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## **Defence Cooperation of the 5+5 Dialogue: Security at both shores of the Mediterranean Sea**

Cooperação em matéria de defesa no âmbito do Diálogo 5+5: A  
Segurança nas duas margens do Mar Mediterrâneo

**POR:**

**Audidores das Sessões Mediterrânicas de Altos Estudos Estratégicos**

### **RESUMO**

O Diálogo 5+5 é um fórum que tem como objetivo reforçar o diálogo político e promover a estabilidade, segurança, desenvolvimento e cooperação entre os dez países pertencentes à bacia ocidental do Mar Mediterrâneo. Este artigo analisa a conexão entre a cooperação económica e a segurança comum aos estados-membros do Diálogo 5+5. Através de nossa análise, argumentamos que a cooperação económica tem o potencial de contribuir de forma significativa para a melhoria da segurança e responder aos principais desafios da região. Em particular, é explorado o potencial da cooperação económica e a sua capacidade de promover confiança e cooperação entre os estados-membros, aumentando o desenvolvimento económico e criando oportunidades para os governos e população dos países envolvidos. É também exposta a hipótese do estabelecimento de um princípio básico de cooperação, através da troca de bens

ou serviços, terminando, assim, com sugestões políticas que visam a criação de um ambiente cooperativo e a promoção da cooperação económica e segurança na região.

**Palavras-chave:** Cooperação; Segurança; Diálogo 5+5; Mar Mediterrâneo

**ABSTRACT**

The 5+5 Dialogue is a forum for cooperation between ten countries that border the Western Mediterranean Sea. This forum was created with the goal of promoting stability, security, and development in the region. This study examines the connection between economic cooperation and common security for the member states of the 5+5 Dialogue. Through this analysis, it is argued that economic cooperation has the potential to contribute significantly to improving security and addressing key challenges in the region. Specifically, the ways in which economic cooperation can promote trust and partnership among the member states, as well as increase economic development and opportunities for the governments and the population involved are explored. We expose the idea of exchanging products or services as a basic principle of cooperation, finishing with political suggestions that aim to create a cooperative environment and, in this way, promote economic cooperation and security in the region.

**Keywords:** Cooperation; Security; 5+5 Dialogue; Mediterranean Sea

## 1. Introduction

This article addresses the security at both shores of the Mediterranean Sea, focusing on defence and cooperation between the 5+5 Dialogue countries.

Since its establishment, the 5+5 Dialogue has provided a platform for sub-regional cooperation among ten Western Mediterranean nations. Comprising five countries from the Northern Mediterranean (Spain, France, Italy, Malta, and Portugal) and five countries from the Southern shore (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia), the initiative marked a significant milestone in fostering closer ties between Mediterranean nations. The 5+5 Dialogue was among the first initiatives of its kind, and it laid the foundation for subsequent structures established under the Barcelona Process, which took place in 1995.

This paper was produced collectively by the participants of the Mediterranean Sessions of High Strategic Studies, which took place in Lisbon, Portugal from the 6th to the 10th of March 2023, from which emerged a number of political recommendations presented at the end of this paper. Among the 10 countries from the 5+5 Dialogue, representatives from Algeria, Italy, Libya and Mauritania were not present.

Great thought was given to this title. It was agreed that security at both shores is being threatened by many common menaces amongst the 5+5 Dia-

logue countries. Some of the threats include, but are not limited to, environmental issues, terrorism, culture and religion, social issues, lack of human resources, digital security and healthcare.

This article is divided mainly in two parts: In the first part, the issue of illegal migration is addressed. The way that this issue amplifies the threats faced by the 5+5 Dialogue countries is also explored. In the second one, a bridge is made to the contribution of economic cooperation to the improvement and the strengthening of the security and the development of member states.

The Western Mediterranean region has long been a zone of intersection between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. As a result, the region's political, economic, and security dynamics are complex and multifaceted. Against this backdrop, the 5+5 Dialogue has emerged as an important sub-regional initiative.

Illegal migration is contributing to amplify the threats and problems faced by the 5+5 Dialogue. It is a phenomenon that affects all the 5+5 Dialogue countries in different levels, but at the same time it is a general and important issue, in their political and security agenda. More than that, it is an umbrella issue that covers other relevant issues of the Dialogue.

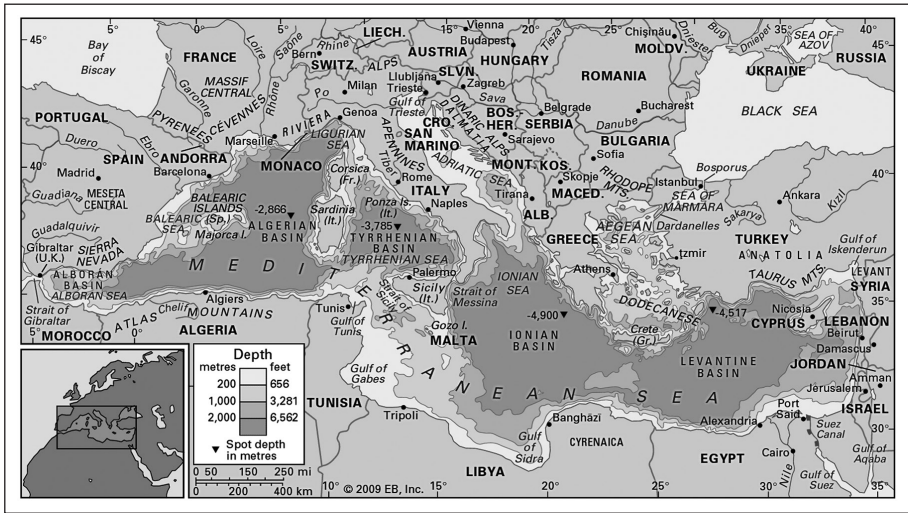
In recent years, illegal migration in the Mediterranean Sea was not just a security issue, but a moral and humanitarian challenge, a challenge that is not limited to the present time. According to the current demographic trends and the next demographic boom in the African continent, this will be a challenge faced by the future generations.

