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**Franco-German foreign policy
cooperation towards the
Maghreb – converging goals,
diverging policies**

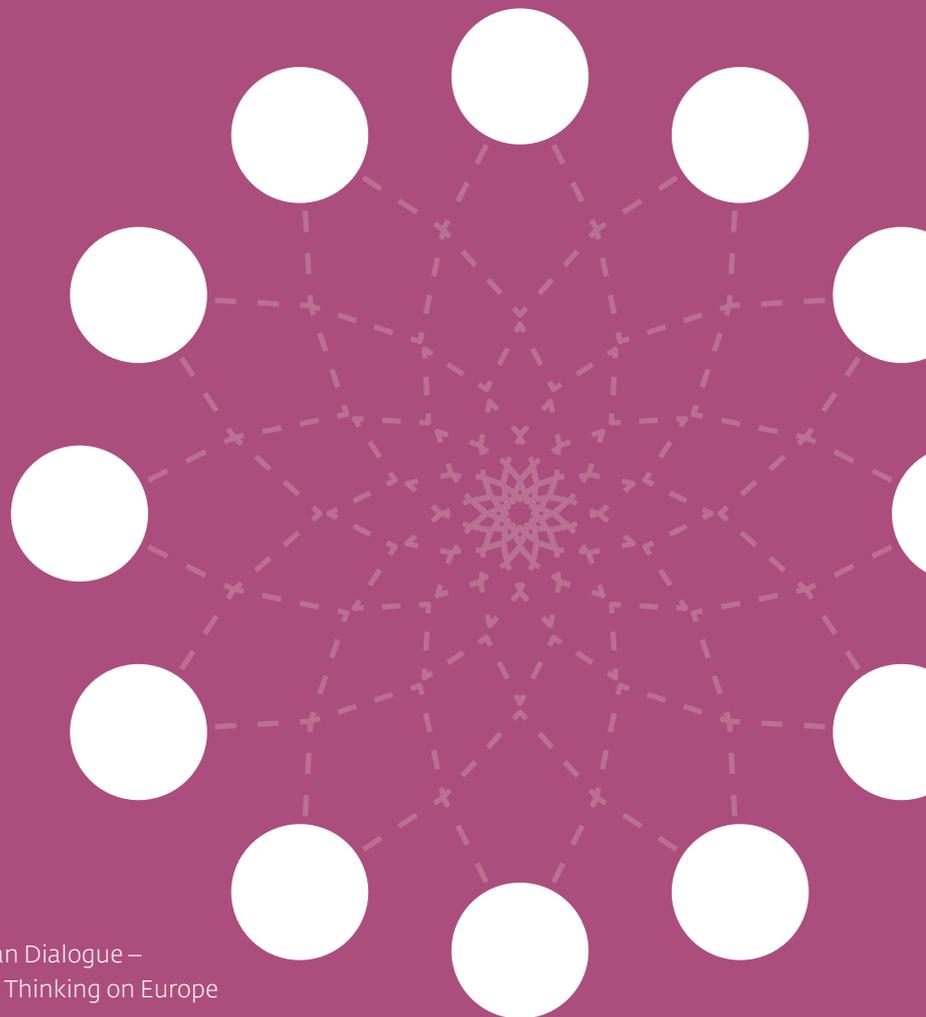


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Executive summary

France and Germany have traditionally pursued very different approaches to the Maghreb countries. This is hardly surprising given the very different roles that these two European powers have played historically in the region. In recent years, however, against the backdrop of an increasing transnationalisation of foreign policy challenges linked to the Maghreb (political unrest, migration, terrorism, socio-economic challenges), the political interests of France and Germany in the Maghreb are clearly converging: both countries emphasise the importance of »security and stability« in the Maghreb countries for Europe's security and seek to limit migration from the Maghreb, while both are interested in intensifying economic and development cooperation with the region.

However, while at the rhetorical level, there has been no lack of pledges to cooperate more closely, differences persist with regard to priorities, approaches and instruments to achieve these goals. While France sees security cooperation and – in some cases – direct military action as an appropriate means to safeguard stability in the region, Germany remains more prudent in this regard. In the development sphere, the goal to support the Maghreb countries' economic development

is shared. However, while this has led to a number of common project initiatives, it has also resulted in increased competition between the two countries' various development agencies. In migration policy vis-à-vis the region, France and Germany have moved closer together since the German government attempted to crack down on immigration from the Maghreb. Nevertheless, strong differences remain and there is no common approach towards migration from the region. Cautious attempts to intensify Franco-German coordination in terms of a joint EU migration policy have yet to make any progress, with the exception of the reinforcement of restrictions and external border controls.

This paper makes a few recommendations on what France and Germany could do in the short term to make their cooperation vis-à-vis the Maghreb region more effective. In the field of security cooperation France and Germany should do more to coordinate and expand their efforts in terms of prevention, de-radicalisation and reintegration programmes in the Maghreb countries, in order to reduce further radicalisation and the on-going spread of radical Salafism. In the long term, the focus on preventing radicalisation is a more promising counterterrorism strategy than simply sending troops and/or providing the local governments with military aid without being able to control whether this aid is being used effectively. In most of the Maghreb

countries, there are neither comprehensive anti-radicalisation strategies nor are there instruments. In the field of development cooperation, France and Germany could jointly support concerted socio-economic reforms, job creation and professional prospects for young people in all Maghreb countries, in particular in the socially contested regions, instead of each pursuing their own separate bilateral programmes. Creating a sort of structural fund for the Maghreb (along the lines of the EU's structural fund) could help to implement the decentralisation process in the Maghreb countries, as well as support sustainable development and sustainable growth. The appointment of a Franco-German Special Envoy for relations with the Maghreb countries could be an asset. In the field of migration cooperation, a joint Franco-German migration strategy for increased legal immigration opportunities from the Maghreb could be developed, based on existing documents (see the Kramp-Karrenbauer/Ayrault paper from April 2016 and the other joint Franco-German ministerial documents from June and July 2016), and as a starting point for a joint European approach.

In terms of methods and instruments, frequent parallelism could be avoided by intensifying and encouraging the exchange of information and on security, migration and development cooperation with Maghreb countries through French-German-Maghreb Dialogues (involving representatives from ministries, development agencies, research organisations, NGOs, North African officials and experts). An informal yet continuous political dialogue platform would not only be a constructive framework for this sort of exchange, but would also be an arena for rethinking cooperative approaches and methods by listening more carefully to the expectations articulated by the Maghreb partners and integrating them more actively and systematically into decision-making processes with regard to European-North African cooperation.

