



## Dossier

Youth mobility, exchange, study and  
training opportunities through the  
Mediterranean Area

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## **Chapter 1 The young population of the Mediterranean Sea**

### **1. The Mediterranean Sea: a heterogeneous space**

The definition of what the Mediterranean represents is an old issue. It is not possible to identify what is the characterizing element of this space, because it is not an ethnic, linguistic, political, cultural or historical unit. Of course it is a geographic space, that includes coastal European and North African countries, but it is not taken for granted that it is a geographic unit. Indeed the geographic definition adopted by the European Union consists of European (excluding Balkans) and MENA countries. At the same time, recent initiatives of the EU “Union for the Mediterranean” have broadened the original boundary lines, including Balkan countries, the Principality of Monaco and Jordan. For sure, the Mediterranean space was more united and lived as a common space in the ancient time that today.

From a geopolitical and strategic point of view, another element that obstacles the setting of limits for the Mediterranean Sea, is that this area goes beyond its mere geographic confines. It is possible to talk about an “enlarged Mediterranean”<sup>1</sup> for the Mediterranean background, made of Gulf states, Sub-Saharan countries, Black and Caspian Sea countries, which influences and in many cases determines dynamics and stability of the area. Having said that, it is clear that the uncertainty on definition of a Mediterranean identity concerns the heterogeneous nature both of the territory and of the population. The variety characterising the area, coupled with several challenges (from the late economic crisis, that has broken the economies of Southern Europe, forcing a European bailout of Portugal, Cyprus and Greece, to the political turmoil started from the Southern coast that has unexpectedly overthrown some regimes), can be considered the underlining reason of the shakiness that is crossing several countries on the Mediterranean sea. In fact, from whatever angle we look at the Mediterranean, there is no doubt that the region is a concentration of challenges, from energy security to terrorism, from cultural conflicts to the role and destiny of

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1 “Mediterraneo: quali prospettive?”, ISPI Dossier, [http://ispinews.ispionline.it/?page\\_id=487](http://ispinews.ispionline.it/?page_id=487), (25/07/14).

democracy.

The Mediterranean is definitely crossing a deep process of transformation and crisis. Evidences of this process can be seen in many different situations. Just to mention the more important and acute, we could refer to the civil war in Syria, the never ending conflict between Israel and Palestine, the tension because of the development of nuclear programme in Iran and the collapse of Iraq after the end of the war of 2003 (two countries that even though not properly Mediterranean, play a central role and have a great influence on the whole area), the instability of Egypt after the new military *coup d'état* and the political unrest in Tunisia after the Arab Spring.

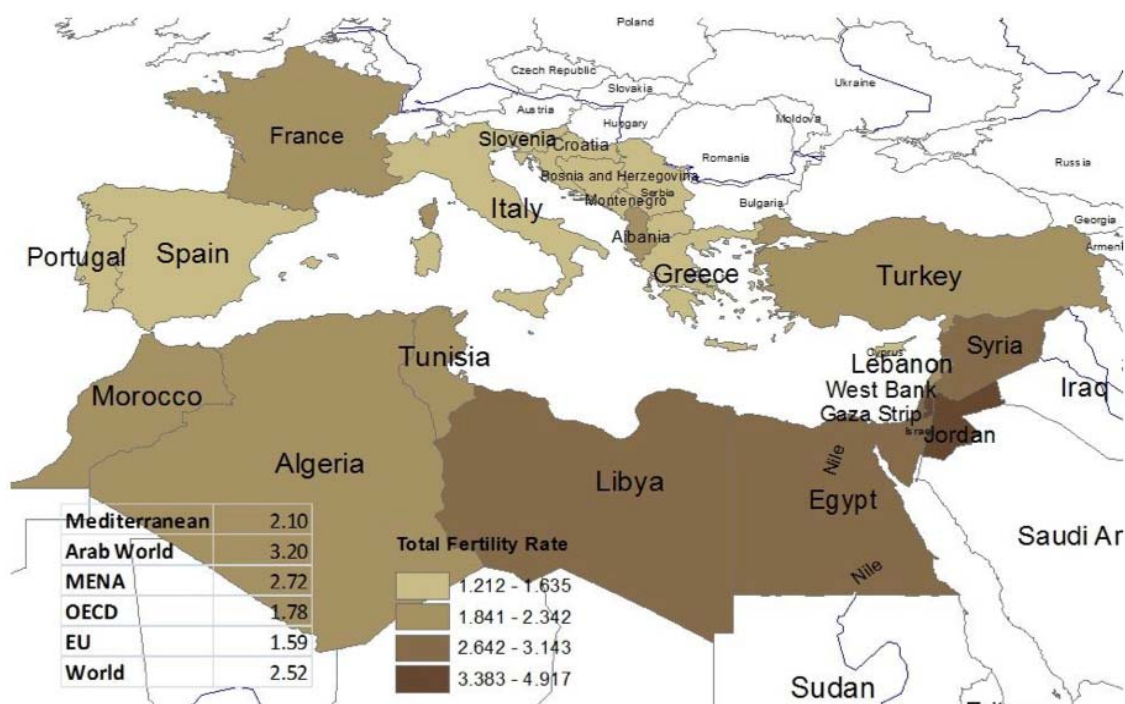
On the other hand, also the North side countries, even though in a less tragic way, are facing their problems. The period of growing poverty and inequality that these countries are going through seems to be stuck and not finding a solution. Among the reasons of this paralysis we could mention the lack of structural reforms, the policies of austerity promoted by the European Union and the global trends that see an increasing imbalance of economy toward Asian markets.

## **2. Demographic outlook on the Mediterranean area**

The population in the Mediterranean countries is rather vary: some hundreds of thousands in Malta and Cyprus, few million in Lebanon, Albania and Libya, around 10 million in Portugal, Greece, Tunisia and Israel (inclusive of occupied territories), 17-18 million in Syria. Then, we have a quantitative leap with the population of Morocco and Algeria with their 30 million of people, 40 million for Spain, almost 60 for France and Italy and at the end the two demographic behemoths, Turkey with 74 million and Egypt with 80 million of inhabitants.

As for the population density, behind a reasonable average of about 50 persons for <sup>2</sup> Km (not far from the global average), there are very high differences, especially because of the presence of desert states like Algeria and Libya that lower the average. If high density is a characteristic of the countries of the North side (with the exception of Lebanon and Israel), the population growth prevails in the South and

**Figure 6. Total Fertility Rate in the Mediterranean (2009)**



Source: 2010 World Development Indicators, The World Bank.

East coasts. Therefore, during the nineties, the population of the North side was still more than 50% of the total population of Mediterranean basin, while nowadays it is decreased to 45%. This trend is caused by the different demographic behaviour in the opposite parts of the sea<sup>2</sup>, but it is partially balanced thanks to the migration flows that slow down the senility of population of the host countries, and lessen the youth presence in the countries of departure. However, the most interesting demographic factor for this study is the size of youth population which is, according to what we have just said, very different from one country to another.

In Middle East and North Africa (MENA) more than 28% of the population is aged between 15 and 29 years<sup>3</sup>. We are talking about 108 million of young people which are the largest number of people in transition from youth to adulthood ever seen in

<sup>2</sup> In North side countries birth rates are between 9 and 13‰. In the East side birth rates are around 20‰ with the exception of Syria and its 30‰, while in the South side we meet a very diversified situation that goes from the 11‰ in Tunisia to the 24‰ in Libya.

<sup>3</sup> Data from World Bank and UNDP database.

the region. If we look at data about people under 30 years, the results are even more staggering: they represent some 60% of the population, “making this one of the most youthful regions in the world, with a median age of 22 years, compared with a global average of 28”<sup>4</sup>. The situation is very different on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. Much of southern European countries hovers near the so-called “lowest-low fertility rate” of 1.3, a value that, if it were true for northern Europe countries too, would cut in half the population of the continent every 45 years<sup>5</sup>. In Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal<sup>6</sup> the problem of lowest-low fertility rate is particularly serious, especially if we look at long term period, when the young people of today will be a small population forced “to spend their entire working lives paying for previous generations' lavish retirement benefits”<sup>7</sup>. The main reasons of this phenomenon are both economic and cultural. Italy, for example, is the country in which the starting wage is the lowest in respect with other countries of the European Union. This trend causes a delay in leaving the parents' house and, as a consequence, a delay in making a new family. These facts explain why Italy holds the record of children born from parents over 40. The second cause is much more cultural and deep, and concerns the Southern European culture that still presents a very asymmetric gender relationship so that is too difficult for women to combine work and family<sup>8</sup>. The matter of lowest-low fertility, besides demographic outgrowths, has strict relations with the issue of immigration and mobility, considered by many experts as the solution or at least a quick fix for the problem. It is also linked with the matter of integration, much more difficult in Europe in comparison with US or Canada, because of the presence of nation-states more impervious to mix up with other cultures because of strong ethnic identity.

