



# North Africa's Security Landscape and Its Mediterranean Impact

by Tarek Megerisi

European policy discourse often portrays North Africa as a source of instability, overlooking the reciprocal dynamics through which European actions contribute to insecurity across the southern Mediterranean. Irregular migration, transnational crime, jihadist networks and regional rivalries are not isolated phenomena but interlinked elements of a broader destabilising environment shaped by non-state actors, fragile governance and external intervention. The securitisation of migration has distorted policy responses, strengthened smuggling networks and conferred legitimacy on armed actors who exploit mobility control for profit and leverage. At the same time, proxy conflicts, authoritarian consolidation and socio-economic decline have deepened popular disaffection, fuelling further instability and migration pressures. External powers, notably Russia, the UAE and Turkey, have instrumentalised these vulnerabilities to pursue geopolitical agendas, eroding state sovereignty and regional autonomy. The resulting insecurity spans North Africa, the Sahel and Europe, turning the region into a shared threat and a missed opportunity. A shift towards development-centred, cooperative and multilateral engagement is essential to transform destructive interdependence into mutual benefit.



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To read between the lines of European statements, visits to and relations with North Africa, you would get the impression that the southern Mediterranean is Europe's noisy neighbour, the source of all the Mediterranean's destabilising dynamics and a disappointing alternative to what could've been a more integrated and prosperous region. The jungle threatening to invade Europe's garden.<sup>1</sup>

What drives this perspective is: The seemingly perennial crisis of irregular migration from north African shores towards Europe, intermittent active security threats such as jihadist terrorism or transnational organised crime crossing the sea, and the seemingly hostile involvement of rival powers in what Europeans consider their backyard. What the perspective of the officials and commentariats

<sup>1</sup> HR/VP, European Diplomatic Academy: Opening Remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell at the Inauguration of the Pilot Programme, 13 October 2022, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/421396\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/421396_en).



**North Africa's security dynamics which corrode intra-state relations and regional stability are driven by non-state actors**

that form European policy establishments often lack though are the environmental reasons which incubate such hostile dynamics. As well as the two-way street between Europe and North Africa, where European foreign policies help sustain that toxic environment while antagonistic north African dynamics help push Europe's political establishments to become more reactionary and reductive in-turn.

This paper will explore North Africa's evolving security landscape and analyse the wider environment which aids destabilising devolution, and considering what policy changes could neutralise these security threats and transform the cross-Mediterranean relationship from destructive co-dependence to mutual beneficence.

## 1 THE RIVER OF INSTABILITY

North Africa's security dynamics, relative to the threat perception of north African and European states and the Mediterranean's general stability, can be read bottom-up and top-down.

From a bottom-up perspective, regional security dynamics which corrode intra-state relations and regional stability are driven by non-state actors (NSA's) across different categories such as: Belligerent megalomaniacs like Libya's Khalifa Haftar; transnational criminal organisations, most notably smuggling networks; Or the rise of jihadist independence groups in the Sahel and the foreboding inevitability that their violence migrates northward, especially given close ties between jihadist groups and smugglers.

Top-down security drivers are shaped by the region's active conflicts, or cold wars, and the increasingly successful co-optation of the region and its conjoining neighbourhoods by outside powers for broader geopolitical struggles, all in a messy interlinked manner. For example, Libya's cold war is a shared theatre with Sudan's civil war, as non-state actors from both countries also: Feed Sahelian instability; irregular migration into Europe; and European divisions over energy. All with involvement from outside powers. Meanwhile, Morocco and Algeria's cold war is being thawed by a spiralling arms race, encouraged by Algiers' threat perception from Israel's security partnership with Rabat, and the UAE's regional policy of which Morocco is a key partner. Atop this all is a similarly interventionist Turkish policy from the eastern Mediterranean to the western Sahel, and Russia's weaponisation of regional instability against Europe and the west more generally.

The way these security dynamics feed into and off of one another makes compartmentalisation impossible, instead they form a broader river of destabilisation spanning Europe to central Africa. The main tributaries of this river are illustrated in the following sections.



**Irregular migration is a prominent dynamic that fuels other destabilising security trends**

## 2 MIGRATION

Irregular migration is a prominent dynamic that fuels other destabilising security trends while hampering effective policy responses, primarily because it is a centre point of European conversations and thus policy towards North Africa.