In turn, economic cooperation has emerged as a critical component of international relations in the contemporary era. The 5+5 member states have been engaging in dialogue to enhance cooperation, security, and development. However, the efficacy of these efforts depends on a range of factors, including overcoming political blockages, creating a common regulatory framework for the digital economy, strengthening education and cultural relations, and addressing environmental issues. In this article, we examine how economic cooperation can contribute to improving and strengthening the security and development of the 5+5 Dialogue member states and discuss several recommendations to achieve these objectives.

## **2. Mediterranean Region: An Overview**

The Mediterranean region is a geographic area that encompasses countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. This region is known for its rich history, diverse cultures and beautiful landscapes. The potential of the Mediterranean region lies in its strategic location as a gateway between Europe, Africa and

the Middle East and its vast natural resources. However, the region also faces numerous challenges, including political instability, economic inequality and environmental degradation. Despite these challenges, the Mediterranean region presents many opportunities for economic growth and development, particularly in the areas of tourism, agriculture and energy. A comprehensive understanding of the Mediterranean region is crucial for addressing the economic and security issues facing the region and promoting sustainable development.



**FIGURE 1**  
The Mediterranean Region

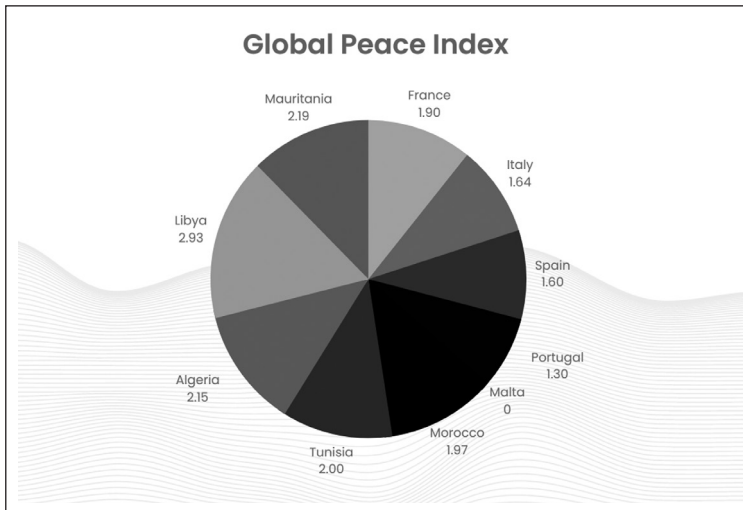
Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mediterranean-Sea>, accessed on 29/04/2023.

According to OIT (2004), economic stability fosters a sense of prosperity, contentment and inclusivity, ultimately contributing to enhanced economic expansion and progress. Improved security contributes to the creation of an environment in which productive economic and social activities can emerge. Some people also assert that more global security leads to a more balanced and peaceful path of development (*ibid*). This means that not only is economic and social development necessary to provide security, but also that this development must be harmonious in order to avoid negative fractures in society, as well as between states. Increasing security budgets without a real solution to the fundamental causes of insecurity tend to become a perpetual cycle of

increasing expenditures, as well as dissatisfaction of the populations, with states always being exposed to numerous risks (vid. Fig. 2). Paradoxically, this entails that development is necessary to ensure security.

Security comes from Latin *Securitas* «peace of mind». In primary logic, we could say that it is a question of finding food and not being eaten. This is somehow still true today. In this context it is necessary to start from the very essence of life since natural resources are vital to life. The creation of new resources and urban areas, especially industrial ones, may have led human beings to the belief that they could detach themselves from their environment or, at least, forget that they were a part of it. Natural resources are limited and, thus, highly coveted. For this reason, they are considered to be the cause of many conflicts. In fact, surveys show that more than 40% of internal armed conflicts over the past 60 years have been connected to natural resources (UN, 2018). Factors such as population growth, pollution and climate change are contributing to this tension.

Moreover, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has also shown the importance of controlling adequate food resources without being dependent on one doubtful supplier. Indeed, any monopoly of resources becomes a potential lever of pressure, which is potentially disastrous for security, including human resources and knowledge.



**FIGURE 2**  
Risk overview: Global Peace Index

Source: Built from data provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), 2021, (<https://oec.world/>).

Therefore, only cooperation will make the 5+5 dialogue successful. It is the keystone of this dialogue and, in order to make this cooperation a necessity, a key factor must lock it in. As it is often stated, states have no friends, only interests. Only a win-win relationship can ensure a long-term, profitable and stable relationship. Thus, our proposition is to turn the source of tension (resources) into a source of cooperation thanks to the basic principle of the economy, i.e., exchange or bartering, based on the assessment made by Secretary-General António Guterres, who claimed that the sharing of natural resources has always been a catalyst for cooperation between states, communities and peoples (UN, 2018).