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4 <http://www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthscenes/mena/facts/> Seen 28th July 2014

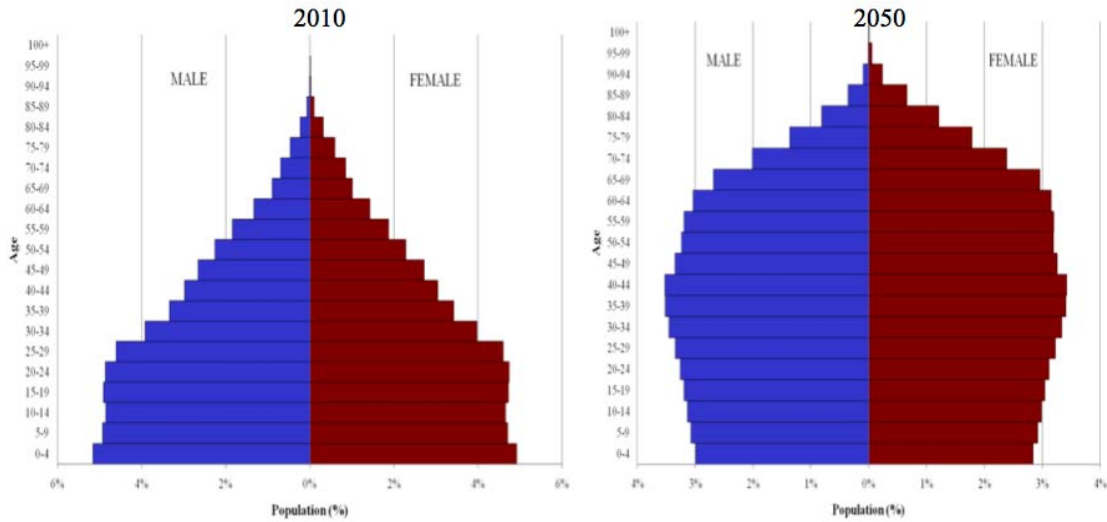
5 The figure of 2.1 is generally considered to be the “replacement rate”, that is to say the number of children per woman that would maintain the population stable.

6 Fertility rates of the mentioned countries: Greece 1.43, Italy 1.41, Spain 1.36, Portugal 1.30.

7 Aaron M. Renn, “Will Europe Hit a Demographic Tipping Point?”, <http://www.newgeography.com/content/003820-will-europe-hit-a-demographic-tipping-point>, last visit 28th July 2014.

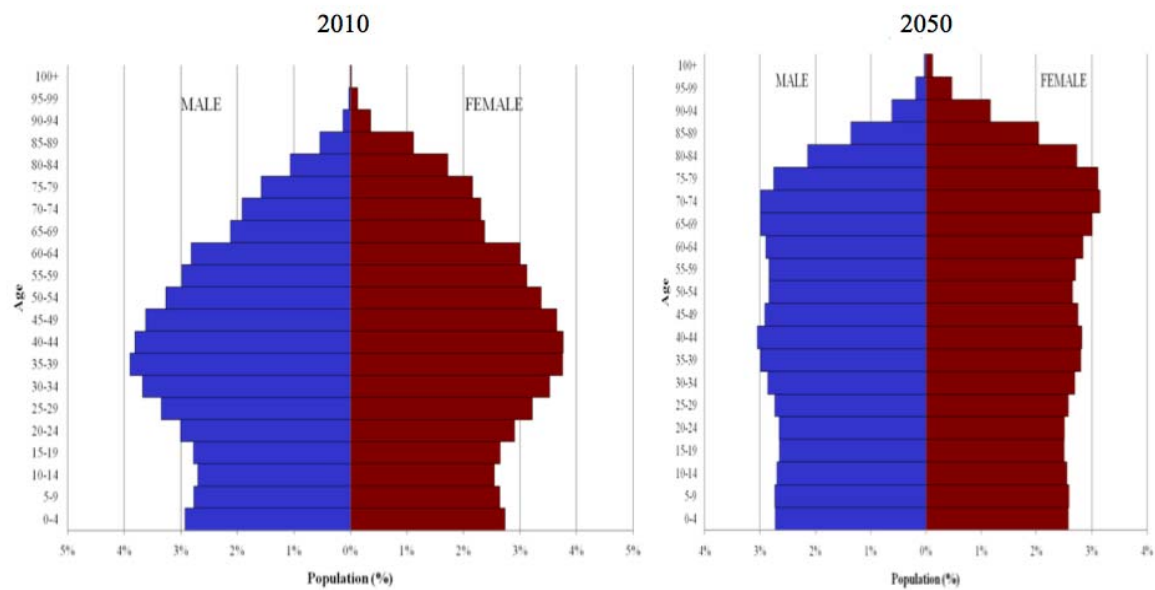
8 A statistic from a 2006 Eurobarometer survey on desired children by women revealed an average result of 2.36, above the replacement level and far above the rate everywhere in Europe.

**Figure 2. Population Pyramid of the Southern Mediterranean Sub-Region (2010 and 2050)**



Source: United Nations World Population Prospects (2010 Revision). Population share calculations were computed by the author.

**Figure 3. Population Pyramid of the Northern Mediterranean Sub-Region (2010 and 2050)**



Source: United Nations World Population Prospects (2010 Revision). Population share calculations were computed by the author.

### **3. The youth issue in the macro-region and main causes of discontent**

According to the United Nations, the youth will be the “new global power reshaping the world”<sup>9</sup>, but even though 24 years old people make up almost half of the global population (around 7 billion with 1.2 billion between 10 and 19) their percentage, according to the *Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social*, has begun to decline not only in the developed countries but also in middle income countries<sup>10</sup>. A key point for our study is therefore that the south-east side of the Mediterranean area has one of the youngest population of the world. As already said, this characteristic represents a very clear contrast to their European counterparts, “where countries are experiencing a serious demographic deficit through population ageing”<sup>11</sup>. This contrast from north and south-east side is expected to end around 2050.

The overpopulation of working-age people in the Middle East and North Africa countries, presents challenges as well as opportunities for the countries of the region. Referring to these challenges, both in the northern and in the southern side they basically concerns unemployment and lack of representation and participation to the political life of the respective countries. On the one hand, the problem is the lack of economic prosperity and professional prospective. This issue infuriates young people representing about half of all unemployed people in the world.<sup>12</sup>

In some countries of the region of our interest, data are even more disheartening: the young population of Syria, to make an example, represents “nearly the 80% of the working-age unemployed population”<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand, another cause of discontent among the young generation is the lack of political representation. The

9 “State of World Population 2011”, p. 9.

10 Ivi, p. 10.

11 Demographic Divide and Labour Migration in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, Working paper 111, Mehmet Serkan Tosun, Oxford Institute of Population Ageing Working Papers, August 2011, p. 1 <http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/files/Tosun.pdf>, last visit 29/07/2014.

12 Unemployed people are around 200 million (see “Global Employment Trend in 2014”, ILO, 2014. According to youthpolicy.org, a website specialised on research and analysis on youth policies all around the world and supported by British Council as well as parliaments, governments and international agencies, “close to 90 million young people are unemployed”. For further information see: “The state of youth Policy in 2014”, p. 38, <http://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/2014/05/state-of-youth-policy-2014/>

13 Ivi.



ability to claim certain rights and benefits lies at the bottom of social and political identity and the impossibility to enjoy them because of an old, blocked political system have been one of the causes of turmoil in the North Africa and Middle East countries, and discouragement and disillusion in the North side. Furthermore, the globalization and the diffusion of technologies such as the internet and social networks have helped to modernize the society, but, at the same time, they have become the instrument to communicate discontent and speak out against the rising of social injustice and social inequality. Even though the social networks cannot be considered the cause of the revolutions in the area, they have been used to amplify the voice of those who have not been heard for too many times, namely young people. The young generation is witnessing the disintegration of the world with its economic, social and political fabric, and have begun to show their anger (most in the South) or the opposite state of mind, that is to say, listlessness and resignation (especially in the North), because of the sensation of being robbed of their own future.

Many events all over the region can be taken as an example of this unsteady situation. From the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, where young people played a central role, to the civil uprising in Syria; from the protests in Algeria, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Morocco and Jordan after the Arab Spring to the grassroots protests in Spain (i.e., the “Indignados” movement was made most of all of students and precarious workers) and Portugal, and the demonstrations and strikes in Greece.

But this situation bears, besides difficulties, opportunities too, and young people are determined to shape our time. As Pankaj Mishra<sup>14</sup> argued in his article “The dead end of globalization looms before our youth”<sup>15</sup> before but even more during the Arab Spring, we are witnessing a fresh political awakening, a world awakening with rage about what Zhang Junmai, a Chinese philosopher, warned against: “a condition of prosperity without equality, wealth without peace”.

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14 Pankaj Mishra (*Pankaja Miśrā*; born 1969, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, India) is an Indian essayist and novelist.

15 Pankaj Mishra, “The dead end of globalization looms before our youth”, *The Guardian*, 25/08/2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/aug/25/dead-end-globalisation-youth-rage> (30/07/2014).

## Chapter 2 Youth mobility for study purposes

### 1. Data on education in the Mediterranean countries

The report of the Wolfensohn Center for Development, entitled “Generation in Waiting: The Unfulfilled Promise of Young People in the Middle East”, gives us an image well-capturing the situation, not only of youth in the Middle East, but, to a certain extent, also of young people living in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. The severe economic crisis and high unemployment are common problems for the youngsters of every country of the region.

More precisely, countries on the South side are facing more complex challenges due to the quality of education and difficulty of access to school, especially for those who live in rural regions. In fact, if in the Southern European countries basic education is nearly assured to every student and the proportion of young people aged 20-24 and 30-34 who have completed tertiary education has continued to increase in the last years<sup>16</sup>, in the Arab states “43% of children are not learning the basics, whether they are in school or not”<sup>17</sup>. This reveals that poor quality of education is the cause of failure in ensuring a good level of children learning. Poor quality education is leaving a legacy of illiteracy more widespread than previously believed, causing the loss of at least the half of the resources spent by these countries on primary education. Another report, done by youthpolicy.org<sup>18</sup>, says that “in the Middle East, educational enrolment rates are high, with nearly universal access at the primary level and nearly 70% enrolment at the secondary level. Between 1965 and 2003, Middle Eastern governments spent an average of approximately 5% of their GDP on education. Despite increased access, the quality of education remains low”<sup>19</sup>. Previous

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16 “Key Data on European Education 2012”, EACEA, <http://tinyurl.com/7gd8dva>, p. 11 (30/07/14). According to data from the World Bank, from 2009 to 2013 school enrolment in tertiary education have increased in Spain, Portugal, France, Malta, Albania. Only Italy, among countries of the South Europe, have a negative trend. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR/countries/1W?display=default> (30/07/14)

17 “11th Education for All Global Monitoring Report”, UNESCO, <http://tinyurl.com/pys4wc4>

18 Youthpolicy.org is a web site that generates and consolidates knowledge and information on youth policies in the world.

