



General Assembly

Eleventh Session

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First Committee – Disarmament and International Security

This committee aims to create a more peaceful world. Talks in this committee center around reducing weapons in the world. It also identifies threats to peace and finds solutions to international security.

This committee believes the world can become stable through cooperation. States can protect their people better if they work together for peace. For example, this committee might discuss how to keep weapons from terrorists. Or, how less weapons can make the world safer. Also, states talk about policing weapons and finding ways to reduce the weapons they have.

First Committee works closely with **United Nations Disarmament Commission** and **Conference on Disarmament**. They have passed resolutions on ammunition, military spending and missiles.

Agenda Item 103 – Strengthening of Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region

Background

This region spans Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Mediterranean region played a very special role in human development. It was one of the first areas where humans practiced agriculture. Wheat, chickpeas and olives were domesticated along with sheep and goats. Typically, it has mild rainy winters and hot dry summers. Interestingly, one of the biological ways of defining the Mediterranean region is that it is the area around the Mediterranean where olive trees grow. Over the centuries hundreds of civilizations developed and fought, traded, intermarried, and worked together in this region.

The Mediterranean Sea gave the people living on its borders access to food, trade, and a comfortable temperature. It also gave the people living on its borders access to other lands to settle and spread their culture. Over centuries Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, and other groups travelled throughout the Mediterranean spreading their languages and ideas. Over time, the Romans slowly gained control over the whole Mediterranean and by 30 BC called it “Our Sea.” This was the first and last time the whole Mediterranean was controlled by one group.

In the Middle Ages, the rise of Islam saw most of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain influenced by Muslim conquerors. These areas became very rich as they controlled trade in the area. However, once European states discovered they could go around Africa to go east, power in Europe shifted to the north and to the Atlantic coast. By the 19th century, Northern African states were poorer and less powerful than Europeans ones. Europeans used this opportunity to colonize North Africa.

Background

Most of the North African states gained independence by the 1970s. States began to see the benefits of working together in order to make the Mediterranean a safer place. Every year, tens of millions of people come to the Mediterranean to vacation. There is now a canal called the Suez Canal which allows ships to go into the Red Sea. This has helped improve trade in the area. More industries, however, have made the Mediterranean very polluted. In 1975, 16 states signed a Mediterranean Action Plan in order to fix the problem of pollution.

The states that make up the Mediterranean Region are: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. The UK has territory at Gibraltar which also touches the Mediterranean Sea. The Gaza Strip is also on the coast. Often, Portugal is included in this region as well even though it does not touch the Mediterranean Sea.

Recent Developments

- The Mediterranean region is at risk due to climate change. If the sea levels rises, islands and coastal cities could be affected. Islands could be flooded and underground water reserves could become undrinkable. Malta is an island that could be affected.
- The Nile Delta is at risk of flooding and endangering the lives of Egyptians living there. Venice and Thessaloniki are two cities that are at a lot of risk of being flooded if the sea level rises.
- The sea is rising in temperature. This could be dangerous for animals living there. Also, it would negatively affect fishers and people who depend on the sea.
- There are differences between Northern Mediterranean states and Southern Mediterranean states. Most of the European states have strong economies. Southern Mediterranean states however are not as developed and many people have trouble finding enough work.
- In 2011, Egypt had a revolution to get rid of their president, Hosni Mubarak, who was president for 30 years. They have a new president now but people worry that the government is still not stable. Stable states improve security in the region.
- Many people in developing states believe their lives would be better if they lived in Europe. For this reason, hundreds of thousands of people have been travelling from African states to Northern Africa. Most of them are escaping war or violence. A small amount leave for economic reasons. Their goal is to cross the Mediterranean and go to Europe. This puts a lot of pressure on Mediterranean states.
- Some of the states in Northern Africa have trouble controlling their borders. In Libya, the civil war makes it extremely difficult. Armed groups control some of the ports. With the help of smugglers, they put people on overcrowded boats and send them to Europe. They charge the people thousands of dollars. Many of the boats are unsafe and people drown.
- Since 2011 Syria has been experiencing a civil war. Many Syrians have become refugees. Over 2.4 million refugees have fled to Turkey. Many want to go to Europe where there are more opportunities. Refugees try to cross the sea from Greece and then travel to other European states. This is called the European Migrant Crisis.

Recent Developments

- In 2016 over 5000 migrants died at sea. The Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat, said to European leaders: “We are just building a cemetery within our Mediterranean Sea.” This is a huge humanitarian problem.
- The European Union wants to stop people from crossing the Mediterranean. It is dangerous and encourages criminal gangs to smuggle people in dangerous conditions. However, the states cannot agree on what is the right solution.
- Neighbouring states are also important to the Mediterranean region. Many states have rivers that end up in the Mediterranean. The pollution in these rivers affects the cleanliness of the Mediterranean.
- The Mediterranean is used to transport illegal drugs and weapons. This endangers communities, fuels addictions and violence and enriches criminal gangs. The world community would like to see a safer and more cooperative Mediterranean region.