This very European dynamic<sup>2</sup> gradually transformed what is fundamentally a socio-economic issue into a security problem. By securitising migration, migrants and refugees became a threat to be neutralised. This reductive perception led to the twin beliefs that borders could be closed to this threat,<sup>3</sup> and that allies could fight this threat at the point of embarkation to Europe.

However, these misunderstandings misdirected Europe's policy conversations and policy responses. Europe still needs economic migrants, lots of them<sup>4</sup> while a host of practical and communal reasons draw migrants to Europe.<sup>5</sup> Despite contemporary political rhetoric, European populations also aren't concerned with stopping migration,<sup>6</sup> instead rising economic rejuvenation and only caring about migration so far as it is uncontrolled. So, this securitisation does nothing to stop the demand for, or supply of migrants, but rather pushes migrants towards smugglers due to political restrictions on controlled migration, inflaming all the key issues.

As such European policy only exacerbates the issue of irregular migration. And in their quixotic pursuit to combat the migration threat, European governments counterproductively provide political legitimacy and capital to more traditional security threats. Notably NSA's seeking political, diplomatic and substantive support. This is exemplified in Libya where from 2017 smuggling groups leveraged European engagement to grow into hybrid interior ministry personnel overseeing Libya's counter-migration apparatus<sup>7</sup> while maintaining links to smugglers. A phenomenon professionalised in eastern Libya by the Haftar family with support from Russia from 2020

<sup>2</sup> Martini, Lorena Stella and Tarek Megerisi, "Road to Nowhere: Why Europe's Border Externalisation Is a Dead End", in *ECFR Policy Briefs*, December 2023, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=115665>.

<sup>3</sup> Toaldo, Mattia, "Don't Close Borders, Manage Them: How to Improve EU Policy on Migration through Libya", in *ECFR Policy Memos*, June 2017, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=3818>.

<sup>4</sup> Nielsen, Nikolaj, "EU Needs a Million Migrants Yearly, Says EU Commission", in *EUobserver*, 8 January 2024, <https://euobserver.com/migration/ar4ef23783>.

<sup>5</sup> Schrover, Marlow, "Chain Migration (Network Migration)", in John Stone et al. (eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism*, December 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663202.wberen592>.

<sup>6</sup> Faro Sarrats, Mireia and Tarek Megerisi, "A Cautionary Tale: Why the UK's Rwanda Bill Is Doomed for Political Failure", in *ECFR Commentaries*, 25 April 2024, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=121339>.

<sup>7</sup> Bish, Alexandre, "Migration Proxy Warfare: Exploring the Role of Non-State Armed Actors in Libya's Refugee Rentierism", in *POMEPS Studies*, No. 50 (March 2024), p. 79-88, <https://pomeps.org/?p=17521>.



**European policy has manufactured the market for what has become a sophisticated and highly lucrative people smuggling industry**

onwards.<sup>8</sup> Today the Haftars use migration management as a form of extortion, profiting from people smuggling through Libya alongside transnational criminal networks while leveraging the potential of stopping migration to establish relationships with Europeans like Italy, Malta or Greece.<sup>9</sup> This dynamic incentivises NSA's towards the migration industry as a vector of international engagement and legitimisation, while also helping make smuggling networks more resilient<sup>10</sup> by funding their hybridisation with state security entities.

By restricting the means for regular migration without engaging supply-demand dynamics of migration to Europe, European policy has essentially manufactured the market for what has become a sophisticated and highly lucrative people smuggling industry. Which in-turn feeds transnational hybridisation. This industry which serves populations across Asia and Africa, maintains embarkation points around the med, and nodes across European states, and is difficult to confront directly due to its transnational hybridity and fluidity. So, even when Europeans focus resources on closing one embarkation point, it is only temporary. As occurred again, when a migration deal with Tunisia in 2023 spurred subsequent spikes in crossings from Libya and Morocco.

Overall, the migration shadow economy only grows, and raises prices in response to European restrictions in a cycle of insecurity and destabilisation. As hysteria around irregular migration drives policy responses which empower north African political actors to extort European counterparts by posing as counter-smuggling allies, charging ever higher prices for ever more limited counter-smuggling policies. The continuing irregular arrivals then fuels right-wing political growth in Europe leading to more stringent, and expensive securitisation and externalisation policies.

