

Europe in North Africa: Fighting Short-Termism

By Tobias Borck

Summary

Europe and North Africa are bound in a strategic relationship. The stability, security and prosperity of both regions are inextricably linked. European countries - both individually and collectively (inside and outside the framework of the European Union) - have to develop a more strategic approach to their southern neighbourhood in order to overcome the current migration crisis, work with the North African states to counter violent extremism, and make the most of the many economic opportunities that could derive from closer cross-Mediterranean cooperation. Yet, as North African countries are experiencing varying degrees of political turmoil, and Europe itself is occupied with internal and external challenges, there is a danger that European governments (and the EU) are fixating on short-term, tactical solutions that are likely to be ineffective at best, and have the potential to be counter-productive and damaging to both regions at worst. Despite the crises and pressures of the day, Europe therefore needs a more flexible and strategic vision for its engagement with North Africa.

Europe and North Africa are bound in a strategic relationship that extends far beyond the current migration crisis in the Mediterranean. Europe's stability, security and prosperity is inevitably affected by what happens within its five southern neighbours - Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco - and vice versa. This is particularly the case at a time when both Europe and North Africa are in the midst of a period of transformation and deep uncertainty that includes a set of complex and interlinking political, economic and security challenges. In confronting these challenges, the European Union, and European governments individually, are in danger of resorting to short-term, tactical fixes that have the potential to undermine and damage the long-term relationship with North Africa, which would in turn have detrimental long-term consequences on both sides of the Mediterranean.

This brief outlines the importance of a coordinated, thought-out, and - above all - strategic engagement

with North Africa for Europe (and this includes Britain despite its withdrawal from the EU). Only an approach that integrates tactical crisis response with long-term strategic vision can effectively confront the pressing needs of controlling cross-Mediterranean migration and countering violent extremism, while enabling both Europe and its North African neighbours to make the most of the many opportunities deriving from closer cooperation.

A Strategic Relationship

The list of important and difficult challenges facing European foreign policy makers in 2017 is long: a meddling Russia to the East, uncertainty in the transatlantic relationship with Donald Trump's America, the war in Syria, and the fight against Daesh all loom large. Without detracting from any of these issues, engaging with the countries of North Africa has to rank highly on the list of

priorities for European countries, both individually and - more importantly - together as a continent.

At present, North Africa's importance to Europe is most obviously apparent through the refugee and migration crisis in the Mediterranean and the connected threat from violent extremism. Since the eastern migration route via Turkey, Greece and the Balkans was mostly closed in early 2016 (through measures such as the EU's deal with Turkey), the central and western Mediterranean routes have once again become the main ways for refugees and economic migrants to try and make their way to Europe. In 2016, 181,000 people arrived in Europe crossing the Mediterranean from North African shores and over 90 percent of them went through Libya; at least another 4,500 drowned during the journey.¹ Over the first three months of 2017, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has already registered nearly 26,000 arrivals in Italy and Spain (plus 600 deaths), over 5,000 more than during the same period last year.²

Above all, these numbers represent the result of multiple humanitarian crises that European countries cannot ignore without betraying their own values and principles. But the refugee and migration crisis also has consequences for internal European politics. Across the continent, asylum and immigration policy has moved to the centre of the political debate - from last year's Brexit referendum in the UK, to this year's national elections in France and Germany. Right-wing, nationalist and isolationist politicians and parties are feeding off and stoking anti-immigrant sentiments. They argue that immigration further burdens fragile European economies and see their worst fears vindicated in incidents such as the terrorist attack in Berlin in December 2016, conducted by a Tunisian failed asylum seeker.³

This is where the refugee and migration crisis intersects with the security interests that drive European engagement with North Africa. For Europe, the challenge of countering

terrorism (CT) and violent extremism (CVE) has a domestic and an external dimension - and working with the states of North Africa is essential in both. In addition to the Tunisian Berlin attacker, Anis Amri, many of the perpetrators of the 2015 and 2016 attacks in Paris and Brussels were second or third generation immigrants from Morocco and Algeria.⁴ It is of course important not to overstate the threat from asylum seekers, or demonise communities with North African roots. But reports that Moroccan intelligence services repeatedly warned German authorities about Amri's ties to Daesh before his attack,⁵ underscore the importance of cross-Mediterranean intelligence sharing.