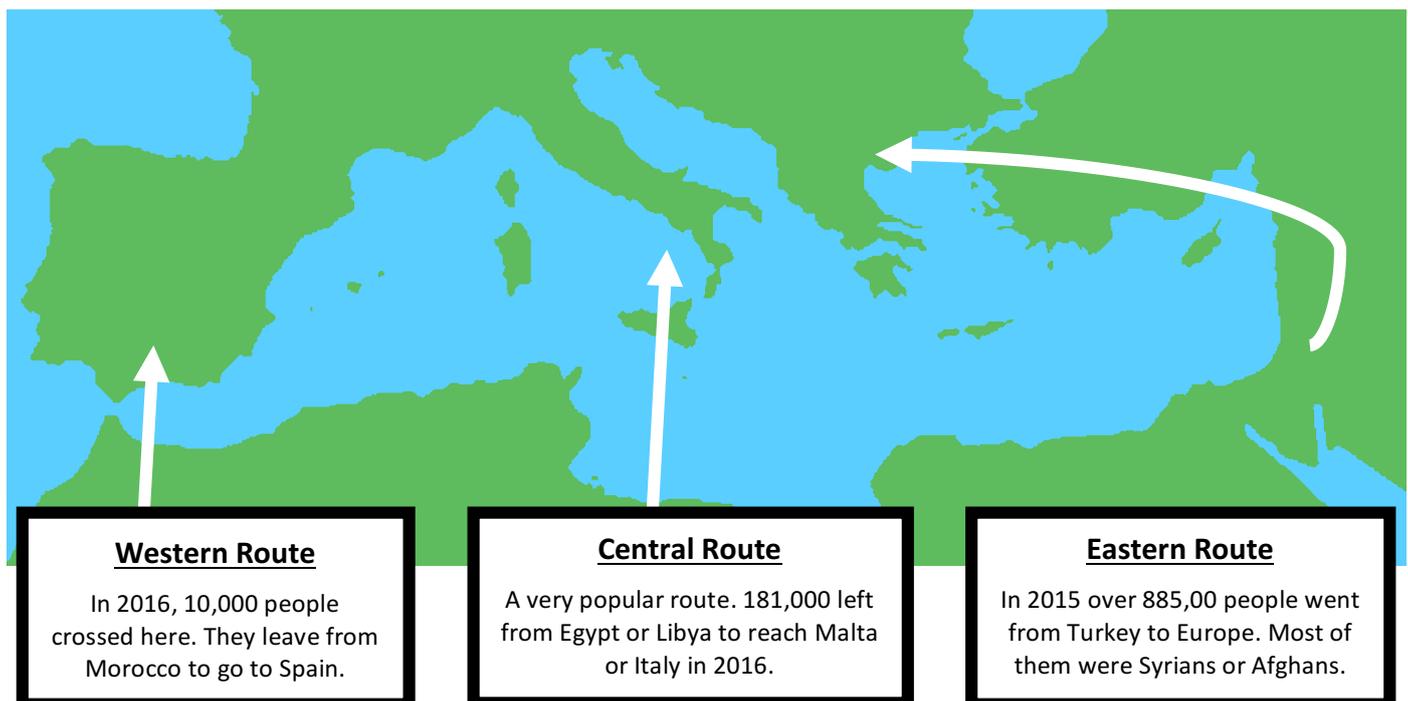
Treaties & Agreements

Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism

- ✓ A document agreed to by the states of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in 2005.
- ✓ It says that the states will do everything in their power to stop terrorism. This includes exchanging information, respecting human rights, and working to stop the causes of terrorism.
- ✓ Pledges to improve security in shipping and aviation.

Mediterranean Action Plan

- ✓ In 1975, this plan was adopted by 16 Mediterranean states to protect the sea from pollution.
- ✓ Economic problems and development without plans were major causes of pollution.
- ✓ In 1995, a second phase started and now the European Union and 21 states around the Mediterranean are members.

Routes to Europe for Migrants and Refugees

Guiding Questions

1. How is your state involved in the Mediterranean region? Is it one of the states? Is it a neighbor? Do some of your citizens come from or visit the area? Is it involved in shipping in the area? How does a safer Mediterranean region impact you?
2. There is a difference between a migrant and a refugee. What is the difference? Why might some states not want to refer to people as refugees?
3. Refugees MUST declare that they are refugees in the first safe state in which they arrive. This means if someone flees Syria to Turkey they must declare they are refugees in Turkey and stay there. They cannot keep going to the state they WANT to and then declare. Why might some states think this is a good rule? Why might some states think it is a bad rule?
4. How can states work together to reduce pollution in the Mediterranean AND support development in the area?
5. Research some of the history of the Mediterranean region. How did the regions work together (or not work together) in the past? How might that effect relationships today?
6. How can states work together to reduce the numbers of migrants/refugees who are crossing the Mediterranean?
7. What issues do you think the Mediterranean regions needs to be prepared for in the next 5 years? 10 years? 25 years?
8. Does the problem exist in your community?
9. Who is working on it? NGOs, not for profits, other groups or individuals?
10. Knowing about this problem, how does it impact your world view?
11. How could you make an impact on this issue through your life choices?

