

EUROPEAN UNION'S REGIONALISM POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Yasemin Necmiye Tutar & Mehmet Ali Mert

Introduction

The phenomenon of migration has increased in visibility and impact with globalization. It has a multifaceted and complex structure involving many actors. In the contemporary era, relations between countries and economies are becoming increasingly intricate, with rapid changes occurring across numerous domains. Concurrently, the factors that drive international migration are evolving over time, and migration patterns vary according to the region of destination. The Mediterranean basin, particularly North Africa and the Middle East, is distinguished by its high migratory flows (Moretti, & Cela, 2014, p. 115). The Southern Mediterranean has traditionally been a region of emigration, whereas the Northern Mediterranean has become increasingly immigrant saturated.

Since the 2000s, the instability and conflict in the Middle East have contributed to a significant increase in the number of migrants in the region. The prevailing atmosphere of insecurity has transformed the phenomenon of international migration into a different dimension. Europe has become a focal point for those seeking employment, not only from the Middle East but also from Africa and Central Asia. The confluence of political and economic instability, climate change, natural disasters, and socio-economic instability between regions has rendered Europe a destination for asylum seekers and migrants. The intricate web of factors influencing migration in this region underscores the multifaceted nature of migration and highlights the necessity for international collaboration. In particular, the necessity for international collaboration to reach Europe has become increasingly apparent in recent times. The unprecedented surge in the number of migrants is regarded as a significant crisis that requires urgent resolution. In light of the aforementioned circumstances, it is imperative that individual countries

assume the responsibility of determining migration policies. It has thus become apparent to the EU that it is unable to address the adverse consequences of migration effectively in isolation. The EU has initiated measures to enhance collaboration with member states and countries in the Mediterranean region. It has adopted a series of agreements with these countries to regulate the inflow of migrants. The primary objective of the EU's migration policy is to externalize the migrant crisis, rather than addressing it from the perspective of internal political balance within European countries. Furthermore, the potential dangers faced by migrants are often overlooked. This study aims to analyse the EU's regionalism policy in response to the migration crisis.

Migration in the Mediterranean

Historical Perspective

The phenomenon of migration has constituted an important dynamic affecting the demographic, economic, cultural, and political transformation of the Mediterranean coasts from history to the present. The phenomenon of migration in the Mediterranean has resulted in significant cultural transformation and shifts in the demographic profile of the region's population. Consequently, the Mediterranean has historically been a region where societies with disparate languages, religions, and racial compositions have interacted. It would be erroneous to assume that migration is a phenomenon exclusive to the Mediterranean region in the modern period. The issue of human movement has been a significant challenge for the Mediterranean region throughout history, from the ancient period to the Middle Ages, and from the colonial period to the post-colonial period. While this phenomenon has been identified as an aspect of immigration on occasion, it has also emerged as a key issue in the context of slave trade practices.

The principal factors underpinning migration movements in the Mediterranean from antiquity to the present can be enumerated as follows: migrations prompted by geographical and environmental factors, social and

political migrations, migrations driven by economic considerations, and migrations motivated by cultural or religious factors (Martin, 2021). In ancient times, environmental factors such as natural disasters and climate change prompted communities in the region to relocate. For example, there were instances of mass migration because of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and droughts. Such disasters resulted in significant population displacement, particularly in ancient times when agricultural communities were concentrated in specific regions. A further factor is the occurrence of wars and invasions. It can be reasonably asserted that the instabilities and conflicts observed in the Mediterranean today have a historical precedent, with similar events having caused significant population displacement in the past. Indeed, as evidenced by the Syrian civil war, which has precipitated the most significant refugee crisis in recent history, states have historically employed exile policies as a means of maintaining control over society and suppressing rebellions. Among these, the practices of the Assyrian Empire constitute an example of forced migration. As is the case today, merchants and craftsmen have been displaced by migrating to new regions for economic reasons. Finally, migration due to religious pressures has an important place in history as it does today. People migrated away from communities where they were oppressed due to their beliefs and migrated to see more tolerance (Martin, 2021).

The dispersal of the human species across the globe commenced in Africa and subsequently extended towards Asia and Europe. This migration theory posits that people migrated in groups approximately 100,000 years ago due to climate change, population density, and the search for new fertile land. The arrival of these migrations in Europe is dated to approximately 40 thousand years ago. This migration phenomenon has persisted throughout human history, giving rise to the rich diversity of human cultures observed in the Mediterranean region in both the past and the present (Gilbert, & Reynolds, 2008, p. 36). The political development of European history is inextricably linked to migration movements, particularly during the Roman Empire. These movements significantly influenced the political system, with some scholars even suggesting that the tribes migrating to this

geography played a pivotal role in the Empire's collapse (Heather, 2010). In this context, it is reasonable to draw parallels between the current migration crisis in Europe and past migration patterns in terms of threat perception.

The Trans-Saharan trade routes, which connected the Mediterranean world to Sub-Saharan Africa, constituted a frequently used route for the movement of not only goods but also people during the Middle Ages. As a result, they are of historical importance in understanding migration and mobility in the Mediterranean. These routes facilitated the trafficking of enslaved individuals from Africa to Asian countries during that period. However, it was in the sixteenth century that the slave trade began to represent a significant aspect of human migration, with forced migration from Africa to Europe becoming a prominent phenomenon (Gilbert, & Reynolds, 2008). This human mobility, which is characterized as the Atlantic slave trade, was not limited to Europe; it also extended to the Americas. It is estimated that 15 million people of African descent were transported to Europe and the Americas as slaves. The practice continued until the mid-19th century, resulting in long-term damage to the demographic, cultural and economic structures of the region, as well as creating instability. The slave trade had a significant impact on not only African societies but also European societies. The formation of a diaspora of Africans in Europe over time resulted in the emergence of a new community within the European socio-cultural landscape, characterized by a distinct linguistic, religious, racial, and cultural identity. Furthermore, the Atlantic slave trade contributed to the accumulation of capital by the European bourgeoisie, due to the human resources obtained from Africa. This, in turn, led to a transformation of Europe's traditional economic structure and constituted an important opening towards the Industrial Revolution (Gilbert & Reynolds, 2008).

