



# The EU and Tunisia: Future Perspectives & Scenarios



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## Introduction:

Four years ago, in *Die Zeit*, Germany's newspaper for the intellectual elite, journalist Gero von Randow called for Tunisia to be granted membership in the European Union. Today, such a call sounds like a pious wish.

Tunisians had many hopes and expectations in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution, which are almost dashed and shattered. Whether it has been due to the geographies of the neighboring countries that facilitate the nurturing of terrorism, or whether it is due to scant resources, the transformations since 2011 are not fast-paced.

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, many people hoped that the authoritarian regimes in the North African states would be swept from power and new democratic governments would replace them. Yet, the transition from the old authoritarian to the new democratic order has not been smooth. Tunisia has been witnessing steep increase in political instability, security problems and social unrest. These increases occurred even though the successive governments held successful elections. The latter brought conservative parties to power for the first time, mainly in coalition with other national or secular parties. These political changes were not isolated from the rapid sociological changes.

In the three decades prior to the political revolution (2011), Tunisia started a demographic transition that was marked by the growth of the middle class, the spread of urbanization, the consolidation of women's rights, the expansion of literacy, the neutrality of the military elites, and the moderation of political party discourses<sup>1</sup>. These transformations have become the key ingredients to the relative success of the Tunisian experience.

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<sup>1</sup>Youssef Courbage, Emmanuel Todd, *Le rendez-vous des civilisations*, Éditions du Seuil, coll. « La république des idées », 2007. Paris

Even if major issues took so long to be resolved and they continued to replicate some classical cleavages- such as civic and religious identity, social policy, privatization, social protection, and public services, among others- the Tunisian experience moved toward a constitutional denouement, through concessions, if not consensus. Politicians from both sides, Left and Right, accepted some form of civic state (*Dawla Madania*), and an expanded economy- i.e., a Keynesian Welfare State. Both Liberals and Conservatives have tried to position themselves in the center and in the middle range of the political scene (*abzâb Al-Wasat*).

In the present geopolitical environment, this form of coalition carries within itself the germs of a positive institutional stability. This position will allow the international community and particularly, the traditional Tunisia partners, namely the European Union, to have a clear visibility of the situation, which might help in the process of implementing long-term neighborhood policies, by including, free trade, human mobility, skills mobility, and security in its multiple dimensions.

In a region under tension, the development of core stability should be an exigency of peace and good neighborliness. A large part of the political class believes that rapprochement with the EU countries represents a constant and a fundamental foreign policy choice to the country, which will continue to strive, in parallel, towards promoting integration in the Maghreb region and strengthening relations between Europe and North African Mediterranean countries. For the large public, perceptions tend to be more nuanced and varied: if, for instance, everyone agrees to say that Tunisia is not Greece, and that the share of European solidarity cannot be similar, many Tunisians continue to believe that the destiny of their country will remain associated with the European Union.

## **I. EU –Tunisia Relations : The Stakes**

The ‘Arab spring’ and the difficulties that have accompanied this democratization process, such as the increase in social protest and violence that are subsidized by neighboring countries that do not see this budding democracy as a good event, clearly show that Tunisia is facing a hostile and unreceptive regional geographical environment. Such regional factor, which is unfavorable to democracy and universal values, has its origins in several issues and considerations, for instance,

the unstable neighborhood, and the interests of states and values. According to the results of the ArabTrans, and Arab Barometer Index, the countries of the European Union top the list of countries with which Tunisians wish to develop their relationship, despite the fact that many of them consider that support to Tunisia's transformation process from the EU countries remains below their expectations; while, others expressed hopes for good relations.

## 1- Experienced Mixed Results

Under the previous regime, and since March 1998, Tunisia's Association Agreement with the EU governed bilateral relations between the two countries. It provides for a free trade area (FTA) between the two countries for the longer term. The agreement constitutes the framework for EU-Tunisia political, economic, social, scientific and cultural cooperation. It also contains provisions, which allow for the coverage of political questions (i.e., international and domestic issues, human rights and democracy, etc.), adding to immigration issues.

