Euro-Mediterranean Relations in the Field of Migration Management: Contrasting the cases of Morocco and Turkey

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DOI: 10.4000/books.ifeagd.1868
Publisher: Institut français d'études anatoliennes
Place of publication: Istanbul
Year of publication: 2016
Published on OpenEdition Books: 12 July 2016
Serie: La Turquie aujourd'hui
Electronic ISBN: 9782362450624

http://books.openedition.org

Electronic reference

This text was automatically generated on 12 January 2021.
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1 The Mediterranean is a symbol of life, conflicts, peace and history. It is blue for some and white for others. It is a place that throughout human history has witnessed vast diversity, mobility and instability. At the intersection of three continents – Asia, Africa, and Europe – the Mediterranean has always been synonymous with craftsmen, intellectuals, artists, and travelers’ mobility and encounters. Conquests, colonization, and forced migrations – from the expulsion of Jews from Spain to the displacements caused by wars with the Russian and Ottoman Empires – have marked the history of mobility in this place.

2 In the modern period, the region has known important developments, wars, colonization, decolonization, conflicts, peace processes, unions, cooperation, trade, and transformations of life patterns, causing increased inter-regional and extra-regional mobility. In the 1960s, Europe, once considered a land of emigration to the New World, became a region of immigration for people coming from many countries. The 1970s initiated a new era of European migration policies that put an end to the so-called “sheltering of the workforce” that had existed until then. These new policies have been marked by the closing of borders, the enlargement of the Schengen area to southern European countries such as Spain, Italy and Portugal, as well as the adoption of new security measures to control the entry and mobility of people and goods within the borders of the European Union (EU). In this sense, Mediterranean third countries began to play a central role in this strategy to prevent the “uncontrolled irregular” migration from neighbouring countries (Sempere Souvannavong 2011).

3 Therefore, a long cooperation process began and developed between the European Union and the Mediterranean third countries. The migratory issue has had and still has
a very important place in these cooperative processes. For the EU, instability in
neighboring countries provokes a great influx of immigrants to its territory.⁴
Therefore, the cooperation to strengthen the security and stability in these countries
aids in the reduction of migratory pressure on the countries in the EU (Lorca, Lozano
and Lajara 1997).

⁴ Since 2002, the externalisation of the border resulted in the EU border control being
subcontracted to non-member countries of the Union. Not only have EU borders
expanded since then, but the outsourcing process extended the areas in which security
forces can intervene. Frontex led the implementation and transmission of new
strategies to neighboring countries to control the border.⁵

⁵ Morocco and Turkey benefit from a privileged position, leading the list of the
Mediterranean third countries that are EU partners. In the last few years, each country
has independently developed greater collaboration and cooperation with the EU in
different areas, especially with regards to issues related to migratory flows. This has
happened through the signature of agreements with Frontex and through the “EU
Mobility Agreement” in the case of Morocco and the “EU Readmission Agreement” in
Turkey’s case.⁶

⁶ These two distant countries have a long history of emigration, transit, and
immigration, in addition to an increased interest in emigration. Moreover, remittances
from nationals living abroad are an important source of capital input and an
economical pillar in both countries.

⁷ Both Morocco and Turkey have declared that their new policies were prepared with
more consideration of the international legislation and with a new approach based on
the respect of human rights as part of their general vision for a global respect of human
rights.

⁸ The new and growing cultural diversity in these two countries as a result of
immigration represents one of the most important challenges of migration policies,
and puts a strain on national policies for managing national diversity in both countries.
The terms guest, transit or passengers are nothing more than excuses to deny the
receiving country’s character as a mixed nation. An immigration policy demonstrates
its effectiveness when it has a higher interest to include diversity, reconciliation, and
the respect for differences as key factors to increase citizen satisfaction.

⁹ In this respect, Morocco and Turkey both deny their “guests” permanent status and
need to open a more structured discussion of this new cultural diversity, added to the
existing diversity; furthermore both countries also need to develop new national
policies in different areas in order to deal with this diversity.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


NOTES

1. Reference is made to the blue sea to citizens from Western European countries and the White Sea to the citizens in countries to the south and east of the Mediterranean. In Arabic is used the expression The White Sea of the middle [al-Bahr al-Ābyad al-Mutarawṣīt]. In Turkish Akdeniz [White Sea] as opposed to Karadeniz [Black Sea].

2. It was signed by several European countries in Luxemburg, in Schengen city, on 1985, and it consists of the lift of internal borders among the signatories of the agreement. The citizens of the signatory countries, the residents of those countries, besides the people with the Schengen visa can travel freely throughout all the States that implement the Convention.

3. The Mediterranean Third Countries or MTC are the partner countries as the countries of Maghreb, of Mashrek and Israel. These countries are linked to the European Union through agreement of cooperation, which include trade, industrial cooperation and technical and financial assistance.

4. After the Arab spring, the arrival of a large number of people put the frontiers of the EU into crisis. Residence documents granted by Italy have been rejected by other Schengen countries, creating -in consequence- a major debate over the Union’s borders.

5. European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU.

6. “EU Mobility Agreement” provides for a series of initiatives, which are designed to ensure that the movement of persons is managed as effectively as possible.

7. A readmission agreement is an agreement by which the signatory States are committed to readmit its citizens (nationals), including the people who have transited throughout its territory, detained illegally on EU territory.

8. Here is made a reference to the Turkish word misafir meaning “visitor” or “guest” and it is commonly used in the media or in political speeches referring to foreign students [misafir öğrenciler] or refugee, asylum seekers and Syrians immigrants. This word refers to the temporary nature of the stay of these people in the Turkish territory.

9. Here is made a reference to the Arabic word Abir to sabil - غابر السبيل which literally dignifies “the passenger along the way,” a word commonly used in Moroccan society to designate sub-Saharan migrants. Refers to transit nature that does not belong to a logic of permanence or long term staying.
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Keywords: Frontex agency, immigration policies
Geographical index: Maroc

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"Guests and Aliens": Re-Configuring New Mobilities in the Eastern Mediterranean After 2011 - with a special focus on Syrian refugees