EU’s Mediterranean Policy after the Arab Spring

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Abstract
Arab Spring has been one of the most important democratization movements affecting the Middle East and North Africa. Being caught off guard like many other global actors, European Union tried to change its foreign policy towards the region. Supporting nepotist governments in MENA for the sake of stability for many years, EU started to import instability let alone promoting democracy to the region. Toppling down of the many authoritarian leaders during Arab Spring led up to a power vacuum which still could not be filled. The fuse of “Post-Modern Cold War” was ignited as global actors were trying to expand their zones of influence through proxy wars in the Middle East.

Refugee crisis breaking out as a result of ongoing conflicts and civil wars in the region posed unprecedented security challenges that Europe has ever faced with. Tragic and barbaric terrorist events taking place in France steered EU to prioritize security concerns of the continent over its core values like democracy building, protection of human rights etc. Problems emerging in the coordination and management of illegal migration and asylum seeking procedures between European countries caused cracks in Schengen area, one of the four cornerstones of EU’s Common Market system. Securitization of refugee problems via political discourse led to the rise of radical right-wing parties which might put self-existence of EU under jeopardy, let alone further integration. As EU was unable to develop a consistent foreign policy during Arab Spring, its credibility was started to be questioned as a global actor.

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the effects of Arab Spring on one of the most important foreign policy instruments of EU, namely the Mediterranean Policy. Deficiencies and factors undermining the Mediterranean Policy of EU will be analyzed within the perspective of latest events taking place in MENA region. Playing the role of “stability promoter” for many years, EU was unable to contain the instability disseminating to its soil from Middle East. Ongoing crisis in MENA region is not a problem of neighbouring countries but an inherent one for EU. Therefore, I certainly believe that EU should immediately utilize its normative power more actively in order to accelerate democratization process in the region for its own security.

Keywords: EU, Securitization, Mediterranean Policy, Arab Spring

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyze the changes in the Mediterranean Policy of European Union after the Arab Spring which has been one of the most important democratization movements in the Middle East and North Africa. The paper is comprised of three chapters. In the first chapter, underlying reasons for the development of a Mediterranean Policy will be analyzed. In order to understand the current policies of EU member states and factors that led to the outbreak of Arab revolts, it is highly essential to evaluate the relations between EU and MENA countries within historical perspective. While relations established based on security concerns are being analyzed, I will benefit from modern security studies and understandings. As clash of arms became highly improbable between MENA and EU countries with the end of colonialism, new security threats like energy security, illegal migration, human and drug trafficking and fight against terrorism will be analyzed in terms of their contribution to the Mediterranean Policy.

In the second chapter of this paper, historical cornerstones of EU’s Mediterranean Policy are tried to be described. While embracing the accomplishments of such policies, deficiencies and shortcomings of Mediterranean Policy within historical perspective will be depicted with the hope of finding solutions to deep-rooted problems. Differences in the national interests of member states and their impact on Mediterranean Policy will also be taken into consideration in the second chapter. Through such considerations, I also hope that I will be able to define both the drivers and the laggards of the Mediterranean Policy through its historical development.

Finally, I will try to observe policy changes of EU towards the region after the Arab Spring in the last chapter. While analyzing policy changes of EU, official statements, declarations and policy papers of institutions and important political figures will be utilized. As EU could not form a common policy for the Arab Spring, it will be essential to analyze foreign policies of leading member states individually. Differences and commonalities in the foreign policies of Germany, UK, France and Italy will be analyzed in this chapter. The efficiency of High Representative of Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was put into a serious test with the Arab Spring would also be evaluated in this chapter. Considering that Mediterranean Policy of EU failed so far, inferences would be made with regards to the roadmap that should be followed by EU in order to establish stability and security in the region in the conclusion part.
1. Factors Leading To The Development Of Mediterranean Policy