19 “Middle East and North Africa: Youth Facts”, [www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthscenes/mena/facts/](http://www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthscenes/mena/facts/), data taken from “World Bank

generations of youth in the Middle East and North Africa benefited from free education, public sector job guarantees and strong state support in the form of subsidies and entitlements. For those born in the 1980s and later on the contrary, institutions which once ensured intergenerational equity are no longer working. So the efforts of these countries to ensuring access to education, if have doubled the number of years of schooling in comparison with twenty five years earlier, at the same time haven't increased the quality of education at all levels, so that it “remains substandard in many countries, as evidenced by the region's low average scores on international tests”<sup>20</sup>. As some studies point out, the key to unlock the potential of youth lies in improving incentive structures within existing institutions, for example revisiting tracking and admission policies. But it would not be enough without an holistic and inclusive prospective that requires “the respective efforts of local and national governments, international donors, educators, business leaders and young people and their families”<sup>21</sup>. Another important aspect of education that has serious effects, mainly in the South countries, is the inequality in the access to education<sup>22</sup>. There are several circumstances that play an important role in shaping the opportunities for students<sup>23</sup>. While wealth is an indicator that influences enrolment of students in almost every country, no matter if they are in North or South side of the Mediterranean Sea, gender and location (urban or rural) have a stronger impact in the Southern states. In particular, location and regional disparities is a matter that influences the capacity of access to education and the quality of the study path. The state penetration of rural areas that have produced the expansion of administrative services and the building of schools and hospital has only slightly dwindled the urban/rural dichotomy. Therefore, nevertheless the activity of NGOs and civil society associations supporting youth employment, rural youth, especially if they have an

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Middle East and North Africa Factsheet” ([www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena](http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena)), (29/07/14).

20 “Generation in Waiting: The Unfulfilled Promise of Young People in the Middle East”, Brookings Institution Press, 2009.

21 Ivi.

22 To examine education inequality visit: <http://www.education-inequalities.org>.

23 To investigate disparities in education across and within countries we visited the web site: <http://www.education-inequalities.org>.

upper secondary school or an university level education, encounter many difficulties in finding, in the place of residence, a job corresponding to their level of education.

What is interesting to underline, however, is that the isolation of those who live in rural areas of Southern countries is diminishing also thanks to the diffusion of technologies. According to young people living in both rural and urban areas, internet usage is considered very important not only for entertainment and leisure, but especially as a freeing tool, as a communication space and as a window onto the world<sup>24</sup>.

Internet and social media infiltrates in almost every aspect of daily life, and in Arab and South Mediterranean countries the usage of social media has grown substantially from 2011 to today<sup>25</sup>. These new skills affect not only the political and social participation, as many studies and researches underlined<sup>26</sup>, but also the way people build their expectations for the future thanks to the larger view on the world that the internet can provide. As for the young ones, it can translate into the desire to professional and social improvement that can pass through a higher level of education.

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24 “Studies on Youth Policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries – Tunisia”, EuroMed Youth III Programme, p. 13.

25 “Social Media in the Arab World: the Impact on Youth, Women and Social Change”, IEMed, <http://www.iemed.org>.

26 For an updated overview on the development of usage trends on online social networking across the Arab region, visit: [www.arabsocialmediareport.com](http://www.arabsocialmediareport.com).

Public Data

Dubai School of Government, Arab Soci...

**Face Book Penetration**  
Number of Face Book users

Clear

Compare by Country

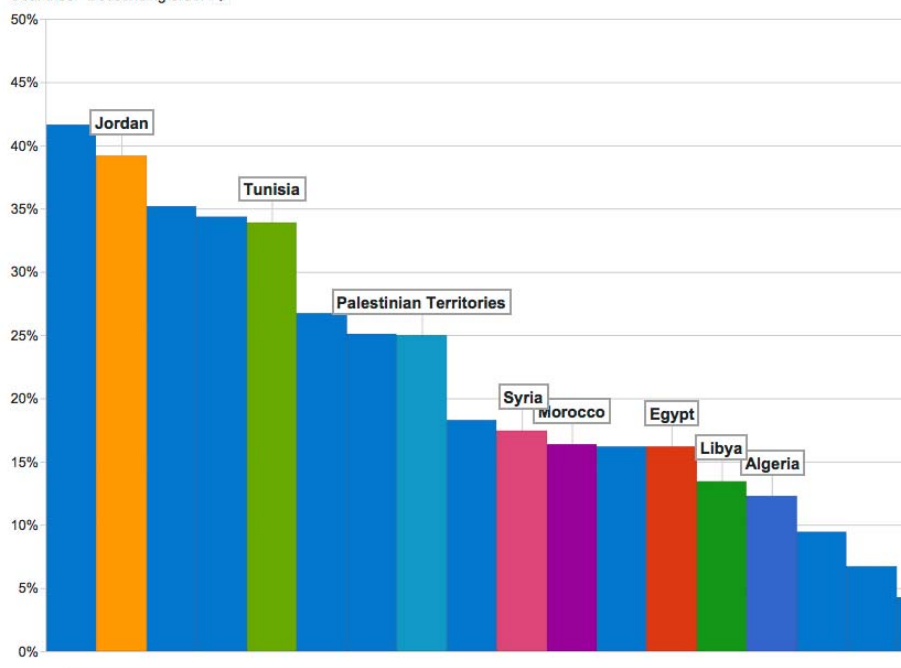
- Algeria
- Bahrain
- Comoros
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Oman
- Palestinian Territories
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Tunisia
- United Arab Emirates
- Yemen

Clear selections

Age group 13 and above  
Gender

Face Book Penetration - 13 and above ?

Countries - Descending order ?

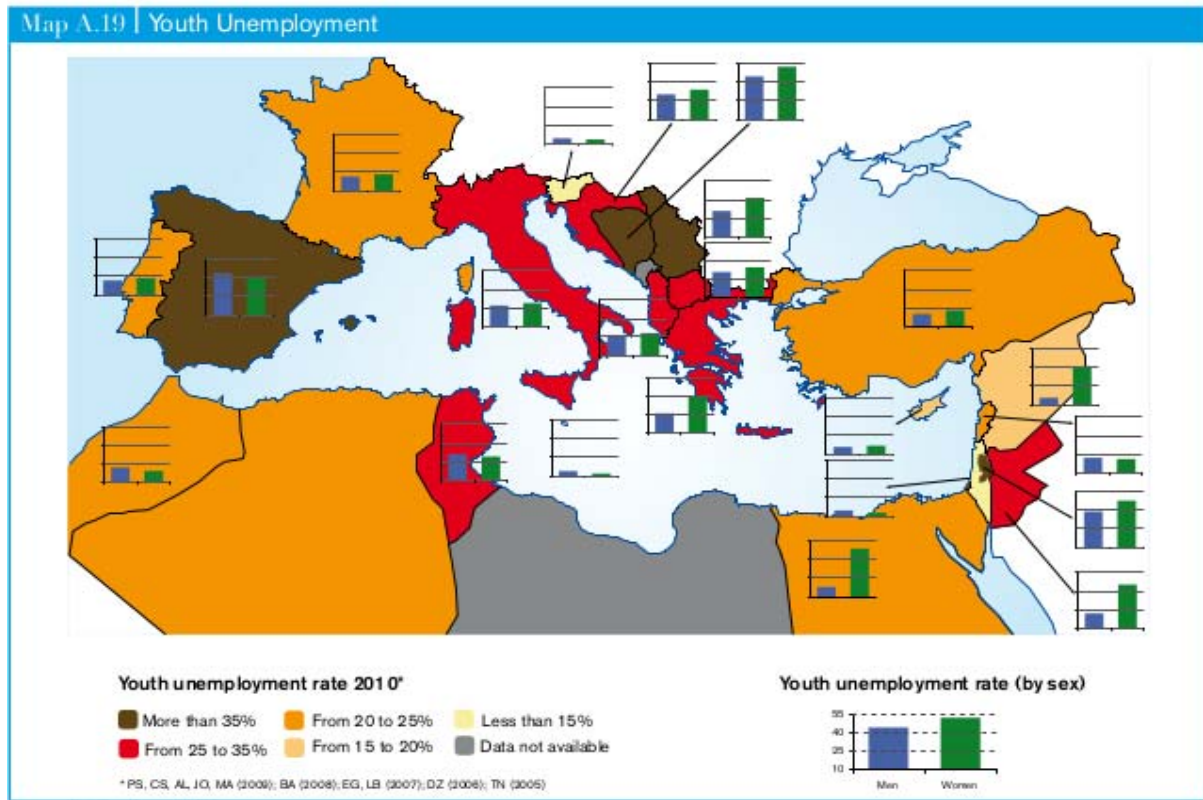


Data from Dubai School of Government, Arab Social Media Report Last updated: Jun 27, 2013

## 2. Why study abroad?

There are several reasons that push young people to leave their countries to study abroad in both sides of the Mediterranean. Certainly, the issue of young people employability is the most relevant one. According to an ILO research of 2008, youths are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, even in economies with strong economic growth. Referring to the Mediterranean region, this forecast seems to hits home. The matter of unemployment in the Mediterranean area, on the one hand is the cause of serious social tensions that, at least in the MENA countries, has been the detonator of revolts and protests. “The persistence and worsening difficulties in integrating the young into the labour market over the past decade have given rise to mounting tensions between the youth, especially the most highly qualified, and society”<sup>27</sup>.

27 “Young Graduates in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries: Untapped Potential stuck in Job Queues”, IEMed, <http://www.iemed.org>.



On the other hand, the deterioration of young people's living conditions contributes to develop the idea that a higher quality and more specialised education is a way to open new opportunities of work and to break in the negative trend of labour market.