The intensity of migration and mobility in the Mediterranean region was further exacerbated during the colonial period. The primary driving force behind migration to Europe during the colonial period was economic and military motivation (Heather, 2010). There was a significant increase in human mobility

towards Europe for the purpose of recruiting soldiers for the colonial armies of Europeans, obtaining manpower to work in the mines operated by European states, and securing inexpensive labour for agricultural plantations. Additionally, during this period, children of prominent families in colonized societies travelled to Europe to pursue education and subsequently assumed positions within colonial administrations.

The 20th century, which was characterized by two world wars and the decolonization process, saw a significant increase in migration towards Europe. During this period, the Mediterranean region served as a key transit point for migrants. Following the attainment of independence by colonized countries in the 1950s and 1960s, this migration flow persisted and even exhibited an increase. The political instability, economic uncertainty, internal conflicts, and other negative developments in the newly independent African countries resulted in a significant number of individuals seeking refuge in colonial countries (Sadiq & Tsourapas, 2021). To illustrate, Algeria experienced a considerable influx of migrants to France. Because of the movement of people from the southern shores of the Mediterranean to the north, minority populations have emerged in the major cities of European countries, and there have been significant changes in the labor force in Europe (Asgher, & Banhegyi, 2015). The migrations have resulted in the formation of migrant communities in major urban centres. While these migrations have contributed to an increase in cultural diversity within Europe, they have also given rise to several challenges, including xenophobia, racism, and the ascendance of populist movements and the issue of integration.

Following the 1960s, there was a notable increase in labour migration from Africa and other poor countries to Europe. This can be characterized as a modern migration movement. In this migration movement, European states benefited from immigrants to meet their labour force requirements. During this period, when transportation and communication facilities were more advanced, immigrants were able to maintain close ties with their societies of origin. Consequently, they also served as intermediaries for their relatives, facilitating their migration to Europe.

However, the principal migration movement to Europe via the Mediterranean commenced following the terrorist and military interventions in the Middle East and Africa in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001. The military interventions and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan have had a significant negative impact on the economic structure and have contributed to a reduction in security and stability. Consequently, a considerable number of individuals attempted to reach Europe via transit countries, including Türkiye, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco.

The period following 2010 saw a notable increase in the number of migrants, with the migration flow becoming more widespread across the globe. The Arab Spring, a series of revolutions that began in 2010, has been identified as a significant factor contributing to the increase in migration from Middle Eastern countries to Europe. Millions of individuals fleeing the civil war in Syria and subjected to forced migration have sought asylum in Europe. In 2015, the considerable rise in the number of migrants reaching Europe from these regions gave rise to significant political debates within European countries. The tragic accidents and deaths of these migrants using the Mediterranean Sea as a transit point highlight the need to take the humanitarian dimension of the issue seriously (Pace, 2016). The confluence of challenges, including military intervention, civil war, political pressures, climate change and the search for economic opportunities, has rendered the prevention of migration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe impossibility. Consequently, the refugee crisis has emerged as a significant challenge for Europe. In response to this surge in migration, the EU has initiated a series of measures aimed at enhancing the efficacy of its border security and migration management policies. In summary, an analysis of the migration phenomenon in the Mediterranean reveals a striking resemblance between the historical and modern migration crises that have occurred in the region.

Migration Routes to Europe via the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean basin has become a significant migratory route for individuals seeking improved circumstances or escaping unfavourable conditions

in their countries of origin. Most of the migration flows in this region are organized through two principal sub-regions.

1. The Western Mediterranean Route, which originates in North and West Africa and culminates in Spain, represents a significant migratory corridor. The region encompasses countries such as Spain, Morocco, and Algeria. This region has developed a collaborative approach to migration management. Spain has entered into bilateral agreements with Morocco and other African countries with the objective of regulating migration flows. These agreements have been operationalized in areas including border security, the return of irregular migrants and the provision of development assistance aimed at addressing the underlying causes of migration (Cassarino, & Marin, 2022).

2. The Eastern Mediterranean route, which originates in the Middle East, South Asia and North Africa and culminates in Greece, the Republic of Turkey (Türkiye) and the Balkans, encompasses a number of countries, including Greece, Türkiye and the Balkans. The region has been confronted with more intricate migration issues because of its proximity to conflict zones in the Middle East and South Asia. The migration flows within this subregion have been characterized by the presence of considerable numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, who have been compelled to flee the consequences of conflict and instability. Regional cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean has been hindered by geopolitical tensions, particularly those between the EU and Türkiye. Greece has encountered significant challenges in managing the influx of migrants and refugees, resulting in overcrowded reception centres and inadequate living conditions (Spencer, & Triandafyllidou, 2020, p.9).

The Western Mediterranean has benefited from a greater degree of regional collaboration, particularly through the implementation of bilateral agreements and initiatives that have been supported by the EU. In contrast, the Eastern Mediterranean has encountered difficulties in establishing effective regional cooperation because of geopolitical tensions and the intricate nature of migration flows. Both subregions have implemented rigorous security measures, but the

Western Mediterranean's approach has been more effective in reducing irregular migration flows while maintaining regional stability. In contrast, the Eastern Mediterranean has encountered significant challenges in addressing the scale of migration, resulting in heightened human rights concerns and difficulties in managing migration flows.