Introduction

France and Germany have traditionally pursued very different approaches to the Maghreb countries.¹ This is hardly surprising given the very different roles that these two European powers have played historically in the region. Accordingly, at the level of European foreign policy, Germany was perceived as being more responsible for the Eastern dimension of EU foreign policy action while France, as a former colonial power in the region, felt more responsible for the south. A lack of coherence between the different policy fields (foreign affairs, defense, development cooperation) on a domestic level, exacerbated by cleavages and different national agendas of the two major European players France and Germany, led to suboptimal results in terms of common European action towards the Maghreb countries. In recent years, however, the traditional division of labour has gradually changed against the backdrop of an increasing transnationalisation of foreign policy challenges linked to the Maghreb (political unrest, migration, terrorism, socio-economic challenges). Germany is taking developments in the Maghreb countries more and more into account, albeit in different ways or to different degrees. This has opened up a window of opportunity for closer cooperation between the countries vis-à-vis a region that was not at the forefront of Franco-German relations in the past.

This contribution identifies differences, commonalities and contradictions in the security, development and migration approaches of France and Germany towards the Maghreb countries since the so-called Arab Spring of 2011. The paper argues that the political interests of France and Germany in the Maghreb countries are increasingly similar: both countries emphasise the importance of »security and stability« in the Maghreb

countries for Europe's security and seek to limit migration from the Maghreb, while both are interested in intensifying economic and development cooperation with the region. However, differences persist with regard to priorities, approaches and instruments to achieve these goals. While convergence is increasing in security and migration matters, improving the prospects for a more integrated common European policy towards the Maghreb, competition or parallelism can be observed in the field of development cooperation. This paper also argues that, in the light of terrorist attacks in France and Germany in 2015 and 2016, development cooperation is increasingly perceived by policy makers in both countries as an instrument of security policy.

In a first section, the paper takes a brief look at the different diplomatic traditions, determinants and challenges of French and German Maghreb policies. The second section analyses existing Franco-German cooperation efforts in the policy fields of security, migration and development. In conclusion, it elaborates a number of policy recommendations for Franco-German-European cooperation towards the Maghreb from a comprehensive regional perspective.

¹ The »Maghreb« countries include Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauretania. This contribution mainly focuses on Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and (if possible and useful) Libya, but also keeps the wider regional context in view and intends to take into account the differences and characteristics of the individual Maghreb countries.

I. French and German policies towards the Maghreb countries since 2011

1. France

Due to former colonial links, relations between France and the Maghreb countries have been historically close. After the Maghreb states achieved independence in the 1950s and 60s, France developed privileged political and economic relations with Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia within the framework of its »politique arabe«.² Strong personal links between the French political class and ruling elites in the Maghreb countries gave France preferential access to the local economy. The start of the Arab Spring in early 2011, however, fundamentally challenged French policy towards the Maghreb. The French »grand design« for the region was thus impossible to maintain. France lost a great deal of credibility because it sent contradictory signals with regard to its positioning vis-à-vis the democratic movements in the Maghreb countries in the early phase of the uprisings.³ Under strong public pressure, President Sarkozy radically changed the course of his policy. In Libya, France spearheaded the international intervention to topple Gaddafi, which was interpreted as a move to »repair« the damage that initial support for Ben Ali had done to France's image in the region.

Since 2011, France has attempted to redesign its policy towards the region. Overall, the Maghreb remains a priority region in French foreign policy.⁴ At the same

time, Paris has struggled so far to find a new, coherent approach for the region. Initially, France hoped that it would be able to focus on maintaining and continuing to strengthen its close economic relations with the Maghreb countries in cooperation with new, more democratic governing elites. In Libya, France had hoped to benefit economically from its leading role in the military intervention to oust Gaddafi.⁵ However, increasing instability, slow economic progress and stalling development throughout the region, and the increasing activities of various terrorist groups in particular have prompted Paris to look at the region from a predominantly security policy perspective in recent times.

To be sure, Maghreb-related terrorism has been an issue for France for a long time already. In the 1990s, the Algerian terrorist group Groupe islamique armé (GIA) carried out a series of terrorist attacks on French soil because France supported the Algerian military regime after it seized power following the first round of the 1992 parliamentary elections.⁶ However, it certainly took on a new quality with the terrorist attacks in France in 2015 and 2016. Some of the terrorists who carried out these attacks were citizens of one of the Maghreb states. Others were French/European citizens with dual nationality or with direct family links to the Maghreb.⁷ Increasing activities of various terrorist groups in the Maghreb countries themselves, such as Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar al-Sharia and the Islamic State (IS), are also a cause for concern

the number-one recipient country of French development funds worldwide, and Tunisia also strongly benefitted from French development funds after the Arab spring. OECD Statistics, Total Net Aid (ODA) Disbursements to Countries and Regions (Constant Prices), <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?datasetcode=TABLE2A>, retrieved on 28 March 2017.

⁵ Tobias Koepf, Die schwierige Rückkehr zu privilegierten Beziehungen: Frankreichs Libyen-Politik nach dem Sturz Gaddafis. DGAPanalyse, no. 7/2012, p. 8.

⁶ Tobias Koepf, France and the Fight against Terrorism in the Sahel. The History of a Difficult Leadership Role, Note de l'Ifri, no. 6/2013, pp. 7–8.

⁷ »Tous les terroristes sont immigrés«: l'intox du député européen FN Nicolas Bay, in: Le Monde, 14 February 2017.

² Smail Kouttroub, Les déterminants de la politique arabe de la France: une approche comparée. In: Maghreb – Machrek, no. 2017, 2011/1, pp. 115–123.

³ In Tunisia, France initially supported President Ben Ali and only changed course after a controversial speech given by then-French Interior Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie at the French National Assembly (Assemblée nationale) caused a major public uproar in France, the Maghreb states and even beyond.

⁴ Despite political and economic instability after the Arab spring, the Maghreb region remains important for France in economic terms. France is Tunisia's main trading partner, Morocco's second-most important trading partner (after Spain) and one of Algeria's most important trading partners (together with Spain, Italy and China). Ministère de l'économie et des finances, Direction générale (DG) Trésor, Liste des pays, <http://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Pays>, retrieved on 28 March 2017. Bilateral development aid to the Maghreb countries, which have historically been among the main recipients of French aid, increased after 2011. In 2014, Morocco was

for France because they repeatedly threatened and also carried out attacks on French interests and citizens in the region. The same holds true for these groups' links to other terrorist groups operating further south in the Sahel-Sahara. Especially in Mali, but also in neighbouring Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, France is engaged in counterterrorism within the framework of its military operation Barkhane. While outfits such as AQIM's southern branch, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO), and Al-Murabitun concentrate their activities on the Sahelian countries, they have strong personal links to the Maghreb⁸ and use weakly controlled territories in southern Algeria and southern Libya as safe havens for their operations.

