



TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SECURITY IN THE MAGHREB:

**An opportunity for the region,
a commitment for the European Union**



This report was drawn up by a multidisciplinary team of researchers and is based on a number of interviews held with senior officials, field workers and regional specialists, as well as on a study trip to the Maghreb.



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◆ Executive Summary

The relationship between Europe and the Maghreb is a complex, multidimensional and somewhat passionate one. The two areas share a common history and are bound by common interests. United against a number of joint challenges (economic development, regional stability, fight against terrorism, migration, sustainable development), it is time for the two shores of the Mediterranean to reconsider the basis for their cooperation. As societies in the Maghreb undergo important transformations, security stakes rise and opportunities arise for regional integration and cooperation between Europe and the Maghreb, the aim must be the emergence of *sustainable security*

from which the European Union (EU) and its members will profit just as much as the Maghreb countries and their populations.

Societies in the Maghreb are today undergoing radical transformations which have four main causes: globalised economic development, populations predominantly made up of young people, migratory phenomena covering the entire Maghreb and Sahelian area and tentative attempts at political and social reform. The transformation process, which is overall a positive one, takes different forms in each of the five countries which make up the region: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. It is nonetheless

fragile and political authorities must be extremely careful not to frustrate the populations by dashing their legitimate hopes for a safer future.

The EU is well aware of what is at stake and must now look for ways of making a more active commitment in the region, particularly on sensitive issues such as human rights and migration. Although the EU is already encouraging the Maghreb countries to promote democracy as a factor of stability and development, it could become more wholeheartedly involved in talks within the Maghreb as far as human rights and civil liberties are concerned – by helping to set up places of reflection and exchange for the Maghreb's elite, for instance. The question of migration, which extends as far as the Sahelian area, is another area of cooperation which needs to be looked into in more depth, since the EU's policy of limiting migratory flows can no longer be restricted to the northern border of the Maghreb. Reinforcing the role of the European agency FRONTEX throughout the area, for example by opening regional offices and assigning resources, is one possible solution. Intensifying efforts to coordinate development assistance policies between the EU and Maghreb countries to help Sub-Saharan African countries that represent sources of immigration is another solution that should not be ignored.

Security in the Maghreb also deserves a new approach and broader vision. The most recent changes (new forms of terrorism, increase in criminality, stalemates in interstate disputes) mean that all the protagonists – local, regional and global – must not only tackle the problems and the variations on them by taking an overall view but also by examining the interactions between them.

The EU has a duty to show particular concern for the current challenges facing the area on account of its geographical proximity and the ties which bond it to the Maghreb. Although a certain amount of cooperation already exists in the fight against terrorism and newly emerging forms of criminality, the EU must now work relentlessly to reinforce measures and to integrate the wider dimension of the Maghreb and Sahelian areas. However, whilst the fight against criminal activities must remain inflexible, the roots of the problem must also be tackled if sustainable development and security are to be achieved, i.e. huge socio-economic difficulties and unemployment affecting the population, depriving the young generation of any real prospects. In the long term, the only way to succeed in drying up the recruitment channels for criminal networks and terrorist groups is to give young people some hope of social success.

The challenges involving security also require constant reinforcement of regional cooperation, with

support and backing from the EU. We all know how much of a setback interstate disputes can be when it comes to developing cooperation, no matter how vital.

The main obstruction is the Western Saharan conflict, which has been going on for thirty years. Its cost for the local populations, the countries involved and indeed the entire region should be enough to convince everybody that it is high time to find a concerted political solution to the conflict. To most observers, the proposal for autonomy put forward by Morocco in 2007 seems to be the only credible way of escaping from the crisis and, provided that all those involved are allowed to have their say, the most realistic basis for discussions in order to continue and strengthen the negotiations in progress under the auspices of the UN. The more general issue of border closure between Algeria and Morocco, which is the main reason for the region's limited development over the last few decades, must also be discussed. The EU could pay special attention to this issue as part of a long-awaited ambitious policy to promote regional integration. The lack of regional integration and cooperation within the Maghreb, which have resulted in the "Non-Maghreb" situation seen today, represents one of the area's main weaknesses. Although there are some obvious fields of cooperation (energy, transport, sustainable development) which are full of potential, integration is still obviously a long way off. And yet integration forms an essential condition, if not a prerequisite, for sustainable security in the five countries concerned, as well as in the EU, as it represents the only guarantee of keeping a check on the key areas of North Africa.

Consequently, Europeans should promote and support the movement, in particular by encouraging the countries in the Maghreb to make the long-awaited efforts required to create the free trade area they have been talking about for fifteen years, whilst intensifying cooperation between Europe and the Maghreb at the same time. Amongst other things, it is therefore important to reintegrate these objectives on the EU's political agenda on a more ambitious scale. We must also ask ourselves whether a sub-regional approach with the Maghreb at its centre would be more appropriate to deal with issues such as energy, transport or sustainable development promoted as part of the Union for the Mediterranean, which is currently being established.

For the Maghreb is waiting for Europe. Europe has authority, an ability to drive forward and a specific interest in making a substantial contribution. Sustainable security in the Maghreb depends on it, and consequently, sustainable security in Europe to a great extent as well.



◆ Introduction

The age-old relationship between Europe and the Maghreb is today a complex one that is sometimes a source of mutual incomprehension. The Maghreb represents a trading area and interface between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe that cannot be ignored. On account of its geographical position, its human richness and energy sources, the region has become essential for the European Union (EU) and its security.

The Southern shore of the Mediterranean is a particularly sensitive region at the moment for several reasons: energy, and supply security in particular, difficulties fighting illegal immigration and the risks of possible terrorist threats. The entire Sahelian area, where drug traffickers and terrorist groups thrive and mingle, is a common danger for both the Maghreb and the EU because of instability. At the same time, the Maghreb is also a “natural” reservoir of development for European economies lacking drive, and represents an essential ingredient for future economic growth in the countries of the Union in the long term.

Consequently, stability and development in the Maghreb are vital for Europe. However, the regional balance remains fragile, since it is subjected to both internal and external tensions. Although the five countries of the Maghreb (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) and their respective populations are on the front line when it comes to taking on political, economic and social challenges on a substantial scale, the EU needs to make a full contribution and take a committed stand beside them. Instead of adopting a purely securitarian or exclusively economic and commercial approach, the Maghreb today deserves a global approach. Europe cannot take the liberty of isolating each problem but must commit itself to taking action against them all in order to help establish – in its own interests and in the interests of the countries concerned – the conditions needed for *sustainable security*.

Based on two key elements, “balance and durability”¹, building up universally beneficial sustainable

security in the region implies adopting a multidimensional approach: political and social, economic and securitarian, bilateral and regional. Rather than just fighting the symptoms, each contributor must look for the root causes before joining together to ensure security and development for everyone in the long term. As emphasised by Salvatore Iacolino, Euro MP, Vice-chairman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs at the European Parliament, security in the Maghreb and in Africa depends on implementing every human right².

That is the price to pay before the Maghreb countries can introduce the political and social reforms they need to enable their predominantly young population to flourish, to get past the antagonisms that have been causing deadlocks in the essential regional integration process, and which are brought together in the conditions for a restored partnership with the EU. Now that the Treaty of Lisbon is being applied, a new Commission has been set up and the Union for the Mediterranean is starting work, the time has come to write a new chapter in the relationship between Europe and the Maghreb.



1. Laure Borgamano-Loup, “NATO and sustainable security”, *Promoting sustainable security*, NDC Occasional Paper no.12, NATO Defense College, Rome, February 2006. On the concept of sustainable security, see also the Oxford Research Group, *Global Responses to Global Threats. Sustainable Security for the 21st century*, June 2006; and the Internet site <http://www.sustainablesecurity.org>

2. 1st Symposium of the African Federation for Strategic Studies, Marrakech, January 28th, 2010.



◆ The challenges facing Maghreb societies: | pressure factors

Maghreb societies are undergoing important transformations. Major social processes are at work in the region, influenced by economic development, an increase in trade and the growing movement of political reform. Although the Maghreb area holds great promise, it is also fragile and is faced with many challenges. The region is subject to pressure factors both internally and externally.

It is time for neighbouring Europe to take on a more

active role in the region. The first thing it needs to do is to consider the people as “players” rather than “objects” undergoing changes. And more generally, Europe should ask itself what kind of commitment it can make, and what it is aiming to achieve. It has a responsibility to contribute to stability in the Maghreb, and must consider all the different aspects that might endanger the implementation of sustainable security in this Southern Mediterranean region.



1) The social, economic and political stakes

There have been some promising signs in the Maghreb over the last few years. Political reforms in Morocco, Libya’s gradual return to the Chorus of Nations¹, recent progress made in bringing democracy to Mauritania, economic success in Tunisia and advancements in the fight against Islamic extremists are all good reasons for not giving into exaggerated pessimism. And yet the stakes are high, no mistake about it.