Security should not be viewed solely in defence terms since there is a strong interdependence between security and economy. It could be argued that there is no economy without security, and no security without economy. A strong economy is necessary to maintain security, and a secure environment is essential for economic growth. In fact, if a country is plagued by high crime rates and social unrest, businesses may be hesitant to invest or operate there, resulting in a weakened economy. On the other hand, a weak economy can lead to increased poverty and unemployment, which, in turn, can fuel social unrest and instability. On a positive note, a strong economy allows the funding of security measures, such as law enforcement, border control or military defence, and these contribute to maintaining a stable environment for economic growth. Conversely, a secure environment can attract foreign investment and tourism, which can further stimulate economic growth.

In order for economic cooperation to happen, the needs and the goods of every state must be identified, which will be later translated into imports and exports in international trade. Concerning the goods and the resources available (vid. Figures 3-4), African countries in the dialogue, such as Algeria and Libya, are rich in natural resources like oil and gas, while Mauritania can provide fishing resources and expertise. Morocco has a strong agricultural sector, and Tunisia is known for its olive oil production. Meanwhile, the European countries in the forum, such as France and Italy, can offer advanced technology in sectors like defence and telecommunications, as well as expertise in areas such as automotive manufacturing and renewable energy. Portugal and Spain are also strong in renewable energy, and they have thriving tourism and agricultural sectors. Malta has a specially strategic location that can work as a hub for trade and transportation.

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SECURITY AT BOTH SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

COUNTRY	EXPORTS	MAIN DESTINATIONS
FRANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaged Medicaments</li> <li>Planes</li> <li>Helicopters, and/or Spacecraft</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Motor vehicles, parts and accessories</li> <li>Gas Turbines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Germany</li> <li>United States</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>Belgium</li> <li>Spain</li> </ul>
ITALY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaged Medicaments</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Motor vehicles, parts and accessories</li> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Vaccines, blood, antisera, toxins, and cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Germany</li> <li>France</li> <li>United States</li> <li>Switzerland</li> <li>United Kingdom</li> </ul>
SPAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cars</li> <li>Vegetable products</li> <li>Packaged Medicaments</li> <li>Motor vehicles, parts and accessories</li> <li>Refined Petroleum</li> <li>Pig meat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France</li> <li>Germany</li> <li>Portugal</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>United Kingdom</li> </ul>
PORTUGAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cars</li> <li>Motor vehicles, parts and accessories</li> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spain</li> <li>France</li> <li>United Kingdom</li> <li>United States</li> </ul>
MALTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated circuits</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Documents of title (bonds) and unused stamps</li> <li>Other toys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Germany</li> <li>France</li> <li>Singapore</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>Japan</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 3**

5+5 Member States' Exports: The North of the Mediterranean

Source: Built from data provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), <https://oec.world/>, accessed on 09/03/2023.

COUNTRY	EXPORTS	MAIN DESTINATIONS
MOROCCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cars</li> <li>Mixed minerals or chemical fertilisers</li> <li>Insulated wire</li> <li>Phosphoric acid</li> <li>Calcium phosphates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spain</li> <li>France</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>India</li> <li>Germany</li> </ul>
TUNISIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insulated wire</li> <li>Pure olive oil</li> <li>Non-knit men's suits</li> <li>Non-knit women's suits</li> <li>Motor vehicles, parts and accessories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>Germany</li> <li>Spain</li> <li>United States</li> </ul>
ALGERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Petroleum gas</li> <li>Crude petroleum</li> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Nitrogenous fertilisers</li> <li>Ammonia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Italy</li> <li>France</li> <li>Spain</li> <li>China</li> <li>South Korea</li> </ul>
LIBYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crude petroleum</li> <li>Gold</li> <li>Petroleum gas</li> <li>Scrap iron</li> <li>Refined petroleum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Italy</li> <li>Turkey</li> <li>United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Germany</li> <li>China</li> </ul>
MAURITANIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Iron ore</li> <li>Gold</li> <li>Non-fillet frozen fish</li> <li>Processed crustaceans</li> <li>Copper ore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> <li>Switzerland</li> <li>Spain</li> <li>Canada</li> <li>Japan</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 4**

5+5 Member States' Exports: The South of the Mediterranean

Source: Built from data provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), <https://oec.world/>, accessed on 09/03/2023.

Conversely, all the countries involved have diverse needs (vid. Figures 5-6), and each country can offer resources to fulfil those needs. For instance, Algeria and Libya can provide natural resources, such as oil and gas, to France and other European countries in need of access to these resources. In turn, France and Italy can assist Libya with post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation, as well as provide investment in areas such as transportation, telecommunications, and energy in Algeria. Mauritania can offer fishing resources and expertise to other African countries, while European countries can provide support for sustainable fisheries management and investment in tourism and infrastructure. Morocco can benefit from investment in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, as well as support for education and training, which European countries can provide. Tunisia can also benefit from investment in tourism and infrastructure, as well as support for small and medium-sized enterprises and job creation, which European countries can offer. Portugal and Spain can provide investment in renewable energy and support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the African countries. Lastly, Malta can offer its strategic location as a hub for trade and transportation, as well as cultural resources and a thriving tourism industry, to the other countries in the 5+5 Dialogue. By working together and leveraging their resources and strengths, the countries in the 5+5 Dialogue can fulfil each other's needs and promote economic development and cultural exchange in the Mediterranean region.

