The Arab Uprisings and the EU.

EU migration policies towards the Mediterranean: learning to cope with "a Changing Neighbourhood"

Paper from the conference

The first year with the Arab Spring.
New political and theoretical perspectives on relations between the Middle East and Europe after the Arab uprisings in 2011

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Introduction

The Arab Spring of 2011 has challenged the European understanding of the Arab Mediterranean countries. Pragmatic EU support to authoritarian leaders, which had marked EU policies for instance towards Tunisia and Egypt, seems no longer to be a meaningful foreign policy strategy. EU leaders have – halfheartedly – supported the attempts by the Arab peoples of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria etc. to "rock the casbah"[1], but without a clear foreign policy vision and without a European consensus according to which this would be the obvious thing to do. The Arab Spring, however, is not only a question of breaking with authoritarian resilience. As implied in a commentary in New York Times, one of the unofficial ambitions behind the EU efforts is to hold off a wave of Arab migration toward Europe by attempting to provide sufficient economic incentive to stay home.[2]

As mentioned in this commentary, a recent poll in France pointed at a paradoxical but easily understandable contradiction in the way in which recent developments in the Middle East are perceived in Europe: "while the events of the Arab Spring were presented positively by the media, most people were mainly worried that they would mean even more potential immigrants."[3] It seems that the European public is in support of the democratic progress in the Middle East, but remains skeptical about the consequences if they include an increasing amount of immigrants. Migration is again becoming a sensitive issue in domestic politics within EU member states.

Shortly after the Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had left office and went into exile in Saudi Arabia, Tunisian migrants started to arrive on the Italian island Lampedusa, within a few days counting a population of several thousand immigrants from Tunisia, who were escaping turmoil in their country. The arrival made the Italian government declare the immigration situation a humanitarian emergency and raise the issue at the EU level. The reaction might have been exaggerated, as discussed by Leonhard den Hertog[4], but once again the migration issue grasped the media headlines emphasizing the European ambivalence: on one side the need for cheap manpower in the European labour market, on the other side the negative perspective: Europe "flooded" by millions of Arabs and Africans. The incidents with the Tunisian migrants at Lampedusa were in the media interpreted as a phenomenon which might threaten stability and security in the region.[5]

Within the last decade new developments have taken place in the Mediterranean regarding migration movements and policy reactions to this important phenomenon. What used to be a system based on a distinction between countries of immigration and countries of emigration has changed into complex patterns of continued migration towards Europe, transit migration through southern and eastern Mediterranean states and trans-regional, globalized migration.[6] At the same time increasingly restrictive immigration policies and external as well as internal EU securitization of immigrant groups seem to emphasize that

security concerns in the Mediterranean are not only a question of external security and North-South issues but also focus on internal challenges in the involved states and transnational developments such as irregular migration, cross-border crime and transnational terrorism.[7] The complex character of the migration issue also containing a wide range of security aspects raises demands for further theoretical developments aiming at understanding important social phenomena beyond traditional state actors, organizations, institutions etc.[8]

Security has become a key issue in EU policies,[9] and in connection with the institutional cooperation related to the Barcelona process and the further development of European-Middle Eastern cooperation, the political narratives related to overall migratory movements, immigrant groups, ethnic minorities etc. have changed. Before 9.11, the Islamist opposition in the Arab countries was seen in many European narratives as constituting a substantial and important part of the political opposition to problematic regimes regarded as authoritarian by the EU. But as a result of the securitization of Muslim immigrants in Europe and the pragmatic policies dealing with the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world,[10] the EU only reluctantly approaches oppositional movements and parties in the countries south and east of the Mediterranean.

This paper takes its point of departure in how changes in the relations between migration and security in a Middle Eastern-European perspective have gradually led to an increased securitization of immigration policies, and more concretely of immigrants arriving or staying in EU member states over the last decades. The paper will analyze how recent developments in Mediterranean migratory movements are dealt with in immigration and security policies of the states north of the Mediterranean. It will deal with Mediterranean migration as a globalized, but also regional and local phenomenon and the perspectives in European policies aiming at controlling and regulating migration movements, refugee flows and illegal migrants trying to reach European shores.[11]

Studies about European immigration policies towards the southern Mediterranean have often focused on the "fortress Europe", suggesting a more or less homogenous common European migration policy approach. This perception is being contested by the recent events concerning African and Arab immigrants heading towards Europe. The incidents have caused several unilateral actions by different EU member states and taking these events and the broader context of the political upheavals in North Africa as a starting point, this paper looks at disruptions within the EU-immigration regime towards the southern Mediterranean states.

