Between a Rock and a Hard Place: North Africa as a region of emigration, immigration and transit migration

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The prevailing Eurocentric perspective on Mediterranean migration lies almost exclusively in the security paradigm, focusing upon African illegal migration to Europe and disregarding the role of migration in the socio-economic development of the African continent. The older emigration histories of North African countries are diverse, with Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria linked to France as a destination country, Libya as an immigration country, and Egypt linked with other Arab countries for temporary migration alongside permanent migration to Anglophone countries. More recent changes include the emergence of southern Europe as destination countries for all except Libyans, and all of North Africa turned into transit countries for migrants from the sub-Sahara and Asia.

The "new migrations" from and through North Africa are described, along with known major migration routes and data on interceptions of illegal migrants by southern European countries. North African policy responses are also identified, noting especially the failure of all countries in the region to observe international human rights standards. Finally, I outline the "failed policy" of the European Union, which simply continues the securitization approach previously pursued by Spain and Italy, neglecting the fundamental realities of Africa as a new continent of emigration. Furthermore, European policy promotes the human rights abuses of North Africa with regard to illegal migrants and asylum-seekers, yet welcomes skilled (as opposed to semi-skilled) African migrants to European territory. Europe thus guarantees the continuation of African underdevelopment – seeking to avoid its negative symptom of mass emigration and asylum-seeking whilst benefiting from the migration to Europe of skilled African workers.

Conventional narratives about migration and North Africa tend to emphasise the role of demography in shaping emigration pressures, ignore the significance of Libya as a guestworker country for the region, and completely disregard the importance of forced migrations throughout Africa. Furthermore, the complex interconnectedness of migrations and socio-economic development in Africa is somehow lost in Eurocentric approaches. Such approaches can be found at their very worst in the policies and analyses of the European Commission, or the Barcelona Declaration: they focus upon illegal African migration to Europe, advocate a policy of 'root causes' of migration which can be remedied with economic aid, and hail migrant workers' remittances as a panacea for faltering economies (whilst ignoring the massive and serious loss of skilled workers from many countries in the region).

Recent events have only worsened the deficiencies of the European perspective, since the most visible manifestation of changing migration patterns has become a

physical challenge to the integrity of Europe's external borders. Whether it be through 'boatpeople' crossing the Mediterranean, or the climbing of the security fences in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, the response of the EU is the same – "send them back". Thus, detailed legal provisions known as readmission treaties are being forced upon all countries bordering the EU, naval patrols and frontiers reinforced, and increasing emphasis laid upon detection and deportation of illegal immigrants and even *refoulement* of asylum-seekers. The ability of North Africa to manage all aspects of migration, especially transit migration of people from sub-Sahara and even Asia, is now central. In particular, the treatment of illegal migrants, returned migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and guestworkers have been shown by all independent sources to be at best inadequate, at worst profoundly inhuman.

In this paper, I set myself the ambitious task of exploring some of the linkages between different facets of migration, and how three different regions (northern Mediterranean, southern Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)) are actually intimately connected through migration. Some theoretical considerations are also outlined, since migration and socio-economic development are closely related – even if the complex relationship defies the identification of universal truths. Finally, I conclude with an examination of European policy, and its failure to grapple with Mediterranean or African socio-economic imperatives.

A Short History of North Africa and Emigration
Of the four Maghreb countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya), Morocco has been the only one since 1968 with a consistent policy of encouraging emigration in order to manage unemployment levels (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 4). Even after the oil-shock and the closure of European labour markets to immigration in 1974, Morocco maintained its policy stance of promoting emigration, opposition to the integration of Moroccans abroad, and great emphasis on the remittances received from the Moroccan diaspora (Fargues, 2004: 1359). Most migrants did not return, and massive family reunification to European countries in the 1970s and 1980s led to an increase in Moroccans from 400,000 in 1975 to over one million in 1992 in France, Belgium, Netherlands and Germany. By 1998, the number had risen to 1.6 million in northern Europe, and despite the opposition of the Moroccan state,

430,000 were granted EU nationality over the period 1992-2001 (de Haas, 2005a). With new Moroccan migrations to Spain and Italy after 1990, the resulting diaspora by 2004 was measured at over 3 million worldwide (over 10% of current population) – with 2.6 million in wider Europe and 280,000 in other Arab countries (Sadiqi, 2005).