COUNTRY	IMPORTS	MAIN ORIGINS
FRANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cars</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Motor vehicles; parts and accessories</li> <li>Crude petroleum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Germany</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>Spain</li> <li>Belgium</li> <li>Netherlands</li> </ul>
ITALY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crude petroleum</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> <li>Petroleum gas</li> <li>Gold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Germany</li> <li>France</li> <li>China</li> <li>Netherlands</li> <li>Spain</li> </ul>
SPAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crude petroleum</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Motor vehicles</li> <li>parts and accessories</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> <li>Petroleum gas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Germany</li> <li>France</li> <li>China</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>Netherlands</li> </ul>
PORTUGAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cars</li> <li>Crude petroleum</li> <li>Motor vehicles; parts and accessories</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> <li>Petroleum Gas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spain</li> <li>Germany</li> <li>France</li> <li>Netherlands</li> <li>Italy</li> </ul>
MALTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Passenger and cargo ships</li> <li>Planes</li> <li>Helicopters, and spacecraft</li> <li>Recreational boats</li> <li>Integrated circuits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Korea</li> <li>Russia</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>China</li> <li>United Kingdom</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 5**

5+5 Member States' Imports: The North of the Mediterranean

Source: Built from data provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), <https://oec.world/>, accessed on 09/03/2023.



COUNTRY	IMPORTS	MAIN ORIGINS
MOROCCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Motor vehicles</li> <li>parts and accessories</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Wheat</li> <li>Petroleum gas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spain</li> <li>China</li> <li>France</li> <li>Germany</li> <li>United States</li> </ul>
TUNISIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined Petroleum</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Wheat</li> <li>Low-voltage protection</li> <li>Equipment</li> <li>Insulated wire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>China</li> <li>Germany</li> <li>Turkey</li> </ul>
ALGERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wheat</li> <li>Concentrated milk</li> <li>Packaged medicaments</li> <li>Corn</li> <li>Raw Sugar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> <li>France</li> <li>Spain</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>Germany</li> </ul>
LIBYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined petroleum</li> <li>Rolled tobacco</li> <li>Cars</li> <li>Broadcasting equipment</li> <li>Wheat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> <li>Turkey</li> <li>Italy</li> <li>United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Greece</li> </ul>
MAURITANIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raw sugar</li> <li>Wheat</li> <li>Soybean oil</li> <li>Palm oil</li> <li>Cars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>China</li> <li>France</li> <li>United Arab Emirates</li> <li>Morocco</li> <li>Spain</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 6**

**5+5 Member States' Imports: The South of the Mediterranean**

Source: Built from data provided by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), <https://oec.world/>, accessed on 09/03/2023.

**3. Diving into the Debate: Unveiling Our Recommendations**

**3.1 How does illegal migration amplify the threats faced by the “5+5 Dialogue” member States?**

Illegal Migration in the Mediterranean stems mostly from human trafficking, which is carried out by organised criminal groups. As a result, innocent individuals seeking a better life are being extorted, misled and left alone travelling throughout the region. These individuals have then to be saved by the Search and Rescue teams, commonly referred to as SAR teams, pertaining to the various states surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

It goes without saying that in some way or another, this phenomenon is affecting all the 5+5 Dialogue countries, a forum uniting five European countries (Spain, France, Italy, Malta, and Portugal) and five North African countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia) to address shared concerns and foster regional cooperation. In turn, it is upsetting the geographical, sociological and political balance of the states affected.

Geographically, the constant influx of migrants strains resources and infrastructure in coastal regions.

Sociologically, it fuels social tensions and challenges related to integration, identity, cultural diversity, and social cohesion.

Politically, the phenomenon presents formidable challenges. It burdens law enforcement agencies, border control systems, and administrative capacities, while also intensifying political debates and tensions surrounding immigration policies, national security, and regional collaboration.

Moreover, the issue compounds pre-existing problems faced by Mediterranean countries, ranging from economic and social inequalities to political instability and inter-state conflicts. The table below provides an overview of the specific challenges each state encounters.

**TABLE 1**

Threats faced by the 5+5 Dialogue member states

<b>N.º</b>	<b>Threat</b>	<b>How is it being Amplified?</b>
1	Environmental Issues	Constant Air, sea and land border patrolling is contributing to more carbon dioxide emissions.
2	Terrorism	Terrorists may travel freely under the disguise of asylum seeking.
3	Culture and Religion	Sudden influx of different cultures without the proper integration may lead to conflicts.
4	Social	Individuals coming from less developed countries will struggle to adapt to a different lifestyle.
5	Human Resources	The ever-increasing influx of illegal migration means that the state has to commit several trained personnel in order to deal with the illegal migrants, usually to the detriment of other sectors.
6	Technology	Individuals coming from less developed countries have not yet been introduced to the digital breakthrough. This will increase the gap between the locals and the illegal migrants trying to integrate in the state.
7	Economy	Illegal migrants might struggle to find employment. This means that the state will need to feed and house these individuals. Moreover, these individuals may even be exploited in working in poor conditions with less pay which are not taxable. This creates a threat which might unbalance the state economics.
8	Healthcare	The ever-increasing influx of illegal migration means that the state has to commit several trained personnel in order to deal with the illegal migrants, usually further stretching the already overstretched system.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Addressing illegal migration in the Mediterranean necessitates a comprehensive approach that tackles human trafficking, fortifies border security, improves living conditions in countries of origin, and fosters regional cooperation to address the root causes of migration. By undertaking such measures, the affected countries can work towards mitigating the far-reaching consequences of this complex issue. To face these threats mentioned above, different recommendations are provided.