Accordingly, maintaining close cooperation with the local security services and improving their counterterrorism capacities is a main goal of France's Maghreb policy today. In 2015, France pledged 20 million euros in counterterrorism support to the Tunisian special forces and secret service agencies, including equipment and training measures.⁹ Cooperation with Morocco has proven to be effective in the aftermath of the November 2015 attack in Paris, when the Moroccan secret service helped French investigators to track down Abdelhamid Abaaoud.¹⁰ Even security cooperation with Algeria, which has traditionally been difficult¹¹, has recently improved. Algerian security forces were crucial in investigating terrorist plots in France and supporting

French counterterrorism activities in the Sahel-Sahara. The Algerian government has granted the French military overflight rights.¹² Libya had received French security support (especially in maritime and air defense) between 2011 and 2014, but this support was suspended in 2014 after the creation of the second (not internationally recognised) government.¹³

Since the terrorist attacks, French migration policy towards the region is mainly seen from a security perspective today. Due to close human links between both sides of the Mediterranean dating back to colonial times, the number of people with Maghreb origins living in France is comparatively high. In 2014, out of around six million people living in France who were born abroad, 774,266 were born in Algeria, 722,627 in Morocco and 265,760 in Tunisia.¹⁴ In the same year, the Maghreb countries were among the most important countries of immigration.¹⁵ Most of the immigrants from the Maghreb arrive legally in France (*regroupement familial*, studies).¹⁶ Immigration from the Maghreb countries has often been a heavily debated issue in French politics. This trend has increased still further since the recent terrorist attacks. Some French politicians (and not only from the anti-immigration right-wing extremist party Front National) have thus repeatedly challenged the current migration regime, especially with regard to the *regroupement familial*.

⁸ The leadership of most of the groups active in the Sahara includes jihadists from the Maghreb, mainly from Algeria. The most famous example is AQIM co-founder and current Al Murabitun leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar. Katrin Sold/Tobias Koepf, Migration und Sicherheit in Europas südlicher Nachbarschaft. Warum die EU den Maghreb-Sahel als Großregion verstehen muss. DGAPanalyse, no. 1/2016, p. 5.

⁹ Ambassade de France en Tunisie (website), Jean-Marc Todeschini à Tunis, 3 February 2016; Ambassade de France en Tunisie (website), Conférence de presse de Jean-Yves Le Drian à Tunis, 3 February 2016.

¹⁰ Anna Ravix, Le Maroc a mis la France sur la piste des terroristes de Saint-Denis, in: France info (website), 20 November 2015.

¹¹ Because of the complex historical relations between France and Algeria going back to the Algerian War, the two countries' security services haven't always worked very well together in the past.

¹² Jean Glavany (Rapporteur), Rapport d'information no. 4384 sur la coopération européenne avec les pays du Maghreb, Paris : Assemblée nationale, 18 January 2017, pp. 113–114.

¹³ Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁴ Insee, Répartition des immigrés par pays de naissance en 2014: effectifs, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2381755#tableau-Tableau1>, retrieved on 26 July 2017.

¹⁵ In 2014, 25,807 Moroccans (out of a total of 209,782 immigrants, 12.3%), 25,414 Algerians (12.1%), and 14,116 Tunisians (6.7%) immigrated legally to France. Cédric Mathiot, Non, Robert Ménard, 75% des immigrés ne viennent pas du Maghreb et de Turquie, in: Libération, 7 October 2016.

¹⁶ Migration en France/Les Algériens toujours les plus nombreux, in: Algérie-Focus (website), 7 October 2015.

2. Germany

Given the fact that Germany has no colonial past in the Maghreb, bilateral relations with the Maghreb countries are less close, but also more unburdened and more open. Germany has maintained official bilateral relations with all Maghreb countries since they gained independence, mainly in the form of economic, technical and development cooperation. Only limited political attention has been paid to the Maghreb over the decades, with German foreign policy rather looking to the Eastern Mediterranean area, in particular due to the Middle East Conflict. This has changed slightly since the Arab Spring of 2011¹⁷, and again since the refugee crisis of 2015, as North Africa gained in importance in the German diplomatic agenda. German foreign policy has never elaborated a comprehensive regional concept for the Maghreb countries, but has rather pursued bilateral relations with individual countries. However, since the 1990s Germany has actively and continuously supported multilateral cooperation with the Maghreb countries in the former Barcelona Process, reframed into the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in 2008. Personal links between the German political class and ruling elites in the Maghreb countries are not well developed, compared with France, but relations between their civil societies exist in multiple forms and have steadily intensified in recent decades.¹⁸

Due to the Arab Spring, the German perspective on the Maghreb countries changed in the sense that interest on the part of the political class, public opinion and the media in the uprisings and in the subsequent transition processes increased considerably. Tunisia is considered to be a »flagship« partner in the MENA

region. Bilateral relations with Morocco are close and without tensions. Bilateral relations with Algeria have traditionally been less intense, but economic and business cooperation have been productive thanks to a »mixed economic commission«, created in 2011. During increasing numbers of official visits in 2015 and 2016, different ministers stressed Germany's commitment to intensifying these relations. In 2016, Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal announced closer security cooperation with Germany with regard to Libya, Mali and the fight against IS, and agreed to more rigorous implementation of the bilateral German-Algerian return agreement of migration of 1997.¹⁹ Relations with Libya have traditionally been complicated. After Germany's abstention from international military intervention in 2011, Germany tried a number of times to mediate between the parties to the conflict, in particular during German diplomat Martin Kobler's mandate as Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) from 2015 to 2017.

The new German enthusiasm to cooperate with the Maghreb was diminished when the Arab Spring turned into the »Arab Winter«, and when it became obvious that region-wide democratic transition in the Arab world was no longer on the cards. What is more, during the night of 31 December 2015 the so-called »events of Cologne« (a group of young men of mostly North African origin sexually harassed numerous women and stole their valuables) darkened perceptions of North African migrants on the part of the German media and public opinion. Existing prejudices vis-à-vis Muslims now turned against citizens from the Maghreb, in combination with the worsening refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016, and the terrorist attack in Berlin in December 2016 had a negative impact on German-Maghreb relations. Following the attack, committed by Tunisian irregular migrant and IS supporter Anis Amri, newly

¹⁷ Isabel Schäfer, Germany and the Maghreb Countries after the Arab Uprisings. In: Mediterranean Yearbook 2013. Barcelona: IEMed, pp. 222–225.

¹⁸ Isabel Schäfer, Entre idéaux et intérêts: les nouvelles perspectives françaises et allemandes sur le Maghreb. Visions franco-allemandes, no. 22, 2013, Paris: Ifri.

¹⁹ Angela Merkel's trip to Algiers in February 2017 had to be postponed owing to President Bouteflika's ill health.

upgraded bilateral relations with Tunisia went through a first minor political crisis, which was eased by Prime Minister Youssef Chahed's visit to Berlin in February 2017.

Since 2011, and in particular since the refugee crisis of 2015, the number of (mainly irregular) migrants from North Africa coming to Germany has increased, but to a much lesser degree than the number of refugees coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq (about 704,000 in 2015) and Sub-Saharan African countries.²⁰ In 2015, more than 28,000 migrants arrived from all Maghreb countries together, among them 10,057 from Morocco, 10,497 from Algeria, 5,376 from Tunisia and 2,693 from Libya.²¹ The North African communities living in Germany have traditionally been rather small: in 2015, 72,129 Moroccan citizens, 20,505 Algerian citizens and about 30,696 Tunisian citizens lived in Germany.²² These regular immigrants are generally quite well integrated and only play a minor role in the political debate or in the media (compared to the large Turkish immigrant community of about 3–4 million citizens, bi-nationals included).