The countries in the Maghreb are affected by deep social transformations, particularly due to the increase in the rate of schooling and the diaspora influence². The way in which women are regarded reveals a great deal about the transformations in progress. In January 2010, thirty four Imams and Ulema in Mauritania signed a fatwa prohibiting female circumcision. Similarly, Morocco and Algeria rewrote their family Code in 2004-2005. The Moroccan reform established joint responsibility for both parents, abolished the principle of a wife having to obey her husband and needing permission from her Father or Brother before she could get married, recognised paternity outside

wedlock as well as adoption and joint management of property acquired during marriage, and introduced an official marriage certificate to validate a union between two people. Although these reforms to the family Code represent true progress for women and reinforce the rights of children, they nonetheless leave the door wide open for contradictory social practices and legal control of family law³. Polygamy is not prohibited – although it does now require authorisation from a judge. The same applies to matrimonial trusteeship, which is in complete contradiction to the growing role played by women in the Maghreb’s economy. Legal advances in this field remain below expectations and all too often seem to be about adapting customary rights that are less and less in

1. Despite the current tense relationship with Switzerland.
2. Laurence Ammour, “Changement social et immobilisme politique au Maghreb Central”, *Le Maghreb stratégique 2ème partie*, NATO Defense College, April 2006.
3. Jean-Philippe Bras, “La réforme du code de la famille au Maroc et en Algérie: quelles avancées pour la démocratie?”, *Critique internationale*, 2007/4.



keeping with current social changes.

The subject of governance is equally ambiguous. Some countries have in fact embarked upon interesting reforms. The regionalisation policy in Morocco initiated last January is emblematic of the movement. Mohamed Cherkaoui, Research manager at the CNRS, believes that as well as supporting the Western Sahara autonomy project, the policy will also contribute more widely to the democratisation of the country and encourage the emergence of a local elite. In the Maghreb, a section of the political class is struggling to form a true proactive force, and the authoritarian nature of certain systems is restrictive to the region's development. The widening contradiction between the changes pushing the people forward and the political immobility of certain ageing systems is sowing the seeds of instability. Despite declaring in March 2009 that he was in favour of the peoples' right to choose a government, Colonel Gaddafi has been in power in Libya for over forty years. In Algeria, the only outcome of the confrontations at the highest level of power between 2000 and 2008 was to modify the Constitution to enable Abdelaziz Bouteflika to aspire to a new term of office¹.

From an economic point of view, the five countries of the Maghreb enjoyed a period of sustained growth between 2000 and 2008, with an increase in actual GDP of around 4 to 5% per year². However, growth was low compared to that of other geographical regions such as South and East Asia, and it proved insufficient. According to the World Bank, 16 million additional jobs would have to be created in the region between 2000 and 2020 for the new arrivals on the job market. If we take unemployment into account, the figure rises to 22 million jobs. In 2006, the unemployment rate in the Maghreb was around 12.8%, predominantly affecting young people. Unemployment stood at 37% in Morocco, and 66% in Algeria and Tunisia. This high rate of unemployment, combined with various economic imbalances and a lack of legitimacy of the political class – or indeed of some entire systems – feeds social tensions. In May and June 2008, violent riots broke out in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia due to the unemployment rate, lack of prospects and corrup-

tion. Minors in Redeyef, a mining town in Tunisia, complained about being held hostage by a local potentate who was their boss, the trade union representative and MP for the party in power, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), all at the same time³. The rise of Islamist movements in the 1980s can be partly explained by the high level of desperation felt by young people. Islamist parties seem to be the only ones offering an alternative to idleness and "hittist"⁴ attitudes in the hope of an Islam state bringing with it new jobs⁵.

The fragile nature of Maghreb economies was reinforced by the world financial crisis. In its October 2009 report, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast a drop of one point in GDP growth for 2009 compared to 2008 in the Maghreb countries, i.e. growth of 2.9%⁶. The three petrol importing countries – Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia – were particularly affected by the economic slump in the EU, which is their main partner for trade and workers' financial transfers. As for Algeria and Libya, which are exporting countries, they have built up financial reserves that allow them to continue to invest, but their earnings have suffered from the decrease in the price of a barrel of petrol. It is not just the financial economy but the region's real economy which is affected by the crises and, according to the IMF, which requires increased internal demand.

Faced with these challenges, which are social, political and economic all at the same time, sustainable security in the Maghreb requires a global approach. Important projects that need to be tackled head on include pursuing social and political reforms and supporting economic and human development. With this in mind, democratisation can be both an aim and a method. As so accurately analysed by researcher Luis Fernandez, the introduction of democracy in the Maghreb will not mechanically resolve all the economic and social problems. It will help to bridge the gap between leaders thought of as being unfamiliar with the evils of society. It would also lead to the definition of a joint project, supported by social and political players, that could promote a policy based on the improvement of living conditions in a sensible, long-lasting manner⁷. Despite the fact that Tunisia and Morocco are seen as open countries, freedom of the press is still not defended as sacred, and its violations regularly provoke criticism from non-governmental organisations.

North Africans are of course the best placed for solving these challenges, both on a national and regional scale. But for Europe, instability in the Maghreb would be the worst case scenario, as it would bring with it serious economic, political, human and securitarian effects. Without losing sight of the fact that the countries concerned have reached different

1. Mohammed Hachemaoui, "Permanences du jeu politique en Algérie", *Politique étrangère*, 2009/02.
2. International Monetary Fund, *Regional Economic Outlook. Middle East and Central Asia*, October 2009.
3. Florence Beaugé, "Troubles sociaux meurtriers au Maroc et en Tunisie", *Le Monde*, June 10th, 2008.
4. "Hittisme" was the name given to the main activity of young people in Algeria in the 1980s, standing doing nothing leaning against a wall.
5. Luis Fernandez, *Vaincre la peur de la démocratie*, Institute for Security Studies, Cahiers de Chaillot no.115, April 2009.
6. International Monetary Fund, *op. cit.*
7. Luis Fernandez, *op. cit.*



stages in their political processes, the EU must therefore implement a strategy of support and assistance for their reforms, aiming for “ratchet phenomena” so that once a position has been attained, there is no going back. Because the main challenge here, as elsewhere, is ensuring that social, political and economic advances are lasting ones. Especially since according to the UNDP, the Maghreb is now one of the world’s most vulnerable areas to the dangers of climatic change. Temperature rises and the consequences for water resources and agriculture are examples of threats that could very well increase social tension and pressure in the area, causing repercussions, especially in terms of immigration, in the EU¹.



1. Encourage the Maghreb countries to promote democracy within their borders, a factor of stability and development in the long term.

Integrating the civil society and representative Islamic movements into politics are initiatives to be encouraged in the most advanced countries to initiate a virtuous process.

2. Help to set up places of reflection and exchange between the Maghreb’s elite. Creating a network amongst journalists in the Maghreb that would act as a place of exchange for its members is an example of an initiative worth encouraging, for instance in the form of a restricted forum within the Euro-mediterranean partnership.

2) The demography and migration issue

a. The Maghreb, land of emigration, but also of immigration: a new challenge

In 2004, an estimated 2.5 million Maghreb emigrants were living in Europe, compared to 1.8 million in 1981. The geographical proximity of the North, the ties forged between different countries on both shores of the Mediterranean throughout history, the demographical structure of the Maghreb and the high rate of unemployment encouraged migration, first legal then illegal following the gradual closure of European borders.

Nevertheless, the five Maghreb countries do not all generate comparable migratory flows towards the outside world. In 2004, Morocco came top of the list of emigrating countries, with 1.4 million Moroccans living abroad, followed by 750 000 Algerians and almost 360 000 Tunisians. However, Libya and Mauritania have a low proportion of emigrating populations². Libya is an immigrating country which attracts workers from neighbouring countries and from Sub-Saharan Africa. In the case of Mauritania, the country’s economic and social organisation (tribal, pastoral and communal) is not conducive to migration outside the area formed by the country itself and

its immediate neighbours (Mali and Senegal).

Far from drying up, migratory pressure from the Central Maghreb is likely to continue in the next few years, not so much because of demographic growth, which is slowing down (*Fig. 1*), but because of a multiplication in the flow and exchange of people throughout the world. According to a survey carried out amongst 5 706 people in 12 countries by the Middle-Eastern on-line recruitment website www.bayt.com, 78% of Moroccan employees would be prepared to leave their country to work abroad if the borders were open. An analysis of the situation by Catherine Withol de Wenden reveals that unlike in the past, demographic pressure – which is decreasing in most of the countries where emigrants originate from, particularly on the Southern bank of the

1. UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report. Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*, 2009.
2. Kamel Kateb, “Des populations à l’étroit dans un vaste territoire”, *Questions Internationales*, no.10, November-December 2004.

	Total population (millions)			Natural rate of increase (%)		Fertility rate (number of children per woman)	
	1990	2007	2020	1990-1995	2005-2010	1990-1995	2005-2010
Algeria	25.3	33.9	40.6	2.3	1.6	4.1	2.4
Morocco	24.8	31.2	36.2	2.0	1.5	3.7	2.4
Tunisia	8.2	10.1	11.4	1.8	1.0	3.1	1.9
Libya	4.4	6.2	7.7	2.0	1.9	4.1	2.7
Mauritania	2.0	3.1	4.1	2.8	2.3	7.1	6.4

Figure 1. Maghreb population change

Source : PNUD, *Human Development Report 2009*.