Tunisia started with the same sort of approach as Morocco in the late 1960s, but by 1974 the state was encouraging the return of its nationals (Fargues, 2004: 1359). Despite this official policy, the number of Tunisians abroad by 2003 was in excess of 800,000 (Zekri, 2005; CARIM, 2005: 315), around 9% of current population, with over 700,000 in greater Europe, mostly in France.

Algeria from the outset was more ambiguous about emigration as a safety-valve for the labour market, preferring to denounce migration as a post-colonial form of dependency and instead relying upon development of its oil and gas reserves (Fargues, 2004: 1359). Its policy left the diaspora highly disconnected from the country, and also explains the relatively low rate of refugee flows during the civil war in the 1990s. By 2000, over 800,000 Algerians were recorded (CARIM, 2005: 374-6) mostly in France – constituting just under 3% of current population.

Libya has a rather different history of migration policy. Owing to the development of its oil and a high *per capita* GDP, it was always a destination country for labour migrants. Some limited temporary emigration occurred, mostly of businessmen and students to Malta and Egypt (NDI, 2005: 27); since Libya removed formal travel restrictions, there has been increasing travel by young people to Italy and Malta. However, the Libyan diaspora is very small. On the other hand, the number and proportion of immigrants in Libya is high: estimates range from 1.1-1.4 million (NDI, 2005) up to 1.8 million, of which only 600,000 are legal workers (EC, 2004: 5). With a total recorded population of around 5.5m, this means that the immigrant/population ratio is of the order of 25-30%. The majority of temporary workers traditionally have come from Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, although more recent visa-free entry for all of Africa resulted also in large numbers of sub-Saharan Africans (NDI, 2005: 29).

Egypt too has a rather different migration history from the other North African countries. Emigration was prohibited until 1967, after which followed a short period of state-organized temporary labour migration to other Arab countries, mainly in the Gulf. Finally, in 1971 legal restrictions on emigration were removed. Abella (1994: 168) identifies three phases of emigration of Egyptians: to Libya, in the early 1970s; to Saudi Arabia, in the late 1970s; and to Iraq, peaking in 1984. Since then, temporary migration flows have been focused on Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan and Kuwait, with an equal mix of skilled and unskilled workers. Unskilled workers predominate in Saudi Arabia – the main receiving country – whereas skilled workers are the majority for almost all other countries of the region (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 8). Permanent emigrants choose mainly Anglophone countries (USA, Canada, Australia) along with Italy and Greece, and are thought to number about 800,000; the estimated number of temporary migrants to nearby countries is 1.9 million. Thus, total emigration as of 2002 constituted around 4% of current population.

Egypt also has substantial unrecognized refugee stocks (from Sudan, Somalia and Palestine), which could be as high as 5 million, making the country clearly a net immigration country (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 8).

For all four Maghreb countries, transit migration (into Europe) and immigration from sub-Saharan Africa and even Asia have recently created serious problems. There are also some informal indications that Egypt is slowly transforming into a transit region, although data are unavailable.

Some Theoretical Considerations

Demography and Migration

The older literature on migration (e.g. Ravenstein, 1885), along with occasional contemporary approaches, tended to assume that population growth has a direct correlation with propensity to migrate. In other words, a high birth rate would lead (with lag) to high emigration, whereas low population growth would not (or might require immigration). This approach to migration has now been abandoned in the mainstream literature, with adequate empirical evidence to show that globally there is zero correlation. Zlotnik, for example, shows that for 164 countries "there is no simple or unidirectional relation between natural increase and net migration"

(Zlotnik, 2004a: 33) and that even for countries with high levels of natural increase both net immigration and net emigration can be observed.