During a visit to the three Maghreb countries Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia in February 2016, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Gerd Müller reiterated the objectives of German development policy in North Africa: political and economic stabilisation, promoting economic dynamics and contributing to new prospects for the young generation. These objectives are not entirely selfless, however: since 2016, the German government has sought more firmly to reduce immigration from the Maghreb, to facilitate the conditions of *refoulement* of those who have slim

prospects of receiving political asylum, and to offer better conditions of reintegration upon returning to their countries of origin.

The controversial political debate on the classification of the three Maghreb countries Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco as »safe countries of origin« overshadowed German-Maghreb relations in 2016. The objective is also to encourage the Maghreb states to control transit migration to the EU more tightly.²³ The government intended to pass a law defining these three countries as »safe« countries, in order to accelerate and facilitate processing of asylum applications and expulsions or forced returns. While the German Bundestag approved the law in May 2016, it was rejected by the Bundesrat in March 2017.²⁴ Out of 2,600 asylum applications by Maghreb citizens in 2015, only 41 were approved.²⁵ The Moroccan government has declared its intention to cooperate more intensively with the German administration with regard to the identification of individuals (e.g. intensified exchange on fingerprints). However, the German government has been vocal in its criticism of a lack of cooperation on the part of the Maghreb countries in terms of repatriating rejected asylum seekers; some politicians even threatened to cut development cooperation funds if the Maghreb countries refuse to repatriate rejected irregular migrants. At the same time, Amnesty International and other human rights organisations have criticised the law and the categorisation of »safe countries of origin« in the case of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, because human rights continue to be violated (e.g. criminalisation of homosexuality and mistreatment or torture of prisoners).

²⁰ Proasyl, Fakten, Zahlen, Argumente, <https://www.proasyl.de/thema/fakten-zahlen-argumente/>, retrieved on 28 March 2017.

²¹ Bundesministerium des Inneren/Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Bamf), Migrationsbericht 2015 des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge im Auftrag der Bundesregierung, Nürnberg: Bamf, December 2016, p. 189.

²² Ibid, p. 258.

²³ Isabel Schäfer, Migration to Europe – is North Africa Europe's border guard? The Current Column, 8 June 2015, Bonn: DIE.

²⁴ Deutscher Bundestag, Bundestag: Drei sichere Herkunftsstaaten, <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2016/kw19-de-sichere-herkunftsstaaten/421684>, retrieved on 28 March 2017.

²⁵ Ibid.

II. Franco-German cooperation towards the Maghreb: convergence, competition, parallelism

The overall objectives of France and Germany in the Maghreb today are more similar than they were in the past: a common will to safeguard security in the region in the light of the rising terrorist threat; development cooperation with the Maghreb states with the objective of economic stability, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights; controlling migration from and via the region to Europe; and maintaining access to the local economy.

Since 2014, France and Germany have sought to improve the coordination of their policies towards the Maghreb region. Foreign ministers of the two countries have travelled to the region together on two occasions to demonstrate their will to cooperate in third countries. In April 2014, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Laurent Fabius visited Tunisia to meet representatives from the Tunisian government, business world and civil society.²⁶ Two years later, in April 2016, Steinmeier and Jean-Marc Ayrault paid a surprise visit (due to security measures) to Libya, where they met members of the Government of National Accord in Tripoli and provided medical emergency aid for the Libyan population.²⁷ However, despite converging interests and symbolic acts such as joint ministerial visits to the region, common policy actions have been rare and less coordinated than initially appeared to be the case. In some cases, the French and German approaches even contradict each other or they take place in parallel, thus duplicating each other.

²⁶ Auswärtiges Amt (website), Tunesien auf dem Weg zur Demokratie unterstützen, 26 April 2014.

²⁷ Auswärtiges Amt (website), Unterstützung für Einheitsregierung: Steinmeier und Ayrault zu Blitzbesuch in Libyen, 18 April 2016.

1. Security and defense policy cooperation

In the aftermath of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, France and Germany repeatedly stated that they intended to intensify their cooperation in the fight against terrorism. With regard to the internal dimension of counterterrorism, the Ministers of Interior of both countries presented a common initiative on European cooperation in the field of internal security in August 2016.²⁸ In terms of the external dimension of counterterrorism, Germany stepped up its military engagement in Mali and in Syria/Iraq in late 2015 and early 2016, invoking the need for solidarity with France and as a response to the French call for increased support.²⁹

The case of Mali, which was heavily destabilised by a military coup in March 2012, is a good example of how French and German security policy can complement each other if there is a real will to cooperate. France has had a strong presence in the country with its military since launching Operation Serval in January 2013, which was transformed into the follow-up counterterrorism operation Barkhane, supported by some 3,500 soldiers, in August 2014. Germany is active in the region within the framework of the EU training mission EUTM Mali, launched in early 2013, to which it is able to contribute, according to the respective Bundestag mandate, up to 300 troops³⁰. In addition, Germany may deploy a maximum of 1,000 soldiers and 20 police

²⁸ Thomas de Maizière/Bernard Cazeneuve Initiative franco-allemande sur les enjeux clés de la coopération européenne dans le domaine de la sécurité intérieure, 23 August 2016.

²⁹ Claire Demesmay/Ronja Kempin, Ein Land im Kampf – Frankreich und der Terrorismus Herausforderungen für Deutschland und Europa, SWP aktuell, no. 37, June 2016, p. 3.

³⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, Antrag der Bundesregierung zur Fortsetzung der Beteiligung bewaffneter deutscher Streitkräfte an der Militärmission der Europäischen Union als Beitrag zur Ausbildung der malischen Streitkräfte (EUTM Mali), 22 March 2017, p.3. Close Franco-German cooperation within the framework of the EUTM Mali mission is underlined by the presence of the Franco-German brigade, which forms part of the French and German soldiers deployed to the mission.

forces for the 15,000-strong UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)³¹, to which France contributes roughly the same number of personnel.³²

Common Franco-German security cooperation is a lot less visible and more limited with regard to the Maghreb states themselves. With the exception of a few small-scale cultural projects to counter radicalisation in the Maghreb states³³, most of the existing French and German initiatives in counterterrorism are, if at all, only loosely coordinated and no joint counterterrorism approach for the region has been formulated. French and German efforts to help Maghreb countries better secure the borders between them exist in various forms. Germany is, for instance, contributing to the construction and control of the border system between Tunisia and Libya with financial support, technical equipment and training measures.³⁴ France is supporting the Tunisian police forces with equipment to improve their border control capacities³⁵ and the Franco-German company Airbus equipped Algeria's border system, as well as parts of the European agency FRONTEX's technical equipment.³⁶ However, there are no signs that these efforts were the result of political coordination, and some seem to be mostly driven by business

³¹ Ibid., p. 5.