Mediterranean – and poverty are less likely to force people to leave home. Reasons for emigration are more likely to be the appeal of the image of migration built up by the media and by word of mouth, and the awareness – on seeing migrants returning home during the holidays – of a consumer society and freedom of expression that are both so close and yet so difficult to access¹.

However, the migratory identity of the Maghreb is changing and becoming more complex. Europe is no longer virtually the sole destination of migrants from central Maghreb. Half of the migrants set off for countries such as Libya and the Gulf States, or even North America. This is the region generally chosen by qualified emigrants, where they represent 60% of migratory flows².

As well as its traditional role as a place of emigration, which continues to grow, the Maghreb is also becoming a place of immigration and transit for the Sub-Saharan population. Images of people crossing the Mediterranean in makeshift boats aroused public opinion to this fact. However, the Sub-Saharan migratory movement started well before the European “attractive mirage”, which dates back to the middle of the 1990s and mainly affects the Maghreb. According to figures reported in the French press in December 2006, at least 100 000 Sub-Saharan migrants live in Algeria and Mauritania today. “A million, or even a million and a half” of them have set up home in Libya (according to the estimates, 1.5 to 2.5 million Sub-Saharan citizens arrived in Libya between 1995 and 2000), and “several tens of

thousands” – a more limited number, but one that is constantly rising – arrived in Morocco and Tunisia³.

Sub-Saharan immigration initially affected the regions on the Sahel border south of the Maghreb. The point where these two regions meet is marked by the activity of the various Trans-Saharan routes setting off from Algiers, Tripoli or Tangier, by the increasing importance of trade flow and by the urban explosion of trade centres and places of transit such as Agadez in Niger, Sabha in Libya and Tamanrasset in Algeria (Fig. 2). Migrants from over twenty different countries represent 40% of the population in these cities, which house over 100 000 inhabitants in the middle of the desert. Recently, migration also spread to coastal cities in the Northern Maghreb. Algiers, Oran, Rabat, Casablanca or Tripoli now all have their own African quarters.

The countries in the Maghreb have gradually developed an arsenal to fight against illegal immigration originating in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as group escorts taking migrants back to border regions, refugee camps to house immigrants awaiting expulsion, and legal instruments. As far as legislation is concerned, Morocco adopted a new law on migration back in November 2003, for example. A year later, it created the Directorate of Migration and Borders Control. As for Algeria, in June 2008 a law was promulgated to introduce harsher conditions under which foreigners are allowed to enter, circulate and stay in the country.

However, the low levels of cooperation between the countries of the Maghreb on this major new problem are detrimental to the measures introduced, and are turning the situation into a human catastrophe. Illegal Sub-Saharan migrants who come through Algeria are sometimes arrested by the Moroccan police before being transferred to Oujda and passed back from Morocco to Algeria, where they are immediately chased out of the country by the Algerian authorities, some-

1. Catherine Withol de Wenden, “L’européanisation des politiques migratoires”, Casnav conference, Paris Academy, February 2005.
2. Ali Bensaâd, “La Méditerranée occidentale à l’épreuve des mouvements migratoires”, *Questions Internationales*, no.36, March-April 2009.
3. Catherine Simon, “Le Maghreb, espace d’immigration”, *Le Monde*, December 16th, 2006.



times with guns. They then systematically come back to Oujda. This happens so often that we can talk about “human ping-pong” between Algeria and Morocco, with unfortunate consequences for the migrants and potentially destabilizing consequences for the region¹. The two countries need to clarify their

positions on the status of migrants, in particular with regard to the United Nations. It is urgent for Algiers and Rabat to cooperate calmly on this issue. Simply closing the border between the two countries is of no use, unless they want the flow of migrants to become uncontrollable.

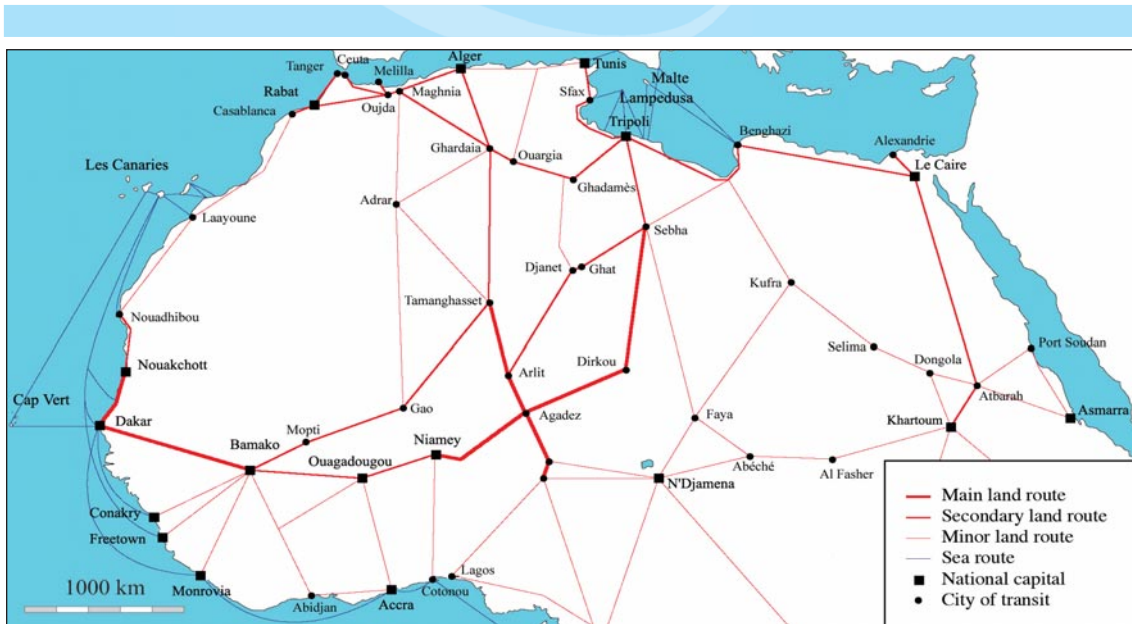


Figure 2. Main routes of present-day Trans-Saharan migrations

Source : Julien Brachet, « Irrégularité et clandestinité de l’immigration au Maghreb. Cas de l’Algérie et de la Libye », in : Bensaâd A. (éd.), *Le Maghreb à l’épreuve des migrations subsahariennes. Immigration sur émigration*, Paris, Karthala, 2009, p.111.

b. A need for increased cooperation between the European Union and the Maghreb

Europe’s policy on migration is based on the principle that the great era of mass migrations is over, replaced by a new international division of labour, whereby a foreign workforce is substituted for the national workforce, and by policies that involve returning and rehabilitating non-Europeans in their countries of origin and internal mobility for Europeans within an area with no interior borders. European countries – and the Community, followed by the EU – concentrated their efforts on border control, in a securitarian view dictated by the migratory risk and concerns about the challenges of integration. Schengen relegated the countries of the Maghreb, and others, to the status of “outsider countries”, with which human circulation is restricted. This logic was maintained by the militarisation of borders which started in 1988 when barriers were built around the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, then as of 2002 by the installation of the Integrated System of External Vigilance (SIVE) around Gibraltar and later

along the Spanish coasts – including the Canary isles – comprising twenty-five detection points, a dozen mobile radar and ten or so patrol units. The attacks perpetrated on September 11th reinforced the security component and, following the creation of FRONTEX (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders) in 2005, other areas were militarised, with preventive sea and air patrols in the Mediterranean and even in the Atlantic, near the Canary isles. The EU also provides its members with technical assistance.

The EU also helps neighbouring countries faced with migratory pressure. When the Hague programme (2004) “Freedom, security and justice” was introduced, Europe left the European foreign policy on

1. Brahim Mokhliss, “Migrants subsahariens : Ce ping-pong humain entre le Maroc et l’Algérie”, *Le Reporter*, February 24th, 2008.



immigration behind and moved on to a policy of externalisation, based on long-distance control in the countries of departure and transit, concentrating on making external borders secure.

The Maghreb has made a real effort to contribute and cooperate with the EU in the fight against immigration. In February 2004, Morocco and Spain started joint patrols and in 2008, cooperation was reinforced by improving controls in the ports of Tangier and Algeciras. According to the Spanish authorities, the result was an overall drop of 60% in illegal immigration originating in Morocco between 2007 and 2008. The decrease in illegal Moroccans was reportedly around 38%¹. However, reinforced controls caused a shift in migratory routes. According to the Italian Ministry of the Interior, the number of illegal immigrants arriving in Italy by sea rose by 75% between 2007 and 2008. 14 000 people arrived in Italy illegally in 2007, whereas the figure was in excess of 40 000 in 2008. Following the signature of the Benghazi treaty between Italy and Libya on 30th August 2008, Italy obtained greater assistance from Tripoli in the form of bilateral cooperation on illegal immigration and the application of the December 2007 agreement on joint patrols off the Libyan coasts, plus the installation of radars by Finmeccanica at Libya's southern borders².