Middle East and North Africa has always been a region with utmost importance for EU due to geopolitical and economic reasons. Although EU did not use its hard power like USA, it tried to have an influence in the region via its soft power. Supporting nepotist governments in MENA for the sake of stability and security reasons for many years, EU started to import instability let alone promoting democracy to the region. The moment EU understood that it would be impossible to maintain its alliances with the dictators whose regime it legitimized, it was inevitable for EU to change its policy towards the region. In order to understand current policy changes of EU after the Arab Spring, I believe it is remarkably important to analyze the relations between EU and Maghreb countries thereby reaching out to the underlying reasons that led EU to develop Mediterranean Policy. It would not be so far-fetched to classify relations between EU member states and Maghreb countries under two sub-categories:

- Postcolonial Economic Relations
- Relations Established Based on Security Concerns (Migration Control, Energy Security, Fight Against Terrorism, Human and Drug Trafficking)

Up until the 20th century, European countries dominated the Mediterranean with their empires. After countries of the region gained their independence, a transition from empire building to democracy promotion within the policies of European countries have started to emerge. Although these countries (Maghreb and Mashreq countries) gained their independence from their ex-colonial powers, their dependency to European countries, in practical terms, continued. The dependency of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to France in terms of economic and military security set an example to that situation. Starting from 1960's and onwards, EEC tried to improve its economic relations with Maghreb countries through free-trade, preferential trade and association agreements. Financial protocols and loans granted by European Investment Bank intensified the economic ties between EU and Maghreb countries. EEC by then had the perception that institutions of liberal democracy

1 Timo Behr, “The European Union’s Mediterranean Policies after Arab Spring: Can the Leopard change its spots?”, Amsterdam Law Forum, VU University of Amsterdam, p.5.
would be established when market forces strengthened their position in political circles as a result of trade and economic liberalization. Main bottleneck of such an assumption was the fact that political culture of those countries did not let market forces emerge and EEC funds were abused as tools of legitimization of the governance of Maghreb countries and a cover for their extremely worrisome human rights records.

Diplomatic crises between Maghreb countries and EU member states also undermined bilateral relations at intervals. Conflict between Spain and Morocco over Ceuta and Mellila enclaves, support of Algeria for Polisario Front were among the main disputes blocking the channels of communication between aforesaid countries. Gradually aggravating tensions between Spain and Morocco placed the latter to the agenda of EU on frequent occasions. Spanish criticisms of Morocco over illegal migration, human and drug trafficking, notorious human right records lead European Parliament to reject economic aid package for the African country which was severely in need of foreign capital flow.  

In addition to such a political impasse, dispute over Perejil Islands brought two countries on the brick of war and further deteriorated the relations. As Spanish soldiers repelled Moroccan army from the island, protests from France scaled up and the dispute over the island could only be resolved with the intervention of Collin Powell, Secretary of the State of USA. Such a disunity in the foreign policy of EEC questioned the Union’s diplomatic problem solving and crisis management capacity. Irredentist attitude of King Hassan the Second and Green March demonstrations of 1975 caused conservative parties of Spain to approach Morocco with ultimate suspicion in international relations. Such reasons put relations between Spain and Morocco into an entire gridlock. Only after Zapatero’s term of office, relations between two countries started to heal again.  

Security played an important role for the development of Mediterranean Policy as security concerns of EU has always shaped its foreign policy towards the third countries. As European Council properly stated: “Enlargement brought EU much closer to troubled waters”. Therefore we can easily conclude that limiting the relations between Maghreb countries and EU member states to economic agreements would certainly be a huge mistake. In order to protect the vision of “Fortress Europe”, EU placed greater emphasis to its relations with

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MENA countries significantly on the security axis. As clash of arms in European continent became unthinkable in the post-cold war era, new fields of security emerged. Illegal migration, terrorist attacks, supply of energy became the subjects of securitization. For instance, European External Action Service defined migration as a subject of high priority in its foreign policies and underlined the importance of cooperation with third countries in order to handle the problem of illegal migration. As long as, Maghreb countries accepted the return of refugees to their lands, criticisms of EU countries over human rights violations taking place in Maghreb never went beyond rhetorics.