The paradox is that exactly highly educated new labour market entrants in South Mediterranean countries, have been particularly affected by unemployment. This has been proved by the fact that “most employment creation in Arab-Mediterranean countries in recent years has occurred in low-productivity and informal sector activities in the service sector”<sup>28</sup>. Young people of the Mediterranean basin have often difficulties in entering the world ruled by the adults and they find hard to collocate themselves in society. This situation is a cause of a new kind of conflict between the two generations: the youngsters consider adults as an obstacle to fulfil

28 “Non-Public Provision of Active Labour Market Programs in Arab-Mediterranean Countries: An Inventory of Youth Programs”, SP Discussion Paper, n. 1005, The World Bank, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>.

their future projects, while for adults young people in many cases are a “burden” for families and a disturb in the continuation of traditions.

Nowadays, young people in both sides of the Mediterranean, because of decreased opportunity in the job market, are attempting to adapt to the new social and political environment by focusing on programmes of study that they judge “fruitful”, and more likely to help them finding a job. That is why, especially in countries of the south side of the Mediterranean, forms of private higher education have been developed to provide more opportunities to students in those sectors which are considered more successful. In the case of Tunisia, for example, “even if these private universities, which are marginal, remain framed by national legislation, they are gaining legitimacy and offer degrees accredited by state and are valid in the international job market”<sup>29</sup>. Despite these efforts to increase the education offering, many young people desire to study and live abroad. The dream of leaving, even if stronger in the Southern countries, is more and more spread among students and young people in general. Lots of them see their future outside the country, mainly in Northern Europe or in the United States, not only because of the poor market for youth, but also to live their lives in line with the globalization trends and values.

Indeed, there is a large part of the students living in the Mediterranean area who choose to study abroad to have a “global experience”. They are aware that the world we live in is more and more interconnected and for this reason they believe that to be up to date is fundamental to be able to interact with multiple cultures and develop a broad understanding of global issues. They are fairly convinced that getting an international education is the best way to have global and more complete competences, to be used both in their country and in another one. Moreover the growing importance given to communication skills and the usage of new technologies, such as the internet and social media, makes the study of foreign languages vital: this represents another reason why many students, both from north and south, study abroad.

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29 “Studies on Youth Policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries – Tunisia”, EuroMed Youth III Programme, p. 16.

**Education** : Outbound mobility ratio by host region

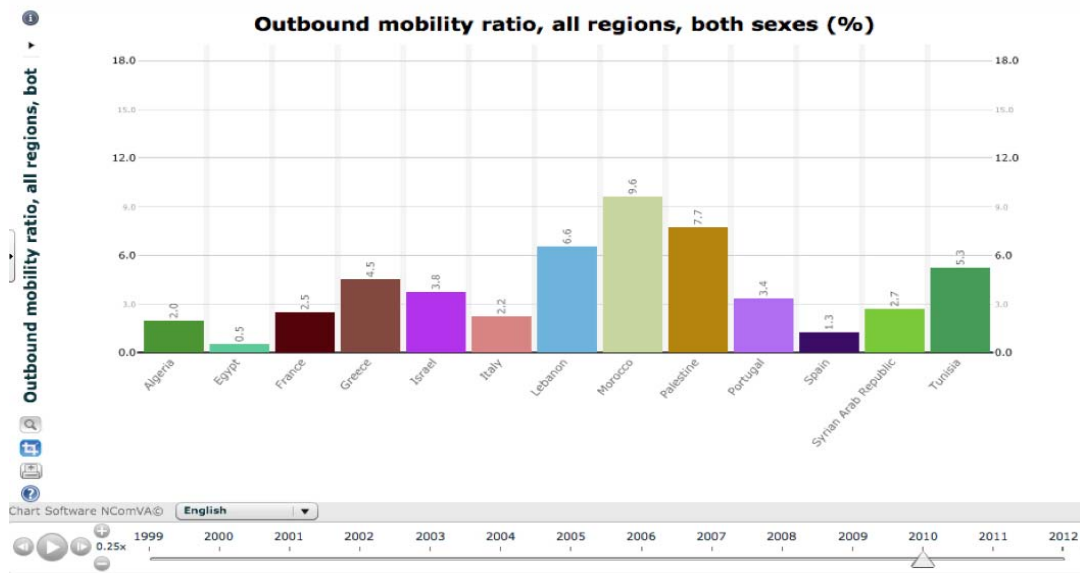
Customise Export Draw chart

Indicator: Outbound-mobility-ratio, all-regions, both sexes (%)

Time: 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013

Country	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Algeria	(*) 3.8	.. (*)	2.8 (*)	2.7 (*)	3.1 (*)	3.4	3.1	3.0 (*)	2.6	.. (*)	2.0 (*)	2.0	2.0 (*)	2.0	..
Egypt	(*) 0.4	..	0.5	0.4	0.5 (*)	0.4	0.4	0.4 (*)	0.4 (*)	0.5 (*)	0.5 (*)	0.5	0.7 (*)	0.7	..
France	(*) 2.4	2.5	2.6 (*)	2.8	2.7 (*)	2.2	2.2	2.4 (*)	2.5 (*)	2.1 (*)	2.4 (*)	2.5	2.7 (*)	2.7	..
Greece	(*) 17.3	15.1	12.9 (*)	9.9	9.0 (*)	7.9	6.4	5.3 (*)	5.3	..	.. (*)	4.5	4.4	..	..
Israel	(*) 4.2	5.5	5.9 (*)	4.1	4.0 (*)	3.5	3.8	3.9 (*)	3.8 (*)	4.1 (*)	3.9 (*)	3.8	3.8	..	..
Italy	(*) 2.4	2.6	2.6 (*)	2.5	2.5 (*)	2.0	1.9	1.7 (*)	1.7 (*)	1.8 (*)	2.0 (*)	2.2	2.4 (*)	2.7	..
Lebanon	(*) 7.5	7.7	7.4 (*)	8.3	9.1 (*)	8.8	8.1	7.9 (*)	7.3 (*)	7.3 (*)	7.1 (*)	6.6	6.1 (*)	6.2	..
Libya	(*) 0.5	0.6 (*)	0.7 (*)	0.7 (*)	0.7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Morocco	(*) 13.9	15.4	14.8 (*)	16.7	16.8 (*)	14.3	12.5	11.4 (*)	11.0 (*)	10.4 (*)	10.1 (*)	9.6	8.6	..	..
Palestine	(*) 14.5	13.7	12.6 (*)	11.7	10.4 (*)	8.9	8.4	8.0 (*)	7.8 (*)	7.7 (*)	8.4 (*)	7.7	7.7 (*)	8.1	..
Portugal	(*) 3.1	2.9	2.9 (*)	3.0	3.1 (*)	2.9	3.2	2.9 (*)	3.2 (*)	3.1 (*)	3.4 (*)	3.4	..	..	..
Spain	(*) 1.5	1.5	1.5 (*)	1.5	1.3 (*)	1.4	1.4	1.3 (*)	1.4 (*)	1.2 (*)	1.2 (*)	1.3	1.4 (*)	1.5	..
Syrian Arab Republic	..	..	.. (*)	5.9	5.6 (*)	5.3	4.5	3.8 (*)	3.6 (*)	3.5 (*)	3.4 (*)	2.7	2.9	..	..
Tunisia	(*) 6.0	5.7	5.4 (*)	5.6	5.4 (*)	5.0	4.8	5.1 (*)	5.2 (*)	5.1 (*)	5.2 (*)	5.3	5.4 (*)	5.3	..

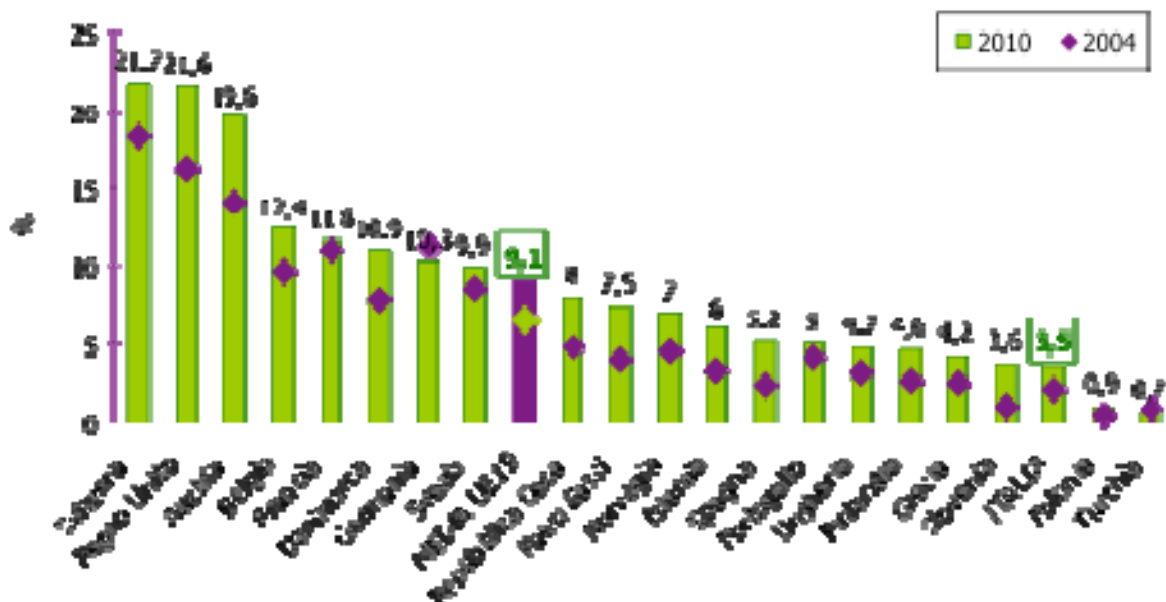
Legend:  
 † UIS Estimation  
 Data extracted on 05 Aug 2014 10:21 UTC (GMT) from UIS/ISU



There is another important aspect to look at. Surprisingly, the countries of the North side of the Mediterranean Sea attract few foreign students in general, and even fewer from the Mediterranean region. So, even though they should be preferred by students coming from the South side, because of closeness and historical relationship between Europe and North Africa and Middle East, they lose in comparison with other



European countries<sup>30</sup>. In Italy, for example, even if there is a constant increase of foreign students (+0,2% per year), in 2011 non-Italian students were only 3,6%, which is substantially below the European average of 9,1%. Among the Mediterranean European countries, only France, in terms of the performance (11,2%), has good results and is able to compete with the EU Northern countries.



