

Mapping Out a Euro-Mediterranean Strategy



Professor Stephen Calleya

In the world of 7 billion people, the emergence of more turbulent times in international relations has unleashed numerous forces that are undermining the very foundations of the sovereign state system. The incredible level of inequality between different peoples around the world and the increase in hate crimes against different religions and cultures is manifesting itself in ways that are often proving very difficult to manage within countries and at a regional level.

The process of rapid change in domestic and international relations continues at an amazing pace affecting the fabric of our political, economic and social landscape. Since the end of the Cold War in general but especially since the Arab upheavals of 2011, major questions are being asked in Europe and the Arab world about which direction the world is moving in and whether this is the path to a future of more stability and prosperity or uncertainty and austerity.

In light of the more turbulent and transitional times across the southern shores of the Mediterranean, is it possible to shift EU external policy making in such a manner that a re-set in Euro-Mediterranean relations takes place towards a more cooperative regional framework where all security challenges are addressed in a more coherent manner? Given the fragmented nature of contemporary inter-Mediterranean relations and the serious risk of EU integration faltering further after the Brexit vote, it is in everyone's strategic interest to map out a Euro-Mediterranean strategy that connects more effectively with the unstable reality currently manifesting itself. Failure to adopt such a strategic agenda will only further erode the relevance gap that should exist between the people and their respective governments across the region.

Against this very fluid context, Malta will be assuming the EU Presidency in 2017. It has already been announced that Malta's EU Presidency will

focus on three main themes: migration, maritime affairs in terms of transport, tourism, and relations between the EU and its neighbours in the Mediterranean. During the EU Presidency Malta together with other countries will be expected to put forward proposals to take stock of the situation in each of these areas and formulate a way forward to address the challenges in each of these very important strategic sectors.

A review of contemporary trends indicates that what we require is more of a focus on solidarity and not just security. The numerous challenges we are facing dictate that a clear message be communicated which emphasises that we either all swim together or else sink together. In order to carry this out it will be important to clearly stipulate that all of us in the European Union and beyond share a common future and it will be essential that a counter narrative to the divisive policies that some are putting forward is introduced and implemented.

Given the indivisibility of security in Europe and the Mediterranean, the EU must continue to adopt a more proactive stance when it comes to influencing and managing the international relations of the Mediterranean area if it wants to project stability in the area successfully. The challenge the EU is facing is to demonstrate that it can be a source that exports stability rather than imports instability. In recent years, it seems that the latter is happening more often than not and this is already having tremendous consequences for all of us.

The very fluid nature of international relations during the first two decades of the new millennium has resulted in an ever-changing global security landscape. Perceptual changes taking place in the Euro-Mediterranean security environment demand a strategic re-think when it comes to addressing and managing more effectively sources of instability. The continuous emergence of different sources of insecurity demands a more flexible modality of security management as states in the international system seek to limit the ramifications from the dominant insecurity landscape in which we find ourselves.

The very fluid and dynamic contemporary post-Cold War era demands that the concept of security be constantly under review. In post-Cold War international relations, there has been a gradual shift away from

traditional security concerns that focus exclusively on military threats to so-called soft security risks and threats. This category of security challenges includes terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration, and climate change.

The United States' Global War on Terror (GWOT) that dominated the strategic landscape for a decade after the 9/11 terror attacks in New York and Washington D.C. unleashed military offences in Iraq and Afghanistan that reinforced the traditional military dimension to security challenges, and provided a boost to a more innovative approach that focuses on intelligence gathering, sharing and monitoring on a global basis. The United States' withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan has resulted in the emergence of a security vacuum that has been taken over by numerous militant forces including ISIS.

In 2003, the EU adopted its own Security Strategy that set out to delineate the new security environment, the EU's strategic objectives and policy implications. The following areas were identified as the main bones of contention: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, an escalation of regional conflicts both globally and in the proximity of the EU, an increase of failed states, and organized crime that includes cross border trafficking in drugs, illegal migration, and weapons.(1)

In an effort to address more effectively the long list of security challenges, the European Union launched its Global Strategy for the EU Foreign and Security Policy entitled 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe', in June 2016. The EU clearly refers to the EU supporting cooperative regional orders globally including in the Mediterranean. (2)

In the section entitled 'A Peaceful and Prosperous Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa', the EU stipulates that it will intensify its support for and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations and other functional cooperative formats in the region. This policy objective is to be achieved by mobilising bilateral and multilateral initiatives and collaborating with civil societies in the region. (3)

The EU identifies five lines of action: first, in the Maghreb and the Middle East, the EU will support functional multilateral cooperation. This will include working through the Union for the Mediterranean to

strengthen border security, human trafficking, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, water and food security, energy and climate, infrastructure and disaster management.

The EU also commits itself to continuing to dedicate its diplomatic resources to fostering dialogue in regional conflicts in Syria and Libya and to continuing to support the Quartet in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Second, the EU will strive to deepen sectoral cooperation with Turkey. This includes seeking to pursue the accession process by anchoring Turkish democracy to the EU membership criteria including normalisation of relations with Cyprus. After the Turkish military coup attempt of July 2016 it remains to be seen how successful the EU will be in balancing its strategic perspective with realities unfolding in Turkey.

Third, the EU will continue to seek engagement with the Gulf States, including the Gulf Cooperation Council, (GCC). An effort will also take place to build on the Iran nuclear deal and its implementation.