Although there is no doubt that efforts have been made, the Maghreb cannot simply be treated as a "shield" for the EU. This situation is even decried by some fringes of the population within the Maghreb countries themselves. Escorting migrants refused by EU countries back to Senegal probably cost Morocco several tens of millions of dollars. The issue of cost is probably one of the reasons why Morocco, Algeria and Libya refused to sign readmission agreements with the EU in March 2009 which would have allowed EU countries to send illegal immigrants arrested on their territory back to their country of origin or transit. In fact, repressive attitudes alone, which imply a "fixed" view of migratory flows, cannot represent a long-term solution since the wider open the borders, the more migrants can circulate and the less they settle down since they are free to come and go³.

The logic behind controlling the flow of immigrants, which is legitimate in itself, can only succeed if a true partnership is envisaged with the countries of the

Maghreb in order to build up a joint response to the challenge of migration, which now also concerns the Sahelian area. As far as Europe is concerned, as well as helping the countries of the Maghreb to fight immigration, a flexible visa policy adapted to current needs could be envisaged, as suggested by the European Parliament. The development of the Maghreb and of Sub-Saharan emigration countries combined with more efficient policies of assistance should represent another essential field of European politics in the region, as well as being a way to combat some of the factors responsible for internal tension in the Maghreb.

3. Strengthen cooperation in the fight against illegal immigration with the countries in the Maghreb, for whom reinforced EU support is essential for making their Southern borders secure. Reinforcement of FRONTEX, opening regional offices and allocating resources to them, as requested by former European Commissioner Jacques Barrot, is a step in the right direction, particularly in the Sahelian area.

4. Ensure more effective coordination with the countries of the Maghreb of EU aid for development given to Sub-Saharan African countries. Some of the Maghreb countries such as Morocco are particularly active in this field. Although real progress has been made in the Euro-African process started in Rabat in 2006, Algeria's absence from the conference in November 2008 in Paris can but harm the efficiency and coherence of regional action.

5. Make mobility in the European Mediterranean area an advantage instead of a risk by building on the Stockholm Programme, through communication and by adapting legal measures, a relationship which would not be crystallised in securitarian stakes.

1. Figures issued by the Spanish government and quoted on the site <http://www.bladi.net> on January 1st, 2010.

2. Giuseppe Terranova, "Le contre-exemple italien", *Outre-Terre*, 2009/3, no.23, pp. 363-369.

3. Bertrand Badie, Rony Brauman, Emmanuel Decaux, Guillaume Devin and Catherine Withol de Wenden, *Pour un autre regard sur les migrations: construire une gouvernance mondiale*, Paris, La Découverte, 2008.



◆ Security stakes in the Maghreb: | tension factors

Security problems in the Maghreb are a key concern for everyone connected with the region. For a long time, security was regarded as an internal issue for each country to deal with on its own, which resulted in fragmented, isolated policies. However, more recent developments (transformations in Islamist terrorism, increase in criminality, stalemates in interstate disputes, etc.) require a global approach which also takes into account the interactions between each aspect of the problem. It now seems that security stakes in the Maghreb must be considered in the context of a wider environment to the South, West and East with a view to reinforcing cooperation locally (coordinating field workers), regionally (inter-state and regional collaboration), and globally

(involvement of the EU and the United States). Integrated management will make security policies more coherent both regionally and sustainably.

The EU has a duty to show particular concern for the current challenges facing the area on account of its geographical proximity and the ties which bond it to the Maghreb. The recent adoption of a concept paper regarding *Internal security strategy* in February 2010 is an albeit tentative step in the right direction¹, the objective being to show more recognition for global stakes and to reinforce cooperation with neighbouring countries in order to build up a secure, long-lasting, common future... in its own – and in their – best interest.



1) Threats against states: terrorism and criminality

a. Transformations in terrorism: a Sahelian and Maghreb problem

The threat of radical Islamism and terrorism has always been taken seriously by the countries in the region, which have been fighting against the phenomenon since the early 1980s. Initially considered as an issue that only concerned internal politics, the anti-terrorist fight became the first area in which the countries of North Africa actually worked together. Their cooperation was as efficient as it was unexpected, as shown for instance by the partnership between Algeria and Tunisia².

Thanks to the various measures taken, activities of movements such as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) or the Libyan Islamic Fighting

Group (LIFG) were under control by the end of the 1990s. However, the attacks perpetrated on 11th September 2001 gave such movements a new lease of life. The invasion of Iraq by the United States was instrumentalised as a way of revitalizing views on the legitimisation of terrorism, which then started to re-emerge in the Maghreb. In 2007, the GSPC even

1. Council of the European Union, *UE Internal Security Strategy*, February 25th, 2010, available on http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/113055.pdf.

2. Luis Martinez, Algeria, *The Arab Maghreb Union and Regional Integration*, Euromesco, Paper no.59, October 2006.



joined Bin Laden's circle of influence to found Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), an organisation which aspires to federate the Jihadists from all over the Maghreb. However, after an explosion in violence between 2001 and 2008, culminating in the appearance of suicide attacks, which were an entirely new phenomenon in the region, the year 2008-2009 marked a break in the development of AQMI. Despite a small number of Tunisian, Libyan or Mauritanian fighters rallying to the cause, AQMI remains a predominantly Algerian phenomenon. As terrorist attacks in the Central Maghreb decreased, organised crime increased instead, and the region witnessed a fresh upsurge of kidnappings involving Western nationals in exchange for the payment of ransoms.

Four main reasons can be given to understand why terrorism ceased. Islam in the Maghreb is traditionally moderate and forms a cultural and religious rampart against the rise of radicalism; on the whole, the measures taken by the Algerian government proved effective in the fight against terrorism; Al-Qaeda's attacks against the Sunnites in Iraq largely blackened the movement's image in the Maghreb; last but not least, the practices utilised by AQMI, particularly suicide attacks, were foreign to local traditions and we could say that the "transplant" was rejected, especially as the Algerian society had already suffered enough from indiscriminate terrorism.

The reaction to these events was that the centre of gravity of terrorism shifted ominously towards the south. Taking advantage of the porosity of the borders, the proliferation of all types of trafficking and the weakness of some states, Jihadist movements set up camp in the desert region of the Sahel from the semi-arid regions of Senegal as far as some parts of Mauritania, Mali and Niger. The emergence of radical Shiism in Sub-Saharan Africa no doubt represents the greatest securitarian challenge of the region in the short and medium term. The suicide attack against the French embassy in Nouakchott, the assassination of an American national and the kidnapping of a French citizen north of Mali for which AQMI claimed responsibility are all examples of events from 2009 that illustrate the shift. All those connected with the region are gradually becoming aware of this new reality, as shown by the recent joint declaration made by the EU and Morocco which states that "the precariousness of the situation in the Sahel region and the



many associated challenges show the need for increased regional cooperation and an integrated approach in the fields of security and development. Morocco and the EU [thus] consider that the Sahel is a priority zone for action to combat terrorism and radicalisation"¹.

Establishing a refuge area for terrorists in the Sahel is a threat to the security of the whole of North Africa as well as of Europe and the United States, whose citizens and their interests are terrorists' preferred targets. As emphasised by a representative of General William E. Ward, Commander of the United States Africa Command (Africom), a global approach faced with terrorism is vital in the Maghreb². In this respect, the decision announced by Algeria, Libya and Mali in July 2009 to combine military forces and information services to fight terrorism in the Sahelo-Saharan strip should be welcomed. It is fully in line with a desire to carry out in-depth work in the long term in order to set up solid foundations for sustainable security in the region³.

1. *Joint statement*, EU-Morocco Grenada summit, March 7th, 2010.
2. 1st Symposium of the African Federation for Strategic Studies, Marrakech, January 28th, 2010.
3. These efforts explain the protests made by Mauritania and Algeria after the release of four members of Al-Qaeda in late February 2010 following the liberation of a French hostage in Mali.



b. The rise in criminality: destabilisation factors and impact on society

Organised crime in the Maghreb consists of the usual different types of trafficking, such as drugs or smuggling cigarettes. New trends are also appearing, such as a new “hybrid kidnapping industry”¹.

In Morocco, cannabis cultivation generates 200 million dollars in annual revenue for small farmers, and profits of 12 billion dollars for traffickers. *The National strategy to fight drugs* implemented by the kingdom since 2005 is producing encouraging results, as noted by the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) which stresses in its latest report that «the total surface area used for cannabis cultivation dropped by 55%, falling from 134 000 hectares in 2003 to 60 000 hectares in 2008»². However, cannabis cultivation remains an important economic activity in the Rif, one of the poorest areas in the country, and efforts to develop alternative crops must be continued. Algeria has become the intermediary country for transporting cannabis to Tunisia and Libya, and then on to Europe.