Regional Cooperation Mechanisms in Migration Management in the Mediterranean

The concept of regionalization emerged from the recognition that collective action could more effectively address common challenges between states (Söderbaum, 2015). In the context of migration management, regionalization involves the creation of cooperation mechanisms that address common migration challenges and draw on common resources, policies, and strategies. The concept of regionalism is particularly pertinent to the Mediterranean region, where the confluence of diverse migration flows, geopolitical dynamics and economic disparities gives rise to intricate challenges that necessitate a coordinated response. The theory of regionalization places significant emphasis on the importance of policy coherence, which is seen as a crucial factor in facilitating smooth cooperation between states. The endeavour to standardize migration and asylum policies in the Mediterranean region reflects a desire to manage migration flows in a more coherent manner and reduce discrepancies between countries' legal frameworks (Geddes, & Scholten 2016). In this regard, regionalization facilitates the harmonization of national policies with regional norms, thereby enhancing coherence and predictability in migration management.

The foundation for regional collaboration in the Mediterranean is rooted in shared security concerns and the notion that this can result in the securitization of migration policies within regional frameworks (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde, 1998). This is due to concerns about irregular migration and border security, which have resulted in the establishment of cooperation mechanisms that priorities the enhancement of border controls, surveillance, and security measures. However, it

is important to note that regional cooperation can extend beyond immediate concerns such as border management to encompass long-term strategies that address the underlying factors that drive migration (Söderbaum, 2015). This is due to the existence of significant humanitarian concerns in the Mediterranean, particularly regarding the safeguarding of vulnerable migrants and refugees. Consequently, one of the primary objectives of the regional frameworks established within the European Union is to guarantee the protection and well-being of migrants (Lavenex, & Uçarer, 2002).

European Union Migration and Asylum Policies on Migration

To manage migration flows, the EU has sought to promote cooperation with countries in the Mediterranean and beyond. This has involved the creation of a network of agreements and partnerships that serve to spread the EU's influence over migration management across multiple regions. A significant aspect of the EU's migration and asylum policies has been the externalization of border controls. This strategy entails the transfer of responsibility for managing migration away from the EU's external borders, particularly to countries in North Africa and the Sahel region. By means of agreements such as the Khartoum and Rabat Processes, the EU has established a novel regional governance framework that extends border management practices beyond its own territory (Lavenex, & Wichmann, 2009). In this manner, the EU has endeavoured to diminish the number of irregular migrants reaching its shores. However, this approach has also resulted in a redefinition of migration routes. As a result of heightened security measures, migrants have increasingly opted for more dangerous and less monitored routes (Frowd, 2014). This has resulted in the proliferation of smuggling networks and an increase in the number of migrants who have died at sea. This gives rise to ethical and humanitarian concerns regarding the EU's approach to regional migration management. In response to the migration challenges in the region, the EU has implemented a series of policies and initiatives with the objective of controlling and managing these movements.

Initiatives such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) have been implemented with the objective of strengthening relations with countries in the Mediterranean region, with a specific emphasis on migration management (Panebianco, 2020). These initiatives launched the process of developing common frameworks for addressing migration issues, including the establishment of coordinated asylum procedures and the provision of financial and technical assistance to non-EU countries. From the perspective of regionalism, this emphasis on cooperation reflects the EU's broader strategy of developing a coherent regional approach to migration management. In collaboration with countries in the Mediterranean region, the EU is striving to establish a comprehensive and integrated migration governance system that is aligned with its security and humanitarian objectives. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these initiatives is further hindered by the presence of additional challenges, including the unequal distribution of responsibilities, disparate levels of commitment among participating countries, and the intricate dynamics of regional power relations.

A further crucial element of the EU's migration and asylum policies is the way migration is portrayed as a security threat necessitating immediate and exceptional measures (Huysmans, 2006). This has resulted in the implementation of policies that priorities border security and control, frequently at the expense of humanitarian considerations and the protection of migrants' rights. The securitization of migration has resulted in the formation of security-oriented partnerships and the establishment of new regional institutions with a primary focuses on border control and surveillance (Bialasiewicz, 2012). Nevertheless, this approach has not only undermined regional collaboration but also intensified the difficulties encountered by migrants, particularly about asylum and protection.

Khartoum Process: Regionalism and Externalization

The Khartoum Process, which was launched in 2014, is a regional initiative that brings together the EU and countries in the Horn of Africa, including Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The principal objectives of the

initiative are to combat human trafficking and smuggling, enhance border security and facilitate regional collaboration on migration management (European Commission, 2014). This initiative provides an illustrative example of the EU's regionalism policies, whereby migration management is externalized to countries of origin and transit.

From a regionalism perspective, the Khartoum Process has had a profound impact on migration patterns in the Mediterranean, with significant shifts in migration flows both within and beyond the region. The implementation of stringent border security and surveillance measures has resulted in the rerouting of migration routes. This has resulted in migrants resorting to more dangerous routes across the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea (Frouws & Horwood, 2017). This reconfiguration of migration routes is indicative of the intricate interregional dynamics at play, whereby regional policies in Africa have a direct bearing on migration patterns in the Mediterranean.

The Khartoum Process represents a form of regionalism that is characterized by a prioritization of security and control. The EU's decision to devolve migration management to African countries has resulted in the creation of a new regional governance framework, which has in turn led to an expansion of the EU's influence over African migration policies. This approach has been the subject of criticism on the grounds that it undermines regional sovereignty and prioritizes the EU's security concerns over the rights and needs of migrants (Andersson, 2015). Nevertheless, this process has also resulted in the formation of new regional partnerships. However, these have often been asymmetric, with the EU exerting a considerable influence on the migration policies of African countries.

