



Policy paper and final report of the first  
Rome Euro-Mediterranean Forum  
organised by Universal Trust for FENL

## Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean geo-political space in turbulent times

*Discussing a new agenda for stability,  
security, development and identity in the  
Mediterranean region*

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*Rome Euro-Mediterranean Forum*

Final Paper

**Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean  
geopolitical space in turbulent times**

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# I. Scope, objet and methodology of the Rome Mediterranean Forum and Conference Paper

This paper has been drafted as a discussing document for the first Mediterranean Forum of Rome held on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2017. The aim of the document has been to provoke a political and scientific debate among the invited speakers and the participants to the conference on the main challenges and critical factors that are reshaping the relations between European and North African countries of the Mediterranean region.

The first part of the document has been drafted in June – July 2017 after studying and analysing the main geopolitical processes underway in the Mediterranean region and comparing them with the ongoing political debate in European societies and in the European Parliament. It is therefore an attempt to fine-tune the geopolitical debate of experts and practitioners of international relations with the increasing concerns of European societies on the instabilities around the Mediterranean. This will be one of the main challenges of European political parties, both in the national parliaments and in the European one.

The first part of this document has been provided to the speakers before the conference as concept paper in order to set the tone of the debate; its main points have been presented during the conference by professor Korinman during his key-note speech. After the conference, the document has been reviewed and finalised in the present final version in order to include the main points that have been raised by the different speakers, interpreting the senses of their speeches in the context of the problems that were highlighted in the preparatory document.

Finally, a conclusion was added on some key points that may be assumed as a fil rouge for most, if not all, the conference participants. It represents a synthetic abstract of the final outputs of the first Rome Euro-Mediterranean Forum. The present document has been drafted in three European official languages (English, French and Italian), reflecting both the different linguistic background of the conference participants and the inter-cultural spirit of the European Parliament.

The first Rome Euro-Mediterranean Forum has represented a unique occasion for confronting on cross-cutting issues crucial for the future of Euro-Mediterranean politics a variety of speakers and experts, with very different cultural and political background. This format has demonstrated to be an interesting model for advancing the political strategic reflexion on the Mediterranean most relevant open issues that will influence the stability and the economic wellbeing of a very high number of States.

It is the opinion of the organisers and many of the participants that in the future this format may be consolidated and extended, in particular outreaching to different political parties and the parliaments of many countries of the Euro-Mediterranean geopolitical space.

## II. Rationale: rethinking the Euro-Med geopolitical space in turbulent times

**E**uro-Mediterranean integration is moving towards turbulent times. Many things have changed for the worse since 13th July 2008, when the Union for the Mediterranean was created in Paris. Today, the 20 years old Barcelona Declaration (1995), that set the goals of stability, security, peace and prosperity for the whole Euro-Mediterranean space, seems a distant dream.

*Turbulent times  
ahead*

The European Union itself is not so “prosperous, secure and free” as it was proudly announced in 2003 in Solana’s European Security Strategy and a number of internal and external crisis are putting at risk the political fabric of the Union. The effects of an ungoverned globalisation have transformed the Euro—Mediterranean space in something different from what we were used to, changing the geopolitical environment of the old developmental strategies. The traditional gaps between the Northern and Southern shores in democracy, development and security have remained or even increased, while the region is still extremely divided economically; the global economic crisis has reduced the financial instrument of Public Development Aid. New conflicts proliferated in the enlarged Mediterranean space, adding to the old ones: in the Maghreb (Libya), Mashreq (Syria), the Black Sea (Ukraine) and in the Horn of Africa (Somalia and Yemen). With the exception of Ukraine, there are many doubts that states like Libya, Syria, Somalia or Yemen can be put together anymore.

*a security scenario  
changed for the  
worse:*

*failed states,  
weak sovereignty  
and civil wars...*

A huge inflow of mostly economic migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa is directing towards the Mediterranean, smuggled by powerful organised criminal cartels that are arising as new power actors in a growing lawless environment, taking over sovereignty and territory from nominal states. Jihadist groups are spreading rapidly, filling the power vacuum, racketing the different criminal traffics, from drugs and weapons to human beings, the most profitable of all. Slavery, with its inhuman business model, has returned to the Mediterranean shores, while EU anti-smuggling naval military operation is stuck to its search-and-rescue humanitarian assistance role.

*...and a wide range  
of hybrid problems  
and threats around  
Europe*

*The failure of multiculturalism and the radicalisation of identities*

At the same time, an unprecedented stream of foreign fighters has spread-out across the Mediterranean space directed toward ISIS global-jihadi proto-state, bridging the terrorist organisations of North Africa and the Middle East with the radical segments of European diasporas. This new phenomenon, matched with the crisis of the European multicultural model, the decreasing legitimacy of governments and the advancement of political Islam, introduces the question of how the Mediterranean countries can avoid a future of social unrest and conflicts between alternative and irreconcilable sectarian and political paradigms.

*The magnitude of EU migration drama in the Mediterranean...*

Between 1991 and 2011 approximately 100.000 illegal migrants have entered Europe through the Central Mediterranean Corridor. In the last five years, (2012 – 2016) the number of irregular migrants disembarked in Italy almost reached the absolute record of half million.

*...and its humanitarian, security and economic dimensions*

It is evident that the European migration crisis is not simply a humanitarian emergence but probably the most severe geopolitical challenge to European security and stability and one of the main geopolitical question of XXI century. The magnitude of the phenomenon, makes it not only an issue of humanitarian security and State security, but its relevance stretches into many other fields, including economic security. This was clear when the Italian Minister of Finance estimated that the net yearly economic burden for Italy of the emergency-costs only (without the future costs of integration and after the EU transfer) was between 3.6 and 4.2 billion euro per year, depending from the magnitude of the phenomenon<sup>1</sup>. An incredibly gigantic figure, superior to the value of the whole Italian Official Development Aid (3,8 billion in 2016) and half of French ODA (9,2 billion in 2016)<sup>2</sup>.

The Euro-Mediterranean space didn't recover from the big geopolitical destabilisation that followed the Iraqi conflict of 2003 and the 2006 Israel – Lebanon

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of Italian Minister of Finance Pier Carlo Padoan to UE Commission October 2016, V. Polchi, Immigrati, ecco quanto ci costa davvero accoglierli, La Repubblica.

<sup>2</sup> OECD, DAC member profiles Italy and France, [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

war. The lack of Mediterranean geopolitical vision and initiative of the European Union, entirely focused on the Eastern Enlargement, was partially responsible for this uncomfortable political scenario.