On the other hand, demographic developments clearly have some role to play in the socio-economic pressures shaping emigration patterns. Afolayan (2001: 10) lists – along with the demographic issues of population growth and population density – economic vulnerability and debt, socio-cultural issues, ecological disasters, social networking, government migration policies and regional economic integration. In the specific case of Africa, Adepoju considers the determinants of emigration to be categorizable under the headings of labour force growth, economic decline and debt, ethnopolitical conflict and ecological deterioration. In this context, emigration should be seen as a survival strategy by individuals and families (Adepojou, 2004: 65).

In a similar vein, the World Bank notes that low-skilled migration can improve labour market conditions for other poor workers (World Bank, 2006a: 64) and even high-skilled emigration can sometimes be beneficial for countries of origin (World Bank, 2006a: 67). These considerations are crucial for North Africa, which still has high fertility rates in all but Tunisia (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 26) and annual projected labour force growth to 2020 of 2-3% in Algeria and Egypt, 1.5-2.5% in Libya and Morocco, and 1-2.5% in Tunisia.[1] In all these countries, male labour force participation is expected to remain stable, but with significant increases of female participation in Algeria and Egypt. The ability of their economies to absorb the new workforce (rather than simple population increases) will be a crucial determinant of future emigration pressures.

Migration and Development
The relationship between migration and socio-economic development is neither simple nor unidirectional. Emigration is somehow connected with income disparities between countries of emigration and immigration, but very low income countries tend to have very low emigration. Equally, the temporary relief provided to strained labour markets is a short-term help, whereas the loss of workers – especially high-skilled ones – is an impediment to longer-run economic development. Also, workers' remittances from abroad are now increasingly seen as a new development "mantra"

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[1] Approximations from World Bank data (2004: Table A.7)

(de Haas, 2005b: 1276), especially since recent years have seen declining development aid alongside increasing migrants' remittances to LDCs.

Recent scholarship is inclined to see [voluntary] international migration as a stage of development, indicating a transition from a very low level of development to an upper-lower income level. According to this view, migration stems not from underdevelopment but from development itself. There is much to commend this view, since historically Africa has exhibited high refugee movements within the region – 30% as of 2000 (Zlotnik, 2004b) – whilst emigration rates have been fairly low from all but the Maghreb. Generally, the world's main labour exporters are upper lower to lower-middle income countries such as North Africa or the Philippines (de Haas, 2005c: 4). Olesen (2002) names this range of low-middle income and high emigration countries as the "migration band", above which emigration tends to diminish. He posits the explanation as the reduced differential in income levels between emigration and immigration countries ($PPP), citing ratios from 1:3 to 1:4.5 (Olesen, 2002: 141). Olesen also suggests that Morocco is ready to exit the migration band, and economic development will reduce its emigration.

Although historically most sub-Saharan migration was intra-continental, since the mid-1990s emigration rates have increased significantly. Gubert (2005: 41) gives net migration rates for 1995-2000 of 6.2% for Guinea, 5.5% for Burkina Faso, 4.7% for Mali and 3.4% for Lesotho. In recent years, emigration outside the continent has taken off: this trend is unsurprising, since internal migration possibilities diminished with worsening economies, and South-South labour migration (e.g. to Gulf countries) options were reduced (Adepoju, 2004). Thus, 'migration for survival' has emerged as a composite type – somehow straddling the western categories of forced and voluntary labour migrations, but crudely classed as "illegal" (Sandell, 2005). The impact of migrant remittances for sub-Sahara is now such that one analyst states that "all local development is based on emigration" (Sall, 2005: 265).

Remittances versus Brain Drain – some empirical data
For the last two decades, remittances to North Africa have constituted the highest ratio to GDP of any region in the world: in 2002, they were 3.1% of GDP compared with 1.6% for Latin America or 0.6% for sub-Saharan Africa (Baldwin-Edwards,

2005: 23). However, the IMF figures do not cover informal transfers: in the case of North Africa, this is probably not such a serious problem of data, but for sub-Saharan African countries there is a consensus that the data substantially underestimate the transfers (Gubert, 2005: 43; Moré, 2005: 4-5). Gubert gives an unsourced figure of 1.3% of GDP for remittances to the region, whilst Sall (2005: 277) provides 1990s data showing remittances ranging between 2% GDP for Senegal up to 20% for Eritrea! Whatever the actual level of remittances, it is certain that they constitute a major source of external development funding for the region.