The Rabat Process Regional Cooperation and Migration Governance

The Rabat Process, initiated in 2006, emphasizes collaboration between European and African countries along the West African migration route. The objective is to facilitate legal migration channels, address irregular migration, and bolster development in countries of origin and transit (European Commission, 2006). In contrast to the Khartoum Process, the Rabat Process is more integrative

in nature and seeks to strike a balance between security concerns and development objectives. This represents a distinct approach to regionalism, which is oriented towards the establishment of comprehensive and cooperative frameworks for the management of migration.

The Rabat Process has had an impact on migration patterns, with the promotion of legal migration channels and development initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of migration. Nevertheless, the impact of these measures has been inconclusive, with opportunities for legal migration remaining constrained and irregular migration persisting (De Haas, 2011). From a regionalism perspective, the Rabat Process has contributed to the securitization of migration in the Mediterranean but has also encouraged greater cooperation between European and African countries, leading to the development of new regional migration governance structures.

The Rabat Process constituted a significant step forward in the establishment of a regional governance framework that integrates migration management with development objectives. This approach to regionalism emphasizes the importance of partnership and dialogue, with the objective of creating a more balanced and sustainable migration management system (Lavenex, & Kunz, 2008). Nevertheless, the process has encountered resistance, particularly from certain African countries, and has been subject to criticism on account of concerns pertaining to the protection of migrants' rights. Furthermore, the implementation of return and reintegration policies has encountered challenges.

The Khartoum and Rabat Processes have had a considerable impact on migration patterns and management in the Mediterranean, influencing regional dynamics and governance structures in significant ways. It is evident that these processes have both reinforced and confronted existing regional frameworks, with significant implications for migration governance. The Khartoum Process resulted in the externalization of EU border controls and a shift in focus towards security. In contrast, the Rabat Process aimed to establish more collaborative and comprehensive migration management frameworks.

The major agreements, partnerships, and policy frameworks in the EU and in regional countries. EU-Türkiye Statement 2016

In response to the 2015 migration crisis, the EU and Türkiye adopted a Statement in March 2016, the purpose of which was to address the growing influx of migrants and asylum seekers. This agreement, commonly referred to as the Statement, represents a significant development in the management of migration in the Mediterranean. Its aim is to reduce irregular migration, combat human trafficking and ensure safe and legal migration routes. While the Statement has been effective in reducing irregular migration, it has also given rise to significant challenges pertaining to regional cooperation, sovereignty, and the safeguarding of migrants' rights.

The objective of the Declaration is to regulate and control irregular migration through the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Türkiye and the return of migrants arriving in Greece to Türkiye. In return, the EU has pledged to revitalize Türkiye's EU accession process and provide financial assistance (European Commission, 2016). The Declaration can be characterized as a success in significantly reducing the number of migrants crossing the Aegean Sea and curbing the activities of human trafficking networks (Niemann, & Zaun, 2018). Nevertheless, it has been subject to criticism about its legal and ethical implications, particularly in relation to the protection of asylum seekers' rights and the externalization of migration management.

The term "regionalism" is used to describe the process by which regions become more integrated through the establishment of institutions and the implementation of policies that facilitate cooperation between states within a specific geographical area (Börzel, & Risse, 2016). In this context, the Statement provides an illustrative example of the application of regionalism to migration management in the Mediterranean. A salient feature of the Statement is the externalization of border controls, whereby the EU has delegated migration management responsibilities to Türkiye. It's acceptance of the return of migrants and asylum seekers from Greece has effectively established it as a buffer zone for

the EU. This strategy of externalization reflects a broader trend in the EU's migration policies, whereby regional cooperation is employed to extend the EU's influence on migration management beyond its own borders. While the EU has been successful in reducing irregular migration through the Declaration, it has also exerted considerable pressure on Türkiye, placing significant strain on the country's capacity to manage the large numbers of migrants and asylum seekers within its borders (İçduygu, & Aksel, 2018).

Furthermore, the Statement underscores the intricate nature of regional collaboration in the domain of migration management. The agreement was negotiated between the EU and Türkiye on a bilateral basis and reflects a top-down approach to regionalism, whereby decisions are taken at the intergovernmental level without wider regional consultations. This approach was detrimental to the principles of regional cooperation and multilateralism, as it circumvented the involvement of other Mediterranean countries that were similarly affected by migratory flows. By accepting the terms of the Declaration, Türkiye has assumed significant responsibilities regarding the management of migration flows on behalf of the EU. This has resulted in concerns regarding the sovereignty of Türkiye (Kirişci, 2016). This tension between regional cooperation and sovereignty represents a significant challenge for the implementation of the Statement.

The Declaration's emphasis on regulating and reducing migration patterns gives precedence to security concerns over those of a humanitarian nature. This approach has the consequence of overlooking the rights of migrants and the principles of international protection. The securitization of migration frequently results in the neglect of the protection of vulnerable populations. This model of managing the EU's migration problem has not been limited to Türkiye; similar partnerships have been sought with Libya and Tunisia. It could be argued that such agreements reflect the EU's efforts to transfer responsibility for this issue to border countries.

The Schengen Border Code (SBC)

SBC is a legal instrument that governs the movement of individuals across external borders. It encompasses provisions pertaining to border controls, surveillance, and the management of irregular migration (European Parliament, 2019). It constitutes a pivotal element of the Schengen Area, which permits the free movement of individuals between EU countries. The 2019 amendments to the SBC were introduced in response to the 2015 migration crisis and were designed to enhance border security, improve the efficacy of border controls, and address the challenges posed by irregular migration.