Fourth, growing transnational interaction between North and sub-Sahara Africa, as well as between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the EU will support cooperation across these sub-regions. This 'neighbours of neighbours' approach will include triangular relationships between the Red Sea area and Europe and the Horn Africa and the Gulf to address common security challenges and economic opportunities. More specifically the EU also commits to focusing on cross-border dynamics in North and West Africa, the Sahel and Lake Chad regions through closer links with the African Union, the Economic Community of western African States (ECOWAS) and the G5 Sahel.(4)

Fifth, the EU also stipulates that it will dedicate more of its resources towards African peace and development by working more closely with the African Union, ECOWAS and the East African Community among others. A key objective will be to generate economic growth and create jobs and to implement a sustainable development agenda that focuses on issues pertaining to migration, health, education, energy and climate, and science and technology.(5)

The 2016 EU Global Strategy recognises that the Mediterranean is already a geo-strategic area where numerous sources of insecurity threaten to escalate and put regional and international stability at risk. It also admits that regional dynamics that need to be urgently addressed include the collapse of failed states, the increase of terrorist activities, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the proliferation of all types of weapons, energy security, environmental degradation and the ever-increasing state of economic disparity between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. The Strategy does not however offer any specific insight into the specific types of security initiatives that will be introduced to tackle such a broad agenda.

The absence of a Mediterranean centric security arrangement to address security challenges in the Mediterranean is certainly a recipe for an increase of sources of insecurity as this strategic waterway is perceived as a zone where illicit activity can take place unchecked. It is quite ironic that the more interdependent the global security theatre of operations has become, the less connected security mechanisms in the Mediterranean have become. If such a trend continues, it is clear that the security vacuum in the Mediterranean will result in even more instability emerging in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The setting up of a Euro-Mediterranean regional security network would dispel the perception that the international community has largely neglected the Mediterranean since the end of the Cold War. The possibility that such a perception becomes further entrenched is particularly high more given that post-Cold War great powers have continued to upgrade their attention towards other regions adjacent to the Mediterranean such as the Balkans, the Arabian Gulf and sub-Saharan Africa, but not the Mediterranean basin itself.

The increase of instability in the Mediterranean makes it clear that it is a strategic error to concentrate your security forces in one region at the expense of securing stability in adjacent regions. International attention towards the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe in recent decades seems to have taken place at the expense of investing diplomatically into a comprehensive security structure in the Mediterranean. The resultant security vacuum has witnessed a multiplication of sources of

insecurity thrive across the Mediterranean including illegal migration, drug trafficking and other types of organized crime. Foreign policy strategists that are seeking to establish peace and security around the Euro-Mediterranean area should introduce policies that seek to balance sub-regional interests and not turn regional security into a zero-sum game where sub-regions compete for attention.

When addressing the plethora of security issues in the Mediterranean, international actors such as the European Union must guard against promising more than they can deliver. The 2016 EU Global Strategy runs the risk of raising expectations once again too high. The EU must therefore be prepared to work closely with other security institutions such as NATO and the OSCE and also the League of Arab states and countries such as the United States, Russia and China, to develop a functioning security framework in the Mediterranean.

If such an exercise is to be successful, it is essential that all Euro-Mediterranean countries become more vocal, transparent and engaged in the post-Cold War security environment that is evolving around them. Otherwise, they will have no one to blame but themselves for becoming further marginalized from the wider security framework that is emerging globally.

Since the new millennium commenced, a more interdependent international security system has evolved. Given their geographic proximity and commonality of security interests it is thus in the interest of both the EU and the countries of the Mediterranean to strengthen security relations between them. Measures that can be taken to realize this include proceeding with the next round of enlargement in the Western Balkans in the shortest time frame possible, speeding up the processing of rapprochement with Turkey through its accession negotiations, and ensuring a dynamic and consistent implementation of the Union for the Mediterranean project driven agenda.

When it comes to North Africa and the Middle East, it is however also of paramount importance that a common political and security agenda be articulated along the lines that were identified in the political and security basket of the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995. The

absence of a comprehensive political and security agenda and a socio-cultural framework, as the Union for the Mediterranean focus seems to suggest, cannot create the necessary holistic security agenda that is necessary to attract a collective Mediterranean approach to security challenges.

Security Dynamics in the Euro-Mediterranean Area: Towards a New Paradigm

Since the end of the Cold War and especially after the September 11 2001 attacks, there has been a continuous perception in Europe of a threat from the Middle East. Alarming headlines in the international media focusing on instability in the Middle East, terror attacks across Europe and the regular arrival of hundreds of illegal migrants from the southern shores of the Mediterranean to Europe highlight such a trend.

The flow of news reports coming from the Middle East predominantly feature threatening images such as extremists preaching hatred against the West, or terrorists displaying contempt for human rights, or brutal dictators seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Such images portray the Middle East as an alien, hostile and backward region. They also help focus attention on the large migrant communities across Europe from these countries. Xenophobia towards migrant communities across Europe has strengthened and given rise to large right-wing political movements in France, Britain and the Netherlands.

During the first decade of the new millennium, negative perceptions of the Middle East have been further fuelled by constant images of violence and terror activities. These include, Islamic extremists preaching hatred against the West (Iran, Lebanon), terrorists displaying contempt for human rights (Lebanon, Gaza, Syria, Israel), brutal dictators flush with billions of dollars of oil money often seeking to purchase all types of weapons, and Muslim leaders and masses determined to establish Islamic states with laws that go against secular Western standards of civilization.

