not withdraw is one of the key sticking points.

Syria

- On 1 January the regime’s air force resumes its offensive on the rebel-controlled Barada valley. The offensive continues with further advances for the regime throughout January.

- On 6 January Turkey reports that 32 Daesh members have been killed in al-Bab, in 119 attacks. More deaths are reported during the rest of the month as a result of the Turkish offensive.

- On 6 January Russia withdraws part of its troops in Syria after the regime’s recent retaking of Aleppo.

- On 6 January the Fateh al-Sham Front reports the death of a member of one of its advisers, Younes Shaib, in an attack by the US-led coalition.

- On 20 January images are released showing Daesh’s destruction of part of the Roman Theatre and the Tetrapylon of Palmyra.

- On 22 January the army ousts Daesh from four villages near to al-Bab.

- On 23 - 24 January indirect negotiations are held in Astana, under the auspices of Russia, Turkey and Iran, between
the Syrian government and seven opposition groups to consolidate the ceasefire of 30 December 2016. The regime’s priorities are to set the terms for the end of hostilities, separate the ‘terrorists’ from the rebel groups participating in the meeting and agree on a common approach for fighting Daesh and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham together. The head of the rebel delegation Mohammed Al-loush doubts Moscow’s mediating role in the talks considering it an “occupying” country.

- On 24 January Russia presents the Syrian rebels with a draft constitution for Syria.

**Lebanon**

- On 4 January the President Michel Aoun accuses Israel’s Mossad of the murder of Lebanese businessman Amine Aoun.

**Jordan**

- On 12 January the General Intelligence Directorate arrests the former government advisor Husam al-Abdallah, former general Mohamad al-Otoom, the colonel and former deputy Wasi Rawashdeh and brigadier-general Omar Os-oofi after a meeting held the same day and attended by the four men to discuss ways to promote reform and transparency in the country.

**Egypt**

- On 3 January 148 members of the Muslim Brotherhood are given life sentences for participating in the violence in Matai in Minya, after the dispersal of the Islamist sit-ins in Cairo in August 2013.
- On 16 January the Supreme Administrative Court blocks the ruling to transfer the islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia, agreed with Riyadh in April 2016 and approved in December 2016 by the government.

**Libya**

- On 2 January the commander of the National Libyan Army Khalifa Haftar says he controls up to 80% of Libyan territory and affirms that he will not enter into dialogue with the Presidential Council (Government of National Accord) until the terrorist presence is eradicated throughout Libya.
- On 12 January armed men loyal to the former Prime Minister of the General National Congress -the previous Libyan Islamist government-, Khalifa Ghweil, who does not recognize the Presidential Council, are unsuccessful in their attempts to take control of various ministerial offices in Tripoli.
- On 13 January Khalifa Haftar’s forces take control of the Abu Smeib district, in Benghazi, after several days of fighting with Islamist militias based in the area since 2014.

**Tunisia**

- On 10 January the authorities dismantle a Takfiri terrorist cell in Monastir.
- On 11 - 12 January clashes break out in Ben Guerdane over the lack of socioeconomic improvements and customs regulations at the Ras Ajdir border crossing with Libya.
- On 31 January the Parliament approves the right to vote in municipal elections and referendums for members of the army and security forces.

**Algeria**

- On 11 January two suspected terrorists are killed in an operation in Buduja, Skikda. A further two people are arrested in Boumerdes. On 19 January, two more people are arrested in Azaza, Tizi Ouzou.
- On 18 January the blogger Merzoug Touati is arrested in Bejaia for “cooperating with a foreign power” when he posted a video in which he interviews an Israeli official who says there is an unofficial Israeli embassy in operation in Algiers.
- On 24 January the army is put on high alert on the Libyan and Malian borders and steps up its presence on the Tunisian border.

**Morocco**

- On 5 January Morocco shuts down the schools of the Mohamad al-Fath group, suspected of having links with Fethullah Gülen’s organization, accused by Turkey of being behind the coup attempt in 2016.
- On 16 January the deputy secretary general of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), Habib el-Malki, is elected president of the House of Representatives (lower chamber).
- On 18 January Mohammed VI appoints the general Abdel Fattah Warraq as second in command of the army.
- On 30 January Morocco rejoins the AU, the organization it left in 1984 in protest against the recognition by its forerunner, the Organization of African Union, of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

**Mauritania**

- On 31 January the Supreme Court orders the retrial of the blogger Mohammed Ould Mkhaitir, jailed on 2 January and sentenced death by the first instance court for apostasy.

**EU**

- On 18 January the former European commissioner and MEP of the European People’s party (EPP) Antonio Tajani assumes the presidency of the European Parliament to replace the German President Martin Schulz.
- On 28 January Lisbon hosts the 2nd summit for southern EU countries -Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Greece and Cyprus- to join forces in the demands of Mediterranean Europe and form a common front in defence of the European project, currently facing a surge in ultra-nationalism and populism.

**February 2017**

*In Spain, the People’s Party and Podemos hold their respective party conferences. Unrest and protests break out in Paris. In Italy, Matteo Renzi resigns as secretary of the Democratic Party. Russia denies orchestrating a coup attempt in Montenegro. In Kosovo, government appointments are made. In FYROM, Zoran Zaev is elected by the social democrats to form a government. In Albania, the opposition protests against the government’s politics. Greece and its international lenders come closer to reaching a deal. In Turkey, the arrests...*
continue of people accused of having links with Daesh, the PKK or the attempted coup in 2016. Geneva hosts a fourth conference on Syria. In Jordan, anti-government demonstrations break out. In Egypt, Copts flee Sinai. The US vetoes the appointment of the new UN envoy to Libya. Morocco threatens to cut its ties with the EU.

Spain

- On 2 February Jose Antonio Alonso, the former Interior and Defence Minister of the socialist government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero dies.
- On 10 February Francisco Correa, Pablo Crespo and Alvaro Perez are sentenced to 13 years’ imprisonment in the Gürtel corruption case. The men are considered as the plot’s leaders in a case which has so far seen 11 people sentenced to prison. With ramifications in various autonomous communities, the scandal has mainly affected former members of the People’s Party (PP, conservative).
- On 12 February the left-wing party Podemos holds its 2nd party congress in which after months of debate, the secretary general Pablo Iglesias wins against the party’s number two Íñigo Errejón, revalidating his position and holding onto the party’s leadership.
- On 12 February the former Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy is reelected with 95.65% of the votes as president of the PP in the party’s 18th congress.
- On 17 and 20 February 700 immigrants enter Ceuta after jumping the fence along the border with Morocco.
- On 18 February Princess Cristina de Borbon is found not guilty of tax fraud in the Noos corruption scandal, although she is ordered to pay a fine of 265,000 euros. Her husband, Inaki Urdangarin, and his partner, are sentenced to six and eight years in prison respectively.

France

- On 1 February the European Parliament decided to dock part of the MEP’s salary of the leader of the ultra-right-wing National Front (FN) Marine Le Pen, until it recoups the 340,000 euros demanded for fraudulent use of European funds.
- On 5 February Marine Le Pen issues a 144-point plan for her candidacy for the presidency which include a referendum on Frexit, “France’s departure from the EU”, leaving NATO and a break with global liberalism, multiculturalism and immigration.
- On 7 February the former President Nicolas Sarkozy is ordered to stand trial in the investigation into the expenses of the 2012 electoral campaign and the false invoices issued by the company Bygmalion.
- On 7 February 17 arrests are made on the outskirts of Paris in the fourth day of unrest over the accusations against the police for raping a young man of African origin with a baton during a police check on 2 February. The unrest continues throughout the month and demonstrations of support for the man are staged on 19 February throughout France.

Italy

- On 12 February the government appeals against a law approved in December 2016 by the regional council (Parliament) of Veneto, under which the region declared itself to be a “national minority” to achieve greater autonomy.
- On 19 February the former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi resigns as secretary of the Democratic Party (PD, centre-left), which is facing a split due to disagreements between centrists and leftists. Renzi also announces that he will run as a candidate again to lead the party.

Malta

- On 3 February the government announces the possibility not to declare gender on ID cards and passports.

Slovenia

- On 23 February the Parliament approves a law giving same-sex couples the same rights as heterosexuals, although not allowing them to adopt children.

Croatia

- On 12 February two people are injured in a homophobic attack on a club in Zagreb. The LGBT associations accuse the government of failing to act in the face of a rise in this kind of violence.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 19 February Stolac holds municipal elections. Stjepan Boskovic, from the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ, conservative) wins with 49% of the votes against the Bosniak coalition Initiative for Stolac. The elections are a repetition of those held on 2 October 2016, during which clashes broke out over Bosnian claims of irregularities.
- On 28 February the month ends with the European accession process on halt over the lack of consensus among the country’s entities in responding to the questionnaire sent out in December by the EU to assess the country’s membership application.

Montenegro

- On 20 February Russia denies accusations made by the Montenegrin public prosecutor that the country orchestrated an attempted coup on 16 October 2016, as well as the possible assassination of the Prime Minister Milo Dujkanovic, to stop Montenegro joining NATO.

Serbia

- On 7 February the ombudsman Sasa Jankovic resigns and presents his candidacy for the presidential elections in April.
- On 10 February the Serbian judiciary refuses to extradite the Serb citizens Predrag Bogicevic and Nemanja Ristic, demanded by Montenegro to stand trial for their alleged involvement in a plot to overthrow the Montenegrin government.
- On 15 February thousands of demonstrators from the movement Ne Davimo Beograd (Don’t drown Belgrade) call for the resignation of the mayor of the capital Sinisa Mali, over the urban development project Waterfront, financed by the United Arab Emirates.
- On 27 February Serbia successfully closes the chapter on Education and Culture in its European accession negotiations.
Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 1 February there is a new round of negotiations to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo. No advances are made due to Pristina’s difficulty to form the Association of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo and Metohija, which should give autonomy to the three Serb-majority municipalities, faced with fierce opposition from the Albanian nationalist party Vetevendosje (Self-Determination).
- On 7 February the EU approves the appointment of the 19 judges that will comprise the new Special Court for Kosovo, based in The Hague and charged with trying crimes of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), under the direction of the Bulgarian lawyer Ekaterina Trendafilova.
- On 8 February Ridvan Haqifi, the former imam of Gjilane is killed in Syria, where he was found fighting for Daesh.
- On 8 February Driton Gashi is appointed director of the intelligence agency after, on 3 February, the public prosecutor withdraws an accusation against him for abuse of office when he was the general secretary at the Interior Ministry.
- On 13 February the Prime Minister Hashim Thaci initiates consultations to establish the new Truth and Reconciliation Commission to foster integration between Kosovan Albanians and Kosovo Serbs and put an end to the after-shocks of the Kosovo conflict.
- On 14 February Kosovan’s ambassador to Slovenia Mimoza Ahmetaj is appointed Minister of European Integration.
- On 27 February the public prosecutor brings charges against the imam of Pristina’s main imam Sheikhet Krasniqi for terrorist activity.
- On 27 February Bangladesh recognizes Kosovo’s independence.

FYROM

- On 25 February the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) chooses Zoran Zaev as its candidate to form a government following the unfruitful attempts of VMRO-DPMNE, winner of the December 2016 elections and whose supporters protest on 27 February against Zaev’s intention to govern in coalition with three Albanian Macedonian parties in exchange for upgrading Albanians’ status in the country.

Albania

- On 18 February the Democratic Party (PDS, centre-right) leads an anti-government demonstration against high unemployment rates, the lack of socio-economic improvements and failure to take action against organized crime.

Greece

- On 1 February Greece reports at least 138 incursions by Turkish military aircraft in its airspace.
- On 20 February the eurozone’s Finance Ministry celebrates the convergence of positions between Greece and its creditors to unblock the third economic adjustment programme.

Turkey

- On 5 February around 450 people are arrested in a large-scale raid against Daesh.
- On 21 February the Parliament expels the deputy of the pro-Kurdish HDP Figen Yuksekdag, who, together with the other party co-leader, Selahattin Demirtas, has been under arrest since November 2016 for spreading “terrorist propaganda.”
- On 27 February the Turkish-German journalist Deniz Yücel is remanded in custody accused of spreading terrorist propaganda.
- On 27 February the Interior Ministry reports the death of at least 18 PKK terrorists between 20 and 27 February.

Cyprus

- On 10 February the Parliament votes in favour of introducing the commemoration of the 1950 referendum into schools in which 96% of Greek Cypriot participants voted in favour of Enosis (union with Greece), in a decision that the Prime Minister of northern Cyprus Huseyin Ozgurgun describes as a threat to reunification.

Syria

- On 7 February Amnesty International condemns the Syrian government’s campaign of extrajudicial executions by hanging in the Saydnaya prison, where at least 13,000 people have died.
- On 7 February at least 15 people are killed in Idlib, in one of the army’s most intense attacks in months.
- On 12 February Turkey announces the entry of its troops into the centre of al-Bab, as part of Operation Euphrates Shield.
- On 17 February the second round of negotiations fails in Astana between the Syrian regime and the opposition to consolidate the ceasefire in Syria. The talks do lead to a mechanism for exchanging hostages.
- On 23 February new peace negotiations begin in Geneva between the opposition and the regime, brokered by the UN. Geneva IV is based on Resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council, which foresees an “inclusive and non-sectarian” government, a new constitution and the holding of elections.
- On 24 February two Daesh attacks kill 61 people at a checkpoint of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in Susyan.
- On 26 February Abu al-Jair al-Masri, al-Qaeda’s number two and Osama Bin Laden’s son-in-law is killed in a US airstrike in Idlib.

Lebanon

- On 7 February security forces thwart a Daesh terrorist attack in Beirut.
- On 20 February Lebanon asks the international community for 8.445 billion euros to alleviate the strain of hosting so many Syrian refugees.

Jordan

- On 18 February demonstrations in several cities call for the resignation of the Prime Minister Hani Mulki over the tax hikes on food included in the budget unveiled on 23 January 2017.

Egypt

- On 9 February the authorities shut down the Cairo offices of the NGO El Nadeem Centre, which offers psychological support to victims of violence in Egyptian jails.
- On 16 February the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi designates five new gov-
errors, which include Nadia Ahmed Abdou Saleh - the first woman to occupy such a post - in Beheira.
- On 20 February the Supreme Court upholds the death sentences handed down to 10 men charged with the deaths at the Port Said Football Stadium in 2012.

Libya
- On 3 February Russia announces a visit to Moscow from the Prime Minister of the Presidential Council (Government of National Accord), Fayez al-Sarraj, in an effort to put an end to the division in Libya. The commander of Libya’s Armed Forces Khalifa Haftar already visited the Russian capital in November 2016 and in December a delegation of deputies from Tobruk did the same.
- On 8 February the Tobruk Parliament declares that the deal reached on 2 February between the Presidential Council and Italy to fight against irregular immigration is not valid.
- On 10 February the US vetoes the appointment of the former Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad as the UN envoy to Libya.
- On 15 February Fayez al-Sarraj, and Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, head of the armed forces loyal to the Tobruk Parliament, meet in Cairo to negotiate the end of the division between the two parallel powers directly.
- On 16 February NATO announces the Presidential Council’s request for help form the Atlantic Alliance in defence and security.
- On 21 February the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) consider that the trial against Saif al-Islam Gaddafi and a further 36 senior officials from the Muamar al-Gaddafi regime did meet international standards for a fair trial.

Tunisia
- On 9 February the former dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and his wife Leila Trabelsi are sentenced in absentia to 10 years’ imprisonment for corruption. On 24 February Ben Ali is sentenced to a further eight years in prison for a property corruption case for which his son-in-law, Sakher el-Materi –exiled in the Seychelles-, is sentenced to six years’ imprisonment.
- On 11 February a terrorist cell formed by six members with links to Daesh is dismantled in Monastir.

Algeria
- On 7 February the activist Kamel Eddine Fekhar enters his 36th day of hunger strike in protest against his imprisonment 18 months ago, accused of undermining state security.

Morocco
- On 5 February there is new unrest in Alhucemas following protests condemning police abuse, part of a protest movement which began in October 2016 with the death of the fish seller Mouhchine Fikri.
- On 6 February Morocco warns that it will suspend economic cooperation with the EU after the European Court of Justice ruled in December 2016 that the agricultural and fishing agreements between the EU and Morocco are not applicable to the Western Sahara.
- On 24 February Morocco requests membership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

EU
- On 3 February the EU heads of state and government gathered in Malta approve 10 immediate measures for collaborating with the southern members in the area of migration.

March 2017
In France, there is a terrorist attack at the Paris-Orly Airport, the Interior Minister resigns and new information emerges which affects the chances of several presidential candidates. In Bosnia the Deputy Defence Minister is sacked. Anti-government protests continue in Montenegro and Albania. Kosovo’s President submits a draft law to create its own regular army. Tensions rise in FYROM over the formation of a coalition government. Turkey enters a diplomatic crisis with several European states. In Syria, the offensive begins on Raqqa. In Lebanon, there are anti-government protests. Jordan hosts the Arab League Summit. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak is acquitted. In Libya, there is fighting for the control of key oil facilities. In Tunisia, Khalil Ghariani declines his appointment as minister. In Morocco, Saad Eddine el-Othmani is appointed Prime Minister.

Portugal
- On 24 March it is reported that Portugal ended 2016 with a budget deficit of 3.807 billion euros -2.1% of the GDP-the lowest since 1974.

Spain
- On 13 March the High Court of Justice of Catalonia (TSJC) bans the former Catalan President Artur Mas and two of his ministers from holding public office for two years for organizing the independence referendum in November 2014, despite this being prohibited by the Constitutional Court.

France
- On 6 March Alain Juppe, mayor of Bordeaux, confirms that he will not be a presidential candidate for LR, believing he does not embody the renovation that the French people are demanding. In contrast, François Fillon faces pressure from his own party, where there are resignations over his running for the presidency, which is supported by a rally in Paris.
- On 7 March the weekly Le Canard Enchaîné reveals that François Fillon received an undeclared loan of 50,000 euros from businessman Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière. On 14 March Fillon is charged for the misuse of public funds and the fictitious employment of his wife as a parliamentary assistant. Together with Fillon, a further two candidates to the presidency, the leader of the Republic on the Move (LREM, social liberal), Emmanuel Macron, and the leader of the far-right National Front Marine Le Pen, are also involved in court investigations for alleged financial crimes.
- On 18 March a man is shot down by police in the Paris-Orly Airport after he opens fire on soldiers in the name of Allah.
• On 21 March the Interior Minister Bruno Le Roux resigns after being accused of offering his teenage children jobs as “parliamentary assistants.”
• On 27 March a demonstration staged by the Chinese community in Paris over the death of a man of Chinese origin at the hands of the police ends in violent unrest.
• On 27 March a general strike in Guiana demands that Paris make improvements in security and public services and denounces the high costs of living.

Italy
• On 9 March the Parliament approves an anti-poverty programme faced with the growing number of citizens affected by the economic slowdown and unemployment.
• On 23 March 80% of taxi drivers support a national strike demanding the regulation of ride-sharing transport services like Uber.
• On 30 March four Kosovo citizens are arrested in Venice accused of planning a terrorist attack on the Rialto Bridge.
• On 31 March the International Organization for Migration reports that the mass rescues in March brings the total number of rescues so far this year to 23,125, with 655 people dying in the attempts.

Malta
• On 28 March Tanya Borg Cardona, chairwoman of the Broadcasting Authority, resigns amid protests from employees at the body accusing her of “bullying tactics.”

Bosnia and Herzegovina
• On 9 March the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) rejects the request filed by the lawyer Sakib Softic to reverse the 2007 ruling which cleared Serbia of genocide in the Yugoslav Wars, as the appeal has not been made by the competent Bosnian authorities.
• On 16 March the European Commission encourages the creation of a common market in the Western Balkans during the regional summit in Sarajevo.
• On 22 March Bosnia reaches an agreement with Russia for the latter to pay 125.2 million dollars to clear the outstanding debt that the USSR owed Yugoslavia.
• On 23 March the Parliament sacks the Deputy Defence Minister Sead Jusic for allowing the presence of the Bosnian army at the anniversary of the establishment of the Republika Srpska, despite its prohibition by the Constitutional Court.

Montenegro
• On 12 March amid opposition protests, Niksic holds municipal elections with just two candidates: the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and Social Democratic Party (SDP), because of the opposition boycott against the national Parliament’s decision -also boycotted by the opposition- to lift the parliamentary immunity of the deputies Andrija Mandic and Milan Knezevic from the Democratic Front (DF, right-wing), accused of planning a coup in October 2016.
• On 21 March after months of disputes, Andrijana Kadija is appointed director of the Radio and Television of Montenegro (RTCG) to replace Radojka Rutovic, whose replacement was one of the opposition’s conditions for holding early elections in October 2016.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244
• On 7 March the President Hashim Thaçi submits a draft law to the Parliament to transform Kosovo’s security forces into a regular army.
• On 13 March the former leader of the Yugoslav Communist Youth and League of Communists of Kosovo Azem Vllasi is shot and wounded in Pristina by a former member of the UÇK.

FYROM
• On 2 March the President Gjorge Ivanov rejects the offer of the social democrat leader Zoran Zaev to form a coalition government with the Albanian nationalists. Albania and Kosovo criticize the presidential decision while tensions rise among the gatherings of supporters of VMRO-DPMNE and Albanian Macedonians and Zaev’s followers.

Albania
• On 12 March the Prime Minister Edi Rama announces a cabinet shuffle coinciding with the protests led by the opposition Democratic Party (PD, conservative) whose leader, Lulzim Basha, calls for the formation of a caretaker government until the elections on 18 June and accuses the government of fraud in the last elections and of colluding with growers and traffickers of cannabis in Albania.

Greece
• On 7 March the ombudsman Andreas Pottakis presents his annual report to the Parliament, which underlines the worrying increase in the number of people affected by the economic crisis.

Turkey
• On 2 March the Prime Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu summons the German ambassador following Berlin’s decision to ban a Turkish minister from holding a rally as part of the campaign for the referendum on Turkey’s constitutional reform. Tensions also rise for the same reason in Austria; the Netherlands, whose security forces stop a rally from taking place in Rotterdam; Denmark, whose Prime Minister declares that Turkish democracy is “under great pressure”; Norway, which grants asylum to five former Turkish military officers involved in the attempted coup in 2016; and Switzerland, where a demonstration is held in Bern against the Turkish President. On 15 March Cavusoglu threatens the EU that he will cancel the migrant readmission agreement.
• On 27 March a report by the opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP, social democratic) sets the number of university teachers dismissed by the government in relation to the attempted coup in 2016 at 4,800.

Cyprus
• On 1 March the Criminal Court in Nicosia sentences the former deputy att-
Syria

• On 3 March the army once again takes control of Palmyra from Daesh.
• On 3 March at least five fighters are killed in fighting between the Kurdish peshmerga and the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS), linked with the PKK in Hasakah, amid tensions between the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS), supported by Iraqi Kurdistan and the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the main Kurdish party in Syria.
• On 11 March Tahrir al-Sham claims responsibility for twin bombings in Damascus in which at least 74 Shia pilgrims are killed.
• On 15 March the third round of negotiations begin in Astana on the cease-fire in Syria without making any significant progress.
• On 15 March twin bombings carried out by Tahrir al-Sham, a coalition led by Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, on the Palace of Justice and a restaurant in al-Ruba, in Damascus, leave more than 40 people dead.
• On 19 March fighting breaks out in Damascus after an assault led by Jabhat Fateh al-Sham on government offices.
• On 20 March the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) take control of Karama from Daesh.
• On 20 March at least 33 people are killed in an airstrike on a school sheltering displaced people in al-Mansoura, Raqqa, and which the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights attributes to the international coalition.
• On 23 March the fifth round of UN-mediated peace talks on Syria begin in Geneva, which come to a close without any relevant advances.
• On 27 March the SDF announces that Raqqa will form part of its autonomous territory. The city is still surrounded by the SDF, which joins with the Kurdish PYD, which hopes to take Raqqa before the regime forces or Turkish-supported rebels arrive.

Lebanon

• On 19 March thousands of people demonstrate in Beirut against the mismanagement, corruption and tax hikes.

Jordan

• On 20 March citing the lack of a bilateral extradition treaty, the Supreme Court of Cassation rejects the US request to extradite Ahlam al-Tamimi, a Jordanian woman involved in a terrorist attack in Jerusalem in 2001, which left 15 dead.

Egypt

• On 2 March the Court of Cassation clears the former President Hosni Mubarak of the death of protesters during the Egyptian Revolution.
• On 23 March the army reports that 10 soldiers have been killed in fighting with jihadists in Sinai.
• On 25 March the former head of the Press Syndicate Yehia Kalash is sentenced to a year in prison for harbouring two journalists wanted by the police in May 2016.
• On 26 March 56 people are sentenced to between seven and 10 years in prison related to the shipwreck of a boat carrying migrants in which at least 202 people died in September 2016.

Libya

• On 14 March Libya’s eastern forces commanded by Khalifa Haftar take back control of the oil facilities of Sirte and Ras Lanuf, captured on 2 March by the Islamist Benghazi Defence Brigades.
• On 15 March the eastern Libyan government announces that it has reached an agreement with Russia for military assistance.

Tunisia

• On 2 March Khalil Ghariani turns down his appointment as Tunisia’s Public Service Minister amid “the political and social tensions” arising after his election to replace Abid Briki, member of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT).
• On 3 March the former President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, exiled in Saudi Arabia, is sentenced to a further six years in prison, this time for the misuse of social funds raised in 2006 at two Mariah Carey concerts.
• On 29 March the former Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa announces the launch of his new party al-Badil Ettounsi (Tunisian Alternative).
• On 9 March the Polish President of the European Council Donald Tusk is reelected to the position with only Poland voting against him.
• On 25 March in the Italian capital the EU holds its 60th anniversary of the 1957 Treaty of Rome with all states - except the United Kingdom - signing a declaration endorsing the Union's validity as a guarantor of an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity.
• On 29 March the United Kingdom activates article 50 of the Treaty on European Union thereby initiating 18 months of complex negotiations for Britain’s departure from the EU; a scenario that increases tensions with Scotland and Northern Ireland, who voted to remain in the referendum in June 2016.

Arab League
• On 29 March the Arab League holds its 28th summit in Sweimeh, Jordan, in which it unanimously condemns the foreign interference in the region - in reference to Iran - Jordan and Lebanon reiterate the need for international aid to cope with the growing refugee population.

April 2017

Spain hosts the third meeting of the EUMed group. The terrorist organization Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) hands over its weapons to France. France holds the first round of presidential elections. In Italy, the Democratic Party (PD) holds primary elections. In Croatia, the Most party leaves the government coalition. Serbia holds presidential elections. Political tension continues in FYROM and Albania. Turkey holds a referendum on its constitutional reform. In Syria, tensions rise between the US and Russia following a chemical attack in Khan Sheikhun. In Lebanon, Michel Aoun suspends parliamentary activity to force an agreement on the new electoral law. In Egypt, further attacks are carried out on the Coptic community. The Libyan Government of National Accord reaches a deal with the southern tribes on their integration into the border security forces. In Tunisia, there are protests in Tataouine and Kef. In Morocco, Mohammed VI appoints the members of the Constitutional Court, the Prime Minister unveils his new government and instability continues in the Rif.

Portugal
• On 4 April the Prime Minister Antonio Costa rules out holding early elections and decides to continue with the governing left-wing coalition.
• On 29 April Spain and Portugal reach an EC-mediated agreement on waste storage at Spain’s Almaraz nuclear plant.

Spain
• On 4 April the regional president of Murcia Pedro Antonio Sanchez (PP) resigns, embroiled in a corruption probe. On 29 April Fernando Lopez Miras (PP) is elected regional president.
• On 9 April Carme Chacon, the former Defence Minister during the government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and first woman to hold the post in Spain, dies.
• On 10 April Madrid hosts the third meeting of the EUMed group –Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Greece and Cyprus- to reinforce a common stance on Brexit.
• On 21 April the former president of the Community of Madrid Ignacio Gonzalez (PP) goes to prison over his involvement in the ‘Lezo’ corruption scandal.

France
• On 8 April ETA hands over a major weapons arsenal to the French authorities, in an act that, theoretically, represents the terrorist organization surrendering arms.
• On 23 April Emmanuel Macron (LREM), and Marine Le Pen (FN) are the most voted candidates in the first round of the presidential elections with 24.01% and 21.30% of the votes respectively.
• On 28 April the FN president Jean-Francois Jalkh steps down over his alleged Holocaust denial. The mayor of Henin-Beaumont, Steeve Briois, will succeed Jalkh, who was appointed as interim President after Marine Le Pen stepped down to focus on her presidential candidacy.

Italy
• On 18 April there are more mass migrant arrivals by boat in Sicily, with 8,500 people rescued in the last three days in 55 operations led by the EU’s migrant rescue service and different NGOs.
• On 30 April the former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi beats the party secretary in the Democratic Party (PD) primaries with over 70% of the votes and relaunches his career, despite the criminal investigation involving his father, Tiziano.

Malta
• On 10 April the Nationalist and Democratic parties announce their intention to form the Coalition for Change ahead of the elections in June.

Croatia
• On 11 April the Commercial Court in Zagreb begins the extraordinary administrative procedure of Agrokor to avoid the major Croatian holding going bankrupt.
• On 28 April the Most party (centre-left) leaves the coalition government a day after the Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic approves the dismissal of three of the party’s ministers, who supported the request for the dismissal of the Finance Minister Zdravko Maric, put forward by the opposition.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
• On 25 April Bosniak and Bosnian Croat war veterans block several entry points to the Bosniak-Croat entity demanding improvements in their benefits and a revision of the registry of beneficiaries.

Serbia
• On 2 April the Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic (SNS) wins the presidential elections with 55.06% of the votes. Polls are organized during the days that follow the elections against the result, denouncing irregularities in the voting.
• On 25 April thousands of Serbs protest against the Waterfront urban development project backed by the government and financed by the UAE.
Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 21 April a court in Kosovo orders the arrest of the former Vetëvendosje leader Albin Kurti, after he fails to appear for the trial against him for throwing a smoke bomb in the Parliament in 2016.
- On 21 April the Kosovo government abstains from responding to the EU’s request to uphold Kosovo’s Constitutional Court ruling in May 2016, which is unpopular among most Kosovo Albanians and attributes the ownership of disputed territories to the Serbian orthodox monastery of Decan.
- On 25 April the opposition groups Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and Nisma announce that they will run together in the next elections and with the AKK leader Ramush Haradinaj as joint candidate for the post of Prime Minister.
- On 27 April a French court rejects an appeal to extradite the former commander of the UÇK and former Prime Minister of Kosovo Ramush Haradinaj, demanded by Serbia to stand trial for war crimes.

FYROM

- On 4 April FYROM accuses Albania of interfering in its internal affairs and influencing the country’s Albanian community, during the political stalemate to form a coalition government, in which the Albanian parties, which want more concessions, are a key piece.
- On 27 April more than 100 people are injured when national demonstrators burst into the Parliament to protest against the election of an Albanian, Talat Xhaferi, as speaker of the Parliament, thanks to an agreement between the SDSM and the Albanian parties, which has sparked two months of protests.

Albania

- On 24 April thousands of centre-right opposition supporters block five major roads demanding the creation of a technocratic caretaker government until the elections on 18 June.
- On 28 April the former Prime Minister Ilir Meta is elected President with the support of the centre-left parliamentary majority, despite the opposition boycott.

Greece

- On 4 April thousands of pensioners demonstrate in Athens against the 12th pension cut in seven years, fruit of the negotiations between the government and international creditors to keep the 86-billion-euro bailout corresponding to 2017.

Turkey

- On 6 April around 550 former MPs from 18 parties, including the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), launch a no campaign in the constitutional referendum of 16 April.
- On 16 April Turkey holds its referendum on its constitutional reform to establish a presidential republic which increases the President powers and terms of office. 51.41% vote ‘yes’ against 48.59% who vote against the change.
- On 25 April the Council of State rejects the appeal filed by the main opposition party, CHP, against the High Electoral Board for not declaring numerous unstermed votes from the constitutional referendum.
- On 26 April the government suspends 9,103 police officers for alleged links with the Islamist preacher Fethullah Gülen, accused of organizing the attempted coup in 2016. On the same day, more than a thousand people are arrested in 72 provinces in the country, suspected of having links with the coup.

Syria

- On 7 April the US launches missiles at the Shayrat military base in Homs, from where Washington believes that the Syrian army carried out a chemical attack on 4 April on Khan Shijn, Idlib, in which at least 80 people were killed. For the first time, Washington orders military action to be taken against Syrian government forces. Russia, Iran and Hezbollah describe the strikes as aggression against a sovereign state and, on 10 April, threaten to respond “with force” to any “aggressor.”
- On 12 April, in the UN Security Council, Russia vetoes a resolution presented by the US, France and the United Kingdom condemning the chemical attack on 4 April in Khan Shijn.
- On 15 April at least 126 people are killed close to Aleppo by the explosion of a vehicle which hit the convoy carrying out the paced evacuation of 30,000 civilians and fighters from Foah and Kefraya -Shia towns under siege by rebel forces- and Zahabad and Madaya -under siege by the Syrian army-. On 21 April the evacuation is completed.
- On 25 April at least 11 civilians are killed trying to leave Tabqa, Raqqa, from an airstrike attributed to the US-led international coalition. The area is the stage for fighting for control between the SDF and Daesh.
- On 26 April Turkey announces the death of 70 PKK members during an airstrike in northeastern Syria and the Iraqi region of Sinjar.