In the case of North African countries (other than Libya), for some time remittances have played a major role in economic policy and economic stability. Although Morocco remains one of the largest recipients of remittances, in excess of tourism receipts for 2004, its significance as a proportion of GDP is likely to decline from the current high level of 10%. Algeria reports a tripling in remittances over 2001-4 (World Bank, 2006a: 87), although exact data are not provided.

As with remittance data, reliable information on the emigration of skilled workers is in very short supply. Recent research undertaken separately by the OECD and World Bank on stocks and flows of skilled migrants make some contribution to remedying the deficit[i]. Table 1 below gives data for North Africa, from the OECD database.

Table 1

Total number of expatriates and proportion of highly-skilled in OECD countries, by country of birth

Country	Total number of expatriates	Of which: highly skilled (%)
Algeria	1,301,076	16.4
Egypt	274,833	51.2
Libya	27,481	43.4
Morocco	1,364,754	14.8
Tunisia	371,274	17.7

SOURCE: OECD (2005: Table II.A2.6)

Several things stand out from this table. First, the total numbers do not correspond with the data given earlier, on diaspora populations. There are significantly more Algerians abroad, and rather fewer Tunisians and Egyptians than could be expected

in OECD countries. Secondly, the proportions of highly-skilled are not so high for Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians; the ratio is high for the small number of Libyans, but this was expected, and is also very high for Egyptians. This latter problem is probably because of no data from Italy as a receiving country and doubtless poor data from Greece – both important countries for the Egyptian diaspora. Overall, there does not appear to be a significant brain-drain from North Africa. Data for sub-Saharan countries show a different pattern, with ratios ranging from 25-40%, suggesting a problem of emigration of the highly skilled from the rest of Africa.

The World Bank database is not published in full, but some partial datasets are shown in tabular form (World Bank, 2006b: ch. 5). One indicator of a serious problem with skilled emigration, is the proportion of a country's skilled workforce which has emigrated. North Africa is not prominent in the list, but several African countries are: Gambia (63%), Sierra Leone (53%), Ghana (47%), Liberia (45%), Kenya (38%), Uganda (36%), Angola (33%), Somalia (33%). Morocco is shown as having lost 17% of its skilled workforce: presumably the other North African countries are below 15%, the lowest proportion shown in the table.

The database also shows the proportion of highly-skilled as part of total migration. Here, Egypt is shown with 59%. However, the data also show Egypt with a low emigration rate for its skilled workforce (4.6%) along with Libya (2.4%). Taken together, these data show that emigration from Egypt and Libya is highly selective and low relative to total population and also to the skilled workforce.

Both datasets show fairly reliably that there is not a serious problem of brain-drain for any North African country; unfortunately, the same cannot be said for much of the rest of Africa. Recent empirical data and focused research projects tend to confirm the picture described by both the OECD and World Bank datasets. El-Khawas (2004: 44) cites data of 60% of Gambia's university graduates, 25% of Sierra Leone's, and 10% of Kenya's, as United States residents. Tanner (2005: 3) cites an older estimate from Stalker that between 1960-87, Africa lost 30% of its skilled workforce. In particular, two sectors show massive emigration rates from SSA – healthcare and education. Mensah *et al.* (2005: 14) in a detailed study of migration of health professionals, estimate that Ghana has lost over 50% of its trained doctors.

Bump (2006) cites detailed annual data 1995-2002 from the University of Ghana, showing that by 2002 the emigration rate of doctors was over 90%, of pharmacists over 60%, and of nurses at 20%.

The New Migrations and North Africa

North African economies cannot be described as doing particularly well, with Libya's *per capita* GDP the highest at $3,500[2] for 2002, Tunisia at $6,800 (PPP), Algeria at $5,800 (PPP), and both Egypt and Morocco at $3,800 (PPP) (UNDP, 2004). However, in comparison with the majority of African countries even North Africa looks prosperous, and it is moreover closer to Europe and therefore a stepping stone to a better life. Thus, in recent years, North African countries have attracted significant numbers of African and also some Asian migrants: most fail to cross the Mediterranean and reach the European continent and remain in very poor conditions in North Africa.