The agreement forms a part of the Barcelona Process launched in 1995, and based on the development of cooperation in terms of political dialogue, in economic partnership, and in the social and cultural fields. Tunisia has played a dynamic part in this partnership by rapidly concluding an association agreement, and by working constructively as Euro Med coordinator within the Arab group

Nine months since the fall of Ben Ali precipitated the Arab Spring, and less than a month before Tunisians go to the polls in the first democratic elections in the region since the revolution, the Tunisian Government unveiled its economic and social development strategy for 2012-2016. The EU pledged initial support, committing itself to working closely with the Tunisian authorities, and with other international organizations in targeting its support for the plan. Also in this optimistic perception, a new Tunisia emerged; an open, dynamic, prosperous, and democratic country. The EU stressed the long-term goals, and the importance of tightening the links between European and Tunisian people. A move was launched towards concluding the EU's first 'Mobility Partnership' in North Africa, which aimed at facilitating visas for Tunisian students, researchers and businesspeople wishing to travel to the EU. New EU funds were also

announced to support EU university scholarships for the region (€30 million), and the work of civil society organizations (€22 million).<sup>2</sup>

Neither the treasures of the Ben Ali clan returned, nor massive aid similar to that granted to the Eastern European countries in their transition was considered. The arrival of the “Troika” into government, with the Islamist party in the coalition with two secular parties (CPR & Ettakatol), and the rise of terrorism have not helped, and left many promises pass overlooked.

Today, the current relationship of Tunisia with the EU, and in the framework of the stability and neighborhood policy, seems ambiguous for both conceptual and empirical dilemmas. First, conceptually, the EU has limited uniform awareness of what it is trying to promote in its eastern neighborhood under the aegis of “shared values”, “collective norms”, and “joint ownership” which is not always the case in regard of the end of the democratization process in Egypt, and the position vis-à-vis the Human rights conditions in the Gulf Countries<sup>3</sup>.

Secondly, empirically speaking, the EU seems to favor a “top-down” governance approach (based on rule/norm transfer and conditionality) in its relations with outsiders, which is clearly at odds with a voluntary idea of “partnership”, and explicitly limits the input of “the other” in the process of reform.

The primacy of security in creating an atmosphere of stability has caused a blockage in the political system, since the eighties. The facts and the events of 2011 have shown how the security and stability calculation could not have a sense without the principle of effective cooperation, and the development of interior areas, which have been turned into a hotbed of traffickers, smugglers, and terrorists.

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<sup>2</sup>[http://eeas.europa.eu/top\\_stories/2011/290911a\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2011/290911a_en.htm). Accessed 20 August 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Farida Chabouni : le gâchis européen. *Sada News* . Paris. Déc. 2014

## 2- Reasons for success of a Model

*Why the Tunisian model of transition could be a success?* As suggested by Frank G. Wisner and W. Bowman Cutter,<sup>4</sup> if ever there is a time to anticipate events and act quickly and forcefully, it is the current time in Tunisia, a country where the Arab Spring was born. Contrary to the disappointing, and sometimes disastrous outcomes, from that moment in history in other countries, Tunisia has made major progress, and could still be a significant success story.

The historic compromise about a civic state “*Dawla madania*,” and about a moderate common identity, and stability cannot be detached, in the future, from the institutional stability and democracy. A non-democratic stability (supported by an authoritarian regime) will cost dear to the international community, and particularly to Europe.

### 2-1 Institutions in the transitional phase & European Neighborhood Policy: Towards more visibility

Tunisia drafted a modern constitution, which is seen as the flowering of a vibrant civil society, election of a functioning government, and creation of a truly competitive politics. Despite the fact that Muslims constitute more than 99 percent of the population, the country has been always committed to being a secular society that respects all faiths. Tunisia is also the Arab nation that has been mostly committed to gender equality and women empowerment.

The presence of a popular civilian party such as The *Call for Tunisia (Nida Tunis)* is an important issue for the political balances, and for putting emphasis on the secular character of the political transition in Tunisia. Leaders of the Conservative party “*Al-Nabdhah*” seem increasingly tempted to accept the idea of secularism in order to display the civic character of their party. Ajmi Lourimi (2012), for instance, a member of *Al-Nabdhah* Political Bureau, described the revolution in Tunisia

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<sup>4</sup>Frank G. Wisner and W. Bowman Cutter. <http://gulfnews.com/opinion/thinkers/us-must-act-quickly-to-help-tunisia-1.1563671>. August 9, 2015. Accessed 18 August 2015.

as “a secular revolution,” and not a secularist one; in the sense that it was neither Islamist nor secularist.<sup>5</sup> This statement means that the democratic transition in Tunisia has scrambled the ideological divide in some ways. Parties and movements that have come to the surface operate in spaces that are defined by ‘something else’. Whether they have succeeded or not, this ‘something else’ is already articulated around an effort of adaptation and compromise that has come to a head in Tunisia around the negotiations on the new constitution.