Fonte: Elaborazione sui dati OCSE 2008, OCSE 2012, EUROSTAT per il numero totale di iscritti nel 2010.

### 3. The response of international institutions in respect to the youth population need for more exchange opportunities

In previous paragraph we described how vital is for young people in the Mediterranean area to acquire an high quality education in order to reach their goals and become especially “marketable”. At the same time, to thrive they also need to learn to become responsible global citizens and develop skills such as critical thinking, communication, cooperation, leadership and advocacy. These proficiencies are fundamental in a space, such as the Mediterranean one, where very different

<sup>30</sup> According to the EUROSTAT research, immediately after Europe, Asia is the most represented continent mainly because of the increase of Chinese students.

cultures, traditions, languages, values and views coexist in a more or less unstable way.

For these reasons, policies developed by international institutions or organizations, as well as focusing on increasing young people qualification to make them enter the world of work, aim for the development of a new leading class suitable for the present times and ready for the future.

This is why many policies and initiatives have been developed in order to facilitate mobility of students across the Mediterranean countries. Especially for those living in the Southern side, they represent very important occasions since across MENA countries only 33,3% of countries (7 countries) have a national youth association or organization as representative structure for youth recognized by governments<sup>31</sup>. Moreover the university offering in their home land cannot respond to the demand yet, and does not suffice to erase inequalities occurring both at the level of the choice of matters studied, and the place of study. In fact even if “universities are experiencing a constant “hyper growth” of their resources”<sup>32</sup>, and public authorities in some countries (Tunisia and Morocco for example), are working on increasing the university infrastructure, they still have difficulties in facing the overpopulation of young people. Another important aspect to highlight is that policies for the mobility of young people do not refer just to formal education but also to non-formal education and volunteering. In fact, the expression “learning mobility in the field of youth” refers to the mobility in formal and non-formal learning settings, and it takes place in the frame of exchange programmes with the aim of promoting and developing personal and professional competences, communication, interpersonal and intercultural skills, and active citizenship.

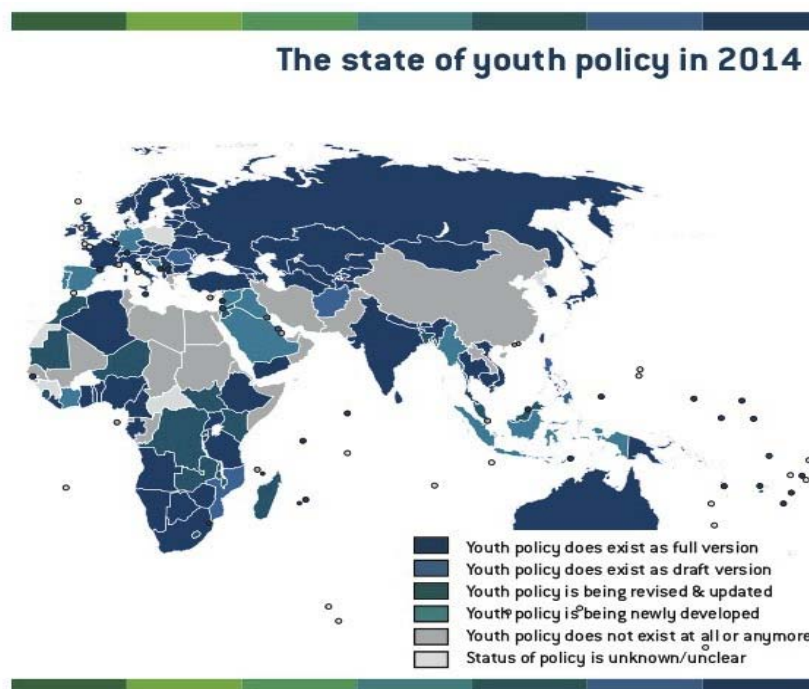
However, a challenge that has to be faced when talking about mobility is informing all young people that mobility possibilities exist. “Young people need to be informed and reached in their natural environment through guidance in school, in youth

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31 “The State of Youth Policies 2014”, p. 30, [www.youthpolicy.org](http://www.youthpolicy.org).

32 “Studies on Youth Policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries – Tunisia”, EuroMed Youth III Programme, p.15.

organisations, on social networking sites”<sup>33</sup>. In fact, the main reason of lack of motivation and interest in learning mobility, is the lack of knowledge on mobility and its benefits, and the shortages of information about possible opportunities. Young people encounter several “barriers” during the path to mobility: some of them are structural barriers while others are perceived. One kind of barrier is represented by financial difficulties, because some young people cannot afford the mobility experience unless they receive financial support. Another problem is the lack of a clear formal recognition of the mobility experience neither in the frame of formal education, nor in families and society in general since, especially in the case of non-formal education, the mobility experience is seen as a sort of “holiday”. Finally, bureaucracy discourages young people who have to undergo complicated procedures to take part in the programmes. Having said that, this paragraph will try to describe some of the most interesting initiatives implemented for both South and North of Mediterranean countries and that focus on mobility of students and youth development.



33 “Youth Forum Jeunesse Reaction to the Green Paper on Learning Mobility of Young People”, p. 4, [youthforum.org](http://youthforum.org), <http://preview.tinyurl.com/lb28png> (11/08/14).

### 3.1. International Organizations' initiatives

3.1.1. *UNESCO*<sup>34</sup> - Youth has always been the most important focus in UNESCO's programmes and that is why UNESCO has defined specific programmes for young people, which are in line with the objectives of UNESCO's Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, UNESCO considers the collaboration with other agencies of the United Nation and with national governments very important, in particular when they develop programmes aimed at empowering youth. As for Inter-Agency Cooperation, for UNESCO the cooperation with their “sister agencies” of the UN is a priority. Joining forces is the only way to ensure that actions and measures for young people have a real impact. This cooperation concerns a close work with partner organizations of the UN system, which develop youth-related policies, project and programmes with the underlying purpose of empowering youth to become key partners for development and peace.

#### World Atlas of Youth policies



34 Information taken from the UNESCO Web Site: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

35 Complete text of “Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021” at: <http://tinyurl.com/mchszub>

As for the cooperation with national governments, UNESCO is involved in the implementation of national legislation and strategies focused on youth. In fact, many countries belonging to the region of our interest (especially those of the South side of the Mediterranean), do not have public policies relating specifically to young people. Moreover, the countries that have developed these new forms of legislation, often lack a comprehensive approach to the challenges faced by the younger generation. Consequently, UNESCO shares its experience and knowledge to assist these governments. The effort made by UNESCO and governments is very important in the case of MENA country because in most of them a youth policy is completely lacking as described in the “World Atlas of Youth Policies” undertaken by the International Institute for Education Planning in collaboration with the UNESCO Youth-led Social Innovation Team.

UNESCO also collaborates with the European Union, which supports a UNESCO project that among its aims, tries “to enhance media coverage of youth perspectives and positioning of youth *vis-à-vis* national policies and programmes in European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) South countries”<sup>36</sup>. The “Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project” (NET-MED Youth) is a three years project which involves both the Southern and the Eastern Basin of the Mediterranean that aims to create an enabling environment for young people to develop their competencies and exercise their right and engage as active citizens<sup>37</sup>. The project focuses on stimulating decision-making relating to youth policies. It will promote young people freedom of expression, representation in mainstream media and empowerment through media, in order to reinforce the capacities and participation of youth organisations and stakeholders working on youth related issues. It will provide national youth organisations with opportunities for supporting the review of policies and programmes focused on youth employment and transition. The activities will be conducted, as a first stage, on a national level with transnational networking opportunities to be provided as a second

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36 Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project (NET\_MED Youth), <http://tinyurl.com/ourw4vm> (05/08/14).

37 For further information visit: <http://tinyurl.com/lbkz9ed> (08/08/14).

step, in order to share experiences between countries.

3.1.2. *United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD)*<sup>38</sup> - The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is a part of the United Nations Secretariat. Together with the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) seeks to strengthen international cooperation for social development. Even if the activities of UNDESA and UNDSPD are not specifically addressed to Mediterranean countries, they pay special attention on youth issue. In fact, among their objective there are the promotion of social inclusion of youth and marginalized people and a particular attention on youth's migration.

As this is one of its major concern, the UNDESA has published a World Youth Report (2013)<sup>39</sup> which explores the situation of young migrants from the prospective of young migrants themselves. The Report highlights some of the concerns, challenges and successes experienced by young migrants told in their own voice. Recognizing the diversity of conditions, reasons and expectations of young migrants is important for understanding the impact of migration on the human development of young people and it is essential for designing specific interventions that enable them to realize their hopes and aspirations. To listen to their voices and to stimulate youngsters participation, UNDESA organised a number of interactive activities, including an online survey, weekly e-consultations, a Google+ Hangout with young people and experts and it set up a dedicated web site to allow youth to contribute with their own stories of migration. As for the projects supported by UNDESA and UNDSPD, they aim to translate international agreements into strategies at the country level. To do so the DSPD organises training workshops and seminars and provides assistance to governments as well as conduct research and field studies.

Regarding youth, there is a specific Programme, the World Programme of Action for

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38 Information taken from: <http://undesadspd.org/Youth.aspx> (08/08/14).

39 To see the complete report visit: <http://www.unworldyouthreport.org> (08/08/14).

Youth (WPAY)<sup>40</sup> which guides the United Nation youth agenda. It provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people all around the world.