A significant element of the 2019 amendments is the reinforcement of border controls at the external borders of the European Union. These changes address the security threats posed by irregular migration, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea, where large numbers of migrants and asylum seekers attempt to enter the EU (Carrera, & Guild, 2019). From a regionalist perspective, the reinforcement of border controls signifies a transition towards a more security-oriented approach to migration management, reflecting the EU's concerns about the stability and security of the region. The intensified focus on border controls has placed significant strain on Mediterranean frontline states, including Greece, Italy, and Spain, which bear the responsibility of implementing the provisions of the SBC. This has resulted in the emergence of tensions between these states and other EU members, particularly regarding the apportionment of burdens and the distribution of responsibilities for the management of migration flows.

The 2019 amendments to the SBC mirror the European Union's sustained endeavours to externalize the management of migration. This is particularly evident in the Mediterranean, where the EU is seeking to enhance collaboration with countries in North Africa and the Middle East with the objective of regulating migration flows before they reach EU borders. The SBC's provisions on external border management have been employed to facilitate this externalization process and have served to reinforce the EU's influence on migration governance in the region.

While the EU has succeeded in reducing the number of irregular migrants entering the Schengen Area, this has resulted in an increased burden on non-EU countries, which are often inadequately equipped to manage large-scale migration flows (Ahad, & Bogdan, 2019). These developments have implications for the sustainability of regional cooperation as well as for the protection of migrants' rights, particularly in countries where legal and human rights standards may not be aligned with those of the EU.

An Evaluation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum (2020)

The Pact on Migration and Asylum, launched by the European Commission in 2020, represents a significant initiative to reform the European Union's migration and asylum policies. The Pact establishes a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to migration management within the EU, emphasizing the necessity for solidarity and shared responsibility among Member States.

The Pact on Migration and Asylum has been devised with the intention of addressing the intricate and multifaceted nature of migration within the EU. It proposes a series of measures designed to enhance border management, asylum procedures and the repatriation of irregular migrants (European Commission, 2020). The Pact encompasses a few key components, including the reinforcement of EU institutions, such as the introduction of a mandatory solidarity mechanism and the externalization of migration management. The Pact reflects the EU's recognition of the necessity for a more coordinated and effective approach to migration, particularly in the Mediterranean, where migratory pressure is most acute.

The Mediterranean is of particular significance as it represents a principal point of entry for irregular migration to Europe. In consequence, the Frontex organization was established in 2004 with the objective of regulating migratory flows in the region through the management of external borders. The Frontex Risk Analysis Reports are of significant consequence in the formation of EU migration policies and strategies (Frontex, 2021). This emphasis on collaboration aligns with

the tenets of regionalism, which espouses cooperative strategies to confront shared challenges.

Frontex's dedication to regional collaboration is clearly demonstrated by its joint operations, which involve multiple EU Member States and, in certain instances, third countries. The objective of these operations is to enhance surveillance capabilities, optimize border management and facilitate the exchange of intelligence and best practices. The promotion of regional cooperation is a key objective of Frontex, with the aim of improving coherence in the management of migration in the Mediterranean (Frontex, 2022).

The concept of regionalism in the Mediterranean is defined by the interplay between EU policies and the migration dynamics of neighbouring regions, including North Africa and the Middle East (Börzel, & Risse, 2016). The Migration and Asylum Pact, a pivotal element of the EU's migration policy, exerts a significant influence on these dynamics. A fundamental tenet of the Pact is the principle of shared responsibility and solidarity among EU member states. The Pact introduces a novel solidarity mechanism that enables member states to select from a range of forms of assistance, including the relocation of asylum seekers, the sponsorship of returns, and the provision of operational aid (Carrera, 2020). The objective of this mechanism is to alleviate the burden borne by countries such as Greece, Italy, and Spain, which are experiencing the greatest pressure from migration.

Furthermore, the Pact on Migration and Asylum perpetuates the strategy of externalizing migration management, a pivotal aspect of the EU's regional approach to migration in the Mediterranean. The Pact underscores the significance of collaboration with third countries, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East, to deter irregular migration and facilitate the repatriation of migrants (Lavenex, 2021). This externalization strategy encompasses the utilization of agreements with third countries, exemplified by the EU-Türkiye Statement, and the establishment of partnerships with countries such as Libya and Tunisia, with the objective of regulating migration flows prior to their arrival at EU borders.

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

The Mediterranean region has historically been a focal point for migration, due to a complex interplay of economic, political, and social factors. In response to these challenges, the AIIB has emerged as a pivotal platform for the advancement of regional cooperation on a multitude of issues, including migration. The Union was established in 2008 and is an intergovernmental organization that brings together 42 member states from Europe and the Mediterranean basin. The organization's objective is to facilitate regional collaboration, discourse, and growth in a variety of domains, including economic integration, environmental sustainability, and social advancement. The UfM's approach to migration is articulated in several policy documents and reports, which set out the organization's priorities, strategies, and initiatives for the management of migration in the region (UfM, 2008).

A principal theme of the Union policy documents is the promotion of enhanced regional cooperation as a means of effectively managing migration. The UfM acknowledges that migration represents a shared challenge that necessitates collective action on the part of all countries in the region (UfM, 2019). This emphasis on cooperation is consistent with the broader principles of regionalism, which advocate collaborative approaches to address common challenges. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these initiatives is frequently constrained by the disparate priorities and capabilities of member states, which can impede the attainment of meaningful collaboration.