Bombardment of such images by the 24/7 media has led European and American audiences to develop more of a racist and xenophobic attitude towards the Middle East during the past decade. As a result, a chorus of discontent has emerged across Europe and North America against continuing to provide development and security assistance to such countries. It is no coincidence that this policy option has emerged as one of the most fiercely debated in the 2016 American election campaign between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Both have sought to reassure the American public that America would adopt a more hawkish approach towards the Middle East in an effort to halt global terror attacks.

While it is clear that the Middle East is not an alien, backward and hostile region, the media's portraying of such images has resulted in such a perception emerging and gradually gaining ground. It has also led to a focus on the large immigrant communities of Middle East origin that are already established in Europe and North America. The backlash against migrant communities in Europe has given rise to right wing political movements in all countries that have increased their popularity as tension against migrants has spiralled.

The presence of both contemporary and historical beliefs may conspire to make Europe more receptive to a perception of threat from the Middle East during the next two decades. Deeply rooted folk memories in Europe of the long and bloody battle between Christianity and Islam continue to resonate. Whether real or myths, this history can easily be revived as a political resource by anti-immigrant movements as happened during the referendum in 2009 that resulted in a majority voting against the construction of minarets in Switzerland.

The revival of Islamic extremism easily provokes fears across Europe of a resurgence of the Islamic faith seeking to make up for past battles lost. Political sensitivity to migrant communities is easily amplified as a result of long-term high levels of unemployment in Europe. If not addressed in a concerted manner the Huntington 'Clash of Civilizations theory' could become a more realistic perspective in Euro-Mediterranean security discourse in the future. This is an outcome that would have

catastrophic consequences for all peoples of the Mediterranean and beyond and is therefore a scenario that must be fiercely rejected. (6)

Addressing the issue of illegal migration through increased cooperation and information exchanges on policing, visa controls and asylum policies through the Schengen framework and the Frontex mechanism has so far only had limited positive results.

In reality the economic affluence that Europe enjoys and militarily supremacy especially when compared to its southern neighbours, makes the suggestion that the Middle East is a threat to Europe seem nonsensical. Yet, since the end of the Cold War, there has been an increasing perception in Europe and North America that the new enemy after communism would come from the Middle East. Alarmist propaganda fuelled by the media has focused on the emergence of an Islamic jihad against the West, particularly after the 9/11 attacks against the United States. The more recent wave of terror attacks in Europe in 2015 and 2016 has given rise to a regular reference in the media to ‘radical Islamic terrorism’ fuelling the perception of a radical Islamic threat to modern civilization.

This perception has been further bolstered by the ever-increasing number of illegal migrants that have sought to seek a better life in Europe by crossing the Mediterranean. A “migration invasion” syndrome gained ground since the new millennium with tens of thousands of migrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa opting for maritime trafficking that more often than not ended up in a futile attempt to arrive in Europe.

The European Union’s inadequate response to the flow of a large number of people seeking political asylum or refugee status also underlined the hollow commitment developed countries have when it comes to humanitarian policies and welfare resources. Falling birth rates in Europe coupled with the large number of arrivals from the southern shores of the Mediterranean led many pundits to question what impact such a phenomenon would have on the future identity of the different nation states of Europe.

The mishandling of the mass migration influx into Germany in 2015 and the vote in the United Kingdom to exit the EU for numerous reasons,

including the mismanagement of migration flows from outside the EU, makes it crystal clear that the time has come to introduce a more robust border security mechanism if the EU is to sustain its experiment in regional integration in future. The free flow of EU citizens within the EU will only be possible if an external land and maritime border is enforced with adequate resources.

During this time of turbulence and transition across the Euro-Mediterranean region, it is essential that the European Union and all other international actors with a capability to influence Euro-Mediterranean regional dynamics seek to steer relations in a cooperative direction instead of a clash that some are seeking. Navigating relations requires an effort to influence them and not just assume an observer status stance. The arc of instability that has emerged in the Mediterranean demands a strategic re-think that seeks to suppress forces of instability.

More than five years since the revolutions swept across the Arab world, the EU must come to terms with the fact that it has so far not succeeded in putting forward a Euro-Med strategy that offers the Arab world an opportunity to cooperate more closely with Europe. Failure to propose a collective security paradigm that reflects the interdependent and indivisible nature of Euro-Mediterranean relations is resulting in a return to fragmentation of embryonic regional relations nurtured since the 1990s and the emergence of a number of failed states as seen in Libya and Syria.

Twenty years after it launched the Barcelona Process the European Union must realise that if it is serious about wanting to contribute towards restoring stability in the Mediterranean it is imperative that it adopts a holistic approach towards security along the lines it had when launching the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995.

Rekindling a comprehensive strategy that offers political, economic and socio-cultural support to neighbouring countries across the southern Mediterranean would provide the European Union with precisely the type of narrative that has been absent since 2011. The EU should adopt a more visible approach towards the Mediterranean and unequivocally support political and economic reforms that are based on a functioning

rule of law system of governance. Such a modality must be inclusive in nature and integrate civil society into the fabric of decision-making. While such a strategy could form part of an over-arching Neighbourhood Policy the time has come to admit that the security challenges facing the EU on its eastern and southern borders require separate and more intensive mechanisms that are able to address the fast changing realities on the ground. Adopting a Euro-Med strategy that focuses on trends in the region is essential if the European Union wants to be a credible actor in the Mediterranean.