Sarkozy's project of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2007 – 2008 aimed to break a long sequence of paper partnerships and diplomatic dialogues whose primary function was to postpone sine die a structured strategic cooperation between Europe and the Arab-Muslim countries. It was a genuine trans-Mediterranean geopolitical project, mutually beneficial for both European and North African countries, but it was damaged by the global financial crisis and finally disrupted by the uprising of the Arab Spring. The awkward and untimely military intervention in Libya and the meaningless civil war in Syria have further disrupted the security in the Mediterranean and have postponed the resumption of political cooperation in the Mediterranean to the solution of these two conflicts.

*Sarkozy  
was right in 2007*

*Berlusconi in 2011*

The present migration crisis – with its slavery traffic that it is funding with European money criminal cartels, jihadi groups and insurgencies in North and Sub-Saharan Africa – may be the last stage of the disruption of the Euro-Mediterranean political space.

*Status quo is  
not an option*

European countries, especially those on the Mediterranean shores, should not accept the present status quo as a viable option, and accommodate their foreign policies to this geopolitically degraded reality.

The present status quo, while being the sign of the failure of EU common and security foreign policy in the region, is unsatisfactory from many points of views. Here it follows a list of main critical points that illustrates the deteriorating status of the Mediterranean. Among them:

- Extensive and documented human rights violations are occurring for thousands of individuals on a daily basis along the migration routes to Europe; an inhumane migrant market emerges from the remote places of Africa across the most impoverished areas of the continent where

unscrupulous criminal organizations are making huge profits from traffics; forms of slavery eradicated a century ago have now reappeared;

- Terrorist and jihadist movements are controlling important transit routes in Sahel and Libya and are making significant profits that can be re-invested in other criminal activities, affirming the new hybrid model of jihadi-gangsterism;
- Thousands of people die each year in the Mediterranean Sea, paradoxically increasing in proportion to the search and rescue efforts;
- Immigration laws in Europe are being discharged as well as many other constitutional and border protection obligations;
- The entry of a large number of people far greater than the reception and integration capacities entails the risk of growing levels of marginalization, criminalization and radicalization rates in European cities;
- The economic burden for South European countries, like Italy, is unsustainable, and billions of euros are diverted from development to emergency policies;
- Worrying tensions emerge among migrants of different religions or ethnicities to the point that many of them should be divided along ethnic or religious lines;
- A dangerous vulnerability has opened into Schengen borders with the illegal entry of millions of foreigners, about whom we don't know anything and there are no concrete possibilities to ascertain precedents, identities, intentions and expectations;

- Extremist and xenophobic movements are emerging in all European countries and episodes of discrimination against immigrants and Muslim communities are on the rise;
- European countries have drastically reduced their political cooperation and the principle of solidarity; nationalism is increasing in many EU countries; border protection measures and forms of border control have been reintroduced inside the Schengen area; the whole EU political construction is likely to collapse under the burden of this unsustainable demographic pressure.

For these reasons, the current status quo is unsustainable from every point of view, humanitarian, political, security, economical. Returning to physiological levels of migration flows to Europe has become EU's top strategic priority, but nobody seems to know how this may be possible. It is anyway evident that a failure to solve this problem will lead to the disintegration of the entire European project and the definitive abandon of any possibility to resume the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.



### III. A tentative agenda for a new Euro-Med political discussion in Europe. Key issues and debating points



### III.1 The European migration drama: a crucial geopolitical question

**E**urope is facing a new wave of migration. In June 2017 landings in Italy increased more than 40% or 61,234 people; 1,622 drowned, were dead or missing. By the end of the year the total figure reached 120.000. The situation will not settle in the coming years because in 2050 Africa will have doubled its population reaching 2.5 billion inhabitants – a quarter of the population living in the planet – without economic growth that can counter-balance the demographic surge. At the same time, the distinction between refugees from war zones or at vital risk and economic migrants has been permanently erased. These days Europeans are facing tough questions: is an escape from the Eritrean kleptocracy eligible for asylum in Europe just like a Syrian running from the carnage? Thanks to the agreements between Spain and Morocco (which is willing and able to regulate its migrants) and other countries of West Africa, the Western route has been restricted to attempts to cross the physical barrier in Ceuta. Similarly, the 2015 German/European – Turk agreement largely dried up the Aegean and Balkan routes. At the moment it remains open, in the Middle of Mediterranean, the Libyan hub where Nigerians, Eritreans, Guineans, Ivoirians, Senegalese represent 90% of the 181.000 who reached the Italian shores in 2016. According to estimates, the figures of migrants wishing to move to Italy is estimated between 300,000 to one million.

## Debating points

- Is it possible (and how) to work with transit countries like Chad, Niger, Sudan for border control, strengthening their authority over cross-border tribes in exchange for development and technical assistance?
- Is there a need to bring the European refugee protection mechanism back to cases of unequivocal protection and to counteract the phenomenon of abuses of refugee status that harm both the countries of destination of the flows and the categories that are really in need of protection?
- Can this help to disrupt the human trafficking business model? The UE has adopted an individual sanction policy (asset freeze and visa ban) as an instrument of its External Action. Is the creation of black-list of individuals (European and non) who participate, facilitate and finance migrant traffic to Europe an option?

## III.2 The Libyan Quagmire and the Sahel – Mediterranean geopolitical corridor

**W**ith the collapse of Libya, the borders of the Mediterranean region have virtually been relocated thousands of kilometres Southern. Its edges shifted from Suez to Cape Guardafui, from Gibraltar to Cape Lopez. The enlarged Mediterranean become reality and the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea regions are now descending into the Mediterranean Sea. Paradoxically, this expansion of the Mediterranean didn't happen along the maritime dimension, but throughout the lawless and border-free "Sea of Sand" that once separated the Sahel's shores from the Gulf of Sirte.

Libya fragmented territory held by clan based militias and without an effective State authority has become the main gateway that bridges Eastern and Western Africa directly with the Euro-Mediterranean space. But the Libyan quagmire is a complex puzzle, very hard to solve and with extremely intricate transnational connections with other geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East and in the Gulf. Its pacification will remain a medium-term goal of European external actions. Meanwhile, it is important to separate the contrast to un-proportionate illegal migration flows to Europe from the most complex dossier of Libyan internal pacification and reconstruction. It may be necessary to split the Libyan migration crisis in its main external dimensions:

- Control and policing of the Libyan territorial waters;
- Control and policing of the coasts from where the migrants are embarking;
- Border control of Libyan southern boundaries from the neighbouring countries;

## Debating points:

Which are the best options for closing the Libya migration route to Europe?