Additionally, the UfM's approach to migration is distinguished by its reliance on multilateral frameworks to address migration challenges in the Mediterranean. These frameworks are designed to facilitate cooperation between Member States as well as external partners, including international organizations, civil society, and the private sector (UfM, 2021). The UfM's objective is to develop comprehensive and sustainable solutions to migration challenges by bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders. From the perspective of regionalism, the utilization of multilateral frameworks evinces the UfM's

dedication to the advancement of inclusive and participatory methodologies in the domain of migration management. Such frameworks provide a platform for member states to engage in dialogue, share information and coordinate their efforts to address migration challenges. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these frameworks is contingent upon the willingness of Member States to engage in constructive collaboration and to accord precedence to regional interests over national concerns.

The Mediterranean region is confronted with considerable migration-related security challenges, including the risk of human trafficking, smuggling and terrorism (Carrera, 2020). While acknowledging the necessity of addressing these security concerns, the UfM also emphasizes the importance of protecting the rights of migrants and promoting sustainable development in the region. This approach is aligned with the principles of regionalism, which advocate a comprehensive and integrated approach to the management of migration. The OAU's initiatives to enhance border management, improve migration governance and promote economic development in countries of origin and transit are designed to address the root causes of migration and reduce the pressures that trigger irregular migration (Pascouau, 2016). The UfM's approach to migration reflects both the potential and the challenges inherent in the management of migration in a complex region. The efficacy of the UfM's endeavours is contingent upon the capacity of member states to surmount these challenges and collaborate in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation, with a view to addressing the root causes of migration and safeguarding the rights of migrants in the Mediterranean.

The UfM publishes an annual series of Regional Forum Declarations, which serve to convene member states for the purpose of discussing and adopting positions on a range of key issues affecting the region (Union for the Mediterranean, 2021). It is significant that these declarations reflect the collective will of the UfM member states, as they establish the agenda for regional cooperation on a range of issues, including migration. They provide a framework for action, delineating priorities, strategies, and commitments to address the challenges of migration in the Mediterranean. These declarations emphasize the

necessity for a coordinated response to migration challenges, recognizing that no single country is capable of effectively managing migration flows in isolation (UfM, 2018). This emphasis on cooperation is consistent with the principles of regionalism, which promote collaborative strategies for addressing shared challenges.

The UfM Regional Forum Declarations place significant emphasis on the necessity of promoting economic development and regional stability as fundamental elements of effective migration management strategies in the Mediterranean region. The UfM acknowledges that economic disparities and a dearth of prospects in countries of origin are the primary motivators of migration and that addressing these fundamental causes is imperative for the effective management of migration flows. The UfM approach to economic development is founded upon the principles of regionalism, which underscore the necessity for coordinated and sustainable development strategies that are mutually beneficial to all countries within the region. The UfM's initiatives to promote job creation, improve education and training, and increase access to markets are designed to reduce the economic pressures that cause migration and promote greater stability in the region. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these initiatives is frequently constrained by the disparate levels of economic advancement and capability among the member states, in addition to the pervasive geopolitical challenges confronting the region.

One of the most significant contributions of the governance of international migration is the Mediterranean Migration Framework, which was devised with the objective of promoting a comprehensive approach to migration management in the region. The document places significant emphasis on the necessity of addressing the underlying causes of migration, safeguarding the rights of migrants, and facilitating the development of legal migration pathways. By means of this framework, the UfM has exerted an influence on the formulation of national migration policies, encouraging Member States to incorporate the principles into their domestic legislation and practice. For instance, some Mediterranean

countries, such as Morocco, have adopted migration and asylum policies that align with the objectives of the UfM, namely, to promote legal migration and guarantee the rights of migrants. This reflects emphasis on legal migration and the protection of migrants (De Bel-Air, 2016). Furthermore, it facilitates capacity building through the provision of technical assistance and training to national authorities in areas such as border management, asylum systems and integration policies. These initiatives have facilitated the standardization of migration practices across the region and promoted greater coherence in national policies (UfM, 2020).

Asylum Procedures

One of the principal areas of harmonization in regional cooperation mechanisms in the Mediterranean is the standardization of asylum procedures. A central initiative, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), has been established with the objective of establishing a uniform asylum process across EU Member States. The CEAS is designed to guarantee that asylum seekers are treated in a uniform manner irrespective of the Member State in which they submit their applications, and that their requests are assessed in accordance with common criteria (European Commission, 2020). In this context, the Dublin Regulation was introduced as part of the CEAS with the objective of determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application. Despite the Dublin Regulation's objective of deterring "asylum shopping" and facilitating prompt access to procedures, it has been subject to criticism for placing undue burden on Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Italy, which frequently serve as initial points of entry for migrants (Guild, Costello, & Garlick, 2015).

Moreover, a common document, the Reception Conditions Directive, has been established with the objective of defining minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers, including provisions related to housing, food, health, and education. The objective of this directive is to harmonize the standards across the region, thereby reducing the inequalities in reception conditions that may affect secondary movements within the EU (European Commission, 2020).

To facilitate the successful integration of migrants and refugees into host societies, the EU has developed a series of integration strategies. Regional cooperation mechanisms in the Mediterranean are oriented towards the harmonization of national integration policies, with the objective of promoting social cohesion, economic inclusion, and respect for cultural diversity. A notable initiative in this regard is the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, which delineates strategies to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees into European societies. The plan places particular emphasis on the importance of inclusive education, access to employment and social services. The objective of the action plan is to establish a harmonized approach to integration across the region, with a view to encouraging Member States to adopt similar strategies (European Commission, 2021).