What is more, there is a tendency for the Maghreb to become a turntable for other trafficking activities. Several observers note that in the most barren, least controlled areas of the Maghreb, an “African route” is developing for cocaine that will ultimately be sold

in Europe, facilitated by the high level of corruption, porosity of the borders, lack of training of the local police forces and inadequate legal systems. Interpol estimates that approximately 50 tonnes of cocaine – worth 1.8 billion dollars – circulate in West Africa each year³. These drugs, which originate in South America, find their way in through the ports in West Africa, cross Nigeria, Guinea and Senegal, before finally arriving in the Maghreb and in Europe. Drug circulation has a definite effect on the local population. Little by little, the countries in the region have become consumer countries rather than simple countries of transit, with all the ensuing potential for destabilisation. The devastating effects of cannabis cultivation on the ecosystem of producer countries are less well known. In



6. Strengthen existing anti-terrorism and anti-criminality cooperation by taking the wider geographical dimension into account. Dealing with traffickers and terrorists should be recognised as a global matter which includes the Sahel and the Maghreb, and even the areas beyond, as suggested by connections with South-American drug traffickers.

7 Tackle the socio-economic roots of the problem at the same time in order to establish the foundations for sustainable development and sustainable security. It is vital to take the difficulties affecting the region into account. By giving young people alternative ways of achieving social success, recruitment possibilities for both criminals and terrorists will be exhausted in the long term.

1. For information on a recent kidnapping case involving 3 Spanish aid workers in Mauritania by AQMI members with ties to the Front Polisario, see Joseph Braude, “Gang rape and Al-Qaeda infiltration: a no man’s land in North Africa grows dangerous”, *The New Yorker*, February 25th, 2010.
2. International Narcotics Control Board, *2009 Annual Report*, Vienna, February 2010.
3. Laurence Ammour, “An assessment of crime related risks in the Sahel”, NATO Research Paper no.53, November 2009.



the long term, the destruction caused (deforestation, pesticide pollution, etc.), and the lack of success of alternative cultivation projects will probably lead to massive migration of the population from some regions¹.

What is more, in an area of the world where young people are severely affected by unemployment, there is a danger that this type of trafficking will grow rapidly and that the traffickers will become models of success for young people who have no better role model to follow. On the other hand, although the links between criminality and terrorism can be proved at international level, showing direct connections within a region is not so easy. Traffickers in the Maghreb are not members of a State body or political class, and are acting as one component of the illegal economy rather than a structured, destabilising force. In addition, there are opposing logical ideas at work. To

the traffickers, remaining anonymous is more important than the principles of publicity and communication sought by terrorists. Europe is directly concerned by these developments because it is the leading customer of the drugs produced in or transiting through the Maghreb, and one of the favourite immigration countries for candidates wishing to leave the area. On top of all that, the rise in criminal networks associated with trafficking (border escorts, forged identity documents, prostitution, etc.), which spread as far as the community's territory, represents real security problems to the EU. The risk is illustrated by the recent dismantling of a network of cannabis traffickers from Morocco to France via Spain, resulting in a record-breaking seizure of over 3 tonnes of cannabis resin. During their raid, the police also confiscated around thirty weapons, including automatic pistols, several shotguns and submachine guns, a rocket launcher and bulletproof vests².

2) Inter-state tensions: the Western Sahara and the problem of borders

a. Against a stalemate in the Western Sahara conflict

The Western Sahara conflict, which has been going on for over 30 years, is the main cause of tension between Algeria and Morocco. It is largely to blame for the closure of the border between the two countries since 1994, the failure of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the arms race, Morocco's decision to leave the OUA and its refusal to belong to the African Union. This long list of implications illustrates the extent to which the situation remains deadlocked and the way in which any attempts to achieve common development and to make the area more secure are undermined.

The Western Sahara first joined the list of non-autonomous territories awaiting decolonisation in 1963. Since then, there have been a number of legal jousts between the parties involved. For example, when the General Assembly of the UN referred the matter to the International Court of Justice in the Hague (ICJ) on 13th December 1974³ following a request made

by Morocco and Mauritania, the ICJ "statuated without statuating". When questioned, the Court replied⁴ that the Western Sahara was not a "no man's land", but acknowledged "links of allegiance" to the kingdom of Morocco. Morocco had in fact hoped to be recognised as the legal administrator of the territory. As emphasised by Laurence Ammour, associate researcher at the Washington Maghreb Center, "Legal arbitration of the dispute has proved inadequate and ineffectual, since the judicial principles governing settlement proposals [...] have remained unchanged for 30 years"⁵. This time-lag explains the successive failure of the UN's plans to resolve the conflict, despite a ceasefire kept by peacekeeping soldiers since 1991. Back in 2000, Kofi Annan, then Secretary General of the United Nations, stated that the world should prepare "to consider other ways [rather than referendum] of achieving an early, durable and agreed resolution of their dispute over Western Sahara"⁶. For it is impossible to envisage holding a referendum in the current conditions. There is still no consensus about compiling electoral lists, the UN has no way of imposing a referendum in Morocco, and the political and ideological lockout applied in refugee camps leaves little hope for free self-determination if the Sahrawis are not even allowed to have full knowledge of the facts. In 2004, the Spanish Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos, commented that "in the current circumstances, a referendum without a prior political solution could lead to a general

1. Luis Martinez, *Maghreb : vaincre la peur de la démocratie*, op. cit.
2. Actualités de la Gendarmerie Nationale Française, February 23rd, 2010.
3. Resolution 3292, adopted by 87 votes to 0 and 43 abstentions.
4. Was the Western Sahara (*Rio de Oro and Sakiet El Hamra*) a no man's land (*terra nullius*) at the time of Spanish domination? Or if the answer to the first question is no, what legal connections did the territory have to the Kingdom of Morocco and to Mauritania?
5. Laurence Ammour, "The Frozen Conflict In Western Sahara: Who Benefits?", NATO Research Paper no.30, November 2006.
6. Report of the Secretary General on the situation concerning Western Sahara, United Nations S/2000/461, Security Council, May 22nd, 2000.



crisis in North Africa”¹. This analysis remains true today. The rule of law is inapplicable on its own. Therefore, there can be no escape from the deadlock without a political agreement between the protagonists.

For a long time, the two main actors, Algeria and Morocco, stuck to their positions and refused to compromise, one side evoking claims of sovereignty inherited from the Almoravid dynasty (1056-1147), the other declaring independence in the name of the right of the people to self-determination. The debate leaves very little room for negotiation. The reigning tension can be explained by the fact that nobody can afford to lose.

- ◆ In Morocco, holding on to the Southern Provinces relates to a fundamental principle of territorial integrity. The Kingdom cannot allow a considerable amputation of its territory.
- ◆ In Algeria, an attachment to the principles of autonomy and the people’s right to self-determination is combined with a major geo-economical interest (an access route to the Atlantic for exporting gas and iron from the Algerian Sahara), and the need to remain consistent with views that have not altered for 30 years.
- ◆ The Saharan conflict was initially utilised internally within each country. To hide inner political difficulties in Algeria, and to cement the nation around nationalistic demands in Morocco. Winning the conflict is also part of a race for regional leadership, whereby Morocco wants to cast itself as a dynamic economic leader, and Algeria as a powerful gas producer operator.
- ◆ Finally, the Polisario Front cannot abandon the fight without losing its very reason for existing; this would also mean admitting that refugees have been living in exile in camps for 30 years for nothing...

The present situation generates considerable costs in economic, human, political and securitarian terms,

and prevents the establishment of truly sustainable security in the region. This cost, acknowledged by all, seems to be accepted or at least tolerated by each country as follows:

- ◆ For Morocco, the cost is primarily economic. An extensive military budget has been allocated to the Western Sahara and massive investments have been made in the Southern provinces, with many tax exonerations on offer, higher salaries for civil servants, etc. The *International Crisis Group* declares that several points of GDP have been swallowed up by the dispute².
- ◆ The economic cost for Algeria is also considerable, including financial aid for refugees (especially following the drop in international aid since the UNHCR lowered its estimates of camp populations in 2006), donations of military equipment to freedom fighters, maintaining several tens of thousands of soldiers at the border in the Tindouf area, and an important political and diplomatic investment to support the SADR around the world.
- ◆ For the Maghreb as a whole, the Western Sahara issue makes integration impossible, restricts foreign investments and maintains an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust. Furthermore, a stalemate represents a danger of break-up in the region. Drug trafficking, cigarette, weapons and petrol smuggling are growing extensively in the area that stretches from the southeastern most part of the Western Sahara to northern Mauritania and southwest Algeria, including certain sub-regions which are difficult to govern and where reasonable cooperation on security issues is once again impossible due to tension caused by the conflict.
- ◆ There is also a financial aspect to the conflict that brings with it an important credibility issue for the international Community, which is maintaining a

1. « Foro de debate de El Mundo. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores. Portada », *El Mundo*, July 11th, 2004.
2. ICG, *Western Sahara: the cost of the conflict*, Middle East/North Africa Report no.65, June 2007.



MINURSO rapid deployment force in place at a cost of 35 million Euros per year. However, results have been unconvincing for nearly twenty years now.

In the meantime, refugees in the Tindouf camps are living in dreadful conditions, suffering from food shortages, a lack of water and insufficient sanitary facilities... The decline of the Polisario movement, which has lost the political and ideological support it enjoyed during the Cold War period, also leads to fears of a collapse in the fragile camp organisation. The new generation has much less tolerance for corruption within the SADR, led solely by the Polisario, for vote-catching politics applied when allocating international humanitarian aid, as well as for the monopolisation of power and the resulting political



1. Khadija Mohsen-Finan, "Le règlement du conflit du Western Sahara à l'épreuve de la nouvelle donne régionale", *Politique africaine*, no.76, December 1999.