Europe also has a clear security interest in the domestic stability of its North African neighbours. Libya's post-2011 collapse into chaos and civil war serves as the most glaring example in this context. As discussed above, the vast majority of refugees and migrants reaching Europe via the central-Mediterranean route have come through Libya where the state is incapable of controlling the borders and human traffickers are operating with impunity. Furthermore, Daesh and other extremist groups have been able to exploit Libya's instability, at one point even establishing a substantial territorial presence in Sirte, and using it as a base to conduct attacks across the region, including the 2015 attack in Tunisia's Sousse, in which 30 British tourists were killed.⁶ The terror campaign by Algerian extremists in France during the Algerian civil war in the 1990s serves as another cautionary tale.⁷

While the refugee and migration crisis and CT/CVE interests are the most urgent imperatives for European engagement with North Africa, three other issues further demonstrate the truly strategic nature of this relationship.

Firstly, Europe has substantial economic interests in engaging with North Africa. Tackling the migration crisis is important to reduce the pressure on the economies of, in particular, southern European states. However, most importantly, closer economic cooperation across

1. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council,' European Commission, Brussels, 25 January 2017, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20170125_migration_on_the_central_mediterranean_route_-_managing_flows_saving_lives_en.pdf [accessed 4 May 2017].

2. IOM, 'Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 29,811, Deaths: 663,' 7 April 2017, available at: <http://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-reach-29811-deaths-663> [accessed 4 May 2017].

3. Spiegel Online, 'Thema: Anschlag in Berlin,' last updated 29 April 2017, available at: http://www.spiegel.de/thema/anschlag_in_berlin/ [accessed 4 May 2017].

4. Larry Buchanan and Haeyoun Park, 'Uncovering the Links Between the Brussels and Paris Attackers,' The New York Times, 9 April 2017, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/03/23/world/europe/how-the-brussels-and-paris-attackers-could-be-connected.html> [accessed 4 May 2017].

5. Hans Layendecker, 'Marokkanischer Geheimdienst Warnte vor Amri,' Süddeutsche Zeitung, 16 January 2017, available at: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/fall-anis-amri-marokkanisch-geheimdienst-warnte-vor-amri-1.3335160> [accessed 4 May 2017].

6. Chris Stephen, 'Tunisia Gunman Trained in Libya at Same Time as Bardo Museum Attackers,' The Guardian, 30 June 2015, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/30/tunisia-beach-attack-seifeddine-rezgui-libya-bardo-museum-attackers> [accessed 4 May 2017].

7. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, London: IB Tauris, 2006.

the Mediterranean offers great opportunities to both Europe and the North African states. Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco are all keen to expand their trade relationships with Europe; and for Europe, North Africa can be the gate to growing economies further south in Africa. Morocco, in particular, has positioned itself as a potential bridge between the two continents.⁸ Finally, Libya and Algeria have extensive hydrocarbon resources that could help reduce Europe's dependence on Russian energy supplies. Morocco is working with Nigeria to build a gas pipeline north along the Atlantic coast that could also reach Europe,⁹ and the kingdom is also one of the world's pioneers in generating solar energy, which could one day be sold to European consumers.¹⁰

Secondly, engaging with North Africa in a concerted and principled manner is important in order to uphold and maintain the credibility of European values. This includes the treatment of the refugees and migrants making the desperate journey across the Mediterranean and often suffering unimaginable hardship in camps on both sides of the sea.¹¹ But it also extends to supporting the nascent, but struggling, Tunisian democracy, encouraging promising political reforms in Morocco, and defending adherence to human rights, especially at a time when the USA, led by President Trump, seems to be less interested in such matters.¹²

Finally, having strong political, economic and security relationships with the states of North Africa is important for Europe's geopolitical standing vis-a-vis ambitious powers such as Russia and China. The former recently upgraded its presence in the region, extending security ties with Egypt and Algeria, taking a growing interest in Libya's crisis, and signing a 'deep strategic partnership'

agreement with Morocco.¹³ Meanwhile, China appears to have anticipated Morocco's role as a potential leading African economy and is investing in a \$10 billion industrial hub near Tangiers.¹⁴ Although Russia and China's presence in North Africa is not necessarily detrimental to European interests, it at least underscores that others are recognising opportunities in the region.

A Period of Change and Uncertainty

While the strategic imperative for European-North African cooperation and integration is clear, the development and implementation of actual policies is complicated by the fact that both regions are currently in the midst of a period of transformation and deep uncertainty.