Energy security was another important factor that placed special importance to the relations with MENA countries. When oil crisis broke out in 1973, Trans-Mediterranean pipeline projects gained further momentum due to security concerns. Establishment of Global Mediterranean Policy in 1970s was of no coincidence. 1991 Gulf War, Russia-Ukraine gas disputes brought forward the issue of energy security once again to the agenda of European countries. Such incidents steered EU to prioritize modern security concerns over its core values like, rule of law, protection of human rights and promotion of democracy…

Inability to integrate “national immigrants” into the mainstream society of Europe triggered mass ethnic demonstrations and terrorist attacks in France, Spain and many other European countries. Gare du Nord riots was a flashpoint of such upheavels. Extending the concept of “Frenchness” to African-Muslims who had never been to France had its traumatic effects. Many radical terrorist organizations manifested that their fight for freedom started under “French Intifada”. As a power vacuum emerged with the toppling down of the dictators in the region, radical terrorist organizations pragmatically increased their power and sided against European countries which had legitimized overthrown corrupted governments for the sake of economic benefits and prevention of migration. Such a power vacuum emerging in the MENA region put Europe into a great terrorism danger which manifested itself not only in neighbouring countries but within Europe itself with consecutive suicide bombing incidents happening in France and Belgium even today.

2. Shortcomings Of The Mediterranean Policy Within Historical Perspective

Last twenty years has been characterized with regional integrations. The increase in such regional integrations was stemmed from the desire of nation states to collectively undertake the burden and costs of their foreign policy objectives. Some scholars claimed that the death of nation state and the emergence of regional economic integrations were inevitable due to irresistible power of global capital. \(^8\) Regional integrations like MERCOSUR, NAFTA, APEC, ASEAN and even EU was certainly the result of such increasing interdependence between countries. With the end of Cold-War, integration of European countries accelerated in align with such trends. However, importance attached to Balkans, Caucasus and Eastern Europe in recent years led Mediterranean and North Africa to be overlooked. Since an institutionalized structure for economic cooperation could not be established in the Mediterranean, faultlines emerging between rich northern countries and poor Southern countries triggered instability and posed a security challenge for both EU and Maghreb countries. \(^9\) In order to strengthen the South–South economic cooperation and increase the bargaining power of Maghreb countries, Arab Maghreb Union was established in 1989. All the same, AMU was not able to fulfill the ambitious expectations and targets it set forth with its foundation. Trade volume between Maghreb countries did not exceed %3. \(^10\) As Maghreb countries lacked the capacity of competing with European markets, a zero-sum game occurred between them to receive EU loans and market access. In addition to this, Maghreb was politically divided in the international crises like Libyan Lockerbie bombings, Gulf War and Western Sahara Conflict which hampered the common action and regional integration even further.

One of the underlying reasons why Mediterranean Policy of EU failed to fulfill its ambitious goals was that the interests of member states varied remarkably. Industrially strong northern countries like UK and Germany gave utmost support to Global Mediterranean Policy with the hope of receiving cheap agricultural products. However, the pioneers of Mediterranean Policy, France and Italy ironically preferred bilateral trade agreements with the fear of losing European markets to Maghreb countries in the agricultural sector. While

\(^8\) Jürgen Habermas, *Postnational Constellations: Political Essays*, MIT Press, 2001
Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia had the free market access of EU’s industrial goods, seasonal limitations and tariff quotas were implemented to agricultural products of Maghreb countries from which they would probably have the ultimate benefit for their economies. Such limitations practically put Maghreb countries to the status of “most favoured nation” rather than countries with free trade agreements. This approach prevented EEC from setting up a comprehensive policy that would facilitate the region-building and regional integration in Northern Africa. As a result, bilateralism dominated the relations between EU and Maghreb countries.