3.1.3. *United Nation Development Programme (UNDP)*<sup>41</sup> - The activities of the UNDP in Arab States include, of course, the Southern countries of the area of our study. Its programme for this region is particularly interesting because among the priorities of UNDP in Arab states there is the promotion and enhance of democratic governance and knowledge society, with particular focus on women and youth empowerment. There are 150 projects with a focus on Democratic Governance and some of them work specifically to strengthen civic and political participation of youth, since in the majority of Arab States, Parliaments have zero young members (under 30).

Therefore, the UNDP supports countries to reach their own development objective and internationally agreed goals. It supports, together with local governments and organisations and partner countries, projects aimed to increase youth employment<sup>42</sup> and youth education in order to increase the awareness of democratic processes in Arab countries<sup>43</sup>.

## 3.2. Regional cooperation mechanisms

3.2.1. *Euro-Med Youth Programme*<sup>44</sup> - The programme promotes the mobility of young people and the understanding between peoples. The Euro-Med Youth Programme is a regional programme funded by the European Union, setup within the framework of the Barcelona Process, specifically referring its third chapter entitled

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40 To see the complete Programme visit:  
<http://undesadspd.org/Youth/WorldProgrammeofActionforYouth.aspx> (08/08/14)

41 Information taken from the UNDP website: <http://arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home.html>

42 The “Employment Generation for Youth in Tunisia Project” promoted the self-employment for youth. More info at: <http://tinyurl.com/qgrxy22> (08/08/14)

43 UNDP initiative to prepare young Palestinians for politics. More info at:  
<http://tinyurl.com/obbg2km> (08/08/14)

44 Information taken from the web site of EuroMed Youth Programme: [www.euromedyouth.net](http://www.euromedyouth.net).

“Partnership in social, cultural and human affairs”. It is at its IV Phase (2010-2016) and it is expected that until the end of this phase around 100 projects will be funded. The geographical area of reference comprises all the countries of the European Union and eight Mediterranean partner countries, signatories of the Barcelona Declaration, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia.

The general objective of the Programme is “to support and strengthen the participation and contribution of youth organisations and youth from the Euro-Mediterranean Region towards the development of civil society and democracy”<sup>45</sup>. To achieve these goals the Programme aims to encourage mutual understanding between young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region and to fight against stereotypes and prejudices; to promote active citizenship among young people and enhance their sense of solidarity; to contribute to the development of youth policies in the different partner countries. Target groups of the Programme are Youth NGOs on local and national level, actors and stakeholders of the youth field and young people in general.

To guarantee a greater proximity to the final beneficiaries, the Euro-Med Youth Units have been established in the partner countries in order to decentralize the programme. The aim is to strengthen the complementarities with the Youth in Action<sup>46</sup> programme and increasing the cooperation between Euro-Med Youth Units and National Agencies. The activities promoted to achieve the objective of the programmes are divided into 3 types of actions:

- Euro-Med Youth Exchange: it is a project based in transnational partnership between two or more organisations from different countries. It brings together in one of the ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) South country groups of young people from the Euro-Mediterranean region, in order to give them the opportunity to discuss and share themes of mutual interests, discover and become aware of social realities and cultural

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.euromedyouth.net/OBJECTIVES.html> (08/08/14)

<sup>46</sup> About “Youth in Action” see the Box on European Union policies for youth mobility.



backgrounds, learn from each other.

- Euro-Med Youth Voluntary Service: this is a project offering the young people an opportunity to carry out a long or short term volunteering activity in an ENPI South country. This enables volunteers to express their solidarity and also to acquire a valuable intercultural experience and develop new skills. At the same time it brings benefits to local communities and to hosting organisations through the mutual exchange and the international added-value.
- Euro-Med Youth training and Networking: measures include projects which support those who are active in youth work and youth organisations. The exchange of experiences, expertise and good practices are the main opportunities of this third action. Possible activities to be implemented in projects are: study visit, partnership building, seminar, training course. It's interesting to highlight two of these activities. The first one is the study-visit, which is an organised study programme that offers a view of youth work and youth policies provisions in the hosting ENPI South country. It consists in visits and meetings to different projects and organisations in the country. The second one is the training-course, an educational learning programme on specific topics, aiming to improve participants' competences, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Training courses lead to higher quality practice in youth work in general and, specifically, EuroMed Youth projects.

3.2.2. *Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities (SALTO)*<sup>47</sup> - SALTO-YOUTH is a network of resource centres working on European priority areas within youth field and its goal is to support and reinforce the Euro-Mediterranean Youth cooperation, whose main challenge is to bring both sides of the Mediterranean sea closer. Countries involved are the countries of the European Union, Lichtenstein, Iceland, Croatia, Switzerland, Norway and Turkey, and eight Mediterranean Partner countries, which are involved in the Barcelona Process, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia.

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<sup>47</sup> Information taken from: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/> (08/08/14).

SALTO-YOUTH provides youth work and training resources and organises trainings and contact-making activities to support organisations and National Agencies within the frame of the European Commission Youth in Action Programme and beyond.

SALTO-YOUTH provides multilateral training courses for youth workers, youth leaders and trainers active in Youth in Action and EuroMed framework and supports the EuroMed Youth Units. These activities are mainly aimed to train youngsters in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and to reinforce the quality of tools of learning. Some of the activities are specifically focused on youth exchanges, others on the definition and promotion of “youth culture” as expression of freedom since youth is more and more present in the social and political scene<sup>48</sup>. Thanks to these kind of activities, the participants can share, test, analyse and develop new projects and new partnerships and implement the priorities in future projects.

*3.2.3. Partnership Between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Field of Youth in the Euro-Med Region<sup>49</sup>* - The European Union – Council of Europe youth partnership is meant to create synergies between the commitments and activities of the two partners institutions in the youth field in situations and on the issues that justify a common European approach. All the activities address the needs of young people and the wider youth field, including decision makers, governmental experts, youth researchers, youth practitioners and youth organisations.

Countries involved in the activities of this cooperation, are those belonging both to the European Union and Council of Europe, as well as neighbouring South Mediterranean countries.

As specific themes in 2014-2016 the two institutions agreed to focus on participation and citizenship, social inclusion and recognition and quality of youth work.

In 2005, the Council of Europe and the European Commission agreed to develop a joint Euro-Mediterranean project, encompassing Human Rights Education and Intercultural Dialogue. Since then, the partnership has been playing a pioneering role

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48 To have an idea of SALTO activity for 2014 visit: <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/tceuromed/2014-training-activities/> (08/08/14).

49 Information taken from: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>.

in the field of youth policy cooperation.

One of the aspects the two institutions take in great consideration is the “learning mobility in the field of youth”, which refers to the mobility of young people across countries, inside and outside Europe, in formal and non-formal learning settings. Learning mobility takes place in the frame of exchange programmes with the aim of promoting and developing personal and professional competences, communication, interpersonal and intercultural skills, and active citizenship among others.

At the European level (especially at the European Union level) learning mobility is also linked to the wider policy for the mobility of European citizens and citizens of Mediterranean partner countries.

The cooperation of the Council of Europe and the European Union in the field of youth policy have focused on introducing instruments which promote learning mobility in a practical sense. In particular, the Council of Europe has been focusing on the promotion of mobility for intercultural learning and integration in the wider Europe. As for the European Union an important step toward the removal of the obstacles to youth mobility has been the Council directive 2004/114/EC on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated trainings or voluntary service. This directive aims at setting up a common legal framework, making it easier for people from outside the European Union to enter and stay in the EU for the purposes described above, in order to promote Europe as a world centre of excellence for studies. The promotion of youth mobility is also included in the Resolution on a renewed framework of cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) and increasing learning mobility and opportunities for young people' has been one of the three priorities of the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth for the years 2010-2014.

The current main policy paper in the field of learning mobility is the Communication from the Commission "Youth on the Move"<sup>50</sup>, issued in June 2011. It is one of the seven flagship initiatives in the frame of the Europe 2020 strategy for a smart,

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<sup>50</sup> To have further information on Youth on the Move programme visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/>.

sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union, builds on the results of the Green Paper on the Learning Mobility of Young People and is closely linked to the flagship initiative "An Agenda for new skills and jobs" aiming at enhancing geographical mobility throughout the EU. The main idea behind "Youth on the Move" is that learning mobility is an important way in which young people can enhance their development as active citizenship and strengthen their future employability both by acquiring new professional competences and developing a positive attitude towards mobility. Therefore, the Commission sees in mobility a key instrument to prepare young people to live in the society of the future, be open to new ideas and deal with the unfamiliar, and aims at extending opportunities for learning mobility to all young people in Europe by 2020 by mobilising resources and removing obstacles to pursuing a learning experience abroad. *Youth on the Move* also envisages a Council Recommendation on promoting the learning mobility of young people, which has been issued in June 2011. In the *Recommendation*, members states are invited to take actions to provide information and guidance on the opportunities available, to increase the motivation of young people to participate in transnational learning mobility activities, to provide preparation of opportunities for learning mobility, particularly with regard to foreign language skills and intercultural awareness, to overcome administrative and institutional issues relating to the learning period abroad, to increase the quality of learning mobility, the portability of loans, the funding and partnerships, the recognition of learning outcomes.

The latest policy developments, the constant attention of the two institutions towards youth mobility and the strong interest of youth organisations on the topic led to the creation of the "European Platform on Learning Mobility in the youth field" as an initiative of practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

3.2.4. *European Platform on Learning Mobility in the youth field*<sup>51</sup> - The "European Platform on Learning Mobility in the youth field 2013" (EPLM 2013) is a network for European policy makers and researchers working in the field of formal and non-

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51 Information taken from: <http://www.learningmobility.eu>.

formal education. The focus is on aspects of mobility for young people.

The learning mobility in this framework aims to increase participation, active citizenship, intercultural learning and dialogue, individual competency development and employability of young people. The platform focuses on physical and organised learning mobility but does not forget the virtual mobility facilitating and supporting physical mobility experiences.