- Financial aid in exchange of border locking: is this something possible and effective, considering both the human rights standards, the level of corruption and the collusion with organised crime of many African government? Is the EU – Turkish agreement a good model for cooperation? Can it be replicated in Africa in countries of origin or transit?
- The formation of African coastguard to protect and secure (both in terms of security and safety) the Mediterranean waters: this activity, especially in the case of Libya could be very effective in reducing the departures and consequently, the inflow of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa to Southern Mediterranean countries. In the case of Libya, this activity remains problematic due to the internal situation divided between camps and factions, where the local coastguards are subordinated to the militia and the potentates and their loyalty remains difficult;
- The opening of camps in North African territory: this idea has been supported by many EU politicians, (for example, the German Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maizière). This may be a good tool to put an end to the trafficking of human beings and to the juridical chaos of who is whom. In these centers the differences between refugees and economic migrants could be established; the sole fact that this process will be made in Africa and that those who won't be accepted as refugee will remain in Africa will enormously reduce the numbers we are dealing with. The main problem of this option is connected to finding a county who is willing and able to organise, with EU standard, this process. Which safe countries in North Africa can take on their shoulders this double economic and humanitarian burden? Which form of EU support is needed? Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, could make such agreements with Europe?

- The establishment of "humanitarian corridors": this idea has been promoted by the Italian government. Are they a real alternative to refugee flows or are simply humanitarian solutions for a small number of people?

### III.3 Italy and Europe in the grip

**R**ome probably remembers with remorse the Italian-Libyan treaty of August 2008, that included measures for the management of migratory flows with important economic counterparts. As early as September 2016 the Italian President of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Renzi, was exasperated about immigration from Libya to Italy to the point that, at the first post-Brexit European Union summit, he threatened the Union that if it does not enter into agreements with African countries, Rome will do it alone. The following month Italian President Sergio Mattarella reiterating Italian loneliness, complained that Italy was practically "abandoned to itself" to manage the Mediterranean "cemetery" of "despair".

The number of people disembarked in Italy are enormous even in 2017. In June 2017, the arrivals since the beginning of the year, reached 62.000, 17% more than the previous year, that was a record-year. More than 170,000 people are already living on state support welfare and this figure will grow to more than 200,000 at the end of the year. The cost of the migration bill for Italy between 2014 to 2017 reached 8.4 billion euros.

According to the Report of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Special Group on the Mediterranean and Middle East (October 2016) the Islamic State doesn't have only the capacity of infiltrating in the migration routes, but it may even seek more ambitious goals, like taking Italy in its grip utilising both the Central Mediterranean and the Balkan routes. While in the first scenario ISIS would basically exploit the illegal smuggling vectors for introducing its members undetected into Europe, in the second case the situation is worse, because they can also exploit, along the route, the already existing radical infrastructures present in Western Balkans, (Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia). In the recent years many Islamic countries have revived their vast campaign of influence in the region dating back to the years of the Yugoslav war. The process of returning of jihadi foreign fighters to Europe through the Balkan route,

taking advantage of the many regional criminal organisations, makes more concrete the risk of a new wave of Islamist radicalisation.

## Debating points

- What European Union and the NATO can do to support Italy's efforts to control and protect the common EU borders?
- Frontex and the Italian government have accused the role that European NGOs have been accused by Frontex and by the Italian government. How is it possible to continue to save lives at sea without it becomes a pull-factor?
- Is the Italian idea to adopt a procedure for preventing foreign NGOs vessels carrying illegal migrants and asylum seekers to disembark in Italian's shores, sustainable and can it be implemented?
- Is there a risk that the Balkans will become a new confrontation ground between religious radicalism 20 years after the signing of the Dayton Agreements?

### III.4 From the “clash of civilisation” to “multi-conflict societies” ?

In 1993 Samuel Huntington presented in a famous article on Foreign Politics<sup>3</sup> his provocative theory of clash of civilisations. The American political scientist affirmed that the new conflicts were going to be characterized not by ideological or economic divisions, but will take place along civilizational lines. Fortunately, nations didn't clash along civilizational lines, mostly because civilisations are not monolithic forces and because, more pragmatically, the national interests of countries belonging to the same civilisation very often do diverge substantially.

Twenty years later we have to admit that not everything was wrong in Huntington's vision. The idea that conflicts may spread along cultural and identitarian lines was an unappreciated precognition of the changing nature of world geopolitical drivers. Huntington underestimated the erosive effects of globalisation, that reduced the power of the nation states and blurred the cultural borders among different geographical areas. At the same time the processes of mondialisation created the highways for turbo-migrations that in short time changed the fabric of European societies.

Today in Paris one in three young people is of non-European origin compared to one in the thirteen in the late 1960s. In 2015 with 13.2 million, the French resident with non-European origin represent 20.5% of the population of metropolitan France.

According to PEW, one of the leading US religious-demography research center, in the EU 15+2<sup>4</sup> the share of Muslims in Europe's population will nearly double between 2010 and 2050, increasing from 5.9% to 10.2%.

In many countries like Sweden, Norway, Spain, Finland, the increase will be nearly triple. The same research underlies that, among many other factors, the increase will be the result of a growing immigration movement, since about half (53%) of the

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<sup>3</sup> S. Huntington, The Clash of civilizations? Foreign Affairs, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1993

<sup>4</sup> European Union member countries before 2004 enlargement plus Norway and Switzerland.

projected growth of Europe's Muslim population can be attributed to new migration<sup>5</sup>. The report estimates that there will be at least five countries in Europe that will not have any more a Christian majority population by 2050<sup>6</sup>: United Kingdom, France, The Netherlands, Bosnia Herzegovina<sup>7</sup> and Macedonia.

European societies are undoubtedly becoming less and less cohesive, losing their national character and splintering across minority identities, often along ethnic, religious or sectarian lines. The identities of Islam diasporas, their level of integration or segregation, or even their tendency to radicalism plays a central role in the forthcoming European ethno-identitarian politics.

France<sup>8</sup>, with a Muslim population that may be as high as 13,2 million (20,5% de la population de la France métropolitaine)<sup>9</sup> is a case in point. According to a survey of the French Institute of Public Opinion (Ifop) 46% of the Muslim resident population are secularized; 25% attribute great importance to sharia, but reject polygamy and niqab, just as they accept secularism; 28% have clearly adopted a system of values contrary to the values of the Republic<sup>10</sup>.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, according to a survey by the Knowledge Center, a third of Muslims do not feel as part of British culture.

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<sup>5</sup> PEW Research Center. The future of world religions: population growth projections, 2010 – 2050, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> The future of world religions, cit. p. 18. While Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina will have a Muslim majority population, France, UK and The Netherlands will have a majority of population unaffiliated to any religious groups.

<sup>7</sup> Bosnia Herzegovina has already become a non-Christian majority country. The first post war population census was held in 2013. The results, published only in June 2016, registered less than 45% of Christians (Orthodox and Catholics) and 50,7 % of Muslims. Agency for Statistics of Bosnia Herzegovina, Census of population, households and dwellings in Bosnia Herzegovina, 2013, final results, June 2016.