Notwithstanding these endeavours, the harmonization of migration policies in the Mediterranean region is confronted with several challenges. The disparate political agendas and capabilities of Member States, the uneven distribution of the migration burden, and the intricate legal and institutional frameworks can impede effective collaboration (Geddes, & Scholten, 2016). Furthermore, external factors, such as conflicts in neighbouring regions and evolving migration patterns, can also present challenges to the harmonization of migration policies.

Conclusion

Migration management approaches in the Western and Eastern Mediterranean subregions reflect the various migration-related challenges and opportunities in the region. The Western Mediterranean has benefited from stronger regional cooperation and more effective security measures, resulting in greater stability and reduced migration flows. In contrast, the Eastern Mediterranean has faced more complex challenges, leading to significant human rights concerns and difficulties in managing migration flows. A review of policy documents, agreements and reports revealed a strong emphasis on security in regional cooperation mechanisms in the Mediterranean. Key priorities include

enhancing border controls, combating human trafficking and smuggling, and utilizing technology and regional cooperation to address migration-related security challenges.

Although the UfM's approach provides a comprehensive framework for addressing migration challenges in the Mediterranean, its effectiveness is constrained by the disparate priorities and capacities of member states, in addition to the broader geopolitical context of the region. From the perspective of regionalism, the Frontex Risk Analysis Reports have illustrated the significance of regional collaboration, the necessity of striking a balance between security and human rights, and the function of multilateral frameworks in addressing migration challenges. Although Frontex's approach to migration management is comprehensive and aligned with the principles of regionalism, its effectiveness is constrained by the disparate priorities and capabilities of EU Member States. The success of Frontex's future endeavours will depend on its capacity to cultivate greater solidarity and collaboration among Member States and partners, while ensuring that its practices align with the principles of regionalism and human rights. The 2019 amendments to the SBC have had a considerable impact on migration management in the Mediterranean (Frontex, 2019), particularly in relation to regionalism. The SBC has had a significant impact on the regional governance framework for migration in the Mediterranean, with its strengthening of border controls, externalization of migration management and securitization of migration. While these changes have contributed to a reduction in irregular migration and an enhancement of border security, they have also brought about significant challenges in relation to regional cooperation, burden sharing and the protection of migrants' rights. The success of the SBC's regional migration management will depend on the ability of the EU and its partners to address these challenges in a way that strikes a balance between security concerns and the principles of regional cooperation and human rights protection.

The EU-Türkiye Statement of 2016 has had a considerable and far-reaching impact on migration management in the Mediterranean, particularly in terms of

regionalism. By externalizing border controls and negotiating a bilateral agreement with Türkiye, the EU has effectively restructured the regional governance framework for migration in the Mediterranean. While the Declaration has been successful in reducing irregular migration, it has also given rise to significant challenges pertaining to regional cooperation, sovereignty, and the protection of migrants' rights.

In general, when the EU's regional cooperation policy on migration is evaluated; two main aspects of these policies emerge as being of particular significance. The initial perspective is that of realism, which posits that the crisis precipitated by uncontrolled migration to EU countries is politically untenable and that migrants should be kept outside the EU borders based on practical necessities. Considering the recognition that the phenomenon of migration is inherently unavoidable, this perspective underscores the imperative for the establishment of collaborative mechanisms at both the EU and transit country levels for the effective management of migration.

From the perspective of those who view the EU's migration policies as failing to adequately address human rights concerns, these policies are seen as an extension of internal political rivalries and discourses. The inability of the new European leaders, who came to power largely based on their commitment to halt migration, has resulted in a decline in their popularity. Consequently, in lieu of long-term solutions, they espouse populist policies. This approach posits that the EU's externalization of migration through the provision of financial assistance to transit countries serves to exacerbate the victimization of migrants. This approach which perceives migrants as a political problem and disregards their status as human beings places significant emphasis on the protection of migrants' rights under international law.

In conclusion, as these different perspectives indicate, migration policies have multifaceted and complex dimensions in both political and humanitarian terms. In the context of a lack of solidarity among European countries regarding the migrant flows, it is implausible that regional cooperation initiatives seeking to

transfer responsibility to countries bordering the EU will provide a radical solution to the problem. It is imperative that the EU assume an active and strategic role in the development of long-term solutions aimed at eliminating the root causes of migration. Otherwise, the EU will be compelled to confront comparable challenges to those confronted by prominent states and empires throughout history.

References

- Ahad, A., & Bogdan, N. B. (2019). Communication Strategically About Immigrant Integration, Polciymakers Perspective, Migration Policy Institute Europe, Retrieved from https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/2019-01/MPIE_CommunicatingIntegration.pdf.
- Andersson, R. (2015). Hardwiring the frontier? The politics of security technology in Europe's 'fight against illegal migration'. *Security Dialogue*, 47(1), 69-85.
- Asgher, U., & Banhegyi, G. (2015). Historical patterns in ancient and contemporary migration phenomena in the Mediterranean area. *Procedia Manufacturing*, 3, 4076-4083.
- Bialasiewicz, L. (2012). Off-shoring and Out-sourcing the Borders of EUrope: Libya and EU Border Work in the Mediterranean. *Geopolitics*, 17(4), 843-866. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2012.660579>
- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2016). *The Oxford handbook of comparative regionalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Carrera, S. (2020). Whose Pact? The Cognitive Dimension of The New EU Pact on migration and Asylum. *CEPS Policy Insights*. Retrieved from <https://cdn.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PI2020-22-New-EU-Pact-on-Migration-and-Asylum.pdf>