The year of 1995 was a turning point for the Mediterranean Policy of EU. For the first time in the history of Mediterranean Policy, an institutionalized multilateral approach was tried to be embraced by EU member states. Setting forth ambitious targets in three different baskets, Barcelona Declaration was thought to be very promising for the future relations of MENA and EU. However, one of the biggest disadvantages of the Barcelona Process was that it was linked together with the Middle East Peace Process. As EU had been determined as one of the key global actors of Middle East Peace Quartet, (together with USA, Russia and UN) Palestinian Authority and Israel seized on the opportunity to utilize Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as a platform for expressing their demands with regards to the unceasing conflict in the region. A political impasse was reached as a result of such futile discussions.

Secondly, the agenda of EU was quite busy with the eastern enlargement in the 1990’s. With the collapse of the SSSR, integrating eastern European countries into Western Bloc constituted a priority for EU. European investments were steered for eastern European countries due to cheap qualified labour force, geographical proximity and similarities in the business culture. Directing funds and investments to eastern European countries rather than Mediterranean neighbours led to economic downturn in MENA countries which was accompanied by increasing radicalization, flux of migrants to European continent and aggravating human and drug trafficking. The support given by Central European countries for Barcelona Process was not taken for granted either. Central European countries did not act as

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laggards for the launch of Barcelona Process in return for the support they would receive for eastern enlargement.\textsuperscript{13}

The balance between France and Germany in terms of their influence in European politics have changed in favour of the latter with Eastern European enlargement. Western Europe ceased to be the heart of European Politics with the latest member states. With its growing economy and the support of east European countries, it will not be unfair to say that German influence in European politics increased in recent years.\textsuperscript{14} Reviving the “France Grandeur” became the highest priority of French politicians and academic circles who defined the era of Valery Giscard d'Estaing, republican Miterrand and socialist Chirac as the era of “declinologie”.\textsuperscript{15} Trying to win back its influence lost with Suez Canal crisis in the Middle East and form a balancing power against the dominant Anglo-American containment, France started to invest in its foreign policy towards MENA region.

As France experienced a reduction of its influence in European politics with Eastern Enlargement, she decided to take action during her rotating presidency of European Council. While it can be described as the personal project of Nicolas Sarkozy, Union for Mediterranean tried to institutionalize relations between MENA and European countries. Co-presidency and establishment of a small secretariat was the innovations brought with this new policy platform.\textsuperscript{16} When we look at the timing of Union for Mediterranean project, international political arena was again experiencing turbulent times. At those times, Ireland was rejecting the Lisbon Treaty, South Ossetia crisis broke out in the Caucasus and a financial crisis were about to erupt. During such politically and economically unsteady times, it was not easy to place Union for Mediterranean to the forefront of political agenda in Europe. Although Nicolas Sarkozy made a great endeavour to keep this issue at the political agenda of EU, blocking of the policy proposals by a non-Mediterranean country (Germany) was a difficult bite to swallow for the foreign policy of France.\textsuperscript{17} As France tried to play the role of “primus inter pares” with its UfM policy, Merkel demanded a the content of the project to be changed

\textsuperscript{13} Tobias Schumacher, “Germany and Central Eastern European Countries: Laggards or Veto-Players?” Federica Bicchi, Richard Gillespie (ed.), \textit{The Union for the Mediterranean}, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, s.75-93.


\textsuperscript{16} Torbica Bicchi, Richard Gillespie, \textit{Ibid}, p.53

\textsuperscript{17} Tobias Schumacher, \textit{Ibid}, p.75-93.
claiming that EU funds must not be utilized for the national interests of a single member state.\textsuperscript{18}

3. After The Arab Spring: What (Un)Changed?

There were a lot of motives which triggered the Arab Spring. In that regard, a political analysis attempting to explain the upheavels of the region solely based on economic factors would be far from reality. Conceptualized as “dignity revolution”, Arab Spring was a remarkably important insurrection against the political suppression and nepotist governments in the region.\textsuperscript{19} Although Arab Spring was an important insurrection against the nepotist governments, it also conveyed a message of vital importance to European leaders who, throughout the years, legitimized and even tried to save the authoritarian regimes of MENA countries. Revolts starting from Tunisia and disseminating to neighbouring countries via a domino effect also disproved the orientalist viewpoint asserting that the desire and appetite for democracy can not flourish from muslim societies.