<sup>8</sup> It is in the arrondissements of North-East and Eastern Paris that there are the largest concentrations, 80% of non-European origin in the statistical unit of the Goutte d'Or. The largest in Seine-Saint-Denis where 60% of young people are of foreign origin in 2011 and 54% of non-European origin. See Michèle Tribalat, "The Progressive and Uncompleted Entry of" Ethnic "Statistics into French Public Statistics", forthcoming in *Outre-Terre European Journal of Geopolitics*, No. 51.

<sup>9</sup> The exact figure of the Muslim population in France can't be obtained from the official data since a law from 1872 prohibits census that distinguish citizens according to their race, or beliefs. Estimation using different methods go between 2.1 Million of declared Muslims to almost 15 million.

<sup>10</sup> We don't have to forget that in France there is also the voice of those Muslims who support a modernist development of Islam, like the great French thinker, Abdennour Bidar, who invites to a re-foundation of the religion and to an opening by the Muslims themselves of their religion, whose reform (contrary to Christianity) was only realized in the twentieth century but that it is now facing an increasingly assertive Salafist regression. These voices are, nevertheless, absolutely minority in the French Muslim intellectual circles.

## Muslim Percent of Population in Western European Countries, 2010 and 2050

Sorted by difference between projection scenarios *WITH EXPECTED migration and WITH NO NEW migration*

	% MUSLIM IN 2010	% MUSLIM IN 2050 WITH EXPECTED MIGRATION	% MUSLIM IN 2050 WITH NO NEW MIGRATION	DIFFERENCE IN 2050 WITH/ WITHOUT MIGRATION
<b>Sweden</b>	4.6%	12.4%	6.8%	+ 5.6
<b>Norway</b>	3.7	8.9	5.2	+ 3.8
<b>Spain</b>	2.1	7.5	4.1	+ 3.4
<b>United Kingdom</b>	4.8	11.3	8.3	+ 3.0
<b>Italy</b>	3.7	9.5	7.2	+ 2.2
<b>Finland</b>	0.8	3.4	1.4	+ 2.0
<b>Belgium</b>	5.9	11.8	9.9	+ 1.9
<b>Denmark</b>	4.1	8.5	6.7	+ 1.9
<b>France</b>	7.5	10.9	9.0	+ 1.8
<b>Ireland</b>	1.1	3.0	1.2	+ 1.8
<b>Greece</b>	5.3	7.8	6.1	+ 1.6
<b>Netherlands</b>	6.0	9.4	8.1	+ 1.3
<b>Portugal</b>	0.3	1.3	0.3	+ 1.0
<b>Austria</b>	5.4	8.9	8.1	+ 0.8
<b>Germany</b>	5.8	10.0	9.4	+ 0.6
<b>Switzerland</b>	4.9	7.6	7.4	+ 0.3
<b>Luxembourg</b>	2.3	2.3	2.3	+ 0.0

Note: EU member countries before 2004 enlargement, plus Norway and Switzerland, otherwise known as EU 15+2.

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## III.5 The end of multiculturalism in Europe?

### The risk of radicalisation and identitarian politics and their consequences for the Mediterranean political cooperation

In February 2011 UK Prime Minister David Cameron, speaking at the Munich Security Conference, strongly criticised “state multiculturalism that encouraged different cultural groups to live separate lives apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We also tolerated these different communities behaving in ways that are running completely counter to our values<sup>11</sup>”.

Few months earlier, in October 2010, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel has declared in a public conference in Potsdam that “the multicultural approach has failed, utterly failed” and that “the idea of people from different cultural backgrounds living happily "side by side" did not work”<sup>12</sup>. The same concept was expressed by President Sarkozy on 11 February 2011.

But when Europe started to dream about the idea of engineering multicultural societies? In Europe, the policy of multiculturalism was introduced some forty years ago by Swedish former prime Minister and Minister of Culture Olof Palme, who introduced a specific policy of non-integration of guest workers based on the “Freedom of Choice”. This policy gave to immigrant minorities the possibility to choose to what extent they want to preserve and develop their cultural and linguistic identities<sup>13</sup>, calling for the principle of cultural equality between the foreign cultures and the host country. Since then, Sweden<sup>14</sup> became one of the few pure multiculturalist country of the continent, but the multiculturalist approach has influenced, in different degrees, the other migration policies in the European Union.

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<sup>11</sup> BBC News, *State multiculturalism has failed, says David Cameron*, 5 february 2011.

<sup>12</sup> M. Weaver, *Angela Merkel: German multiculturalism has 'utterly failed'*, The Guardian, 17 October 2011

<sup>13</sup> Tawat, Mahama, *The Birth of Sweden's Multicultural Policy: The Primacy of Olof Palme's Ideas*, Malmö Institute for the studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, Malmö University, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Aujourd'hui est paradoxal que on retrouve dans la patrie européenne du multiculturalisme des phénomènes d'(auto)ségrégation par exemple par exemple à Rinkeby (à quelques kilomètres du centre de Stockholm) où la population d'origine étrangère dépasse les 90% de presque 20 000 personnes qui parlent le rinkebysvenska, soit leur suédois.

## Debating points

- Is European multiculturalism a failed model as Merkel, Sarkozy and Cameron have publicly said in 2010 – 2011?
- How is possible in multi-ethnic society to conciliate the respect for the different ethno-cultural difference without undermining the egalitarian principle of European laws and of the welfare states?
- The creation of transnational societies that are bridging democratic and non-democratic social systems is it consistent with the old European multiculturalism that was conceptualised inside autonomous and isolated societies?

## III.6 Tensions mounting across European Islam

The divisions of Islamic communities and those in European societies.

According to David Cameron's 2015 Casey report, 58% of Britons say that "there is a fundamental clash between Islam and the values of the country". According to Chatham House 61% (against 16%) of French people would approve a complete ban on immigration from Muslim countries. A poll by the Ipsos Institute reveals that 46% of French people say they are "annoyed" or "worried" at the sight of a veiled woman (87% in case of full veil); 52% do not appreciate, more generally, traditional Muslim outfits, the rise of this figure is mostly due to "left sympathizers". But above all: the head of the French General Directorate for Internal Security (DGSI), Patrick Calvar, in June 2016 produced a report describing a "civil war" in being in French cities: his organization believes that growing tensions between the "extreme Right and the Muslim world" have pushed France to the "verge of a civil war", and military confrontation among opposite radical group is possible.