Lebanon

- On 11 April the death toll following four days of fighting in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh, in Sidon, rises to eight in clashes that began on 7 April during the deployment of soldiers from the Palestinian Joint Security Forces, who were attacked by members of the radical Bilad Badr organization. On 12 April, the Palestinian security forces burst into Ain al-Hilweh to put an end to the fighting.
- On 12 April the President Michel Aoun suspends parliamentary activity for a month temporarily preventing the approval of an extension to the mandate of the current deputies. With the suspension, Aoun hopes to give more time to the deputies to reach some kind of agreement on a new electoral law before the extension of their mandate, scheduled for 13 April, - which began in 2009- to 2018.
- On 24 April the army announces the death of around 20 Daesh members in an artillery attack in the Baalbek region.
- On 24 and 26 April four members of Daesh preparing terrorist attacks in Lebanon are arrested by security forces.

Egypt

- On 2 April a court for urgent matters nullifies the Supreme Administrative Court’s ruling in January which cancelled the agreement to transfer the islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia, saying that the court did not have the necessary jurisdiction.
• On 5 April the Minister of Supply Ali al-Meslehi announces that the reform of the food subsidy system will mean a 10% decrease in the current beneficiaries.
• On 9 April an explosion during the Palm Sunday service in the Coptic church of Saint George in Tanta leaves at least 27 dead. Two hours later, a second explosion is reported in Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Alexandria, which leaves at least 18 dead. Daesh claims responsibility for both attacks. On 13 April the Coptic Orthodox Church is forced to cancel Easter celebrations due to the risk of another attack.
• On 19 April Daesh claims responsibility for a gun attack on a military checkpoint next to the Saint Catalina Christian monastery, in southern Sinai, which leaves at least one dead.

**Libya**

• On 2 April the Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti announces the signing in Rome, on 31 March and by around 60 southern Libyan tribes, of a peace deal with the Government of National Accord (Presidential Council). The agreement foresees the tribes forming part of the government’s security forces along the 5,000 km of the country’s southern border where migrant and arms traffickers operate.
• On 10 April the G7, gathered in Lucerne, express their support for the unity government led by Fayez Sarraj and for Libyan unity.

**Tunisia**

• On 4 April two government delegations travel to Tataouine and Kef after several days of major demonstrations supported by the UGTT against the high unemployment and poverty in both governorates.
• On 14 April the student union UGET leads a general strike against police violence on 11 April during a student demonstration in the capital in which 43 students are injured. The student mobilizations come in relation to the ministerial decree in March 2017 modifying the access conditions to the entrance call for the Magistrates Training Institute (MTI) restricting it to students who have a master’s degree in legal sciences.
• On 20 April a large demonstration in Kef protests against the lack of government measures to improve the region’s economic situation.

**Morocco**

• On 4 April Mohammed VI appoints the members of the Constitutional Court, whose president will be Said thihi.
• On 5 April the Prime Minister Saad Eddine El Othmani unveils his new government led by the Islamist PJD and which includes the National Rally of Independents (RNI), the Constitutional Union (UC), the Popular Movement (MP), the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) and the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS).
• On 10 April the new Interior Minister Abdelouafi Laftit travels to Al Hoceima to meet with citizen representatives, where there have been months of demonstrations since the death in October 2016 of the fish seller Mouhcine Fikri as a consequence of an act of police abuse.
• On 13 April clashes break out in Fez between security forces and leftist students, following an attempt by police to disperse student demonstrations in support of two students who are to stand trial for the death of an Islamist student in April 2014.
• On 27 April seven people are sentenced to between five and eight months in prison for the death in October 2016 of Mouhcine Fikri in Al Hoceima.

**EU**

• On 1 April a well-attended rally in Gendarmenmarkt Square in Berlin calls for greater effort to drive the European project towards a stronger union.
• On 29 April the 27 Member States agree to include a reference to a unified Ireland -as part of the EU- at a summit in which European leaders approve directives on the Brexit negotiations.

**May 2017**

*In Spain, the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) holds primary elections. France holds the second round of its presidential elections and unveils a new government. Mass migrant ar-rivals continue in Italy. Malta and Albania call for early legislative elections. In Kosovo, the coalition government breaks up. In FYROM, the Parliament endorses the government of the new Prime Minister Zoran Zaev. Greece experiences a national strike day, in the month that Athens and its international creditors reach an agreement on the reform package required for the release of the next bailout tranche. In Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan is pronounced leader of the AKP. In Syria, the regime takes complete control of Homs and makes major advances on the eastern and southern borders. In Egypt, the Coptic community is the target of a new attack and new sentences are issued to the Muslim Brotherhood’s supreme guide. In Libya, an agreement is reached to hold elections in 2018. In Tunisia and Morocco, anti-government protests continue. Algeria holds legislative elections.*

**Portugal**

• On 15 May data on the Portuguese economy for the first quarter of 2017 reveal an interannual growth in GDP of 2.8%, the fastest expansion since the end of 2007.

**Spain**

• On 21 May the former PSOE secretary-general Pedro Sánchez wins the party’s primaries against the Andalusian president Susana Díaz and the former Basque president Patxi López, with the support of 50.26% of party members.

**France**

• On 7 May with a turnout of 74.56%, Emmanuel Macron (LREM) wins with 66.1% of the vote against Marine Le Pen (FN, 33.9%) in the second round of the presidential elections.
• On 17 May Emmanuel Macron announces the composition of the government of his Prime Minister Edouard Philippe. Its members include Gerard Collomb (PS) as Interior Minister; Richard Ferrand, as LREM general secretary and Minister of Territorial Development; the environmentalist Nicolas Hulot as Minister of the Eco-
IEE-Mediterranean Yearbook 2018

Appendices

Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events

Italy
- On 14 May Matteo Salvini confirms his position as leader of the Northern League (Padanian separatist) with 82.7% of the votes in the party’s primary elections.
- On 15 May 68 members of the ‘Ndrangheta Calabrian mafia, are arrested for their infiltration into migrant aid organizations.
- On 18 May three people are stabbed at Milan’s main train station by an Italian-Tunisian Daesh supporter.
- On 18 May Italy begins the process of finding a buyer for Alitalia, currently under extraordinary administration.
- On 19 May Italy approves a law on compulsory vaccinations for children.
- On 20 May the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi gives his full support to the Animalist Movement, a new party led by Michela Vittoria Brambilla, an MP from his party, Forza Italia.
- On 26 May Taormina hosts the G7 summit focused on climate change, international terrorism and the refugee crisis. During the summit, the thousands of rescued migrants are to be taken to a location away from Sicily.
- On 27 – 28 May six people are killed in Naples in crimes related with the Camorra, violence the likes of which has not been seen since the last faida - war between mafia families- in 2004.
- On 30 May a total of 60,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean headed for Italy since the beginning of 2017. A further 1,720 have died in the attempt, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Malta
- On 2 May Joseph Muscat, the Labour Prime Minister, calls early legislative elections for 3 June, faced with growing allegations that connects members of his family and the Labour Party with the international corruption scandal Panamagate.

Slovenia
- On 5 May the EC opens an infringement procedure against Slovenia for the seizure by the country’s police force of confidential information of the European Central Bank in a raid in 2016 of the Central Bank of Slovenia as part of an investigation into the 2013 rescue of the bank.

Croatia
- On 22 May the EC recommends that Croatia and Portugal exit the excessive deficit procedure.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
- On 25 May police in Trebinje file charges against the former Bosnian general Jovan Divjak for war crimes against Bosnian Serbs in Konjic during the Bosnian War.

Montenegro
- On 24 May the pro-Serbian Nova party launches an initiative to achieve greater autonomy for the Bay of Kotor.

Serbia
- On 23 May Bratislav Gasic, the former Defence Minister who was sacked in 2016 for making sexist remarks, is appointed head of the Security Information Agency (BIA).
- On 31 May Aleksandar Vucic is sworn in as President while clashes break out between his supporters and opposition protesters.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244
- On 10 May the breakup of the coalition government over the failure to reach an agreement regarding border demar-

cation with Montenegro, a condition to obtain visa-free travel in the EU, brings about the fall of the government after a no-confidence vote in the Parliament.
- On 25 May the Supreme Court acquits the former UÇK commander and former Transport Minister Fatmir Limaj of charges of war crimes committed in Klecka in 1999.

FYROM
- On 17 May the President Gjorge Ivanov tasks the social democrat Zoran Zaev, who came second in the early elections held in December 2016 with the formation of a new government, after receiving a guarantee that his coalition with the Albanian nationalists will not undermine the country’s constitutional order or sovereignty.
- On 22 May the special state prosecutor for war crimes opens three new investigations, two of which affect the former Prime Minister and VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski.
- On 31 May the Parliament approves the government of Zoran Zaev which it is hoped will put an end to two years of political crisis and make progress in the EU and NATO accession negotiations and the naming dispute with Greece. Seven of the 25 ministers belong to the Albanian minority, which represents a third of the country’s population.

Albania
- On 18 May the socialist Prime Minister Edi Rama and leader of the Democratic Party (PD, conservative) Lulzim Basha agree to hold parliamentary elections on 25 June.
- On 23 May the Parliament approves the composition of the new caretaker government agreed upon between the government and the opposition, which entails the replacement of the Deputy Prime Minister and six other ministers with members of the opposition.

Greece
- On 16 May figures published by Eurostat reveal that at the end of the third quarter of 2016 the Greek economy entered a recession for the third time since 2010.
• On 18 May a day after the one-day general protest strike, the Parliament approves a new package of austerity measures, agreed upon on 2 May between the government and international creditors and which includes pension cuts, tax hikes and reforms in the energy sector in exchange for a new tranche of the financial bailout.
• On 25 May the former Prime Minister Lucas Papademos is wounded in Athens by a letter bomb for which no one claims responsibility.

Turkey
• On 16 and 24 May arrest orders are issued for at least 224 civil servants and workers over their links with Fethullah Gülen and the attempted coups in 2016.
• On 21 May Recep Tayyip Erdogan is named the AKP leader, thereby becoming the first Turkish head of state to preside over a political party under the constitutional reforms approved in April.
• On 26 May security forces kill 29 members of the PKK terrorist organization in an operation in Agri and Van.

Syria
• On 15 May around 2,300 people, including more than a thousand rebels, are evacuated from Qaboun, Damascus, control of which was taken two days before by the army.
• On 15 May Daesh carries out intensive bombing of Deir ez-Zor.
• On 21 May the Syrian regime declares Homs as “liberated” following the departure of 989 fighters and civilians from al-Waer heading for Jarabulus, in Aleppo.
• On 21 May at least 23 people are killed in a twin bomb attack on a security base in Ahrar al-Sham in Tell Toqan, Idlib.
• On 25 May at least 35 civilians, including relatives of Daesh militiamen, are killed in an airstrike on al-Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor.
• On 30 May the US begins sending arms to the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG).

Lebanon
• On 17 May Lebanon becomes the first Arab country to hold Gay Pride celebrations.
• On 26 May at least six soldiers are injured in an attack during an anti-terror raid in Nabi Osman.

Jordan
• On 4 May the EU and Jordan strengthen their collaboration to foster possibilities of developing trade, business and investment in Jordan.

Egypt
• On 7 May the eight members of a cell linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, among them its leader Helmi Saad Masri, are killed in clashes with security forces in Upper Egypt.
• On 8 May the Giza Criminal Court hands down a life sentence to the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohammed Badie, in the repetition of a trial in which originally—in April 2015—he had been sentenced to death for inciting violence. On 9 May Egypt’s Court of Cassation order the retrial of Badie and a further 49 who were also convicted in April 2015 and given death sentences over the attack on a police station in Port Said in 2013.
• On 16 May the Sawarka tribe becomes the second in Sinai to declare war on Daesh, after the al-Tarabin tribe did the same days before, when, on 11 May, Daesh killed 15 al-Tarabin tribesmen in el-Perz.
• On 17 May the President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi promises tax exemptions to alleviate the widespread price increases.
• On 24 May Egypt blocks 21 news websites, including al-Jazeera and Huffpost Arabi, for “inciting terrorism and spreading lies.”
• On 26 May at least 28 Coptic Christians are killed in a Daesh attack in Menia. On 28 May, the government fires the security chief in Menia, Faisal Doweidar.

Libya
• On 1 May the former President Moncef Marzouki is elected secretary-general of al-Irada (The Will) in the first conference of the party, of which Marzouki is a founding member.
• On 8 May demonstrators, who have been protesting since March in the south of the country demanding better salaries and working conditions, interrupt the production of crude oil in Kamur. On 10 May the army is deployed to protect production.
• On 24 May the businessmen Chafik Jarraya and Yassine Chennoufi are arrested for links with protests which took place in Tataouine and under corruption charges, respectively.
• On 31 May the army clashes with terrorists in Mount Samama, Kasserine, days after a senior figure in the AQIM-affiliated Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade is killed in the same province.

Algeria
• On 4 May Algeria holds parliamentary elections. The National Liberation Front of Djamel Ould Abbes wins (25.99% of the votes) obtaining 164 seats, 44 less than in the previous elections. In second place (with 14.91%), the National Rally for Democracy takes 100 seats, 32 more than in the previous elections.
• On 20 May around 100 demonstrators are arrested in Bouira during a march of the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie (MAK).
• On 24 May the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appoints the hitherto Housing Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune, as (Presidential Council) Fayez al-Sarraj agree to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018.
Prime Minister to replace Abdelmalek Sellal.
• On 28 May Abdelaziz Bouteflika fires the Minister of Tourism and member of the Algerian Popular Movement (MPA) Messaoud Benagoun, three days after his appointment.

Morocco
• On 20 May after dismantling more than 270 terrorist cells since 2002, the Moroccan intelligence services warn of the need to increase information exchange to halt the growing threat of terrorism in the Sahel and Maghreb.
• On 29 May Nasser Zatufazi is arrested, one of the leaders of the anti-government protests carried out in recent weeks in Al Hoceima.

EU
• On 16 May the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker announces the appointment of the Euro MP Mariya Gabriel, the candidate proposed by Bulgaria on 10 May, as member of the EC following the resignation at the end of 2016 of Kristalina Georgieva.
• On 17 May the EC opens another procedure against Hungary, the first of which was opened in December 2015, for breaching European asylum rules.
• On 22 May the EC receives Michel Barnier’s mandate as chief negotiator for Brexit.
• On 28 May, after the NATO summit in Brussels and the G7 summit in Taormina, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel calls on the EU to “take fate into its own hands” after Brexit, the changing politics in Russia and Turkey and the election of Donald Trump in the US.

June 2017
In France, parliamentary elections are held and there are four resignations in the government. Italy holds local elections and the mass migrant arrivals continue. Malta, Kosovo and Albania hold parliamentary elections. In Croatia, the Parliament approves a government reshuffle. Montenegro joins NATO. Serbia appoints a new Prime Minister. In FY-ROM new charges are brought against former senior government officials. In Turkey, an opposition leader is convicted of spying. In Cyprus, the reunification negotiations are resumed. In Syria the offensive begins to oust Daesh from Raqqa. Lebanon passes an electoral law based on proportional representation. The Egyptian President ratifies the transfer of Tiran and Sanafir in the same month that Egypt and Mauritania breaks with Qatar. In Libya, the former Lebanese Minister of Culture Ghassan Salame is appointed as the UN’s Special Representative. In Morocco, the protests grow in Rif.

Portugal
• On 17 June a deliberately-started fire in the Leiria district, the largest in the country’s history, leave 64 dead.

Spain
• On 1 June the anti-corruption prosecutor Manuel Moix resigns after his involvement is reported in a family business based in Panama.
• On 9 June the Catalan President Carles Puigdemont announces that a referendum on independence will be held on 1 October.
• On 14 June the Congress of Deputies (lower house) rejects the motion of no confidence presented by Unidos Podemos (‘Together We Can’ - leftist) against the government of Mariano Rajoy (PP).
• On 23 June the Civil Guard arrests a Moroccan man with Danish nationality in Melilla who, through an extensive business network, laundered money to finance Daesh and al-Qaeda.

France
• On 11 and 18 June France holds parliamentary elections. LREM wins an absolute majority taking 350 of the 577 seats in the National Assembly, although there is a record abstention rate of 57.36%.
• On 18 June the leader of the Socialist Party (PS) Jean-Christophe Cambadelis resigns after the party’s historic defeat in the parliamentary elections.
• On 20 – 21 June Richard Ferrand, the Territorial Cohesion Minister, Sylvie Goulard, the Army Minister; Francois Bayrou, the Justice Minister; and Marielle de Sarnez, the European Affairs Minister, resign over their involvement in court investigations. They are replaced by Florence Parly – Defence, Nicole Belloubet – Justice, Nathalie Loiseau – European Affairs and Jacques Mezard – Territorial Cohesion, the latter, in turn, being replaced as Agriculture Minister by Stephane Travert.
• On 21 June forty of the 112 LR deputies splinter from the parliamentary group to form their own party close to the President Emmanuel Macron.
• On 30 June Marine Le Pen (FN) is charged in the investigation into fictitious contracts to pay her party assistants with funds from the European Parliament.

Italy
• On 11 and 25 June Italy holds local elections in around a thousand town councils with a turnout of below 50% and in which the centre right gains a major victory which contrasts with the fall of the centre left and the Five Star Movement (M5S).
• On 25 June the EC authorizes the Italian bailout of the banks Popolare di Vicenza and Veneto Banca.
• On 28 June the government announces the possibility of closing its ports to NGO migrant delivery boats due to the unsustainable situation caused by migrants arriving in their thousands and coinciding with the landing in the last 48 hours alone of 12,000 refugees.

Malta
• On 3 June Malta holds early parliamentary elections with a turnout of 92.1%. The Labour Party wins with 55.04% (37 seats). National Force, a right-wing coalition of the Nationalist Party and the Democratic Party win 43.68% of the vote (30 seats).

Slovenia
• On 29 June the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague rules in favour of Slovenia in the border dispute with Croatia over the maritime border in Piran Bay, granting Slovenia access to international waters.
Croatia

- On 9 June the Parliament approves the government reshuffle following the breakup in April of the government coalition. The new coalition is formed by conservatives from HDZ, liberals from HNS and other minor parties.
- On 12 June the Foreign Minister Darko Stier resigns to focus on his position as political secretary of HDZ.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 6 June the President of the Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik reiterates his decision not to authorize the history textbooks approved by the Federal Government or the Bosniak-Croat Entity because they reflect a “distorted” view of events such as the Srebrenica massacre or the siege of Sarajevo.
- On 20 June the student protests against ethnic segregation in education centres intensify.
- On 27 June a Dutch court rules that the Dutch UN peacekeepers were partly liable for the massacre of 300 Bosniaks in Srebrenica at the hands of Bosnian Serb troops.

Montenegro

- On 5 June Montenegro joins NATO.
- On 20 June Montenegro opens chapters on the free movement of goods and regional policy and closes the chapter on external relations in its accession negotiations.

Serbia

- On 15 June the President Aleksandar Vucic gives the task of forming a government to the current Public Administration Minister Ana Brnabic, Serbia’s first woman Prime Minister.
- On 15 June Serbia introduces sanctions and incentives in favour of the Cyrillic alphabet.
- On 20 June Serbia opens chapters on customs unions and intellectual property in its accession negotiations.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 11 June Kosovo holds early parliamentary elections. The coalition led by PDK wins (33.92% of the votes) and there is a surprising increase in the separatist Vetëvendosje party who came second (27.16%) ahead of the LDK-led coalition (25.79%).
- On 28 June the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) warns of the sharp rise in the influence of extremist groups during the last two decades in Kosovo.

FYROM

- On 29 June the special prosecutor Katice Janeva announces charges against more than 90 senior officials over the illegal wiretaps carried out by the previous VMRO-DPMNE government. In parallel to this, she orders the arrest of the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and the Interior and Transport Ministers Gordana Jankuloska and Mile Janakieski, among others, within the investigation into the alleged electoral fraud of VMRO-DPMNE in 2013. The announcement comes a day before the 18-month deadline for pressing charges before the special prosecutor, which has been serving a five-year mandate since its creation in 2015.

Albania

- On 25 June Albania holds early parliamentary elections in which the Socialist Party wins with 48.52% of the vote, followed by the Democratic Party of Albania (PDS, conservative) -29.05%- and the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) -14.42%-. On 29 June the LSI leader Petrit Vasil announces his resignation and proposes his wife Monika Kryemadhi as his successor.

Greece

- On 2 June police begin to clear the refugee camp at the old Athens airport in Elliniko.
- On 15 June the IMF and the eurozone agree on a new tranche of 8.5 billion euros of the Greek bailout to allow the country to meet its imminent payments.
- On 23 June according to official data, on the islands of Lesbos, Chios and Samos alone a total of 1,038 people have arrived in 20 days.

Turkey

- On 15 June Enis Berberoglu, from the opposition CHP party, is sentenced to 25 years’ imprisonment for spying, charged with leaking information to the media about an alleged Turkish arms shipment to Syria in 2014.
- On 16 June Turkey summons the US ambassador to demand explanations over the US decision to issue an arrest warrant on 12 of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s bodyguards, who were involved in clashes against demonstrators protesting Erdogan’s politics during an official visit to Washington in May.
- On 22 June the Education Minister removes the theory of evolution from the last draft of the education programme for secondary education centres.
- On 25 June for the third consecutive year, the authorities stop Gay Pride celebrations in Istanbul.

Cyprus

- On 13 June the President Nicos Anastasiades declares that he is ready to help Lebanon in its dispute with Israel over the demarcation of its maritime border where there are major hydrocarbon deposits.
- On 28 June the UN-brokered Cypriot reunification negotiations are resumed in Crans-Montana, Switzerland.

Syria

- On 6 June the FSA begins its offensive to liberate Raqqa from Daesh.
- On 10 June the advance of the Syrian army on Daesh positions reaches 50 kilometres from the strategic al-Tanf area.
- On 19 June Russia announces that it has killed the Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, close to Raqqa in an air-strike on 28 May.
- On 18 June the Iranian Revolutionary Guard fires missiles at Daesh’s Deir ez-Zor bases, which Iran considers responsible for two terrorist attacks in Tehran, on 7 June, that left 18 people dead.
- On 19 June the Syrian regime condemns the downing in al-Rasafa, Raqqa, of one of its jets by the US-led coalition. Washington confirms the downing of the plane claiming the aircraft had dropped bombs on FSA soldiers in Tabqa.
• On 20 June the Syrian army resumes its shelling on Dera, after a 48-hour ceasefire comes to an end, coinciding with US and Russian talks in Amman to create a "de-escalation zone" in southern Syria.

• On 26 June fighting intensifies between regime forces and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other rebel groups in Quineitra.

• On 30 June a report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirms that the civilian deaths in Khan Shijun in April 2017 were the result of the use of chemical weapons.

Lebanon

• On 14 June the government approves for the first time in the country’s history an electoral law based on proportional representation, overcoming the last sticking point for holding the first parliamentary elections since 2009. The new system establishes elections on a single day throughout the country, in which, as of 2022, the diaspora will have six seats.

Egypt

• On 17 June 30 people are sentenced to death for the murder of the chief public prosecutor Hisham Barakat, in June 2015.

• On 20 June the government announces the death of three members of the armed Hasm group in an operation in Alexandria.

• On 22 June the government approves the three-month extension of the state of emergency declared in April.

• On 24 June the President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi ratifies the agreement to transfer Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia, after the Parliament gives its approval on 13 June and despite the temporary suspension issued by the Constitutional Court on 21 June and the citizen protests which end with several arrests in 11 governorates.

Libya

• On 6 June Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia agree to push for political dialogue for Libya, rejecting foreign interference in the country.

• On 10 June the militia Abu Bakr al-Siddiq says it has freed Saif al-Islam Gaddafi after holding him for more than six years in Zintan.

• On 20 June the United Nations Security Council appoints the former Lebanese Minister Ghassan Salame as the new UN envoy to Libya to replace the German envoy Martin Kobler.

Tunisia

• On 21 June Rachid Ghannouchi, president of the Islamist Ennahda party, announces a dispute with Sky News Arabia after the Emirate news channel broadcast a report accusing him of being involved in the assassination of his political opponent Chokri Belaid in 2013.

• On 28 June the authorities announce they have frozen the assets of the magnet and former presidential candidate Slim Riahi suspected of corruption.

Algeria

• On 2 June an AQIM attack leaves two soldiers dead in Tebessa.

• On 18 June three suspected terrorists are killed and a further three captured after seven days of military operations in Skikda and Constantine.

Morocco

• On 2 June an anti-government demonstration in Imzouren ends with clashes between demonstrators from the al-Harak Popular Movement from the Rif and police, amid tensions in the Rif which began with the protests in October 2016 in Al Hoceima. The protests and arrests continue throughout June. On 11 June large-scale march in Rabat calls for the release of around a hundred al-Hirak activists.

• On 6 June the ECOWAS announces an agreement in principle for Morocco’s entry into the organization.

Mauritania

• On 6 June Mauritania breaks diplomatic ties with Qatar, accusing it of “supporting terrorist organizations” and joining the decision taken the previous day by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to cut diplomatic ties with Doha and begin a blockade on the emirate.

EU

• On 1 June the EU warns the US that the Paris Agreement on climate change is neither reversible nor renegotiable, after Donald Trump’s announcement of his intention to withdraw the US from the deal.

• On 7 June the EC sets the European Defence Fund in motion, which will mobilize 5.5 billion euros a year for stepping up the EU’s defensive capacity.

• On 13 June the EC announces infringement procedures against Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic for non-compliance with their obligations on migration.

• On 16 June Helmut Kohl dies, the German Chancellor between 1982 and 1998 and a great driver of German reunification and the construction of Europe.

• On 19 June negotiations begin on the United Kingdom’s exit from the EU, 11 days after the British elections in which the Prime Minister Theresa May loses the conservative party’s absolute majority.

• On 21 June the EU is awarded the Princess of Asturias Award for Concord for its unique model of supranational integration.

• On 23 June the European Council describes the British proposal to recognize the right of residence of EU citizens who have been living in the United Kingdom from five years after Brexit as insufficient. Parallel to this, the meeting is the stage for the relaunch of the Franco-German Axis by Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron.

• On 27 June Google is given the largest anti-monopoly fine ever imposed by the EU - 2.424 billion euros.-

July 2017

In Spain, the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy testifies in the trial for the Gürtel corruption scandal. France approves radical reforms in public administration. Italy, France and Germany agree to accelerate the refugee relocation programme. Ministers resign in Italy and Croatia. In Bosnia, the Constitutional Court orders the modification of the Electoral Law. The Montenegrin Parliament withdraws immunity from four MPs.
The former Serbian Environmental Protection Minister is convicted of corruption. Greece accessed a new aid tranche from the European Financial Stability Mechanism. In Turkey, new operations are carried out against the PKK, groups linked with Fethullah Gülen and Daesh. The negotiations for Cypriot reunification in Crans-Montana end without an agreement. In Syria, a ceasefire comes into force in Daraya, Suweida and Quneitra, announced by the Syrian army. Hezbollah announces a ceasefire in Arsal. In Egypt, eight people are sentenced to death for storming a police station in Helwan in 2013. In Libya, the liberation of Benghazi is announced and the head of the forces loyal to the Tobruk Parliament meets with the president of the Presidential Council to arrange elections. Tunisia approves laws against gender-based violence and corruption. In Morocco, the protests in Rif continue. Mauritania reaches an agreement with Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Chad on a joint defense force.

Portugal

- On 2 July the President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa demands a full investigation into the theft of weapons detected on 30 June from an army weapons arsenal.

Spain

- On 4 July the Catalan President Carles Puigdemont fires his Business Minister Jordi Baiget for expressing doubts over the independence referendum scheduled for 1 October.
- On 26 July the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy testifies before the National Court in the trial for the Gürtel corruption scandal, which mainly affects the PP, becoming the first serving President of a Spanish government to declare before a court.
- On 31 July around 400 irregular migrants attempt to jump the border fence between Morocco and Melilla.

France

- On 1 July the socialist candidate for the presidential elections in May, Benoît Hamon, presents his new 1 July Movement after leaving a Socialist Party suffering the worst crisis in its history.
- On 3 July, speaking at Versailles, the President Emmanuel Macron sets a deadline for the members of the Congress of the French Parliament - the National Assembly and the Senate - to carry out a radical institutional transformation. On 4 July the Prime Minister Édouard Philippe wins parliamentary backing for the proposed reforms: to reduce the public debt, the number of civil servants and tax burdens; liberalize services; balance the social security accounts; labour reform and the war on tobacco.

Italy

- On 2 July Italy, France and Germany agree to accelerate the refugee relocation programme and draft a code of conduct for NGOs involved in migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean, after Italy warns of the possibility of closing its ports to new arrivals if it does not receive more support.
- On 4 July more than 1,000 police officers participate in an operation against the ‘Ndrangheta after arrests are ordered of 116 members of the Calabrian mafia.
- On 19 July the Regional Affairs Minister Enrico Costa resigns over his disagreement with the government majority regarding measures like the approval of the law that grants citizenship to children of immigrants residing in Italy.
- On 20 July Massimo Carminati and Salvatore Buzzi, leaders of the Capitale Mafia, are sentenced to 20 and 19 years in prison, respectively.

Malta

- On 12 July the Parliament approves same-sex marriage.

Slovenia

- On 26 July the EU Court of Justice gives Slovenia and Austria authorization to send asylum seekers back to Croatia, where they entered from.

Croácia

- On 18 July the Defence Minister Damir Krstičevic hands in his resignation, which is rejected by the Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, after the President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic criticizes the army for not reacting quickly enough to the serious fires around Split.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 6 July the Constitutional Court orders the modification of the electoral law by the Parliament to bring it into line with the constitution, in response to a demand made by the Bosnian Croat politician Bozo Ljubic. In another ruling, on the same day, the high court rejects the appeal filed by various Bosnian Serb deputies from the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska in which they argue that the celebrations of Independence Day (1 March) and Statehood Day (25 November) are unconstitutional as they are not recognized by the Bosnian Serb entity.

Montenegro

- On 19 July the High Court of Podgorica opens and postpones the awaited trial of 14 people - nine Serbs and three Montenegrins of the pro-Russian DF and two Russian citizens - over their involvement in a failed plan to lead a coup in Montenegro on 16 October 2016, during the parliamentary elections.
- On 26 July the Parliament strips four DF MPs of their immunity for inciting the violence in February in the Parliament and plotting to carry out a coup and prevent the country from joining NATO.
Serbia

- On 12 July the former Environmental Protection Minister Oliver Dulic is sentenced to three and a half years in jail for corruption.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 7 July the President Hashim Thaci tasks Ramush Haradinaj, the PDK leader, with forming a government.

FYROM

- On 4 July a court in Skopje orders the passports of the former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and four other members of VMRO-DPMNE to be seized, in connection with the investigation into the illegal wiretapping of the previous government.
- On 18 July the EU asks the new FYROM government to make progress on necessary reforms and resolve the naming dispute with Greece to be able to advance in the accession process, during the bilateral Association Council meeting.

Greece

- On 7 July the European Financial Stability Mechanism approves Greece’s third tranche of 8.5 billion euros in financial aid.

Turkey

- On 9 July a large demonstration against the politics of Recep Tayyip Erdogan reaches Istanbul after a 25-day march from Ankara, headed by the leader of the social democratic CHP, Kemal Kilicdaroglu.
- On 15 July on the first anniversary since the attempted coup in 2016, tens of thousands take to the streets in different cities in support of the government.
- On 15 July a total of 7,563 public workers are fired for having “links with terrorist organizations.” The decision also includes stripping 343 retired members of the armed forces of their rank. Among those who are sacked is Huseyin Avni Mutlu, the former Istanbul governor responsible for the harsh police response during the Gezi Park protests in 2013.
- On 17 July at least 17 soldiers are injured in a PKK attack in Yuksekova.
- On 27 July the Parliament expels Tugba Hezer Ozturk and Faysal Saryildiz, members of the opposition and pro-Kurdish HDP for whom arrest warrants were issued in November 2016. This brings the number of lawmakers from the HDP who have been dispossessed of the seat to four, including their co-president Figen Yuksekdağ.
- On 29 July hundreds of women march in Istanbul in protest against attempts to control how they dress.
- On 30 July the army reports the death of 12 PKK members in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq.
- On 31 July the Interior Minister reports that 1,098 people have been arrested for terrorism in the last week.

Cyprus

- On 7 July the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres announces the end of reunification talks in Crans-Montana without an agreement being reached. The Turkish demands to withhold its right to intervene unilaterally in the island and station troops there continues to be the main stumbling block.

Syria

- On 4 July a unilateral ceasefire enters into effect announced by the Syrian army in Daraa, Sweida and Quneitra, in force until 13 July as part of the Astana negotiations to achieve a stable ceasefire in Syria.
- On 4 July the FSA enters Raqqa’s old city.
- On 7 July in the context of the G20 summit in Hamburg, the US and Russia announce their agreement for a ceasefire in southeastern Syria.
- On 15 July the seventh round of talks between the Syrian regime and opposition forces, which began on 10 July, comes to an end without any progress being made.
- On 22 July the Syrian government announces a ceasefire in various places in Eastern Ghouta, coinciding with Russia’s announcement of the creation of a “de-escalation zone” and a pact with rebel forces. In recent days, clashes have broken out between rebel factions in favour of and against the agreement.
- On 30 July the Syrian army and its allies reach the outskirts of al-Sukhna, the last bastion of Daesh in Homs.

Lebanon

- On 27 July Hezbollah announces a ceasefire in Arsal where it launched a military offensive on 23 July to oust Syrian jihadist groups from the area. The announcement comes hours after the leader of the Shia party-militia Hassan Nasralah says that Hezbollah has begun a round of talks with Jabhat Fateh al-Sham.