³² As of 30 June 2017, 729 troops and 31 police officers from Germany and 732 troops and 20 police officers from France were present in the mission; see http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2017/jun17_1.pdf, retrieved on 26 July 2017. Despite the different military operations and the presence of international forces, the security situation in Mali and the wider Sahara-Sahel region remains highly problematic due to the continued presence of terrorist groups, weapons proliferation, drug smuggling and human trafficking. This also negatively impacts all the neighbouring Maghreb countries. Yahia H. Zoubir/Louisa Dris-Ait-Hamadouche, Global Security Watch—The Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia, April 2013, Praeger Security International.

³³ Nabil Ayouch : Le Centre culturel «Les étoiles» ambitionne d'ouvrir de nouvelles perspectives aux jeunes du quartier de Sidi Moumen, in: Le Mag (website), 14 February 2017.

³⁴ Zeit online, Die gekaufte Grenze, 29 October 2016.

³⁵ Ambassade de France en Tunisie (website), Dons matériels pour la police des frontières tunisienne, 11 October 2016.

³⁶ Zeit online, Die gekaufte Grenze (see footnote 34).

interests. The securitisation of migration has become an increasing economic factor for private security companies and public security bodies in France and Germany alike.³⁷

In the wake of the terrorist attack in Berlin on 19 December 2016, cooperation between France and Germany has also been very low key, in spite of expressions of solidarity by the French government. French Minister of the Interior Bruno Le Roux stepped up security measures in France (e.g. to protect the Christmas market in Strasbourg and similar places). Sections of the French media wondered whether Germany would now be ready to increase its military engagement, while the extremist right-wing Front National and conservative politicians criticised Angela Merkel's refugee policy and called for the borders be closed.³⁸

In the case of Libya³⁹, both France and Germany consider the conflict to be a major obstacle to regional stability in the Maghreb, although approaches to tackling the conflict clearly diverge. While France is active in Libya above all in terms of counterterrorism (use of special forces, intelligence), Germany limits its commitment to the construction of the border control system between Libya and Tunisia (see above). When in response to the worsening situation in Libya in 2016, France announced that it would intensify its counterterrorism efforts, Germany remained hesitant and announced that it would, at most, support training measures for Libyan security forces outside Libya. France was in favour of swift military action in order to prevent the further spread of radical Islamism in the country and started to gather European (Italy and the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Martin Zagatta, Reaktion auf Anschlag in Berlin. Frankreich verschärft Sicherheitsmaßnahmen, in: Deutschlandfunk, 20 December 2016.

³⁹ Jason Pack, The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Quadhafi Future. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

United Kingdom) and international partners the Arab League, African Union and the United States) for a joint international military intervention.⁴⁰

Germany warned that the conflict could escalate in a similar manner to Syria, rejected military intervention and concentrated its efforts on strengthening the political process. Contradictions and differences between France and Germany in the case of Libya had already occurred prior to this. For example, the French government responded with military intervention to support the uprising against dictator Gaddafi, while the German government rejected the military intervention and abstained from the UN Security Council's vote on 18 March 2011, which led to criticism of then German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle for isolating Germany.

2. Development cooperation

After 2011, France redefined the priorities of its development cooperation with the MENA region: economic and sustainable growth creating employment for youth and women, the protection of natural resources in the light of climate change, and social cohesion.⁴¹ In the Maghreb region in particular, youth and employment are considered to be priorities. The linguistic, cultural and geographic proximity between France and the Maghreb countries are assets of this cooperation. German development cooperation with the Maghreb countries after the Arab Spring in 2011 was mainly directed towards medium and long-term economic and sustainable development cooperation, including a multiplication of employment and infrastructure programmes, civil society and political transformation programmes. Both countries are endeavouring to intensify the decentralised cooperation approach, working more closely with development actors on the ground (including local politicians, trade unions, entrepreneurs and civil society associations). However, this is not always easy to implement in practice; the impact and tangible results of these efforts remain limited so far.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), a major development cooperation agency, has been working in the Maghreb countries for decades. The priorities include sustainable economic development, protection of resources, renewable energies, energy efficiency and good governance, while the French Agence française de développement (AfD) focuses on sustainable growth and employment, vocational training, rehabilitation of urban areas, rural development and environmental protection. In reality, however, both agencies are active in many more domains (including health, education, private sector

⁴⁰ Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik, *Libyen – der nächste militärische Einsatz unter deutscher Beteiligung?* Arbeitspapier Sicherheitspolitik, no. 3/2016.

⁴¹ Agence française de développement, *Vivre ensemble, croître ensemble en Méditerranée et Moyen-Orient. Plan d'Action 2015–2018*. Paris: ANR, 2015.

development, water and waste management, transport, infrastructure and agriculture etc.). This often takes place in parallel, and consultations on the division of labour are rare, even though the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) is a privileged bilateral partner of the AfD. Examples of common Franco-German projects are the »Support for strengthening the maritime transport administration and authorities in Tunisia«, launched in May 2016 by France, Germany and the EU (1,3 million euros)⁴², and the Grand-Tunis Rapid Rail Network co-financed by France (AfD), Germany (KfW), the EU and further partners.⁴³ Both France and Germany co-fund multilateral projects of the European Commission, European Investment Bank (EIB), African Development Bank (AfDB) and World Bank. During an international investment conference entitled Tunisia 2020, organised by the Tunisian government in November 2016 in order to attract new foreign direct investments to inject fresh dynamism into the Tunisian economy in crisis since 2011, international donors and investors pledged about 15 billion euros for projects in infrastructure, tourism and other sectors, most of them within the framework of the Tunisian Development Plan 2016–2020.⁴⁴ On this occasion, France announced additional AfD funds of 250 million euros per year⁴⁵, while Germany pledged 100 million euros for the construction of a wind park in Nabeul and a KfW loan of 82 million euros for a seawater desalination plant.⁴⁶ However, competition between

France and Germany and other donors also increased over the years, all looking for promising projects and further partners in the Maghreb region.

In general, German and French development cooperation face similar problems: there are too many projects in different sectors, many of them with a short-term focus and without synergies between them, little common prioritisation, and no overall strategy or coordination. Representatives of the Maghreb countries often travel to Germany, France and other donor countries with »shopping lists« for single projects, but necessary deeper structural reforms and inter-ministerial cooperation are overlooked. Corruption in the North African countries is actually on the increase according to international corruption indices. At the same time, large parts of the attributed funds are not used (e.g. the outflow of funds is only about 50% in the case of Tunisia) for different reasons such as administrative hurdles or frequent changes of government. But also between international donors, including French and German organisations, reform projects are often not efficiently coordinated. Numerous parallel youth employment projects have been launched since 2011, but youth unemployment remains very high in all Maghreb countries.⁴⁷

A recurring problem in both countries is also the fact that development cooperation is increasingly perceived as a means of conflict prevention, at least since 9/11 and the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, and has thus become highly »securitised«. Financial and technical contributions to job creation programmes, affordable housing and reconstruction and further development projects were, for many years, defined as instruments to counter extremism and conflicts. However, the recent developments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and other

⁴² European External Action Service (website), Jumelage entre la Tunisie, la France et l'Allemagne, Communiqué de presse, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/tunisia/documents/press_corner/cp_jumelage_maritime_portuaire_12mai2016_fr.pdf, retrieved on 28 March 2017.