A thought provoking similarity emerges when one analyzes the countries whose regimes changed during the Arab Spring. Although income levels of countries in the region varied remarkably from each other, resemblances in political culture of these failed states were salient. The fact that Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, Hafez al-Assad, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali and Muammar Gaddafi were leaders with military background constituted the aforesaid resemblance.\textsuperscript{20} The reason why leaders with military background dominated the political circles of MENA countries for so many years was that modernization process had been initiated in armed forces for the first time in Ottoman Empire. For this reason, families with military background constituted the political elite for a long time both in Turkey and also in MENA countries after the collapse of Ottoman Empire. Mentioned by Sudanese political scientist Haydar İbrahim, securitocracy* described the core characteristics of those regimes. In order to cling to the power, political elites of these countries (generally comprised of a single family) used intelligence forces to suppress any political opposition. These countries also always ranked at the bottom of human rights,

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, p.78
\textsuperscript{19} Müjge Küçükkeleş, Ibid,
\textsuperscript{20} Murat Aktaş,\textsuperscript{20} Arap Baharı: Ortadoğu’da Demokrasi Arayışı ve Türkiye Modeli, Ankara, Nobel Yayınevi, Eylül 2012, p. 38–44.

* Securitocracy is a term used by Haydar İbrahim to define the political characteristics of Arab countries. Securitocracy refers to a system where security elites use direct or indirect influences and interventions in order to cling to the power.
corruption and democracy indices. Considering all such problems, we have to ask ourselves a critical question. Why did not EU implement a sound, dissuasive action other than its discoursal stance against those regimes where corruption, political suppression and violation of human rights were so common and evident? The answer for this question can be found in the security perception that has changed after 9/11.

Terrorist attack of 9/11 led to the adoption of a new security approach in the western world. Lack of democracy in the Middle East constituted a security threat according to this new security approach which associated security with democratic regimes. Although EU did not try to export democracy directly to the undemocratic regions as USA did, it postulated that economic liberalization and market reforms would inevitably lead to democratization in those regions. However, market forces did not form due to weak civil society, dominant crony capitalism and political culture which is extremely hostile to the democracy. Inequality in terms of the income distribution increased and authoritarian governments secured their powers in their countries.

For years, EU faced a formidable dilemma in its relations with MENA countries. This dilemma was between stability promotion and democracy promotion. As democracy promotion was more complex, costly and required greater time to be realized, EU-Maghreb relations were driven mainly by economic interests. EU overlooked human rights violations and lack of democracy since authoritarian governments functioned as a shield against political Islam and jihadist Selefi groups in their regions. The belief that any regime change would trigger chaos in the region constituted the achilles heel of EU in its relations with MENA countries. Based on such considerations a win-win relationship was established between EU and MENA states. While EU solved its problems of illegal migration, suppresion of anti-western political groups and energy security, governments of MENA region legitimized their administration by recieving the financial and political support of EU countries.

Arab Spring was important since it proved us that geo-political interests of the member states were at the forefront during crises. Intervention on Libya explicitly showed a disunited Europe in terms of foreign policy. France opposed NATO taking control of the

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Libya operation\textsuperscript{23} while Italy stated that it would withdraw its support for intervention if NATO did not command the operation.\textsuperscript{24} Germany on the other hand decided to abstain from voting on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 authorizing a no-fly zone over Libya. \textsuperscript{25} While UK proposed arming rebels fighting against the Gaddafi, \textsuperscript{26} Belgium strongly opposed to that idea. \textsuperscript{27} All such foreign policy actions of member states made it crystal clear that EU was far away from following a common foreign policy at the outbreak of the crisis.