Jordan

- On 21 July thousands of Jordanians demonstrate against Israel and the occupation of the Palestinian territories. On 24 July at least two Jordanians are killed in gunfire outside the Israeli embassy in Amman, related with the spiraling violence unleashed in Israel and Palestine following Israel’s decision to restrict access to the Temple Mount.

Egypt

- On 2 July Ola al-Qaradawi and Hosam Jalaf, daughter and son-in-law of Yusuf al-Qaradawi, considered the spiritual guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, are arrested.
- On 7 July between 10 and 26 soldiers and 40 members of Wilayat Sinai, the local branch of Daesh, are killed in a car bomb attack and subsequent gunfire in el-Barth, northern Sinai.
- On 26 July Abdel Fattah al-Sisi issues a decree for the creation of the National Council to Combat Terrorism and Extremism.
- On 28 July the Criminal Court in Cairo sentences eight people to death over the storming of a police station in Helwan on 14 August 2013, which resulted in several deaths, following the violent dispersal of the Islamist sit-in, in protest against the ousting of Mohamed Morsi.

Libya

- On 6 July the general Khalifa Haftar announces the liberation of Benghazi.
**Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events**

**Tunisia**
- On 11 July the trial begins against the nearly 50 people accused of the Bardo Museum terrorist attack in 2015 in Tunis.
- On 19 July the Parliament approves the new “Law on Good Governance and Fight Against Corruption” with 116 votes in favour, 10 against and 5 null votes, thereby establishing the creation of the institution for the fight against corruption.
- On 27 July the 146 members of the Parliament unanimously vote in favour of the law on violence against women and gender equality.

**Algeria**
- On 12 July Hassan Mermouri is appointed Minister of Tourism and Handcrafts to replace Messaoud Benagoun, who was sacked on 28 May.
- On 31 July the army reports the death of six terrorist during an operation which began on 27 July in Guraya, Tipasa.

**Morocco**
- On 17 July the Moroccan authorities prohibit a demonstration organized for 20 July in Al Hoceima to demand socioeconomic improvements in the Rif region.
- On 21 July the protests reignite in Al Hoceima with a new mass demonstration, which marks nine months of mobilizations.
- On 30 July for Throne Day Mohammad VI pardons or commutes sentences for 58 people arrested during the protests in Al Hoceima and the Rif region.

**Mauritania**
- On 1 - 2 July the countries of the G5 Sahel -Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Chad agree to form a joint force of 5,000 men to aid the United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the French military operation in Mali.
- On 15 July thousands of people demonstrate in Nouakchott against the constitutional referendum on 5 August and accuse the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz of a “serious authoritarian drift” in the country.
- On 17 July employees of the French oil company Total in Mauritania have been striking for five days, demanding salary increases and overtime payment.

**EU**
- On 1 July Estonia assumes the six-month EU Presidency with the priorities of safeguarding European unity and its balance, fostering innovation, the digital agenda and the free circulation of data, promoting social inclusion and sustainability and increasing internal and border security.
- On 4 July the Parliament approves the appointment of Mariya Gabriel as the Bulgarian member of the Commission, in charge of the Digital Economy and Society.

**August 2017**

**Portugal and Greece suffer serious wildfires. In Spain, Daesh carries out an attack in Barcelona and Cambrils.**

In France, the Parliament approves legislation on corruption and transparency in public life. In Montenegro, the assets of the former Yugoslav President Svetozar Marovic are seized. FYROM’s support of Kosovo’s entry into UNESCO sparks a diplomatic crisis with Serbia in the same month that Belgrade and Pristina reach an agreement related to justice. Albania and Tunisia unveil new governments. There are further dismissals and arrests in Turkey in connection with the coup attempt in July 2016. In Syria, the Syrian regime’s forces win decisive victories in Homs, the area around the Jordanian border and Damascus. Jordan holds local elections. In Egypt, there are fresh attacks in northern Sinai and the US freezes two major financial aid packages. In Libya, there are more blocks on oil production. In Algeria, the Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune is fired. Mauritania holds its constitutional reform referendum.

**Spain**
- On 17 August a van bursts onto the promenade of the Ramblas in Barcelona and drives into pedestrians, killing 15 and leaving 131 injured. Hours later another connected ramming is carried out in Cambrils, Tarragona, where the five terrorists are shot down after driving through a police check and running down six more people, one of whom is killed. After the attacks, four people are arrested in Ripoll, in Girona, and another in Alcanar, Tarragona. In this latter town, the previous day, there was a huge gas explosion related with the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks and in which two of the members of the jihadist cell were killed, one of them the imam of Ripoll.

**France**
- On 9 August six soldiers are injured in a vehicle ramming in Levallois-Perret, Hauts-de-Seine, carried out by an Algerian man, who is arrested later near Calais. The incident takes place three days after a Mauritanian man, suspected of having links with Daesh, attempts an attack on soldiers at the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- On 9 August the government announces the closure of the Pontoum “deradicalization” centre for jihadists in Beaumont-en-Veron, just a year after its opening and due to its failure to achieve results.
• On 9 August the National Assembly gives its definitive approval of the so-called Law on Morality of Public Life, presented by the President Emmanuel Macron, which proposes measures to step up the fight against corruption and improve transparency in public institutions.

• On 25 August the Paris public prosecutor launches an investigation into François Thiry, the former head of OCRTIS, France’s anti-drugs agency, who is suspected of aiding certain drug traffickers and of complicity in their activities.

• On 31 August the first secretary of the Socialist Party Federation of French Abroad Boris Faure undergoes emergency surgery after being assaulted by the LREM MP M’jid el-Guerrab with a motorbike helmet, during a heated argument between the two men.

Italy

• On 13 August the police and some hundred immigrants and refugees clash in Rome after the police cleared a camp in Independence Square.

• On 28 August the police arrest the leader of the Neapolitan Camorra’s Polverino clan Giuseppe Simioni, alias Perucchiolo, who has been wanted since 2010.

Croatia

• On 11 August the government goes back on its decision to increase taxes on specific agricultural imports, faced with warnings from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and FYROM that they would adopt similar countermeasures.

Montenegro

• On 18 August the High Court of Montenegro seizes the property of the former President of Serbia and Montenegro Svetozar Marovic and his family, in a corruption investigation.

Serbia

• On 28 August the Parliament approves an amendment to the Law on Agricultural Land to allow EU citizens to buy arable land in Serbia.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

• On 21 August Serbia recalls its diplomatic staff in FYROM in protest against Skopje’s support of Kosovo’s initiative to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

• On 21 August Kosovo’s former Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi dies in a Turkish hospital.

• On 31 August the Serbian and Kosovar Presidents agree in Brussels on the final steps of the bilateral Justice Agreement, for its full implementation on 17 October.

Albania

• On 27 August the Prime Minister Edi Rama announces the composition of the new government, formed entirely by socialists, with a reduction in ministerial posts from 13 to 9 and equal numbers of men and women.

Greece

• On 3 August the EC announces 9.3 million euros in additional emergency assistance to provide support for the refugees and migrants in Greece.

• On 3 August the ECB lowers the cap on emergency funding for Greek banks by 1.6 billion euros, requested by the Bank of Greece.

• On 4 August the EC announces 9.3 million euros in additional emergency assistance to provide support for the refugees and migrants in Greece.

• On 4 August the government announces the creation of the Hellenic Development Bank to fund infrastructure projects, startups and small businesses and export-oriented companies.

• On 22 August Greece declares a state of emergency in the area of Kalamos, north of Athens, due to a serious wildfire which scorches thousands of hectares. The fire, one of 90 declared throughout the country, moves the government to criticize the government, accusing it of incompetence. The Justice Minister Stavros Kontonis says the fires are part of a plan to increase social discontent.

Turkey

• On 4 August Turkey includes the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) on its list of terrorist organizations in the context of increased cooperation between China and Turkey on security.

• On 4 August a court in Istanbul releases four suspects in the murder of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007 due to a lack of evidence.

• On 10 August Turkey issues arrest warrants on 35 journalists for their alleged connection with the preacher Fethullah Gülen.

• On 14 August a police officer is stabbed to death in Istanbul by a man being taken to a police station after being arrested for planning a bomb attack in the name of Daesh.

• On 25 August the government publishes two decrees in which it sacks 928 civil servants, closes two pro-Kurdish newspapers and creates an intelligence coordination board under the control of the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The measures are ordered under the state of emergency established after the attempted coup in July 2016.

• On 31 August the Interior Ministry announces the death of four members of the PKK terrorist organization in an operation in Oglu, Hakkari.

Cyprus

• On 3 August the UN’s special envoy to Cyprus Espen Barth Eide urges the population to get more involved in the peace process and to “stand up and demand a change.”

Syria

• On 3 August the Syrian regime confirms, five years after his arrest, that the Palestinian-Syrian open software developer and activist Bassel Khartabil was executed in prison.

• On 6 August Syria condemns the use by the US-led coalition of white phosphorus bombs in Raqqa before the United Nations.

• On 10 August the Syrian army recovers all border checkpoints in the province of Sweida, on the border with Jordan, which, until now, were in rebel hands.

• On 14 August the Syrian army takes various villages and towns close to al-Kum, Homs, in an advance that aims to circulate the Daesh positions in the centre of the country.
• On 19 August the Syrian army attacks rebel positions in east Damascus.
• On 20 August at least six people are killed by a mortar bomb fired from Eastern Ghouta at the Damascus International Fair.
• On 21 August the Russian air force attacks Daesh targets in Deir-ez-Zor, killing at least 200 fighters.
• On 22 August the number of civilian deaths rises to around a hundred in recent days in Raqqa, the last major Daesh-held Syrian town, due to air strikes attributed by various media outlets to the US-led coalition, which supports the advance of the Syrian-Kurdish forces.
• On 31 August at least 13 FSA members are killed in clashes with Daesh on the outskirts of Raqqa and the Hasaka province.

Lebanon

• On 14 August a convoy of 40 buses with dozens of members of Saraya Ahl al-Sham – part of the FSA – leaves Arsal heading to the Syrian province of eastern Qalamoun. The move comes as part of an agreement reached by Hezbollah with the rebels following a major offensive to clear Arsal.
• On 20 August the Lebanese army launches an offensive to oust Daesh from the Syrian border. On 28 August Lebanon calls a temporary ceasefire to negotiate with Daesh.
• On 23 August at least two Fatah members are killed in clashes with Islamist groups in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain El-Hilweh, bringing the number of deaths to six in almost a week of disputes, which began on 17 August after the leader of an armed group connected with the Islamist Badr Organization was expelled from the headquarters of the camp’s security force.
• On 30 August the United Nations Security Council approves a one-year extension for the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
• On 31 August the Lebanese army announces the arrest in Arsal of the Syrian Daesh commander Bassel Mohammed Abdel Qader.

Jordan

• On 15 August Jordan holds local elections to elect members of the municipal and local councils. For the first time in the country’s history, Jordanians also vote for the members of the governorate councils.
• On 22 August Jordan opens its first job centre in the Zaatar refugee camp, the biggest in the world.

Egypt

• On 3 August the Interior Ministry reports that at least two people have been killed in an attack on police officers in Eina.
• On 8 August a member of the security forces is killed in clashes with militants connected with Daesh in Qena.
• On 22 August the US denies Egypt 96 million dollars in aid and delays a further 195 million dollars earmarked for the Egyptian army, citing the continued violations of human rights and the country’s ties with North Korea.
• On 28 August Germany and Egypt sign an agreement to cooperate in the fight against irregular migration to Europe.
• On 30 August the press reports the government’s initiative to launch an education and family planning programme in rural areas to slow down the population growth, which the country’s President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi considers a threat to national development.

Libya

• On 15 August the International Criminal Court issues an arrest warrant for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf al-Werfalli, commander of the al-Saqa militia, for war crimes in Benghazi.
• On 21 August the International Organization for Migration reports a fall in the number of migrant arrivals from Libya due to the action of an armed group in Sabratha comprising civilians, policemen and soldiers, which is preventing them from leaving.
• On 23 August at least two civilians and nine members of the Libyan National Army are killed in a Daesh attack in al-Fogha, Jufra.
• On 27 August the oil pipelines blockaded by armed Libyan militiants demanding better economic conditions causes the closure of two oil fields – el Feel and Hamada – and forces the state-owned company NOC to declare force majeure in various places in the country. These closures add to that of the Sharara field, in the previous week.
• On 31 August a Daesh attack on a military checkpoint manned by the Libyan National Army of Khalifa Haftar in Nafliya, leaves four soldiers dead.

Tunisia

• On 18 August the acting Finance Minister Fadhel Abdelkefi resigns after being convicted in a conflicts of interest trial.
• On 27 August the Assembly of the Representatives of the People approves the new unity government presented by the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed.

Algeria

• On 15 August the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika fires the Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune after just three months in the position and appoints as government chief the former Prime Minister and cabinet director of the presidency Ahmed Ouyahia.
• On 31 August two police officers are killed in a Daesh suicide bomb attack in Tiaret.

Morocco

• On 7 August the secretary general of the Authenticity and Modernity Party Ilyas el-Omari resigns.
• On 20 August Mohammed VI pardons a group of Salafists convicted of terrorism and who had voiced “their rejection of extremism,” as part of the 415 pardons granted to mark the anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People.

Mauritania

• On 5 August Mauritania holds its constitutional reform referendum which proposes changes in the national anthem and flag, bringing together in a single body - the Supreme Council of the Fatwa - the High Court, the Islamic Council and the Ombudsman, and removing the
Appendices

Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events

September 2017

In Spain, the government suspends the independence referendum called by the Catalan government. In France, there is a one-day national strike against the labour reform and LR wins in the partial senatorial elections. In Italy, the Parliament passes a law banning fascist propaganda and the former Minister Altero Matteoli is convicted of corruption. In Malta, Adrian Delia is elected leader of the Nationalist Party. In Kosovo, an agreement is reached on the formation of a coalition government. The EU announces the end of the excessive deficit procedure for Greece. In Syria, the FSA ousts Daesh from most of Raqq. In Egypt, the Court of Cassation upholds the life sentence handed down to the former President Mohamed Morsi for spying. The UN special envoy to Libya proposes a roadmap for the country’s transition. Tunisia unveils a new government and its parliament approves the administrative reconciliation law. In Morocco, the trial begins of 21 leaders of the Hirak Movement and clashes break out at the congress of the Istiqal Party.

Spain

- On 7 September the Catalan Parliament passes the law on Legal Transitoriness, the second to be approved by the autonomous parliament with the votes of the pro-independence parties, which contemplates Catalonia breaking away from the rest of Spain. The law regulates how Catalonia will operate during the first months following a win for the yes camp in the independence referendum scheduled for 1 October. On 8 September the Constitutional Court suspends the referendum upholding the appeal filed by the Spanish government. On 15 September the government takes control of the Catalan budget to avoid funds being used for the referendum.
- On 11 September, Catalonia’s national holiday, hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets of Barcelona for the sixth consecutive year to call for a referendum on Catalan independence.

France

- On 5 September the President Emmanuel Macron announces he will fight against illegal immigration and completely reform asylum policy, allowing France to deport illegal immigrants with greater speed.
- On 12 September the General Confederation of Labour leads the first national strike of Emmanuel Macron’s presidency, in protest against the reform of labour rules.
- On 13 September Paris is chosen as the host of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games.
- On 21 September Florian Philippot, considered to be Marine Le Pen’s closest adviser, announces he is leaving the FN amid internal tension in the party, following its defeat in May’s presidential elections.
- On 24 September LR wins with a comfortable majority in the partial elections to renew the Senate. LREM, the President’s party, takes fewer than 30 seats.
- On 28 September thousands of pensioners demonstrate throughout France against Emmanuel Macron’s fiscal policy, fearing a significant fall in their purchasing power due to the announcement of a 1.7% increase in social security contributions.

Italy

- On 12 September faced with signs that fascism is on the rise, the Chamber of Deputies approves a law that bans any kind of propaganda of Italy’s fascist regime or the German Nazi party or which makes direct reference to Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler.
- On 14 September the former Infrastructure and Transport Minister of the government of Silvio Berlusconi, Altero Matteoli, is sentenced to four years in prison and ordered to pay a fine of over 9 million euros for corruption during the MOSE project construction works to protect Venice from flooding.
- On 23 September the M5S elects the Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies Luigi Di Maio as candidate for Prime Minister to run in the next general election.
- On 28 September the public prosecutor asks for the mayoress of Rome Virginia Raggi, from the M5S, to be put on trial for corruption, accused of making a false statement in the appointment of the Head of Tourism of the Italian capital’s town hall.

Malta

- On 17 September Adrian Delia is elected leader of the Nationalist Party, replacing Simon Busuttil, who resigned on 5 June after losing the parliamentary elections.

Slovenia

- On 22 September the Slovenian Prime Minister Miro Cerar cancels his visit to Zagreb scheduled for 27 September after the Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic reiterates before the United Nations General Assembly that Croatia does not accept the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration on the Bay of Piran border dispute.

Croatia

- On 26 September a Croatian court sentences the former Serb paramilitary commander Dragan Vasiljkovic to 15 years in prison for torturing and killing numerous soldiers and civilians in Knin, Glina and Benkovac between 1991 and 1993.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 22 September 86 skulls are taken from a mass grave, belonging to Bosniak and Bosnian Croat victims of the Kori cani Cliffs massacre, for which the ICTY has already sentenced 11 former Bosnian Serb police officers.
Serbia

- On 17 September hundreds of people participate in the gay pride parade in Belgrade. The march is attended by Ana Brnabic, the first woman and the first homosexual to hold the position of Prime Minister in Serbia.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 4 September the nationalist alliance led by the Democratic Party of Kosovo agrees to form a coalition government with the New Kosovo Alliance (AKR), of the magnate Behgjet Pacolli. On 9 September, the new government wins a parliamentary confidence vote.
- On 7 September, Kadi Veseli is elected as parliament speaker thanks to an agreement reached between the coalition government and Lista Srpska, the main Kosovo Serb party, which, in exchange, is given the ministries of Agriculture, Local Government and Returnees.
- On 13 September, the police carry out raids on premises used by the Serbian Red Cross in Kosovska Mitrovica, suspected of being used to organize an illegal population census in North Kosovo, which has a Serb majority.

Greece

- On 25 September the EU announces the end of the excessive deficit procedure imposed on Greece since 2009.

Turkey

- On 5 September the Interior Ministry reports that 185 suspected PKK members were arrested the previous week in Turkey.
- On 7 September the federal attorney of the Southern District of New York accuses the former Finance Minister Zafer Caglayan and former chairman of the state bank Halkbank Suleyman Aslan of conspiring to carry out transactions on behalf of Iran, which have been barred by the US.
- On 12 September the authorities announce the arrest of 63 people, among them several former intelligence agency personnel, suspected of having ties with Fethullah Gulen.
- On 12 September the authorities announce the arrest of 25 people suspected of belonging to Daesh in Istanbul.
- On 13 September Turkey confirms the deal to purchase Russian S-400 surface-to-air missiles despite their incompatibility with NATO radars.
- On 15 September Celal Celik, the lawyer of CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, is arrested at his home in Ankara accused of having ties with the network of Fethullah Gulen and the attempted coup in 2016.
- On 18 September the armed forces initiate military manoeuvres on the Iraqi border a week before the independence referendum is held, called in Iraqi Kurdistan, and which Turkey opposes.
- On 29 September the public prosecutor issues arrest warrants on 117 soldiers over their alleged ties with Fethullah Gulen.

Cyprus

- On 9 September two boats carrying 305 Syrian refugees arrive in Cyprus in one of the largest landings on the island since the beginning of the Syrian conflict.

Syria

- On 5 September the Syrian army announces it has broken Daesh’s three-year siege on Deir ez-Zor.
- On 6 September five months after the bombing of Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib, the United Nations publishes a report in which it refutes Russia’s official version and directly blames the Syrian government for using chemical weapons on the civilian population.
- On 8 September the Russian Defence Ministry reports that it has killed Gulmurod Khalimov in Deir ez-Zor, considered to be Daesh’s “War Minister.”
- On 15 September Russia, Iran and Turkey agree to deploy observers in the de-escalation zone set up in Idlib, a region mostly under the control of Islamist groups.
- On 20 September the FSA says it controls 80% of Raqqah.
- On 21 September the army and its allies launch various attacks against rebel forces north of Hama, after taking back control of various towns and villages in the area.
- On 26 September the former Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem says that the Syrian government would be ready to negotiate with the Syrian Kurds for an autonomous regime within Syrian borders and sovereignty.
- On 30 September Hezbollah announces a further advances of Syrian government troops, which have taken nine Daesh-held positions on the Jordanian border.

Lebanon

- On 9 September the police arrest Ali al-Hujie, the former mayor of Arsal, accused of collaborating with Jabhat Fateh al-Sham.
- On 28 September a military court hands a death sentence to the Salafi preacher Ahmed al-Asir, considered as Daesh’s emir in Lebanon, for forming terrorist cells in Sidon.

Egypt

- On 10 September 10 suspected members of Daesh in Egypt are killed during a raid by security forces in Cairo.
- On 11 September at least 18 police officers are killed in a Daesh attack on a military convoy on the road between al-Qantara and al-Arish, Sinai.
- On 16 September seven people are sentenced to death for belonging to Daesh and their involvement in the beheading of 21 Christians in Libya in February 2015.
- On 16 September the Court of Cassation upholds the life sentence handed to the former President Mohamed Morsi for spying for Qatar.

Libya

- On 20 September the UN envoy to
Libya Ghassan Salame presents his roadmap in New York, which defines different stages prior to the organization of parliamentary elections and which must lead to the drafting and approval of a new constitution within a year.

- On 26 September the US Air Force carries out two airstrikes in the southeast of Sirte killing several members of Daesh.
- On 29 September Abdallah Nattat and Khamis Isbaga, two leaders of the Werfallah tribe, which was allied with Muammar Gaddafi, are assassinated in Bani Walid on their return from a tribal reconciliation meeting in Mizda.

Tunisia

- On 10 September Khalil Zaouia is elected the new secretary general of the Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (Ettakatol) to replace the party’s founder Mustapha Ben Jafar.
- On 14 September the new cabinet ministers are sworn in after a major reshuffle undertaken by the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed. Among them is Mohamed Ridha Chelghoum – Finance; Abdelkarim Zibi – Defence; and Hatem Ben Salem – Education who were ministers during the Ben Ali regime.
- On 14 September the Parliament approves, with a Nidaa Tounes and Ennahda majority, the controversial “administrative reconciliation law” which will allow court trials against civil servants for crimes of corruption committed before the 2011 revolution to be closed if the offence was not for their own benefit.
- On 14 September the Parliament abolishes the 1973 law that banned Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men.
- On 30 September bread makers go on strike to demand an increase in their profit margins and the closure of illegal bakeries.

Morocco

- On 12 September the trial begins in Casablanca of 21 leaders of the protests which, for several months, have shaken Al Hoceima and other places in the Rif region.
- On 27 September the Moroccan Prisons Observatory NGO reports that 37 people arrested for their involvement in the Rif protest movement Hirak have been on hunger strike for the last two weeks to demand their release, a figure that the prison authorities reduces to just three detainees.
- On 29 September clashes break out during the congress of the Istiqal Party between supporters of the candidates for secretary general Hamid Chabat and Nizar Baraka. The incidents lead to the congress being suspended until 7 October.

EU

- On 1 September the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement comes into force.
- On 9 September thousands demonstrate in London against Brexit, two days before the British Parliament votes in favour of the law which revokes European legislation in the United Kingdom.
- On 26 September the French President Emmanuel Macron proposes a stronger Franco-German axis to which other Member States can join in order to build a kind of European United States as an alternative to the current rise in nationalist movements. The project would include a single budget for the eurozone, a European Finance Minister, a single taxation system, a European military body, a European border agency, a European university network and a far-reaching institutional reform of the Union.
- On 27 September the Commission proposes the possibility of extending the temporary checks on the internal borders of the Schengen area by three years, if there is a threat to internal security.

Arab League

- On 29 September the secretary general of the Arab League Ahmed Abul Gheit offers Iraq his assistance to keep the country together following an independence referendum held on 25 September in Iraqi Kurdistan, in which the ‘yes’ vote wins by 93%.

October 2017

Portugal

- On 1 October Portugal holds municipal elections. In Lisbon and Porto, the socialist Fernando Medina and independent Rui Moreira win respectively. In light of the poor results obtained by the Social Democratic Party (PSD, conservative), on 3 October Pedro Passos-Coelho announces that he will not run for reelection as president of the party.
- On 11 October after three years of investigation, the public prosecutor indicts the former socialist Prime Minister Jose Socrates on charges of 31 counts of passive corruption, 16 counts of money laundering, nine counts of document forgery and three counts of tax fraud. Together with Socrates, 19 people and nine companies are charged in the so-called ‘Operation Marquis.’
- On 16 October Portugal declares a state of catastrophe over the more than 500 wildfires raging through the northern half of the country, in which at least 38 people have lost their lives. On 18 October the Internal Administration Minister Constança Urbano de Sousa resigns, criticized for her management in putting out the fires. She is replaced by Eduardo Cabrita.

Spain

Catalonia and Asturias are also affected by the severe fires and in Catalonia a referendum is held on independence, which is declared unconstitutional and leads to the dissolution of the autonomous government. In France, the National Assembly approves an anti-terror law and there is a national strike. In Italy, the new electoral law is approved and Veneto and Lombardy hold referendums for greater autonomy. In Malta, the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is murdered. Slovenia holds the first round of presidential elections. Croatia announces its intention to adopt the euro within the next eight years. The agreement between Kosovo and Serbia enters into force to unify the Kosovo legal system. In Sina, Raqqa is liberated from Daesh. In Jordan, the National Current Party announces its dissolution. In Libya, Benghazi port resumes activity. In Algeria, the Parliament authorizes the Central Bank to lend directly to the Public Treasury. In Morocco, Mohammed VI fires four ministers.
• On 24 October the Prime Minister Antonio Costa survives a no-confidence vote tabled by the Social Democratic Centre - People’s Party (CDS-PP) over the management of the wildfires.

Spain

• On 1 October the independence referendum is held, called by the Catalan government, despite being outlawed by the Constitutional Court and the government’s actions to prevent it from taking place. The actions taken by the national police and civil guard against citizens trying to participate in the referendum leaves 800 injured. The referendum organizers announce that more than two million people have voted with 90% of the votes in favour of independence.
• On 3 October a general strike and a large-scale march called by the Catalan government protests against the actions taken by the authorities to stop the referendum on 1 October.
• On 8 October hundreds of thousands of people demonstrate in Barcelona in favour of Spanish unity.
• On 16 October the National Court orders the heads of the pro-independence platforms Omnium Cultural and the Catalan National Assembly to be held without bail for sedition.
• On 16 October 150 fires have been declared in Galicia and Asturias in recent days.
• On 17 October Spain is elected member of the UN Human Rights Council for the period 2018-2020.
• On 20 October a large demonstration demands the release of the leaders of the pro-independence platforms Omnium Cultural and the Catalan National Assembly.
• On 27 October the Catalan Parliament declares unilateral independence, which it then suspends in the hopes of mediation with the central government. The Spanish Senate authorizes the immediate activation of the constitution’s Article 155, which foresees the temporary seizure of the Catalan government, early elections to be held in Catalonia, the dissolution of the regional government for sedition and gives the central government the capacity to veto any anti-constitutional initiative of the Catalan Parliament.
• On 29 October a demonstration in Barcelona calls for Spanish unity and denounces Catalonia’s unilateral declaration of independence.
• On 30 October the former Catalan President travels to Belgium faced with the Spanish public prosecutor’s imminent charges of sedition and rebellion.

France

• On 1 October a man with links to Daesh kills two women in Marseille, crying out “Allah is the greatest,” after which he is shot dead by a military patrol.
• On 3 October the National Assembly approves the counter-terrorism bill which will end the state of emergency in force since November 2015, authorizes the police to carry out searches without judicial oversight, creates designated areas where citizens can be asked for identification and authorizes the government to limit the free movement of suspects.
• On 10 October civil servants go on strike against the government’s planned salary freezes and staff cuts.
• On 27 October Emmanuel Macron visits Guiana amid demonstrations and violent clashes in Cayenne, led by the social movement Pou Lagwiyann Dékolé (PLD) which is calling for socioeconomic improvements.

Italy

• On 12 October the Chamber of Deputies approves the new electoral law that introduces a mix of proportional representation and first-past-the-post voting, despite opposition from M5S, Italy’s thriving second political party, which will be negatively affected by the new law that favours the formation of coalitions, a practice that M5S opposes. On 26 October the law is definitively approved by the Senate.
• On 22 October Veneto and Lombardy each hold non-binding referendums to ask for greater autonomy, particularly fiscal autonomy, within Italy. The ‘yes’ vote wins in Veneto with 98.1% of the vote and a 57.2% turnout and also in Lombardy with 95.29% of the vote and a 38.26% turnout.

Malta

• On 6 October Adrian Delia becomes the new leader of the parliamentary opposition weeks after being appointed leaders of the Nationalist Party on 17 September. Delia replaces Simon Busuttil in both positions, who resigned after the party’s poor electoral result in June.
• On 16 October the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is killed by the blast from a bomb planted in her car. Caruana Galizia had a famous blog in which she denounced cases of corruption in the upper echelons of national politics. On 22 October thousands of Maltese demonstrate as a sign of unity following the journalist’s assassination. After the demonstration, the President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca receives the organizers, who call for the dismissal of the police commissioner and public prosecutor.

Slovenia

• On 22 October Slovenia holds the first round of presidential elections. The outgoing President Borut Pahor and the mayor of Kamnik Marjan Sarec go through to the second round, which will be held in November.

Croatia

• On 16 October the police arrest Ivan Črnjac, former vice-chairman of Agrokor, together with other senior figures of the processed food holding, currently being bailed out by the State, faced with bankruptcy and serious irregularities in its accounts.
• On 18 October the President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović travels to Russia to present the Three Seas Initiative to Vladimir Putin and negotiate the payment of a debt incurred by Agrokor with the Russian state-owned bank Sberbank and VTB Bank, which is over a billion euros.
• On 30 October the Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic announces that his intention is for Croatia to adopt the euro within the next eight years.
Bosnia and Herzegovina
- On 9 October Naser Oric, the Bosnian army commander in Srebrenica during the Bosnian War is cleared of committing war crimes against Serbs.
- On 18 October the Bosnian Serb Parliament proclaims the military neutrality of the Republika Srpska, looking to contravene the moves taken by the federal government to request Bosnia’s entry into NATO.

Serbia
- On 3 October Greece, Romania and Bulgaria express their support for Serbia’s candidacy for European accession.
- On 19 October the agreement between Serbia and Kosovo enters into force to unify the justice system in Kosovo.
- On 27 October Surinam informs Kosovo of the withdrawal of its recognition of Kosovo’s independence.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244
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FYROM
- On 15 and 29 October the first and second rounds of local elections are held. VMRO-DPMNE goes from holding 56 municipalities to just seven. SDSM wins in 57 municipalities.

Albania
- On 7 October the Prime Minister Edi Rama unveils the 33 deputy ministers of this government, which include four Kosovars; a gesture interpreted as a declaration of intent from Tirana to increase its regional influence.
- On 25 October the Parliament blocks the public prosecutor’s request to lift the parliamentary immunity of the former Interior Minister Saimir Tahiri to proceed with his arrest for suspected drug smuggling.
- On 30 October the intelligence chief Visho Ajazi Lika resigns, appointed in 2012 by the former Prime Minister Sali Berisha and the target of accusations made by the Socialist Party of practices against the current socialist government.

Greece
- On 10 October the Parliament passes a new law allowing people to change their gender on official documents.

Turkey
- On 4 October 34 people are sentenced to life imprisonment for planning to assassinate the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the attempted coup in 2016.
- On 5 October the government orders the arrest of 133 civil servants for their involvement in the attempted coup in 2016.
- On 23 October Melih Gökçek, the mayor of Ankara since 1994, announces his resignation in light of Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s bid to renew the AKP’s longest-serving mayors.
- On 25 October the former Interior Minister Meral Akşener presents her new centre-right political party İyiparti (Good Party), formed by dissidents of the nationalist MHP.
- On 26 October 10 human rights activists accused of collaboration with armed groups are released on bail, among them the local director of Amnesty International İdil Eser.
- On 26 October the police begin operations to arrest 121 former civil servants of the Foreign Ministry for ties with Fethullah Gülen.
- On 28 October the police arrest more than 60 people suspected of having ties with Daesh.

Cyprus
- On 26 October the Cypriot MP Stella Kyriakides is appointed president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, replacing the Spaniard Pedro Agramont, who resigned on 6 October after the crisis sparked by his visit to Syria with Russian MPs, during which they met with Bashar al-Assad days before the chemical attack on Khan Sheikhoun on 4 April.

Syria
- On 2 October two terrorists blow themselves up in a police station in al-Midan, Damascus, killing 17 people.
- On 8 October al-Mayadin, currently Daesh’s main base in Syria, is surrounded by government troops.
- On 7 October Turkey initiates a military operation to support FSA in the province of Idlib, which is mostly controlled by the Syrian division of al-Qaeda.
- On 18 October the complete fall of Raqqaa, the last jihadist stronghold in Syria, is confirmed, faced with the advance of government troops and the FSA.
- On 24 October in the United Nations Security Council Russia vetoes the extension of the UN’s Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPAQ). On 27 October the JIM concludes in its last report that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons in Khan Sheikhoun claiming 86 lives.
- On 30 - 31 October Astana hosts the seventh round of Syrian peace talks mediated by Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Lebanon
- On 20 October the Judicial Council sentences in absentia Habib Chartuni and Nabil al-Alam to death for their involvement in the 1982 assassination of the President Bashir Gemayel.