Applying a political learning and historical institutionalism-approach, the paper analyzes how adaptations of national immigration policies affect what so far can be seen as attempts to establish a common European policy. Thereby the paper sheds light on the complex logics of actions of the EU migration policy. The relation between EU migration policy and national immigration policies is analyzed as a dialectical process of political learning, affecting both the national as well as the supra-national narratives about migration and security.

Lisbon, immigration and political learning

The political reactions to the Arab Spring at the EU level have been followed by a rather differentiated pattern of behaviour by the member states. The new EU foreign policy set-up, established on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty, has thus not decisively altered the status of the EU as an actor, which is characterized by the fact that the member states more or less perceive themselves as independent states pursuing their own foreign and security policy.

The Arab Spring is adding new dimensions to the role migration is playing in Mediterranean cooperation in the sense that what used to be a rather stable relationship between the EU and the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East is gradually changing into a new, dynamic and – due to the nature of the case – completely unknown reality, which seems impossible to predict and which might have serious consequences for the Mediterranean security environment. As pointed out by Roberto Aliboni and Fouad M. Ammor the EU and the Arab states over the years have developed a growing, yet mostly unspoken, consensus across the Mediterranean related to the securitization of oppositional groups in the Arab world. The growing focus on security has resulted in the construction of an informal alliance between authoritarian MENA states on one side and EU on the other with consequences for the foreign policy and security strategies.[12]

The changing Middle Eastern political scene leads to a potential erosion of this consensus and possible informal alliance. If the weak, but stable and resilient authoritarian states can no longer provider stability, law and order, the EU will have to consider if it is more appropriate to support the groups leading the unrest in the spring of 2011 in the Middle Eastern states. This is and will probably for years ahead constitute a complex and difficult political learning process, which already has started – as it can for instance be seen in recent documents and statements from EU leaders, which give tentative answers to the new Mediterranean challenges.

The theoretical argument of the article is that because of the specific political learning process related to the Mediterranean cooperation and the given institutional development within the framework of the policy instruments at the disposal for the EU, the specific political practices tend to promote a pragmatic and consensus based foreign policy. The Lisbon Treaty has moved important aspects of migration policy to majority voting and co-decision. This has consequences for the whole, broad range of migration issues which is dealt with in new policies developed recently in the EU system.

Immigration and the institutional development of the EU
As demonstrated by Desmond Dinan the development of EU's foreign policy can be described as episodic.[13] The changing of the treaties which constitute the foundation for the foreign policy activities, have taken place in a gradual process, often attached to a national context, where EU-skeptical populations in

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some member states have held up or postponed the development of the EU to-wards an actual union with more explicit state-like features. The EU is a federal-ist, state-like entity and the foreign policy of the EU might have state-like char-acteristics, but the EU is hardly on its way to developing into a full-fledged state. As Dinan convincingly predicts the EU will continue being an association of states, which recognize the value of sharing sovereignty and resources within a limited spectrum of policy fields, but continue to see themselves as integrated parts of an international system, where the individual state retains responsibil-ity for the main aspects of foreign policy, especially regarding security.

With the appointment of a political leader both as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and as the Commission Vice-President, it was the idea to create a stronger unity in EU foreign policy. At the same time and as part of the setup the European External Action Service (EEAS) was supposed to provide an efficient organization behind the new institutions and secure a stronger global impact. The appointment of a President of the Eu-ropean Council should furthermore contribute to the Lisbon-based institutional structure and together with the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, Catherine Ashton and Herman van Rompuy was supposed to form a leadership with formal competencies sufficient for launching a new, more ac-tive EU on the international political scene. However, the EEAS is not really in place yet and still the surrounding world will have to wait and see how this foreign policy instrument will develop. In addition, the latest agency meant to enhance Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), has more or less stopped its activities.[14]

The EEAS has declared migration as one of the strategic priorities in the for-eign policy relations of the EU and as a phenomenon, which the EU systemati-cally is "placing on the agenda of its political, economic and social dialogues with third countries".[15] Migration is thus, according to the official narrative of the EEAS, an issue placed in the center of external relations on behalf of the new institutional set-up after Lisbon. Official EU documents emphasize that migra-tion in the context of the EEAS is to be understood as a multiplicity of phenom-ena ranging from overall relations between development and migration in Third World countries, irregular migration, human trafficking etc., to integra-tion of immigrants in industrialized countries.