In this sense, the process of political adaptation to democracy in a transitional context seems essential to make concessions and compromises to reach potential voters inside the emerging political market, and to seek consensus that reaches over partisan bargains to make a new social contract for the body politic. In this process, in which classical political identification is still inchoate, compromises were necessary, if any progress is to be made.

In a transitional context, which is characterized by its unpredictability, this adaptive capacity and need for consensus are more imperative, especially where the dynamic of change is not determined by any charismatic role, or by any militant ideology. Paradoxically perhaps, the absence of a charismatic figure and ideological reference in the early stage of the Tunisian revolution, carried out in the name of Dignity (*karama*), played a positive and a constructive role. For the EU countries, this situation means that it is now possible to deal with credible actors, for a long period through sustainable constitutional institutions, even if they currently still undergo consolidation.

In this context and beyond the existing relationship, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) will have to propose the prospect of a high degree of economic integration including gradual

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<sup>5</sup> Zartman, I. William & Abdelwahab Ben Hafaiedh “Tunisia: Beyond the Ideological Cleavage: Something Else” in *Arab Spring: Negotiating in the Shadow of the Intifadat* · University of Georgia Press .2014

integration into the internal market, and a deeper political, cultural and social cooperation. In this supporting process, the actors of the EU will have to take into account two new factors:

**First, the role of the emerging civil society:** Tunisia-EU cooperation should ensure greater participation beyond civil society in order to touch upon different levels within the framework of the consultation during programming the implementation of some programs, and through the implementation of specific actions for its benefit. Steps forward have been already made, but the EU, including the European Commission, will be called upon often to consider the varied and multiple nature of this emerging civil society. This implies, above all, an inclusive approach that integrates all actors without distinction.

Second, during the execution times provided in the potential reforms, the scientific measurement of the social impact (opinions, attitudes, policies, etc...) have sometimes proved to be little realistic, in the past few years. Depending on the nature of the required reforms, as stipulated by a large scope of studied population in the Arab-trans survey, this time factor can be considered differently. The Tunisian approach to major economic and social reforms are based on prior construction of a broad consensus (*Wifaq*) among concerned parties (National dialogues, sectorial dialogues, etc.); this represents a typical Tunisian approach to social change and transformation. Sometimes, this process may take more time than it is expected, but it ensures that the reforms have the best chances of success.

## 2-2 - Regional Mediation Process: Underestimated role

Conventionally, the idea involving the EU-Tunisia over the issue of security refers to the role of a “firewall” in order to prevent the threat of terrorism and illegal immigration. This vision, did not last long, as we know today that stabilization by “consolidation of democracy” has more positive effects than the notion of stability dictated by security emergencies.

Although it has many assets that enable it to intervene as a mediator in regional conflicts, the Tunisian diplomacy seems to hesitate between a policy of “empty chair,” and passive role. The lack of experience of its various ministers who are at the head of this diplomacy, explains this and failure, among others, since 2011, and it reflects the absence of an attractive economic diplomacy.

Tunisia lives in a rough neighborhood, with a long border with Libya, and it frequently faces terrorist assaults. Two major attacks had been mounted in the past three months killing more than 50 people. These attacks were clearly calculated to wreck the economy and undermine the morale of Tunisians, and the effort might well succeed; current estimates reveal that Tunisia will lose more than 2 million “tourist days” this year because of the attack. To be frank, we do not believe Tunisia can separately solve its economic and security problems without the help of the European Union and the United States, as dedicated faithful partners.

Just one year before the two attacks, Tunisia had adopted a progressive and consensual constitution, organized three election rounds leading to a new parliamentary coalition, and the country’s first directly elected president, and thus appeared poised to experience true democracy. However, Tunisia has supplied the Islamic State and other groups in Iraq and Syria with large number of foreign fighters, and has experienced the two deadliest terrorist attacks in its history this year.

Even in the case of Islamists, the geographical reference of a “model country” is no longer the same. The eyes that were deflected before on the Gulf countries are completely disenchanted. These countries, led by the only concern for security to preserve their status quo, never ceased to destabilize the new Tunisian democracy, so that the contagion of freedom and dignity remain far from their borders. The call of freedom seems to be stronger than the holy religious call.

Furthermore, the inability to better manage its military cooperation with partner countries such as Algeria, and the lack of initiative for the resumption of dialogue between Morocco and Algeria, and between the two sides in conflict in Libya, is probably behind the weak performance of the Tunisian diplomacy.