When revolts broke out, EU member states abstained from harsh criticisms due to their geo-political and economic interests in the region. This became evident when France embraced a moderate discursal stance towards Tunisia because of its economic ties. Many of the EU member states adopted for a “wait and see” policy. Some member states even tried to undermine the transformation process by offering support to authoritarian regimes. Official statements delivered by EU authorities only called for sobriety.\textsuperscript{28} France was a country which tried to undermine the transformation process at the initial phases of revolts. Foreign Minister of France stated that France could provide police support to Tunisia in order to supress demonstrations.\textsuperscript{29} Minister of Agriculture of France, Bruno Le Marie stated that “Judging Tunisian government is not my business!”. In addition to the minister of agriculture, minister of culture, Frederic Miterrand claimed that Tunisia was not unequivocal dictatorship.\textsuperscript{30} All such official statements delivered by French authorities showed the explicit support of France for previous Tunisian government.

As France failed to pursue an active foreign policy on Tunisian transformation process, she tried to compensate the failure of Tunisia in Libyan case. Staying silent in Tunisian and Egyptian turmoils, France actively tried to convince United Nations Security


\textsuperscript{24} Valentina Pop, “Italy presses for NATO command of Libya war”, EUObserver, (Online), https://euobserver.com/news/32033 , 30.04.2015

\textsuperscript{25} http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/Analysis-Archive/ideasToday/08/berenskoetter.pdf

\textsuperscript{26} “US and Britain may arm Libya rebels if Gaddafi clings to power”, The Guardian, (Online), http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/29/libya-rebels-armed-by-us-uk , 20.03.2015

\textsuperscript{27} “Belgium opposes arming Libyan rebels”, Expatica, (Online), http://www.expatica.com/be/news/country-news/Belgium-opposes-arming-Libyanrebels_249981.html , 20.03.2015

\textsuperscript{28} “Joint Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Stefan Füle on the Situation in Tunisia”, (Online), http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/136186.pdf , 20.03.2015

\textsuperscript{29} Ufuk Ulutaş, Furkan Tolak, “Devrimden Demokrasiye Tunus’un Seçimi”, SETA Analiz, No:46, Kasım 2011, p.16.

\textsuperscript{30} Sarkozy admits France made mistakes over Tunisia”, The Guardian, (Online), http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/24/nicolas-sarkozy-tunisia-protests , 20.03.2015
Council to authorize a no-fly zone over Libya.\(^{31}\) Three factors caused France to embrace such an active policy in Libyan military intervention. First of all, France tried to save its prestige which was severely damaged due to its discourse and stance against Tunisian revolts. In addition to that, toppling down of Gaddafi regime was a golden opportunity for France as Gaddafi was a military leader with Pan-Islamist and Pan-Arab foreign policies undermining the personal project of Nicolas Sarkozy, namely the Union for Mediterranean. Taking lessons from failed foreign policy towards Tunisia, France realized that the fall of Gaddafi was inevitable as two politically important tribes of Libya (Warfalla and Maghraa) were going to withdraw their support for Gaddafi regime due to the revolts.\(^{32}\)

During the Arab Spring, Germany was the country which caused a severe disunity in the foreign policy of EU. Foreign policy of Germany has presented a unique synthesis of economic entrepreneurship and military reluctance for a long time.\(^{33}\) However, abstention of Germany in UNSC 1973 resolution can not solely be explained based on its military reluctance. The relationship between Germany and Libya has been strengthened especially after 2004. Germany tried to break its dependence to Russia in terms of energy security through North African oils. It was a striking fact that %11 of the country’s oil export was coming from Libya.\(^{34}\) One of the main reasons why EU could not develop a common foreign policy during the Arab Spring was stemmed from disagreements between two important foreign policy driving actors of EU (Germany and France). While Germany was trying to utilize the soft power of EU, France started to opt for hard power in its effort to revive France Grandeur during Sarkozy’s term of office.