The platform focuses on the learning mobility of 13 to 35-year-old and of practitioners in the youth field. By “youth field” the platform means specific youth field culture types of youth work that characterize the field.

The EPLM is the result of a European conference that took place in 2011 at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe, organised thanks to the cooperation between the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the National Agencies for Youth in Action in Germany and Hungary and a consortium of German institutions organising the long-standing ‘Research-Practice Dialogue on International Youth Work’.

The European Platform on Learning Mobility in the Youth Field aims to:

- develop a network for cooperation for the exchange and cooperation of researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Europe;
- create and maintain a collective, multi-professional voice from the youth field with the common concern of learning mobility;
- create links between non-formal and informal learning as well as formal education;
- foster participation, active citizenship, intercultural learning and dialogue, individual competency development and employability of young people by learning mobility;
- foster the learning mobility of youth 13-35 years old and learning mobility of practitioners in the youth field.

The Platform intends to strengthen the involvement of local actors and young people themselves, as well as to enlarge the regional scope through stronger participation of non-EU countries. In fact, even though by now the Platform is mainly focused on the

European mobility of young people, the fact that it is recognised in programmes such as the European Commission's "Youth in Action", open to the future implementation for Mediterranean non-European countries. Moreover, to support the enlargement process which can be favoured by ensuring sufficient mobility opportunities also for young people living in the countries involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy is in the interest of the European Union.

### 3.3 Development agencies and foundations

*3.3.1 Anna Lindh Foundation*<sup>52</sup> - Anna Lindh Foundation is an inter-governmental institution bringing together civil society and citizens across the Mediterranean to built trust and improve mutual understanding.

The purpose of this institution is to improve mutual respect between cultures and to support civil society working for a common future for the region. Through its action and reflection the ALF aims to contribute to the development of an Intercultural Strategy for the Euro-Mediterranean Region, providing recommendations to decision-makers and institutions and advocating for shared values.

To achieve its goals, the Anna Lindh Foundation develops programmes and resources for educators and youth leaders with a focus on promoting dialogue skills and intercultural citizenship learning.

These events and programmes are taken in different countries of the Mediterranean region, both in the South and in the North, and they deal with very different topics. Among them the mobility around the Mediterranean is taken into great consideration, trying to develop a deep understanding on contemporary mobility, by bringing together people able to think mobility in its widest sense<sup>53</sup>. The Anna Lindh Foundation's Call for Proposal is one of the instruments to support the development

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52 Information taken from: <http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/home>.

53 A symposium entitled "Exploring Mobility around the Mediterranean" supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation took place in Alexandria in 2011, and came to topics such as artistic mobility, travel literature, artists' experiences, policies on mobility and the role of cities in promoting artistic mobility.

of transnational civil society projects and to mobilise the National Networks. This mechanism contributes to the unique character of the Foundation as a meeting point for civil societies from both sides of the Mediterranean. The Call aims at supporting projects that promote the mobilisation and empowerment of civil societies for inclusion and citizenship in line with the Anna Lindh Foundation's '4D' Strategy. The strategy conceives Intercultural Dialogue as a civil society mobilisation factor, aimed at valuing Diversity, promoting the participation of the society in building open and plural Democracies, and fostering inclusive and sustainable Human Development. The Call for Proposal include several multilateral projects built upon a 1+1 partnership formula with at least one partner from a Southern Mediterranean country and at least one from European country.

#### **4. A brief overview on national youth policies of the Mediterranean countries<sup>54</sup>**

If youth policies including youth mobility are rather developed in Northern Mediterranean countries, thanks to the EU membership and the subsequent possibility to address to the policies implemented by European institutions, for the Southern countries the situation is different. The question is that national youth policies in the Southern Mediterranean countries are not yet fully implemented even at an internal level and so it is more difficult to find national policies regarding youth mobility. However, some of these countries have a series of national directives, legislations and policies/strategies to address youth needs that over time, and thanks to the cooperation among Mediterranean countries, could become outright youth policies, concerning their mobility too.

Below some notes about youth policies in the Mediterranean countries.

##### *Algeria*

Algeria is one of the most lacking in this sector and it is therefore difficult to recognise the presence of a youth policy in Algeria, except for some measures to favour sports. However, this country has various regulation and programmes that effect youth and the Ministry of Youth and Sports has Directorates in each of the provinces that are responsible for local youth centres, youth hostels, village halls, youth camps and sport facilities. Moreover, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of National Solidarity both offer programmes and incentives supporting the hiring of school and university graduates. In a situation like this, a local policy with national guidelines adapted to each region is requested and in fact “a political vision and the will to act on young people, who represent a large section of the Algerian society, as well as the implementation of youth related policies, are demanded”<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Information taken from: <http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/>.

<sup>55</sup> “Introducing Youth Policies in the Mediterranean Partner Countries in brief”, EuroMed Youth III Programme, p. 5.



### *Egypt*

According to the Egyptian Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, youth is defined as aged 18-30. However, recent programmes by the ministry, define youth as aged 18-35. Even though many policies have been proposed in the youth field, up to the beginning of 2014, there is no indication that a national youth policy was adopted. Anyway the governmental authority responsible for youth is the above mentioned Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, which included, in its strategic goals, the increasing of political participation of youth, building cultural awareness and developing training and research on youth.

### *France*

France renews its youth policy biennially. Priorities of youth policies are the improvement of interdepartmental cooperation on youth issues, ensuring all young people the access to education, professional orientation and training, participation in the personal development and autonomy. The Ministry for Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life is the authority charged with preparing and putting in place governmental policy in favour of youth. In 2013 it adopted 47 concrete measures designed to meet the needs of young people through public action.

### *Greece*

Youth in Greece is defined as between 15-35 years old. In some cases this is extended to 40 years. The Youth Policy Report of 2012 noted that Greece has no dedicated national youth policy. Actually, youth policy is considered “transversal” and various ministries and incorporating national, European and international policies deal with it. In fact, national youth programmes are mainly influenced by the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018). The authority primarily responsible for youth in Greece is the General Secretariat for Youth within the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, which has the “primary task of shaping, monitoring and coordinating the government policy for youth”. Its main role is to promote a transversal youth policy and heads an inter-ministerial committee.

### *Israel*

Even though it seems, according to a EuroMed study that there is no a specific national youth policy in Israel (but there are plans to create one), there are at least eleven different ministries involved in developing youth related programs and services. One for all is the “Youth and Non-Formal Education Department” of the Ministry of Education.

Moreover, in Israel there is a National Student and Youth Council, which is an umbrella organisation for all Israeli regional youth councils. This Council participates in decision-making in a range of ministries and bodies dealing with youth matters.

### *Italy*

Italy has not a fixed definition of youth and age categories vary according to the aims of different youth initiatives. While some of them target the “traditional” youth bracket 15-24, the category 15-35 is becoming more frequent.

There is an outright national youth policy, but since 2006 the National Youth Plan has been introduced and it identified focus-areas such as: access to the labour market, development of youth skills and knowledge, promotion of creativity and culture, encouragement of youth representation in the institutions, stimulation of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue.

In 2011, in reaction of the effects of the crisis, the government adopted a package of measures entitled “Diritto al futuro” (Right to the Future). The measures aim to “tackle the precarious conditions faced by young people”. The governmental authority which is primarily responsible for youth, is the Department of Youth and National Civic Service, responsible for the organisation of activities to implement youth policies, coordination of international youth exchange schemes, and tackling issues affecting youth.

### *Lebanon*

According to Lebanon's youth policy, youth is defined as aged 15-29 years old. The

Document of the Youth Policy in Lebanon (2012) outlines policy recommendations in five areas, namely: demography and migration; labour and economic participation; education and culture; health; social integration and political participation. The Document has been drafted by the Youth Forum for Youth Policy, a national-level organisations comprised of young NGOs and youth wings of political parties. The Ministry of Youth and Sport is responsible for youth affairs in Lebanon, and it established a department for youth with a special focus on youth development and policy issues.

### *Libya*

Because of the lack of youth policy and structured youth programming in Libya, an age range for youth has not been clearly identified. Despite the absence of a national youth policy and regardless all the difficulties, education and employment have become priorities of the post-revolution government. The issues of quality of education and the changing requirements of the labour market constitute pressing challenges for the Libyan education system. The Ministry of Youth and Sport, established under the transitional government in 2011, is responsible for youth affairs and it works on the creation of services for young men and women. An important role is also played by youth organisations and associations such as, for examples, the Libyan Youth Movement, Lybia Hurra Live Stream and the Libyan Link. These groups are coordinated and supported by the Libyan Youth Forum, which aims to “establish a national/international forum with a view to build one safe and prosperous nation for all Libyans” and advocates for recommendations devised by Libyan youth to be taken into account by decision-makers.

### *Morocco*

In 2003 a framework of a global plan for young people, children and women has been constituted. The main feature is the New National Youth Policy (NPNJ) adopted right in 2003, and a national integrated youth strategy (SNIJ) that seeks to expand the

country's network of youth services. The main authority in charge of the NPNJ is the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is responsible for developing and implementing policy relating to youth, sports and protection of children and advancement of women, but up until 2012 neither NPNJ nor the SNIJ were featured on the Ministry web site. Youth policy is marked with paradoxes because in the one hand the decision-makers have enhanced the quality of youth infrastructures and leaders skill, but on the other one young leaders lack of recognition and professional training.

### *Palestine*

The Palestinian Youth Cross-Cutting Strategy (2011 - 2013) defined youth as between 13-29 years. The National youth policy - planning document (2005) outlined the guiding principles and terms of reference used by governmental and non-governmental organisations during an effort to establish a national youth policy. Unfortunately, even though a youth study and a policy study exist, the process for the development of a dedicated policy has been put on hold following the creation of the Higher Council of Youth and Sport. The Higher Council for Youth and Sport (HCYS) operates both in the West Bank and in Gaza. It aims to establish a democratic Palestinian society and free nation, which provides citizens with equal opportunities, by furthering a legal environment for organising youth work and sports, promoting the values of citizenship, providing infrastructures and a suitable environment for physical activities. Youth, in Palestine's vision, is seen as being “empowered and participative youth, who have diversified and equitable opportunities for a balanced growth within the framework of a democratic, pluralistic society”.