### **3-2 -Deeply Ingrained Democratic Culture**

The Arab Trans survey question “how democratic your country is?” revealed that slightly more than half of the respondents (53, 3%) aged 18-25 said it is democratic, while 45, 4% of 26 and older thought it is a democratic country. Women (58, 6%) were more likely than men (47, 6%) to

believe in this. Young people from urban areas (60, 4%) were the most likely to say that the country is democratic as compared to less than half of the respondents (40, 4%) in the rural milieu. Additionally, one notices that there is a change in attitudes with regard to Arab Barometer II (44, 8%) and Arab Barometer III (37, 7%), as there is a rise of 15, 6% in Arab Trans results, as compared to Arab Barometer III. Additionally, one-third of the respondents (64.60%) said democracy is compatible with Islam.

Tunisian support for democracy has declined steeply, since the early days of the Tunisian Spring. Yet, despite waning confidence in democracy's ability to produce practical results, Tunisians continue to want key features of a democratic system, such as a fair judiciary, competitive elections, right to protest, and equal rights for men and women.

More than nine-in-ten of the respondents believe that having a judicial system that treats everyone in the same way (94%) is *very* important for the country's future. Similarly, 92% of Tunisians say having honest, regularly held elections in which people have a choice of at least two parties is very important, (this scores an increase of 21 percentage points in just a year.)

## II. Challenges to Democratization in Tunisia and the European Union:

### *1- Global Reform vs. Security*

Tunisia, as one observer recently noted, is certainly a "country of contradictions." While the Tunisian government has made several disquieting moves evocative of deposed dictator Ben Ali's policies, the answer to the question so many are asking lies in the grievances that led Tunisians to rise up and overthrow the previous regime which sparked uprisings throughout the Arab world. Although many are aware that extremism will threaten Tunisia's transition, the response of Tunisia's government is equally important to its democratic trajectory and with a recently extended state of emergency and a new anti-terror law passed on July 25, that response has been less than encouraging.

The turmoil that took the world by surprise in 2011, while it began in the domestic arena, has developed complex regional ramifications. Since then, the domestic focus of concern has moved from economics to security, which has been rapidly imploding across the region. Domestic politics have therefore moved from a reform to a security agenda, ignoring the fact that economic issues were one of the driving factors that led to the upheaval of 2011. While security forces are over-stretched everywhere, defense budgets are rising across the region. The security vacuums which have opened up in the wake of the events of 2011 (ranging from Lebanon to Iraq and Syria, the Egyptian Sinai, Algeria's south and mountains, Tunisia's mountains and Libya) have expanded, while illicit networks, present there, have grown into full-scale jihadi organizations – sometimes cooperating with one another, sometimes not. This reinforces the political role of the military, while a series of new terrorism laws conflates political opposition with terrorist activity. Security sector reform has been postponed virtually everywhere.<sup>6</sup> It is important in this regard that the EU support of security policies becomes part of a comprehensive reform agenda, including reform of the security services, and commitment human rights' principles.

## ***2- Regional integration vs. Marginalized Borders***

Since 2011, the alliance between firearms and drug traffickers and armed *jihadi* cells appears to have considerably strengthened in the border regions. From the south to the center-west, the activities of the major illegal trade networks are encouraging violence, so that much of the media is quick to put the blame on terrorists. According to the International Crisis Group, the battles against terrorism and organized crime are inextricably linked. The government would gain from adding to its security measures new economic and social initiatives that would ensure that border communities are siding with the State.

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In order to deflect another crisis, the authorities would benefit from carrying out two principal measures: The first is to strengthen the state's presence in border regions through socio-economic development policies whose impact would be quickly noticed by local communities. The second is to implement an effective and calibrated counter-terrorism strategy, in contrast to sensationalist media treatment that only serves to increase anxiety about *jihadis* and indirectly promotes confusion between different strands of Islamism.<sup>7</sup>

It is important, in this context, to mention that the informal economy crisis that springs from smuggled Chinese goods will witness a decline, as a result of the financial crisis of the Chinese economy, as well as the increasing control over trafficking, which would leave thousands of beneficiaries of the smuggling economy without resources.