In a recent European Parliament Resolution related to the development of a common immigration policy the relation between immigration and security appears in a number of contexts. The document is called *A Common Immigration Policy for Europe*[16], but has a broader scope, which includes the security dimen-sion. This can be seen in the introduction, where both external and internal se-curity is touched upon, but later in the document a whole section is devoted to the issue – under the heading "Security and Immigration".

The structural composition of the document emphasizes that the security dimension was thought of as being important, when drawing up the document. The document consists, besides a short introduction, of 92 paragraphs. The first

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42 paragraphs deal, in two chapters, with General Considerations (1-10) and Prosperity and Immigration (11-42). The second part of the document consists of 50 paragraphs, of which the first chapter deals with Security and Migration (43-76) and finally the last chapter with Solidarity and Immigration (77-92). The chapter titled Security and Migration, however, focuses on border management, irregular migration and returns, with a main focus on the common borders and other perspectives related to external security.

The chapter Prosperity and Immigration contains a section which focuses on integration, but without explicit formulations related to security. However, it is clear from the chapter, that integration is seen as an important activity in dealing with an ageing population; European societies are facing a new reality in the medium term, with the working age population projected to fall possibly by almost 50 million by 2060; whereas immigration could act as an important stimulus to ensure good economic performance in the EU."[17] Summing up the document is dealing with an essential challenge for the EU, and even though the document is very general in its approach it represents an important stage in the institutional development of the EU.

On 25 May 2011 the EU launched a new policy called *A new response to a changing Neighbourhood* taking up the challenges from the new developments in the Middle East.[18] On the EU-homepage it is stated, that together with the countries in the Middle East, the "EU would launch institution-building programmes, collaborate closely on migration, mobility and security and launch pilot programmes to support agricultural and rural development." In the policy document more detailed information can be found, which furthermore emphasizes the relationship between migration and security seen from the European side.

The significant novelty about this is that it is produced in a context where, as mentioned, the Lisbon Treaty has moved all aspects of migration policy to majority voting and codecision.[19] This means that it becomes more and more difficult for the individual member states to uphold their right to maintain local practices in dealing with migration and integration of immigrants, which for some member states create serious internal political conflicts. Luedtke analyses differences between Belgium, France and the UK as to the level of "EU control" and concludes that "when Lisbon takes effect, legal migration will lose its 'special' status and become a 'normal' area of EU law."[20] This might be the case; however, recent developments in the EU member states, for instance in Austria, Denmark and Ireland where EU skepticism is widespread, demonstrate that this process will tend to be rather long-lasting[21], since in some of the EU member states negative attitudes towards the EU are linked with anti-immigration positions in right wing parties and movements. Recent developments in the Middle East and the European intervention via NATO might be popular in the European public, but – as mentioned in the introduction – a development where migration flows towards European coasts are "ignited" will probably change this.

The description of the security threats as they are perceived in the EU constitute a broad range of phenomena, which include more non-state related security issues like migration, energy and resource security, climate change, non-proliferation, combating international terrorism, trans-border organized crime and the fight against drugs.[22] Ole Wæver and others have suggested the concept "non-traditional security" to cover this complex range of phenomena, which do not deal with security defined in traditional geo-political terms and confined to relations between nation-states, deterrence, the balance of power, and military strategy.[23] The important point is that non-traditional security issues might represent just as challenging problems as questions related to state power and at the same time, because of their rather intangible character, are difficult to deal with.