### 3 NSA's – NORTH AFRICA'S MENAGERIE OF CRIMINALS, TERRORISTS AND PROXIED STRONG MEN

While migration is the dominant, if manufactured, security trend in North Africa, the non-state actors who exploit it are the dominant vehicle for the region's destabilising descent.

<sup>8</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "The Bear Who Came to Tea: Russia, Libya and the Kremlin's Playbook for Fragile States", in *ECFR Policy Briefs*, 28 March 2025, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=135582>.

<sup>9</sup> Saini Fasanotti, Federica, "Charting Risky Waters: Italy and Khalifa Haftar's Role in Libya", in *ISPI Publications*, 5 July 2023, <https://www.ispionline.it/en?p=134318>; Marsi, Federica and Priyanka Shankar, "The Libyan Militia Illegally Towing Back Vulnerable Refugees", in *Al Jazeera*, 11 August 2023, <https://aje.io/rkf9yf>; "PM, FM Discuss Greece–Libya Relations with Belgacem Haftar", in *Ekathimerini*, 8 September 2025, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/politics/foreign-policy/1280247>.

<sup>10</sup> Horsley, Rupert, "Libya. Hybrid Migration Systems Underpin Resilience of Human Smuggling in 2024", in *Human Smuggling and Trafficking in North Africa and the Sahel* 2025, October 2025, <https://globalinitiative.net/?p=42320>.



**Non-state actors who exploit migration are the dominant vehicle for the region's destabilising descent**

The evolving new body of north African security actors is built off the foreign-made breakaway armies Haftar's Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF),<sup>11</sup> and Hemedti's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan.<sup>12</sup> They're not only deconstructing their country's state-systems through conflict, creating waves of migration, but they're bolstering criminal activity, and setting a dangerous regional precedent.

These non-state actors leverage an almost carte blanche of financial, military and diplomatic support from regional powers to impose new authoritarian systems on fragile states undergoing precarious political transitions. The cost of that foreign support is state sovereignty,<sup>13</sup> best seen in how Libyan military bases are taken over, and its energy industry is repurposed for the profit of others, or how Sudanese land and gold is expropriated. On a grander scale this support denigrates the global rules-based order, as powerful international partners block any accountability for war crimes,<sup>14</sup> putsches, and even genocides.<sup>15</sup>

The precedent of impunity and utility of this foreign support for the putative 'strong men' despite the broader corrosive effects has encouraged a further spree of more successful putsches across the Sahel with Emirati and Russian backing. Here Hemedti in Chad and Haftar<sup>16</sup> in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are invaluable conduits of influence as a new regional (dis)order is stitched together. However, the increased weapon flows and criminal activity as these rebel actors seek financing while their foreign backers seek ways to profit outside of existing international systems only fuels the growth of other NSAs.

Sahelian coup governments publicly justify themselves as fighting terrorist insurgencies and European neo-colonialism. But without European anti-terrorism missions like Barkhane,<sup>17</sup> these largely incompetent proxy governments, are losing to jihadist groups.<sup>18</sup> A dynamic epitomised in the UAE transferring tens of millions of euros and several tonnes of weaponry to Malian jihadists in a hostage

<sup>11</sup> Fetouri, Mustafa, "A New King? The Haftar Dynasty's Challenge to Libya's Future", in *The New Arab*, 18 August 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/node/5815559>.

<sup>12</sup> "Sudan between Floods and War: A New Government Announces the 'Dismantling of the Old State'", in *MyJoyOnline*, 5 September 2025, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/?p=10032842271>.

<sup>13</sup> Mahjoub, Husam, "The Emerging Sub-Imperial Role of the United Arab Emirates in Africa", in *TNI State of Power*, 4 February 2025, <https://www.tni.org/en/node/18829>.

<sup>14</sup> "Libya 'War Crimes' Videos Shared on Social Media", in *BBC News*, 1 May 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-48105968>.

<sup>15</sup> York, Joanna, "Genocide Warnings 'Flashing Red' after RSF Takeover of Sudan's El-Fasher", in *France24*, 29 October 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20251029-genocide-warnings-flashing-red-after-rsf-takeover-of-sudan-s-el-fasher>.

<sup>16</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "The Bear Who Came to Tea", cit.