### ***3- Political Transformation vs. Religious Radicalization***

Following the Tunisian revolution, many fundamentalist prisoners, who were held by Ben Ali's regime, were released. These are *Abu Iyadh* aka *Saifallah Ben Hassine*, among other prisoners, who had previously co-founded the Tunisian Combat Group with Tarek *Maroufi* in June 2000<sup>8</sup>. Coming out of prisons, they found themselves better prepared and well organized than any other political party, or civil society body. In the first months of the revolution, they founded *Ansar al-Sharia* as a radical group. The latter had around 1,000 people, as part of their movement<sup>9</sup>. It has

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<sup>7</sup> Gaub, Florence; Laban, Alexandra. *Arab futures: Three scenarios for 2025*.[http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Report\\_22\\_Arab\\_futures.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Report_22_Arab_futures.pdf). Accessed, August 18, 2015.

<sup>8</sup>*Tunisia Live* :Tarek Maaroufi: Tunisia's Most Notorious Jihadist, Returns Home". 1 April 2012. Retrieved 10 January 2014.

<sup>9</sup>"Meeting Tunisia's Ansar al-Sharia". *Foreign Policy*. 8 March 2013. Retrieved 10 January 2014

been listed as a terrorist Group by the Tunisian government,<sup>10</sup> as well by the United Nations, the UAE, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In fact, terrorist attacks have never ceased in Tunisia since 2000 (armed attack against the Jewish synagogue in Djerba, the commandos Soliman Nabeul, and a dozen of deadly operations which targeted the army in Algerian border areas). After 2011, the group has continued to renew its militant base with success. The most recent attacks (on Bardo Museum and Sousse) have shown its capacity to embrace youth (boys and girls) aged between 22 and 24 years and with different educational levels and different professions. This capacity to renew the militant base of these groups since 2000, despite the repression, puts on the table the question of the sociological basis that ensures the survival and the continuity of these networks.

After 2011, and because of a general loosening of the control of the state, radical Islam has moved into the mosques, and an overexcited free-for-all situation has overtaken the internet and social media now that censorship has ended. Most of the enrolled activists disillusioned by thwarted high expectations of the Arab Spring, have become radicalized. Young Tunisians longed for a real change in living conditions after rising up against the dictatorship in 2011, but the governments that followed Ben Ali failed to provide for this. The social determinants of such radicalization are more than evident.

Far behind journalistic analysis, the question of the sociological profile of those jihadists remains to be defined. Where do they come from? Is there a comparison between these young “Tunisian” recruits and the Spanish, or Italian Brigades in the late 60s and 70s? How to cross the variables of education with those of poverty, and informal work? what is the share of the individual frustration, and that of the collective frustration in the explanation of this phenomenon? Finally, at which level are positioned the generational and regional variables?<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Tunisia declares Ansar al-Sharia a terrorist group". *BBC News*. 27 August 2012. Retrieved 10 January 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Abdelwahab Ben Hafaiedh : *Les étudiants et la culture civique :une approche inter-générationnelle*. Université de Tunis – 2000.

A considerable number of young Tunisians (2,400) became combatants in Syria and Libya since 2011 and 2012, according to the Tunisian Interior ministry around 400 of them returned to the country. Several thousands more have been prevented from travelling, it says, and there has been an attempt to close down the recruitment networks. As with other countries dealing with returnees from the war in Syria and Iraq, Tunisia faces a legal challenge in how to deal with crimes suspected to have been committed, in a chaotic situation in another country.

Today, the Tunisian government and the civil society are facing a challenge: With an eventual negotiation process in Syria and Libya, many of those who managed to go for Jihad are coming back. The help of EU Member States in this field can be very beneficial for Tunisia, so that to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Almost everyone knows Denmark was progressive, but it is particularly evident in how it is dealing with the returning fighters from Syria.<sup>12</sup> The program *Rehab* is built on the notion that these citizens need help more than punishment, without challenging their beliefs — a stark contrast to how the UK is handling similar returning fighters, thanks to fears of terror attacks. The initiative includes new legislation to allow the UK to revoke them, or withhold citizenship, on suspicion of terrorism. In France, politicians have been debating potential policies on how to handle such returnees. In Saudi Arabia and Jordan, similar programs were carried out, such as *Monasaba*, but in both cases, the Ministry of the Interior, whose success has proved to be very limited so far, administered these programs.

In Tunisia, the government is still groping for a strategy to deal with the young men returning from the hot zones. “Some of them (those who returned from Syria and Libya) have been sent to jail for months without trials, while others have been freed after a few days of detention. Recently the Ministry of the Interior invited the Tunisian civil society organizations to play their role in the management of these returnees. The idea is that civil society mediators can contribute to the

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<sup>12</sup> Denmark's rehab program has been around since before the rise of ISIS the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011.

process of rehabilitating these youths. The goal is not to be limited to purely punishment measures in Tunisia, but also the EU should take seriously the hypothesis of recidivism among this population.