It is not unusual that the EU tends to solve problems by institution building. The Lisbon Treaty represents in itself an attempt to strengthen the EU foreign policy apparatus, so that the cooperation with the neighbouring countries can be broadened to cover a more comprehensive range of issues in an integrated and more effective manner. The new policy is based on the premise that the reform process in the Middle East takes place differently from one country to another, but that certain elements are required to secure a strong and lasting commitment to what is termed a "deep and sustainable democracy". This is then, still in the same document, defined as free and fair elections, freedom of association, rule of law and fight against corruption plus a "security and law enforcement sector reform (including the police) and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces".

As hinted at by Kerstin Rosenow it seems that the attempts at constructing a common European migration policy can be seen as a prerequisite for a common EU integration policy.[24] She furthermore claims that the continued existence of a multitude of European integration schemes have contributed to slow progress regarding a possible harmonization of the integration policies within the EU. The development of instruments aiming at controlling and steering of migration towards Europe is also for that reason an important part of the development of European institutions. Understanding the recent changes in European practices might therefore as mentioned earlier benefit from institutionalist approaches.

Mediterranean migration and European political learning
As pointed out by Adam Luedtke, individual EU member states might tend to securitize migration as a result of the fact that they react based on specific, negative experiences in the given state, whereas common policies formulated in Bruxelles tend to be more open and tolerant, apparently based on more principled positions. Luedtke explains this by referring to the fact that the "Eurocrats are free to take this pro-immigrant line because they do not face direct electoral pressure in the way that national officials do".[25] So if the actual narratives are analyzed the differences are obvious. The officials in Bruxelles are more sympa-

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thetic to rights and freedoms of non-EU citizens than it is the case in the member states, where soft migration policies are "no-go area" for politicians who care about their own political future.

Luedtke's argument is mainly taking its point of departure in the debates related to the integration of immigrants in the European states and thereby to the question of inner security in the EU. A parallel argument can be brought forward related to the outer security, where there is a gap between the official EU position and the actual practices in several of the EU member states. It should be mentioned that the theme is not without problematic political implications, as demonstrated by Christina Boswell.[26] An important discussion in connection with this revolves around the relation between the national and the EU level in relation to the discussion of migration and securitization.

The idea that various aspects of European migration policies are constructed in a security context has been demonstrated by several scholars. The concept of securitization has been used in connection with analysis of different kinds of migration, maybe most frequently illegal migration. The illegality in itself makes this almost self-evident. In an almost "classical" article from 2000 Jef Huysmans claims that migration has become a meta-issue, and that it "has become a powerful theme through which functionally differentiated policy problems, such as identity control and visa policy, asylum applications, integration of immigrants, distribution of social entitlements, and the management of cultural diversity are connected and traversed."[27]

Huysmans argues, that the development of common migration policies is embedded in societal and political processes that articulate an endangered society and that the Europeanization of migration policies thus securitizes migration by integrating migration policy into an internal migration security framework, which partly feed into a negative politicization of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. As mentioned by Nathalia Tocci and Jean-Pierre Cassarino the "fear of terrorism, political Islam, smuggling and organized crime, unauthorized migration and the wider spillover effects of instability, has induced most Europeans, leaders and publics alike, to deepen a policy of containment in recent years."[28] Those phenomena together constitute the background for the securitization of immigrants and migration in the EU member states.

The concept of securitization is here understood within the framework of the so-called IR linguistic turn, as processes by which specific phenomena through speech acts are transformed into security issues, thereby legitimizing extraordinary measures.[29] However, this paper subscribes to a societal understanding of the securitization process, where the study of securitization not only requires a study of speech acts, but also of contextual factors, i.e. specific historical and institutional developments.[30]

Boswell points at securitization of immigration as an in some cases problematic strategy for European states and takes the recent practice, where the EU has increasingly been "outsourcing" various areas of migration control and refugee

protection to countries in regions of origin. Her argument is that this outsourcing of the implementation of immigration policies to regions of origin for the potential immigrants can be seen as a successful securitization.[31] By "leaving" immigration and integration policies to the supranational level the individual EU member states are able to avoid democratic and public scrutiny, which makes it difficult for the media and the political opposition in the given member state to involve public protest. The fact that other important non-state actors, like for instance NATO, are also considering migration as an important security issue adds to the "institutional alienation" of national migration policies.[32] Under all circumstances: the built-in democratic deficit in the EU-system in this case legitimizes a securitization of immigration and integration policies internally in the EU.