Jordan
- On 2 October Human Rights Watch accuses Jordan of summary group deportations of Syrian refugees.
- On 17 October the reformist National Current Party, Jordan’s strongest centrist party, announces its dissolution.

Egypt
- On 1 October the Supreme Council for Media Regulation orders a ban on any kind of support of the LGBT community saying that homosexuality is a “shameful disease.”
- On 13 October six soldiers are killed in a Daesh attack in al-Arish, northern Sinai.
- On 15 October at least six soldiers and 24 jihadis are killed in a terrorist attack in the northeast of al-Arish.
- On 20 October at least 58 police officers are killed in an anti-terror raid in Bahariya.
**Libya**

- On 1 October Benghazi port reopens after being closed for three years because of fighting in the city.
- On 7 October more than 3,000 migrants are arrested close to Sabrata.
- On 22 October a new round of negotiations comes to a close without an agreement in Tunisia, between the Tripoli and Tobruk authorities. The biggest obstacle is the constitution of a unified army.
- On 31 October at least 17 people are killed in an airstrike on Derna, a city controlled by Islamist militias which has been under siege for over a year by Khalifa Haftar’s forces.

**Tunisia**

- On 3 October the former Prime Minister Ali Larayedh is cleared of responsibility in the police intervention during a strike in Siliana in 2012 when he was Interior Minister.
- On 8 October the Health Minister Slim Chaker dies of a heart attack.

**Algeria**

- On 8 October the Parliament authorizes the Central Bank to lend directly to the Public Treasury to contain the country’s economic crisis.

**Morocco**

- On 7 October the Court of Cassation assumes control of the public prosecution office, until now controlled by the Ministry of Justice.
- On 8 October Nizar Baraka is elected secretary general of Istiqlal, to replace Hamid Chabat.
- On 14 October a Daesh cell is dismantled in Fez, which was planning attacks in Morocco.
- On 22 October Ilyas el-Omari, returns to the head of the PAM, after having announced his resignation on 7 August.
- On 24 October Mohammed VI fires the Ministers of Education; Housing and Territorial Management; and Health over delays in development programmes in Al Hoceima.

**EU**

- On 5 October the European Parliament approves the creation of a European public prosecutor to fight fraud.

**November 2017**

In Spain, the National Court sends eight ministers of the Catalan government to prison without bail. In France, there is a government reshuffle. In Italy, elections are held in Sicily and Ostia. Slovenia holds the second round of presidential elections. The ICTY hands life sentences to the former Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladic. Serbia and Albania receive positive assessments from the EC in their accession process. In Kosovo, local elections are held. In FY-ROM, two deputies are arrested for the clashes in April in the Parliament. In Greece, a new centre-left alliance is created. In Syria, the army declares Deir ez-Zor as fully liberated and announces a ceasefire in Eastern Ghouta. The Lebanese Prime Minister announces his resignation, which is then put on hold. In Egypt, the succession of terrorist attacks in Sinai reaches horrific heights with the Bir al-Abed massacre. In Libya, footage is released of mass sales of migrants as slaves. Algeria holds local elections. In Morocco, there are new dismissals.

**Portugal**

- On 17 November Portugal announces a new early repayment of 2.78 billion euros of the financial aid received from the IMF in 2011, which was to expire in 2020 and 2021. Portugal has already paid back 76% of the total 26 billion euros it received.

**Spain**

- On 2 November the National Court sends eight former Catalan government ministers to jail without bail after they make a statement in favour of Catalonia’s pro-independence process. The court also orders the extradition of the former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and a further four ministers, who have travelled to Brussels, and who appear voluntarily before a Belgian court.
- On 11 November hundreds of thousands demonstrate in Barcelona to call for the release of the presidents of the pro-independence platforms and the Catalan government ministers, who remain in custody.

**France**

- On 3 November France and New Caledonia agree to hold a referendum on New Caledonian independence within the next year.
- On 8 November the National Assembly lifts the parliamentary immunity of Marine Le Pen for the court investigations into the FN leader’s social media posts in 2015 of images of executions carried out by Daesh.
- On 24 November the President Emmanuel Macron reshuffles the government. Christophe Castaner, named as the new LREM leader, will continue as Secretary of State for Parliamentary Relations but is replaced as government spokesman by Benjamin Griveaux. The socialist MP Olivier Dussopt takes over as Secretary of State for Public Action and Delphine Gény-Stephann Secretary of State for Economy and Finance.

**Italy**

- On 5 November the candidate from the coalition between Forza Italia, Diver tera Bellissima, Liga Norte and Brothers of Italy, Nello Musumeci, wins the Sicilian elections (39.85%). The M5S is the single most voted party (34.6%). The governing Democratic Party (PD), wins barely over 18%.
- On 17 November Salvatore ‘Totò’ Riina, the Sicilian mafia’s main boss between 1974 and 1993, dies of natural causes in a prison in Parma, where he was serving 26 life sentences.
- On 19 November Giudiana di Pillo (M5S) wins the Ostia municipal elections, whose government was dissolved due to mafia infiltration in 2015.
- On 24 November the EC announces the release of an additional 39.92 million euros in emergency assistance for Italy to control the mass migrant arrivals.
Slovenia

- On 12 November Borut Pahor (52.93%) beats Marjan Sarec (47.07%) in the second round of the presidential elections.

Croatia

- On 7 November Ivica Todoric, found-er of Agrokor, hands himself into the British authorities in London, who proceed with his arrest on a international arrest warrant issued by Croatia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 7 November the United Nations Security Council extends its EU mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eufor Althea, for another year.
- On 10 November the Republika Srpska and Serbia sign a “Declaration on the survival of the Serbian nation.” On 21 November, the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic explicitly reminds the Bosnian Serb entity that under no circumstances is Belgrade seeking an annexation.
- On 22 November the former Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladic is given a life sentence by the ICTY for crimes of war in the siege of Sarajevo and genocide in the Srebrenica massacre.
- On 29 November during the ruling against six Bosnian Croats for crimes of war, one of them, Slobodan Praljak, protests his sentence by lethally poisoning himself in front of the disconcerted court.

Montenegro

- On 1 November Russia rejects Montenegro’s extradition request for Ananije Nikic, accused of conspiring to overthrow the government and to whom Moscow has granted refugee status.

Serbia

- On 16 November the EU-Serbia Sta-bilization and Association Council high-lights the progress made by Serbia for accession to the Union, especially regard-ing the presidential elections held in April and the opening of an internal dialogue on Kosovo.

Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 17 November a court in Pristina sentences the Vetëvendosje MP Frasher Krasniqi to eight years in prison for launching a grenade at the Parliament building in August 2016.
- On 19 November after the second round of local elections, Vetëvendosje takes Pristina, Prizren and Kamenica. There are also good results for LDK, which wins eight municipalities, and the governing AAK, which increases the number of municipalities it controls from three to seven. The PDK, however, drops from 10 to five municipalities.
- On 21 November Guinea-Bissau re-vokes its recognition of Kosovo’s independence.
- On 23 November Kosovo’s President declares the 28 November a holiday, Independence Day in neighbouring Albania.
- On 24 November Madagascar recognizes Kosovo’s independence.

FYROM

- On 15 November the Parliament approves a draft law making Albanian the second official language, despite opposi-tion from VMRO-DPMNE.
- On 28 November VMRO-DPMNE supporters protest outside the Skopje Criminal Court against the arrest of three of its MPs, as well that of the former police chief and several officers sacked on 11 November for their inaction or responsi-bility in the violence in the Parlia-ment on 27 April.

Albania

- On 15 November the EU-Albanian Stabilization and Association Council recognizes Albania’s progress and en-courages Tirana to continue to apply the reform of its judicial system.

Greece

- On 13 November the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announces 1.4 billion euros in aid for the “people who need it most.”
- On 19 November the Greek centrist elect Fofi Gennimata to lead the centre-left alliance, which includes PASOK, led by Gennimata, the Democratic Socialist Movement, Democratic Left and To Pota-mi, to win back voters who switched to Syriza.

Turkey

- On 2 November eight members of the security forces and five PKK terrorists are killed in fighting in Hakkari.
- On 9 November the police arrest 101 people in Ankara suspected of having links with Daesh.
- On 18 November all public film screenings, events or exhibitions related with LGBT issues are banned in Ankara to protect “public security.”
- On 29 November the public prosecutor issues arrest warrants on 360 suspects thought to be supporting the Fethullah Gülen network from within the army.

Cyprus

- On 3 November around 175 migrants are rescued off the Cypriot coast.

Syria

- On 3 November the Syrian army re-takes the last Daesh controlled sectors of Deir ez-Zor with Russian support.
- On 4 November at least 75 people are killed in a Daesh attack in an area between the Koniko gas fields and al-Jafka where people displaced by fighting in Deir ez-Zor are camped.
- On 8 November the Syrian army takes Albu Kamal, close to Iraq and Daesh’s last bastion in Syria.
- On 15 November the Syrian army, with Russian support, begins several days of bombing on Eastern Ghouta, controlled by armed opposition Islamist groups.
- On 21 November Bashar al-Assad meets in Moscow with his counterpart Vladimir Putin, who congratulates him on his “achievements in the fight against terrorism” and predicts a quick end to the armed conflict in Syria, paving the way to a “political solution.”
- On 22 November during the opening session of a conference in Riyadh between representatives of the Syrian opposition in preparation for the next round
of peace talks in Geneva, the Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir assures that his country will back the Syrian opposition in unifying against the Syrian regime.

- On 22 November the Syrian government celebrates the final declaration of the trilateral Sochi summit between Russia, Turkey and Iran, where it is agreed to launch a new peace process in Syria which respects the country’s sovereignty, independence and integrity.
- On 26 November at least 53 civilians are killed in Russian airstrikes in al-Shifa, a Daesh-held town in Deir ez-Zor.
- On 28 November the United Nations special envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura announces an agreement for a ceasefire in Eastern Ghouta.
- On 28 November the eighth round of talks begins in Geneva between the Syrian government and the opposition. The role of the President Bashar al-Assad in the future is still the main sticking point in the negotiations.
- On 28 November Jabhat Fateh al-Sham announces the detention in Syria of several senior figures from factions loyal to al-Qaeda’s Ayman Zawahiri, Bin Laden’s successor, and that the detainees will appear before an Islamic court.

Lebanon

- On 2 November the Prime Minister Saad Hariri appoints the first Lebanese ambassador to Syria since 2011, in a decision criticized by his own government, believing it legitimizes the Syrian regime.
- On 4 November Saad Hariri announces, from Riyadh, his intention to resign citing fears of a plot to kill him. Hariri points to Iran and Hezbollah and their ambitions to control Lebanon. On 22 November after a tour to Paris, Cairo and Nicosia, Hariri announces in Beirut that he will not resign, as requested by the President Michel Aoun, who accuses Saudi Arabia of pressuring Hariri to step down and holding him in Riyadh, an accusation also made by Hezbollah. Hariri asks all political powers to stay out of regional conflicts.

Jordan

- On 13 November UNHCR reports that Jordan has begun operation of the world’s largest solar plant to provide power for the Zaatar refugee camp.

Egypt

- On 6 November the security forces raided the printing house where material was prepared for the candidacy of left-wing lawyer Khaled Ali for the 2018 presidential elections.
- On 8 November the Court of Cassation upholds the full five-year jail sentence for Alaa Abdel Fattah, one of the leaders of the 2011 revolution.
- On 24 November a group of men carry out an attack on the al-Rawda Sufi mosque in Bir al-Abd. The attack, attributed to Daesh, leaves at least 311 people dead, practically all of the village’s male inhabitants. On 29 November, the President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi orders the army to use “all force necessary” to guarantee security throughout Sinai in the next three months.
- On 28 November a military court sentences 11 members of Daesh in Sinai for various attacks in 2014 and 2015.

Libya

- On 30 November the African Union assures that it will take immediate action to repatriate 3,800 immigrants in Libya because of the inhumane conditions they are subjected to, after, on 21 November, footage is released proving the existence of slave markets in the country.

Tunisia

- On 1 November two police officers are stabbed outside the Parliament by a man identified as a Salafist by the authorities, who is arrested after the assault.

Algeria

- On 23 November Algeria holds local and regional elections with a low turnout of 34% and which are won by the National Liberation Front.
- On 26 November the Parliament approves the 2018 budgets which foresee a 7.9% increase in social spending, a decision that contradicts the agreement between the government and the Parliament to reduce the budget deficit during the three-year period of 2016-2019. Only article 12 of the text, which provided for a wealth tax, is removed. A tax on oil products is approved as well as a 1% tax on imports.

Morocco

- On 7 November Morocco launches its first satellite, Mohammed VI-A, from the European spaceport in Kourou.
- On 13 November seven secretary generals are fired by Mohammed VI for their responsibility in the delays of development programmes in the Rif region.
- On 26 November the PJD National Assembly votes against Abdelilah Benkirane running for reelection as secretary general.

Mauritania

- On 2 November the G5-Sahel’s anti-terror security force begins operations.
- On 8 November there are demonstrations calling for the execution of the blogger Mohamed Ould Mjetir, sentenced in 2014 for apostasy.

EU

- On 12 November 23 Member States agree to create a European defence force.
- On 20 November as a consequence of Brexit, it is announced that the European Medicines Agency and the European Banking Authority will relocate from London to Amsterdam and Paris respectively.
- On 23 November the EC announces its plan to enhance the European capacities to react to natural disasters, following the wave of wildfires in Portugal.
- On 28 November the United Kingdom and the EU reach an agreement on the amount that London must pay to leave the EU, which will be somewhere between 45 and 55 billion euros.

Arab League

- On 19 November the Arab League warns that it will denounce Iran’s interference in the internal politics of various Arab states to the UN and declares Hezbollah a terrorist organization.
December 2017

In Spain, Catalonia holds early elections in the context of the independence crisis. In France, Corsica holds elections and LR elect a new leader. The ruling of the Court of Arbitration of The Hague on the border dispute between Slovenia and Croatia comes into force. Serbia and Montenegro open new chapters in their European accession negotiations. New efforts are made in the negotiations between Greece and FYROM to resolve the naming dispute. In FYROM, the main opposition party elects a new president.
In Greece, there is a national strike against the austerity measures. Russia begins the withdrawal of its forces in Syria, while the regime forces consolidate their progress. Lebanon calls parliamentary elections for 2018. In Egypt, the former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik is deported from the United Arab Emirates and Daesh carries out an attack on the Mar Mina Coptic church. In Libya, the mayor of Misrata is assassinated and Khalifa Haftar declares that the mandate of the interim unity government has expired. In Tunisia, the coalition government crisis worsens.

Portugal

- On 28 December Portugal approves raising the minimum salary to 580 euros, a 4.12% increase.

Spain

- On 4 December the Supreme Court decides to keep the former Catalan Vice-President Oriol Junqueras and the leaders of the pro-independence associations ANC and Omnium Cultural in prison, without bail. The other six former Catalan ministers can be released on a bail of 100,000 euros for each.
- On 5 December the Supreme Court withdraws its European arrest warrant on the former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and former ministers, who travelled to Belgium, fearing that the Belgian courts could limit the charges Spain is pressing against them.
- On 11 December Julian Sanchez Melgar is appointed state prosecutor following the sudden death of his predecessor Jose Manuel Maza in Buenos Aires on 19 November.
- On 21 December Catalonia holds early regional elections, called by the central government and following the unilateral declaration of independence, which enjoy a historic turnout of 81.94%. Citizens (unionist) wins with 25.37% of the votes and 37 seats, 12 more than in the previous elections. However, the total number of seats of the three pro-independence parties -Together for Catalonia (21.65%, 34 seats), the Republican Left of Catalonia (21.39%, 32 seats) and Popular Unity Candidacy (4.45%, 4 seats) gives this block a parliamentary majority.

France

- On 3 and 10 December Corsica holds regional elections, which gives an absolute majority to Gilles Simeoni’s nationalist coalition Pe a Corsica which wins 41 of the 63 seats in the regional assembly.
- On 4 December a court in Paris announces the trial of the heads, between 2011 and 2014, of the Franco-Swiss group LafargeHolcim, the world’s largest producer of construction materials, accused of financing Daesh and buying oil from the organization to keep their cement factory in Jalabiya in operation, despite the EU embargo.
- On 10 December the regional President of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Laurent Wauquiez, is elected president of LR with 74.64% of the vote.

Italy

- On 5 December 25 people are arrested in Palermo for belonging to Cosa Nostra, including Maria Angela Di Trapani, who, according to the authorities, was trying to reorganize the leadership of the Sicilian mafia after the death of Toto Riina.
- On 14 December after eight months of political tension, Italy approves the “living will,” a law that regulates assisted death for the terminally ill, and which Italians have been call for for some time, particularly following the case of the DJ Fabiano Antoniani, who ended his life in March in a Zurich clinic through euthanasia.

- On 20 December the FPO, a far-right partner in the government of the Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, announces its intention to grant Austrian citizenship to the German-speaking inhabitants of the Italian region of South Tyrol, a territory which until the end of World War I belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- On 23 December the Senate gives its final approval for the 2018 budget, which foresees incentives for companies to hire young staff and the renovation of civil servants agreements.

Slovenia

- On 30 December Slovenia officially begins exercising its sovereignty over the areas of the Bay of Piran that it was attributed in June under a ruling of the Court of Arbitration of the Hague on the border dispute with Croatia. There are no major incidents despite Zagreb’s request to Ljubljana not to apply any measure unilaterally which changes the pre-ruling status quo, due to Croatia’s rejection of the court’s decision.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 21 December after 24 years of activity, more than 10,000 days of trials, 161 indictments and thousands of witnesses of the Yugoslav War, the ICTY closes its doors considering its work to be completed.

Montenegro

- On 11 December the EU and Montenegro open chapters 2 and 3 on the freedom of movement for workers and the right to establish and freedom to provide services in its accession negotiations.

Serbia

- On 11 December the EU and Serbia open chapters 6 and 30 on company law and economic relations with foreign countries, in its accession negotiations.

FYROM

- On 11 December the DF, the main opposition party, announces that it is
resuming parliamentary activity after a year’s boycott in protest against the results of the 2016 October elections and the trial underway against some of its members suspected of participating in an attempted coup during said election.

- On 11 - 12 December Greece and FYROM resume negotiations in Brussels to resolve the naming dispute.
- On 19 December the special anti-corruption prosecutor presses charges against 17 former senior officials for abuse of power, influence peddling and fraud. Parallel to this, the special prosecutor Katica Janeva requests that the mandate of the special prosecutor be extended beyond 2020 due to the magnitude and amount of cases to be investigated.
- On 23 December VMRO-DPMNE appoints Hristijan Mickovski president of the party to replace Nikola Gruevski, who resigned on 11 December.

**Albania**

- On 18 December a parliamentary majority elects Arta Marku as public prosecutor to replace Adriatik Llija, whose mandate expired in December, amid smoke bombs thrown by opposition MPs and clashes between police and protesters against the election taking place before the formation of the High Prosecutorial Council, the body, according to the constitution, which should be charged with said appointment.

**Greece**

- On 14 December trade unions lead a general strike against the parliamentary approval of the 2018 budget, which foresees major cuts in social spending and tax hikes, which are approved by a Syriza and Independent Greeks majority.

**Turkey**

- On 1 December security forces report that nearly 100 PKK members have been killed between 24 and 30 November. Throughout December there are fresh operations against the terrorist organization in different parts of the country.
- On 13 December a total of 64 people are given prison sentences -18 of them life sentences- for their alleged ties with Fethullah Gülen.
- On 17 December the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says that Turkey will open an embassy in East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, as recognized by Ankara.
- On 28 December 46 suspected Daesh members are arrested in various operations in Bursa and Konya.
- On 27 December 170 people are arrested in 29 provinces for their links with the Fethullah Gülen network and involvement in the attempted coup in 2016. More than 50,000 people have been arrested and around 150,000 public workers sacked under these charges since July 2016.

**Syria**

- On 2 December several Arab media outlets report an attack on Syrian army targets close to Damascus by Israeli jets from Lebanese airspace, whose main target is actually an Iranian military base close to al-Qiswa.
- On 4 December Israeli warplanes attack areas of Jamaraia, close to Damascus, including a research centre and weapons storage facility of the regime and its allies.
- On 11 December the Russian President Vladimir Putin arrives in Syria on an official visit and orders the withdrawal of Russian forces deployed in the country.
- On 14 December the chief negotiator of the Syrian government Bashar al-Jafari accuses the opposition and its international partners, including Saudi Arabia, of sabotaging the UN-led peace talks in Geneva, which end without results.
- On 22 December in the context of the Astana talks, Russia, Iran and Turkey agree on the creation of a working group for prisoner exchange in Syria.
- On 27 December after advancing on Beit Yin, the Syrian army gives rebels on the outskirts of Mount Hermon, close to the border with Israel and Lebanon, an ultimatum to surrender.
- On 30 December the FSA expel Daesh from Ghariani, Kashikia and Abu Hamam, in the Deir ez-Zor governorate.

**Lebanon**

- On 15 December the Interior Minister signs the decree that sets the next parliamentary elections for 6 May 2018.
- On 28 December the Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil sparks a political storm in his country by stating in an interview that Israel has the right to exist as a state.

**Jordan**

- On 26 December Abdullah II announces that his brothers –Prince Ali and Prince Talal– and his cousin –Prince Faisal–, all high-ranking officials in the military, will retiring from the armed forces, according to the King, as part of a plan to restructure the army to reduce costs and create a more effective force to fight against terrorism.

**Egypt**

- On 2 December the former Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik, the last in Hosni Mubarak’s regime, is arrested in the United Arab Emirates and deported to Egypt after announcing his intention to run in the presidential elections.
- On 13 December a court in Cairo sentences the Egyptian singer Shaima Ahmed to two years in prison for sexually explicit content in a music video.
- On 29 December at least nine people are killed in a Daesh attack on the Mar Mina Coptic church, in Helwan.
- On 29 December a Daesh attack on a bank in el-Arish, in northern Sinai, leaves two people dead. Throughout December, there are various attacks in Sinai against the armed forces, as well as several anti-jihadist military operations.
- On 30 December a court in Cairo sentences the former President Mohamed Morsi again to three years in prison, this time for insulting the judiciary.

**Libya**

- On 12 December Amnesty International accuses European governments of complicity in the arrests of migrants in Libya, denouncing the European assistance to the country’s coastguards involved, according to the NGO, in human trafficking.
• On 17 December the marshal Khalifa Haftar declares that the UN-backed interim unity government has expired, after the period stipulated in the agreement signed in Morocco in December 2015, which facilitated its creation, comes to an end. Haftar also insinuates that he might run in the elections scheduled for 2018.
• On 17 DecemberMohamad Eshtewi, the mayor of Misrata, is kidnapped and murdered by an unknown assailant.
• On 26 December armed men blow up an oil pipeline transporting crude oil to the port of Sidra, reducing Libya’s daily production by around 100,000 barrels.
• On 26 December the unity government announces that the displaced people of Tawergha, a city that was looted during the period stipulated in the agreement and the road map of the current unity government.

Mauritania
• On 21 December five people are handed a three-month suspended prison sentence after participating in a protest march against the constitutional reforms.
• On 18 December Action against Hunger warns that more than a million people will be in danger of suffering from a food crisis in 2018 in Mauritania and Senegal because of the severe drought of recent months.

EU
• On 4 December pressure from the Northern Ireland unionists from the DUP, government partners with the British Conservative Party, prevents an agreement being reached with Brussels on the terms of the United Kingdom’s exit from the Union, because of their opposition to a special regime for Northern Ireland to alleviate the effects of reestablishing the border between the two Irelands after Brexit.
• On 7 December the Commission decides to bring Hungary before the European Court of Justice for non-compliance of its obligations on migration, as well as for laws on NGOs and higher education.
• On 13 December the British Parliament approves an amendment that allows it to veto the final agreement on Brexit.
• On 14 December, in Brussels, the European Council confirms the ineffectiveness of mandatory quotas for receiving refugees faced with the lack of an agreement and pressure from the Visegrad Group.
• On 15 December the EU heads of state and government approve the agreement of 8 December, which sets the conditions for Brexit: after the British exit, on 29 March 2019, the country will remain in the customs union and the single market for two more years; EU citizens who have been residing in the United Kingdom since before Brexit will be able to remain in the Union; and the European Court of Justice will continue to have jurisdiction over the country until 2027. The parties can, therefore, begin the second phase of the negotiations on the kind of relations that the EU and the United Kingdom will have after the divorce.
• On 21 December, after numerous warnings, the European Commission, for the first time, triggers article 7 from the Treaty on the EU to sanction Poland for violating democratic principles and the rule of law. Its activation is counteracted, however, by Hungary’s decision to block it.

Arab League
• On 10 December the Arab League agrees to call on the US President Donald Trump to revoke his decision to recognize Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

Gibraltar
• On 28 March the EU rejects Gibraltar’s request for a special status in the EU after Brexit.
• On 31 March the President of the European Council Donald Tusk announces that once Brexit has been finalized, no agreement between the EU and the United Kingdom will apply to Gibraltar without Spain’s consent.

Western Sahara
• On 26 February Morocco withdraws its military units from Guerguerat after the United Nations calls for Rabat and the Polisario to contain the border area, where tensions have been mounting be-
between the parties since the end of 2016. On 5 March, the Polisario announces that it will keep its soldiers in the area in light of “Morocco repeatedly breaking the terms of the ceasefire.”

• On 10 April the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres presents the annual report on the Western Sahara, which calls for new diplomatic efforts to put an end to the conflict, possibly through the holding of a referendum on self-determination, urges the Polisario to withdraw from the Guerguerat area and defends the continued mandate of the UN mission, MINURSO.

• On 28 April the United Nations Security Council adopts a resolution to resume negotiations on the Sahrawi issue and extends the MINURSO mandate to 30 April 2018. The resolution coincides with the Polisario’s withdrawal from Guerguerat.

• On 16 May the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) reduces the food rations it hands out to thousands of Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps by 20%, due to a lack of funds, and appeals to the international community for urgent support.

• On 18 May the Polisario announces the interception in the Panama canal of a ship heading for Canada transporting 55,000 tonnes of phosphates extracted from Sahrawi territory.

• On 1 July Morocco vetoes a report made by the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights due to the inclusion of two clauses on sending a delegation to evaluate the human rights situation in the Western Sahara.

• On 19 July the Sale Appeals Court sentences 23 Sahrawi activists to between two years and life in prison, charged with the death of 11 members of the Moroccan security forces during the dismantling of the Gdeim Izik protest camp in November 2010.

• On 22 August, after Morocco’s consent, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres appoints the former German President Horst Köhler as the new envoy to the Western Sahara, to replace Christopher Ross, whose resignation was announced in March.

• On 23 November the EU and the African Union (AU) announce that the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) will take part in the AU-EU summit in Abidjan on 29 - 30 November. Morocco, which has long been calling for SADR’s exclusion from the AU - a stance which led the country to withdraw from the Pan-African organ between 1984 and 2017 - announces that it will not boycott the summit.

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Chronologies of Events in Israel and Palestine

2017 begins with the announcement in January by the recently elected US President Donald Trump to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. An announcement that, 11 months later, in December, is made final together with Washington’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, despite warnings from practically the entire international community. In the diplomatic sphere, the decision leads the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state and causes friction in the United Nations with the US veto of Egypt’s draft resolution submitted to the Security Council to withdraw the recognition, followed by the United Nations General Assembly’s vote in favour of the resolution pushed forward by Turkey and Yemen to reaffirm that Jerusalem’s future must be resolved through negotiations between the parties. On the street, Donald Trump’s decision triggers protests and new episodes of violence in Gaza and the West Bank at the end of the year, which come after the surge in violence mid-year following Israel’s decision to install security checks and limit access to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount. The drastic and accelerated change in direction of US policy with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects the region’s fragile stability – also marked by a rise in tensions between Syria and Israel in the context of the Syrian conflict – and begins to affect the system of the United Nations itself, with announcements from the US and Israel, during the crisis over Jerusalem’s status, of their readiness to leave UNESCO, due to its “anti-Israel bias” and for having approved Palestine’s membership in 2011. In view of this scenario, the lukewarm attempt by the US Administration to try to resume the peace process between Israel and Palestine offers no significant progress. The rise in regional and international tensions caused by the new US administration’s impulsive politics also contributes to endangering the reconciliation process between Fatah and Hamas that had been making promising progress throughout the year in the context of the electricity supply crisis and unpaid civil servant salaries in the Gaza Strip. This process is sparked by the new political road map adopted by Hamas in May, in a swerve towards more moderate and realistic stances, thereby breaking with the trajectory marked by the founding charter of the Shiite movement in 1988, despite February’s election of Yahya Sinwar as the new leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement. The reconciliation process between Palestinian factions continues to be considered as a critical threat to Israel’s existence by the Israeli government, who, meanwhile, approves the new Amichai/Emek Shilo settlement in the middle of the West Bank – to provide homes for the evacuees from Amona – and new extensions to existing settlements in East Jerusalem, Ariel, Givat Zeev and Beit El. With regard to West Bank settlements, there is also a major development with February’s approval by the Knesset (Parliament) of the Regularization Bill, which will allow the retrospective legalisation of some 4,000 homes in the C Area of the Oslo Accord, but which in August is provisionally suspended by Israel’s Supreme Court. As regards Israel’s home policy, 2017 is also marked by the opposition of the ultra-orthodox Jews, known as haredim, to the legal reform that makes it compulsory for them to do military service – from which, until recently, they were exempt – and the court investigations linking the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his wife Sara and other Likud members to cases of corruption or the government crisis caused by the replacement of the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) with the Israel Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), among other developments.

January 2017

Israel

- On 6 January Israel announces cuts of six million dollars in funds earmarked for the United Nations, in protest against the Security Council’s approval, on 23 December 2016, thanks to the US abstention, of a resolution condemning the Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory. This is one of the last measures taken by the Barack Obama presidency, despite pressure from his successor, the Republican Donald Trump and Israel.

- On 22 January Israel approves the construction of 560 new homes in East Jerusalem.

- On 24 January the Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman reports the approval of 2,500 more homes in the West Bank settlements of Ariel (900 units) and Givat Zeev (652 units), erected right on the Green Line, and in Beit El (100 units), a settlement to which the US President Donald Trump, his new ambassador to Israel David Friedman, and his son-in-law and advisor Jared Kushner, give significant sums of money on a yearly basis, according to the Haaretz newspaper.
February 2017

Israel

- On 1 February Israeli forces begin the eviction of the Amona settlement. Ten Israeli police officers are injured in clashes with settlers attempting to prevent the evacuation ordered by the Israeli Supreme Court, which has ruled that the homes were illegally constructed in Palestine territory.
- On 3 February the new Trump administration in the US issues a statement regarding Israel’s decision in January to build new settlements and expand existing ones. The statement asserts that while the existence of settlements need not be an impediment to peace, the new constructions or the expansion of already existing ones beyond their current boundaries could be.
- On 6 February the Knesset (Parliament) approves the controversial Regulation Bill with 60 votes in favour and 52 against, in connection with the settlements in occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank. The text, drafted with the support of the ultra-Orthodox party and member of the government, Naftali Bennett, will enable the retroactive legalisation of some 4,000 homes in settlements in Area C of the Oslo Accord, which is entirely under Israeli control. Under the new bill the properties can then be declared as state-owned in exchange for economic compensation for the Palestinian owners.
- On 9 February several rockets launched from the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula towards the city of Eilat are intercepted by the Iron Dome defence system. This attack coincides with another similar attack carried out from Syria against the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since 1967, in response to an attack launched against a position close to the Syrian army.
- On 26 February the Israeli police begins evicting the new buildings of the Ofra settlement, illegally constructed on private Palestinian land in the West Bank.

Palestine

- On 13 February after a lengthy and complex process of internal consultations, Hamas appoints Yahya Sinwar as leader of the movement to replace Ismail Haniyeh. Sinwar founded the Majd section, the intelligence unit of Ezzedeen al-Qassam, Hamas’ armed militia, spent 22 years in prison in Israel after being sentenced to life imprisonment for his involvement in various attacks and the murder of Palestinians accused of collaborating with Israel.
- On 26 February, after two days of meetings in Istanbul, the Palestinians Abroad Conference establishes a new political entity to represent the Palestinian diaspora and defend their rights.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 21 February, in a unprecedented verdict, a military court in Tel Aviv sentences sergeant Elor Azaria to 18 months in prison, for shooting a Palestinian assailant in the head and killing him, while he was lying injured on the floor, on 24 March 2016 in Hebron.

March 2017

Israel

- On 17 March the Syrian Armed Forces confirm they have shot down an Israeli military jet, coinciding with an attack launched by the Israeli Air Force against targets in Syrian territory, in what would be the most serious incident between both countries since the beginning of the war in Syria. The same day, the Russian Foreign Minister summons the Israeli ambassador in Moscow Gary Koren over the attacks launched by the Israeli Air Force against Syrian army targets close to the town of Palmyra.
- On 19 March the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatens to call early legislative elections if the Israel Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), the new public television broadcaster to replace the old Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) begins broadcasting on 30 April, in a crisis with the Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon who accuses him of being reluctant to the existence of the new public body, over which the government would have less control. Netanyahu’s political opponents accuse him of using the complaints aimed at the body by employees
over the numerous dismissals arising from the transition from IBA to IBC, as an excuse to deny approval for the new television station.