<sup>17</sup> King, Isabelle, "How France Failed Mali: the End of Operation Barkhane", in *Harvard International Review*, 30 January 2023, <https://hir.harvard.edu/how-france-failed-mali-the-end-of-operation-barkhane>.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, Will, "Aligned in the Sand: How Europeans Can Help Stabilise the Sahel", in *ECFR Policy Briefs*, 15 October 2024, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=128077>.



exchange.<sup>19</sup> The links between jihadist groups and separatists from the Tuareg tribe that span Mali, Algeria, Niger and Libya creates a permanent threat of their campaign travelling northwards. This is worrisome given the well-worn link between smugglers and jihadists,<sup>20</sup> Tunisia's latent jihadist population, and lingering remnants of the Islamic State in Libya.

Transnational criminal networks (simplified to smugglers) are the connecting layer over the various NSA groups and their international backers. Aside from the jihadist links they are a vital source of income for NSAs or putschist governments that have broken from the west and a key facilitator for the geopolitical goals of their new backers. They provide proxy governments valuable rents for facilitating their trade from humans to drugs,<sup>21</sup> while sharing in the windfall to their industries as powers like Russia use the region for fuel smuggling to escape sanctions.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4 THE INTERVENTIONISTS: THE UAE, TURKEY, RUSSIA AND THE CHAOTIC NEW WORLD

**North African security dynamics are clearly animated by outside powers**

North African security dynamics are clearly animated by outside powers. Whether that's responding to the weighty capital on offer for engaging with European migration policy, to the more invasive use of proxies by the UAE, and Russia to re-engineer the neighbourhood. A factor likely to continue spawning unknown security threats, as the region is reduced to a platform for broader geopolitical goals often enacted by megalomaniacal or criminal actors. This patronage and influence also becomes a replacement for local diplomatic or political problem-solving degrading regional autonomy and competence.

Following the invasion of Ukraine and the western response, Russia has stepped up its existential conflict, following a doctrine of trying to flip the non-western world into becoming an anti-western world.<sup>23</sup> This policy has been more successful in Africa than anywhere else, largely due to Moscow's Libyan equities providing: a logistical hub at the heart of the Mediterranean, military bases a few hundred kilometres from NATO's Sigonella airbase, influence over an African energy industry, a conduit to smuggle fuel and weapons into Africa

<sup>19</sup> Maillard, Matteo, "In Mali, Three JNIM Hostages Freed in Exchange for Ransom and Arms", in *The Africa Report*, 30 October 2025, <https://www.theafricareport.com/396791/in-mali-three-jnim-hostages-freed-in-exchange-for-ransom-and-arms>.

<sup>20</sup> Horsley, Rupert, "Libya", cit.

<sup>21</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "The Bear Who Came to Tea", cit.; UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011) Concerning Libya* (S/2024/914), 13 December 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/914>.

<sup>22</sup> Ha, K. Oanh, "The Odyssey of the Queen Majeda", in *Bloomberg*, 6 February 2024, <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2024-libya-russia-oil-smuggling>.

<sup>23</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "The Bear Who Came to Tea", cit.



for other proxies, and of course to smuggle their national wealth out. This has been weaponised against Europe through a powerful disinformation operation<sup>24</sup> that is turning hearts and minds against their northern neighbours and facilitating European expulsion from African countries and economies.

Russia's military first presence has been facilitated by the UAE, likely from their primordial shared experience fighting Libya's civil war on behalf of Haftar. Since then, the UAE has seemingly seen Russia as a more effective tip for the spear for similar policies elsewhere. Like Russia, Abu Dhabi is sowing chaos through Libya to the Sahel, looking to take control of local governments, replace them when they can't and then take control of key assets, carving out islands of profitable stability in a logistical and influence corridor from Puntland in east Africa, to Morocco's Atlantic coast. While Russia has been a key vector to militarily assert this policy in the Sahel, Rabat has been the soft-power vector for the socio-economic push in the western Sahel region<sup>25</sup> as Emirati money helps fuel a Moroccan influence campaign through the region. Much to the discontent of their pantomime rivals Algeria.