(1) Cooperating rather than granting financial aid

To effectively address the issue of migration, it is crucial to highlight five to ten countries of migration origin that are willing to cooperate and demonstrate an interest in improving the living conditions of their citizens. Through cooperative missions, these states can focus on enhancing infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other vital areas. However, it is essential that these efforts be carried out through cooperation rather than simply providing financial aid. This approach ensures that relationships between nations improve in a more efficient manner, with fewer losses incurred during the process. Furthermore, involving the local population in the state's improvement initiatives fosters a sense of ownership and belonging, thereby contributing to the reduction of illegal migration.

It is imperative to approach this method holistically, considering all aspects involved. Building a hospital, for example, would serve little purpose if the local population lacks the necessary skills and resources to operate and maintain it effectively. Therefore, each project must be meticulously planned and executed according to the specific needs and capabilities of the community it aims to benefit.

The underlying principle guiding this approach is akin to teaching people how to fish rather than simply providing them with fish. By empowering communities and equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for sustainable development, the cooperative efforts can yield long-lasting results. However, in order for this cooperation to be successful, it is crucial that the state implementing these initiatives be free from conflict and instability. A stable and secure environment serves as a foundation upon which progress can be built, enabling the cooperation to flourish and positively impact the lives of citizens.

(2) Identifying common interests: “Good governance clause”

The concept of the 5+5 Dialogue countries collaborating to assist states in identifying mutually beneficial interests is crucial for fostering regional co-

operation and development. It is essential that the participating countries offer their support without any ulterior motives or conditions. The ultimate objective is to empower states to become self-sustainable entities capable of effectively governing their territories, providing adequate care for their populations, and securing their borders.

To achieve this goal, it is recommended to focus on enhancing the capacities of states to exercise their political power. This involves promoting good governance practices, strengthening democratic institutions, and fostering transparent decision-making processes. By doing so, states can establish a solid foundation for their development and ensure the well-being of their citizens.

Additionally, it is important to prioritise the provision of comprehensive care for the population within these states. This includes investing in healthcare systems, education, social welfare programs, and other essential services. By addressing the basic needs of the population, states can foster social stability and promote a higher quality of life for their citizens.

### (3) Sharing information: Interagency cooperation

The 5+5 countries of the Mediterranean can play an important role in reducing the phenomena of illegal migration by increasing information sharing and interagency cooperation. In order to decrease the issue that leads people to decide to move illegally, it is crucial to look at the root causes which are difficulties in their home countries, such as poverty, political instability and conflict.

First, 5+5 countries can invest in creating new businesses and industries, which can offer employment opportunities for local communities. They can also increase access to education and healthcare, particularly in distant and underserved areas, by sending doctors and professors, for instance. This promotes human development and improves access to medical care.

Second, sharing information and intelligence between 5+5 countries leads to more efficient policing and more coordinated border control management. This could help in identifying and pursuing the criminal groups and networks involved in illegal immigration and can make it harder for unauthorised immigrants to enter and leave states undetected.

Last but not least, encouraging legal migration is a successful strategy. Employment-based visas, education and student visas, can help create legal avenues for people to work and study abroad and decrease the need for illicit migration.

Consequently, addressing these challenges cooperatively leads to improved connections between the 5+5 countries as well as increased regional stability and peace.

#### (4) Increasing cohesion

The relations between the 5+5 countries are not homogeneous since they are more developed in some cases than in others. This may be caused by historical events or other recent political issues. However, limitations in the diplomatic level should not be reflected in the relation of the states' populations.

Various initiatives may be implemented in order to encourage better and healthier relations, such as the following: Mobility programs, like Averroes' programme, should be improved and expanded. By investing in these programs, opportunities for people-to-people exchanges, educational collaborations, and cultural understanding can be promoted, contributing to stronger bonds between the countries.

Cooperation and information workshops, in which information is shared about common challenges, celebrated on a yearly basis should be facilitated and may also be introduced. These workshops would provide a platform for sharing valuable information about common challenges faced by the 5+5 countries. By engaging in dialogue and exchanging ideas, the participating nations can work towards finding collective solutions and enhancing cooperation in various fields.

Finally, the last suggestion is the creation and the promotion of cultural and sporting events in the 5+5 Arena. These events serve as opportunities for people from different countries to come together, celebrate their shared heritage, and foster a sense of unity. Cultural exchanges and sporting competitions can create a positive atmosphere that transcends political barriers and fosters greater understanding and mutual respect among the populations.