As European policy-makers are looking across the Mediterranean, they see five countries on five very different political, economic and security trajectories. Egypt's economy is in crisis while the government of President Abdelfattah Al-Sisi is taking an uncompromising strongman-approach to dealing with the country's post-2011 political turmoil.¹⁵ Libya has collapsed into near statelessness with three different governments vying for power, and countless militias and a number of extremist groups operating freely.¹⁶ Tunisia remains the one bright spot amongst the countries that experienced regime change in 2011, but its young democracy is struggling with a weak economy and a security crisis that has seen several thousand Tunisians join Daesh.¹⁷ Algeria appears outwardly stable, but its economy is struggling with low oil prices and the deteriorating health of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika creates significant political uncertainty.¹⁸

8. Atlantic Council, 'Morocco's Emergence as a Gateway to Business in Africa,' 4 August 2014, available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/moroccos-emergence> [accessed 4 May 2017].

9. The North Africa Post, 'The Africa Atlantic Pipeline, Bringing African Gas to the Mediterranean,' 5 February 2017, available at: <http://northafricapost.com/16305-africa-atlantic-pipeline-bringing-african-gas-mediterranean.html> [accessed 4 May 2017].

10. Sandrine Ceurstemont, 'The Colossal African Solar Farm that Could Power Europe,' BBC, 29 November 2016, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20161129-the-colossal-african-solar-farm-that-could-power-europe> [accessed 4 May 2017].

11. IOM, 'IOM Learns of 'Slave Market' Conditions Endangering Migrants in North Africa,' 11 April 2017, available at: <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-learns-slave-market-conditions-endangering-migrants-north-africa> [accessed 4 May 2017].

12. Josh Lederman and Matthew Lee, 'Tillerson Calls for Balancing US Security Interests, Values,' AP News, 4 May 2017, available at: <https://apnews.com/7aff2131d7b4b10b2c84b89c721b6c9/Tillerson-calls-for-balancing-US-security-interests,-values> [accessed 4 May 2017].

13. Oren Kessler and Boris Zilberman, 'Russia's Charm Offensive in North Africa,' Foreign Affairs, 3 April 2017, available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-africa/2017-04-03/russia-s-charm-offensive-north-africa> [accessed 4 May 2017].

14. Morocco World News, 'Tangier: King Mohammed VI Launches \$ 1 Billion Chinese Investment Project,' 20 March 2017, available at: <https://www.morocroworldnews.com/2017/03/211612/tangier-king-mohammed-vi-launch-largest-chinese-investment-project-north-africa/> [accessed 4 May 2017].

15. Steven Cook, 'Egypt's Nightmare,' Foreign Affairs, November/December 2016, available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/egypt-s-nightmare> [accessed 4 May 2017].

16. Mary Fitzgerald and Mattia Toaldo, 'A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players,' European Council on Foreign Relations, undated, available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping_libya_conflict [accessed 4 May 2017].

17. Haim Malka and Margo Balboni, 'Tunisia: Radicalism Abroad and at Home,' Centre for Strategic and International Studies, June 2016, available at: <http://foreignfighters.csis.org/tunisia/why-tunisia.html> [accessed 4 May 2017].

18. Francisco Serrano, 'Algeria on the Brink?' Foreign Affairs, 27 May 2016,

Finally, Morocco is a reforming monarchy with a promising economy, but faces the challenge of translating high-level reforms into tangible benefits for its poorest citizens.¹⁹

Ultimately, change in North Africa has long been the expressed objective in European policy towards the region. Beginning with the Barcelona Process (also known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) in 1995, and continuing with the 2004 formulation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, the members of the EU have sought to coordinate and formalise their approach towards Europe's southern neighbourhood.²⁰ Throughout, the promotion of liberalising and democratising economic and political reforms were placed front and centre. In essence, although somewhat simplified, it is possible to say that the ultimate goal of these policies was to reshape Europe's neighbours in its own image. Yet, the dynamics of change currently at work in North Africa can hardly be considered to be in line with this intention.