• On 31 March the Israeli government approves the creation of a new settlement in Amichai, also known as Emek Shilo, to accommodate 42 Jewish families evacuated in early February from the illegal enclave of Amona. This is the first settlement to be newly built in the West Bank in the last 25 years.

Palestine

• On 16 March the Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza announce the formation of a committee to manage the Strip’s government institutions, led by Abdel Salam Siam, the former secretary general of the Hamas Council of Ministers in Gaza, and comprising seven members, each of whom is appointed to oversee a ministry of the Palestinian unity government.

• On 19 March a Hamas military court hands down death sentences to two drug traffickers from the Gaza Strip.

• On 27 March the spokesman for the Interior Ministry of Gaza Iyad al-Bazem announces the closure of the border between Gaza and Israel “until further notice,” while investigations are carried out into the murder, on 24 March in the Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood, of Mazen Fuqaha, the commander of Hamas’ armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades.

Conflicts between the Parties

• On 13 March a Palestinian citizen is shot dead in East Jerusalem by Israeli soldiers after he was stabbed and wounded two soldiers.

• On 23 March the Israel Defence Forces shoot down a Palestinian leaving three others wounded during clashes in Beit El, the West Bank, in which the Palestinians had used molotov cocktails against the Israeli soldiers.

April 2017

Israel

• On 17 April some 1,100 Palestinian prisoners – linked mostly with Fatah and, to a lesser extent, with Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – begin a hunger strike in several Israeli prisons led by the former Fatah militia leader Marwan Barghouti, following the failed negotiations with the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) over the restoration of rights withdrawn in recent years and the end of the preventive detention and isolation systems. The measure is interpreted in Israel and certain sectors of Fatah as a demonstration of Barghouti’s strength compared with the leadership at the heart of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the PNA. On 27 April a general strike is staged in the Palestinian territories in solidarity with the ongoing prisoner protest.

• On 27 April the Israeli Air Force attacks an arms depot allegedly operated by Hezbollah close to the Damascasus airport.

Palestine

• On 6 April, in an unexpected and unprecedented move, the Russian Foreign Minister says he sees West Jerusalem as the future capital of Israel and East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State.

• On 8 April thousands of Palestinian civil servants take to the streets of Gaza to protest against the pay cuts approved by the PNA and demanding the resignation of the Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and the Finance Minister Shukri Bishara. On 11 April Hamdallah, assures that the pay cut for civil servants in the Gaza Strip – which does not affect civil servants in the West Bank – is a “temporary” measure and that the cuts will be reimbursed. Hamdallah attributes the measure to the economic crisis exacerbated by the blockade Israel continues to impose on the Strip and Hamas’ unwavering control over the enclave, which vetoes strategic projects of the Palestinian government, refuses to redistribute taxes among the population or surrender a proportional part to the PNA.

• On 27 April the PNA notifies the Israeli government that it will stop paying for the electricity that Israel supplies the Gaza Strip. The decision, which endangers the precarious economy and medical services in the Strip, forms part of a series of initiatives adopted by the PNA to force Hamas to assume full responsibility for the territory it governs or surrender control to Ramallah, in light of Hamas’ refusal to buy fuel from the PNA for the enclave’s only power plant.

May 2017

Israel

• On 22 May roughly 200 Palestinians imprisoned in Israel join the hunger strike declared by another 1,300 prisoners after the Israeli Prison Service refuses to negotiate over the prisoners’ demands regarding their living conditions, the practice of torture, abuse and medical negligence and the abolition of the so-called administrative detention.

• On 23 May a missile fired from the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt lands in Israeli territory after exploding in the air.

• On 27 May thousands of people demonstrate in Tel Aviv to demand a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

• On 27 May the Palestinian prisoners end their hunger strike after reaching an agreement with the government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Red Cross over visiting rights, according to which, from now on, each prisoner can receive a family visit twice a month instead of once.

• On 31 May the Israeli Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon meets with the Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah in an unusual visit aimed at presenting Hamdallah with a series of proposals, which include the 24-hour opening of the Allenby Bridge border crossing, an increase in the number of building permits for Palestinians living in Area C of the West Bank and greater development in the industrial areas close to the West Bank cities of Jenin and Hebron.

Palestine

• On 1 May Hamas announces its new political roadmap, which amends the 1988 founding charter and which contemplates “more moderate” positions and the implicit recognition of an Israeli state, while at the same time con-
considering the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, with its capital in Jerusalem and the 1967 borders. The organization thereby renounces its historical position which called for a Palestinian state “from Jordan to the Mediterranean.” Hamas, also breaks its historical ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and continues to restructure its leadership with the appointment of the former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, as director of the political office of the Shiite movement. This historic change in direction taken by Hamas comes despite February’s election of Yahya Sinwar as the movement’s new leader, a development which, at the time, was thought to preemt a change towards more radical stances.

- On May 25 Hamas executes two Palestinians by hanging and a third by firing squad, who were convicted of killing one of the heads of the party’s armed wing under Israeli orders.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On May 21 and 22 on his second stop following Saudi Arabia – on his first foreign visit as President of the United States, Donald Trump visits Israel and Palestine meeting in Tel Aviv and Bethlehem with Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas respectively, with the aim of “reviving” the peace process. In this regard, in an interview with the conservative newspaper Israel Hayom, Trump asserts that he is “working very hard to finally achieve peace between the people in Israel and the Palestinians.” For the moment, his electoral promise to transfer the US embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a “red line” for the Palestinians, is put on hold.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On May 18 clashes break out near the Kalandia checkpoint, in the West Bank, between the Israeli security forces and Palestinian demonstrators protesting over the death hours earlier of a Palestinian who was shot by an Israeli settler, whose vehicle had been stoned in Nablus.
- On May 19 a march in support of the Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike since April 17 ends with multiple episodes of unrest between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli security forces in the West Bank – especially in Nablus and the border with the Gaza Strip.
- On May 25 a Palestinian dies two days after being shot down after he stabbed a Border Police officer in Nablus.

**June 2017**

**Israel**

- On June 10 Benjamin Netanyahu demands that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) be shut down following the previous day’s discovery of a secret tunnel under one of the organization’s schools in Gaza. UNRWA denies all responsibility and blames the Islamist movement Hamas.
- On June 19 the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announces the beginning of construction of the new Amichai settlement (Emek Shilo), in the West Bank, which will house the 300 settlers evacuated from the Amona settlement. This is the first Israeli settlement built in Palestinian territory in two decades.
- On June 25 Benjamin Netanyahu orders the suspension of the project to establish a common prayer area for men and women at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.
- On June 29 the parole board of the Maasihyu prison grants the former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert early release after serving two-thirds of his 27-month prison sentence, handed down for crimes of corruption.

**Palestine**

- On June 5 the PNA denies that it has not paid the salaries of 47 Hamas MPs on the same day that representatives of the Islamist prisoners accuse it of stopping the salaries of nearly 300 prisoners in Israeli jails.
- On June 14 with the backdrop of the Qatar crisis, Mousa Abu Marzook, Vice-President of Hamas’ political bureau and Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah’s Secretary General hold a meeting in Beirut, the latest in a series of meetings in an effort to improve relations for the last two months, which, since 2012, have been especially cold.
- On June 15 at least nine Palestinian websites based outside of the West Bank are blocked inside the territory by order of the PNA’s public prosecutor. The blocked pages include the Palestinian Information Center, the Hamas-linked Shehab news agency and the Voice of Fatah – close to Mohammed Dahlan, the Palestinian MP thrown out of Fatah in 2011.
- On June 19 Nabil Abu Rudeineh, the official spokesman of the Palestinian presidency since the days of the President Yasser Arafat, is unanimously appointed as member of the Fatah Central Committee. The appointment of Abu Rudeineh, a Christian Palestinian from Bethlehem, is the latest example of the unique relationship between Fatah and the Palestinian Christians.
- On June 20 Israel’s national power company begins reducing its supply to the Gaza Strip following a decision by Benjamin Netanyahu’s government, taken at the request of the PNA President, Mahmoud Abbas. The Fatah leader’s request to reduce the payment of the Israeli power supply by 40% comes in the context of its dispute with Hamas, which has controlled Gaza for the last 10 years.
- On June 22 the only power plant in the Gaza Strip resumes operation at a reduced capacity, following a fuel delivery from Egypt.

**Peace Negotiations**

- On June 21 Jared Kushner, White House advisor and son-in-law of the US President Donald Trump, holds separate meetings with Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas in an effort to relaunch the peace process.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On June 1 an Israeli soldier is wounded close to the Israeli settlement of Mevo Dotan after being stabbed with a screwdriver by a Palestinian teenager, who dies the following day from the bullet wounds he received in response.
• On 6 June a man identified as Mohamed Taha, is shot dead by an Israeli security guard during clashes between police and demonstrators at a protest in Kafir Qasim.
• On 16 June an Israeli police officer is stabbed to death in Jerusalem in an action that Daesh claims responsibility for and is praised by various Palestinian factions. Should such a claim be confirmed, denied by Hamas, which asserts that two of the authors were members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the third belonged to the Islamist movement controlling Gaza, this would be Daesh’s first attack in Israel. Virtually simultaneously and just 100 metres away, two other Palestinians open fire and attempt to stab several police officers. The attack, which causes minor injuries ends with the death of the attackers, shot down by security officers. In response, Benjamin Netanyahu orders the cancellation of visiting permits for Palestinians planning to meet relatives from the occupied territories.
• On 19 June the Israel Defense Forces shoot and kill a Palestinian man armed with a knife who was allegedly attempting to stab several soldiers at the Kalandia checkpoint.

July 2017

Israel

• On 10 July Avi Gabbai wins in the second round of the primary elections to lead the Israeli Labor Party, gaining 52% of the votes, against Amir Peretz’s 47%. With a 59% turnout of the 52,502 registered members, Gabbai is victorious despite not having the support of the party apparatus and not being an MP—which means that Isaac Herzog, who was defeated in the first round, will continue as leader of Labor’s parliamen
tary opposition.-
• On 12 July the Israeli military court in Ofar, the West Bank, sentences Khalida Jarrar, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, to six months of administrative detention over links with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, after arresting him at the beginning of the month during a raid in Ramallah.

• On 26 July the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatens to close down the Jerusalem offices of the Qatari television news network al-Jazeera for inciting the rise in violence.

Peace Negotiations

• On 9 July Mahmoud Abbas meets with the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo, to study a possible relaunch of the peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis based on the co-existence of the two states. Abbas informs al-Sisi of the initiative of the US President Donald Trump to push the peace process forward, as well as the Israeli actions on the ground, which include settlement construction. The meeting comes days after a Hamas delegation travels to the Egyptian capital to talk about improving bilateral relations—which have deteriorated since the overthrow in July 2013 of the Islamist Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi—and to address the Palestinian reconciliation process.

Conflicts between the Parties

• On 12 July two Palestinians are killed during clashes with the Israeli army during a raid of the Jenin refugee camp, in the West Bank. 39 Palestinian citizens have now been killed in clashes with Israeli security forces since the year began.
• On 14 July two Israeli police officers are killed and a third injured at the hands of three Palestinians in an attack on the entrance to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. Following the murders, the Israeli authorities decide to install metal detectors at the entrances to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount, a measure that increases protests and clashes with the Muslim community.
• On 17 July dozens of faithful Muslims clash with members of the Israeli security forces at the Lion’s Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem.
• On 18 July at least 14 Palestinians are injured in fresh clashes between Muslims and the Israeli police in the proximity of the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount.
• On 21 July three Palestinians are killed and almost 500 injured in major unrest in East Jerusalem and on the border between Israel and Gaza, following the Friday prayers, when the Palestinian factions had called upon their supporters to face up to the Israeli soldiers.
• On 25 July the Israeli government decides to remove the metal detectors which they had installed at the entrance to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount of the Old City of Jerusalem.
• On 27 July at least 96 people are injured in new clashes in the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, when thousands of Muslims turn up for prayers following the withdrawal of the special security measures established by Israel.
• On 28 July the Israeli police force announces that it will prohibit access to men under the age of 50 to Friday prayers in the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount, following the recent escalation in tension.
• On 29 July Israel lifts all access restrictions to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount. The authorities also carry out a raid on the offices of various Arab media outlets and a Ramallah producer for an alleged crime of inciting hatred.

August 2017

Israel

• On 6 August the Israeli Communications Minister Ayoub Kara announces that he is revoking the credentials of journalists from the al-Jazeera television station and will proceed with the closure of their offices in Israel after the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accuses the Qatari media outlet of inciting violence against Israel during its coverage of the latest crisis at the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount.
• On 18 August the controversial law on illegal enclaves in the West Bank, passed in February in the Israeli Parliament and which gives the government authority to expropriate private land from Palestinian citizens in exchange for economic compensation, is provisionally suspended by order of the Supreme Court.
• On 31 August Israeli security forces carry out a raid on a Palestinian broad-
caster in Hebron, the al-Hurriya Media Company that manages the Manbar al-Hurriya radio station and al-Nauras television station, which are then shut down for a period of six months accused of inciting terrorism.

**Palestine**

- On 17 August at least two people are killed in clashes on the Gaza Strip between Hamas and Salafi militants also operating in the neighbouring Egyptian Sinai.

**Peace negotiations**

- On 23 August three advisors of the US President Donald Trump, including his son-in-law Jared Kushner, begin a tour of the Middle East to try to unblock the frozen peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. Travelling with Kushner are the White House’s Special Envoy to the Middle East Jason Greenblatt and Trump’s Deputy National Security Adviser Dina Powell.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On 19 August the Israeli police kill a young Palestinian who had attacked a checkpoint in Zotara, in the north of the West Bank, armed with a knife.

**September 2017**

**Israel**

- On 3 September the Israeli government approves 14 million euros to resume construction of the new Amichai settlement in the West Bank, work on which had been suspended for two months due to insufficient funds.
- On 3 September David Sharan, former cabinet chief of the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is identified as a suspect in the court investigation known as Case 3000 over the suspected bribery in the purchase of German submarines for the Israeli navy.
- On 5 September Israel begins 11 days of military exercises in the north of the country, the largest scale manoeuvres since 1998, coinciding with the advance in Syria of the axis formed by Bashar al-Assad’s regime, Hezbollah and Iran, and after the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warns that Israel will not allow the creation of missile factories in Lebanon, or an Iranian presence on the Israeli-Syrian border.
- On 7 September the Syrian army accuses Israel of attacking the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre, in Masyaf, Hama, from Lebanese airspace, which, according to Israeli analysts could be a chemical weapons and missile plant. Israel neither confirms nor denies the information about an attack which, as in previous similar cases, would be aimed at destroying Iranian weapons, some of which would be destined for Hezbollah.
- On 8 September the Israeli Public Prosecutor Avichai Mandelblit charges Sara Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister’s wife, with alleged fraud and abuse of public funds, in the investigation known as the “meals-ordering affair” into the excessive spending at the Prime Minister’s official residence in Jerusalem. This comes after the news in August, according to which the Israeli police has publicly recognized the existence of a criminal probe into Benjamin Netanyahu under suspicion of bribery, fraud and abuse of power.

**Palestine**

- On 11 September the chief of Hamas’ armed wing Ismail Haniyeh asserts that the group is prepared for a reconciliation process with Fatah without preconditions.
- On 17 September in response to the Egyptian mediation’s call for dialogue with Fatah, Hamas announces that it will dismantle its Administrative Committee, in operation in the Gaza Strip since March. Hamas created the Administrative Committee in light of what it considered a complete absence of attention from the Palestinian unity government, set up in 2014. Fatah considers the committee as a shadow government. Hamas also announces that it will accept the holding of general elections in the PNA, which would be the first since 2006 in which Hamas won in Gaza, sparking the long showdown with Fatah, which governs in the West Bank. The Shiite movement’s decision comes after the 40% cuts in payments for the Israeli power supply decreed by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.
- On 27 September despite Israeli opposition, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) approves Palestine’s entry as a member state of the organism during its 86th General Assembly held in Beijing.

**Conflicts between the Parties**

- On 26 September two Israeli security guards and an Israeli police officer are killed and another police officer injured in an armed attack carried out by a Palestinian man at the entrance to the Israeli Har Adar settlement, close to Jerusalem. The Palestinian is shot dead by Israeli security officers.

**October 2017**

**Israel**

- On 12 October Israel announces that its Air Force has attacked a Syrian anti-aircraft battery which had previously fired a missile at Israeli jets on a reconnaissance mission over Lebanon.
- On 15 October the Israeli army reports the launch of two rockets from Syria into Israeli territory, with warning sirens sounding in the regional council of Eshkol, close to the Gaza Strip.
- On 17 October the Israeli army raids and shuts down eight Palestinian media outlets in the West Bank, accused of inciting violence against Israel.
- On 19 October hundreds of ultra-Orthodox Jews block various streets in Jerusalem in protest against the application of the military service law, which is compulsory for all Israeli citizens, and the recent arrest of conscientious objectors from their community.

**Palestine**

- On 3 October the PNA government holds its first meeting in the Gaza Strip since 2014, in an act that symbolizes the re-establishment of the PNA’s con-
control two weeks after Hamas announced the dismantlement of its Committee, which had been governing the Strip. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticizes the reconciliation initiative, believing that a rapprochement between Fatah and Hamas will come at the “cost of the existence” of Israel.

- On 10 October the Commissioner General of the UN’s support agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) Pierre Krähenbühl warns the European Parliament that the situation in the Gaza Strip is “a timebomb” and calls for support to cover the 77 million dollars the agency needs to continue its aid operations for Palestinian refugees in 2017.

- On 10 October representatives of Fatah and Hamas begin new negotiations in Cairo for national reconciliation.

- On 12 October Hamas and Fatah take a further step towards national reconciliation in Cairo, with an agreement for the Rafah border crossing, which joins the Gaza Strip with Egypt, to be controlled by Fatah as of 1 November. The unity government will also deploy its own security forces – some 3,000 officers – in the Strip before the year’s end. Both factions set a two-month deadline to address the pending problems, which include the control of the Islamists’ weapons arsenal and Israel.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 9 October the Israeli army fires at a Hamas target in the Gaza Strip in retaliation to the previous day’s launch of a rocket from the Palestinian enclave into Israeli territory.

- On 31 October at least seven Palestinians are killed in an Israeli airstrike on a tunnel in the south of the Gaza Strip.

November 2017

Israel

- On 2 November 100 years has passed since the Balfour Declaration, the British document which, during World War I explicitly outlined London’s support of a “national home” for the Jewish people in Palestine and which, 30 years later, would take the shape of Resolution 181 in the United Nations General Assembly of 29 November 1947, under which it was proposed to divide Palestine into two states, one Arab and another Jewish.

- On 8 November the UK International Development Minister Priti Patel hands in her resignation after it comes to light that she held a series of private and unauthorised meetings with senior Israeli officials, including Benjamin Netanyahu, during her holiday to the country in August.

- On 18 November Israel issues evacuation orders for 300 Bedouins from Jabal al-Baba, as part of Tel Aviv’s Corridor E1 urban development plan.

- On 26 November the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reaches an agreement with the ultra-Orthodox parties to put an end to the crisis sparked by the resignation of the Health Minister Yaakov Litzman after the government gave permission to workers in charge of repairing a train track in the south of the country in the middle of Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest.

- On 27 November the Israeli army announces that Tamir-Adir, the naval version of its Iron Dome air defence system is already operational.

- On 29 November 18 ultra-Orthodox Jews are arrested in Jerusalem during a new protest against their recruitment into the army.

Palestine

- On 1 November Hamas hands over official control of its border posts to the PNA, in the context of the national reconciliation process.

- On 8 November the PNA announces it is resuming coordination with Israel for security in the West Bank, which has been frozen since June due to the installation of metal detectors at the entrances to the Noble Sanctuary / Temple Mount.

- On 18 November the US confirms that it will not certify that the PLO meets the conditions needed for its delegation in Washington to remain open, following the Palestinian organization’s request to bring Israel before the International Criminal Court (TPI).

December 2017

Israel

- On 2 December various Arab media report that Israeli fighter jets have fired missiles from Lebanese airspace at Syrian army targets close to Damascus. The main target of the attack is an Iranian military base close to al-Qiswa.

- On 4 December Israeli jets attack areas of the Jamarya region, close to Damascus and which include a scientific research centre and weapons stores of the regime and its allies.

- On 7 December the UN Security Council meets following the request of eight of its 15 members to address the status of Jerusalem after the US President Donald Trump’s announcement two days before that Washington recognizes the city as the Israeli capital and the consequent move of the embassy in Tel Aviv to the city that both Israel and Palestine claim as their capital. On 10 December the Arab League condemns Trump’s decision and calls upon him to withdraw it. The Vatican also condems the decision of the US President. The EU abstains from condemning the decision, essentially due to Hungary and the Czech Republic’s reluctance, but at the same time rules out moving its delegations in Israel to Jerusalem. For his part, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on an official visit in the Union, says that he is confident that both the EU and its Member States will end up following the US’s initiative.

- On 9 December a massive march in Tel Aviv protests against government corruption and the cases affecting the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under investigation for fraud and bribery. The demonstration comes during the mobilizations that different social leaders have called to oppose a draft law in progress to limit the capacity of the police regarding recommendations to try public officials. There are also protests in Jerusalem, Nahariya, Hadera, Afula, Netanya, Rishon LeZion, Modiin, and Beer Sheva. Netanyahu is a suspect in two criminal investigations, Case 1000 – into alleged gifts the Prime Minister and his family received – and 2000 – into an alleged deal between Netanyahu and the owner of the Yediot Aharonot
Palestinian reconciliation agreement • On 21 December Hamas says the State of the Palestinians as the capital of the Palestinian meeting in Turkey, declare East Jerusalem as the capital of Jerusalem. 

Israel announces its readiness to leave UN Palestine thereby joins the US, which also into force on 31 December 2018. Is- • On 12 December two Palestinians riding a motorcycle are killed in an Israeli airstrike close to Beit Lahia, in the north of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli attack comes after the Israeli army intercepts a new missile launched into southern Israel from Gaza.

Conflicts between the Parties • On 8 December a Day of Rage begins, leading to several days of unrest in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, amid protests to denounce the US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. 

Israel • On 18 December, in the West Bank village of Nabi Salih, the Israeli army arrests Ahmed Tamimi, a Palestinian activist who starred in a viral video in which she is hitting Israeli soldiers during one of the protests in the village, which take place each Friday against the Israeli occupation.

Palestine • On 18 December the Israeli Defense Forces attack a Hamas training camp in the Gaza Strip, in response to missiles launched hours before from the Palestinian territory, as part of an escalation in tensions over the US recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

Palestine • On 12 December two Palestinians are injured by shots fired by Israeli forces in a new day of protests in Gaza and the West Bank against the decision of the US President Donald Trump to declare Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

Israel • On 23 December the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu orders the Israeli ambassador to UNESCO Carmel Shama-Hacohen to formalize the request to leave the body, which will enter into force on 31 December 2018. Israel thereby joins the US, which also announces its readiness to leave UNESCO over its “anti-Israel bias.”

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January

Maltese Presidency

1 – Valletta: Malta takes over the EU Council Presidency from Slovakia. The Maltese programme outlines six priorities: migration and the strengthening of the Common European Asylum System, with the application of the principles of solidarity and responsibility and the Dublin Regulation; the full development of the Single Market; security and the fight against terrorism; social inclusion of civil society and gender themes; EU Neighbourhood – South and East; and maritime themes. With respect to Southern Mediterranean, the Presidency aims at the stabilization of Libya through a peaceful transition, the resumption of the Middle East Peace Process, support to the democratic transition in Tunisia, the Syrian conflict, and deepened cooperation with LAS and GCC.


Foreign Affairs Council

16 – Brussels: The first Foreign Affairs Council of the year discusses the developments in Syria, with full support to the UN-led process and UN Special Envoy. The Council reiterates its support to the EU regional initiative on the future of Syria. The HR briefs ministers on the latest round of talks conducted in this framework with key regional players: Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and soon Turkey and Qatar. The Council agrees that the EU will host a conference on Syria and the region in Brussels in the spring 2017, to be focused on the political process towards a transition, humanitarian work and possible support post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation once a credible political transition is firmly underway. Later they discuss about the Middle East peace process, building on the outcome of the Paris conference (15 January), to preserve the viability of the two-state solution. Moreover, they reaffirm the EU support to the democratic process in Lebanon, welcoming the recent formation of new government. They commend the country’s extraordinary efforts in hosting more than 1.1 million Syrian refugees.


Politics and Security

19 – Brussels: The European Union (EU) and Tunisia hold their 2nd high-level political dialogue meeting sharing their respective analyses of and responses to the transnational threat of terrorism, providing updates on existing cooperation on security and combating terrorism, and discussing how they could to address the challenges raised by terrorism and radicalization. Both parties renew their commitment to strengthen their bilateral cooperation on security and counter-terrorism. Tunisia’s new national strategy on fighting extremism and terrorism, recently adopted, provides an excellent basis for an inclusive approach that involves civil society players and respects the country’s constitutional principles as well as the international standards on human rights and fundamental freedoms reflected in the Tunis Declaration.


Anti-Discrimination

17 – New York: The EU, Canada, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the US co-organize a High Level Forum on Combating Anti-Muslim Discrimination and Hatred. The Forum, attended by over 300 participants, seeks to voice concerns about the rising tide of discrimination and violence specifically targeting populations of Muslim origin in Europe and worldwide and look for joint responses. The main message that emerges from the Forum is to promote diversity as a richness instead of a threat, to fight against all forms of discrimination, and to build bridges between different communities – religious and otherwise.


Culture

20-24 – Paris: Cultural entrepreneurs from the southern Mediterranean present their work in the framework of the EU-funded project ‘Development of Clusters in Cultural and Creative Industries in the Southern Mediterranean (Creative Mediterranean)’. Participating clusters come from Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. The aim of the initiative is to foster entrepreneurial cooperation in the cultural and creative industry, through the promotion of pilot initiatives demonstrating contribution to inclusive growth. It then aims at demonstrating the potential for the national and regional development of these industries, thus opening the possibility through adequate replication and larger scale support from financial institutions to promote new employment in the region.

www.medcreative.org/

Youth and Development

23-24 – Barcelona: The UfM holds the 2nd edition of its Regional Forum under
the theme “Mediterranean in Action: Youth for Stability and Development.” The Forum, centred on youth potential as driving force for stability and development, brings together the region’s key players to review the UfM’s activities and achievements and to discuss perspectives for strengthening cooperation between the main stakeholders. HR Mogherini reaffirms that only greater regional integration can reduce the instability of the Mediterranean region and solve conflicts. The UfM Secretariat and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) sign a EUR 6.5 million multi-annual financial agreement to implement and strengthen UfM core activities, namely women’s empowerment and gender equality, climate action and energy, as well as water, environment and blue economy. The Forum also sees the project “Generation Entrepreneur” officially launched under the framework of the Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs (Med4Jobs). The project offers a jobs and business creation training programme that will benefit some 79,000 school and university students from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Furthermore, several UfM cooperation agreements are signed with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation and the Agadir Technical Unit. 


Economic and Social Cooperation
24-25 – Casablanca: The EU-funded SwitchMed programme holds a business networking event, implemented by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to connect EU Eco-Innovation technologies, developed in the framework of EU’s Eco-Innovation and Life programme, to businesses of the southern Mediterranean region. The objective of the B2B event is to strengthen the internationalization of start-ups and SMEs in the region by promoting the transfer of EU Eco-Innovative technologies and the creation of joint ventures, to improve their ability to achieve common competitive advantages in innovation, greening and resource efficiency. SwitchMed aims to promote a switch by the Mediterranean economies towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and green economy, including low-emission development, through demonstration and dissemination of methods. www.switchmed.eu/en/corners/Business-networks-and-intermediaries/pages/switchMed_B2B_Morocco

Migration
25 – Brussels: EU HR and the European Commission put forward a number of additional measures to strengthen the EU’s work along this route, in particular with and around Libya. They focus on fighting human smuggling and trafficking networks, helping to manage migratory flows more effectively, continuing to save lives at sea and improving the living conditions of migrants and refugees in Libya and neighbouring countries. The package of concrete measures is to contribute to the Malta Summit discussion of the Heads of State and Government.

February

Justice
1 – The Hague: EU and Mediterranean partners meet for the opening conference of the latest phase of the EuroMed Justice project, focused on judicial cooperation in the field of criminal law, civil law, independence and access to justice. Cooperation mechanisms are based on national and regional platforms directly connected to Eurojust and the European Judicial Network. The project will promote the sharing of best practices, such as the use of judicial networks for exchanging information, and will be structured around working groups on criminal matters, conferences, technical training sessions, and study visits. www.euromed-justice.eu/

Blue Economy
2 – Barcelona: The EC and the UfM organize a stakeholder conference on the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean. Stakeholders of the maritime sector include businesses, researchers, institutes, national and local authorities from Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. Panel sessions regard smart and innovative Mediterranean, coast-guards and safety, sustainable consumption and production, governance, transport and ports with new technologies and sustainable tourism. The aim of the meeting is to assess the feasibility and the added value of a possible sea-basin based initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean. www.westmed-initiative.eu/events/

Politics and Security
6 – Brussels: EU Foreign Affairs Ministers reaffirm the EU’s commitment to supporting efforts to stabilize Libya and achieve an inclusive political settlement under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). All armed forces need to be united under the control of the legitimate civilian authorities as set in the LPA. Concern is expressed about the humanitarian situation in country. The ministers call for the implementation of urgent measures to reform the economy, reduce wasteful public expenditure and improve delivery of basic services to the population. Moreover, they decide that the EU will join the UN, the LAS and the African Union (AU) to transform the Troika into a Quartet, bringing together mediation efforts. Other topics of discussion regard the Middle East Peace Process, Ukraine and Egypt; with regard to the latter, they commit for stronger EU support for economic growth and job creation, dialogue democracy, rule of law and human rights. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/02/06/

Governance and Human Rights
7-9 – Tunis: Within the framework of the EU-funded South Programme II, the Venice Commission of the COE jointly with the UNDP and the Independent High Electoral Commission of Tunisia support the holding of the 2nd Annual General Assembly of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies (ArabEMBs). The Assembly is structured around a workshop on the theme of ‘Strengthening the Independence of Electoral Management Bodies’ and it is attended by about 80 participants from ministries, electoral authorities, human rights institutions as well as international organizations. The workshop al-
lows the EMBs of Arab States to network, share experience and exchange on the tenets of EMB independence, international and regional standards, as well as the best practices for securing the impartiality of EMBs.

**Education and Vocational Training**

15-16 – Rabat: Representatives from southern Mediterranean partner countries gather for a two-day forum on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the region and its importance for development. The event is organized by the European Training Foundation (ETF), with the aim of sharing the findings from the ETF’s national consultations in the Mediterranean partner countries and discussing common trends, progress, and future action. Given the high rates of unemployment, priorities for the modernization of VET in the region are: more participatory governance, modernization of qualifications, promoting entrepreneurial learning and skills for SMEs, policy analysis and monitoring of progress.


**Politics and Security**

21-22 – Valletta: Representatives from EU and Mediterranean partner countries gather for the 1st high-level meeting of the Euromed Police IV Project, aimed at presenting and endorsing the Euromed Cooperation priorities to increase citizen security. Among the priorities are counter terrorism, irregular migration, trafficking of human beings, cybercrime, cyberterrorism. Europol, Cepol and Interpol participate as partner institutions. The project runs from 2016-2020 with a budget of 5 million.

**Sustainable Development**

21-22 – Agadir: The EU-funded CES-MED project, promoting clean and energy saving cities, holds its 7th Steering Committee, bringing together the EC, the National Focal Points of the eight beneficiary countries, eight mayors and other stakeholders. The CES-MED team gives several presentations covering progress and work plans, funding opportunities, applied methodology to change from Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) to Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP), collaboration with the European Joint Research Centre (JRC), gender equality, awareness actions and use of training tools.


**ARLEM**

22-23 – St Julian’s (Malta): The Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) meets in the 8th plenary session. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) adopt a report on cross-border cooperation that urges national governments and the international community to work more closely with mayors and governors to help stabilize North Africa and the Middle East. The Assembly expresses concern for the conflict in Libya, migration and climate change (a specific report is adopted for the latter). With respect to Libyan cities, it is noted that these partnerships are contributing to the stabilization. Under the Nicosia initiative, EU cities and regions are providing support for Libya’s local authorities in the areas of water and waste management, primary health care, public administration, language training, budgeting, fisheries, policing and counter-radicalisation. About climate change, it advises local and regional authorities to join the Global Covenant of Mayors, a bottom-up approach to climate action in which communities make ambitious pledges in exchange for technical support and easier access to funds. Among other decisions taken in Malta, ARLEM agrees to send members to Tunisia to monitor local elections, as part of a mission organized by the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. In addition, the report examines the results achieved by different types of cross-border programmes, including IPA II, Interreg V-A and ENPI CBC.


**March**

**Economic and Social Cooperation**

6-7 – Marrakesh: The EUROMED Invest project holds a training workshop on “Fostering Women Leaders - Women in Business Support Organisations (BSOs)” bringing together participants from south Mediterranean countries, mainly active women entrepreneurs, members of Confederation of Enterprises and several stakeholders from the private sector in order to discuss the role of women in the economic and social development of their countries. It will also offer the opportunity to share best practices among BSOs in supporting women entrepreneurs and improving services provided.