Resources

Title	Hyperlink	How is it helpful?
<i>Climate Change and the Mediterranean Region</i>	https://secured-static.greenpeace.org/international/Global/international/planet-2/report/2006/3/climate-change-and-the-mediter.pdf	A Greenpeace article about climate change in the region.
<i>Climate Types for Kids</i>	https://sites.google.com/site/climate/types/mediterranean	A basic overview of what Mediterranean climate is.
<i>Mediterranean Sea</i>	https://www.britannica.com/place/Mediterranean-Sea#toc33251	An encyclopedia entry about the Mediterranean Sea.
<i>The Sea Route to Europe</i>	http://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/5592bd059/sea-route-europe-mediterranean-passage-age-refugees.html	UNHCR booklet about the European Migrant Crisis.
<i>Mediterranean Sea Getting Saltier, Hotter</i>	http://www.livescience.com/6510-mediterranean-sea-saltier-hotter.html	An article from Live Science about how climate change is affecting the region.
<i>Mediterranean Coastal Hazards</i>	http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/majorhazards/activites/2009/Murcia_26-27oct2009/Murcia_26-27oct09_Micallef.pdf	A PowerPoint presentation on some of the effects of climate change on the region.
<i>Mapping Mediterranean Migration</i>	http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24521614	A look at some of the roots taken by people to enter Europe.
<i>Mediterranean Death Rate Doubles as Migrant Crossings Falls</i>	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/03/mediterranean-refugees-migrants-deaths	An interesting article about how less people are going to Europe but those that do have a greater chance of dying.
<i>UNHCR Report</i>	http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/2/58b458654/refugees-migrants-face-heightened-risks-trying-reach-europe-unhcr-report.html	A report looking at the risks migrants and refugees face.



General Assembly

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Seventy-first session
Agenda item 103

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 5 December 2016

[on the report of the First Committee (A/71/455)]

71/85. Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the subject, including resolution 70/72 of 7 December 2015,

Reaffirming the primary role of the Mediterranean countries in strengthening and promoting peace, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region,

Welcoming the efforts deployed by the Euro-Mediterranean countries to strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism, in particular through the adoption of the Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism by the Euro Mediterranean Summit, held in Barcelona, Spain, on 27 and 28 November 2005,

Bearing in mind all the previous declarations and commitments, as well as all the initiatives taken by the riparian countries at the recent summits, ministerial meetings and various forums concerning the question of the Mediterranean region,

Recalling, in this regard, the adoption on 13 July 2008 of the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean, which launched a reinforced partnership, named the “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”, and the common political will to revive efforts to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity,

Welcoming the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)¹ as a contribution to the strengthening of peace and security both regionally and internationally,

Recognizing the indivisible character of security in the Mediterranean and that the enhancement of cooperation among Mediterranean countries with a view to

¹ A/50/426, annex.



promoting the economic and social development of all peoples of the region will contribute significantly to stability, peace and security in the region,

Recognizing also the efforts made so far and the determination of the Mediterranean countries to intensify the process of dialogue and consultations with a view to resolving the problems existing in the Mediterranean region and to eliminating the causes of tension and the consequent threat to peace and security, as well as their growing awareness of the need for further joint efforts to strengthen economic, social, cultural and environmental cooperation in the region,

Recognizing further that prospects for closer Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in all spheres can be enhanced by positive developments worldwide, in particular in Europe, in the Maghreb and in the Middle East,

Reaffirming the responsibility of all States to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region and their commitment to respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,²

Noting the peace negotiations in the Middle East, which should be of a comprehensive nature and represent an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of contentious issues in the region,

Expressing concern at the persistent tension and continuing military activities in parts of the Mediterranean that hinder efforts to strengthen security and cooperation in the region,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,³

1. *Reaffirms* that security in the Mediterranean is closely linked to European security as well as to international peace and security;

2. *Expresses its satisfaction* at the continuing efforts by Mediterranean countries to contribute actively to the elimination of all causes of tension in the region and to the promotion of just and lasting solutions to the persistent problems of the region through peaceful means, thus ensuring the withdrawal of foreign forces of occupation and respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries of the Mediterranean and the right of peoples to self-determination, and therefore calls for full adherence to the principles of non-interference, non-intervention, non-use of force or threat of use of force and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

3. *Commends* the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity, encourages them to strengthen such efforts through, inter alia, a lasting multilateral and action-oriented cooperative dialogue among States of the region, and recognizes the role of the United Nations in promoting regional and international peace and security;

² Resolution 2625 (XXV), annex.

³ A/71/156 and Add.1.

4. *Recognizes* that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in levels of development and other obstacles, as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area, will contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through the existing forums;

5. *Calls upon* all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the conditions necessary for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region;

6. *Encourages* all States of the region to favour the conditions necessary for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, *inter alia*, in the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms;

7. *Encourages* the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating international crime and illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation and which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session the item entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

*51st plenary meeting
5 December 2016*