A relative latecomer to this neo-colonial game is Turkey. Their military support for Libya's government in the civil war became a marketing vehicle for Turkish military cooperation elsewhere from the Sahel to east Africa. Like Russia and the UAE Turkey retains its military airbases in Libya as a launchpad for broader African security policies and is using the dependent governments it creates for financial and geopolitical purposes.<sup>26</sup> Alongside this they are leveraging their influence in Libya to advance claims to eastern Mediterranean energy,<sup>27</sup> antagonistically to Greece, creating a dangerously volatile scenario that could end in multi-state conflict and catalyse Libya's collapse.

Separately from the broader geopolitical game has been a US policy to slowly advance a network of military-military partnerships,<sup>28</sup> including training in the Africa Lion programme as well as funding

<sup>24</sup> Brown, Will, "The Bear and the Bot Farm: Countering Russian Hybrid Warfare in Africa", in *ECFR Policy Briefs*, 22 October 2025, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=143722>.

<sup>25</sup> Yamani, Abdelhakim, "Morocco–United Arab Emirates: Talks to Finalise an Important Strategic Alliance", in *Atalayar*, 15 May 2025, <https://www.atalayar.com/en/opinion/abdelhakim-yamani/morocco-united-arab-emirates-talks-to-finalise-an-important-strategic-alliance/20250515172714214766.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Kenez, Levent, "Turkey–Libya Agreement Grants Turkish Forces Expansive Operational Freedoms and Legal Immunity", in *Nordic Monitor*, 16 August 2024, <https://nordicmonitor.com/?p=31491>.

<sup>27</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "Are Mediterranean Gas Fields Gold Mines or Volcanoes?", in *Afkār*, 17 September 2025, <https://mecouncil.org/?p=476164>.

<sup>28</sup> US Congress, *Statement of General Michael E. Langley, United States Marine Corps Commander, United States Africa Command before the House Armed Services Committee*, Hearing on U.S. Military Posture and National Security Challenges in the Greater Middle East and Africa, 10 June 2025, [https://armedservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2025\\_africom\\_posture\\_statement\\_for\\_hasc.pdf](https://armedservices.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2025_africom_posture_statement_for_hasc.pdf).



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and equip programmes, as its main influence vector in the region. While this is perceivable as a stabilising wave of institutional support through the region, it provides an independent source of unchecked funding and support from the world's superpower to military institutions that are often repressive, seek to dominate civilian governance, and become a vector for authoritarian rule that is crucial to maintaining an environment that cultivates breakdown, disorder and instability.

## 5 AN INSECURE ENVIRONMENT

North Africa's major security dynamics (proxyification, criminalisation and simmering regional conflicts) are all facilitated by the region's broader socio-political environment.

Popular frustrations at local political economies that were authoritarian, cronyist,<sup>29</sup> and failed to provide adequate services or opportunities for vast segments of the population, notably a burgeoning youth, triggered a spree of uprisings from 2011 in each north African country. While each uprising was context specific, the causes and effects were fairly similar. North African populations today are poorer, more nihilistic and more repressed than they were in 2011.

An Emirati-backed counter-revolution has fuelled the rise of new autocrats from Egypt to Tunisia (with two in Libya), who frame themselves as an anti-Islamist response. Raising the spectre that Islamist, potentially violent jihadism is considered as an antithesis and so oppositional vector to their violent regimes. The poor governance,<sup>30</sup> outright kleptocracies, lack of maintenance and harsh response to any criticism is causing states and nations to crumble. Whether literally, as in Libya where a dam crumbling washed an entire city away,<sup>31</sup> or figuratively as peripheral populations return to the streets in places like Gabes in Tunisia, where a phosphate plant is poisoning the population,<sup>32</sup> and even Morocco in a new youth protest movement.<sup>33</sup> As already seen this dynamic fuels local migration,

<sup>29</sup> Rijkers, Bob et al., "All in the Family: State Capture in Tunisia", in *World Bank Policy Research Working Papers*, No. 6810 (March 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-6810>.

<sup>30</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "Border Bargains Only Borrow Time: How Europe Can Stop Its Tunisia Rot", in *ECFR Commentaries*, 28 May 2025, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=138446>.

<sup>31</sup> Megerisi, Tarek, "Libyan Floods Reflect a River of Corruption and Negligence", in *New Lines Magazine*, 15 September 2023, <https://newlinesmag.com/argument/libyan-floods-reflect-a-river-of-corruption-and-negligence>.