This scenario is even more likely to happen since a party like the Front National, which may function as a shield against the violent extreme right has failed in the presidential race. But everywhere in some parts of Europe the tension between radical Islam and radical right is increasing. In Germany, it can be measured by the number of attacks against refugees and refugee homes: 3,533 in 2016. And from the warning of the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) against the interpenetration between the party Alternative für Deutschland and the French identity bloc. In Scandinavia, it can be recorded the rise of militias like the "Soldiers of Odin" who want to return Sweden to the Swedes. A Baroque geopolitical turnaround is taking place in French Corse, where the local separatist are threatening to take over the sovereign function of security from the State and to attack the "Salafists" if the French state is not able to prevent their rise.

## Debating points

- European public opinion shares the point of view of David Cameron and Angela Merkel that the European multiculturalist project has come to an end?
- How to deal with opposing views in democratic systems, such as the one of the Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, which puts the wearing of the veil as doctrinal?
- More generally, how is possible to reconcile the dissemination of Islamic courts - with parallel jurisprudence based on Sharia law as in London, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester and Nuneaton - with European constitutions and rule of law systems?

### III.7 New Europe and New walls: the question of sovereignty and identity

The Commission has launched an infringement procedure against Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic who refused to admit asylum seekers under the "relocation" rule, the quota system adopted in September 2015 to relieve Italy and Greece from the demographic pressure. However, even if the Juncker team expected 160,000 relocations over two years, the twenty-eight managed to accommodate around 20.000 persons and Brussels couldn't hide the extent of the failure. Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg Foreign Minister, may well claim that Poland would not enter the Union today because it is failing to comply with the Copenhagen criteria and that Hungary is a champion of embezzlement of the rule of law. But behind these legal confrontations there are two fundamental geopolitical issues that must be highlighted:

- *The issue of sovereignty.* The European countries of the Center and East-Europe share a representation of EU as doubly flawed: it encroaches on their sovereignty (the "diktat" of Brussels) without protecting them against the imperial impulses of Moscow. Are they completely isolated? Austria announced at the end of March 2017 that it will ask to be exempted from the reception of migrants within the framework of the distribution between EU countries. A Similar process is happening in Cyprus when, as early as 2014, Greek Cypriots changed their legislation: applicants for subsidiary protection can no longer invoke the right to family reunification. In Eastern Europe, the Budapest Parliament adopted on March 7 a law reinstating the systematic detention of migrants who enter Hungarian territory pending a decision on their status while the European Union calls for respect for its humanitarian "principles", Budapest is building a second anti-migrant barrier parallel to the already existing barbed wire. While MEP György Schöpflin says that

"Hungary does not want to become multicultural" and recalls that 70% of immigrants are economic migrants and regrets significantly that Western European countries do not consider more seriously its proposal to install refugee camps in Africa to stem the flow of migrants upstream.

- *The question of identity.* The Polish case remains from this point of view the most explicit. The prevailing idea in the PiS (Law and Justice) is that the ideology of political correctness forbids in the Western European countries to discuss of possible links between Islam and terrorism; if Poland has so far been spared by "Manchester" style events, it is because Warsaw has so far resisted to European pressure and its political correct ideology. According to the latest polls, 70% of Poles are opposed to the reception of refugees coming from Muslim countries, while two-thirds of the population speaks more generally against the impact that immigration has on security, employment and "national culture". A referendum on immigration may be conducted in parallel with the next elections in 2019. The question of identity of Eastern Europe should be read also in the background of the process of demographic desertification of the so called New Europe. In 1990's Eastern Europe had 310 million people. In 2016 the population of the countries of the region has decreased to 292. A reduction of 18 million people, like the population of the Netherlands.

### III.8 A new Euro-African Commonwealth?

**T**he project of creating a great Euro-African Commonwealth was present in the original French plan of the Union pour la Méditerranée (UpM). Now, ten years after, the idea of a trans-Mediterranean Commonwealth between Europe and the Arab-Islamic countries based on common geopolitical interests should be fine-tuned to the many changes and lessons learned of the last decade.

Among them, the need to resolve cooperatively the problem of human smuggling and illegal migration remains of primary importance. This should become a specific new priority area of UpM that includes the humanitarian aid to migrants and refugees with EU assistance and standards, the cooperation in border management and the protection of the vulnerable migrant groups, like women and children. An active cooperation in the fight against human smuggling and trafficking cartels across the Sahara Desert will be another future cooperation priority.

Apart from this new emergency, the Southern Mediterranean countries must refocus on a new model of modernisation and economic development where Europe remains a strategic partner but not necessarily a socio-economic model. This remains the best way how Europe can help its Southern Mediterranean partners. Unfortunately, in the past, the Eurocentric approach to democratisation has produced many mistakes on the political or economic level, including “regime change” and “democracy export” policies. A greater effort must also be attempted by the European countries for a better understanding of the nature of Muslim societies and the basic features of Islam, that may be not fully compatible with EU cultural, political and institutional models. Only a modernisation based on autochthonous cultural models grounded in the Islamic values and tradition will be accepted by all the segments of the society and it can be considered a stabilising political factor.

The new Euro-Africa cooperation should take into considerations the lessons learned from the Arab Spring and it should therefore adopt a more flexible democracy

promotion strategy, paying more attention to listening to local visions and sensitivities. This may imply limiting the external actions promoting social-changes and the support of Western style NGOs.

### **Debating points**

- How the Arab Spring has affected the Euro – Mediterranean project?
- Many people talk about a new “Marshal Plan” for the Mediterranean and Africa. How can this be sustained in the present European economic situation? How development and modernisation will increase the stability of the Mediterranean society and reduce the illegal migration flow towards Europe?
- Are the countries of Southern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa capable of using efficiently the development aids?

## IV. The senses of speakers' points of view



## Hassan Abouyoub

Ambassador of Morocco to Italy, Former Minister of Commerce and Investments.

The main message of Ambassador Abouyoub was that the present migration crisis in the Mediterranean has overshadowed the many unsolved problems of the region. Problems with profound historical roots that the Mediterranean countries decided to put in their multilateral agenda with optimism and a certain degree of determination more than twenty years ago, at the beginning of the nineties. Although the level of inclusiveness of

the Barcelona process was not impeccable – Morocco had difficulties in being included in the process and succeeded only for the determination of Spain – its geopolitical framework was encouraging due to the positive developments in the Israeli – Palestinian peace talks. Unfortunately, the idea of creating a common space of shared prosperity in the Mediterranean couldn't survive to the killing of Rabin and the explosion in terrorist attacks that followed it. The death of Rabin was the death of the Barcelona spirit.

The Union for the Mediterranean is a similar attempt to give a political answer to the sense of frustration that arises from the stalemate and protracted crisis in the Mediterranean region. But its nature and real political motivation is also connected to some dynamics arising from French internal politics, namely the importance of the ethnic vote of the French Maghreb citizens for Nicolas Sarkozy. This French internal dimension has configured the UPM initiative as a mostly unilateral project, producing problems with Germany that increased the contraposition between two different EU external dimensions, in the East and in the South.