2. To be precise: the region's administration, police and jurisdictions, economic development, regional planning, investment support, trade, industry, tourism and agriculture, budget and taxes, water facilities, electricity, public works, transport, habitation, education, health, employment, sport, social welfare and security, cultural policy (including promoting the Sahrawi Hassani cultural heritage) and the environment.

opposition to change. The Sahrawi nomadic identity, which had been dissected and embodied in the fight for a lost territory, is in the process of being pieced back together. Sahrawis opting for Mauritania show the same desire to assert their identity as those who stay in Tindouf, not in terms of independence, which they regard as unobtainable, but in terms of their identity. By setting up home in Mauritania, they are giving up their political activism for independence of the SADR, but they still remain Delimi, Tekna, Ahl Ma El Aïnin or members of another tribe¹. Morocco has been administrating and developing the Western Sahara since 1979, giving local populations (Sahrawis and Northern Moroccans living in the Sahara) a higher standard of living than in the refugee camps. Progress to obtain recognition for the Sahrawis as citizens in their own right under Moroccan administration should now be continued as part of a global programme to defend and promote human rights in Morocco.

When placed alongside all these added difficulties, crystallised in the Western Sahara, the initial stakes are so high that the supposed or estimated cost of the deadlock has long appeared preferable to the cost of losing to the other side, despite the potential for development and securitarian stability which standardisation of the conflict would allow. Consequently, only a properly negotiated political solution covering all the problems that the conflict brings with it and enabling all the participants to save face could possibly end the deadlock. The plan of autonomy for the Western Sahara region proposed by Morocco and presented to the Secretary General of the UN in 2007 is a credible alternative to freezing the positions of principle mentioned above.

Autonomous management as proposed by Morocco would involve setting up legislative, executive and judicial bodies locally, and granting them jurisdiction to cover a range of fields². Just like in Europe's various federal models, the State would retain exclusive jurisdiction for sovereign fields, which in Morocco would include security, international cooperation and external relations, religion and the judicial system, amongst others. Whilst endeavouring to obtain the widest possible consensus in the country, Rabat wishes to organise a referendum to ratify the autonomy project by the people living in the Southern provinces. Given the need to reform the constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco to incorporate the concept of autonomy, Rabat also aims to consult the entire Moroccan population.

It seems that this proposal for autonomy should be considered as a tangible basis for negotiation, which would also fall within the scope of a more general approach towards regionalisation and democratisation of the country, as outlined in the first section. Today, nobody knows whether independence of the Western



Sahara is a viable option. The territory might turn into a grey area propitious to all kinds of trafficking and the proliferation of terrorism, ultimately leading to regional destabilisation. Some observers, including the spokesman of the American Department of State in 2008 have even gone so far as to state that an independent Sahraouian state cannot be treated as a "realistic option"¹. The former special representative of the Secretary General of the UN for the Western Sahara, Peter van Walsum, considers that it is not an "accessible objective"². However, he is sure that security in the area cannot allow a *failed state*, especially if the latter is used as a new alibi to strengthen tension in Maghreb societies and to keep them as trust territories.

On the other hand, everyone agrees that an end to the policy of mistrust in the Maghreb would bring considerable advantages in terms of growth and improvement of the population's living conditions, not to mention progress in regional integration. Standardising the Western Sahara conflict, which requires a firm commitment from all sides, would also make this fragile region globally and lastingly secure. It is now

simply a matter of convincing the protagonists that their position and their interests will be preserved once they have taken the initial steps. The Maghreb needs openness and stability, not a securitarian escalation.

8. The EU must support the Moroccan proposal for autonomy, which today seems to be the only realistic way of escaping from the crisis. This solution can only be envisaged if the Moroccan plan is extended in order to provide a way out of all the aspects of the conflict, in particular: (1) by giving the Sahrawi people guarantees under Moroccan administration, particularly concerning the integration of a Sahrawi legal right to political expression – the current gradual decorrelation between Sahrawi identity and land claims is a positive sign; (2) by drawing up bilateral trade agreements and co-operation agreements to preserve the geo-economic interests of the two major countries involved.

9. Direct negotiations between all the protagonists, including Algeria, must take preference and be given EU support. The latest informal negotiations held between Morocco and the Polisario Front in New York on 10th and 11th February 2010, also attended by Algeria and Mauritania, are an encouraging sign. Although little information has leaked out about the actual negotiations themselves, the parties' decision to meet again soon is in itself a step forward which deserves support³.

1. Declaration before the UN Security Council on the occasion of the vote of resolution S/Res/1813, April 30th, 2008.

2. Interview given to the Spanish newspaper *El País*, August 8th, 2008.

3. In the *Joint statement* of the EU-Morocco summit dated 7th March 2010, the EU reiterated its support for efforts made by the United Nations Security Council, the Secretary General and his Personal Envoy on Western Sahara to reach a definitive, lasting and mutually acceptable solution by expressing its approval of the current negotiation process, in line with the directives of the Security Council, and Resolution 1871 in particular (2009).



b. The negative impact of blocking borders

The attitude of mistrust which paralyses the region is also at the heart of the border problem, both internally in the Maghreb and externally with neighbouring countries. Border closure is doubtless one of the most revealing and the most worrying difficulties generated by the security issue, and remains a substantial obstruction to regional development. Traditionally, borders are a mark of sovereignty and a barometer of regional relationships. They are primarily a sovereignty issue, as illustrated by the 1963



“Sand War” between Morocco and Algeria. Direct confrontations only lasted a few months before a ceasefire was signed, but the situation did not become stable until 1992 when the convention establishing the borders between the two countries was published in the Kingdom of Morocco’s official bulletin¹. Quarrels between the countries in the Maghreb also inevitably result in stricter border controls, like those enforced between Algeria and Tunisia in 2007, and can even lead to complete border closure. The borders between Algeria and Morocco have been shut for over 15 years, ruining the regional economy and tearing many families apart. Despite Morocco’s repeated requests for them to be reopened, there seems to be no end in sight.

Cooperation on security issues, border controls and the fight against trafficking must not be detrimental to the populations or to economic development. Measures of this kind may well improve the trafficking situation in the short term, but do not lead to long-term security for all.

States are not the only ones who are reticent about opening up to the outside world. The Agadir free trade agreement, which was signed in February 2004 and came into force in April 2007, suffered similar reluctance. The agreement was initially designed to allow the immediate lifting of non-tariff barriers and

the gradual introduction of a free trade area comprising Morocco, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. Three years later, despite an official political agreement between the countries concerned, there is no denying that the expected results have not materialised, as shown by the low levels of trade between the signatory countries. According to many analysts, this deadlock is the direct result of unwillingness of certain companies to go along with the agreement. For a long time, it was extremely difficult to export the Logan car to Egypt for instance, due to administrative obstructions following pressure from Egyptian assembly chains keen to hold on to market share on a very highly protected internal automobile market. However, a certain amount of trade is now underway, and Egypt has just agreed to purchase almost 6 000 cars made in Morocco.

Similar protectionist reflexes are also shown by Maghreb countries, for instance in the campaigns led against imports of Egyptian rice. According to Omar Hilale, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the Office of the United Nations in Geneva, deadlocks of this kind are due to the prevalence of sartorial interests in the strategic collective interests of the region, and are detrimental to the very future of the Maghreb.

10. Give priority to secure border policies which safeguard the interests of the countries concerned whilst furthering economic and human development of the people living near the borders and local trade.

11. Continue the efforts being made to reach out to the civil societies of the Maghreb in order to convince them that opening up to their neighbours is an opportunity. Calming their fears is an essential part of the process. With this in mind, the EU must support public information policies designed to eradicate psychological blockages such as communities’ desires to remain isolated and cut themselves off from others.

1. *Bulletin officiel du Royaume du Maroc*, no.4157, 29 hijja 1412, July 1st, 1992.



◆ The regional integration and the cooperation between Europe and the Maghreb: standardisation factors

Europe and the Maghreb are now facing the difficult challenge of creating an area of “peace, security and prosperity” specifically in line with the preliminary declaration of the Union for the Mediterranean. We must once again point out that regional integration in the Maghreb is at the very least a necessary condition for their shared sustainable security,

if not a prerequisite.

The Maghreb must use all its internal leverage so that the barriers to regional integration can at long last be lifted. As for the EU, it must provide backing and support by encouraging cooperation within the Maghreb prior to integration and by increasing the extent of cooperation between Europe and the Maghreb.



1) The “long road” to regional integration

a. The cost of Non-Maghreb

Regional integration in the Maghreb is currently so limited that we can only talk of a “Non-Maghreb”, an expression used by a number of observers. The region is Africa’s worst pupil when it comes to regional integration! And yet the creation of a true area of cooperation and trade within the Maghreb could provide a strategic response to the challenges of development and stabilisation in all the countries concerned, reinforcing opportunities for cooperation with the EU and Sahelian neighbours at the same time. However, as seen above, the five countries have not all reached the level of political maturity needed to take up the challenge. The EU, a specialist in promoting regional integration strategies around the world, should nonetheless aim to encourage its partners to respond to the largely unsatisfied “need for Maghreb”. For the Non-Maghreb does not come cheaply.