What was once a tolerated income supplement for cash-starved Spanish fishermen with their *pateras* [small fishing boats], has turned since the mid-1990s into a more serious phenomenon of organised smuggling or individual attempts to cross the Mediterranean and reach prosperous 'Europe'. One of the earliest accounts of "Mediterranean Boat People" (Pugh 2001) gives a figure of illegal migrants intercepted by Spain for 1996 as 1,573, but rapidly escalating to 15,000 in 2000 (Baldwin-Edwards, 2002). The figure peaked in 2003 at 19,176, and stood at 11,781 persons for 2005 (APDHA, 2006: 12). In the case of arrivals in Italy, for 2003 Italy recorded 14,017 arrivals from North Africa; by 2004, this had decreased to 12,737 illegal migrants in 231 boats (van Selm and Cooper, 2006: 62). Most arrived on the small island of Lampedusa, close to Libya and Tunisia. Malta recorded 1,369 boat arrivals in 2004, which although a small number is proportionately a larger problem for the island.

ICMPD[3] has identified three main illegal migration routes into southern Europe: the West African route, the North and East African route, and the Eastern Mediterranean route (ICMPD, 2005). For the *West African route*, the main points of arrival are the

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[2] PPP data are not available for Libya
[3] The International Centre for Migration Policy Development – an intergovernmental agency based in Vienna, with a specific focus on border management and illegal migration issues.

Spanish island of Fuerteventura (Canary Islands), the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and the southern Spanish coast adjacent to Morocco. Most departures are from Morocco, although some are from the Western Sahara. For the *North and East African route*, the main points of arrival are the Italian islands of Lampedusa, Pantelleria, Linosa, Sicily and also Malta. The main point of departure is Libya, but also Egypt. For the *Eastern Mediterranean Route*, the main transit country is Turkey. From southern Turkey, boats cross to Italy and Cyprus; from western Turkey, boats cross to the numerous small Greek Aegean islands; and from Istanbul, crossing the River Evros effects entry into Greek territory.

The nationalities of the migrants are not so well documented (and are frequently concealed to avoid deportation), but ICMPD estimated for 2003 that about 25% were sub-Saharan, another 25% from other countries, mainly Asian, and about 50% from the south or east Mediterranean (ICMPD 2004). 2004 data for Italy show an increasing proportion of Egyptians (60%) and about 28% sub-Saharans (EC 2005a:38), whilst for Malta the principal nationality in 2004 was Somali (40%) followed by Egyptian (15%) and Eritrean (15%). Spanish apprehensions at sea over 2004 were, according to the European Commission (EC 2005b: 5) mainly of sub-Saharan nationals: the main countries of origin were Mali and Gambia, with smaller numbers from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Sudan, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria and Guinea Buissau. A few hundred Indians and Bangladeshi were also apprehended. Spanish data for 2005 show that of 368 corpses or missing persons, 267 were sub-Saharan, 85 from the Maghreb and 16 from Western Sahara (APDHA, 2006: 15).

In the two temporary reception centres in Ceuta and Melilla, in late 2005 some 2,000 persons were detained. 61% were from sub-Saharan countries, of which the most numerous were those from Mali (23%) and Cameroons (7%), although there were also smaller numbers from the entire region including Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Ghana. 18% of those detained were from India, and 17% from Algeria.[4] A small subsample of the sub-Saharan migrants by educational level showed that over 20% were university graduates and another 46% had a reasonable level of education (EC, 2005b: Annex 2, Table 5). Most of them had reached Morocco via the land border with Algeria.

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[4] Own calculations from EC (2005b), Annex 2, Table 4.

North African Policy Responses

(i) Morocco

Morocco views immigration policy as mainly a security policy, with the country now not only a transit country but also a *de facto* destination country (Sadiqi, 2005: 227). Law No. 02/2003 on the entry and stay of foreigners, illegal emigration and immigration came into force in November 2003. Trafficking in migrants was criminalized, and there are also some rights of foreigners granted. Also in 2003 two new institutions were created – the Directorate of Migration and Border Surveillance (Interior Ministry) and a Migration Observatory (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004).