### **3.2 How can economic cooperation contribute to improving and strengthening the security and the development of the “5+5 Dialogue” member States?**

The 5+5 Dialogue aims to foster economic cooperation, to enhance security, and to promote development. However, a range of challenges, including political blockages, technological disparities, and environmental degradation, threaten to undermine these objectives. In this chapter, the question of how economic cooperation can contribute to improving and strengthening the security and development of the 5+5 Dialogue member states is explored. Furthermore, several recommendations for the creation of an integrated, regional, and economic environment, the overcoming of political blockages, the creation of a common regulatory framework for the digital economy, the strengthening education and cultural relations, and the focus on environmental issues are provided.

(1) Creating an integrated, regional and economic environment to strengthen cooperation, security and development

States are not well integrated into their economic regional environment. They do not trade enough, which is also bad for the development of the local economy, as they prefer to trade with states outside the region, sometimes located quite far from their own region, where they have plenty of resources to trade together.

However, no cooperation is possible without exchanges. It is rare for countries to have developed diplomatic and cooperative relations when their economic ties are weak. Insecurity, which is also linked to development problems, is too present to allow this integration, especially since it mostly occurs on the border areas.

Thus, the exchange of resources, which allows a form of interdependence, will be an effective means to develop these states in their regional environment. It will also be a lever for cooperation on issues that may go further than sharing resources, since the states will have an interest in cooperating together, especially relevant for security cooperation because of this security-development cycle and due to the unsafe borders.

This cooperation would be particularly useful since most of the insecurity is located on border areas. Incentive factors for exchange will obviously have to be respected, put in place and standardised within the 5+5 dialogue. This is particularly true of customs tariffs. Definitely, states should exchange their resources much more than they do currently within the 5+5 dialogue area, possibly in the form of barter in order to avoid embezzlement and corruption.

Finally, it must be remembered that this has been the failure of many military operations, including that of France in Mali. The absence of development does not allow for stability. Economic cooperation that facilitates trade and investment would promote development, which in turn would promote security.

(2) Overcoming political blockages to create a long-term cooperative environment

The Mediterranean Sea (Lat. *Mediterraneus*, «the sea between lands») can be considered as one of the crossroads of civilizations. It is an intercontinental sea which bathes the shores of Europe, Africa, and Asia. This is but the living proof of the rich diversity of the Mediterranean, which is not only to be measured by its natural resources, water being the cradle of life, but also through the diverse peoples encompassed in its basin. Due to its geostrategic position, as well as to its richness, the control of the Mediterranean Sea has always

been coveted by many powers, and, whenever confronted with a power struggle, strife always erupts. Terrorism, illegal migration, and the struggle for resources are the main sources of conflict in this region.

Jihadist terrorism poses one of the highest risks at the present time. Terrorism has caused a great lasting impact mostly in the South of the Mediterranean, notably in the Sahel region, and, most recently, in the Western coast of Africa. Nonetheless, this evolving threat continues to spread at a rapid pace in all directions. Likewise, illegal migration plays a fundamental role in the process of radicalization, both as a method to introduce terrorists into new territories through illegal migration routes, as well as to exploit the grievances and the suffering of a population which is in search of better opportunities, and who is highly prone to be radicalised.

Unfortunately, not a single state is safe from the scourge of terror. Thus, turning a blind eye to this menace is not a viable option. As Western organisations, such as the EU, NATO and the UN, abandon their joint missions in the region in what seems to be a failing effort to help to bring stability and security to this region, new actors seem to be taking their place in the recent years, highlighting the growing presence of private military companies, such as Russian Wagner, or a high number of Chinese entrepreneurs, who consider this region to be the new land of opportunities despite the growing destabilisation of the region.

The fight for the scarce and decreasing vital resources [...], an almost exponential demographic growth, the brutal effects of climate change and the growing interest of old and new powers to position themselves in the region, [as well as the terrorist threat] are generating [...] an accelerated destabilisation process that is very difficult to reverse. (Sánchez, 2022:3)

Moreover, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict seems to have accelerated this phenomenon of destabilisation. With the launching of the special military operation in Ukraine, undertaken by the Russian Federation on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the whole world came to a halt. As the conflict escalated, everyone started to realise the high relevance of resources, which are the master key that opens the door to power, the Mediterranean being one of the main entrances. Attention was diverted to the military conflict in the Eastern flank, while the real fight was being silently fought in a scramble for natural resources in the Southern one. As more powers turn to this region to search for new resources reserves, such as the highly sought-after rare elements or other minerals, the security of the Mediterranean is being more and more threatened.

Bearing these security issues in mind, a prevention-oriented approach focused on the promotion of cooperation and unity rather than in division, which will certainly be exploited by those who do not abide by our interests, is the most adequate course of action to follow. The success of this initiative rests with the identification of common interests and, as surprising as it may seem, even common threats, such as the proliferation of terrorist groups. In order to do so, it is essential to not let ourselves be swept away by our differences, disputes and individual concerns, especially those of a political nature.

We strongly believe that joint proactive measures must be taken by the 5+5 dialogue member states in order to ensure security on both shores of the Mediterranean, both the North and the South. It is of vital importance for us not to wait for a “bomb” to drop right under our noses. For this reason, threats must be tackled before they even materialise. Security problems must be rooted out in the very beginning, i.e., in their source of origin, especially considering the fact that economic causes always underlie security problems, because the economy runs the world. As the renowned latin aphorism goes *Si vis pacem, parabellum*<sup>[1]</sup>. If we want peace, we must brace ourselves for war, and for the worst-case scenarios. Although the next war will probably be waged due to geopolitical pretexts, the real fight will be for economic reasons, mainly the control of resources, and it seems to have already begun, unbeknownst to many.