This rift has contributed to keep low the strategic ambition of UPM, that is only a parody of the European Union and is mostly limited to the coordination of some infrastructural projects among the participant countries. These are still important initiatives, but they remain well below the necessary actions that could reduce the magnitude of the migration flows toward Europe.

Today EU neighbourhood policy towards the Mediterranean is mostly an exercise of rhetoric. And, compared to the past, it appears that today it will be even more and more difficult to increase the level of strategic ambition. In the present situation of the Mediterranean, in fact, it is even more challenging to put all the countries around a multilateral table in order to commit themselves to real integration policies, because some countries have meanwhile failed while others are failing and are steadfastly directed toward this end status. We have probably to admit that the Southern Mediterranean shore is not capable of entering into a new negotiation with the EU over Mediterranean integration. And, at the same time, EU has many doubts on how far to push a political integration with the countries of the Mediterranean region, therefore governance, human rights and democracy are used as conditions to be achieved before strengthening the political relations. This situation represents a problem especially for the EU Mediterranean countries, like Italy that it won't be able to reach again a growth over 1% of GDP if it doesn't open its economy to the countries of the Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The level of marginality of the Euro-Mediterranean dossier in European politics is evident from the fact that no European political party has included the Mediterranean as a focal point of its political program.

**M**inister Granara concentrated his exposition on the salient features of the Euro-Mediterranean Union, which is currently the main diplomatic tool to foster political-economic relations between the various countries bordering the Mediterranean basin.

### **Enrico Granara**

Euro-Mediterranean Multilateral  
Activities Coordinator at the Italian  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and  
International Cooperation

First of all – he warned – we need to look at the diplomatic tools for what they are, trying to push the countries that produced them to work to take the best out of them. Certainly, the Union for the Mediterranean has some constituent defects, but if it were not existing it would certainly have to be invented, as it is one of the few regional multilateral instruments we, the only one with a capacity to address transnational problems even in a crisis context.

UpM was reconfigured after 2011 changes and, even after that, it has only a positive agenda. The spectrum of the countries involved is vast: 43 member states, 28 Europeans, 11 Arab League plus Turkey, Israel and the Balkan countries. It is a very large area of 750,000,000 million inhabitants, the so called enlarged Mediterranean region.

One peculiarity of UpM is that it includes not only the riparian countries of the EU, but of the whole Union, including non-Mediterranean countries, giving therefore a truly European dimension to the EU's external policy towards the Mediterranean. One of the pillars of UpM is co-ownership and the priority to those projects that can have an impact on improving directly the economic standards of the local communities.

The original UpM architecture is now more than 20 years old, since it was originally launched in Barcelona in 1995 and the aim was to make the Mediterranean a space of peace, health and safety through a political dialogue supported by forms of financial economic collaboration to overcome the lack of integration between the two shores of

the Mediterranean. The problem of lack of Euro non-integration should not only be seen in relation to the North-South economic relations, but mostly in the South-South cooperation, since less than 2% of the total exchange takes place between the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

Despite the successes in some areas, the Barcelona Process has been penalized by some factors, such as the permanence of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The economic crisis of European countries after 2007 added a further level of criticality to the UpM, as well as the explosion of the upheavals of the so-called Arab Spring that followed four years after.

**H**ervé Juvin's speech had its focus on the geopolitical concept of "new Mediterranean", which according to him should be introduced as a starting and observation point, in the light of the fact that, today, it is almost impossible to speak of the Mediterranean as a unitary space.

### **Hervé Juvin**

French writer and essayist

The Mediterranean of today is primarily a Sea incorporated in the great transnational flows of globalization, as evidently plasticized by the presence, for the first time in history, even of a Chinese military fleet in the Mediterranean; this new military presence should be read together with the development of the mega-project of integrated trans-continental logistics called “one-belt, one-road”, as well as the acquisition by Beijing of important

logistic assets in the strategic ports of the Mediterranean, such Piraeus;

The enlargement of the Mediterranean didn't happen only toward Asia but also toward Africa. The traditional geopolitical separation of a North Mediterranean Africa and a Sub-Saharan South Africa has almost ended. The Sahara no longer divides Africa into two parts. As demonstrated by the migrant crisis, a large number of Sub-Saharan African countries also gravitate demographically on the geopolitical space of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean had now become a sea in which the whole of Africa is present.

The French geographer Lacoste speaks of the “Mediterraneans”, using the plural, including the Black Sea and the Red Sea. But today this is not enough. We must enlarge the Mediterranean also in other directions. Drawing a vertical line from the Mediterranean across the Sahara that arrives to the Great Lakes

region. While a second, West-East line, unites central Africa with the territories beyond the Red Sea, the Arabian Peninsula and beyond the Middle East to Pakistan.

Another point of reflection proposed by Juvin concerns the marginalization in the common European foreign policy of the Mediterranean policies of the countries of southern Europe. For example, the interests of France in the Mediterranean are much wider than those of the European Union, limited to the concept of good neighborly relations according the various initiatives such as Barcelona or UpM. The same can be said for countries such as Italy and Spain or Great Britain who have an African outreach bigger than that of EU. This geopolitical impoverishment of EU was caused by the emergence of an idea of Europe built without a significant Southern geopolitical vision, because of the prevalence of the vision of Germany: a country that does not have a true vision and tradition of a Mediterranean policy, except for the relationship with Turkey.

Also for this, prevailing continental vision of the European Union, the plan of the UpM has been sabotaged by Germany that has refused to support the countries of Southern Europe to build a privileged relationship with the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, probably for fearing that it may be the road to build a two-speed Europe. Europe has thus shrunk towards the North, towards the Baltic, cutting the heritage of historical and cultural relations of which Mediterranean European countries were bearers.

Today, however, the geopolitical question of Africa is emerging even if you want to avoid it. It is contained in the figures of its uncontrolled population explosion. 50 years ago, sub-Saharan Africa was half of the European population. Today its population is heading to become three times the European population. There are African countries whose population grows 3-4% a year, each year, but which continue to maintain rates of economic

development around zero or a little higher. These imbalances will soon lead to tens of millions of migrants, perhaps hundreds, marching towards Europe.

In this sufficiently critical context, we should not forget the destructive and destabilizing action from the outside that have been caused by US foreign policy, starting with the conflict in Iraq and continuing with the project of the Greater Middle East, up to the most recent destabilization action in countries such as Syria or Libya.



Professor Michel Korinman began his speech by anticipating three points of method, considered a necessary preliminary step when, in a public conference, sensitive issues such as geopolitics and migration problems are addressed.