Data on legally present immigrants show only 60,837 for 2002, with some 28,000 from Europe and 25,000 from Africa of which 14,000 are from Algeria and just under 2,000 from Tunisia (CARIM, 2005: 233-6). Morocco's record on asylum-seekers and refugees is poor (Lindstrom, 2002) and it has also recently been denounced by a detailed report from Human Rights Watch on the abuse of child domestic workers (HRW, 2005).

Collaboration with Spain, including liaison officers in various regions of Spain and to the S.I.V.E. system of naval surveillance, has been extensive and apparently successful in reducing emigration and transit migration from Morocco (Sadiqi, 2005: 228). Table 2 shows interceptions of illegal migrants, 2000-2004. From these figures, it seems that control over the illegal emigration of Moroccans improved from 2003 (the year of increased state activity in the area). Other reports (e.g. Daoud, 2005) suggest that progress was made over 2004 in dismantling smuggling networks, and 2005 saw further reductions in illegal migration.

Table 2

Interceptions of illegal migrants in Morocco, 2000-2004

	2000	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**
Moroccans	9,353	13,327	16,034	12,493	9,353
Foreigners	15,056	13,100	15,363	23,851	17,252
TOTAL	24,409	26,427	31,397	36,344	26,605

SOURCE: CARIM (2005: 236)

Morocco has readmission agreements with both Spain and Italy, and since 2004 accepted the return of sub-Saharan illegal migrants from Spain (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004). Morocco has also undertaken co-operation with Nigeria on readmission of illegal migrants; in 2004, Nigeria sent five aeroplanes to transfer 1,700 Nigerians residing illegally in Morocco (Daoud, 2005; Sadiqi, 2005). However, the more usual state response is either to imprison the illegal migrants or refugees, or simply to evict them from Moroccan territory into the desert of Algeria (Daoud, 2005). Violence by Moroccan state authorities against illegal migrants is well-documented by *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF, 2005) and constitutes a further worry concerning the "security approach" that Morocco has been encouraged to adopt. MSF notes that out of 2,193 cases (2003-5) of sub-Saharan nationals being treated for medical conditions caused by physical violence, 52% were caused by Moroccan security services, 29% by criminal networks and 15% by Spanish security services.

(ii) Algeria

Algeria has no co-operation with the EU, nor with Morocco (EC 2005b: 11), although it does participate in the 5+5 Mediterranean Dialogue, managed by IOM[5]. For 2003 and 2004, the number of illegal immigrants arrested was 4,870 and 5,680 respectively (Labdelaoui, 2005: 87). Algeria has signed readmission agreements with Spain and Italy, but information on their operation is not available,

1998 Census data show some 72,000 foreigners residing in Algeria, of which 58,000 were from Arab states, 5,000 from Europe and 7,000 from non-Arab African countries (CARIM, 2005: 90).

(iii) Tunisia

Tunisia, like Morocco, has recently passed new laws to deal with illegal migration. Two laws passed in early 2004 aim to limit illegal migration and associated criminal networks. One law allows closer surveillance of vessels and also regulates the ownership of these and sets out rules for mooring in ports (Boubakri, 2004: 23). The other law amends a 1975 law on passports and travel documents; its sanctions for directly or indirectly aiding illegal migration are punitive, with up to 20 years'

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[5] The International Organization for Migration, based in Geneva

imprisonment and fines of up to 67,000 Euros. Tunisia has a readmission agreement with Italy, which also covers the return of non-nationals. No data are available on the operation of the agreement.

There is a small number of foreigners residing legally on the territory: as of 2004, they numbered 35,192 of which 9, 612 were Algerian, 6,363 Moroccan, and 4,612 French. From sub-Saharan Africa, the small numbers total just over 1,000 persons (CARIM, 2005: 317).