“The Signers in Blood” (*al mouakkaoun bil dam*), a North African group, represents the most noticeable model of eternal “stigma” law that is used by international organized gangs and Mafia to ensure loyalty in the long term, and to make retreat impossible in practice. This always provides for those groups an asset of quicksand that reduces the chances to siege them, or push them to surrender, which explains the renewed fabric of those groups and permanent changes to their structures, in spite of the blows that they receive from time to time. Some texts refer to the concept of “burn the boats”, and others refer to the concept of “bring down the bridges”; all concepts refer to implicate individuals psychologically and physically in violence, so that they will not be allowed to leave or return.

### III. Future Perspectives and scenarios

Anticipation is not widely accomplished by decision-makers because when things are going well, they can run without it, and when things are going imperfectly, it is too late to see beyond the ends of their noses. What happen in the EU –Tunisian relations could illustrate this paradox. Before, during, and after the Arab spring, the EU politics were taken *ad hoc* and according to urgent considerations.

As Lucius Seneca said: *“If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable.”* Action becomes meaningless without a goal, and only anticipation points the way to action and gives it both meaning and direction. Public surveys, expert analyses, group discussions, could help the anticipation process. In the international relations, a scenario is the set formed by the description of a future situation, and the course of events that enables one to progress from the original situation towards the future. In this perspective, most of the studies that tackled the future Tunisian-European relations had deeply studied the situations in North Africa and the Middle East on a regional basis. Therefore, they did not take profoundly the characteristics of the Tunisian case.

Based on the results that have been gathered all through the different case studies, the situation in Tunisia, as compared to its relations with the EU countries, can be presented into three different scenarios that are as follows:

- The cycle of violence scenario
- The Hourglass cycle of action and reaction scenario
- The locomotive scenario

We can imagine the three scenarios falling under two types: **the two first (the cycle of violence and action/reaction)** that can be considered in terms of the cycle of recurrence, and therefore may not form the basis for a real social transformation, or effective policy. These two scenarios can cost a lot for the EU, inasmuch as Tunisia does not bypass its status; even though we can assume a minimum of stability.

The third scenario, meanwhile, is in a path of progress and change. The cycle of violence and recurrence are both broken. In this case, Tunisia can serve as a model country for the region. The EU can be considered a mediator and a support base in the region and in Africa.

## 1. The cycle of violence: Tunisia Transition Bubble

The priority given to security forces and the army will help to give birth to a new military and security “aristocracy”, which will have a growing influence in the business world (the Egyptian model). This game of influence will increase relations with the military–industrial complex in the partner countries. It will strengthen conservative tendencies of power. Terrorism, even weakened, may continue to dominate the scene, while giving more power to the army and the security apparatus.

The conflicts in the border areas cannot support the logic of regional development. The logic of fear take over that of trust. Blocking the educational and cultural reforms must reinforce partitioning trends in the areas that are most populated and most affected by poverty. Local and regional elections will be postponed, or held under a climate of suspicion and distrust. The so-

called “elected individuals” will be a mix of local smugglers (allied to power against the terrorists). The continuing decline in oil prices and the fact that Tunisia was unable to develop long-term relations with the Gulf countries contribute to the rise of its unemployed graduates.

Despite all this, Tunisia remains the only country, so far, that is able to attract investors not only in the textile industry but also in aeronautical engineering. Nevertheless, the capacity of job integration is “weak” and most of the foreign industries choose the Moroccan destination, in order to avoid strikes and social contestations.

From fear of terrorism, the EU will develop de facto security policies that will gradually reduce mobility flows. The fundamental objective of the cooperation will focus on “security”. The return of the jihadists from Syria “on the assumption of the end of the war” will have the risk of focusing terrorist acts on Tunisia, against Western interests and tourism.

By touching the tourism sector, the terrorists take hostage the whole economy. Despite the existence of free trade agreement and for climatic reasons and lack of water, especially in areas of southern Tunisia, Tunisian agriculture underwent invaluable losses. This factor will strengthen the camp of candidates for illegal immigration, and the departure of young people to new fields of tension.

## 2. The Hourglass : The Cycle of Action and Reaction

The Institutional and political destabilization contribute, in this scenario, to the weakening of the relationship with the EU credit institutions, on which the pressure will multiply:

Within this scenario, there are the driving factors to the economic downturn; these are:

- External factors related to the potential of the global financial crisis.
- Internal factors related to the performance of the Tunisian economy and its relationship to security and social conditions.