Ten Strategic Euro-Mediterranean Trends

Numerous geo-strategic factors are contributing to an increase of insecurity across the Mediterranean. Ten major issues have had a negative impact on Euro-Mediterranean relations since the end of the Cold War and have prevented the emergence of a more cooperative security culture in this part of the world. Closely examining and systematically addressing the ten trends is essential if the causes of insecurity in the Mediterranean area are to be better managed.

First, there has been a considerable rise in terrorism in the region. The migration of Islamic State (ISIS) from Iraq and Syria to Libya has further consolidated this trend. Continuous acts of terror in all countries across the southern shore of the Mediterranean including the specific targeting of overseas residents as has been the case in Tunisia and Egypt and Turkey has resulted in a state of emergency and high alert that are stretching the security capabilities of the respective states to try and cope with terrorism.

This increase in tension has had major economic consequences on tourism receipts and on private foreign investment at a time when such revenues are essential if the Mediterranean developing states are going to be able to provide a better standard of living to their respective citizens. A concerted Euro-Mediterranean counter-terrorism strategy that brings together both soft and hard security resources together is long overdue. A key challenge for all democratic governments will continue to be how

to enhance counter-terror measures without undermining the freedom and rights of citizens living in a democracy.

Second, a more robust policy of diplomacy must be introduced to address ongoing conflicts in the Mediterranean. The six-decade Israel-Palestine conflict is pivotal to the geopolitics of the Mediterranean and has to be resolved through a policy of compromise.

Since the collapse of the Oslo peace process the Israel-Palestine, conflict has been in a state of paralysis. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the main bone of contention in the Mediterranean area. It impacts negatively, directly and indirectly, on attempts to harness closer political, economic, and social development across the Mediterranean. Before efforts to resuscitate peace negotiations will be successful, numerous factors must take place.

The United States must assume a more direct involvement in peace efforts. President Obama signalled a more dynamic and balanced approach towards this conflict upon being elected to the Oval Office but has failed to deliver on such a promise and has not succeeded in bringing the protagonists back to the peace table.

The European Union's continuous commitment to the Quartet's peace efforts also rings hollow after more than a decade of no progress. A re-think in this regard is long overdue. The EU needs to introduce a more robust diplomatic strategy that seeks to advance the compromises necessary to achieve a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

In addition, reconciliation between different Palestinian factions is a prerequisite to the Palestinians adopting a credible negotiating position. A sustainable national unity government or a consensus government must be formed if the Palestinians are to be taken seriously in any future marathon of peace talks with Israel. The al-Fatah and Hamas political movements must be prepared to put the Palestinian people's greater interest of an independent Palestinian state ahead of their own political interest in any given situation. Failure to do so will relegate the Palestinians to a continuation of suffering.

Israel remains pivotal to the geopolitics of the Mediterranean. Israel continues to serve as a unifying force that brings her opponents together. In this catchment area of the Mediterranean Israel is the only state that has an economic profile similar to that of mainstream European states. Israel is also a leader in technological development and economic development.

Securing a permanent peace with Palestine is in Israel's interest, as the open conflict will continue to serve as a continuous security challenge within and from outside Israel. The prospect of a nuclear Iran or nuclear Arab state will also remain an existential threat.

In addition to investing in a more robust diplomatic strategy towards Israel and Palestine, the EU should invest a great deal more in diplomatic initiatives that seek to restore order in Syria and Libya. The EU's large aid budget needs to be coupled by more spending on diplomacy, which is actually very cheap in relative terms and can be very effective when compared to defence spending.

Third, the growing call for political freedoms from Arab citizens all through the region that reached a climax in the 'Arab Spring' of 2011 needs to be better supported by the international community. As populations across the Arab world have become better educated they now want a say in public affairs, or at the very minimum, a number of basic freedoms including association and expression.

Arab citizens in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya do not believe anymore that the alternative is between autocratic regimes or Islamic radicals. Political Islam as one model of politics is to be embraced as long as it does not undermine the basic rights of citizens. The majority of Arab citizens have demonstrated that they want peaceful evolutions after the revolutions. The fascinating Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia in January 2011 and the overthrowing of the Mubarak regime in Egypt in February 2011 and the Gaddafi regime in October 2011 provided tremendous momentum to this reality. Developments since have stifled this sentiment and it is unclear if this historic moment is going to deliver the inclusive representative system of governance that so many have lost their lives to achieve.

Political reform must remain a priority on the agenda. Governments in the region have to tackle the immense challenge of a now vastly educated population and few political freedoms. This population does not believe anymore in the black and white choice “us or chaos” that they have long been offered by their governments. Islamic extremism is no longer an excuse. Terrorism needs to be fought at the same time that governance is improved, not at the expense of good governance. Political reform in the region is a strategic goal for the EU because the lack of it opens the door for many forms of instability. Political reforms must not go down the priority list of EU countries in the region.

Fourth, there has been a tremendous increase in the trafficking of human beings across the Mediterranean towards Europe, which is part and parcel of the sophisticated organised crime network. These networks are well organised, well equipped and connected to security forces throughout the region. The illegal migration racket in the Mediterranean is a 250 million Euros business per year, counting only the “fees” collected by these networks. This figure is to be compared to monthly police force salaries of 150-200 Euros in North Africa.