The process of securitization of migration has both an external and an internal dimension, which in many ways are interconnected. The tightening of the external borders is followed by a parallel tendency at opting for more aggressive means at integrating immigrants into the Europeans societies – leading to a tendency at giving up on or maybe even pronouncing multiculturalism as a failure.[33] Such new ways of dealing with immigrants arriving in Europe can be described as 'civic integrationism' (Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos), and represents "not simply a new brand of old-style xenophobia, but rather a self-consciously liberal response to the challenges of cultural pluralisation that seeks to distinguish itself from its primary competitor, liberal multiculturalism."[34]

A different interpretation might take its point of departure in the EU and its changing institutional development, including the gradual establishment of the free movement of labour, which is a result of the Single European Act and the implementation of the Schengen Agreement with its open borders internally in the EU. With this development the external borders become more important, as shown by Aderanti Adepoju et al.[35] There is a logical interconnectedness between internal liberalization and external deliberalization, and this process is part of the political learning process that the EU experienced over the last few decades. It gradually became obvious "that there is a need to establish a common EU immigration policy to replace fragmented and inconsistent national regimes."[36]

The EU is thus going through a process of political learning, where the institutions of the union seek to develop abilities at working with phenomena like in this case the non-traditional security migration issue. Since the launching of the "European Security Strategy", *A Secure Europe in a better World* in 2003, which was characterized by focusing mainly on traditional security, new initiatives have changed this focus, gradually focusing on a broader range of security issues, as it can for instance be seen – very explicitly – in "The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: five steps towards a more secure Europe" of November 2010,[37] based on The Internal Security Strategy, adopted in early 2010 under the Spanish Presidency.[38]

The challenges from the uprisings in the spring of 2011 are being met by formulations in new EU documents, which see the EU attempting to solve problems in its neighbourhood by institutional means. An example of this can be seen in *A new response to a changing Neighbourhood*, where it says that to support "democratic transformation, Comprehensive Institution-Building programmes (...) will be set up: they will provide substantial expertise and financial support to build the capacity of key administrative bodies (customs, enforcement agencies, justice) and will be targeted in priority towards those institutions most needed to sustain democratisation. To build a stronger partnership with people, the Commission will launch a dialogue on migration, mobility and security with e.g. Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt (as a first step towards a Mobility Partnership). These proposals are further detailed in the Communication on migration, mobility and security in the southern neighbourhood."[39]

Migration, security and the actual practices of the EU

The unrest and uprisings in the spring of 2011 have contributed to uncertainty linked to the migration pressure from non-European Mediterranean states. The issue is no novelty and has a very complex background and character. The actual migration consists of ordinary labour migration, where this might be possible, supplemented by illegal migration, of which a part from time to time are normalized (in Spain and Italy), but also irregular migration, human smuggling and migration related to organized crime. A part of the migration movements is related to traditional chain migration, but all forms of migration are developing transnational networks, which emphasize the complex character of the phenomenon. As emphasized by Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller in their classic textbook "The Age of Migration" the Middle East is containing all relevant conditions for producing migrants. It is "an area where enormous political, cultural and economic diversity has resulted in many varied types of migration and mobility."[40]

Middle Eastern migration takes place internally in the states and across borders locally. It is also regional – a large number of Egyptians work in Libya (the local perspective) as well as a large number of Egyptians work in the Gulf (the interregional perspective).[41] The largest population movements related to the Middle East, however, are transregional movements, first of all towards Europe.[42] Until recently these movements seemed to be rather stable, as shown by Philippe Fargues et al: the "emigration from South and East Mediterranean countries (SEM) is continuing at a steady rate, while immigration to these countries is increasing, particularly in various irregular forms."[43]

The Arab uprisings have resulted in new migratory movements, which are rather diverse, but to a large degree have a forced character. This is the case with the Tunisian migrants trying to enter Italian islands. The same is the case with migrants from Libya (be they Libyan nationals or transit migrants from other African states). The European coastline including the islands of the Mediterranean is experiencing a growing pressure from developments in the Middle

East that are still unpredictable.[44] Added to that forced migration is taking place from Syria, where people from the Syrian opposition and to an increasing degree ordinary citizens are trying to reach Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. In Lebanon a large number of Syrian migrant workers are present, even though the number is smaller than prior to the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005 and the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon.