<sup>32</sup> Amara, Tarek, "Hundreds Protest in Tunisia's Capital over Worsening Pollution Crisis", in *Reuters*, 25 October 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/hundreds-protest-tunisia-capital-over-worsening-pollution-crisis-2025-10-25>.

<sup>33</sup> Haouari, Meissa, "Morocco's Youth Protests and the Limits of its Governance Formula", in *Afkār*, 12 October 2025, <https://mecouncil.org/?p=476539>.



strengthens criminal actors as the youth look for employment, and creates autocrats vulnerable to proxyfication as they look for outside help to push back against popular unrest.

This insecurity can also express itself in different forms amidst the stronger state systems. As Algeria and Morocco seek to distract populations from failed political movements and a declining quality of life both regimes are becoming increasingly chauvinist<sup>34</sup> and seeking to divert popular frustrations externally. This helps justify increased military budgets, a vector of contemporary cronyism, and raises the risk of conflict. This trend is also applicable to more fragile states like Tunisia and Libya, and the unifying trend of this chauvinism is antagonism to Europe, despite it being the region's primary trading partner. As such, these socio-political trends continue towards fragility (which cultivates the previously discussed security dynamics) and more hostility within the region and across the Mediterranean.

## 6 CONCLUSION: SHARED THREATS, SHARED BENEFITS

The region's dominant security dynamics trend towards destabilisation and contagion. There are already unavoidable interlinkages in the NSAs, criminal activity, and foreign involvement, that is sowing conflict and the breakdown of norms from east to west Africa, through the eastern Mediterranean and across Europe. The region is becoming a shared threat, and a source of missed opportunity as its resource wealth, human capital and geographic assets could help bolster prosperity and growth on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Looking at the environmental conditions at play it's clear that any solution begins with development and economic growth to create the structures to absorb domestic disaffection and build resilience against criminal or foreign predation.

So far Europe has been another destabilising actor and suffered for it. Despite regional vehicles like the Barcelona Process and Union for the Mediterranean, Europeans have often acted bilaterally. As individual nations scrambling to protect interests, Europeans are easily waylaid and subordinated to grander geopolitical currents. Be this France's infamous backing of Haftar's rise, or Italy's current role in Turkey's energy push in Libya, another Franco-Italian squabble in Algeria, Italian attempts to unilaterally stop irregular migration, or a Spanish-Franco divide in Morocco. A by-product of this has often

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<sup>34</sup> International Crisis Group, "Managing Tensions between Algeria and Morocco", in *Middle East and North Africa Reports*, No. 247 (29 November 2024), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/node/24835>.



been European support for strong-man politics despite the obviously deleterious effect of autocrats on state systems and regional populations, a dynamic that is becoming exponentially corrosive.

If Europe can change its foundational assumptions of the region, and its perceptions which seem rooted in colonial-era histories, towards viewing its southern neighbourhood akin to its eastern neighbourhood after the fall of communism, then European policy can have a transformational impact. The breadth of shared interests from energy, to nearshoring, to migration creates fertile ground for broader partnerships rooted in policies such as:

- Increased visa provisions for more controlled labour movements across the Mediterranean, and more taxable remittance flows back home. This could also undercut toxic migration debates, and help create real partnerships against smuggling.<sup>35</sup>
- Leverage the interest and capital mobilisation under the new Pact for the Mediterranean and Global Gateway to advance broader 'offers' to North Africa, parcelling together desired European energy and industrial investments to leverage regulation and governance changes that can help develop more stable, predictable and thus growth inducing economies.

While development-led policies such as the above can help create stronger relationships, and cultivate dynamics that undercut the current destabilising environment, all parties will have to deal with the new era of corsair interventions by regional powers. This strengthens the argument for closer trans-Mediterranean, political and diplomatic partnerships that can collaborate to close avenues for interventions and provide better diplomatic support on the world-stage and at multilateral forums. Whether this translates to supporting the United States to defuse the Morocco-Algerian rivalry before it explodes, or channelling meaningful, concerted and coherent support to the UN Support Mission in Libya, Europeans must recognise the imperative to stabilise their neighbourhood as the world seemingly trends towards discord. And Europe's greatest tools remain its single market, and ability to rally coalitions of states in support of multilateralism and normative politics. Two tools that North Africa, and the conjoining regions of instability, desperately need.

<sup>35</sup> Martini, Lorena Stella and Tarek Megerisi, "Road to Nowhere", cit.



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