Since the turn of the new millennium, the Mediterranean has increasingly moved into the international spotlight as a front-line area for illegal migration from the African continent towards the European Union. Since 2002, the central Mediterranean has experienced a growing influx of migrants predominately from the Horn of Africa, practically all of which have departed from the Libyan coast towards Europe. Even though, in absolute terms, the total number of sea-borne migrants crossing the Mediterranean has not consisted of a massive exodus from Africa, the continuous flow of migrants has become a permanent feature of the security challenge landscape. Moreover, the challenge of managing illegal migration flows has had an enormous impact on the small state of Malta in proportional terms, given the country’s small size and very high population density.(7)

Consequently, illegal immigration has become one of Malta’s top policy priorities, nationally as well as at the EU level, where Malta has been calling for responsibility-sharing mechanisms and support from other EU countries to help cope with the regular flow of migrant crossings.

Malta's EU Presidency in 2017 will be an opportunity to call for a more dynamic EU migration policy.

Addressing the trafficking of human beings in a comprehensive manner that seeks to separate legal from illegal migration is long overdue and essential, as the number of migrants is certain to rise in the decade ahead as sub-Saharan states struggle to cope with the rising expectations of their respective populations. A more forward looking and inclusive EU migration policy must be forthcoming if this human security challenge is to be properly addressed. One should bear in mind that the EU would need 20 million new workers between 2020 and 2030 to sustain current level of productivity, workers that its demographic trends will not produce.

Illegal migration will thus remain a major security challenge for the foreseeable future. This migration originates mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt. The 2016 European Union Global Strategy correctly indicates that a triangular partnership between Europe, North Africa and sub-Sahara Africa needs to be implemented. Nowhere is this more evident than when it comes to addressing the trafficking of migrants across the Mediterranean. Adopting a common approach between Europe, the Mediterranean and African countries is the only way to fight criminal networks effectively. The sooner a political dialogue between the EU and its counterparts in the southern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa is formulated the better._

The collapse of Syria since 2011 has resulted in the exodus of millions of Syrians towards Europe and the Gulf states. The chaotic manner in which Germany sought to accommodate more than a million refugees in 2015 has undermined the confidence of a large sector of the EU population and political spectrum that previously supported such a policy.

Thus far, the European Union has not yet developed any real comprehensive policy on the integration of migrants. For the last few years, it has tended to turn a blind eye to what happens to these individuals after their period in detention. Nevertheless, the reality is that

the numbers living and working (or wanting to work) in communities across the EU are growing.

At the start of the twenty-first century, it is time to come to terms with the fact that illegal migration is a challenge that will continue to dominate security patterns of interaction between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. The reality of extreme poverty and civil strife in Africa coupled with the fact that this may be exacerbated by climate change dictates that serious planning must take place to cope with an influx of refugees in Europe at any given moment.

The knee jerk policy reaction of the European Union towards Turkey in 2015 and 2016 to stem the flow of migrants towards Europe is unlikely to deliver the desired result for a number of reasons. First, how long before Turkey demands more compensation beyond the billions of Euros already promised to sustain its efforts to halt the flow? Moreover, will the EU be able to achieve a continent wide consensus to introduce visa liberalization to Turkish citizens? Will the EU be able to guarantee that the rights of those people not being allowed to leave Turkey are safeguarded?

A **fifth** trend influencing Euro-Mediterranean regional relations is the slowdown in European Union political dynamics, in particular since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The Brexit vote in 2016 caps a long process of continuous paralysis in the EU that has been more preoccupied with trying to address economic challenges through austere measures than providing a regional integration narrative that attracts the support of its member states.

The EU has been able to have a profound positive impact on Euro-Mediterranean regional thanks to its successful enlargement process. The admission of ten states in 2004 and then Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 and Croatia more recently has enabled the EU to stabilise political and economic relations far beyond the original six member states ever envisaged. The EU should now map out a policy that will allow it to admit other Balkan accession states and encourage Turkey to stay the necessary course required to meet the EU accession criteria if it wants to continue to be a source of stability in non-EU member states.

Sixth, the external relations policy of the EU in general and the European Neighbourhood Policy in particular have not delivered the desired results. The ENP review process has gone on too long. The EU needs to adopt a more robust diplomatic agenda in its adjacent regions, especially in the Mediterranean. While the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership launched in the 1990s promised a dynamic Euro-Mediterranean cooperative relationship, the successive European Neighbourhood Policy and Union of the Mediterranean have been perceived as a dilution of the EU's commitment towards a peaceful and prosperous Mediterranean. If the concept of the ENP is to remain, it must be given a Mediterranean specific agenda with clear short-term oriented goals and the necessary diplomatic and economic resources to implement the agenda.

Seventh, Euro-Mediterranean relations can only be improved if a credible border control mechanism is in place to prevent and deter sources of insecurity. The EU must upgrade its land and maritime border capabilities if its citizen's faith is to be restored after the numerous experiences of security infringements that have taken place on a regular basis.

The time has come to investigate the feasibility of upgrading the Frontex operation in the Mediterranean into a permanent Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard Agency (EMCA) that would be mandated to co-ordinate the co-operative security network with a mission statement and plan of action similar to those carried out by a coastguard. As with the case of Frontex, it is essential that this initiative should involve collaboration not only between EU countries, but also between EU and southern Mediterranean states.

The significant increase in sources of instability in the Mediterranean ranging from trafficking of human beings to the proliferation of weapons smuggling and terror related activities dictates that Euro-Mediterranean states should focus on introducing a security mechanism that can assist in addressing security challenges that all riparian states are facing. The common bond that all Mediterranean states share is their maritime heritage and the security threats that result from such a common geographical reality.