**Youth**

7-8 – Rabat: A seminar dedicated to youth in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia is organized by CESEM and UNESCO in the framework of Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project (Net-Med Youth). It brings together the academic community, civil society, national institutions, public and private, and cooperation actors. The project supports enhanced networking among youth organizations in order to harness the collective potential of youth to affect democratic transition towards active citizenship, political participation, economic contribution and social inclusion.


**Climate Change**

13 – Barcelona: More than 50 representatives of government, international organizations and the scientific community meet to set the ground for the first assessment report on the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean region. The report is expected to be finalized by November 2018 and presented at the 24th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24). The aim of the meeting is also to advance the regional agenda on environment and climate change for the next years and support UfM Member States in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The UfM Secretariat is working closely with the network of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC).
Politics and Security
14-16 – Madrid: The 1st session of the CrimEx Experts Group, created under EuroMed Justice IV Project to enhance criminal cooperation and international judicial cooperation is attended by members of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia, as well as experts from EU, Eurojust, the European Judicial Network in criminal matters (EJN), UN-CTED (United Nation’s Counter Terrorism Directorate), as well as EuroMed Police. In order to promote a holistic and coordinated national response to transnational crime and terrorism, the Project Team envisages creating mechanisms to facilitate strategic and operational development, information sharing and other coordination.
www.euromed-justice.eu/home

Politics and Security
14-16 – Tangier: In the framework of the EU-funded project strengthening the legal regime against foreign terrorist fighters (FTF), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) holds a regional training entitled “Strengthening regional cooperation in foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) criminal cases.” The training brings together some 20 senior criminal justice and law enforcement officials representing key counter-terrorism institutions from Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The three-day event offered a forum to discuss practical methods and tools to further increase cooperation on criminal matters in FTF-related cases at the regional level. As a result of the training, participants are provided with a set of recommendations and concrete measures likely to improve mutual legal assistance and extradition requests at the regional level.

Media
15-16 – Beirut: Around 80 young people from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia come together to exchange views about their relationship with the media, their media habits and especially their expectations. The Forum, organized by the EU in partnership with CIfmedias and the Samir Kassir Foundation, addresses several topics including the role of the media in helping young people to find a job, media literacy, the questioning of authorities by young people through the media, youth expectations towards the media, etc.

Economic and Social Cooperation
22-23 – Athens: A regional workshop on “Visibility of statistics and relations with users” organized by EU-funded MEDSTAT IV project represents a unique opportunity for high level statisticians from the statistical offices of the southern Mediterranean countries to confront the tools they developed to reach out their users with the needs and requirements from these users. Journalists, researchers and programmes officers from EuroMED programmes and initiatives illustrate the relations they experienced with statistics and statisticians with concrete examples. They call for more open and transparent relations and for more easy-to-read, easy-to-understand statistical products. The statisticians for their part promise to engage more with their users, to improve their capacities for attractive dissemination and genuine dialogue and to re-think their production.

Fisheries
30 – Malta: The Malta MedFish4Ever Declaration is signed by Mediterranean Ministerial representatives from northern and southern coastlines, after months of negotiation (Catania process). The declaration sets out a detailed work programme for the next 10 years, in which the parties commit to saving the Mediterranean fish stocks and protecting the ecological and economic resources of the region. In practice, this involves regular data collection that includes small-scale fishermen, multi-annual management plans for fisheries, illegal fishing elimination and support to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. Effective implementation will require the involvement of fishers, coastal communities, civil society, industrial, small-scale, artisanal and recreational fisheries, as well as the UN FAO and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). The countries participating are Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro.

Higher Education
30 – Fes: The European Investment Bank (EIB) approves a €70 million loan to support the EuroMed University of Fes (UEMF). The UEMF is a flagship project of the UIM. The loan will finance the construction of the eco-campus, able to host over 6,000 students from the Euro-Mediterranean region and Sub-Saharan Africa. The project has also received the institutional support of the Steering Committee of COP22 as a “model of eco-space, combining academic life, research, innovation and technology transfer in a clean environment, using the latest technologies for sustainable development.” Students from various nationalities are currently enrolled on UEMF academic and research programmes which are focused on important topics for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean region and launched in partnership with well-known Higher Education Institutions. The overall construction of the University is expected to be completed by 2019-2020.
http://ufmsecretariat.org/eib-grants-a-e70-million-loan-to-ufm-labelled-project-euromed-university-of-fes/

April

Youth
3-5 – Casablanca: More than 70 young people speaking more than seven languages, from more than 15 countries of both sides of the Mediterranean gathered in the framework of the EU-funded Net-Med Youth project, to share experiences on social work, to enrich, strengthen and develop their abilities, and to find solutions to the obstacles each of them faces in their country. Four main themes are discussed during the meeting: Youth access to employment and training, Free movement of young people in the Mediterranean, The role of culture and the arts for young generations, and Civic participation in public life. Participants shared their experiences on these topics.
www.netmedyouth.org

Economic and Social Cooperation
4-5 – Rome: Participants from National Institutes of Statistics of Southern Neighbourhood countries have the opportu-
nity to learn, or to improve their knowledge, about the most used applications of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for the production, dissemination, and analysis of statistical data, at a training workshop organized by the EU-funded project MEDSTAT IV. The workshop was also a unique opportunity for countries to share their experiences on the use of geo-information for statistics in their respective Institutes, and to be updated on the latest worldwide developments for the integration between geospatial and statistical data.

Culture
25-27 – Rabat: Representatives of public broadcasters from the southern Mediterranean take part in a regional platform alongside academics, representatives of training centres and actors of the Arab cultural sphere, at the initiative of Med-Culture and MedMedia, two EU-funded regional programmes. The event aims to develop networks and exchanges on higher education issues and training in the field of management and cultural policies. Discussions cover cross-cutting issues such as the definition of required skills to operate in the sector, advocacy as a learning experience, innovative educational initiatives, employability and the integration of young people into the labour market.

Migrations
12 – Brussels: The EU Trust Fund for Africa adopts a €90 million programme to step up the protection of migrants and reinforce migration management in Libya, as well as supporting the people that host them. A part of the programme (€48 million) is for assistance and protection of migrants and refugees at disembarkation points, in detention centres and urban settings, as well as provision of information on viable options of food and non-food items and data collection. Another part (€42 million) is to be given to socio-economic development at municipal level to strengthen local authorities’ capacities.

Water
27 – Valletta: Ministers in charge of Water from the 43 members of the UfM agreed to develop a UfM Water Agenda to further enhance regional cooperation on water. They recall the unique features of the Mediterranean region, which makes it particularly vulnerable to water scarcity and climate change. The UfM Water agenda is expected to lead to a consensual regional water policy framework that offers a means for substantial and measurable positive impact towards sustainable livelihood in the region. Ministers agreed that the new policy framework will help UfM Member States to implement sustainable and integrated water resources management in a comprehensive manner, thus promoting progressive integration, synergies and coordination among the water and other inter-linked sectors.


FEMISE
27-29 – Casablanca: The FEMISE annual conference - on “Migration and Refugees’ Crisis in the EU-Med: Dawn of an Era of Shared Responsibility?” - provides a platform for the different actors of the EUroMed region to engage in a constructive dialogue about the future of the region and the role the EU can play in the context of the new ENP. The refugees are facing a humanitarian crisis. The southern neighbouring countries are struggling to cope with the inflows of refugees. The EU countries are facing political and socio-economic divisions on how (or whether) to integrate refugees into their societies. Despite efforts that have taken place, there is still a lot to be done. Within this challenging environment, there is a shared responsibility within the EuroMed region to take prompt and concrete actions and to unify the different stakeholders through combined policies to find ways to resolve this crisis and ease the pressure on the region.


May

Research and Higher Education
4 – Valletta: The Research Ministers of UfM countries gather for a Conference on Strengthening Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation through Research and Innovation. They emphasize the need to step up cooperation on research and innovation, with a region-wide approach to increase students’ and researchers’ mobility, as well as establish common platforms for data collection and analysis. The Ministerial Declaration builds on the many research and innovation commitments endorsed at recent UfM Ministerial Conferences including ones on Employment and Labour, Environment and Climate Change, Water and the Blue Economy.


Justice
8, 11 – Maastricht: The EU-funded Europol Justice IV Project organizes the 2nd session of its Expert Group in Criminal Matters (CrimEx), bringing together justice practitioners in criminal matters from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, as well as EU and international experts. Themes of discussion are coordination at national level, cross-border cooperation, north-south and south-south judicial cooperation, transnational crime’ challenges and best practices.

EU-Tunisia Association Council
11 – Brussels: During the 13th session of the EU-Tunisia Association Council the two parties note with satisfaction the marked improvement in the security situation in Tunisia and emphasize the progress achieved in their bilateral cooperation in the field of security and the fight against terrorism besides the progress in terms of the implementation of the Privileged Partnership Action Plan for 2013-2017. The EU and Tunisia agree on the importance of making progress in identifying a new framework for the future Partnership to replace the current Action Plan for a Privileged Partnership (2013-2017), to define priorities that reflect the scale and the depth of the privileged relations, and to meet their ambitions for the future. The two sides have an exchange of views at high level on regional issues of common interest, in particular the situation in Libya. EU and Tunisia reiterated their wish to
define together a common vision for the proper management of migration flows within their Mobility Partnership. The 13th session of the Association Council provided an opportunity to identify concrete bilateral actions in the priority areas of youth and of economic development.

**Energy Cooperation**

18-19 – Valletta: An Informal High level meeting on Energy Efficiency in the gathers UfM Ministers in charge of energy, government representatives and stakeholders to discuss how to enhance regional cooperation to implement energy efficiency solutions in the Mediterranean. The meeting is held within the framework of the UfM Energy and Climate Action Agenda and is part of the UfM Energy Platforms, which aim to deliver a secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply in the Mediterranean with a special focus on the UfM Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Platform (UfM REEE).


**Sustainable Urban Development**

22 – Cairo: For the 2nd UfM Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development, the ministers in charge of housing, municipal affairs and urban development from 43 UfM countries gather and agree on an Urban Agenda. The Agenda is aimed at delivering common responses to the challenges facing urban areas, key drivers for stability. UfM Ministers agree to create a UfM Regional Platform on Sustainable Urban Development, as well as to organize the UfM-IFIs International Financial Institutions) Urban Development Project Committee Meetings. The Conference also gathers high-level representatives of UN-Habitat, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the WB and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Conference concludes with the launch of the project “Imbaba Urban Upgrading” for the urban regeneration of one of Greater Cairo’s most populated areas.

**MEDREG**

24 – Athens: Mediterranean Energy Regulators gather for the 23rd General Assembly of Mediterranean Energy Regulators’ Association (MEDREG). MEDREG is an association that brings together energy regulators of 21 countries around the Mediterranean in order to promote a clear, stable and harmonized legal and regulatory framework. It benefits from the support of the EU and of the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER). At the assembly, members have the chance to debate the strategy and action plan for MEDREG in the medium term, discuss the development of tailored support activities for members’ national reforms, and approve a new communications strategy to extend MEDREG’s outreach and the dissemination of its achievements. MEDREG unveils the first activities of its new initiative for “Support to Regulatory Reforms,” which offers tailored and personalized assistance to members on national regulatory issues. Moreover, it announces the incoming technical study visits to the national energy regulators of Jordan, Egypt, Portugal, then Palestine and Tunisia.

**June**

**EuroMeSCo**

1-2 – Barcelona: The Euro-Mediterranean network of think tanks on politics and security EuroMeSCo holds its Annual Conference on the theme “Confronting Violent Extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean.” It is organized in the framework of the project “Euro-Mediterranean Political Research and Dialogue for Inclusive Policymaking Processes and Dissemination through Network Participation,” co-funded by the EU and the IEMed. The conference gathers over 150 researchers and practitioners from 22 countries to discuss violent extremism in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The plenary sessions explore how the region is affected by violent extremism, the specificities of violent extremism today and possible strategies to counter the phenomenon, the complex drivers and root causes motivating the radicalisation of individuals, as well as the interactions between violent extremism and other phenomena such as populism, Islamophobia and authoritarianism. Three working sessions offer an opportunity to discuss specific angles of the phenomenon in a smaller format. Moreover, preliminary results of the EuroMed survey of experts on violent extremism are presented.

www.euromesco.net/event/confronting-violent-extremism-in-the-euro-mediterranean/

**Freedom of Press**

2 – Beirut: The EU Delegation to Lebanon organizes the annual ceremony for the Samir Kassir Award for Freedom of the Press, on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of Samir Kassir’s assassination. Three journalists from Syria, Egypt and Iraq rewarded at the ceremony. The award rewards journalists who have distinguished themselves through the quality of their work and their commitment to human rights and democracy. Organized every year since 2006, the Samir Kassir Award honours the memory of the Lebanese journalist Samir Kassir who was assassinated on 2 June 2005 in Beirut.

**Journalism and migration**

14 – Valletta: The first edition of the Migration Media Award awards 35 journalists from 16 countries, based on fact-based and impartial reporting on the complexity of migration, its many challenges and opportunities. The 12 first-prize winners for four categories in three languages come from Egypt, Italy, Algeria, Portugal, UK, France and Morocco. The EU-funded competition is based on the initiative of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and is organized by EUROMED Migration IV, OPEN Media Hub projects, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and Malta’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.

www.migration-media-award.eu/en/

**Civil Society**

19 – Brussels: EU Foreign Ministers stress the importance of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as promoters of democracy, and as defenders of the rule of law, social justice and human rights. In Conclusions on the EU’s engagement with civil society in external relations adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council
meeting, the EU underlines the crucial importance of CSOs for the successful implementation of the EU Global Strategy and the 2030 Agenda, including in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At a time when the space for civil society is shrinking in an increasing number of countries, foreign ministers reaffirmed the EU’s opposition to any unjustified restrictions to freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly that hinder the work of CSOs.

Politics and Security
19 – Brussels: EU Foreign Ministers meeting adopts conclusions on EU external action on counter-terrorism. Noting that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that the EU has a vital interest in continuing to work with partners at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels in countering this threat, in the conclusions of the Council the ministers tackled the following issues: Counter-terrorism structures; Internal-external nexus; Strengthened cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa, Western Balkans, Turkey, Sahel and the Horn of Africa; Strengthened international cooperation, in particular with key strategic partners, such as the United States, Australia, Canada and the Schengen partners; Strengthening the EU response in key thematic areas, such as preventing and countering violent extremism, the need to effectively address online recruitment and radicalization, the acute challenge of foreign terrorist fighters, in particular the issue of returnees, the issue of terrorist financing and money laundering and the links between serious and organized crime and terrorism.

July

Politics and Security
3 – Barcelona: Senior Officials of the UfM Member States discuss challenges and opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the ongoing projects and initiatives of the UfM Secretariat and for the stability of the region. They take stock of UfM Ministerial Meetings held during the first half of the year (in the areas of water and sustainable urban development), UfM Senior Officials discuss four new region-wide cooperation project proposals submitted by the UfM Secretariat aiming to facilitate access to employment, support entrepreneurship and SME development, promote climate transparency to help contribute to the Paris Agreement, and provide multimodal training to help build an efficient, interoperable and sustainable transport infrastructure network in the Mediterranean region.

Youth Employment
9-10 – Cairo: The Conference on “Youth and Employability in MENA: better skills, more jobs” is organized by the Centre for Mediterranean Integration, with support from the Anna Lindh Foundation, the WB, AFD, UNIMED and the Egyptian Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation. The aim of the event is to identify the main constraints affecting youth employment in the MENA region, and to explore the role of business climate, labour and education policies in mitigating those challenge. Participants come from governments and agencies, international organizations, private sector and civil society. The conference is able to create valuable interaction and discussion, and allows to identify concrete policy and operational recommendations to tackle the most serious challenges.

www.cmi-marseille.org/highlights/conference-youth-and-employability-mena-better-skills-more-jobs

CSO Forum 2017
10-12 – Brussels: Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and stakeholders from the southern Mediterranean and representatives of EU institutions come together for the CSO Forum 2017 around the theme of Youth and Resilience. It is organized by DG NEAR, in co-operation with DG DEVCO and other European Institutions. This dialogue should lead to strengthening coherence and establishing a joint agenda between regional CSOs from the Southern Neighbourhood and the EU. In the build-up to the forum, four seminars have already taken place in Tunisia in April to gather civil society inputs on: migration, security and resilience, human rights and governance, and reducing inequalities. They regarded CSOs from the Mediterranean region (10 countries of the Southern Neighbourhood, from Morocco to Syria).

http://csfosouth.org/data.php?itemId=475&lanId=1

Youth
13 – Barcelona: The UfM Secretariat gathers relevant stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges related to the expansion of internships in the region and the specific role of the private sector. The workshop – titled “Boosting employability in the region: which role for internships? Lessons learnt and future perspectives of HOMERe UfM labelled project” – allows students, enterprises, civil society organizations and higher education institutions to formulate recommendations for the development of international training programmes in the region. The UfM has labelled the HOMERe project, a programme working through international traineeships to increase the employability of students from more than 100 top universities members of the Mediterranean Network of Engineering Schools in order to help companies to identify the best young talents and strengthening academic and professional mobility in the region. So far, 125 young people from the northern and the southern rims of the Mediterranean have benefitted from HOMERe.

EU-Lebanon Association Council
18 – Brussels: The EU-Lebanon Association Council takes stock of progress in the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement and of the EU-Lebanon partnership priorities and compact including: growth and jobs, security and counterterrorism, governance and the rule of law, migration and mobility. The consequences of the Syria crisis, as well as human rights and justice reform in Lebanon are also tackled.

Politics and Security
18-19 – Barcelona: A meeting of about 40 experts, academics, practitioners and advocates is held to identify key priority actions and approaches towards enhancing the roles of women and youth as key-actors in preventing violent extremism (PVE) in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The event is organized by
the UfM, the UNDP and UN Women. The meeting reaffirms that while women and youth can play a significant role in preventing violent extremism, they need to be supported and empowered to do so. It is noted that the drivers of recruitment and radicalization vary according to the context. Until recently a security approach to violent extremism has prevailed. However, evidence and experience show that it requires responses that address political, social, and economic drivers with a human rights based approach.

August

Inclusive Economy and Sustainable Growth

10 – Amman/Cairo: The two first national “Green start–ups meet investors” events takes place with the aim of bringing together entrepreneurs and financial actors in order to promote access to finance for green entrepreneurs. A total of 15 companies (eight in Jordan, and seven in Egypt) present their business ideas before potential investors and relevant stakeholders. During the events, the entrepreneurs also have the opportunity to network with the potential investors, aiming at closing deals in the future.

Research and Innovation

10 – Allan: The Jordanian city of Allan has seen the opening of the first major international research centre in the Middle East and the first such centre in the world powered by solar energy, supported by the EU with more than €20 million in funding. Synchrotron–light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) is a unique science for peace project where Arabs, Israelis, Iranians, Turks, Europeans and others work together in a world–class science facility. The SESAME synchrotron is the first research hub in the Middle East that is open to scientists from all over the world, and the first synchrotron ever built in the region. SESAME was launched in 2002 under the auspices of UNESCO with the aim of using science diplomacy to foster a culture of peace and cooperation in the broader Middle East.

Anna Lindh Foundation

28, 30 – Helsinki: About 70 civil society actors, teachers, youth workers and educators from nine countries (Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Morocco, Poland, Sweden, Tunisia and Turkey) participate in the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) Network Days for Intercultural Citizenship Education. The event is structured in a forum of discussion, interactive workshops and training. Main themes regard intersectional identities and education, the role of civil society in fostering intercultural learning, fighting hate speech and extremism, encouraging language learning as a tool for intercultural dialogue and the power of arts in education.

September

Migration

6 – Brussels: Measures put in place to better manage migration along the Central Mediterranean Route and with partners in Africa are starting to bear fruits, according to the fifth progress report on the Partnership Framework on Migration, presented by the European Commission and the EU High Representative for foreign affairs. The number of tragic deaths at sea has significantly decreased over the summer months, alongside a substantial reduction in the number of migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean. The partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the IOM has been strengthened all along the Central Mediterranean route, with specific programmes in place for protection and support of migrants: such as primary health care, access to documentation, assisted voluntary returns and reintegration for returnees.

Economic and Social Cooperation

14 – Cairo: The EIB (European Investment Bank) holds an international conference on “Boosting investments in the Mediterranean region” in partnership with the Ministry of International Cooperation and Investment, the EU Delegation to Egypt and the UfM. Government officials, investors, bankers, and researchers from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia discuss the current economic context and potential drivers of economic growth in the region, ways to help SMEs and micro entrepreneurs to access finance, and the critical investment needs to promote innovation and the international competitiveness of local firms. EIB is stepping up its support to the private sector with €600 million for SME finance. Furthermore, a new initiative called the European External Investment Plan (EIP) will cover the MENA region and will be aimed at leveraging public and private funds from the EU and its Member States.

Violent Extremisms

14 – Brussels: The EU adopts a programme under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) worth €17.5 million, aimed at addressing the terrorist threat in MENA region. Terrorism and radicalization leading to violent extremism continue to pose a significant threat to states and societies in the region. This three-year programme will address drivers and threats from terrorism in the region to foster human security and build resilience in both states and societies. The programme will include a first component to contribute to strengthening the capacity of state actors that play a key role in countering terrorism and violent extremism. The second component of the programme will focus on partnerships between authorities, youth and communities to address underlying factors that can make communities vulnerable to violent extremism.

Education and Refugees

26, 27 – Beirut: Supporting the access of refugees and vulnerable populations from host countries to higher education in the Mediterranean region is the object of a conference organized by EC and Hopes Project. The conference gathers more than 120 participants, including representatives from ministries, international and non-governmental organizations, universities, as well as students from the Mediterranean region and Europe. The European Union has provided material, help and expert knowledge to incorporate Syrian youth and vulnerable host communities into higher educational institutions with an investment of €53 million alone from the EU’s Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis.
October

Migration
11-12 – Amman: EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) programme holds a 2nd Sub-Regional Workshop on Migration Governance implemented by The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The event provides a knowledge and experience-exchange platform on national migration governance and inter-institutional coordination for representatives of the three governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. Participants discuss topics such as international, national and local Migration Governance frameworks, e-government tools and evidence-based policy-making for better migration governance. Participants exchange their respective national migration governance challenges and good practices.

www.icmpd.org

Energy
18 – Cairo: UfM Energy and Climate Business Forum is held in Cairo focusing on releasing renewable energy opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region as key to socio-economic development. Held in the perspective of the World Energy Day, the Forum brings together more than 150 high-level government officials from UfM countries, representatives of large private companies and start-up teams working on renewable energies, as well as international financial institutions and development banks. Participants agree on the need to promote regional cooperation through the federation of energy-related business associations in the Euro-Mediterranean region in order to encourage private sector initiatives in the energy sector. They also call for the structuring of a dialogue platform to explore the potential of public-private partnerships (PPP) in the UfM region as an essential tool to foster investments in the renewable energy sector.


Politics and Security
19 – Madrid: The Senior Officials of the 43 UfM Member States meet to discuss upcoming regional cooperation activities and initiatives organized in the framework of the UfM. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) is also the occasion to exchange information on activities and initiatives launched by the UfM Secretariat in the last quarter of 2017 especially updates and final details on the UfM Ministerial Conference on Women Empowerment, which will take place on 27 November in Cairo.

Youth
23-24 – Paris: 62 participants meet at UNESCO Headquarters to share findings of their skills forecasting work, with special focus on youth employment. The seminar, Regional Skills Forecasting in the South Mediterranean Region, presents the results of NET-MED Youth forecasting work and provides a platform for participants to discuss and exchange national and international experiences. In the area of employment, NET-MED Youth works with youth organizations, experts and decision-makers to reinforce the relevance of education and training systems so as to promote youth employment and enhance their skills. The project is multidisciplinary and strengthens national skills forecasting systems, empowers youth capacities so they can be part of policy dialogue and planning, and supports youth-led national awareness campaigns on youth skills needs.

https://en.unesco.org/projects/netmedyouth/

Women
24 – 26 Casablanca: The Euro-Mediterranean Women’s Foundation organizes a meeting to strengthen the role of local and regional civil society associations in the preparation of European and Euro-Mediterranean policies in favour of the rights of women and gender equality in the southern Mediterranean. The objective of this regional dialogue is to strengthen the role of associations in the planning, implementation and monitoring of European and Euro-Mediterranean policies related to women’s rights and gender equality in the southern Mediterranean.


November

Migration
7-8 – Beirut: 80 participants representing city and national governments, NGOs, international organizations, the European Union and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation attend the Conference of the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM) to present the project findings and launch a debate about the future of urban migration in the Mediterranean region. The relevance of the urban dimension of the phenomenon of migration is highlighted as well as the importance of a project such as MC2CM to shed light on the reality of the nexus between migration and urbanization.

Economic and Social Cooperation
14 – Cairo: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) organizes its 2nd Business Forum for the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and the West Bank and Gaza. The theme of the event is “Investing for Sustainable Growth.” The event brings together key policymakers, government officials, investors and prominent business people to discuss the business outlook in the region, and to consider the obstacles impeding an increase in foreign investment.

Women
22-23 – Barcelona: The Women’s Entrepreneurship & Investment Programme (WEIP) Forum provides a unique opportunity to promote women’s entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean, where the rate of women who run their own businesses is two to three times lower than the world average. More than 70 Mediterranean women entrepreneurs exchange experiences and best practices and explore new business and investment opportunities through networking and match-making activities. Through dedicated workshops, B2B meetings and study tours the event will also promote dialogue between women entrepreneurs from both sides of the Mediterranean with the objectives of strengthening cooperation, fostering international partnerships and creating new business opportunities in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
**UEM-Women**

27 – Cairo: Ministers from the 43 UfM Member countries gather at the 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.” They agree on a common agenda to strengthen the role of women in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and they also acknowledge the efforts made by UfM countries to foster gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment and stressed the need to address the obstacles that still hinder the full participation of women in the public and private spheres. To that end, they adopted a Declaration with concrete and operational recommendations, actions and measures focused on four priority areas: raising women’s participation in public life and decision-making; improving women’s economic participation; combating all forms of violence against women and girls; and eliminating gender stereotypes.


**Culture**

28-29 – Amman: The Med Culture Forum takes place providing an opportunity to assess what the EU-funded Med Culture programme has accomplished during the past four years and to look ahead to the future. The forum gathers a number of professionals involved in the themes addressed, including cultural operators and civil society actors, representatives of Ministries of Culture and other relevant ministries, and representatives of EU institutions and other EU-funded programmes. Med Culture will also take serious steps in creating a Community of practice for the future, comprising culture sector operators, managers, civil society organisations, academics and trainers, together for working in sustainable development and public policy making.

www.medculture.eu/

**Blue Economy**

29 – Naples: The UfM Regional Stakeholder Conference on the Blue Economy, kicks-off bringing together over 400 key stakeholders dealing with marine and maritime issues from the entire region, including government representatives, regional and local authorities, international organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society. The main objective of this event is to consolidate a Mediterranean blue economy community working on sustainable development solutions for the region, as well as to create partnerships and initiatives to harness the potential for blue growth. The conference features 12 thematic workshops on the whole range of sectors covered by the blue economy, namely blue jobs and training, research and innovation, blue entrepreneurship, coast guard cooperation, marine protected areas, offshore energy, coastal and maritime tourism, fisheries and aquaculture.

**December**

**Culture**

3-4 Amman: SouthMed CV holds a regional conference bringing together representatives of 30 cultural projects sub-granted by SouthMed CV during the past two years, as well as local public authorities, cultural practitioners, artists, academics, international experts in the field of culture and development, and representatives the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries’ institutions in Jordan. During the conference, two different panels reflecting on the culture as a vector for development in the southern Mediterranean region with the participation of experts from the Euro-Mediterranean region are held. Moreover, group discussions among the SouthMed CV sub-grantees, speakers and the audience on cross border cooperation to foster the emergence of citizen platforms, new models for public-private partnerships, culture as an instrument to lead changes, creative economy in the southern Mediterranean region, among other issues, take place.

www.smedcv.net/

**Women**

12-13 – Amman: Euro-Med Women’s Foundation meets with associations to analyze women’s situation in 2018. These associations will study subjects that have a direct impact on women’s lives such as women’s access to local political decision-making (Jordan and Morocco), women’s entrepreneurship (Algeria), women’s role in the preservation of the environment (Lebanon and Tunisia), and violence against women (Egypt and Palestine). Every year, the Foundation sets up local clusters of gender equality actors around a leading association in order to develop a diagnosis on a specific subject and territory. The associations undertake to collaborate with different actors in their territory who do not work together generally (local and regional authorities, media, private sector…). Through this initiative, the Foundation highlights the expertise of civil society as a driver of social change and privileged observer of gender equality policies. It allows researchers involved in local clusters to learn about the work of women’s rights associations. The local clusters’ methodology helps establish long-term partnership dynamics and unites the efforts and resources available for gender equality.


**Invest**

14 – Brussels: The EUROMED Invest final conference is the occasion to have a look on the project achievements. Gathering implementing partners and the project’s final beneficiaries, the conference highlights the role and implication of the EU in the development of the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as the main impact reached. Since the beginning of the project, the EUROMED Invest project enabled nearly 2,000 people to be trained. Around 9,000 organizations benefited from its activities, mostly start-ups, companies and Business Support Organizations, but also clusters, technoparks, incubators, local and central public authorities, civil society organizations, and others.
Chronologies

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 29 Allies (Montenegro became NATO’s 29th member on 5 June), 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 Obergamgau (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 ICIPs 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-Improvised 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 Science 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.

**NATO-Turkey Relations at the End of December 2017**

Turkey-NATO relations become increasingly tense throughout the year, as Turkey strengthens its bonds with Russia. In addition to Western concerns regarding the 2016 coup attempt and its consequences, there are episodes that undermine détente such as the withdrawal of German troops from a Turkish-NATO base in June, and the withdrawal of Turkish soldiers from a joint military exercise in Norway in November. The greatest concern however comes from signing the agreement to buy four batteries of S-400 surface-to-air missiles from Russia. The system, designed to destroy aircraft and cruise and ballistic missiles, is incompatible with NATO’s military architecture, and could hamper interoperability. Moreover, it would not be subjected to the constraints imposed by the alliance, which prevents Turkey from deploying such systems on the Armenian border, Aegean coast or Greek border. Turkey has turned to Russia after several NATO allies declined to renew their deployments of the Patriot missile-defence system. The country is strengthening its defences in response to both terrorist threats (linked to PKK or ISIS activities) and conflicts on its borders with Syria and Iraq. It has claimed that NATO’s support to security has been inadequate. In addition to the agreement with Russia, Turkey signed an agreement with the French-Italian consortium Eurosam-T for common defence strengthening. NATO officials keep a confident attitude regarding mutual bonds and obligations as partners.

**Main Events in 2017**

- 24 January, Kuwait City, Kuwait: Secretary General (SG) Stoltenberg inaugurates the NATO Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre in Kuwait. As the Alliance’s first presence in the Gulf region, the Centre will be a vital hub for NATO’s practical cooperation with Kuwait and other Gulf partners, as well as Saudi Arabia and Oman. Strategic analysis, civil emergency planning, military-to-military cooperation and public diplomacy will be the centre’s issues of interest. After the ceremony, the 28 NATO members and its ICI partners meet to discuss common security challenges. In a joint press conference with Kuwaiti Authorities, the NATO SG praises Kuwait’s efforts for common stability, as the first country to join ICI and to establish an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (ICPC) with NATO.

www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_140308.htm?selectedLocale=en

- 23 February, Nouakchott, Mauritania: A NATO team of experts visits the National Staff College (ENEM) to assess the progress of the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) in the country. The DEEP programme has helped the military education system to develop an operational planning and design courses according to NATO standards. Course modules are on crisis management, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency in various languages. Mauritania was the first MD country to apply for an IPCP, and has asked for the programme to continue for three more years.


- 21-23 March, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Legislators from NATO member and partner countries meet to discuss prospects for EU and NATO enlargement to the Western Balkans, intra-regional relations and internal political developments. Under the title “The Western Balkans: Transition Challeng-
Appendices in the Mediterranean

es, European Aspirations and Links to the MENA Region," the event is organized by NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) and jointly with the meeting of the NATO PA Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group. For the region, the primary impetus for reform is the prospect of Euro-Atlantic integration; yet the EU appears to be distracted from internal issues. The desire is expressed for Russia's role in the region to be less destabilizing.

www.nato-pa.int/news/west-called-upon-overcome-balkans-fatigue-prevent-jointly-with-the-meeting-middle-east-special-group

• 5 September, Naples, Italy: The NATO Strategic Direction South Hub is inaugurated. NSD-S Hub serves to face evolving security challenges as well as to promote cooperation with North Africa and Middle East partners. Dialogue through MD and ICI are part of the culture of cooperation and interoperability with the Alliance and Partner countries. The centre will deal with destabilization, terrorism, radicalization, migration, and environmental concerns. It aims to work with agencies outside of traditional NATO military structures such as regional development and crisis handling experts, academics, non-governmental organizations, law enforcement officials and non-governmental organizations. It is designed to take existing information and analysis and transform it into knowledge and information that is even more useful to stakeholders. Final capability is expected to be reached at the end of 2017.


• 2-3 October, Nouakchott, Mauritania: The 5th meeting of the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue-Policy Advisory Group (MD PAG) takes place. Besides NATO Allies and MD partners, high-level representatives from Libya, the EU Delegation in Mauritania, the GS Sahel, the OSCE and the German Marshall Fund (GMF) participate as speakers. The meeting focuses on the state of play of NATO’s cooperation with MD partners and how to further enhance the partnership. Bilateral talks take place at the meeting between NATO representatives and Mauritanian officials from the government and the army.