At the same time, Europe is going through a significant period of uncertainty itself. The Euro currency crisis is far from over and many European economies, including those of heavyweights such as Italy and France, are struggling with slow growth and extensive youth unemployment.²¹ With Brexit, the EU is losing one its three most powerful members, which is also one of Europe's most competent and active foreign political actors. Anti-EU sentiments are growing in other countries too, mixing with populist and anti-globalist forces. Even after the presidential elections in France, the future political direction of the country remains highly uncertain. Finally, Germany is caught between trying to hold the EU together, while becoming increasingly occupied with its own national elections, which will take place in September this year. Meanwhile, the spectre of Russian attempts to influence and undermine political debates everywhere is looming large.²² In sum, this means that in early 2017, Europe is a primarily inward-looking continent.

available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/algeria/2016-05-27/algeria-brink> [accessed 4 May 2017].

19. International Monetary Fund, 'Morocco: Selected Issues,' IMF Country Report No. 17/65, March 2017.

20. European External Action Service, 'Middle East and North Africa,' last updated 6 June 2016, available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/336/middle-east-and-north-africa-mena_en [accessed 4 May 2017].

21. OECD, 'Youth Unemployment Rate,' July 2016, available at: <https://data.oecd.org/unemp/youth-unemployment-rate.htm> [accessed 4 May 2017].

22. Becky Branford, 'Information Warfare: Is Russia Really Interfering in European States?' BBC, 31 March 2017, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-39401637> [accessed 4 May 2017].

This sense of European uncertainty is reinforced by the lack of clarity in the transatlantic relationship, which has long been the central pillar of European foreign and security policy. The new administration's signals on its commitment to Europe have been mercurial at best; and in the Middle East, President Trump's embrace of authoritarian leaders and dismissive attitude towards human rights²³ seem to be indicating a substantial shift away from the generally aligned European-American approach to the region.

Beware the Temptation of Short-Term Fixes

Confronted with the instability and unpredictability of change in North Africa, and preoccupied with internal political, economic and security challenges, European countries, both individually and collectively, are in danger of resorting to short-term, tactical policy measures towards their southern neighbours. This is particularly the case with regards to the refugee and migration crisis in the Mediterranean. The political climate in Europe, particularly in countries with upcoming elections and where populist politicians and parties are on the rise, puts pressure on governments to adopt strong positions and deliver immediate tangible results on their controlling borders. However, the resulting short-term measures risk being ineffective, at best, or counter-productive and leading to further instability on both sides of the Mediterranean, at worst.

Working closely with the United Nations, Europe is amongst the primary backers of Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), which is led by Fayez Al-Sarraj and was established through the UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) in December 2015.²⁴ The idea was - and remains - to bring Libya's many political and armed factions together under one government, which could then be a partner for the international community in preventing Libyan territory from being used as the primary staging ground for cross-Mediterranean migration. Whilst a negotiated settlement and the establishment of a unity

23. Josh Lederman and Matthew Lee, 'Tillerson Calls for Balancing US Security Interests, Values,' AP News, 4 May 2017, available at: <https://apnews.com/7aff2131d7b4b10b2c84b89c721b6c9/Tillerson-calls-for-balancing-US-security-interests,-values> [accessed 4 May 2017].

24. For the agreement see: UNSMIL, 'Libyan Political Agreement,' available at: <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=miXuJYkQAQg%3D&tabid=3559&mid=6187&language=fr> [accessed 4 May 2017].

government is almost certainly the only feasible way to end Libya's ongoing conflict and stabilise the country, the GNA has thus far struggled to establish itself in the country. It remains opposed by other self-declared governments, is dependent on the support of several militias it does not truly control, and cannot shake its image as a foreign-installed entity.²⁵

The EU's insistence to nevertheless seek agreements on controlling migration with the GNA and, amongst other measures, training a Libyan coast guard (driven especially by Italy),²⁶ does yield the needed headlines for domestic European audiences, but may not contribute to the stabilisation of Libya. On the contrary: Al-Sarraj's presence at a European migration summit in late March, while his capital Tripoli was shaken by protests and militia fighting, only vindicated his opponents who accuse him of serving the interests of foreign governments over those of the Libyan people.²⁷ Meanwhile, it remains unclear who exactly controls the new EU-trained coast guard, which could ultimately end up as yet another unruly militia.²⁸

Similarly questionable are ideas of the temporary resettlement of refugees and migrants in North African states until EU-administered facilities in those countries can consider their rights to come to Europe.²⁹ It is difficult to see how countries such as politically and economically fragile Egypt and Tunisia (much less Libya) are any better equipped at hosting large numbers of migrants than European nations, or how their governments could explain to their citizens why they are allowing their sovereign

territory to be used for outposts of Europe's asylum and migration system. Such policies would not just undermine the stability of these countries, but also damage Europe's reputation the region.