At the moment, there are no elaborate mechanisms to contend with a security crisis that would result from an accidental collision at sea between transport tankers crossing through the choke points of the Mediterranean basin, such as the Straits of Sicily or Straits of Gibraltar. In addition, very few practical measures are being taken to tackle the alarming rate of degradation that is currently taking place in the marine environmental sector. As a result, marine biology and everything linked to maritime activities, including tourism, is suffering more and more year in and year out.

Two other sources of instability that have benefited from the maritime security vacuum that exists are traffickers in drugs and human beings. The ever-increasing proliferation of drug consignments is reaching ever deeper into the civil societies of the Mediterranean. As already discussed above the accentuation of illegal migratory flows from south to north have already negatively affected the lives of millions of people in the Euro-Mediterranean area and risk undermining further the legal structures of all Euro-Mediterranean states.

The geographical proximity between Europe and North Africa requires an early warning Euro-Mediterranean border control coast guard mechanism that can monitor such security risks and threats. Once this has been realised, the co-operative maritime security network can be instructed to draw up optional policy positions on security issues that are regarded as the most serious. Such an exercise in itself will raise awareness of the vulnerable position Mediterranean states are currently in and the weak defence mechanism they have at their disposal to cope with such security threats.

This security enhancement initiative should seek to establish a Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard Agency (EMCA). The EMCA would be mandated to co-ordinate a co-operative maritime security network similar to other coastguards around the world. The EMCA could initially carry out stop and search exercises in two principal areas: maritime safety and maritime pollution. This phase could be enhanced at a later stage by monitoring other aspects of security that include narcotics trafficking and the transport of illegal migrants. (8)

It is essential that this initiative should be introduced in as flexible a manner as is possible. Such an early warning mechanism should be open to any of the Euro-Mediterranean states that wish to participate. Those countries with the most experience in the area of maritime cooperation, such as Italy and Spain, should share their expertise with other willing and able Mediterranean states. EMCA could also seek the maritime security technical expertise that has already been achieved by the EU and NATO, through their respective experiences in EUROMARFOR and Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean.

In addition to strengthening political and security channels of communication, the establishment of such a Euro-Mediterranean early warning network will assist in cultivating more intense crisis management mechanisms in an area where these are lacking. Practical confidence building measures will enhance the level of trust between Euro-Mediterranean states and therefore set the stage for a more intricate security strategy to follow.

Areas where partnership-building measures can be introduced include conducting simulation exercises of oil spills, ensuring that international standards are observed during the cleaning of oil tankers, and monitoring the activities of non-Mediterranean fishing boats that are operating in the Mediterranean with a particular emphasis on over-fishing.

As experiences with irregular migration over recent years have shown, the challenges of coping with sea-borne migrants concern not only naval forces, but also fishermen. In the large majority of cases, the would-be immigrants are first spotted or encountered by fishing vessels, which have a much larger presence at sea. However, while the fishermen could, in principle, play an important role in saving the lives of migrants who are in distress at sea, fishermen often themselves have felt “under threat” from the growth in illegal immigration, and have criticized the insufficient support they have received from governments in coping with migrant encounters at sea. The creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard Agency would be able to assist fishermen who have to address this issue by assisting in the complex task of rescuing migrants in situations of distress.

The neglect of such security risks has already had severe consequences in some parts of the world that have seen their entire ecological and service industries wiped out overnight. The natural geographical characteristics of the Mediterranean expose it to consequences that are even more serious should any of the above security risks continue to take place unchecked. It is therefore in all Euro-Mediterranean states' interest to seek the creation of A Euro-Mediterranean Coastguard in the shortest time frame possible. Whether the political will to launch such a security mechanism can be found is of course entirely another matter.

Eighth, energy security has already emerged as one of the more prominent factors influencing the international relations of the Mediterranean. In the twenty-first century oil is much cheaper in absolute terms, in real terms counting inflation and most important, in relation to income levels. Therefore, people do not mind paying €1.50/litre for normal gasoline. Unless there is even more of a significant price hike there is unlikely to be any downturn in global energy consumption.

The strategic importance of energy security in the Mediterranean is evident as a result of the increase of oil and gas pipelines connecting Turkey, Egypt, Algeria and Libya to Europe and the significant volume of energy transport through the Mediterranean. The consolidation of gas, oil and electric transmission lines around the Mediterranean has created an increasingly important Mediterranean energy market. As a result, global powers, including the United States, Europe, Russia and China, continue to increase their interest in the energy security of the Mediterranean.(9)

Socio-economic development in the MENA region is dependent upon having access to an ever-growing demand for energy. The unequal distribution of increasingly limited resources, in particular water and deteriorating environmental conditions further underlines the importance of energy security in the Mediterranean.

By 2030, global gas production is set to double but demand across the southern shore of the Mediterranean is also set to double resulting in several countries becoming net importers of energy. (10) Some of the main questions that will need to be addressed in this regard

include: how will the Euro-Mediterranean region cope with the ever-increasing energy needs of North Africa and the Middle East? How can a balance between human development and limiting carbon emissions be achieved? How can a larger share of renewable energy sources be integrated into the current energy mix? What model should be adopted to develop a mutually beneficial and stable Euro-Mediterranean regional energy market? (11)

Ninth, the forces of economic globalisation with the major expansion of China and India as global powerhouses have taken their toll on the Mediterranean region, especially in the textile sector. The dismantlement of the textile agreements in 2005 in countries like Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt has had a major negative impact on the productivity of these sectors. The competitive rise of countries such as Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Russia and Indonesia has also undermined the Mediterranean southern shore countries' ability to attract the foreign direct investment necessary to improve their productivity.

