

## EIN Seminar on “EU Transatlantic dialogue in the Mediterranean region”

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The constant turmoil and fragmentation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region unavoidably affects both EU countries and the USA and their strategic cooperation.

The European Union Institute for Security Studies (2017) emphasizes that the MENA region has a very strategic importance for the EU, highlighting three main reasons: the geographic proximity to Europe, the vital passage for goods traveling to and from Europe and the constant instability within the region. This is directly intertwined to Europe and it is the reason why we need to act in conformity to such problems.

The close cooperation and work between Europe and the US allows an open discussion, where both sides can share their perspectives and strategic position towards the MENA region and how to tackle illegal immigration, civil wars and political instability through action programmes that seek to encourage political, social and economic reforms in each country individually and according to its priorities. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is an example of such programmes. One of the key priorities of this policy, which was launched in 2004, is to build a more efficient partnership so that the EU and its neighbours can face the threats and challenges, especially regarding migration and mobility. Through the ENP, the EU offers partner countries potential greater access to the EU's market and regulatory framework, standards and internal agencies and programmes. Having said this, the European Union proposes to establish dialogues on migration and security regarding the Southern Mediterranean countries, which is one of the biggest challenges, so that it can create new agreements that will help on the mobility management. The ENP opens up to a all new range of cooperation areas as conflict prevention, crisis management and security sector reform. In order to address these questions, the EU aims to work more closely to its partners to redefine common goals.

The Arab Spring, the Civil War in Syria and the dictatorships that rule in some African countries have led to a situation of instability which Europe has not seen since the Second World War. The more efficient way to address this crisis is to clearly understand and establish each neighbour role in order to provide the right tools on an individual basis.

The Europe of 2050 predicts a mass wave of immigration coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. Both sides of the Atlantic need to create programmes to control such waves of immigration and have a clear and definite strategy to control what could be an obstacle towards development and security.

Security is the flip-side of stability and Europe needs to find a balance between both. Fruitful dialogues on how to strengthen regulations, uphold the rule of law, build bridges with neighbouring countries and promote security are the key to ensure that our citizens live in a safe and prominent Europe. What other approaches can we take? What is the future of the MENA region, the US and the European Union cooperation?