EU has also shown a considerable inconsistency about democracy and human rights issues. Its uncritical engagement with GCC countries ran counter to its self-declared new role as a democracy promoter.\(^{35}\) When Saudi Arabia intervened in peaceful demonstrations taking place in Bahrain, Germany acquiesced the situation without questioning. Suppression of the upheavals emerging in Bahrain was favourable for the political interests of not only Germany but all EU countries as it would lead to a reduction of the influence of Iran in the region. Sales

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\(^{31}\) France urges EU sanctions on Libya”, Al Jazeera. (Online), http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2011/02/2011223102122200199.html, 20.03.2015


\(^{33}\) Volker Perthes, “Relations to Arab World, Germany and the Middle East: Interests and Opinions”, *Heinrich Böll Foundation & Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, Berlin, t.y., p.129-139.


\(^{35}\) Timo Behr, *Ibid*, p.87
of 200 Leopard tanks to Saudi Arabia during Bahrain revolts exposed Germany to the firing arrows of criticism. UK was also harshly criticized for its arms trade with GCC countries. The visit of David Cameron to GCC countries together with a delegation of arms traders immediately after Tunisian and Egyptian revolts questioned the morality of UK foreign policy during Arab Spring. UK had to revoke 44 of its arms trade agreements with Bahrain and Libya.

Italy’s foreign policy approach towards Arab Spring mainly focused on migration control. Italy promised an aid with the value of 200 million euro to Tunisia as long as National Transitional Council collaborated on the issue of controlling illegal migration. On 17th June 2011, Italy and NTC signed a Memorandum of Understanding which focused on measures to reduce illegal migration. Signing parties of this MoU committed to exchange information on migration flows and engage in mutual assistance to combat irregular migration, including the repatriation of illegal migrants. Approximately 13,000 “illegal migrants” have been repatriated between the months of January and July. It is questionable whether the policy followed by Italy and Tunisia with regards to migrants is in compliance with non-refoulement principle. Since Italy has the obligation to protect migrants from torture and probable ill-treatment it has been harshly criticized by many non-governmental organizations for violating international law norms.

There was a giant illusion that EU member states harmonised their foreign policy choices after 9/11. While France and Germany opposed to Iraq intervention, UK sided with USA at that time. In order to prevent such a disunity in the foreign policy of EU, the position of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of EU has been created after the Lisbon Treaty. It is also fair to say that Common Foreign and Security Policy

41 Sergio Carrera, Leonard den Hertog, Joanna Parkin, Ibid.
42 https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/16/issue/14/european-court-human-rights-protects-migrants-against-%E2%80%9Cpush-back%E2%80%9D
of EU was not tested firmly up until the emergence of Arab Spring. Being probably the most serious test of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Arab Spring certainly caught EU off guard. Trying to protect the status quo was the first action taken by High Representative as it was the case for member states. As revolts aggravated in Egypt, EU was only calling for sobriety and fair elections but never demanded Hosni Mubarek to abdicate his place. As constitutional changes took place in Jordan and revolts were suppressed very quickly in Gulf emirates, EU High Representative opted for a “wait and see” policy. When it was understood that the fall of governments would be inevitable, EU reviewed its Neighbourhood Policy. “A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean” was the document issued on 8th of May 2011 as a response to changing dynamics in the region. Two months later Catherine Ashton formulated the 3 M principle based on positive conditionality. “A New Response to Changing Environment” set forth the principles of EU’s new policy towards the region. Although financial aids of EU for new governments were linked to the condition of democratization, it became evident that EU would sustain its approach towards those countries from the security perspective.

With regards to Libya intervention, EU collaborated with UNSC. EU also took part in the Action Group which was responsible for deploying the sanctions against Syrian regime. The dialogues established between EU, African Union, Arab League and Islamic Cooperation Organization were invaluable. Spesifically, the dialogues established between EU and General Secretary of Arab League, Amr Moussa who defined himself as the spokesman of democratization movements in the Arab world were remarkably promising achievements for the foreign policy of EU. However, EU had no choice but to link its foreign policy choices to UNSC decisions as the intergovernmentalist features endured in policy making process for EU.