### *Spain*

Spain is discussing a draft white paper on youth policy so a national youth policy is still unclear. This White Paper on Youth Policy in Spain 2020 was expected to establish a comprehensive, nationwide strategy on youth. There is also a Strategy for Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment 2013-2016 which aims to improve young people's employability, equal opportunities and entrepreneurship. The Youth Institute

is a public body under the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality and it aims to facilitate youth participation in political, social, economic and cultural development, and to encourage cross-governmental collaboration. The Youth institute develops international cooperation through programmes of the European Union, Council of Europe and Ibero-American Youth Organisation.

### *Syria*

Syrian laws define youth as between 15-25 years. In 2008 the Government of Syria began working on a national youth policy to form the basis for the “Five-Years Development Plan”. This would “define structures, activities, procedures and budget for young people”. The process was supported by UNICEF, UNFPA and national partners through a national committee. However because of the civil conflict begun in 2011, the status of the youth policy process is unclear.

The governmental authority responsible for the development of the national youth policy is the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs. Clearly, the current civil war is affecting the country and the youth tremendously.

### *Tunisia*

According to a report of EuroMed Youth Programme drafted in 2013, Tunisia has no national youth policy even though the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Women and Families “is in the process of formulating a new youth policy that will be a product of the revolution”. Prior to the “revolution” of 2011, it was likewise more accurate to speak of “strategies” concerning youth rather than a single youth policy. In addition to the above mentioned ministry, other ministries share responsibilities for those having reached the age of majority. Services to young people are delivered through centralised administrative units and a network of youth centres. According to the EuroMed study, decentralisation is a priority of the post-revolutionary government, as well as the increasing of autonomous youth organisations. As a matter of fact, the Tunisian Union of Youth Organisations (UTOJ) has become the main coordinator

body of youth organisations born after the revolution. Despite that, a study<sup>56</sup> about youth perceptions argues that also after the revolution youth felt that the current leadership is not listening at all to their aspiration.

### *Turkey*

The Turkish national youth policy of 2013 encompasses 13 themes linked to youth issues. However, the document neither names concrete measures to be taken, nor defines the financial resources needed or allocated.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Turkey, founded in 2011, is the central governmental authority for youth. The Ministry plans, implements and monitors all youth services except for formal education. It organises a wide range of youth activities, such as youth centres and camps, as well as an annual youth week.

### **BOX - European Union policies**

#### **The European Union policy<sup>57</sup> on youth learning mobility**

Learning mobility<sup>58</sup> is considered by the European Union Institutions, especially the EU Commission, a very important and effective tool to increase education quality, to provide more opportunities of work and to promote intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

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56 “The Revolutionary Promise: Youth Perceptions in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia”, The British Council, 2013, [http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2013\\_Tunisia\\_youth-perceptions-egypt-libya\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2013_Tunisia_youth-perceptions-egypt-libya_ENG.pdf)

57 Information taken from: Erasmus+ Programme Guide, <http://ec.europa.eu>, <http://tinyurl.com/ohkhjsn>

58 To read a comprehensive report on this topic, see: “Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Exchanges” , [www.europemobility.eu](http://www.europemobility.eu), <http://tinyurl.com/lkw9p3> (14/08/14).

Erasmus+ is the EU Commission Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport developed from the European union for the period 2014-2021. It manages the budget and sets priorities, target and criteria for the Programme on an on-going basis. The EU Commission entrusts budget implementation tasks to National Agencies that play an important role in the Erasmus+ Programme. The rationale of this approach is to bring Erasmus+ as close as possible to its beneficiaries and to adapt to the diversity of national education training and youth system.

Overall, the Programme will support actions, cooperation and tools consistent with the objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives, such as Youth on the Move and the Agenda for new skills and jobs. The Programme will also contribute to achieving the objectives of the European Youth Strategy and of the EU external action, as well as the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education. So it covers both an intra-European as well as an international cooperation dimension.

The Erasmus+ Programme is the result of the integration of several programmes implemented by the Commission during the period 2007-2013. However, in the period 2014-2021, Erasmus+ aims at going beyond these programmes, by promoting synergies among the different fields of education and removing artificial boundaries between the various actions and project formats, attracting new actors from the world of work and civil society and stimulating new forms of cooperation.

Among the Erasmus+ programmes, two are more relevant for youth mobility across Mediterranean countries, namely the Erasmus+ related to “Joint Master Degree” which is a continuation of the former Erasmus Mundus, and the Erasmus+ “Mobility Project for Young People and Youth Workers”, for activities related to the field of youth non-formal and informal learning, which can be considered the continuation of the former “Youth in Action Programme”. Both these programmes are open not only to young people coming from Programme countries, but also to those coming from a Partner Country<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> Programme countries are: all the Member States of the European Union and some non-EU countries (former Yugoslav Liechtenstein Switzerland Republic of Macedonia Norway Turkey Iceland). Partner countries of the Southern Mediterranean area are: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia.

*Erasmus+: Joint Master Degree (JMD)<sup>60</sup>*

The main contents of the programme and selection criteria follow the regulations of the former “Erasmus Mundus”, a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education. It aimed at the enhancement of quality in European higher education, the promotion of the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries as well as for the development of third countries in the field of higher education.

JMD is a high level integrated international study programme of 60, 90 or 120 European Credit Transfer System delivered by an international consortium of higher education institutions (HEI)<sup>61</sup> and other educational or non-educational partners with specific expertise and interest in the study areas covered by the joint programme. In line with the overall objective of Erasmus Mundus Programme, JMDs aim to foster quality improvements, innovation, excellence and internationalization in HEIs and to increase the quality and attractiveness of European Higher Education Area and supporting EU external action in the higher education field, by offering full degree scholarships to the best Master students worldwide.

JMDs take place in at least two of the Programme countries represented in the consortium, but part of the studies can also takes place in a partner country. Students will have to study in two different countries for a period of at least six months each.

<sup>60</sup> For further information visit: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/jointmasterdegrees\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/jointmasterdegrees_en).

<sup>61</sup> “A consortium must include HEIs from at least three Programme Countries, and may involve other HEIs from Programme and Partner Countries. Other organisations such as enterprises, public bodies, NGOs and research institutes may also be full partners”, [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/jointmasterdegrees\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/jointmasterdegrees_en), (14/08/14).



*Erasmus+: Mobility Projects for Young People and Young Workers*

Erasmus+ aims to strengthen the quality of youth work and non-formal learning for young people in Europe. It provides opportunities for young people to experience learning mobility in Europe and beyond and for youth workers to develop their interpersonal skills and improve their employment prospects through training and networking opportunities in Europe and beyond. The new Programme follows the former Youth in Action Programme, which ran from 2007 to 2013, and aimed to inspire a sense of active citizens, solidarity, and tolerance among young Europeans, as well as involve them in shaping the future of the European Union. The objectives of the Youth in Action Programme are basically the same of the new Erasmus+ programmes on youth mobility for non-formal learning.

Opportunities for young people to participate in activities abroad, include Youth exchanges and European Voluntary Service projects, while opportunities for youth workers to take part in activities abroad, include Training and networking events.

**Youth Exchanges** allow groups of young people from different countries to meet and live together for up to 21 days. During a Youth Exchange, participants jointly carry out a work programme (a mix of workshops, exercises, debates, role-plays, simulations, outdoor activities, etc.) designed and prepared by them before the Exchange. Youth Exchanges are based on a transnational cooperation between two or more participating organisations from different countries within and outside the European Union.

**European Voluntary Service** allows young people aged 17-30 to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary service for up to 12 months in another country within or outside the European Union. Young volunteers are given the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations dealing with youth information and policies, young people's personal and socio-educational development, civic engagement, social care, inclusion of disadvantaged, environment, non-formal education programmes, ICTs and media literacy, culture and creativity, development cooperation, etc. A volunteer from a Programme Country must carry out her/his activity in another Programme Country or in a Partner Country neighbouring the EU, while a volunteer from a Partner Country neighbouring the EU must carry out her/his activity in a Programme Country.

**Youth workers' training and networking** supports the professional development of youth workers in the form of participation of youth workers in seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits and a job shadowing/observation period abroad in an organisation active in the youth field.

All these projects are available to young people aged between 13 and 30, youth organisations based in the EU and outside the EU and other stakeholders with an active interest in youth issues.

## 5. Conclusions and open questions

This dossier is showing how youth policies and opportunities are different and fragmented in the Mediterranean area. In the last years, the whole area is facing deep changes and transformations which are having a strong impact on societies and institutions.

Popular uprisings demanding civil and social rights in the south side and the impoverishment of the middle class due to the economic and financial crisis in the Eurozone have encouraged to further support the relationship between the two sides of the Mediterranean and to develop policies to strengthen the connection among its populations. As the participation and involvement of youth is specific of this transition process, the younger population is the target to which these policies should be addressed to. Clearly, more mobility, exchange and training could create opportunities for the youth populations. Without an answer to their needs and request, the implementations of other reforms and policies will be conditioned by the discontent.

The following open issues are at the center of the debate and they need to be taken into account working on youth mobility and opportunities in the Mediterranean area.

- Are specific youth policies and departments useful or it is better to consider youth a transversal policy?
- Which are the main reasons that drive young students to study abroad? Is it only a matter of looking for higher quality education or is it also important in order to build a Mediterranean citizenship?
- Mediterranean mobility is still showing a great cleavage between North and South. How can this gap be mitigated?

- In practice, almost all the north side is composed by EU countries. The EU is supporting mobility and exchange in the Mediterranean area through the Neighborhood programmes and other project? Are the policies enough? How could be improved?