(iv) Libya

Libya has effectively no immigration policy. There is no clear distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, no asylum procedure of system of protection for refugees, it has not ratified the Geneva Convention on refugees and it does not recognize the UNHCR. Libya has not been part of the Barcelona Process and has no formal relations with the EU (EC 2005a; EP 2005). In 2005, two new institutional bodies were created – a passport and control department, and a coastguard service. An anti-trafficking law was also passed in 2005, with a maximum penalty of one year's imprisonment (EP 2005: 10). Libya does have bilateral agreements with several EU countries (including Italy) and illegal migrants returned to Libya are then deported to their own country of origin, without legal process at any stage.

As discussed above, Libya has a large illegal immigrant population – of which a great part is sub-Saharan. In 2003, Libya expelled some 43,000 migrants, of which 38% were Egyptian, 15% Nigers and over 33% sub-Saharan (EC 2005a: 38). For 2004, the *verbal statement* made to the EP delegation by the relevant senior public official, stated that 75,000 had been repatriated, of which 17,000 were Nigers, 11,000 Ghanaians, 7,000 Nigerians, 5,000 Egyptians and 3,000 Sudanese (EP 2005: 9). However, it is thought that most of the illegal immigrants residing in Libya are not transit migrants, but simply looking for work. Given the lack of basic immigration infrastructure, there is no mechanism to distinguish between different motivations or types of migrant.

(v) Egypt

Egypt essentially has no immigration policy: entry to Egyptian territory is seen as primarily a security matter. Responsibility for non-nationals and foreign workers is divided between a large number of ministries, with frequent problems of co-ordination (Sawi, 2005: 106).

There is a small number of legally resident aliens in Egypt – as of the 1996 Census, some 116,000. The largest numbers are of Sudanese, Palestinians, and Russians (CARIM, 2005: 110-113). However, as noted above there are thought to be millions of unrecognized refugees, who will be, in most respects, indistinguishable from illegal immigrants. There is still no domestic legislation or effective protection of asylum-seekers, the responsibility for which is given to UNHCR (Roman, 2006: 19-24) with the presumption of relocation to a third country. The state violence against Sudanese asylum-seekers in December 2005 was largely the result of friction between UNHCR and the Egyptian Interior Ministry, with strong protests from Egyptian human rights groups about the criminal behaviour of the Ministry with the deaths of up to 100 asylum-seekers (Roman, 2006: 23).

Egypt does not have any readmission treaties with southern European countries, although one is under discussion with Turkey. Information on Egypt's role in illegal migration movements is almost completely absent, although Sawi (2005: 2-3) reports that the Interior Ministry maintains records on irregular migrants and regularly collaborates with Interpol and foreign powers on these issues.

A Failed Policy for Europe

Throughout the recent history of the EU there has been a remarkable one-sided emphasis on the security aspects of immigration control [borders, asylum, expulsion of illegal migrants] and an almost complete absence of even co-ordination of policy on immigration for employment, issues of legalisation of illegal immigrants, and until recently on the rights of long-term immigrants (Baldwin-Edwards, 1997). Looking specifically at three issues relevant to southern Europe, by early 2006 there was no EU policy on admission of immigrants (other than the Schengen rules for visitors), there was substantial policy on removal of illegal immigrants (but nothing on

legalization of undocumented immigrants), and also substantial policy on asylum-seeking.

In 2003, the UK started to suggest a new vision of refugee protection, which included the notion of 'transit camps' (van Selm, 2005:16). Most of these ideas were withdrawn in the European Council meeting in Thessaloniki, but by June 2004 the European Commission had made clear its intent to propose a new policy regime. The UK and also German/Italian proposals were rejected in 2004 by the European Parliament (Schuster, 2005:5): those proposals essentially consisted of keeping the majority of refugees outside of Europe, and in particular, in North Africa.

Following opposition not only from the EP but also from many EU member states, Italy independently pursued bilateral arrangements with Morocco, Tunisia and Libya – essentially linking re-admission agreements with development aid and small-scale immigration quotas (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005: 32-35). In October 2004, Italy returned 1.000 people, without allowing them to claim asylum, to Libya, which in turn, deported them to Egypt and Nigeria (Schuster, 2005:12). As Libya does not recognise the Geneva Convention or apply the OAU asylum procedures (EC 2005a:52), this meant that effectively the migrants were denied the right to asylum even though they had arrived in an EU country. The European Parliament in April 2005 passed a resolution effectively condemning as illegal the Italian expulsions from Lampedusa carried out between October 2004 and March 2005. Similarly, UNHCR condemned an incident with 180 people on 17 March 2005. Other expulsions continued later in 2005, although with smaller numbers (Hamood, 2006: 66).