Meanwhile, when it comes to the challenge of countering violent extremism and terrorism, European governments have a role in helping their North African counterparts in developing comprehensive approaches and strategies that do not let short-term fixes undermine their long-term domestic security and stability.

The case of Tunisia illustrates this necessity. The large number of Tunisians who have joined Daesh underscores the extent of the country's CVE/CT challenge. The problem is particularly acute in Tunisia's central and southern regions, away from the economically more developed coast. This is where the revolution began in 2010, but where life has arguably only become more difficult in the years since.³⁰ In trying to prevent further spillover from the instability in Libya, including the cross-border movement of extremists and weapons, the government in Tunis has adopted a heavily security-focused approach to the country's borders and adjacent regions. However, while this has reduced the number of large-scale terrorist attacks conducted by operatives crossing into Tunisia from Libya (like the Sousse attacker in 2015), it has also severely impacted on the formal and informal cross-border trade that has long offered one of the few economic opportunities to the local population. This approach risks turning these regions into mere buffer zones around the economic centres along the coasts in which young Tunisians have few alternatives to emigration, apathy or violent protest.³¹

Beyond Short-Termism

Ultimately, European (and North African) governments are under pressure to deliver quick responses to challenges such as the migration crisis and the threat from violent extremism. However, while effective tactical measures are undoubtedly needed (to stop the drownings in the Mediterranean and prevent terrorist attacks, for example), there can be no alternative to embedding these policies in a long-term, strategic approach to strengthening relations between the two sides of the Mediterranean. This is also

25. Tim Eaton, 'Libya's Power Vacuum Risks Heightened Violence,' Chatham House, 6 April 2017, available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/libya-s-power-vacuum-risks-heightened-violence> [accessed 4 May 2017].

26. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Joint Communication of the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council,' European Commission, Brussels, 25 January 2017, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20170125_migration_on_the_central_mediterranean_route_-_managing_flows_saving_lives_en.pdf [accessed 4 May 2017].

27. John Pearson, 'Libyan PM Faces Migrants Problem in Rome and Turmoil Back Home,' The National, 21 March 2017, available at: <http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/libyan-pm-faces-migrants-problem-in-rome-and-turmoil-back-home> [accessed 4 May 2017].

28. Kristiana Ludwig, 'Libyens Küstenwache gefährdet Flüchtlinge und Helfer,' Süddeutsche Zeitung, 16 November 2016, available at: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/mittelmeer-libyens-kuestenwache-gefaehrdet-fluechtlinge-und-helfer-1.3250197> [accessed 4 May 2017].

29. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Joint Communication of the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council,' European Commission, Brussels, 25 January 2017, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20170125_migration_on_the_central_mediterranean_route_-_managing_flows_saving_lives_en.pdf [accessed 4 May 2017].

30. Haim Malka and Margo Balboni, 'Tunisia: Radicalism Abroad and at Home,' Centre for Strategic and International Studies, June 2016, available at: <http://foreignfighters.csis.org/tunisia/why-tunisia.html> [accessed 4 May 2017].

31. Hamza Meddeb, 'Peripheral Vision: How Europe Can Help Preserve Tunisia's Fragile Democracy,' ECFR Policy Brief, January 2017, available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR202_PERIPHERAL_VISION2.pdf [accessed 4 May 2017].

important in order to avoid letting short-term security imperatives jeopardise economic opportunities that could benefit both regions.

With regards to the migration crisis, Europe should see the countries of North Africa not just as a partial source of the problem, but rather as partners that are also struggling to deal with the refugee and migration flows from Africa to Europe. Stabilising Libya is clearly necessary in order to stop the country from being used as the primary transit route. But Libya also needs help in coping with the huge numbers of refugees and migrants it is hosting - many, but far from all, of whom are looking to move on to Europe. The estimated 700,000 migrants currently staying in Libya³² are not just suffering immense humanitarian hardship, they also constitute a burden that the country simply cannot shoulder and that only aggravates its prevailing instability. Libya's neighbours are only marginally more capable of hosting large numbers of migrants.