⁴³ Agence française de développement (website), Réseau Ferroviaire Rapide de Tunis, 16 April 2013.

⁴⁴ Radio France internationale (RFI), Tunisie 2020: près de 15 milliards d'euros engrangés pour le pays, 1 December 2016.

⁴⁵ Gouvernement français (website), Tunisie 2020 : Manuel Valls annonce une aide additionnelle de 250 millions d'euros par an, 2 December 2016.

⁴⁶ Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (website), Tunisia 2020. Deutschland unterstützt auf tunesischer Geber- und Investorenkonferenz die tunesische Wirtschaftsentwicklung, 29 November 2016.

⁴⁷ Isabel Schäfer, Economic Crisis And (Youth) Unemployment In Tunisia: A Danger To The Democratic Transition Process? In: Mühlberger, W. (Ed.): Transformation in Tunisia: The First Five Years. EuroMeSCo Joint Policy Study, no. 5/2016, Barcelona: IEMed, pp. 42–65.

conflict countries in the MENA region and Sub-Sahara Africa have questioned this understanding that development policy can or should be a preventive security policy, too. Development politicians are increasingly sceptical of the idea that development policy can help to fight terrorism causes. They criticise the simplified nexus between poverty and terrorism, and claim that terrorism is not the consequence of poverty, hunger or a lack of education, but rather of misplaced ambition.⁴⁸ Ideological propaganda is another factor. Development policies alone cannot counterbalance short-term political or military decisions (e.g. leaving Libya in a chaotic state and with a power vacuum after a military intervention). At best, they can improve the livelihoods of the population and thus indirectly reduce conflict potential.

The same is true of migration policy (see also next paragraph). Since the refugee crisis, critics have become more vocal with regard to ineffective conflict resolution, failed foreign and security policy (such as in Syria and Libya in particular) and the ineffectiveness of the »fight against root causes of displacement and migration«, be it in the Middle East, Afghanistan, North Africa or Sub-Sahara Africa. Even if the causes of migratory movements are multiple and vary significantly from one country and society to another, the challenges of poverty, hunger, inequality and socio-economic discontent remain important in most of these countries.⁴⁹ In many cases it is still war, violent conflicts and repression that force people to migrate, as is the case in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. Faced with this kind of violent conflicts, development policies reach their limits. While development deficits lead to violent conflicts, the implementation of development projects is difficult or

even impossible in a situation of war or violent conflict, and also in countries where the rights and livelihood of the population is not guaranteed by the state. In the Maghreb, this dilemma specifically applies to Libya.

⁴⁸ Ralph Bollmann/Inge Kloepfer, Milliarden gegen den Terror, in: FAZ, 27 March 2016.

⁴⁹ Isabel Schäfer, Der Maghreb vor neuen Herausforderungen. Sicherheit, Entwicklung, Migration. In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, no. 33–34/2016, pp. 11–18.

3. Migration cooperation

France and Germany have also repeatedly stressed the need for closer cooperation in the field of migration and refugee policy. However, even though the Maghreb states have become a greater priority for German migration policy since 2015, no common Franco-German policy has been agreed upon. After Angela Merkel went it alone in summer 2015, opening the country's borders to a large number of refugees (mainly from Syria) for humanitarian reasons, but without consulting with France or other European partners, the political positions of France and Germany have changed on a number of occasions until today, illustrating once again the non-existence of a common approach (let alone a common European immigration policy). After the terrorist attacks of 2015, France's priority was to fight the Islamic State with military means on the ground in Syria. German diplomacy was reticent with regard to new military involvements in the region, in particular after the failure of military interventions in Afghanistan and Libya, making the case instead for an intensification of humanitarian and development aid in order to »fight the root causes of migration«. The dominating perceptions of the refugee crisis were very different in France and Germany⁵⁰, which also explains the diverging reactions. In Germany, many did not understand France's reluctance to welcome Syrian refugees in what has long been considered to be the »country of human rights«. But France was still reeling from the Islamist terrorist attacks of 2015, and increasing right-wing xenophobia reinforced by economic stagnation put the socialist government under pressure, giving rise to a restrictive immigration policy. In Germany, about one million refugees arrived in 2015 (mainly from Syria), while in France the number of asylum-seekers decreased by 5%. In the end, Germany

agreed to participate in a joint military mission to fight IS in Syria, at the request of President Hollande (Bundestag vote of 4 December 2015 to provide 1,200 German soldiers), and in return Hollande accepted a quota regulation for the distribution of refugees among EU member states. Angela Merkel, under pressure from Horst Seehofer and other CDU/CSU adversaries and parts of German public opinion, started to change her political course after the Balkan route was closed by Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia and Macedonia in March 2016. She supported the controversial refugee treaty with Turkey and returned step by step to a restrictive immigration policy and the reinforcement of external border controls. It now became much easier once again to reach consensus with France. In the end, the sole common objective of France and Germany is, once again, stricter controls of external EU borders, and despite the refugee crisis, no tangible progress was made in terms of developing a comprehensive long-term common European immigration policy.

There have, however, been some attempts to inject momentum into a Franco-German response to migration and integration, such as a joint report on »Promoting integration within our societies«, published in April 2016 by then Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault and Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Minister-President of the Saarland.⁵¹ The report analyses the different approaches to migration and integration in France and Germany and develops concrete proposals for a bilateral approach to integrating regular and irregular immigrants into French and German society, in terms of anti-discrimination and social inclusion in particular. A few months later, François Hollande and Angela Merkel used a joint press conference at the EU Summit of Bratislava in September 2016 to express their common political will to intensify controls of the EU's external

⁵⁰ Julie Hamann, Mama Merkel und der Kriegsherr. Wie Bilder den Blick auf Terror und Flüchtlingskrise prägen. In: Heinrich Böll-Stiftung (Ed.), Frankreich und Deutschland – Bilder über den Nachbarn in Zeiten der Krise, 2016, pp. 143–150.

⁵¹ Jean-Marc Ayrault/Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Promouvoir l'intégration au sein de nos sociétés, rapport remis au président de la République française et à la chancelière de la République fédérale d'Allemagne au 18e Conseil des ministres franco-allemand, 7 April 2016.

borders, to stop irregular immigration and to »combat the root causes of migration«. ⁵² By doing so, France and Germany tried, at least in theory, to return to their traditional role as the motor of European integration.