Various research projects have been documenting the migratory movements in the last decades in the Mediterranean region.[45] Taking the Middle East and its relations to the EU as point of departure it can be claimed that the political and institutional developments are creating huge challenges for attempts of cooperation. On one side the complex challenges in the Middle East, not the least in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war in Iraq, have led to pragmatic tendencies in European foreign policy towards the MENA-region.[46] On the other side the EU itself is experiencing a continuously slow process of institutional development, which only recently has seen the Lisbon Treaty beginning to materialize.

In understanding migration as an important issue in a security context, the role of transnational networks becomes highly relevant. Different phenomena attached to migration processes like chain migration related to family reunion, migration networks (be they official, semiofficial or clandestine), or ethnic diasporas all constitute examples of transnational social formations. But also more problematic phenomena like human trafficking or illegal migration activities organized by people smugglers can be seen as manifestations of transnationalism. With the tendency of securitizing migration movements and with the growing focus on radical Islamist organizations in the last decade the interconnectedness between security and migration develops new dimensions in the narratives related to transnational social movements.

Most probably the emphasis on transnationalism should not be exaggerated. Migration processes often take on accidental form, often reflecting spontaneous options rather than being consciously planned long journeys. The migrant – if it is not a labor migrant on a contract – will tend to spend long time, with several "stops" on the way, before he or she ends in a specific location where it is possible to earn a living, and often the final destination might be far from what was anticipated before the journey was initiated. The accidental character of (a part of) the migration processes adds to the security aspect attached to them. And from the receiving states this issue adds dimensions to the difficulties in dealing with the question, wether they are clandestine and explicitly unwanted or just "officially unwanted" but, as shown by Luedtke, in practice an expression of a de facto policy of labour migration, as in Spain for the last decades.[47]

It is an interesting irony, as demonstrated by Ahmet İçduygu, that "while most of the southern European countries on the Mediterranean shores together with other EU countries tend to be advocating or actually adopting a range of restrictive controls against the incoming migrant flows, their economies are able to absorb thousands of irregular migrants without any unbearable confronta-

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tion."[48] The important point here is that in European reality it is of course not only a question of absorbing irregular migrants, but of absorbing migrants in a broader sense. Southern European economies are in some areas hardly able to function without an influx of a cheap labour force from other continents, first of all, regarding Southern Europe, from Northern Africa[49], but also from other regions of the world.[50] And gradually this reality is spreading to the rest of Europe in the sense that a growing part of the unskilled European labour market is being dominated by immigrant workers.[51]

Europe is importing a labour force which Europe itself - due to population ageing – is no longer able to provide. The EU is experiencing radical changes in its demographic composition, which make it necessary to implement new strategies. Therefore the EU has taken up competition with the US in attracting skilled workers. The European Commission launched in 2009 a programme called the 'blue card' intending to lure highly skilled third country migrants to the European economies.[52] But as a matter of fact this process started many years earlier. A shrinking European labour force has for decades been balanced off by immigration resulting in a process of mutual accommodation, on one side by the European host societies and on the other side by the immigrants arriving to Europe.[53] According to a UN migration analysis, the EU currently integrates two million new migrants a year – a figure, which is likely to increase, as demonstrated by several migration trend analyses.[54] It should be emphasized, however, that this does not mean that attempts at preventing specific groups from arriving in Europe is brought to a halt.[55]

Traditionally the challenge has been met by the EU member states with different national integration strategies, but over time this has changed with the establishment of supranational immigration policies, which also contain an integration dimension. One of the EU documents is called "Towards a common European Union immigration policy" [56] and even though there might be a long way ahead until the EU will reach this goal, there is no doubt that steps on the way have been taken, so that immigration and integration policies at the national level gradually are being replaced by common EU policies. Still the concrete integration activities take place locally and will therefore have a tendency to reflect national strategies and concrete practices developed over the last decades.[57]