44 Müjge Küçükkeleş, Ibid, p.26
CONCLUSION

Although it is quite early to assert that Arab Spring will generate a “new wave of democracy” in the Middle East, significance of the upheavels is so obvious as they have already been associated with 1989 East European revolutions. Falsifying the traditional presupposition that democracy can not flourish in the Middle Eastern societies, Arab Spring has proven to be a cornerstone in the history of Arab democratization movements. Shaping its foreign policy towards the Arab world with aforesaid presupposition, European countries had to face with inevitable and legitimate demand of Arab societies. However, I believe we have to ask ourselves the evaded question. Has there been a real transformation process in the Arab world after the Arab Spring?

Even though four leaders have been toppled down and the outcry of Arab people for democracy has been heard all over the world, we have not observed so far any change in the regimes of Arab states. Elections have been declared null and void in the Egypt and military forces seized the government with a coup d’etat just like the old times. It would of course be unrealistic to export democracy and let it root in a single night in the societies which have been ruled with undemocratic regimes for centuries. However, we came to a point in which the opportunities for Arab democracies might be swept away.

Arab Spring has also led us to question the normative power of EU. Making references to the universal human values, trying to disseminate the principle of multilateralism in foreign relations and prevent conflicts, negotiating rather than coercing were among the civil and normative features of EU’s foreign policy. EU also had a constructive dialogue for transformation in Syria from 2008-2011. However, Libya intervention by France and deployment of German marines in Eastern Mediterranean clearly showed us that EU might waive from its normative power and opt for hard power if need be.

Arab Spring has also posed unprecedented challenges for the EU as a result of refugee crisis which could not be solved as of the written date of this article. Toppling down of the

50 Alman Dış İstihbaratı Suriye’ye Yoğunlaşıyor.”, (Online), http://www.dunyabulteni.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=222527, 27.04.2015
many authoritarian leaders during Arab Spring led up to a power vacuum which still could not be filled. As global actors have been trying to increase their influence in the region, proxy wars led to the dissemination of instability not only in MENA but also in Europe. Refugee crisis breaking out as a result of ongoing conflicts and civil wars in the region should be evaluated as an inherent problem of EU. Problems emerging in the coordination and management of illegal migration and asylum seeking procedures between European countries caused cracks in Schengen area, one of the four cornerstones of EU’s Common Market system. Securitization of refugee problems via political discourse led to the rise of radical right-wing parties which might put self-existence of EU under jeopardy, let alone further integration.

In order to seize on the opportunity emerging as a result of Arab Spring, regional integration through increasing cooperation should be established first and foremost on the South-south axis. It is quite obvious that Arab Maghreb Union was not able to fulfill its ambitious targets so far. Second of all, EU should start questioning the effectiveness of its foreign policy instruments. Is there a future for external governance or do we need a revision in external governance policies of EU? Playing the role of stability promoter for many years, EU started to import instability let alone promoting democracy to the region. Funds and loans to be allocated to the region should be invested for strengthening civil society in those countries. Strengthening civil society would definitely constitute the first step for democratic transition in rent-seeking states.

When USA implemented its Marshall Plan for preserving the democracies in Europe, it allocated 125 billion euros between the years of 1947-1951. Within the scope of Mediterranean Policy, Brussels invested only 20 billion euros to MENA region for democracy promotion between the years of 1995-2005.\(^1\) One can easily conclude that EU should prepare its Marshall Plan for the region in order to prevent instability disseminating to its soil. Sole political will of individual leaders would not suffice for the implementation of an EU Marshall Plan. It is for certain that northern countries like Germany and Sweden which is contributing heavily to the EU funds would not be volunteers of the Mediterranean Policy without any return for their investments. While isolationsit policies of USA is being discussed, a common foreign policy will be of vital importance for EU if instability problem would like to be tackled. As it was mentioned before, bringing an end to the clash of arms in

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\(^1\) Stephan C. Calleya, *Ibid*, p.139. Europe was the utopia that EU was built on. Right now EU is in need of new utopias. The utopia of a common foreign policy is of vital importance for EU.
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