4. Partners in multilateral frameworks

France and Germany are both present and active in a number of multilateral frameworks. In sum, however, France has played a more proactive role and, in several cases, helped to initiate closer cooperation with the Maghreb countries. Germany followed this cooperation and provided financial support, but remained in the background both politically and diplomatically. Germany increased its activities mainly via the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other EU frameworks, as well as during the G7 Presidency in 2015 and the G20 Presidency in 2017, while France initiated, for instance, the Deauville Partnership and increased its activities in the 5+5 Dialogue.

Within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), both countries supported the SPRING initiative (Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth) that was launched in autumn 2011 and enveloped 500 million euros for 2011–2013, additional MENA projects of the EIB, as well as the adoption of the New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood in 2011 ⁵³ and the ENP review process in 2015. ⁵⁴ Many cooperation projects are co-financed by France, Germany, other EU member states and the EU. Both France and Germany are involved in the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which was created in 2008 at the initiative of France and seeks to foster regional cooperation within the institutional framework of the ENP. ⁵⁵

⁵² In the course of the year 2016, other joint Franco-German documents were prepared that addressed, amongst other topics, cooperation in asylum and migration policy. They included a common declaration by foreign ministers Jean-Marc Ayrault and Frank-Walter Steinmeier from June 2016 and a Franco-German initiative on domestic security in Europe, presented by ministers of the Interior Thomas de Maizière and Bernard Cazeneuve in July 2016. See Jean-Marc Ayrault/Frank-Walter Steinmeier, *Une Europe forte dans un monde incertain*, 27 June 2016; de Maizière/Cazeneuve, *Initiative franco-allemande sur les enjeux clés de la coopération européenne dans le domaine de la sécurité intérieure* (see footnote 28).

⁵³ European External Action Service/European Commission, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood. A Review of European Neighbourhood Policy*, 25 May 2011.

⁵⁴ European External Action Service/European Commission, *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, 18 November 2015.

⁵⁵ The French AfD is, for instance, co-piloting the UfM's Urban Project Finance Initiative (UFPI) together with the EIB; see <http://ufmsecretariat.org>, retrieved on 23 February 2017.

Both France and Germany are participating in the Deauville Partnership, established during the French G8 Presidency in 2011, which promotes bilateral and multilateral transformation initiatives in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and MENA countries. While expectations were high with 70 billion US dollars pledged, effective mobilisation of funds remained below this amount at 38 billion US dollars. While the Gulf States made large sums available, the IMF is conditioning credits to public policy reforms in, among other countries, Tunisia and Morocco.

During an informal EU Summit in Malta in February 2017, the EU adopted a nine-point plan (Malta Plan) on irregular migration from North Africa. The objective is to block the central Mediterranean migration route (going through Libya) and to engage in closer cooperation with the Libyan government (in 2016, some 180,000 irregular migrants used this route and about 5000 died) and other African countries, including take-back agreements.⁵⁶ Mobility partnerships with Morocco have been in place since 2013 and with Tunisia since 2014. In the case of combatting migrant and arms smuggling off the Libyan coast, Paris and Berlin disagreed about the extension of EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia, to which both France and Germany contribute ships and personnel. France actively lobbied for an extension of the operation's mandate to monitor the arms embargo against Libya, to prevent human and arms trafficking.⁵⁷ The German government was opposed to such a military extension of the mandate⁵⁸, because it required a new vote in the Bundestag, which

had only agreed upon the sea rescue character of the mission. Human rights and humanitarian NGOs have accused the EU of disregarding human rights and the rule of law. They seriously doubt that Operation Sophia is a viable solution given the fact that human rights continue to be violated in Libya and that the security situation remains chaotic. The EU would like to establish migrant camps in Libya and accelerate the return of rejected asylum seekers.

France and Germany are involved in NATO missions in different ways. Germany is contributing 650 soldiers to Operation Sea Guardian (July to December 2017) while France did not send any ships. The objective is a more efficient control of the Mediterranean Sea and the containment of Islamic State (IS) activities by controlling ships and preventing weapons smuggling and human trafficking. This mission replaces Operation Active Endeavour of 2001, created in response to 9/11, which was not particularly active in recent years and did not involve French participation. Sea Guardian troops are intended to work closely together with the EU's Operation Sophia. In the NATO air force intervention Unified Protector in Libya in 2011, under the mandate of UN resolutions 1970 and 1973, France was one of the major initiators and actors via Opération Harmattan.

France plays an important role within the framework of the informal EUMed forum («club du Sud»), bringing together the southern EU member states Greece, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus and Malta. The most recent summit was held in Athens in September 2016. The objective is to galvanise efforts to address issues specific to southern EU member states, such as relaunching economic growth, creating jobs and opposing the Merkel government's austerity dogma, which dominates European economic policies.⁵⁹ France is also pushing for greater security cooperation between

⁵⁶ According to the UNHCR Global Trends Report 2015, among the 65 million refugees worldwide, the large majority are internally displaced persons (IDPs): 42 million, and only one million arrived 2015 in Europe, where about 1.9 million refugees are currently registered. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 4.4 million people have been displaced within the continent; see UNHCR, Global Trends Report 2015, Forced Displacement in 2015, 20 June 2016.

⁵⁷ Zone militaire Magazine (opex360), Libye : Le mandat de l'opération européenne Sophia bientôt élargi au contrôle de l'embargo sur les armes?, 6 June 2016.

⁵⁸ Libyen. Steinmeier zu Überraschungsbesuch in Tripolis, in: FAZ (website), 16 April 2016.

⁵⁹ Adéa Guillot, Les pays du sud de l'Europe appellent à sortir du «dogme de l'austérité», in: Le Monde, 9 September 2016.

the EUMed states and for the establishment of a European corps of coastguards. It also supports calls for solidarity by Greece, Italy and Malta and has requested another redistribution of refugees in the EU and a reform of the Dublin system.

France also continued to intensify its diplomatic relations in what is known as the 5+5 Dialogue, bringing together the five Southern Mediterranean states Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, as well as the five Maghreb States Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania. Founded in 1990, it seeks to enhance regional cooperation in security, migration and economic matters and is appreciated by ministers and policy makers for its informal character, «common Mediterranean identity» and shared Mediterranean concerns, as opposed to the large and formal UfM framework (28 EU member states and 15 MED countries). France took over the 5+5 Presidency from Algeria in January 2017. Since the rising political and security challenges in the Maghreb-Sahel region, a concept was elaborated to enlarge the 5+5 Dialogue to a »5+5+5 Dialogue«⁶⁰ including the five Sahel states Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Chad, which could also present an occasion to improve the Europe-Maghreb cooperation.

⁶⁰ Aomar Baghzouz, La nouvelle géopolitique du Sahel, une opportunité pour refonder le partenariat euro-maghrébin? In: Cahiers de la Méditerranée, no. 89, 2014, pp. 195–207.