Nonetheless, in order to secure our territories and our borders, good diplomatic relations and partnerships between states must be established in the first place. Hence, our main recommendation is the implementation of a small-steps policy which will allow us to ensure security through the use of diplomacy as the main mechanism to overcome political blockages with the aim of creating a long-term cooperative environment in different fields, starting with the economy, since there is no security without economy, and no economy without security.

Our motto is “diplomacy first, economy second, and security third”. These three categories are part of a never-ending circle, and they feed back into each other, converging in diplomacy, which is the core that will guarantee the success of this initiative. The said economic cooperation will contribute to fostering and strengthening diplomatic relations among the 5+5 dialogue member states, as well as to the creation of an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, understanding and tolerance, which, in turn, will pave the way for further steps

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1. An aphorism whose origin can be traced in the ideas expressed by the Latin writer Flavius Vegetius Renatus in his treatise on military art *Epitoma Rei Militaris* (c. 4<sup>th</sup> century).



to be taken, as well as for partnerships to be extended to other fields, such as security, defence, and intelligence.

Little by little, great things can be accomplished thanks to this small-steps policy, and we are highly confident that more and more states will join this initiative. What started as a seemingly irrelevant conversation, may turn into a bilateral agreement, which, in turn, may become a multilateral one and, in the not-so-distant future, the small seed planted in that initial conversation could grow into the Union of the Mediterranean after many years of nourishing, but only time will tell.

(3) A common regulatory framework for the digital economy to promote innovation and protect consumers

On the subjects of technology and digital transformation, it is considered relevant for the state members to invest in digital infrastructure and modern technologies in order to enhance the region's connectivity and to improve access to digital services, expanding broadband internet access and promoting the use of digital technologies to improve public services, such as healthcare and education.

The rule of law should be strengthened, and good governance must be nurtured to ensure that countries in the region are able to effectively address security challenges and to guarantee the well-being of their citizens. In order to ensure this, a common regulatory framework for the digital economy can be established with the aim of fostering innovation and protecting consumers. This framework could also include the establishing of common standards for data privacy and security, as well as the promotion of digital trade and e-commerce.

In order to have well-structured cooperation, it is necessary to enhance cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure, digital assets and personal data from cyber threats, establishing national and regional cybersecurity strategies and promoting cybersecurity awareness among the public and private sectors. It is of vital importance to promote the use of digital technologies to enhance border security and to prevent illegal activities, such as human trafficking and smuggling. For instance, using biometric identification tools and advanced surveillance technologies could be helpful in this sense.

These measures will help to foster economic growth and development. They will ensure that the digital economy remains secure and resilient and will create a more integrated and dynamic regional economy, promoting trade, investment, and job creation.

#### (4) Strengthening education, cultural relations and academic exchanges as a basis for future relations

It is quite important to highlight two major challenges: On the one hand, Islamic fundamentalism, which is the perception of Islam as a threat by European countries and, in particular, the Northern countries of the 5+5 dialogue. European societies are not only afraid of the expression of Islam in the form of the use of power, but also fear it once in power, even in a democratic system, because the erroneous perception that democracy and Islam are not compatible has been generated among the public opinion. On the other hand, due to historical events, such as colonialism, the Southerners perceive that their independence, national identity and self-esteem are endangered because of the persistence of the North Mediterranean countries on deficiencies of the political, economic and cultural models used in Southern Mediterranean countries which creates a sense of insecurity in the South.

There is a great need to surpass this complexity of Islam versus Christianity and the conceptions of the politically, economically and socially backward South versus the secular prosperous North. The mutual understanding of cultural differences and ideological backgrounds, the increasing of mutual familiarity throughout the Mediterranean region, and the development of human resources are the main ways to achieve it.

Thus, reinforcing and strengthening courses to allow for postwork higher education in different domains, internships, academic trips and training programs is highly recommended. Northern countries have to assist Southern ones so as to establish, on the one hand, and to innovate, on the other hand, the learning practices and tools available, as well as to create a common research funding.

To sum up, cultural exchanges and educational programs must be promoted in order to increase understanding and cooperation among the countries in the region, and to combat the spread of extremist ideologies.

#### (5) Focusing on environmental issues for a better energy independence and a healthy environment for humanity

In the last few decades, humanity has been gradually hit by a Climate Crisis as a consequence of environmental pollution. Disasters such as storms, floods, droughts, and earthquakes have been occurring more frequently like never before. Glaciers and ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising, while the climate becomes more extreme. These occurrences are a part of the heating up of the earth which is known as global warming.

The challenges humanity faces derive from environmental pollution that was caused by humanity itself. The burning of fossil fuels (which are non-renewable sources of energy) and the manufacturing of plastics are a few of these environmental pollution examples which are greatly impacting many parts of the world, the Mediterranean is one of these regions which suffers from the impacts caused by environmental issues. This region faces many environmental challenges e.g., land degradation, water scarcity, environment pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change (Lacirignola et al., 2014).