Here are the figures to prove it. Intra-regional trade represented just 1.3% of foreign exchange in the five countries in 2010, and the figure has in fact decreased since 2003¹. The unresolved question of borders, as explained above, is not without bearing on the situation. The border between Algeria and Morocco has only been open for seven years out of the last fifty years. In these circumstances, with no transport connections between the two countries, how can cooperation to stimulate trade possibly be developed? According to a note written by the Moroccan Ministry of Finance and Privatisation, the estimated shortfall in terms of GDP growth due solely to the breakdown of the UMA is an average of 2 points per year², given that the five economies which make up the Maghreb

are described as being extremely complementary and “almost totally airtight”³. Tunisia alone loses approximately 20 000 jobs a year through the non-existence of the UMA. The shortfall in terms of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) stands at an estimated 3 billion dollars a year for the region as a whole, when in theory FDI should be attracted to an area that comprises nearly 100 million consumers⁴. Lastly, it should be emphasised that the region’s vulnerability was demonstrated once again during the economic and financial crisis in 2008. As mentioned before, the Maghreb was severely affected by the crisis. More severely no doubt than if an area of exchange and mutual integration had genuinely existed.

It is therefore clear that not only is the Maghreb facing a serious challenge, but Europe as well. Simply working out the cost generated by the non-existence of regional integration should be enough to prompt the parties to change their strategies and to form new synergies. They need to understand the reasons for the deadlock if they are to have any chance of modifying its outcome. The EU, for example, did not wait until it had solved the Gibraltar conflict between the United Kingdom and Spain before embarking on inter-regional cooperation...

1. Francis Guiles, “Le “Non-Maghreb” coûte cher au Maghreb”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2010.
2. *Les enjeux de l’intégration maghrébine*, Document de travail no.90, Moroccan Ministry of Finance and Privatisation, July 2003.
3. Ridha Lamar, “8ème session du Conseil des Ministres maghrébins du Commerce: Quelle zone de libre-échange pour le Maghreb?”, *Réalités*, January 2007.
4. *Les enjeux de l’intégration maghrébine*, op. cit.



b. Cooperation within the Maghreb: disappointments and opportunities

Effectively, cooperation within the Maghreb is the region's greatest disappointment in the last twenty years. The weak progress that has been made is symptomatic of the Non-Maghreb. Results in energy or transport related matters are still negligible. And yet together with climatic change, these are the very areas in which collaboration "laboratories" could be formed between the countries concerned. Cooperation within the Maghreb in expanding or strategic economic sectors is an inevitable milestone in the journey towards integration.

It is a well-known fact that Algeria and Morocco suffer extensive losses by failing to work together in the energy business. Natural gas represents less than 1% of Morocco's energy bill – the figure rises to 10% in Tunisia, 25% in Algeria, the world average being 23%¹. In order to reduce its energy bills and energy dependency, Morocco has decided to adopt a true policy of energy security and to increase the proportion of natural gas it uses to 23% of primary energy by 2020. This decision will be hard to put into practice without making use of Algerian gas. Morocco would gain a great deal if it could reach an agreement with its neighbour, as Algeria remains the country's most suitable partner. Algerian gas is competitive, available in large quantities and its cost – including environmental cost – would be lower due to geographical proximity. But there are no serious plans for cooperation between the two countries. On the contrary, links between Algeria and the EU are strengthening and the Medgaz gas pipeline service is soon due to start up (900 million Euros of investments), connecting Algeria directly to Spain without passing through Morocco and without hooking up to the Pedro Duran Farrell gas pipeline. The Algerian government remains formally opposed to negotiations of any kind between Sonatrach and Morocco. The Western Sahara issue and the lack of trust between the protagonists rule out any hope of a solution for the time being, and Morocco has no choice but to persevere with an energy strategy that avoids becoming too dependent on Algeria. The resulting situation is highly unfortunate, given just how complementary the Maghreb area appears to be in terms of energy.

Another significant example involving Morocco and Algeria concerns fertilisers. Morocco possesses half the world's phosphate reserves, but in order to make phosphate into fertiliser, it needs energy, sulphur and

ammonia, which are available in great quantities in Algeria. Cooperation between the Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP) and Sonatrach could significantly increase the Maghreb's fertiliser producing potential, making it one of the most competitive production areas in the world. The effects would be beneficial to all, creating jobs, developing and setting up subcontracting companies, attracting FDI from Europe, Asia, Africa and America etc.

Transport is another industry which concerns all five countries in the Maghreb. Transport is of course an area which deserves a great deal of attention. As far as road transport is concerned however, the so-called "Trans-Maghreb" motorway is far from operational. The future motorway is meant to connect Nouakchott to Tripoli, crossing the main industrial and tourist areas and serving 55 cities with a total population of over 50 million inhabitants as well as 22 international airports and a large number of maritime ports and rail stations. It could and should become the vital nerve



1. Ihsane El Kadi, "À quand un partenariat énergétique Algérie-Maroc ?", *El Watan*, May 2005.



of the region's economy, a way of increasing trade within the Maghreb. But before it can do this, investments are needed to connect national networks, some of which already exist. The motorway has suffered constant delays, and it is now up to the UMA to spur things on. As far as rail transport is concerned, there are still no concrete plans for the Trans-Maghreb express, which should link Casablanca to Tripoli. The same applies to maritime connections and airspace. Today, the Maghreb has reached the stage where a boat setting off from Morocco has to transit via Spain in order to reach Algeria, or where a plane journey from Morocco to Tunisia has to include a stopover in France. And yet airspace should automatically be included in the negotiation process for the long awaited regional free trade area.

Initiatives for sustainable development also seem to have very shaky foundations at the present time. A sub-regional action programme to fight against desertification dating back to 1999 and a Trans-Maghreb food safety programme developed with the FAO's support in 2006 appear to be the only measures taken. Three appropriate fields in which to set up initiatives have nevertheless been identified by the UMA as follows: sustainable management of natural resources (water, soil, flora, etc.), climatic change and renewable energy sources¹. An appraisal of the current energy situation and the different policies implemented in these countries reveals that we should join with the protagonists and stakeholders to

process the interests and prospects for developing internal cooperation within the Maghreb in this area, and to evaluate what the region stands to gain, preferably with involvement from the EU, whose expertise in the field of sustainable development is well-recognised.

As stated above, the Maghreb has been identified by the UNDP as an area that is particularly vulnerable to the risks connected with climatic change². The rural exodus and intense urbanisation of the Mediterranean coast have made the population more vulnerable whilst accentuating the factors which contribute to climatic change. Soil erosion, urbanisation of arable land, and more and more frequent flooding are all good examples of the risks incurred in the region, especially in Algeria. Although Africa is responsible for less than 5% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, its population will probably foot the full bill for climatic change. The Trans-Maghreb issue becomes partially a Maghreb/Sahel problem since the effects of these factors can already be seen in African countries, for instance on water and public health. The stakes are essentially cross border stakes, and thus require cross border responses. The only way to limit the human and economic consequences of future natural catastrophes is through Trans-Maghreb cooperation (and, ideally, through cooperation between the Maghreb and Sahel regions), with backing from the EU to help with resource sharing.

c. From cooperation to regional integration: the essential free trade area in the Maghreb

The aim of regional integration is nothing new in the Maghreb. Acquired political knowledge exists, but remains insufficient. The UMA, which was formed between the five countries of the Maghreb by the treaty of Marrakech in 1989 and whose headquarters are in Rabat, has not held a meeting since 1994. Despite the statements of principle which regularly remind us of the institution's supposed rich potential of varied, efficient structures, the reality of its existence remains subject to the Western Sahara deadlock and the disputes between member countries. As we have seen, another important agreement signed in Agadir in February 2004 and in force since 2007 formed a free trade area between Egypt, Jor-

dan, Morocco and Tunisia. The fact that this agreement only involves two of the five Maghreb countries restricts its impact in terms of regional integration, but its approach deserves special attention and support.

The creation of a free trade area in the Maghreb on the road from cooperation to integration is an issue which has been mentioned in a number of UMA de-

1. *Charte Maghrébine pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le Développement Durable*, UMA, Nouakchott, 1992.
2. UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report. Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries*, op.cit.



clarations ever since the *Common Development Strategy for the Maghreb* was drawn up in 1990 and put on the Euro-Mediterranean political agenda. The opportune nature of this key issue should be constantly reasserted¹. Despite the obstacles slowing the process down (pollution of regional political files, competition between agreements signed by the Maghreb countries and other trade partners such as the EU, the United States or some Asian countries, and the Agadir agreement), a free trade area is the only way of giving lasting meaning to the insufficient co-operation projects already mentioned, and especially of creating the dynamics needed for regional integration. For the Maghreb stands to gain huge benefits from a free trade area, and this alone should be enough to make political leaders stop and think. According to a number of recent studies², one American, the other European, the establishment of a free trade area would boost local economies and have a direct impact on trade in two to five years. Trade within the Maghreb as a whole could increase by 3 to 4.5% (i.e. 3 to 4 billion Euros) and FDI could increase by 75% (i.e. approximately 5 billion Euros per year).