**Michel Korinman**

Professor Emeritus of Geopolitics at  
Sorbonne University

First of all, there is the need to be able to carry out constructive discussions between the different positions and therefore we must avoid making the field of geopolitical discussion a field of confrontation between radically opposing positions. This is because, as we know, there are no universal truths in these fields, but we must rather try to make the effort to put ourselves within the point of view of the different

observers and try to understand their visions of reality.

Secondly, it is certainly useful to describe how techno-structures such as UpM are made and how they work, as well as describing them from a functional point of view, but we must also make the effort to grasp the historical and geopolitical meaning of these initiatives. And in the case of the UpM, we need to reflect on what the UPM wanted to be and the time it was funded, ten years ago. The answer we would like to give is that it was clearly an initiative that served to create an alternative structure parallel to the European Union and which could respond to the pressing questions of some Maghreb countries, such as Morocco, to be included in the projects of enlargement of the European Union.

Thirdly, we cannot reduce today's Mediterranean to a migration problem, even if today we have to admit that the issue of migration and transfer of populations to the Mediterranean is "the" problem of politics and geopolitics of the present day. But the

strategic issues of the Mediterranean are much wider: just think of the strategic question of ports and how many non-European actors have developed or are developing projects to build their own port and logistic projection in the Mediterranean. So, we don't have to fall into the trap of transforming the whole Euro-Mediterranean relationship into a debate between those in favor and against immigration from Africa to Europe.

Another aspect to which we must pay particular attention is to avoid the trap of geopolitical determinism, which condemns us to inertia as everything is already decided. This risk is inherent in those visions that speak to us of the years we are living as a second inevitable globalization, after the one that was arrested with the first world war in 1918.

On immigration then we must admit that there are different models with which Europe responds to this phenomenon. Just think of the differences between the numbers of people arriving in Italy and those arriving in Spain. Hundreds of thousands in the Italian case, a few thousand in the case of Spain. The Spanish model, substantially based on political and economic agreements with Morocco and the countries of North Africa, is based on a strong bilateral economic and political partnership, and it appears to work.

It should be noted that the migration crisis has brought to light a role of the NGOs we did not know, which saw them becoming the weak link, perhaps unconsciously, of an ambiguous collaboration with the traffickers of men. This model has shown the obvious limits of universal principle that don't take into account the overall meaning of the phenomenon and how the humanitarian principles can be exploited.

On the migratory question, we must accept that the classical definitions of who is a refugee and who is not a refugee today is somehow rethought, depending on the increasing confusion existing between the categories of economic migrant and refugee, as well as the old concepts of what is a safe third country and which extra-European country can be considered suitable to accommodate refugees going to Europe. This

leads us to believe that there is inevitable a great debate between "law and geopolitics", now necessary to redefine the limits of how international humanitarian principles are increasingly affecting the security of States and their geopolitical identity.

Finally, at the domestic European political level, it is important that an agreement should be made among EU countries not to exacerbate migration problems and not to bend them to the needs of internal and electoral politics, as happened several times in recent months, in particular with the "alleged" crisis. of migrants to the Brenner between Italy and Austria. It became clear to us that this "crisis" was the result of an attempt by the Austrian ruling parties to stem, thanks to the media effects, a possible victory of the FPÖ in the general elections.



**A**mbassador Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata began his speech by making a comment on how the attitude of many European countries towards Italy in terms of controlling migratory flows is worsening. In Europe, it is in fact rising an apparent hostile and closing attitude on the migratory themes, which produces as consequence a deep sense of abandonment from Italy, that is considered left alone to face this phenomenon. Obviously, from our point of view, this lack of solidarity and burden-sharing to stem a phenomenon with has also profound humanitarian aspects, produces a sense of irritation and frustration both in the government and in the public opinion.

### **Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata**

Ambassador and former Minister of  
Foreign Affairs

Some European countries appear to be on the verge of adopting a policy of no collaboration with Italy on migration issues because they believe that the European principles put the burden of compliance with the rules and mechanisms of the Treaties on migration on external countries that have to ensure that migration towards Schengen takes place in an ordered and sustainable way.

Italy must respond to this skepticism of our European allies and the only way to do it is not to accept the fate of the inevitable disappearance of borders and “liquidity” of space in the South of the Maghreb, but rather it has to respond to the lack of European solidarity - and some time hostility - with a more attention to the question of sovereignty and border control.

In addition to this it is necessary, and here Italy can make a notable contribution, to look for new the aggregating elements among the Mediterranean countries, to bring

out those factors left in the shadows that can give fuel a new process to create an identity based on a community of values.

More than 20 years have passed since the Barcelona process began, but today the geopolitical framework is totally different from the first half of the nineties. Of the many changes, however, there is a specific aspect that has become decisive, and that is the insertion of new protagonists, such as China, but above all Russia, especially after 2015 with the start of military operations in Syria and autonomous relations with the Libya.

Add to this the growth in power of Iran, with the entire Shiite world affirming their geopolitical interest in the Shiite crescent, from Iraq to Lebanon. In particular both the emergence of Iran and the return of power of Russia represent important strategic changes that alter the geopolitical Mediterranean space, also because they appear in some way to be converging.

Against this background of profound change, we must add the transformations that will be produced by the change of the American presidency which appears to have a clear-cut aspect of difference compared to the Obama presidency in the Middle East: the transition from a phase of containment of Iranian expansion to a roll-back policy.

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**P**rofessor Mujagic addressed the issue of Euro-Mediterranean development and cooperation from a specific point of you, discussing the role of the European Central Bank in responding to the problems of public debt of EU Mediterranean countries.

**Edin Mujagic**

Economist, The Monetary  
Kring, The Netherlands

His vision was mostly pessimistic about the role of ECB, and he implied that the negative effect of the intervention of ECB in rescuing the economies of Italy, Spain and Greece has resulted in weakening all the Euro-Mediterranean economic region.

Mujagic recognizes that the EU Mediterranean countries are not performing well in economic fields mostly because their vast national debt. Still, the rescue policies of ECB and the overall Euro-Zone mechanism of functioning has also contributed in

reducing their monetary option during the 2007-2008 financial crisis. In fact, the Euro zone system was created on three principles: 1) Euro was created as a project for success at any cost, without paying attention to the social and economic impact of this success; 2) The Euro system didn't include options for leaving the Euro-zone; 3) In case that some countries are not able to finance their national debts, the other EU countries can't guarantee their debt (no bail out clause).

Greece has used the loans to repay the debt it had with the European banks, and the loans were not used to improve the economic situation of the country. On the contrary, it was necessary to apply draconian economic measures that produced a drastic fall in the economy, with huge social consequences on the population.