Instead of talking about keeping migrants in Libya, or resettling them in other North African countries, the focus should therefore be on increasing efforts to help migrants leave Libya and either return to their countries or, at least temporarily, come to Europe. Bringing more migrants to Europe appears counter-intuitive at first, but taking pressure off Libya in the short term may be the only way to stabilise the country in the long term. Such steps have to be accompanied by policies aimed at helping North African countries to secure their southern borders and, most importantly, reducing the push factors in refugees and migrants' countries of origin. The German government's initiative of a Marshall-Plan for Africa³³ may not be the answer yet, but it is certainly a step in the right direction.

In the area of CVE and CT, the need for and value of closer cross-Mediterranean cooperation is evident. The above discussed example of Moroccan intelligence services warning German authorities about Anis Amri's links to Daesh ahead of the Berlin attack demonstrates the benefits of bilateral and multilateral intelligence sharing for all sides, but also highlights that current arrangements are not yet fit for purpose. Meanwhile European countries

should assist their North African neighbours in developing more comprehensive CVE strategies that go beyond robust security measures aimed at preventing imminent attacks and controlling borders. Technical security assistance and training for security and intelligence services are important, but should go hand in hand with measures outside the traditional security realm. This could include, for example, working with governments to empower local community initiatives and to amplify credible moderate voices that are working to reduce the appeal of extremist groups both at an ideological and a societal level. The UK's increasingly diverse engagement on CVE issues with the Tunisian government³⁴ can serve as a platform to build on.

Furthermore, effectively tackling the CVE threat in North Africa requires a focus on creating economic opportunities, especially in regions away from the political and industrial power centres (i.e. in central and southern Tunisia, but also northern Morocco, for example). Promoting economic development in North African countries has long been on the European agenda and a core element of the ENP. However, in the past this has mainly found expression in a focus on one-size-fits all measures such as market liberalisation and macro-economic reforms.³⁵ What is needed is a much more flexible approach that takes into account the unique circumstances of each country and can direct aid and investment into areas where it is most needed and most likely to yield economic and societal benefits for the local population. The EU's 2015 review of the ENP³⁶ is an important step in this direction, but more needs to be done.

Finally, as outlined above, the case for closer cross-Mediterranean economic cooperation and integration goes far beyond stabilisation or development imperatives. Instead, North Africa offers Europe economic opportunities ranging from ensuring and diversifying energy supplies, to harnessing the region's manufacturing and industrial potential, to opening up a direct link to emerging markets further south on the African continent.

In conclusion, it is clear that Europe and North Africa are

32. IOM, 'Libya,' last updated September 2016, available at: <https://www.iom.int/countries/libya> [accessed 4 May 2017].

33. Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, 'Afrika und Europa: Neue Partnerschaft für Entwicklung, Frieden und Zukunft,' January 2017, available at: http://www.bmz.de/de/mediathek/publikationen/reihen/infobroschueren_flyer/infobroschueren/Materialie310_Afrika_Marshallplan.pdf [accessed 4 May 2017].

34. British Embassy Tunis, 'UK Support for Tunisia 2016/17,' last updated 14 December 2016, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/uk-support-for-tunisia-2016-2017> [accessed 4 May 2017].

35. Muriel Asseburg, 'The EU in the Middle East and North Africa,' SWP Comments 50, November 2014.

36. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy,' European Commission, Brussels, 18 November 2015, available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf [accessed 4 May 2017].

inextricably tied to one another by virtue of geography, but also through close political, economic and security interdependencies that require a long-term strategic approach in order to effectively tackle threats and make the most of potential opportunities. The changes taking place in both regions make for a dynamic environment that requires agility from policy-makers, both in Brussels and in national capitals. In fact, Brexit means that European-North African relations cannot be confined to the structures of the EU alone. Despite its withdrawal from the union, the UK cannot shut itself off from the threats emanating from instability in North Africa, nor can it afford to forgo the potential economic opportunities of

a closer engagement. At the same time, the rest of Europe needs the UK's capabilities and expertise in areas such as CVE and stabilisation. All European countries need to recognise that ideas of quick fixes and fantasies of Europe as a fortress with the Mediterranean as its moat are unrealistic and ultimately counter-productive. What is needed is a clear strategic vision for closer cross-Mediterranean cooperation and integration that provides enough flexibility to account for the very specific interests and needs of individual countries. Such an approach is also the only way to uphold the credibility of European values and bolster Europe's geopolitical standing.

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