A suitable method now needs to be adopted. Inspiration could be drawn from the model which the European Community built itself up on from the 1950s onwards for instance, i.e. cooperation between different countries, establishment of a free trade area and a customs union. This *spillover* approach is what the EU is based on. The Maghreb could follow a similar pattern, taking into account the specific nature of the Maghreb model. As indicated by Tunisian sociologist Aissa Baccouche, it is vital to adapt the institutional instrument adopted, i.e. the European common market, to suit the Maghreb in order to cope with the negative repercussions from free trade areas which Maghreb countries have become involved in separately³.

It is true that the EU must make sure that it does not attempt to compete with regional integration in the area. At the moment, trade agreements, association agreements or special economic agreements exist between each of the Maghreb countries and the EU, but not between the neighbours themselves. The danger is that the Maghreb countries might devote their energies to a privileged relationship with the EU but “forget” about their neighbours, when they are

the ones offering the most opportunities, if they could only be made full use of. In an ideal world, the tariff preferences granted to the EU by the countries in the Maghreb should be the same as those set between the different Maghreb neighbours. In practice, tariff preferences could be restricted to certain products, according to highly specific agreements. Which is why the EU should continue to develop its business relationships whilst encouraging regional integration in the Maghreb. It is the region’s economic development that is at stake, through the development of business and trade. Economic development is the only thing that can mend the fragile nature of the societies and economies described above. Economic development is the only thing that can produce stable, common growth in the Maghreb, which would be a source of sustainable security for both shores of the Mediterranean.



12. Put the issue of Trans-Maghreb cooperation and regional integration back on the EU’s political agenda, particularly for common reflection purposes alongside the portfolios on Neighbourhood, Development, Trade and the new International Cooperation portfolio, stressing the mutual benefits for the EU and the Maghreb. The development of the Maghreb must be a European concern.

13. Build up cooperation both within the Maghreb and between Europe and the Maghreb, especially by encouraging a free trade area in the Maghreb and proposing that the customs duties applicable between the Maghreb countries should be the same as those between Europe and the Maghreb countries.

1. We must once again point out that it should originally have been completed by 2010...

2. *Del coste del No Magreb, al Tigre Norteafriicano*, Centro Internacional de Toledo, Madrid, May 2006 and *Maghreb regional and global integration: a dream to be fulfilled*, Peterson Institute for International Economics, Washington, October 2008.

3. Quoted by Imeddine Boulaâba, *Le Non Maghreb ou l’injure au bon sens, un statu quo intenable pour les peuples de la région*, WMC, Tunis, October 26th, 2009.



2) Sustainable security at the heart of the relationship between Europe and the Maghreb

a. From cooperation to a true partnership between Europe and the Maghreb

Since 1957, Europe has been the leading commercial partner of all the countries in the Maghreb. Europe has a particularly strong commercial relationship with Tunisia (78%) and Morocco (60%), whilst trade with Algeria and Libya is more varied. The vertical nature of trade makes the Maghreb a captive market for the European Union¹. The two shores of the Mediterranean are obviously interdependent. Europe is the main destination for exports from the Maghreb, i.e. 65%, and also an essential source of imports, providing 60%. In absolute value, exports from the EU stand at 45.4 billion Euros, whilst imports (almost essentially energy) represent 80 billion Euros, i.e. a trade deficit of 35.1 billion Euros per year for the EU².

Algeria is already an EU gas supplier that cannot be ignored (third after Russia and Norway) and Algerian suppliers are likely to gain ground as European dependence grows³. Without petrol and without gas, exchanges from the Maghreb to the EU would show a deficit. Without petrol and gas from the Maghreb, Europe would not be able to guarantee safe energy supplies. Since the Maghreb is commercially focussed on the EU, and the UE is dependent on the Maghreb for energy, they must together find a way of standardising and consolidating their trading relationship. Particularly as other expanding industries bring new hope, particularly tourism.

The Maghreb needs European technology and op-



portunities, especially renewable energy. The Maghreb region has an especially high sunshine rate, one of the highest in the world. Algeria has the highest sunlight potential in the entire Mediterranean, the equivalent of 10 average natural gas deposits⁴. Consequently, if the potential to produce hydrogen by solar power could be made use of, the Maghreb, and ultimately Europe, could be responsible for their own supply security, in a safe, sustainable manner. Given the high cost of a barrel of petrol and the need to reduce greenhouse gases, hydrogen has been identified as the most strategic environmentally friendly replacement fuel for future decades. Solar technology, which a number of EU countries are capable of developing, is more than necessary in the Maghreb. This opens up extensive cooperation opportunities, which is the whole point of the Mediterranean Solar Plan set up by the Union for the Mediterranean.

In the light of these examples, and there are many others, it seems vital for Europe to maintain a partnership based on high levels of cooperation, a definite interest in the region and a concern for sustainable security. The EU needs the Maghreb for its energy security: safe access to resources, regular supplies, secure gas pipelines, attractive prices. In the long term, it could make a decisive contribution to regional stability. But a partnership must of course go beyond just one field, in this case energy. As seen above on the subjects of political and social reform and migration and regional security, the EU's involvement can be a decisive factor in helping the Maghreb to achieve stability and development. For stability and development alone will be the guarantees of shared security. But this implies proactive diplomacy from the EU, involving many different portfolios within the European Commission (External relations, Development, Trade, Internal affairs and International cooperation), a global strategy and an upstream approach that takes the specific nature of the Maghreb into account.

1. Khader Bichara, *Renforcer les échanges économiques avec les pays arabes: un intérêt européen*, MEDEA, 2009.
2. 2008 figures, not counting Mauritania.
3. *A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy*, European Commission green paper, March 2006.
4. According to data from the German Aerospace Center (DLR), quoted by F. Harouadi, "Les potentialités d'exploitation d'hydrogène solaire en Algérie dans un cadre euro-maghrébin", *Revue des Energies Renouvelables*, Vol. 10 no.2, 2007.



b. Towards commitment from the European Union to further regional integration

Two essential aspects result from this analysis. The need to push for regional integration in the Maghreb and the need to preserve and consolidate the existing partnership between Europe and the Maghreb. Some observers insist on the need for the EU to make a greater investment in the region to push for regional integration¹.

The EU has expertise, methods and instruments for achieving regional integration that are widely recognised. Based on its past experience, the EU has promoted, spread and adapted the model to its external partners, in regions of the world where it already had a strong presence, and in agreement with its partners. It considers regional integration between third party countries as a key objective, in their best interests and in its own best interests. However, we cannot help noticing that the EU has not implemented this approach in the Maghreb, but has instead developed a common approach for the entire Euro-Mediterranean area, combining the Maghreb and the Mashriq. The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Union for the Mediterranean, are the two main levers currently in use. It is vital that they should treat the Maghreb as a specific region. A region that is integrated within but differentiated from the Euro-Mediterranean as a whole. The approach taken by the Union for the Mediterranean – which replaces the Barcelona Process – therefore needs reconsideration. A sub-regional approach should be adopted which would treat the Maghreb as a specific area and not just as part of “Euromed”², differentiating it from the Middle East in particular.

The target of creating a prosperous, stable, secure Euro-Mediterranean area has obviously not yet been met. The EU, which is sometimes subjected to the crosswinds of different political influences, members with their own agendas and the demands of international power struggles, and which has been keeping a close eye on its Eastern flank for the last twenty years, must not underestimate the opportunities offered by the south. But in order to rise to meet them, it must first remove the initial obstacles in its path. It must go beyond the divisions of opinion between member States who find it hard to speak with one voice, revise the general approach taken by the Union for the Mediterranean to include a specific Ma-

ghreb debate and clarify certain institutional overlaps between existing instruments, i.e. “Neighbourhood”, “Partnership” and the Union for the Mediterranean. For the Maghreb is waiting for Europe. Europe has authority, an ability to drive forward and a specific interest in making a substantial contribution. Sustainable security in the Maghreb depends on it, and consequently, sustainable security in Europe to a great extent as well.



14. Reconsider the EU’s approach to the Maghreb, treating it as a problem in its own right. The Union for the Mediterranean, whose projects are starting to get underway, could be the ideal place for this new ambition.

15. Rely more on existing complementarities between sectors (energy and sustainable development in particular) between the EU and the Maghreb, to maintain a strong, balanced partnership in terms of growth, employment, external trade and energy supplies (energy and sustainable development issues for example)

1. See, in particular, *La Tunisie, l’Union du Maghreb Arabe et l’intégration régionale*, Euromesco, Paper no.78, January 2009.

2. The Joint Statement of the recent EU-Morocco summit (6th and 7th March 2010) mentions the development needed for regional integration in the Maghreb by the UMA, but goes no further.

Institut Thomas More
49, boulevard de Courcelles – F-75 008 Paris
Tel. +33 (0)1 49 49 03 30
Fax. +33 (0)1 49 49 03 33
info@institut-thomas-more.org

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