- Carrera, S., & Guild, E. (2019). The EU's 2019 Schengen Border Code reforms: Addressing migration and asylum challenges. *CEPS Policy Insights*.
- Cassarino, J. P., & Marin L. (2022). The Pact on Migration and Asylum: Turning the European Territory into a Non-territory? *European Journal of Migration and Law* 24, 1–26.
- De Bel-Air, F. (2016). Migration profile: Morocco, Migration Policy Centre. *Policy Briefs* 05. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/41124>
- De Haas, H. (2011). The determinants of international migration: Conceptualizing policy, origin, and destination effects. *IMI Working Papers*, 32.
- European Commission. (2006). The Rabat Process: A Euro-African dialogue on migration and development. Retrieved from <https://www.rabat-process.org/en/>
- European Commission. (2014). The Khartoum Process: Enhancing EU cooperation with the Horn of Africa on migration and mobility. Retrieved from <https://www.khartoumprocess.net>
- European Commission. (2016). EU-Türkiye Statement, 18 March 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>
- European Commission. (2020). Common European Asylum System. Retrieved from https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system_en#:~:text=In%202020%2C%20the%20European%20Commission,s trengthened%20partnerships%20with%20third%20countries.
- European Commission. (2020). New Pact on Migration and Asylum: A fresh start on migration in Europe. Retrieved from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/fresh-start-new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en
- European Commission. (2021). Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027. Retrieved from <https://integrazionemigranti.gov.it/en-gb/Dettaglio->

[approfondimento/id/1/EU-Action-Plan-on-Integration-and-Inclusion-2021-2027](#)

European Parliament. (2019). The Schengen Border Code: Latest developments. Retrieved from https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/schengen-area_en

Frontex (2019). Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management. Retrieved from https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Key_Documents/IBM/EU_IBM_Broc_hure_EN.pdf

Frontex (2021). Frontex Risk Analysis for 2021. Retrieved from https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis_2021.pdf

Frontex (2022). Annual Risk Analysis 2022. Retrieved from https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Strategic_Risk_Analysis_2022.pdf

Frouws, B., & Horwood, C. (2017). Smuggled South: An updated overview of mixed migration from the Horn of Africa to southern Africa with specific focus on protection risks, human smuggling, and trafficking. *Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS)*. Retrieved from https://staging.maisoninteractive.com/mixedmigrationcenter/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/016_smuggled_south.pdf

Frowd, P. M. (2014). The field of border control in Mauritania. *Security Dialogue*, 45(3): 226-241.

Geddes, A., & Scholten, P. (2016). *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe*. SAGE Publications.

Gilbert, E., & Reynolds, J. T. (2008). *Africa in world history*. Pearson Educational.

Guild E., Costello C., Garlick M., & Moreno-Lax, V. (2015). The 2015 Refugee Crisis in the European Union. *CEPS Policy Brief*. Retrieved from <https://cdn.ceps.eu/wp->

content/uploads/2015/09/CEPS%20PB332%20Refugee%20Crisis%20in%20EU_0.pdf

- Heather, P. (2010). *Empires and barbarians: The fall of Rome and the birth of Europe*. Oxford University Press.
- Huysmans, J. (2006). *The politics of insecurity: Fear, migration, and asylum in the EU*. Routledge.
- İçduygu, A., & Aksel, D. B. (2018). Two-to-tango in migration diplomacy: Negotiating Readmission Agreement between the EU and Türkiye. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 16(3), 338-363.
- Kirişci, K. (2016). *Türkiye's new draft law on asylum: What to make of it? Türkiye, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities*. Hamburg Institute of International Economics, Series Edition, 63-68.
- Lavenex, S. (2021). Regions and global migration governance: perspectives 'from above', 'from below' and 'from beyond'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(2), 1-18.
- Lavenex, S., & Kunz, R. (2008). The migration–development nexus in EU external relations. *Journal of European Integration*, 30(3), 439-457. Bölgesel Kuruluşlardan Politika Belgeleri, Anlaşmalar ve Raporların İncelenmesi.
- Lavenex, S., & Uçarer, E. M. (2002). *Migration and the Externalities of European Integration*. Lexington Books.
- Lavenex, S., & Wichmann, N. (2009). The External Governance of EU Internal Security. *Journal of European Integration*, 31(1), 83-102.
- Martin, S. C. (2021). *Migrations and Crisis in the Mediterranean: An Anthropological Dialogue on Past and Present Migrations*. Doctoral dissertation. The University of Arizona.
- Moretti, E., & Cela, E. (2014). A brief history of Mediterranean migrations. *Rivista Italiana di Economia Demografia e Statistica*, 68(2).
- Niemann, A., & Zaun, N. (2018). EU refugee policies and politics in times of crisis: Theoretical and empirical perspectives. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(1), 3.

- Pace, R. (2016). Migration in the Mediterranean: Origins and characteristics. Dossier, IEMED. *Mediterranean Yearbook*, 91-97.
- Panbianco, S. (2020). The EU and migration in the Mediterranean: EU borders' control by proxy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Special issue: The EU and migration in the Mediterranean* 48.
- Pascouau, Y. (2016). *The Schengen area in crisis – the temptation of reinstalling borders*. Foundation Robert Schuman. The Research and Studies Center in Europe.
- Sadiq, K., & Tsourapas, G. (2021). The postcolonial migration state. *European Journal of International Relations*, 27(3), 884-912.
- Söderbaum, F. (2015). *Rethinking Regionalism*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spencer, S., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2020). *Migrants with Irregular Status in Europe*.
- Union for Mediterranean (UfM) (2015). *Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean ministerial conference*. Retrieved from <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Marseille-Declaration.pdf>
- Union for Mediterranean (UfM) (2020). *Annual Report 2019*. Retrieved from https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Annual-Report-2019_Print-43.pdf
- Union for Mediterranean (UfM) (2021). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from <https://ufmsecretariat.org/annual-report-2021/>