The negative downturn of the European economy since 2008 is having a major negative impact on the southern shore countries of the Mediterranean that rely on the EU for 50 to 80 % of their exports and for a large part of their investment and tourism. A revival of the European economy is essential to future, positive growth of Mediterranean state economies.

Sustainability of democratic reform across the southern shores of the Mediterranean will require economic development on a major scale for decades. In order to attract the billions of Euros necessary to spur job creation and improve Mediterranean competitiveness, the international community needs to provide political and economic support that assists in creating the conducive type of environment that will attract international investors to the region.

In the past few years, regular reference to the so-called BRIC countries has been made to highlight the spectacular economic progress that these emerging states have been making. Brazil, Russia, India and China have established themselves as pacesetters of the developing world and have

been succeeding in consistently boosting their productivity. As a result, an ever-growing number of citizens in each of these states have been able to benefit from a significant improvement in living standards.

It is highly significant that none of the BRIC states are located in the Mediterranean. Since the end of the Cold War, no major economic success stories have been registered along the southern shore of the Mediterranean. While it is true that states such as Morocco and Tunisia have restructured their economies to take larger advantage of the more competitive economic climate that has evolved and Libya and Algeria benefitted from a major upswing in revenue whenever energy prices increased, none of the states in this region of the Mediterranean area have emerged as major economic powerhouses.

Tenth, while there has been a resurgence of regionalism globally since the end of the Cold War no such trend has emerged in the Mediterranean. Instead, the Mediterranean has become more of a strategic fault-line between competing geo-political forces and a crossroads between different religious and cultural traditions. The absence of regional arrangements in the Mediterranean and more importantly of contemporary initiatives that are seeking to promote regional cooperation in the Mediterranean, has resulted in the Mediterranean becoming more of a north-south frontier than a region of cooperative interaction.

In the past two decades, numerous initiatives have been proposed to stimulate the concept of regionalism in the Mediterranean. The most prominent of these initiatives are the 5 + 5 sub-regional initiative launched in 1990 that brings together the five southern European states of Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Malta with their North African counterparts, namely Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Other initiatives include the Arab Maghreb Union that was established in 1989, the League of Arab States that was set up in 1945 and the Union for the Mediterranean, which was launched in 2008 by the European Union as a complement to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy. The Italian-Spanish proposal of 1989 to establish a Conference on Security and Cooperation

in the Mediterranean is another initiative that never progressed beyond the drawing board. (12)

A lack of consensus among Mediterranean riparian states on the strategic priorities of foreign policies has undermined efforts to nurture pan-Mediterranean relations. A fundamental factor hindering a resurgence of regional relations is the fact that regional dynamics in the different sub-regions of the Mediterranean remain too asymmetrical to be put into a single institutional framework. Socio-economic, political and military disparities that exist between the northern and southern states of the Mediterranean are so divergent that it often seems impossible to try and institutionalize so many different interest groups into one regional forum. (13)

In order for a functioning Euro-Mediterranean regional forum to emerge, the countries concerned must perceive that they share a common strategic future and ideally a collective identity. Such essential characteristics remain absent or too weak upon which to build a coherent regional framework. Addressing long-standing conflicts in the region such as the Arab-Israel conflict will assist in overcoming the common strategic gap that continues to dominate Mediterranean relations. Moreover, Mediterranean security issues do not attract enough international political support to mobilize the necessary resources to start bridging the divide that exists between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. The striking lack of South-South integration must be succeeded by a thrust of regional integration as has happened in most parts of the world since the end of the Cold War.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead towards 2030 the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) will remain an important geopolitical location due to the large oil deposits in this region of the world and the region's potential as a source of instability. The MENA's near future will be determined by how the leaders of these countries decide to manage political reform, energy profits, demographic changes, and open conflicts.

The first major immediate challenge Arab states in transition are facing is of achieving growth rates above six per cent annually to absorb the new workforce generation and provide a completely different narrative to the high number experiencing youth unemployment. (14)

If serious economic, educational, social and legal reforms are implemented and law and order are restored then international investors will be prepared to invest in these states. This process must include integrating moderate Islamic political parties that are certain to multiply during the next two decades.

A ring of failed states in this part of the Mediterranean area would severely undermine the stability necessary to attract foreign direct investment on a large scale and to ensure the safe passage of commodities through the global supply routes of the Red Sea and the Straits of Hormuz. The emergence of an arc of crisis across the southern Mediterranean will ultimately impinge upon all states across the Mediterranean and undermine their position in the global political economy of the twenty-first century.

Since the end of the Cold War, the global economy has drawn the majority of states in the international system closer together. Yet growing interdependence has not affected all parts of the globe to the same extent. In fact, while the intensity of political and economic relations across Europe has resulted in it becoming one of the most advanced regionally integrated areas of the world, the Mediterranean remains the least integrated.

The European Union's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) launched more than twenty years ago in November 1995 and the EMP Barcelona Declaration held great promise of creating a more peaceful, stable and prosperous Euro-Mediterranean region in the twenty first century. Instead, the opposite has happened. The time has come to reflect upon the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 and refocus the EU's energy on specific short-term oriented goals that were already highlighted in the Declaration.