• 24-25 October, Cairo, Egypt: The President of the NATO PA Alli meets in Cairo with Egyptian authorities and Arab regional institutions. During a conference for fellow legislators from Africa and the Middle East, he encourages them to take full advantage of cooperation opportunities with NATO’s new Strategic Direction South, and the Hub for the South in Naples, with the aim of combating terrorism. Alli meets with the SG of the Arab League and then with the President of the Arab Parliament. Possibilities of further cooperation are explored with both.

www.nato-pa.int/news/nato-pa-president-cairo-strengthen-cooperation-egypt-arab-institutions

• 26 October, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: the first Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme for Algeria is launched, with the focus on implementing detection systems in the fight against terrorism. By providing cutting-edge technological solutions in support of the fight against terrorism, this SPS project contributes to NATO’s wider efforts to project stability beyond Alliance borders. Moreover, it creates expert networks, from north to south, and develops scientific skills and technology.

• 9-10 November, Naples, Italy: 57 participants in the annual NATO Regional Cooperation Course 2018 (NRCC 18) visit the Allied JFC Naples HQ and the NSD-S Hub location. The NRCC is the Alliance’s major educational outreach to our Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanouba Cooperation Initiative partners and other countries from the region. Participants attend a series of comprehensive briefings, including panel discussion with experts from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Kuwait. It is underscored that to tackle common threats, cooperation should be aimed at improving border security, safeguarding energy resources and reducing smuggling (human, weapons, drugs), which finances terrorism.

• 13-15 November, Kuwait City, Kuwait: A delegation of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly visits Kuwait City. Kuwait is pursuing constructive relations with all regional powers in efforts to mediate the recent tensions in the Gulf region and in the Gulf Cooperation Council. Rivalries between Iran and Saudi Arabia, already present in Syria and Yemen, threaten to spill over into Lebanon.

• 22 November, NATO HQ, Brussels, Belgium: The agreement to launch Trust Fund IV for Jordan is signed. It is the latest phase of a NATO Partnership for Peace/MD Trust Fund and will last 24 months, with the main aim of helping the armed forces to build a self-sustaining ammunition demilitarization capacity. Trust Funds are voluntary, nationally-led and work under the framework of the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund policy. Since 2000 about 30 projects have been funded, and it is proving to be a very effective tool, able to combine practical support with a high degree of public diplomacy.

• 23-24 November, Rome, Italy: A Joint Seminar of the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation (DSCTC) is held, with themes ranging from Libya and North Africa, the migration crisis, the situation in Syria and Iraq, the terrorist threat to Europe and the Western Balkans, and countering radicalization and violent extremism. Participants in the seminar include over 100 members of parliament from 35 countries from the Euro-Atlantic region, the Middle East and North Africa. What emerges is that complex security problems require multi-faceted approaches; human rights and rule of law must always be guaranteed. Italy’s Prime Minister Gentiloni recalls how Italy is struggling with the migration crisis and must not be left alone; he suggests that more people-to-people exchanges for the Mediterranean are needed to foster solidarity and build long-term stability.


• 23-24 November, Rome, Italy: The 5th Shared Awareness and Deconfliction for the Mediterranean Sea (SHADE Med) takes place bringing together representatives from nations and organizations interested in or affected by the migratory phenomenon in the southern central Mediterranean, thus providing a forum to discuss and share knowledge and deconflict to coordinate their activities. Its primary goal is to provide a mecha-
nism aimed at deconflicting and where possible coordinating military and civilian resources, military and civilian operations and industry practices to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness in managing objectives related to the migratory phenomenon in the Mediterranean. The 2017 edition of the SHADE Med gathers 156 attendees from 32 countries and 94 organizations (including seven NGOs). Keynote speeches focus on the need for effective cooperation, in particular between law enforcement agencies and the military. The plenary session is followed by working group panels divided into six different topics (information exchange in the Mediterranean, the smuggling business model, communication systems and information exchange, training the Libyan Navy and Coastguard, migration and SOLAS and capacity building and legal aspects) where experiences, emerging trends and best practices are discussed. 


2. OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation

The relationship between the OSCE and its participating states 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 (counterterrorism, 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.

**2017 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 16th Winter Meeting**

- 23-24 February, Vienna, Austria: In the opening joint session, the values of the OSCE community—peace, security, prosperity and democratic values— are underlined. Other issues recognized as relevant are the need to address the root causes of violent extremism, the gender dimension when dealing with refugees and migrants, and the improvement in promoting inclusivity and laws against discrimination based on religion, race and national origin. During the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security the main topics assessed are the threat of terrorism and cybersecurity, women’s role in peacebuilding, the role of parliamentarians in strengthening cooperation, as well as the role of education and inter-cultural dialogue. The General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment focuses the debate on the management of natural resources, water security and combating climate change, which is increasingly influencing migration. The General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions stresses how human rights challenges also have to be faced in OSCE countries. The Human Dimension Committee focuses on freedom of expression, torture, gender and democracy, and hate crime. The debate in this session regards the protection of human rights amid growing populism. During the closing joint session, participants reaffirm that hyper-securitization is not an effective solution when ensuring security. Concern is expressed with relation to growing executive power, distrust and rising populism. A special debate is dedicated to the protection of human rights in times of crisis. The situation in Turkey is also addressed, and concern is expressed for the number of journalists imprisoned, and for the security and terrorism threats that the country faces. The Greek members call for burden sharing in the refugee and migrant crisis. During the Standing Committee, which consists of the OSCE PA’s 57 Heads of National Delegations and Members of the Bureau, OSCE PA SG Montella argues in favour of increased engagement with the Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation through visits to the region and possible election observation. www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/winter-meetings/2017-vienna/reports-20/3513-2017-winter-meeting-final-report/file
2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

- 3-5 October, Andorra la Vella, Andorra: About 180 parliamentarians take part in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s 16th Autumn Meeting, under the theme “Security in the OSCE Area: New Challenges, New Tasks.” The three sessions are centred on the themes of cybersecurity, environmental security and climate change and the importance of education as a guarantee of stability. The Committee’s topics of discussion include the issue of the Catalan referendum, the democratic regression, and attacks on the rule of law throughout the OSCE area. A series of additional PA activities are presented, with praise expressed for the work of the OSCE PA’s Ad Hoc Committee on Migration and the newly established Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism.

- 2 October, Andorra la Vella, Andorra: The Mediterranean Forum meets under the theme “Promoting Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean.” The Andorran delegation expresses hope for more action-oriented dialogue. Minister Counsellor L. Fratini, 2017 Chairman of the MCG, discusses governmental efforts towards dialogue in the Mediterranean, noting that in 2017, the MCG has focused on trafficking in cultural properties, cybersecurity, energy, the role of women in security issues, and economic cooperation. He talks about the priorities of the incoming Italian OSCE Chairmanship (Ukrainian crisis, protracted conflicts, cybersecurity, transnational threats and civil society dialogue).

- 24-25 October, Palermo, Italy: The 2017 OSCE Mediterranean Conference is organized by the Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE’s Mediterranean Partnership. The title is “Large Movements of Migrants and Refugees in the Mediterranean: Challenges and Opportunities,” and is attended by more than 30 foreign ministers and deputy foreign ministers and more than 200 high level representatives of the MPCs, OSCE participating states, OSCE institutions, international organizations, civil society, academia and the media. The first session discusses the increased risk of smuggling and trafficking in human beings arising from large movements of refugees and migrants. Vulnerable groups such as children face greater exposure. The second session is devoted to the opportunities arising from migration and the role of integration policies for growth, sustainable development, peace and stability. Migration management requires a long-term approach to unlock its economic, social, and cultural potential. The third session delves into the core of successful integration as a common responsibility based on a two-fold approach, with a focus on combating all forms of intolerance, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, also based on religious grounds. Both newcomers and the receiving communities need to engage in a process of knowledge, exchange and adaptation. The message that emerges from the conference is that the way forward requires turning migration governance challenges into mutually beneficial opportunities.
Med Seminar: Women, Peace and Security: A Gender Perspective on the Future of the MENA Region

- 23 October, Palermo, Italy: The Med Seminar is held on the side of the Mediterranean Conference. The major reshaping in the region in recent years has led in some cases to new political structures that have brought women’s rights to the core of the political agenda. The first session looks at the opportunities that arise from these processes, to promote women’s needs and aspirations. The second session focuses on the adoption of the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The current state of the implementation of the resolution and the WPS agenda within the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation is discussed.


2017 OSCE-Wide Counter-Terrorism Conference and Civil Society Day

- 23-24 May, Vienna, Austria: More than 500 experts from across the OSCE region gather for the annual OSCE conference on Terrorism. Violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism (VERLT) is a threat faced by both OSCE participating states and their partners. Participants discuss good practices from the OSCE region on rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, as well as prevention of radicalization to terrorism. The conference also addressed youth empowerment in preventing and countering VERLT.

- 25 May 2017, Vienna, Austria: after the Conference, the Prevention Project convenes representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs), OSCE executive structures, the UN and interested participating states during a civil society day. The purpose is to give CSOs and other local actors the opportunity to further consider the issues on the conference agenda, and to put forward a series of recommendations for consideration by the OSCE participating states for strengthening the role of civil society and of local communities in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism (P/CVERLT) in the OSCE area. The participating CSOs come from across the OSCE area, with expertise on and experience in a range of P/CVERLT issues, e.g., youth empowerment, community-law enforcement dialogue, rehabilitation and reintegration (R/R), religious engagement, research, gender, good governance and democratization. In particular, emerging themes are the role of trust and cooperation among CSOs and between state/police actors, the availability of political and legal space, and the importance of replicating and upsaling successful projects. Another topic that emerges throughout the conference is the need to work with the families of violent extremist offenders, to do more research into radicalization and recruitment in prisons, and to foster the empowerment of civil society by tackling the reasons for non-collaboration.


Annual Ministerial Council – 24th OSCE Ministerial Council

- 7-8 December, Vienna, Austria: The 24th Ministerial Council, the central decision-making and governing body of the OSCE is the culmination of Austria’s 2017 OSCE Chairmanship, which has placed particular emphasis on defusing conflicts, re-establishing trust and fighting radicalization and violent extremism. Civil society’s recommendations to the OSCE executive structures and participating states are received by the Council. Such recommendations are adopted by more than 100 NGO representatives who met during the Parallel Civil Society Conference. One of the main issues discussed by the Council is the crisis of confidence in the OSCE area. Security, it is advocated, can be achieved only when confidence is shared. Concerns arise for developments that have deepened mistrust, increased tensions, and caused conflict and instability within and between the states. At the margins of the Council, OSCE Youth Focal Points, experts, youth participants and high-level diplomats are brought together to discuss implementation and mainstreaming of UNSCR 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security. Another side event is dedicated to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). A number of decisions are adopted by the Council: preventing the trafficking of human beings, and combating all forms of child trafficking, including for sexual exploitation; intensifying cooperation on economic activities, promoting good governance, and further encouraging employment opportunities for women and young people; enhancing OSCE efforts to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technologies.

www.osce.org/oscemc17

Mediterranean Contact Group

- 12 June, Vienna, Austria: The MCG meets to discuss energy security as a precondition for economic growth and stability. The meeting is an opportunity to showcase contributions to energy security in the Mediterranean region by the private sector, governmental agencies and civil society. Important discussion themes are also the legal and investment framework and diversity in energy governance.

www.osce.org/partners-for-cooperation/mediterranean/322696

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 transformed 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 2017

Finances

- 24 January, Paris, France: The first 5+5 Ministers of Finance meeting is held, as a privileged forum for reinforcing Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and regional Maghreb integration and optimizing existing resources. The aim is to foster complementarities and synergies between members and the relevant regional and international initiatives. A ministerial declaration is issued. Regarding financial transparency, ministers underline the importance of: i. the implementation of norms and international standards of transparency defined by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF); ii. the development of systems to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. They call for cooperation among FATF and similar regional organizations, with the aim of reinforcing their work in identifying and fixing the flaws in the financial system. Regarding taxation, they encourage bilateral talks between tax authorities to ensure uniform applications of existing fiscal conventions. The Dialogue 5+5 Finances has a relevant role in fiscal transparency, facilitating the implementation of international norms about financial accounts information exchange and information on actual beneficiaries. In the customs area, cooperation should be strengthened giving priority to the coordinated management of the borders against major trafficking activities and terrorism, and the training of customs officers. They recognize the importance of financial innovations in mobilizing private capital for green investments and encourage the share of knowledge, reinforcement of capacities, the analysis of risks and international cooperation.


- 6 April, La Valetta, Malta: The 2nd 5+5 Finance Dialogue meeting takes place on the fringes of the Informal Meeting of EU Finance Ministers, during the Maltese Presidency of the EU. The discussions focus on the promotion of private investment in the region after the recent economic and political upheaval. The ministers discuss the best ways to create the right environment for the private sector to flourish, highlighting the importance of political stability, good governance, legal security, infrastructure and market and finance access.


Culture

- 10 February, Tunis, Tunisia: the first 5+5 Dialogue Culture Ministers meeting is dedicated to “Culture in the service of bringing people closer and development.” It results in the proclamation of the Tunis Declaration. The document highlights the importance of strengthening synergies between all organizations and associations devoted to culture in the Mediterranean Basin. These countries have considerable cultural assets, including heritage that should be enhanced as part of a joint strategy in order to promote a closer liaison and cohesive development between countries of the Mediterranean Basin. Cooperation in the cultural domain and intercultural dialogue form an essential vector for revealing the current challenges. Ministers agree that special attention should be paid to: a. the promotion of universal values, tolerance, solidarity, peace and freedom of expression to contribute to countering radicalization and extremism; b. strengthening cultural cooperation at the legal and institutional level to enhance the region’s intangible and tangible heritage; c. promoting backup, digitalization and vocational training; d. countering the illegal traffic of cultural properties; e. encouraging mobility of cultural players between countries of the western basin; f. supporting policies and programmes for translating literary, audio-visual and cinematographic works; g. holding events and joint cultural prizes in the west Mediterranean; h. encouraging the creation of a Mediterranean digital library; i. developing joint cultural tours and museum networks; j. supporting the artistic creativity of youth in the Mediterranean with projects like Young Mediterranean Voices; k. encouraging the involvement of local authorities in cultural co-operation between countries of the 5+5 Dialogue.


Research, Innovation and Higher Education

- 30-31 March, Tunis, Tunisia: The 3rd ministerial conference on Research, Innovation and Higher Education is titled “Promotion of research, innovation and higher education for social stability and economic growth.” Research and education can play a key role in facing current challenges, such as unemployment, economic underdevelopment, environmental degradation, shortage of natural resources, and severe scarcity of energy and water. Recalling the Work Programme and values stated during the 2nd ministerial conference encourages the continuation of ongoing initiatives, and recognizes the importance of youth training and occupational integration, which must become a priority in projects in the ENP and UfM frameworks. Furthermore, they praise mobility programmes of students and researchers, which make a valuable contribution to mutual understanding and combating radicalization, racism, xenophobia and religious intolerance. They adopt a Work Programme for 2017-2018.

Defence

• 12 December, Paris, France: the ministerial meeting is the occasion to take stock of the activities of the year under the French Presidency. The initiative has enabled 36 of the 38 planned initiatives to be carried out. The two remaining activities, planned in Libya, could not be carried out due to the security and political situation in the country. Italy is the next country to take up the Presidency. The 5+5 Defence initiative aims to foster practical activities of common interest, favour the exchange and sharing of knowledge, interoperability of armed forces and develop trust bonds and mutual understanding among participating countries. This forum is organized around four domains of cooperation: maritime surveillance, air security, armed forces contribution to civil protection, and education and research. The initiative is based on a pragmatic and non-institutional approach, freedom to participate, decisions by consensus and efficiency.

www.defense.gouv.fr/dgris/action-internationale/environnement-proche/initiative-5-5

4. Adriatic Ionian Initiative (All)

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 (All) 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 All 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 Greece started in June 2016 and ended in May 2017, with Italy taking over from June 2017 until May 2018. Following the recent EU approach to support multilateral sub-regional cooperation, the All started working, in 2010, on the idea of a Macro-Region for the Adriatic Ionian Region. Since then the All 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 All, the geopolitical environment has deeply changed. Slovenia in 2004 and Croatia in 2013 entered the EU the other Adriatic-Ionian Eastside coastal Countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia), even if with different timeframes and conditions, are gradually approaching the EU within the Stabilization and Association Process framework, as a prelude to future EU membership. After the overhaul of the All Round Tables approved in 2015, the highest political body of the All is also reformed. For the first time in Dubrovnik (12-5-2016) a double hat “Adriatic and Ionian Council / EUSAIR Ministerial Meeting” is held within the EUSAIR Forum. This now makes the two exercises (All and EUSAIR) inseparable from each other and mutually beneficial. The All focus for 2017 is on stakeholders and civil society with the ultimate goal of bringing them into the picture and making the subsidiarity principle work. The All is going to foster this process in two ways: firstly, by strengthening All Round Tables and connecting them strictly with the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups (TSGs). In order to make them effective, the All-PS finances the participation of selected experts coming from Adriatic and Ionian Civil Society (universities, NGOs, associations, chambers of commerce) and from local administrations; and, secondly, by connecting the All Round Tables with the EUSAIR Stakeholders Platform, as soon as it is fully operational.

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 Chairmanships 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.

• 8 February, Brussels, Belgium: The second All Committee of Senior Officials under the Hellenic Chairmanship takes place right after the EUSAIR Governing Board (GB). Items discussed include: the achievements of the Presidency up to now and the planned activities, the implementation of the overhauled All Round Table (which are now an auxiliary tool of the EUSAIR Governance at the disposal of Adriatic and Ioni5Stakeholders); the next Adriatic and Ionian Council/EUSAIR Ministers
Appendices in the Mediterranean

Main Events during the Italian Chairmanship

Italy takes over the All Chairmanship, as well as the Chairmanship of EUSAIR, starting from June 2017. In its All chair capacity, Italy intends to further strengthen the All role as an essential instrument for fostering regional cooperation, by completing Round Tables, progressively aligning with EUSAIR Thematic Steering Groups and by strengthening policy dialogue and cooperation among All Member States, as well as between the All and other regional cooperation fora, such as the Central European Initiative. Increased emphasis is also envisaged on further strengthening dialogue with civil society through cooperation with the Adriatic-Ionian Fora (cities, chambers, and universities) as well as enhancing inter-parliamentary cooperation.

- 7-9 June, Pescara/Chieti, Italy: The 17th Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chamber of Commerce and the 18th Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities - the main EUSAIR stakeholder event - takes place. The title of the event is “Bridging to the Future,” and the sessions include topics such as governance to relaunch the territories in a macro regional perspective, cultural heritage and tourism as a competitive factor, industry 4.0 and digitalization for SMEs. Thematic workgroups discuss the EUSAIR Pillars: Blue Growth, connecting the region, environmental quality and agriculture, sustainable tourism, women’s entrepreneurship.


- 25 October, Ancona, Italy: A meeting of the ombudsmen of the Adriatic and

Evaluating the progress of EUSAIR.


- 11-12 May, Ioannina, Greece: The 2nd EUSAIR Forum takes stock of the progress and achievements since the 1st Forum held in Dubrovnik in May 2016 and contributes to defining the way ahead. It is a great networking opportunity, where stakeholders (European Commission and institutions, ministers of foreign affairs and ministers responsible for EU funds, line ministers, national, regional and local administrations, the business sector, academia, civil society and the general public) gather to discuss concrete suggestions, views and ideas on how to better achieve EUSAIR Strategy objectives. The focus of the event is Blue Growth and its interrelations with the other EUSAIR pillars: environmental quality, sustainable tourism and connecting the region. On the occasion of the EUSAIR Forum, a joint (“double hat”) meeting of the Adriatic Ionian Council/EUSAIR Ministerial is held. The ministerial meet-

ing gathers the representatives of the Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia and a representative of the European Commission. The representatives adopt the Ioannina Declaration. Moreover, two-side events take place on the occasion of the Forum: the Business to Business (B2B) meeting and the Monitoring and Evaluation of the progress of EUSAIR.


- 6-7 April, Ioannina, Greece: The XV Conference of President/Speakers of All Parliaments tackles the following issues: “Blue growth in the Adriatic and Ionian Macro-region: needs and opportunities” and “The importance of the parliamentary dimension in the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative.” The Final Statement of the Conference recalls the support the EUSAIR can give to a comprehensive European response to the migration issue and the role of the Blue Economy in fostering regional economic growth. The All Parliamentary Dimension was established in 2001 with the aim of encouraging mutual parliamentary cooperation concerning economy, maritime affairs, transport and communication, environment protection, science and culture, as well as to encourage the development of appropriate forms of transborder cooperation in matters of shared interest in the Adriatic and Ionian Region.


- 23-24 March, Porto, Portugal: All SG Amb. F. Piliglipozo attends the 11th Plenary Assembly of the Mediterranean. The conference focuses on the ongoing crises and security challenges in the region, terrorism and extremism, as well as on economic cooperation and trade, climate change, protection of civilians, the Mediterranean cultural heritage and the promotion of human rights.


- 28 March, Athens, Greece: The RT on Sustainable Tourism and Culture takes place with the theme “Leveraging the cultural heritage of the Adriatic and Ionian Region for the promotion of sustainable tourism development.” The RT focuses on the perspectives for the development of the tourism sector in the Adriatic-Ionian Sea Basin, with the sharing of best practices and projects, pertaining to cultural routes and cultural heritage as a generator for sustainable development. The second session is dedicated to enhancing connectivity through transport infrastructure development for sustainable tourism destinations (water ports, seaplanes). The meeting is attended by representatives of civil society and the private sector as well as public authorities from Croatia, Greece, Serbia and Slovenia.


- 21 March, Athens, Greece: the RT on Environmental and Civil Protection takes place to discuss the following issues: the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016-2025, and the connected Education Strategy; training in Sustainable Growth; the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning; and the ADRIOnet project, the network of marine and coastal protected areas in the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Moreover, concerning Civil Protection, the focus is on the Greek national forest fire risk, the Union Civil Protection mechanism for the refugee crisis, problems connected to forest fires and smoke impact, and the use of social media to raise public awareness concerning these issues.


- 7-9 June, Pescara/Chieti, Italy: The 17th Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chamber of Commerce and the 18th Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Cities - the main EUSAIR stakeholder event - takes place. The title of the event is “Bridging to the Future,” and the sessions include topics such as governance to relaunch the territories in a macro regional perspective, cultural heritage and tourism as a competitive factor, industry 4.0 and digitalization for SMEs. Thematic workgroups discuss the EUSAIR Pillars: Blue Growth, connecting the region, environmental quality and agriculture, sustainable tourism, women’s entrepreneurship.


- 25 October, Ancona, Italy: A meeting of the ombudsmen of the Adriatic and
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, Jordan, 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 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 revolts 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 2017

23-29 March, Amman, Jordan: The 28th Arab League (AL) Council meets at the Summit level on 29 March, preceded by an Economic and Social Council’s ministerial meeting (26th March) and foreign ministers’ preparatory meeting (27th). Together with the Arab leaders other representatives also gather at the Dead Sea Summit: the UN SG, UN Special Envoy for Syria, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, SG of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), EU HR for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Russian President’s personal envoy, the US President’s personal envoy and the French government’s envoy. The Summit is the occasion to discuss in the current challenges for the stability of the region and common efforts to address them. According to Jordan’s King Abdullah II, Arab action should be institutionalized to overcome common challenges, and he regrets that the AL has no decision-making role in current crises in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. The Amman declaration focuses mainly on Syrian and Palestinian issues, and terrorism. Arab countries would continue to seek a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis and to support the countries hosting Syrian refugees. Arab leaders agree on the need to reach a political solution to end the conflict and preserve the unity and territorial integrity of the country. They urge Turkey to withdraw its forces from Iraqi territories. The declaration also supports the restart of stalled peace talks between Israel and Palestine on a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders. The statement affirms that the location of the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is unacceptable. Settlement activity has been on the rise since US President Trump took office in January. The declaration urges the enforcement of last year’s UNSCR 2334. On Iraq, the declaration says the country’s stability and territorial integrity are the basic cornerstones of Arab national security. Iraq’s efforts in uprooting terrorism and its work in eradicating Daesh from its territory are praised. Conflicts in Libya and Yemen are also mentioned. The declaration voices the leaders’ support for Yemen’s legitimate government, welcoming the organization of an Arab-European summit for cooperation. The summit concludes with a message of peace, full support for Palestine and a call for pan-Arab solidarity in the face of challenges. UN SG Guterres highlights the plight of refugees and commends Jordan for hosting those fleeing conflicts, while bemoaning the fact that developed countries have closed their borders to the region’s displaced. The high youth unemployment rates and women’s empowerment issues are also mentioned in his speech. HRVP Mogherini’s participation in the summit focuses on the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, on the situation in Syria and Iraq, on Libya and Yemen. Peace in the Middle East requires everyone’s constructive contribution, and only the two-state solution is a realistic possibilities for the Palestinian issue. Moreover, she underscores the European and Arab interest in preserving the unique status of Jerusalem. Regarding Syria, she says that the only solution to the war is political and calls for a relaunch of the Geneva talks under UN leadership. If the EU and the AL joined forces towards this goal, consistently, their leverage could be huge. www.arabsummit2017.jo/en/news/Arab-Summits-28th-ordinary-session-begins
Appendices

in the Mediterranean

• 12 September, Cairo, Egypt: The 148th Session of the Arab League Council at the level of foreign ministers, is held focusing on a draft agenda including 28 items and the report of the SG on the activities of the Secretariat, the Palestinian issue, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the developments in Syria, Libya and Yemen, items on the support for peace and development in the Republic of Sudan, support for the Federal Republic of Somalia and support for internally displaced persons in Arab countries and the displaced Iraqis. The tone of the meeting is lowered by the Gulf crisis, which began on 5 June when four Arab countries – Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt – imposed a land, sea and air blockade on Qatar. The reason given was Qatar’s support for Iran and its alleged support for terrorism. Kuwait and the United States have tried to mediate, unsuccessfully.

www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170913-qatar-neighbours-trade-barbs-at-arab-league-over-boycott/

• 24 October, Barcelona, Spain: the UIM SG and the League SG sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations, with the aim of strengthening mutual collaboration and promoting regional cooperation activities. The two organizations agree to regularly exchange relevant information, jointly promote regional cooperation initiatives, co-organize events, as well as plan study visits and the exchange of experiences among officials and experts in areas of common interest. This framework should contribute to development and security in the region, and open up opportunities for the many young people there.


• 9-10 November, Athens, Greece: the 2nd EU-Arab World Summit “Towards a Solid Alliance” is organized in partnership with the EU Parliament and the LAS. The summit aims to insist on the need for future prospects of both the European and the Arab world. The EU Commission’s Vice-President for Energy refers to the intertwined interests of the two sides, namely security, terrorism, irregular migration, climate change, economic development and trade. The relationship with the southern Mediterranean and Arab countries has been dominated by trade in hydrocarbons; recently the dialogue with supplying countries has been reinvigorated, along with supply. Nonetheless, the commitments to the Paris Agreement stand; cooperation with the Arab region, therefore, is broadening to include clean energy technologies and policies. He mentions successful examples (the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Energy Expert Group, the UIM Platforms on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Regional Electricity Markets, and the EU Neighbourhood Policy). Investments in sustainable energy in the private sector need to be further encouraged. He concludes with an invitation to deepen cooperation.


• 28 November, Brussels, Belgium: 6th Meeting of the EU Political and Security Committee and the LAS Permanent Representatives. Since the launch of the EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue in November 2015, it has been agreed to continue developing the Euro-Arab operational cooperation, particularly in the fields of conflict prevention, early warning and crisis management, humanitarian assistance, counter-terrorism, transnational organized crime, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The meeting includes a constructive discussion on the current regional obstacles facing the Arab and European regions, in particular, the Palestinian question, Syria, Libya, Yemen and Iraq, as well as counter-terrorism, irregular migration, refugees, displaced persons and Iran.


6. Summit of the Southern European Union Countries

The 1st Mediterranean EU Countries’ Summit took place in September 2016 in Malta, with the aim of enhancing their cooperation and to contribute to the dialogue on the future of the EU. The recovery from the crisis, high migration flows, the instability in the southern Mediterranean, as well as Brexit and Euro-scepticism need a united response from southern European countries. With the Athens Declaration, the Heads of State and Government (HoSG) of the Republic of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain underline their strong commitment to European unity. They are convinced that the EU needs fresh energy in order to address the common challenges. The Member States are facing and upholding its values of freedom, democracy and rule of law, as well as tolerance and solidarity. The countries therefore propose the following priorities and measures: ensuring the internal and external security of Europe, reinforcing cooperation in the Mediterranean and with African countries, fostering growth and investment in Europe, strengthening programmes for youth, and addressing the challenge of migration. Athens Declaration 2016: www.topontiki.gr/sites/default/files declaración_athens_summit.pdf

Main Meeting during 2017

• 28 January, Lisbon, Portugal: The 2nd Summit of the Southern EU Countries brings together the HoSG of the seven countries to find common ground on EU policies. The event reaffirms the confidence in the European project and the conviction that building a stronger and more cohesive Union is a priority that corresponds to the national interest of each country. The main message is that the EU can only overcome the challenges it faces with unity and cohesion. In the final declaration, the HoSG confirm their will to enhance cooperation and contribute to a strong and united EU, with a series of measures and priorities in the following areas: fostering investment, growth, employment and convergence in Europe; ensuring the internal and external security of Europe; and migration and reinforcing cooperation in the Mediterranean and with African Countries. On the first point, they call for more inclusion of youth in employment, the imple-
mentation of the Single Market Strategies, the finalization of the European Monetary Union, the completion of the European Central Bank’s action with a fiscal policy, support for the extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, hope for a strengthening of the European Pillar of Social Rights towards a European social model and welfare state, and call for trade policy based on fair exchanges. Secondly, they remark that security remains a top priority on the European agenda, support the EU Global strategy, and commit to coordinate defence programmes and reinforce the European Defence Agency. They remain vigilant regarding the situation in the Mediterranean and Africa and support EU capacity development to conduct military and civilian missions, in cooperation with African partner countries. They underline the need to implement the EU’s Internal Security Strategy and preserve the Schengen area. Prevention of radicalization is also among the priorities, through tackling social exclusion. Thirdly, they engage commonly with European partners to promote development and growth in the southern neighbourhood and contribute to its stability and security, and support partners to fight against irregular immigration as well as address its root causes. They welcome the New Partnership Framework for Migration, La Valetta Action Plan and the new European Fund for Sustainable Development: the need to build partnerships with origin and transit countries must respect human rights and international law; responsibility and solidarity should also guide the review of the Common European Asylum System.

www.portugal.gov.pt/media/24687555/20170128-pm-ue-sul-ing.pdf

• 10 April, Madrid, Spain: the 3rd Summit of Southern EU Countries to reaffirm their commitment to working together for a strong and united European Union. Cooperation across the Mediterranean Basin and African countries needs to be further strengthened, especially in terms of a comprehensive approach to migration. Solidarity and shared responsibility should remain central to EU Migration Policy, especially in relation to the Common European Asylum System. From an economic point of view, efforts are needed in fighting unemployment and fostering the completion of the single market, above all in energy and digital areas. Labour mobility should be enhanced, accompanied by further investments in education and vocational training. The completion of the Economic and Monetary Union mean it is now essential to have the Banking Union, European Deposit Insurance Bank and fiscal integration. Citizens’ security remains the main priority, yet higher cooperation among Law Enforcement Authorities is crucial, both within the EU and with third states. They welcome the entry into force of new EU rules – the Directive on Terrorism, Firearms Directive and Schengen Borders Code. Measures to fight terrorism financing, smuggling of cultural property and site destruction and prevent radicalization are needed. They express the wish for the EU to become a real security and defence provider. Furthermore, they reaffirm the central role of the UfM, as an expression of co-ownership in the management of common regional agenda. Finally, they condemn the air strike with chemical weapons on 4 April in Idlib (Syria).

This chapter provides details of the results of presidential and legislative elections that took place in 2017 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.