In the first level, it is noticeable that the same indicators that preceded the 2008 crisis have come to the surface to determine the features of today’s global economy with lower oil prices to levels

not witnessed since November 2014 for the barrel is trading below the level of \$ 40, down by 60 percent. In addition to a collective decline of global stock markets, and a slowdown in the growth of the Chinese economy (informal economy is the main source in Tunis), where it came down to less than 10 for the first time.

The financial crisis that hit China, and whose effects will not be only limited to the Chinese, but also it will extend to other countries in Europe and America, to include the rest of the world. In Tunisia, the results will be contraction of the external investment, declining purchasing power, and falling financial market.

Given that the context is different from that of Britain and Germany, it is expected that the crisis will directly affect the French economy that faces a financial crisis and growth recession (0.3 percent), with the expectations that this ratio will go below zero. It can be said that the main partner of the Tunisian economy, within the Union, will not be in a position to maintain the pace of cooperation, if the international financial crisis indicators are maintained.

However, on the second level, that is the interior, it can be confined to the direct effects of terrorist operations and in particular, the level of tourism services sector.<sup>13</sup>

Among the direct consequences of this scenario, we find:

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<sup>13</sup> Regarding the services sector, the main indicators of tourism activities showed a significant decline in July 2015, that affected in particular:

- Overall tourist nights: 64.9% and -76.6% compared to the same months of 2010 and 2013 respectively.
- Foreign tourist arrivals: -44.1% and -65.7%, following the contraction in the number of European tourists (-72%), including the English (-93.1%), the Italian (-79 , 6%), the French (-39.4%) and the German (-66.4%) despite the increase in tourist flows from the Maghreb (26.3%),
- Foreign currency receipts: -50.7% and -59.6%.

- An increase in the number of illegal immigrants from the suburbs and inland areas.
- Focused on fighting terrorism at all costs, Tunisia neglected to put into practice important reforms that would have created jobs, triggered innovation, and economic diversification, contributed to growth and fostered stability.
- Phasing human and student mobility programs, following acts of violence or terrorism committed by North African students in Europe in response to what is considered an alliance of European countries with “new dictatorships.”
- It is quite possible that the State ensures a minimum of stability “façade” for the next five years, but it will lead eventually to a hellish cycle of scenarios.
- In this scenario, Tunisia continues to benefit from the advantage of its demographic transition (2020) and the number of potential unemployed graduates will be reduced, but the structural unemployment of unskilled labor and the presence of the informal economy will always be important.
- Factors, such as, the absence of an active policy on the part of EU countries involved in a regional integration direction, lack of a peaceful solution to the Sahara problem (lack of pressure on Morocco and Algeria ), the weak role of French diplomacy, will contribute to uneven development between the desire to stabilize the political games and social instability. The “outsiders” discourse will continue to be emulated.
- Consequently, the rise in power of coercive powers to end contestations, give arguments to Europe to reduce its support because of violations of human rights and the proliferation of slippages.
- Terrorism and recurrent social disorder have led to a sharp decline in jobs in the tourism sector;
- The absence of a proactive policy on agriculture and the first signs of climate change are Beginning to take their toll on an already underperforming agricultural sector.

### 3. The locomotive scenario: Tunisia Democratization taking off

The fate of this scenario will be determined over the next ten years, in the form of final control of the effects of the economic crisis of 2008 that led to the outbreak of revolutions. In this scenario, the EU plays the role of the godfather of the Tunisian democracy in an effort to reorient the region in the direction of the future values and social progress. The importance of this Scenario is pivotal in terms of determining the most effective role for EU countries and in transforming Tunisia to a “playground” model to be more sophisticated and more humane in social terms.

In this light, Tunisia will realize a growth rate between 7 and 8 percent with betting on deep reforms in the field of public services, thanks to the re-employment services and debt re-scheduling and tax system reform and reduce the spread of the informal economy.

This scenario focuses on formalized work of Union countries and friendly countries on the idea of “dignity” and humanitarian character of the 2011 Revolution: That does not mean replacing the principles of interest, but rather ensuring the common interests in the far future.

This scenario is based on a relationship more involved with European Union’s opening up rapidly on the economies of Tunisia that can help in the recruitment of human resources (Gulf) with the emergence of assurances of non-interference in their affairs or the threat of its interests at home or abroad.