In addition, the region is faced with another issue, the increasing demand for energy. At the moment, many of the Western Mediterranean Forum countries are acquiring their energy from fossil fuels, mainly oil and gas. As previously discussed, the burning of fossil fuels has led to a high amount of carbon dioxide in the air, fuelling this climate crisis. Hence, focusing on renewable energy sources that can lessen their detrimental effects on the environment is crucial. By doing this, we can safeguard a healthy environment for people and attain energy independence (Bartoletto, 2021).

To get the ball rolling, the first recommendation the 5+5 Dialogue governments must tackle is climate change. The impacts of climate change in the Mediterranean region are of a significant threat to the lands and sea. Many big companies within this area are polluting the most as they emit the most carbon emissions. Responsibility and action need to be taken. There needs to be political solutions on climate change. A few suggestions the 5+5 dialogue governments can make are: incorporating more renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and bioenergy are becoming more affordable and accessible. These nations may lessen their reliance on fossil fuels and cut greenhouse gas emissions by embracing these energy alternatives (UN, n.d.). Implementing and instilling climate neutral directives / regulations and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as promoting renewable energy and regulating industries that emit greenhouse gases. On an individual level, citizens within the 5+5 dialogue countries can reduce their carbon footprint by buying electric cars, using public transportation, reducing energy consumption, and supporting renewable energy.

The second recommendation is to reduce and eliminate plastic pollution within our seas. The Mediterranean Sea faces a serious environmental problem with plastic contamination. Many plastics are disposed of incorrectly, leading to many plastic containers and bottles ending up in landfills sites or in our enclosed sea. Plastics which end up in our sea, release toxic chemicals and substances into the water, harming and destroying our natural biodiversity and ecosystems. The reason is that many plastics are made from refined oil.

Due to the inability of plastic to decompose, it fragments into microplastics, which many sea creatures consume. In consequence, contaminating the food chain consumed by people. To combat this issue, the 5+5 dialogue governments must reduce purchasing such products that contain plastic. A few of these items are removing single use plastic bottles, plastic bags, and utensils. Instead, the 5+5 dialogue governments need to invest in more renewable products which do not include plastics. Moreover, it is in the 5+5 dialogue best interests to regulate the amount of plastic being produced to afford the health impacts on citizens within the region.

The third and fourth suggestions go hand in hand. The third recommendation is to support ethical fishing methods. The promotion of sustainable fishing techniques is essential because overfishing is a serious problem in the Mediterranean Sea as the fish are declining in population due to overfishing. To stop overfishing, governments might enact fishing quotas and rules. The preservation of habitats and biodiversity is the fourth suggestion: The protection of habitats and biodiversity is essential since habitat degradation is a serious issue. To preserve vital habitats and species, governments might create marine protected areas. To safeguard these habitats and biodiversity, additional rules and legislation need to be implemented.

The last recommendation is to raise environmental awareness through education. Education is essential and the teaching can take place in different forms, including through schools and universities, public awareness campaigns, and outreach initiatives for the community. It can address a variety of issues, such as waste reduction, sustainable consumerism, biodiversity preservation, and climate change. Moreover, governments can also promote the science industry within their country to come up with new innovations to reduce their carbon footprint.

Implementing these suggestions would help us fight environmental problems in the Mediterranean region and among the 5+5 Dialogue nations, safeguarding our vital ecology for coming generations. Focusing on sustainable energy sources that can lessen their detrimental effects on the environment is crucial. By doing this, we can safeguard a healthy environment for people and attain energy independence.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the security challenges faced by the Mediterranean region are complex and multifaceted, with economic cooperation being a key driver for enhancing security and development. The 5+5 dialogue countries have the potential to leverage their economic ties to foster greater collaboration, trust,

and stability in the region. As highlighted in this paper, illegal migration continues to pose a significant threat to the security of the region, amplifying the need for coordinated action among the Mediterranean countries.

The very existence of this dialogue provides an unique opportunity for economic cooperation and resource sharing, which can positively impact security at both shores of the Mediterranean. The measures suggested beforehand will result in the enhancement of economic growth and stability in the region, the decreasing of the dependence on fossil fuels, the support of innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as the promotion of the sustainable management of migration flows.

It is clear that the Mediterranean is a region of great potential, with a wealth of natural resources, cultural heritage, and economic opportunities. By working together to develop strong economic partnerships, the 5+5 dialogue countries can harness this potential to build a more secure, prosperous and sustainable future for their people. Corruption and the use of natural resources to finance conflicts must be avoided by any means possible to contribute to development. This will require a sustained commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and innovation, as well as a willingness to address the underlying political, economic and social factors driving insecurity and instability in the region.

In light of these challenges, this paper has provided a series of recommendations for enhancing economic cooperation and addressing security threats in the Mediterranean. From strengthening trade ties and investment flows to improving border security and addressing the root causes of migration, these measures offer a roadmap for a more integrated, peaceful, and prosperous Mediterranean. Ultimately, the benefits of economic cooperation and resource sharing will contribute to regional security and the 5+5 Dialogue presents an opportunity for countries in the region to work together towards these common goals.

In the end, it is up to the leaders and citizens of the 5+5 dialogue countries to seize this opportunity and work together to build a brighter future for their region, something that the authors of this document seek, with its recommendations, passing on the view of young people from civil society and the military of the members of the 5+5 dialogue.

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