Before ECB started its Quantity Easing, the interest rate that Italian government had to pay to have access to the financial market was 2.1 %. After the QE took place the interest rate fell to 1% only for a short time, increasing again at 2% soon after. The

same happened to Spain. Greece, on the contrary is outside the reach of the QE, that is also a paradox because it is the country in the most need.

On the contrary, the interest rate of Germany when QE was announced was 0,6%. It than fall below 0% and remained below 0% for a while, increasing again to 0,4%, with a significant reduction compared to the situation before QE. It means that countries like Germany, that they didn't need economic help, had more benefits from the QE than the countries that needed, like those of the Southern of Europe.

In other words, the fallacies of ECB mechanism in time of financial crisis is partially responsible for the general economic decline of the Mediterranean and it has also affected the economic and political cooperation among the two shores of the Mediterranean Region.

In his speech dr. Pallavicini has repeatedly emphasized the risk of instrumentalization of religious identity, that is a constant feature of many forms of jihadist pseudo-Islamist movements. The formalist dogmatism of jihadists is in fact a violent, superficial and bigoted attempt to recover a sense of their own values of which they have lost consciousness and they no longer have the perception of what their traditional roots are.

### **Yahya Pallavicini**

President of the Islamic  
Religious Community of Italy

This jihadist model of identity is opposed to similar extremist models on the rise of Western radical movement, giving us the feeling of the imminence of a clash among the two. In reality, the problem of identity misunderstandings between Islam and the West is not linked to a clash of civilizations but to forms of decay of both the two civilizations that are confronting.

To make the meeting between the West and Islam more complex there is certainly also the confusion existing in Europe between cultural / political identity and the ambition of economic cooperation. In particular, the world of European politics appears to be confusedly

towards the Islamic world, oscillating between a critical sense of distrust and denial of the cultural religious substratum of Islam and an extreme interest in high-level economic relations, in particular with Islamic finance.

There is therefore a fundamental cultural incomprehension in his speech the dr. Pallavicini has repeatedly emphasized the instrumentalization of religious identity, what are the forms of jihadist pseudo-Islamism. The formalist dogmatism of the jihadist is in fact a violent, superficial and bigoted attempt to recover a sense of his own values of which he has lost consciousness and no longer has the perception of what his traditional roots are.

This model of identity, is opposed to similar extremist models and Western radicals, giving us the feeling of the imminence of a clash. In reality, the problem of identity misunderstandings between Islam and the West is not linked to a clash of civilizations but to forms of decay of the two confronting civilizations.

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There is therefore a fundamental cultural incomprehension which produces political and economic utilitarianism, often producing a disadvantage to the relationship between the two halves of the Mediterranean. This simplistic model does not favor a dialogue between identity and civilization, because it is based on a confusion between homo islamicus (and more generally religious man) and homo economicus. The European Union appears to have built relations with Islam mainly around a vision of homo economicus, but this simplistic choice creates problems and confusions in the dialogue between civilizations, and partly also for economic development itself. In fact, for all religions - from the most ancient, Hinduism, to Islam - the identity of man is not linked either to its economic value or to its relationship with the concept of citizenship, but rather it is determined by the type of relationship that it has with the sacred and metaphysical, where man is a creature made in the likeness of God.

What defines identity in Islam is therefore neither the relationship of citizenship nor its economic value, but rather its ontological - spiritual value. Western and European disinterest in this nature leads to a misunderstanding between the "citizen" dimension and that of the "believer", which represents the main obstacle to a positive relationship between Europe and Islam and also stops the positive effects in terms of economic development.

The relationship between Europe and the Islamic world in the economic field, however, is also made of positive examples when it takes place taking into account cultural diversity. An example in this field is given by the activities of internationalization of the Italian agro-food chain towards Islamic countries, training Italian economic operators in all the requirements to adapt their products of excellence to local uses and customs so that they are compatible with the Islamic markets.

It is within this complex framework that the most difficult issue of all is included, that of immigration and integration. The types of migration flow between the Islamic countries and Europe we are experiencing today are very different from the flow of investments, to trade flows, to political-diplomatic relations, to tourism or to religious exchanges. These flows are mainly a massive phenomenon, constantly increasing, different from those that have been going on for decades. However, they often represent the flight from destructured social realities, in which the individual who becomes a migrant is forced to live for decades in societies where the minimum requirements of education, cultural and religious references, social-relational skills were lacking.

In addition to material shortcomings, this world that migrates to Europe is often lacking the necessary awareness of the meaning of key concepts that make integration in Europe possible, such as religious identity, awareness of the state, meaning of the concept of secularism, human rights, etc. The lack or deconstruction of these concepts is not a problem of language skills and it is not solved simply by teaching these people the Italian language but it is the result of a more complex and demanding integration work.



## 5.0 Conference conclusions

The many speakers that participated in the conference had different cultural, political and professional background but all of them shared a common concern over the future of the Euro Mediterranean cooperation and, above all, of the same Mediterranean political space.

They mostly shared and confirmed the approach that was proposed in the discussion paper, and mostly the need to reframe the Euro-Mediterranean political cooperation in an historical moment characterized by old instabilities and new emerging threats.

The following points can be considered consistent with the spirit of the addresses and remarks of all the speakers and they can be presented as conclusion of the conference

- Acknowledging that the expansion of the boundaries of the Mediterranean geopolitical space, both in the direction of Sub-Saharan Africa but also towards the Middle East and Asia, is changing the nature of the European role in the region, making insufficient the present level of EU commitment;
- Rethinking the Euro-Mediterranean institutional cooperation, upgrading its level of ambition as an instrument of regional stability and development and tuning it to the new global and pan-African challenges including, but not limiting to, the control of illegal migration trafficking and smuggling from Africa to Europe through the Mediterranean;
- Incorporating the issues of identity, statehood and sovereignty in the EU strategic approach to the global fluxes in the Mediterranean region in order to reduce the risk of identitarian tension and conflicts, including radicalization and xenophobia, straining the already unsteady intercultural relations in EU societies;

- Strengthening the EU Mediterranean posture and identity vis-à-vis the external actors (China, US, Russia, Iran, United States), elaborating a strategy for a greater participation and commitment of EU non-Mediterranean countries in the North African and Sub-Saharan;
- Taking into consideration the effects of the financial crisis on EU Southern countries and the failure of EU financial institution, who took over monetary competences from the national banks, to help in addressing the causes of economic stagnation;
- Recognizing the special circumstances under which the current Mediterranean migration crisis is taking place and its negative consequences on the Euro-Mediterranean political climate, as well as on the stability and cohesiveness of European societies;
- Avoiding the risk of over-emphasizing the migration dossier, overshadowing the many other threats and opportunities that are at stake in the EU – Mediterranean partnership.