## IV. Policy Suggestions for the EU

We can propose a number of recommendations in the light of the proposed scenarios according to the following formulas:

The *first scenario* (chaos scenario) seems unlikely under current circumstances, and based on current data. It could turn into a possible scenario, only in the following situations:

- The outbreak of increasing conflicts in Tunisia's southern border, that is in Libya and in the Algeria-Libya border, as well as in the case of the emergence of serious indications of political instability in Algeria after the death of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.
- Tunisian society is rather split in its fight against terrorism, and armed groups manage to attract an important fraction of the public opinion and the political class (from the conservative right, for example.)
- The emergence of a severe economic crisis and the rise in oil, which could affect the logistics' capabilities of the armed and security forces, or threaten the materials they gained during the years 2012-2013, which are still considered as insufficient (especially by the Tunisian customs).
- Far-right minorities will win "comfortable" majorities in most of European countries (France, for example).

The occurrence of this scenario will require a negative attitude from EU countries and the international community that will refuse to contribute to the economic cost of peaceful political transition in Tunisia. In that case, EU countries would have preferred the "Islamic state" option which will find, in Tunisia, a fertile ground for control under different names close to al-Qaeda, after IS succeeds to infiltrate in Tunisia, as a result of the military strikes in Libya. This worst-case scenario will be entitled "Toppling Neighboring Countries" to experience first instances of "civility" in the Arab world.

- The *second scenario* (The Hourglass scenario) can be a negative extension of the current situation. The most important thing about this scenario is to make of Tunisia a laboratory of political and security changes, that does not derive its value from within (without fearing foreign dominance or prevalence of natural resources), but as a peripheral existence between
  - Oil and gas zones which are Algeria and Libya; this scenario is preferred by the "industrial – military" compound in more than one country where some of the major interests lie in the ability to ignite wars and bring continuity and reconstruction requests.
  - According to the Euro-Tunisian relations, this scenario will result in high cost of "cosmetic solutions", which will automatically contemplate on fundamental reforms that

will affect different branches, for instance, justice, security, education, health and compensation.

- Furthermore, the most important features of the “sand clock scenario” is to impose silence on the reforms or unload an agenda to fill in the security one. One result of this scenario is also to make the reform agenda a part of the security agenda, rather than the opposite.
- In this regard, it is important that the EU countries work to avoid repeating the scenario that had been tested for 23 years of Ben Ali in power. It is important to link the security demands with reform claims for lifting social and economic security levels.
- *Scenario 3: taking-off*: : the “model state”. The demand for security and stability should be linked to a well-defined reform agenda. This scenario requires that Europe expands the base of its allies, and not restrict itself to institutions of power and deterrence, and to some businesspersons.

In light of the result of the Arab –Trans survey, it will be possible to identify some lines of work and cooperation that can have a positive impact on the Tunisian democratic transformation process:

- The medium-term political reforms concerning democracy and human rights, rule of law and good corporate governance;
- Reforms in justice, management of migration flows and asylum according to the principles detailed in the 1951 Convention, the fight against organized crime, money laundering and terrorism, while respecting human rights ;
- The development of conditions for private investment, the development of Competitive small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),to reduce unemployment and sustainable rural development;

- The development of conditions conducive to the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social, and economic);
- The development of education and training, higher education and scientific research as key factors in building the knowledge society and to reducing unemployment in a context of opening economy;
- Strengthening of social programs while maintaining budget balances;
- Facilitating trade in goods and services, approximation of technical regulations and standards and conformity assessment procedures.

However and in the short- terms, that policy should include the following pieces:

**Security:** The EU should share available intelligence regarding terrorist activities in Tunisia’s neighborhood; and help Tunisia develop a more-effective counterterrorist capability; and provide material counter terror and security-sector support.

**Economics:** Independently of the Currents agreements with the EU, other countries, like the US and Canada could begin, formal negotiations toward a mutual- free-trade agreement. This would be of real consequence to the Tunisian economy, providing the carrot for Tunisia to make the hard economic decisions that it clearly must make, but would have only a marginal impact on the associated countries.

**Policies:** The economic difficulties that can be caused by the budget deficit and the growth of social demand may lead the government, in the near future, to freeze time and employ measures rather “coercive” and “securitarian.” This will probably be acquired at the expense of democracy. It can undermine the fundamental rights of expression and demonstration. It can also force the government to fall back on authoritarian ground; the role of European partners and through increased monitoring of daily politics will at all costs prevent a return to dictatorship. The support of activities of compromise and negotiations will benefit the European Union as well as Tunisia.

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