Conclusion

This study has shown that while German and French interests and priorities with regard to the Maghreb region have clearly been converging since 2011, and while, at the rhetorical level, there has been no lack of pledges to cooperate more closely, tangible cooperation efforts are few and far between. The reason for this is mainly that France and Germany agree on the goals they pursue vis-à-vis the region, but have found it much harder to find common ground regarding the instruments they should use to achieve these goals and/or how these instruments should be implemented. While France sees security cooperation and – in some cases – direct military action as an appropriate means to safeguard stability in the region, Germany remains more prudent in this regard. In the development sphere, the goal to support the Maghreb countries' economic development is shared. However, while this has led to a number of common project initiatives, it has also resulted in increased competition between the two countries' various development agencies. The upshot is that, in some cases, development projects are conducted rather in parallel than in a coordinated manner. In migration policy vis-à-vis the region, France and Germany have moved closer together since the German government attempted to crack down on immigration from the Maghreb (spurred by the so-called »events of Cologne« and the 2016 terrorist attacks on German soil). Nevertheless, strong differences remain and there is no common approach towards migration from the region. Cautious attempts to intensify Franco-German coordination in terms of a joint EU migration policy have yet to make any progress, with the exception of the reinforcement of restrictions and external border controls.

For all of the criticism regarding the lack of implementation of converging goals vis-à-vis the Maghreb, we

should not forget that the new consensus on common goals between France and Germany poses problems in itself. In the light of the terrorist challenge and the increasing migratory movements from the region, French and – to a lesser, but still significant degree – German policy towards the Maghreb has taken a strong security turn. Against this backdrop, there is an increasing tendency to see the economic development of the region not as an end in itself, but rather as a means to achieve security and stability. France, Germany and the EU continue to perceive the Maghreb countries not as equal partners, but rather as sub-contractors to ensure the security of the old continent. This can be detrimental in the long term, however. There is a real risk that the Maghreb governments will use this financial support to shore up their own regimes instead of improving the economic conditions of their populations. Instead of solving the region's problems, this could worsen them as a new generation of terrorists and a higher number of migrants could be the result. This is a potential consequence of the »securitised« approach that France and Germany are currently pursuing that should be always kept in mind.

France and Germany should therefore do more to coordinate and expand their efforts in terms of prevention, de-radicalisation and reintegration programmes in the Maghreb countries, in order to reduce further radicalisation and the on-going spread of radical Salafism. In most of the Maghreb countries, there are neither comprehensive anti-radicalisation strategies (except in Algeria) nor are there instruments. So far, the main approaches have been repression, detention or laxness (e.g. vis-à-vis returnee fighters). In the long term, the focus on preventing radicalisation is more promising than simply sending troops and/or providing the local governments with military aid without being

able to control whether this aid is being used effectively. In the field of development cooperation, France and Germany could jointly support concerted socio-economic reforms, job creation and professional prospects for young people in all Maghreb countries, in particular in the socially contested regions, instead of each pursuing their own separate bilateral programmes. Creating a sort of structural fund for the Maghreb (along the lines of the EU's structural fund) could help to implement the decentralisation process in the Maghreb countries, as well as support sustainable development and sustainable growth. The appointment of a Franco-German Special Envoy for relations with the Maghreb countries could be an asset. A joint Franco-German migration strategy for increased legal immigration opportunities from the Maghreb could be developed, based on existing documents (see Kramp-Karrenbauer/Ayrault paper from April 2016 and the other joint Franco-German ministerial documents from June and July 2016), and as a starting point for a joint European approach.

The analysis of French and German cooperation with the Maghreb countries has also shown that, in terms of methods and instruments, frequent parallelism could be avoided by intensifying and encouraging the exchange of information and experiences (best practices and worst cases) on security, migration and development cooperation with Maghreb countries through French-German-Maghreb Trialogues (involving representatives from ministries, development agencies, research organisations, NGOs, North African officials and experts). Only few projects already implement such fruitful trialogues, such as the tri-national youth programme of the Office Franco-Allemand de la Jeunesse (OFAJ) and the tri-national French-German-Maghreb research ateliers supported by the Franco-German University. An informal yet continuous political dialogue platform would not only be a constructive framework for this sort of exchange, but would also be an arena for rethinking cooperative

approaches and methods by listening more carefully to the expectations articulated by the Maghreb partners (governments, economic actors and civil society) and integrating them more actively and systematically into decision-making processes with regard to European-North African cooperation.

The mixed results of French and German cooperation with the Maghreb countries since 2011 highlight the need to define clearer targets, principles, timelines and priorities (as opposed to the scattergun approach), increasing reciprocal commitment and transparency, intensifying systematic monitoring and impact evaluation (e.g. in terms of reducing social injustice), introducing coordination mechanisms and continued control (e.g. naming and shaming by independent local watchdog NGOs when project funds disappear) and improving the outflow of funds. Alongside encouraging the Maghreb governments to develop mid- and long-term strategies, visions and priorities, improved international donor coordination and transparency could create more synergies and an improved division of labour in French-German-EU-Maghreb cooperation.

The election of Emmanuel Macron to the French Presidency in May 2017 has fuelled hopes that there will be a new dynamism in Franco-German cooperation, including in foreign and security policy matters. This could also have a positive impact on France and Germany's and the whole of the European Union's policy towards the Maghreb. However, Macron has sent mixed signals across the Rhine so far. On the one hand, he has repeatedly expressed the will to put Franco-Maghreb relations on a new and more equal footing⁶¹, which could also open the door to improved cooperation with France's European partners (including Germany). The

⁶¹ This was especially apparent when Macron travelled to Algeria during his electoral campaign in February 2017. In a speech, he stated that French colonisation in the region was a «crime against humanity», which led to mixed reactions at home, but largely positive feedback from within the region. Libération (website), En Algérie, Emmanuel Macron qualifie la colonisation française de «crime contre l'humanité», 15 February 2017.

recent intensification of Franco-German »rapprochement« in the neighbouring Sahel region could be cited as an example in this regard.⁶² On the other hand, Macron's proposal to create migration »hotspots« in Libya, which he formulated without consulting the other EU member states during the Libyan peace talks that he initiated in late July 2017, raised eyebrows in Berlin and other European capitals.⁶³ It thus still remains to be seen whether Macron is really amenable to a new, more coordinated approach towards the Maghreb. A lot will also depend on the priority that the new German government will attach to the region. If Germany confirms its increasing interest in the region or even injects fresh impetus into it, prospects for getting Macron on board for a more multilateral approach may also improve. It is a window of opportunity that should definitely be seized.

⁶² At the Franco-German Ministerial Council meeting in July 2017, Paris and Berlin, together with the European Union, launched the initiative for a »Sahel alliance«. This initiative aims to bring together international donors to meet on a regular basis and develop a more coherent approach towards the region. European External Action Service (website), Alliance for the Sahel will reinforce EU work for stability and development of key region, 14 July 2017.

⁶³ Valérie Leroux/Claire Byrne, Macron's go-it-alone style raises eyebrows in Europe, in: Agence France Presse (AFP), 29 July 2017.

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