The recent report of the Commission (EC 2005a) makes no mention of these serious problems with "safe third countries" such as Libya, whilst admitting that "the EU has no formal relations with Libya...Libya is not a member of the Barcelona Process...and there is no avenue for a formal dialogue on migration management" (EC 2005a:5). The report also notes that Tunisia has no functioning asylum system, but nevertheless the EC intends to include it in the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan. In the case of Morocco, the main concern of the Commission seems to be that they have been unable to conclude a re-admission agreement to cover non-nationals (unlike Spain, which has concluded such).

In the absence of coherent policy initiatives from the EU, Spain and Italy have pursued their own national agendas, which has resulted in "an increasing 'militarization' of migration and crime control along the EU's Mediterranean borders" (Lutterbeck, 2006: 64). In the case of Spain, the 'bloodbath' that occurred on the frontier of the Spanish enclave of Melilla in October 2005 was symbolic of the frustration of African migrants and the legitimized state violence which has arisen from Spanish-Moroccan collusion (Mead, 2005). For Italy, the collusion with Libya takes a different form, which includes the financing of a detention camp in northern Libya, and provision for two more in the South. Italy also finances the repatriation flights from Libya to country of origin (including Eritrea). Detailed lists of provisions include such macabre items as "1,000 sacks for transport of corpses" (Trucco, 2005: 3).

The current EU agenda recycles all the old baggage which serious analysts discredited years ago (such as the "root causes of migration"), whilst spouting nice rhetoric about eradicating poverty, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In reality, the latest policy document (EC 2005c) is concerned only with security measures (such as coastal patrols, FRONTEX, more detection technology, better management of migration for North African countries, readmission agreements) whilst paying lipservice to the fundamental problems faced by African economies. Emphasis is placed on "political dialogue" (EC 2005c: 6-7), specifically focused on the following:

Remittances [the EU will try to reduce bank transfer charges]
Capacity-building [legal and technical infrastructure to stop migration]
Management of migration flows and skills [to "raise awareness of legal channels for migration" to EU states]
Improving integration in destination countries [possibly this means trying to get EU states to obey the anti-discrimination directives and the directive on the rights of long-term immigrants]

Essentially, Europe fiddles while Africa burns. Southern European countries in particular, but even northern European, have some limited demand for semi-skilled and unskilled immigrant workers. For the past two decades, this demand has been filled by illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers; more recently, by Romanians and

Bulgarians migrating as 'false tourists' under Schengen rules, and then working illegally (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006). The expansion of Europe to the East has badly damaged Africa's chances of labour migration and associated economic development: the cynical reaction of the European continent is to blame Africa for the logical outcome of European policies. Basically, there are no legal channels for semi-skilled labour migration to Europe, although the developed world continues to rely heavily on skilled migrants trained in Africa, and the European Union offers Africa nothing more than "political dialogue".

Endnotes

[i] Both the OECD and World Bank datasets on skilled expatriates are based primarily upon detailed population stock data from the OECD area, of which only a few countries are unable to provide such data [Italy, Greece, Turkey *et al.*]. The World Bank methodology is described in detail in World Bank (2006b), pp. 155-196. Essentially, the study optimizes the use of available data by using stock data for 1990 and 2000 in OECD receiving countries, country of birth of migrants rather than nationality, and attempting by various mechanisms to standardize the data. The stocks of skilled foreign-born nationals are then related to population by educational level in the country of origin, using the UN population dataset (supplemented in some cases by the CIA World Factbook). The ratio gives a rough indicator of the emigration rate, i.e. how significant emigration of skilled personnel is for that country. Comparison with previous studies is made (pp. 192-194) and the authors conclude that faulty data on educational levels used in the older studies resulted in overestimation of the rate of skilled emigration for North Africa and Turkey, whilst seriously underestimating the rates for sub-Saharan Africa and, globally, small island countries.

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