The different national integration strategies of course have to do with different conditions as these are for instance described by Göran Larsson et al. in their analysis of minorities with Islamic background in Scandinavia and the Baltic states.[58] Different ideological and political traditions have contributed to the well known integration paradigms that characterize national and/or regional discourses and integration practices within Europe. Rob Euwals et al. compare the conditions for Turkish immigrants in Germany and the Netherlands and demonstrate that a convergence has taken place, bringing the two neighbouring countries closer together regarding integration policies: "While Germany became less restrictive with respect to family reunification and family

formation, the Netherlands became more restrictive (…) From 2003 onwards Dutch naturalization policy started to become stricter."[59] However, Euwals et al. do not seek to explain the demonstrated changes by pointing at a supranational development at the EU level. Other analyses have also shown the same tendencies at convergence between the EU member states regarding immigration and integration policies and practices – and how these have been exposed to an increased securitization.[60]

Conclusion

It has been the central ambition of this article to analyze how the development of the relation between migration and security in a European setting establishes a dialectical process of political learning process with important consequences for the development of the EU migration policies related to the Middle East and for the national immigration policies of the member states. As shown, the challenges related to the Arab Spring have contributed to this by creating more complex preconditions for European decision making. From a general perspective the historical development regarding migration and security seem to be affected by a limited process, which on one side presents a development, where the "ever closer union" logic results in a gradual transfer of decision making power regarding migration from the national to the supranational level within the EU, but on the other side still leaves room for national differences within this highly controversial issue.

The Lisbon Treaty and its gradual implementation do not seem to lead to radical changes of this pattern. The EU is still to be characterized as an actor where the member states more or less perceive themselves as independent states pursuing their own immigration and integration policies. And regarding integration policies there is a contradiction between rather intolerant local practices in some of the EU member states and more accommodating ideological formulations from the "Eurocrats" – not having critical voters to face. Some of the immigrants coming to Europe left the Middle East because they were subject to persecution in the native country, maybe because they were part of a political opposition to the authoritarian regimes. At least some of the same regimes were until recently supported by the EU – "rewarded" for their ability to secure stability in the European neighbourhood.

As mentioned the focus on security for years resulted in the construction of an informal alliance between authoritarian MENA states on one side and EU on the other with consequences for the migration policy and security strategies. This pattern might be broken and the years to come will probably see an erosion of the cooperation and consensus between the European and Middle Eastern states founded on pragmatic realism on the EU side. The fact that migration has become *high politics* and constitutes an important part of foreign and security policies contributes, as demonstrated by referring to the point made by Boswell (seeing securitization of migration as an in many ways problematic strategy), to the complexity of the issue. This is because it opens a possibility for a

securitization of the migration issue at the national level, where mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are results of political processes dealing with the challenges related to the historical development of European-Middle Eastern relations.

The article has attempted to demonstrate how the EU is going through political processes where the institutional structures of the EU seek to develop abilities at working with non-traditional security issues like migration, environmental issues, combating international terrorism, trans-border organized crime etc. This highly complex field is in itself calling for new institutional frameworks; this paper thus shows how political learning on behalf of the EU is reflected in the official documents issued by different EU-institutions from the situation in 2004, when the European Neighbourhood Policy was launched, to the recent situation, where the EU is seeking to find answers to the challenges related to the Arab Spring.

The transregional interaction is influenced by the Arab uprisings and the rather stable migration patterns, which we have seen for decades in the Mediterranean, seem – at least potentially – gradually to be replaced by new dynamic and unpredictable tendencies related to the local conflicts and unrest. The Tunisian refugees and migrants reaching Lampedusa in the early months of 2011 were the first representing new tendencies, followed by other forced migrants from Libya (or transit-migrants from Africa) leaving Libya. The Syrian refugees entering the neighbouring states represent so far relatively small groups, but it is rather unlikely that they will be the only forced migrants in the Middle East resulting from the dramatic events of the first half of 2011.

The EU has five months after the start of the Arab Spring issued a new policy, *A new response to a changing Neighbourhood,* which mostly has the character of general declarations of intent. As demonstrated the policy is a product of a situation, where the Lisbon Treaty is gradually being implemented while the EU is experiencing dramatic and unforeseen changes in its neighbourhood. Recent developments in the Middle East and the NATO intervention in Libya might be popular with the European public, but – as mentioned – a development where migration flows towards Europe increases, would probably change this. A changing EU is learning to cope with a new Middle Eastern reality both as to the migration phenomenon and in a broader political perspective, but has so far not changed its traditional pragmatic approach towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

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