France
Presidential Elections
23 April 2017 and 7 May 2017
Previous elections: 22 April 2012 and 6 May 2012
Semi-presidential Republic. Two-round elections for a five-year presidential term, renewable once only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>% 1st round</th>
<th>% 2nd round</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Macron (On the Move)</td>
<td>24.01</td>
<td>66.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Le Pen (National Front)</td>
<td>21.30</td>
<td>33.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francois Fillon (Republican Party (LR))</td>
<td>20.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Luc Mélenchon (Left Front)</td>
<td>19.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benoit Hamon (Socialist Party)</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 75.8% (1st round) and 66.0% (2nd round)

Legislative Elections
11 June 2017 and 18 June 2017
Previous elections: 10 June 2012 and 17 June 2012
Bicameral legislature. The Senate has 348 seats elected by indirect universal suffrage for a nine-year term, a third of which are renewed every three years. The 577 seats of the National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale) are elected for a five-year term, each from a single-seat constituency. The election consists of two rounds: the total number of seats is provided after both rounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% 1st round</th>
<th>% 2nd round</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La République En Marche!</td>
<td>28.21</td>
<td>43.06</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Republicans (LR, centre-right)</td>
<td>15.77</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Movement (centrist)</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party (PS, social democrat)</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI, liberals, centre-right)</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 75.8% (1st round) and 66.0% (2nd round)

Slovenia
Presidential Elections
22 October 2017 and 12 November 2017
Previous elections: 11 November 2012 and 2 December 2012
Parliamentary Republic. Two-round elections are held to choose a President for a five-year term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>% 1st round</th>
<th>% 2nd round</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borut Pahor (Independent)</td>
<td>47.21</td>
<td>53.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjan Sarec (Independent; List of Marjan Sarec)</td>
<td>24.76</td>
<td>46.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romana Tomc (Slovenian Democratic Party, SDS)</td>
<td>13.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljudmila Novak (New Slovenia)</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrej Šiško (United Slovenia Movement)</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boris Popović (Slovenia Forever)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maja Makovec Brenčič (Modern Centre Party)</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 75.8% (1st round) and 66.0% (2nd round)

Malta
Legislative elections
3 June 2017
Previous elections: 9 March 2013
Malta has a unicameral Assembly (Kamra Tad-Deputati) with 67 seats. The deputies are elected through a single transferable vote proportional representation system, to serve a five-year term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour Party (social-democrat, Centre-left)</td>
<td>55.04</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Party (Christian-democrat, conservative, Centre-right)</td>
<td>43.68</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alternative (green politics, Centre-left)</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244

Legislative elections

11 June 2017

Previous elections: 8 June 2014

Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244 is a parliamentary republic. It has a unicameral legislative system (Kuvendi i Kosovës) with 120 seats elected through an open-list proportional representation system to serve a four-year term. 10 of those deputies are elected by the Serbian community and another 10 by other minorities. A 5% threshold is established for political parties representing the Albanian majority, and no threshold for the minorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PANA Coalition</td>
<td>33.7 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) (Liberalism)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) (Conservatism) Initiative for Kosovo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Determination Movement (LV) (Nationalism)</td>
<td>27.49 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) Conservatism</td>
<td>25.53 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian List (SL) (Minority interests, Serbian nationalism)</td>
<td>6.12 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo (Turkish minority)</td>
<td>1.08 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vakat Coalition (Bosnian minority)</td>
<td>0.89 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Minority Parties</td>
<td>2.06 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout: 41.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Republic of Albania

Legislative elections

25 June 2017

Previous elections: 23 June 2013

The Albanian republic is a parliamentary democracy. Elections are held every four years to a unicameral 140-seat chamber (Kuvendi i Shqipërisë) through a closed-list proportional representation system. There are 12 multi-member constituencies corresponding to the country’s 12 administrative regions. Within any constituency, parties must meet a threshold of 3%, and pre-election coalitions must meet a threshold of 5%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>% Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party of Albania (social-democrat, pro-Europeanism. Centre-left)</td>
<td>48.34 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party of Albania (conservative. Centre-right)</td>
<td>28.85 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Movement for Integration (social-democrat, pro-Europeanism. Centre-left)</td>
<td>14.28 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Party for Justice, Integration and Unity (Albanian nationalism. Centre-right)</td>
<td>4.81 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout: 54.36% (1st round)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Democratic Party of Albania (social-democracy, centre-left) | 0.95 1 |
| Turnout: 46.8% | |

Turkey

Referendum

16 April 2017

A constitutional referendum was held on whether to approve 18 proposed amendments to the Turkish constitution that were brought forward by the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). If approved, the office of the Prime Minister would be abolished and the existing parliamentary system of government would be replaced with an executive presidency and a presidential system. The referendum was held under a state of emergency that was declared following a failed military coup attempt in July 2016. Allegations of electoral misconduct, irregularities throughout the campaign and state coercion of ‘No’ supporters were widespread prior to, during and after the referendum. European election monitors said the referendum did not meet international standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout: 58.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Algeria

Legislative Elections

4 May 2017

Previous elections: 10 May 2012

Semi-presidential republic. Bicameral legislature. 462 seats to be filled in the People’s National Assembly (al-Majlis al-Sha’abi al-Watani/Assemblée Populaire Nationale) for five-year terms by means of proportional representation and from multi-seat constituencies. Eight seats are reserved for Algerians living abroad. 17 new parties recently legalized by the Interior Minister take part in the elections.
### Mauritania

**Referendum**

5 August 2017

A constitutional referendum was held on 5 August 2017, having initially been planned for 15 July. In the referendum, two questions were asked about the reforms proposed by the government. The first dealt with the abolition of the Senate, the creation of regional councils, as well as the merger of the High Islamic Council and the National Ombudsman, giving way to the creation of the ‘Supreme Council of the Fatwa.’ The second question referred to national symbols, including a proposal to change the national flag, adding two red stripes at the top and bottom of the national flag, as well as the modification of the national anthem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Constitutional reforms (%)</th>
<th>National symbols (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>85.61</td>
<td>85.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turnout: 53.75% and 53.72%.

### Sources

- **Electoral Calendar**
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  - [http://pomed.org](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 2016

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*Res. 1244 of the UNSC.

CHART A1
Official Aid to Mediterranean Countries Financed under the European Commission Budget and the European Development Fund (EDF) in 2016


*Res. 1244 of the UNSC.
### Table A2: European External Assistance in the Mediterranean Countries by Country and Instrument** – Commitments

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### Table A3: European External Assistance in the Mediterranean Countries by Country and Instrument** – Disbursements

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### TABLE A4  European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) 2014-2020

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### TABLE A5  Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) – 2016-2017

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Table A6: Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), Indicative allocations for the period 2014-2020


### TABLE A7 European Investment Bank Loans toward Mediterranean Countries in 2017

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<th>Loans by Sector</th>
<th>Millions of euros</th>
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<td>SGRS Loan for SMEs Midcaps &amp; Other Priorities IV</td>
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<td>ISP Loan for SMEs &amp; Other Priorities IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procredit Loan for SME &amp; Other Cop Objectives</td>
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<td>Aklease Loan for SMEs and Mid-Caps</td>
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<td>Bursa Integrated Hospital Campus</td>
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<td>Lebanon Private Sector Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arab Bank Regional Facility for SMEs and Midcaps</td>
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<td>Wadi Al Arab Water System II Project</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vitas Palestine</td>
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<td><strong>Israel</strong></td>
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<td>Automotive Glass Manufacturing Morocco</td>
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<td><strong>Tunisia</strong></td>
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<td>Mechatronic and Cable Manufacturing Maghreb</td>
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<td>Mediterrania Capital III</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Source:</strong> <a href="http://www.eib.org/attachments/general/reports/st2016en.pdf">www.eib.org/attachments/general/reports/st2016en.pdf</a></td>
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### TABLE A8 Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)

<table>
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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><strong>2017</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Crisis (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey)</td>
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<td>North Africa (Algeria, Libya)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balkans</td>
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### TABLE B1  Breakdown of Net Spanish Official Development Assistance in the Mediterranean Region

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<th>Region</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Maghreb and Middle East</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>12,498,232</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<td>12,498,232</td>
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### CHART B1  Breakdown of Spanish Gross Development Aid in the Maghreb and the Middle East by Sector (2016)

TABLE B2  Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region by Aid Type (2016)

<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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maghreb and Middle East</td>
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CHART B2  Breakdown of Spanish Gross Development Aid in the Balkans and Turkey by Sector (2016)

Multi-Sector 93%
Emergency aid 0%
Other 1%
Education 3%
Governance and Civil Society 2%
Other Social Infrastructure and Services 1%


TABLE B2  Breakdown of Spanish Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region by Aid Type (2016)

<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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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Maghreb and Middle East</td>
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<td>23,592</td>
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Migrations in the Mediterranean

TABLE C1  Number of Foreigners from MPCs in the European Union by Nationality

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<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 EU-28 Immigrants</th>
<th>Total non EU-28 Immigrants</th>
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<td>76</td>
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<td>237</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>294</td>
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<td>953,677</td>
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<td>143</td>
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<td>915</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>236</td>
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<td>5,825</td>
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<td>46,909</td>
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<td>1,217,012</td>
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CHART C1  Percentage of immigrants from MPC over Total Immigrants Non UE-28 in 2017

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>17%</td>
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TABLE C2  Major Countries of Origin of Asylum Applicants in the EU in 2017, Compared with the Year 2014

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<th>2014</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Evolution</th>
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<td>13,777</td>
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<tr>
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### TABLE C3
Countries Hosting The Largest Numbers Of Refugees

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>922,200</td>
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<td>Sudan</td>
<td>906,600</td>
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### CHART C3
Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated Children by Main Euro-Mediterranean Countries of Arrival in 2017

- Accompanied children
- Unaccompanied and Separated children (UASC)

Commercial Relations of the Mediterranean Countries

### TABLE D1 Merchandise Trade between the Mediterranean Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Med/tot imports</th>
<th>EU/tot imports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>14,560,161</td>
<td>7,008,320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>20,135,920</td>
<td>9,140,120</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>5,051,054</td>
<td>3,644,576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3,886,767</td>
<td>48,606,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>6,464</td>
<td>43,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>79,694</td>
<td>562,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>26,281</td>
<td>219,572</td>
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<td>Bosnia &amp; H.</td>
<td>1,770</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>18,686</td>
<td>162,083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
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<td>2,107</td>
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<td>FYROM</td>
<td>8,486</td>
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<td>Albania</td>
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<td>75,745</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>4,988,483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>Jordan</td>
<td>10,690</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>Palestine</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
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<td>848,679</td>
<td>3,879,164</td>
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<td>Morocco</td>
<td>230,901</td>
<td>5,487,095</td>
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<tr>
<td>med. countries</td>
<td>31,418,971</td>
<td>93,681,548</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU28 (EU)</td>
<td>50,848,067</td>
<td>192,424,268</td>
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</table>

### CHART D1 Import Ratio from EU and from the Mediterranean, 2016

**Med/tot imports**: For each country: total imports from Mediterranean partners over total imports. **EU/tot imports**: For each country: total imports from EU28 partner countries over total imports. These ratios show the importance for each country of two areas of trade, the Mediterranean and the EU. Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
### TABLE D1

**Merchandise Trade between the Mediterranean Countries (continuation)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Cyprus</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Syria</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Palestine</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>Libya</th>
<th>Algeria</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>Portugal</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Slovenia</th>
<th>Croatia</th>
<th>Bosnia &amp; H.</th>
<th>Serbia</th>
<th>Montenegro</th>
<th>FYROM</th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>Portugal</th>
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<td>41,159</td>
<td>461,668</td>
<td>10,880</td>
<td>52,600</td>
<td>37,871</td>
<td>199,025</td>
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<td>10,830</td>
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<td>37,871</td>
<td>168,122</td>
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<td>Export Ratio from EU and from the Mediterranean, 2016</td>
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TABLE D2 | Export Disaggregation (%), 2016

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Food and live animals</th>
<th>Beverages and tobacco</th>
<th>Crude materials, inedible, except fuels</th>
<th>Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials</th>
<th>Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes</th>
<th>Chemicals and related products, n.e.s.</th>
<th>Manufactured goods</th>
<th>Machinery and transport equipment</th>
<th>Miscellaneous manufactured articles</th>
<th>Commodities and transactions, n.e.s.</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
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</table>

CHART D3 | Trade Openness (Trade as % of GDP), 2016

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Trade (% of GDP)</th>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td>FYROM</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Bosnia &amp; H.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CHART D4 | Percentage of Services in Total Export and Total Import, 2016

CHART D5 | Herfindahl Hirschmann Index (HHI) of Geographical Concentration in the Mediterranean, 2016

The Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index (HHI) is calculated as \( H^* = \sum_i (s_i)^2 \) where \( s_i \) is the share of import/export flows of country \( i \) in total imports/exports of country \( i \). The HHI is an index of concentration and ranges from 0 to 1. Values closer to 1 indicate highly concentrated flows. Here it is calculated with Mediterranean trading partners only. Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
The Intra-Regional Trade Intensity Index (IRTII) and Intra-Regional Trade Shares (IRTS, 2016) are used to measure the degree of dependency on regional trade. The IRTSI (intra-regional trade intensity index) is calculated as \( \frac{T_{ii}}{T_{i}} \) \( T_{w} \), where \( T_{w} \) is the sum of world exports and imports. If it is greater than 1, flows are greater than expected.

Intra-Med trade: 512 billion $ in 2016: 24% inter-subregions
67% intra-West
9% intra-East

IRTS: 12%
IRTII: 0.67

Intra-Regional Trade Shares (IRTS), 2005-2016

Intra-Med trade: 512 billion $ in 2016: 2.8% inter-subregions
2% intra-Middle East
1% intra-North Africa

IRTS: 2%
IRTII: 0.59

Intra-Med trade: 512 billion $ in 2016: 24% inter-subregions
74% intra-North
2% intra-South

IRTS: 2%
IRTII: 0.75

Intra-Mediterranean Total Trade and Intra-Regional Trade Intensity Index (IRTII), 2005-2016

The IRTSI (intra-regional trade intensity index) is calculated as \( \frac{T_{ii}}{T_{i}} \) \( T_{w} \), where \( T_{w} \) is the sum of world exports and imports. If it is greater than 1, flows are greater than expected.

Own calculations using UNCTAD data.
Signature of Multilateral Treaties and Conventions

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multilateral Treaties on Human Rights and Penal Matters*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of adoption</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tunisia</strong></td>
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Source: UN UN UN UN UN UN UN UN UN

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### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multilateral Treaties on Labour Rights (year of ratification)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Freedom of association and collective bargaining</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rights of immigrant workers</strong></td>
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</table>

Source: ILO ILO ILO ILO

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Appendices

445

IEVal Mediterranean Yearbook 2018
Appendices
Signature of Multilateral Treaties and Conventions

446
IEMed. Mediterranean Yearbook 2018

TABLE E3

Multilateral Environmental Treatiesj
Climate
changea

Kyoto
protocolb

Biological
diversityc

Biosafety
protocold

CITESe

Desertificationf

Persistent
organic
pollutantsg

Ozone
layerh

Control of hazardous
wastes and their
disposali

Date of adoption

1992

1997

1992

2000

1973

1994

2001

1985

1989

Portugal
Spain
France
Italy
Malta
Slovenia
Croatia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Serbia
Montenegro
Macedonia
Albania
Greece
Cyprus
Turkey
Syria
Lebanon
Jordan
Israel
Palestine
Egypt
Libya
Tunisia
Algeria
Morocco

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Source:
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TABLE E4

Date of adoption
Portugal
Spain
France
Italy
Malta
Slovenia
Croatia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Serbia
Montenegro
Macedonia
Albania
Greece
Cyprus
Turkey
Syria
Lebanon
Jordan
Israel
Palestine
Egypt
Libya
Tunisia
Algeria
Morocco

Multilateral Disarmament Treatiesa
Geneva
protocolc
1925
1930
1929
1926
1928
1970
2008
2006
2006

1989
1931
1966
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weaponsd
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Conventional
weapons f
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2015
1981b
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2015
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Chemical
weaponsg
1992
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2003

1998

1999
2001

Source:
UN
UN
UN
UN
UN
UN
UN
a. Ratification, acceptance, approval, accession or succession. b. Signature. c. Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of
Destruction. f. Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. g. Convention on
the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. h. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. i. Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

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TABLE F1  Human Development Index (HDI)

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<th>Life expectancy at birth (years)</th>
<th>Mean years of schooling (years)</th>
<th>Expected years of schooling (years)</th>
<th>GNI per capita (2011 PPP $)</th>
<th>Human Development Index (HDI) Value</th>
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Own production. Source: UNDP.  
* Data refer to 2015 or the most recent year available.
TABLE F2 Population: Demography

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<th>Estimated population for 2050 (millions)</th>
<th>Crude birth rate per 1,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Crude death rate per 1,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Average annual population growth (%)</th>
<th>Total fertility rate (births per woman)</th>
<th>International migrant stock (thousands)</th>
<th>Net number of migrants (thousands)</th>
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Own production. Source: WB, UNPOP.

CHART F2 Birth and Death Rates, 2015

Own production. Source: WB.
### TABLE F3: Population: Structure and Distribution

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<th>Urban population</th>
<th>Population located on the Mediterranean coastal regions</th>
<th>Urban population living in slums</th>
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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 Office data. d Data from 2008. e Data from 2010. f Data from 2011. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F3: Urban and Rural Population Growth Rates and Population Density

![Urban and Rural Population Growth Rates and Population Density](image)

Own production. Source: WB.
### TABLE F4: Education and Training of Human Capital

<table>
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<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Pre-primary and primary</th>
<th>Secondary and post-secondary</th>
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**Duration of compulsory education**

- Portugal: 9 years
- Spain: 10 years
- France: 11 years
- Italy: 12 years
- Malta: 11 years
- Slovenia: 9 years
- Croatia: 8 years
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: 8 years
- Serbia: 8 years
- Montenegro: 8 years
- FYROM: 8 years
- Albania: 9 years
- Greece: 9 years
- Cyprus: 9 years
- Turkey: 12 years
- Syria: 9 years
- Lebanon: 9 years
- Jordan: 10 years
- Israel: 13 years
- Palestine: 10 years
- Egypt: 9 years
- Libya: 9 years
- Tunisia: 9 years
- Algeria: 10 years
- Morocco: 9 years

**Public expenditure on education**

- Portugal: 5.1
- Spain: 4.3
- France: 5.5
- Italy: 4.1
- Malta: 7.8
- Slovenia: 5.5
- Croatia: 4.6
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: 0.2
- Serbia: 4.2
- Montenegro: 2.2
- FYROM: 3.5
- Albania: 3.5
- Greece: 6.1
- Cyprus: 4.8
- Turkey: 4.8
- Syria: 5.1
- Lebanon: 2.6
- Jordan: 1.0
- Israel: 6.1
- Palestine: 4.8
- Egypt: 3.8
- Libya: 1.0
- Tunisia: 6.3
- Algeria: 4.4
- Morocco: 5.3

Own production. Source: UNESCO, OECD.

---

### CHART F4: Percentage of Children Scoring below Level 1 and Scoring Level 6 in PISA 2015

![Percentage of Children Scoring below Level 1 and Scoring Level 6 in PISA 2015](chart.png)

Own production. Source: OECD.
 TABLE F5  Health and Survival

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Child mortality rate</th>
<th>Maternal mortality ratio</th>
<th>People living with HIV/AIDS</th>
<th>Prevalence of smoking</th>
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<td>under-five per 1,000 live births</td>
<td>Total prevalence of HIV</td>
<td>Estimated number</td>
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</table>

Note: Own production. Source: WB and UNAIDS. (..) Data unavailable.

 CHART F5  GNI per capita and Under-five Mortality Rate

Note: Male mortality rate less female mortality rate, under-5 per 1,000 live births.
### TABLE F6 Nutrition and Food Security

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Food Supply (kcal/person/day)</th>
<th>Cereal trade (mt)</th>
<th>Exports (thousands $)</th>
<th>% children underweight</th>
<th>% children overweight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2013</td>
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**Notes:**
- Own production. Source: FAO.
- a, Latest data available from this period.
- (,) Data unavailable.

---

### CHART F6 Prevalence of Obesity among Adults, Men and Women (%)

Obesity Prevalence by WHO Regions, 2016

- **Male**
- **Female**

Own production. Source: WHO.
TABLE F7  
Access to Health Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physicians per 10,000 population</th>
<th>Population using safely managed drinking-water service</th>
<th>Population using safely managed sanitation services</th>
<th>Births attended by skilled health personnel</th>
<th>Contraceptive prevalence, any method</th>
<th>Adolescent fertility rate</th>
<th>Current health expenditure % of GDP</th>
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Note: Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable.

CHART F7  
Health Expenditure per capita and Probability of Dying of Non-communicable Diseases (years 30-70)

Note: Probability (%) of dying between age 30 and exact age 70 from any cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease. Own production. Source: WHO..
TABLE F8  Gender: Social Development

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<th>Life expectancy at birth</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate</th>
<th>Combined gross enrolment ratio, primary to tertiary</th>
<th>Year women received right to vote</th>
<th>Year women received right to stand for election</th>
<th>Year first woman elected or appointed to parliament</th>
<th>Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments</th>
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Own production. Source: WB UNESCO UNESCO UNESCO UNESCO IPU IPU UNDP IPU

- **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.
- **g.** Data unavailable.

CHART F8  Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments, December 2007-2017
TABLE F9  Technology and Communications

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<th>Fixed-telephone subscriptions</th>
<th>Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions</th>
<th>Fixed-broadband subscriptions</th>
<th>Active Mobile-broadband subscriptions</th>
<th>Proportion of households with computer</th>
<th>Internet access</th>
<th>Internet users</th>
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Source: ITU, UNCTAD

CHART F9  Percentage of Individuals Using Internet, 2010-2016

The Mediterranean in Brief 2018
TABLE F10  Security and Military Expenditure

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<th>Internally displaced people</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Conventional arms transfer</th>
<th>Military expenditure</th>
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<td>Own production. Source: IDMC UNHCR UNHCR WB SIPRI SIPRI SIPRI SIPRI</td>
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a. Data only refer to Palestinian refugees under UNHCR mandate. b. Military pensions not included. c. Total exports or imports for the entire period. d. Data refer to the approved budget, not real spendings. e. Excluding paramilitary forces. f. Excluding paramilitary forces. g. Include civil defence spending, which usually accounts for about 4.4% of the total. h. 2016. i. Includes only provisional information on supplementary allocations, may underestimate. j. Including Kosovo. k. Latest data available for this period. l. Data unavailable.

CHART F10  Arms Imports and Exports in the Mediterranean

Own production. Source: SIPRI.
## TABLE F11 Economic Structure and Production

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP, current prices</th>
<th>GDP per capita, current prices</th>
<th>GDP growth</th>
<th>Share in GDP by sector</th>
<th>Consumer price index</th>
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Own production. Source: IMF IMF WB WB WB WB IMF


## CHART F11 Share of Agriculture in GDP and GDP per capita, current US$ (2016)

![GDP Growth (annual %), top Mediterranean Countries in 2016](image)

GDP Growth (annual %), top Mediterranean Countries in 2016

Own production. Source: IMF & WB.
### TABLE F12  Agriculture

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<th>Total area for irrigation</th>
<th>Land under cereal production</th>
<th>Cereal production</th>
<th>Cereal yield</th>
<th>Fertilizer consumption</th>
<th>Economically active population in Agriculture</th>
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Own production. Source: FAO FAO FAO FAO FAO FAO FAO FAO WB ILO

* Agricultural area is divided into ‘arable land and permanent crops’ and ‘permanent meadows and pastures’. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F12  Agricultural Productivity, Arable Land and Fertilizer Consumption (2015-16)

#### Average Use of Pesticides, kg/ha, top Consumers

- **Israel**: 16 kg/ha
- **Malta**: 12 kg/ha
- **Cyprus**: 8 kg/ha
- **Italy**: 6 kg/ha
- **Montenegro**: 4 kg/ha
- **Portugal**: 2 kg/ha

#### Fertilizer Consumption (kg per ha of arable land)

- **Israel**: 240 kg/ha
- **Palestine**: 1,808 kg/ha
- **Egypt**: 7,114 kg/ha
- **Lebanon**: 646 kg/ha
- **Tunisia**: 1,542 kg/ha

#### Arable Land (ha per person)

- **Israel**: 4 kg/ha
- **Palestine**: 1 kg/ha
- **Egypt**: 2 kg/ha
- **Lebanon**: 1 kg/ha
- **Tunisia**: 1 kg/ha

Own production. Source: WB.
### TABLE F13  Livestock

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<th>poultry&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<sup>a</sup> Own production. Source: FAO.  
<sup>b</sup> Includes chicken, hens, ducks, turkeys and geese.  
<sup>c</sup> Includes horses, asses, mules and camels. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F13  Production of Eggs, 2016

![Production of Eggs, 2016](chart.png)

Top Producers of Milk in the Mediterranean

*Own production. Source: FAO.*
Appendices

The Mediterranean in Brief

IE Med.
Mediterranean Yearbook 2018

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CHART F14

TABLE F14
Fisheries

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Own production. Source: FAO
( ) Data unavailable.
TABLE F15: Employment and Unemployment

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Own production. Source: ILO.
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### CHART F16: Mediterranean Countries with Highest Proportion of the Employed Population below $1.90 per day (%), 2000-2016

![Proportion of Employed Population below the International Poverty Line of US$1.90 per day (%)]
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Own production. Source: ILO. (..) Data unavailable.

CHART F17  Proportion of Self-employment by Gender, 2018 (%)

Female share of Employment in Managerial Positions (2012-16)

Own production. Source: ILO.
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*Own production. Source: IEA.*

---

### CHART F18: Energy Use per capita (kg oil eq) and Share of Energy Supply from Oil and Coal (%), 2015

[Energy Use per capita (kg oil eq) and Share of Energy Supply from Oil and Coal (%), 2015 chart]

*Own production. Source: IEA.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population with access to electricity</th>
<th>Electricity production</th>
<th>Electricity consumption per capita</th>
<th>Sources of electricity</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>billion kWh</td>
<td>kWh</td>
<td>2014/15^b 2014/15^b 2014/15^b 2014/15^b 2014/15^b 2014/15^b 2014/15^b</td>
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<td>29 20 3 17 30 0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>281.0</td>
<td>5,356</td>
<td>20 19 6 10 25 21</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6,938</td>
<td>2 4 0 10 6 78</td>
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<td>901</td>
<td>55 19 13 6 7 0</td>
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</table>

Sources of electricity: coal, gas, oil, hydroelectric renewables, nuclear.

Table notes: Own production. Source: WB, IEA, WB, WB, WB, WB, WB, WB, WB, WB.

Excluding hydroelectric. Latest data available from this period. (..) Data unavailable.

**CHART F19** Electric Power Consumption (kWh per capita), 2004 and 2014

Electricity Production from Renewable Sources, Excluding Hydroelectric, in Mediterranean Countries (kWh) 2014

- Greece 4%
- Turkey 6%
- Portugal 8%
- France 14%
- Italy 20%
- Spain 33%
### TABLE F20: CO₂ Emissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2015 CO₂ emissions</th>
<th>2015 Emissions per capita</th>
<th>2015 Emissions intensities by GDP</th>
<th>2015 CO₂ emissions by sector</th>
<th>2015 Passenger cars per 1,000 people</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>millions mt</td>
<td>per capita mt</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>kg CO₂ / PPP $</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>0.12</td>
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<td>0.22</td>
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</table>

Note: This does not include motorcycles. Own production according to IEA data. Own production according to OICA data. Data unavailable.

### CHART F20: Number of Cars per 1,000 People and Emissions per capita

![Chart showing number of cars per 1,000 people and CO₂ emissions per capita for various countries.

Own production. Source: IEA and OICA.](image-url)
### TABLE F21

<table>
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<th>Water consumption</th>
<th>Desalinated water production</th>
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<td>total</td>
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</table>

Own production. Source: FAO.

---

### CHART F21

Seasonal and Inter-annual Water Supply Variability (0-5)

- **Pressure on Water Resources - Freshwater Withdrawal**
- **as % of Total Renewable Water Resources**

- **Country**
  - Libya
  - Jordan
  - Syria
  - Tunisia
  - Algeria
  - Madagascar
  - Palestine
  - Malta
  - Morocco

- **Interannual variability 2013**
- **Seasonal variability 2013**

Own production. Source: FAO.
### TABLE F22 Environment

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Total area</th>
<th>Forest area</th>
<th>Wood fuel production</th>
<th>National protected areas</th>
<th>Threatened species</th>
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<td>%</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>% of territorial</td>
<td>gha per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>%</td>
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Own production. Source: FAO, FAO, FAO, FAO, WB, WB, IUCN, IUCN, IUCN, GFN.

a 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. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F22 GDP per capita and Ecological Footprint, 2014

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Own production. Source: GFN.
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*Own production. Source: UNCTAD.*

### CHART F23: FDI Inflows and Outflows 2016

[Graph showing FDI Inflows and Outflows for various countries]
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Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
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<td>74.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13.3</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNCTAD

### CHART F25: Total Imports of Mediterranean Countries by Product (1995-2016)

- Manufactured goods
- Food items & Agricultural raw materials
- Fuels
- Ores, metals
- Others

Own production. Source: UNCTAD.
### TABLE F26  Tourism in the Mediterranean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Inbound tourists</th>
<th>Outbound tourists</th>
<th>International tourism receipts</th>
<th>Tourism expenditure in other countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11,223</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1,893b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>75,315</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>15,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>82,570</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>26,483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>59,372</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>30,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>1,966</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>497</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13,809</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovia</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYROM</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7.5</td>
<td>4,070</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4,852</td>
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<td>7.3</td>
<td>7,235</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>3,167</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>30,289</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>-42.5</td>
<td>-5,256</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>-11.2</td>
<td>-1,668</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3,858</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6,781</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-7.4</td>
<td>400</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>-42.5</td>
<td>-5,256</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.8</td>
<td>5,724</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>2,039</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10,332</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1,864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Own production. Source: UNESCO and WB. a Value calculated using WB data. b Data from 2015. (..) Data unavailable.

### CHART F26  Inbound Tourists (2016) and Number of World Heritage Properties

Percentage of Persons Employed in Cultural Employment (2015)

Arrivals (in millions)

Number of World Heritage Properties

Own production. Source: UNESCO and WB.
### Official Development Assistance (ODA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Official Development Assistance by Donor Countries</th>
<th>Official Development Assistance in Recipient Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>millions $ 2016</td>
<td>% of GNI 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>4,278</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>9,622</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>5,087</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYROM</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>6,488</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>8,870</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1,139</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
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<td>2,402</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>1.55</td>
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### Aid Disbursement and Commitment by Recipient Countries (2016)

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Disbursement Commitment</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>36,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>33,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovia</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYROM</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ODA: Grants/loans to developing countries which are: (a) undertaken by the official sector; (b) with economic development and welfare as the main objective; (c) at concessional financial terms (if a loan, grant element of at least 25%). OOF: Transactions by the official sector with developing countries which do not meet the conditions for ODA, either because (b) or (c). Own production. Source: OECD.
### External Debt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>External debt</th>
<th>% of GNI</th>
<th>$ per capita</th>
<th>long-term debt</th>
<th>short-term debt</th>
<th>Debt service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>millions $</td>
<td>% of GNI</td>
<td>$ per capita</td>
<td>millions $</td>
<td>millions $</td>
<td>% of exports</td>
</tr>
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<td>Portugal</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>..</td>
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<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
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<td>3,116</td>
<td>9,501</td>
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<td>1,131</td>
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<td>2,505</td>
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<td>24.0</td>
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<td>1,893</td>
<td>15.2</td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
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</tr>
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<td>521</td>
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<td>5,321</td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
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<td>51,413</td>
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<td>18.9</td>
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<td>..</td>
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<td>135</td>
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<td>46.4</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>36,587</td>
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<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Own production. Source: WB.

*a. Value calculated using WB data. (..) Data unavailable.

---

### External Debt, Concessional* and Short-term Portions, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>IBRD Loans and IDA Credits in Mediterranean Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concessional (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD Loans and IDA Credits in Mediterranean Countries</td>
<td>Total External Debt (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Concessional debt is defined as loans with an original grant element of 25 percent or more. 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.
Appendices

Definitions

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 intervals; for example annually. The Laspeyres formula is normally used.

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.

Economically active population in agriculture
Part of the economically active population engaged in or seeking work in agriculture, hunting, fishing or forestry.

Economic 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.

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 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.

Export/Import concentration index
The Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index is used, in a normalized 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 considered are nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Consumption is calculated as production plus imports minus exports, and traditional nutrients (animal and vegetable fertilisers) 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.

Fishery fleet
Aggregation of fishing vessels of a particular country.

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.

Foreign direct investment
Net direct investment that is made in order to achieve a lasting participation in the management of a business company operating in a country other than that of the investor. It is equal to the sum of the equity capital, the reinvestment of earnings and other long-term and short-term capital.

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 US 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) with 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 cap-
Number of tourists who travel to a country
Inbound tourists by destination property, as well as transfer payments.

Value of all goods received by an economy from the rest of the world. It includes labour and income in concept of sovereignty.

Refers to the people born outside of a given country at the mid point of the year. This data is given in absolute figures and as a percentage in respect to the population of the receiving country.

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
Show 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 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 organizations, 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 107 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 with access to electricity
Percentage of the population having access to electricity as a percentage of the total population.

Population using safely managed sanitation services
Percentage of population is the percentage of the population using "safely managed sanitation services." For having a safely managed sanitation service, people should use improved sanitation facilities which are not shared with other households, and the excreta produced should either be treated and disposed in situ, stored temporarily and then emptied and transported to treatment off-site, or transported through a sewer with wastewater and then treated off-site.

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 declare 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 declare 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. 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 proportion 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.

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 six-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. 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 rainwater 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 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

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

OICA, International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers  
www.oica.net

Psephos Adam Carr’s Election Archive  
psephos.adam-carr.net

SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute  
www.sipri.org

UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  
www.unaids.org

UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
www.unctad.org

UNDP, United Nations Development Programme  
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
Appendices

Charts and Maps

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

WEF, World Economic Forum
www.weforum.org

WHO, World Health Organization
www.who.int
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>Palestinian Territory, Occupied</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</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>AA</td>
<td>Association Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>AA-DCFTA</td>
<td>AA including DCFTA</td>
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<td>ABM</td>
<td>Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFD</td>
<td>Agence Française de Développement</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFRICOM</td>
<td>United States Africa Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFTE</td>
<td>Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (EG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Artificial Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>AII</td>
<td>Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank</td>
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<td>AICTO</td>
<td>Arab Information and Communication Technology Organization</td>
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<td>AIIIB</td>
<td>Adriatic-Ionic Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<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>AMU</td>
<td>Arab Maghreb Union</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQIM</td>
<td>Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARLEM</td>
<td>Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>Africa-South America Summit</td>
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<td>ASPA</td>
<td>Summit of South American and Arab Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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