In many ways, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has diluted the EU's focus towards the Mediterranean. The time has come for the

European Union to shift from being a passive observer of the historical moment taking place in the Mediterranean since 2011 and to become an active player that nurtures confidence across the Mediterranean and supports seriously a Euro-Mediterranean cooperative security agenda.

It is also important for the European Union to recognize its limitations. The EU on its own lacks the political and economic means to correct the socio-economic and political disparities in the Mediterranean. This is even more the case now that the EU is confronted by the challenge of managing the exit of its first member state from the Union after the Brexit vote of June 2016.

The United States can certainly help make up for some of Europe's shortcomings along its southern periphery. After all, co-operating with Europe in the Mediterranean could be a decisive foreign policy mechanism that assists in strengthening the transatlantic partnership at a stage in history when its entire *raison d'être* is being questioned.

After the tragic events of September 11th 2001 and subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is in the international community's interest to avoid the emergence of new fault-lines such as the one that is settling between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. Improving the livelihood of the millions of people along the southern shores of the Mediterranean must emerge as a concerted transatlantic foreign policy goal if such a division is not to become a permanent feature of the Mediterranean region.

If the 'clash of civilisations' scenario is not to attract tens of thousands of recruits in the years ahead, the West must find ways of opening further channels of communication with all governments in the Mediterranean, including possible Islamic regimes. Otherwise, the slow process of democracy building in the Maghreb and the Mashreq will come to a halt and the wave of anti-Western radicalization may increase. (15)

Some estimates envisage as many as twenty million people in North Africa opting for emigration into Europe in the coming few years, where salaries are anything between eight to ten times higher than in the South. The emergence of a "Fortress like Europe" where borders are sealed in an effort to discourage possible migrants would only

exacerbate this problem further. European policy-makers should recall, that large communities of workers originating in the sub region of the Mediterranean such as the Maghreb, have already made a significant contribution to the success of European industry. (16)

While the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the subsequent Union for the Mediterranean have sought to arrest the process of polarisation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, the post-Cold War era has so far not seen a significant reversal of this trend. This structural development is what is stifling the establishment of a co-operative Mediterranean region.

It is also worth noting that political will on its own will not be enough to influence geopolitical relations on such a large scale. Economic support must also be forthcoming. The Americans had spent the equivalent of 125 billion Euros in the Marshall Plan towards Western Europe between 1947 and 1951 compared to the 20 billion that Brussels had devoted to the Euro-Med Partnership between 1995 and 2005. (17)

If the goal of fostering economic development is to take place across the MENA region then an 'Arab Marshal Plan' should be created. This fund, which will require tens of billions of dollars to be effective, could be financed by the rich Gulf States and would be geared towards restoring ailing Arab economies over a period of five years. Such a Fund would provide vital support for Arab states to undertake the necessary reforms in a socially sustainable manner and ultimately help in economic growth and job creation. (18)

A quarter of century into the post-Cold War era there are clearer signs that the East-West divide of the past is being replaced by an international security system where North-South divisions are becoming the dominant feature. (19) Unlike the European continent where the fall of the Iron Curtain ushered in a period of reconciliation, the Mediterranean remains a frontier area of divisions. European and Middle East international region disparities and conflict continue to be the hallmark of Mediterranean interchange.

References

- (1) European Council, A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy, Brussels, December 12 2003, pp.3-5.
- (2) European Council, Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, June 2016, p.10.
- (3) *ibid.*, p.34
- (4) *ibid.*, p.35
- (5) *ibid.*, p.36
- (6) Huntington, Samuel, Clash of Civilisations, Simon & Schuster, 1995. See also Calleya Stephen, Security Challenges in the Euro-Med Area in the 21st Century, p.12.
- (7) Managing the Challenges of Irregular Immigration in Malta, Calleya Stephen and Lutterbeck, Derek, The Today Public Policy Institute, November 2008.
- (8) Calleya, Stephen, Evaluating Euro-Mediterranean Relations, Routledge, 2005, p.70.
- (9) Lesser, Ian, The United States and the Mediterranean: A New Strategic Concept, MED AGENDA Series, 2009, MEDAC, p.8.
- (10) Gaub, Florence, and Laban, Alexandra, eds., Arab Futures: Three Scenarios for 2015, ISSUE, Report No.22 – February 2015, pp. 13-15.
- (11) Koehler, Michael, Energy Challenges in the Mediterranean, 14th May 2011, Euro-Med Seminars, Malta.
- (12) Calleya, Stephen, Security Challenges in the Euro-Med Area in the 21st Century, Routledge, Chapter Three, p. 97.

(13) *ibid.*, p. 119.

(14) Gaub, Florence, and Laban, Alexandra, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 19-20.

(15) Miall, H. (ed.), *Redefining Europe, New Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation*, Pinter, 1994. p.5.

(16) Bryant, R.C., *Global Change*, *The Brookings Review*, No. 4, December 1994, p.42.

(17) Selim, M. El-Sayed, *Mediterranean: A New Dimension in Egypt's Foreign Policy*, Paper prepared for presentation at the American Political Science Association, New York, 1994, p.2.

(18) Gaub, Florence and Laban, Alexandra, eds., *op.cit.*, p. 37.

(19) Wallace, W., *The Dynamics of European Integration*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Pinter, 1990, pp.8-12.

