

Securitization of Environmental Problems in the Mediterranean Sea Basin

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Securitization of environmental problems in the Euro-Mediterranean area (Euromed) seems to be a crucial issue that impacts stabilization of this region in the 21st century. The European Union, as the main actor in this field, regularly declares and stresses that lack of natural environment protection and of preventive actions undertaken by the states of the Mediterranean Sea Basin's southern flank will transform into an existential threat to the security of this common region. Such a declaration on being endangered formulated by the states of its northern flank, i.e. European part of the Mediterranean, is a kind of a speech act (securitization). Thus, this paper aims to analyze securitization of environmental threats in the Euromed. Firstly, it needs to explain and present the evolution of security itself and its widening scope (environmental dimension). In order to examine the securitization of environmental problems, an analysis of the specific functional and institutional structure of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is required.

Keywords: securitization, environmental threats, Union for the Mediterranean.

Introduction

Securitization of environmental threats in the Euro-Mediterranean space (Euromed) seems to be a crucial issue that impacts stabilization of this region in the 21st century. The European Union, as the main actor in this area, regularly declares and stresses that lack of natural environment protection and of preventive actions by the states of the Mediterranean Basin's southern flank may become an existential threat to the security of this common region. Such a declaration on being endangered formulated by the states of its northern flank, i.e. European part of the Mediterranean, is a kind of a speech act (securitization).

The term "securitization" was introduced in the domain of international relations by the Copenhagen School of International Security as its core concept. It refers to perception of security risks and constitutes a declaration of an actor in which a phenomenon, process or another agent's actions are defined as an existential threat. The act of declaring the sense of insecurity is therefore an act of speech. Its intersubjective

nature concerns the securitizing actors, perceived threats and the audience affected by this speech act.¹

In the context of environmental problems in the Mediterranean, the initiative of the Union for the Mediterranean, UfM (*Union pour la Méditerranée*, UpM), could be perceived as such a speech act. The act of securitization of problems in the Mediterranean (including environmental risks) was put forward by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy in the 2008 draft on the UfM. The very act of securitization was performed by Britain's foreign minister Margaret Beckett. On 24 October 2006 in her Berlin speech, Beckett stressed the fact that climate change is a threat to international security and used the term "climate security",² which stands for the maintenance of stable climatic conditions that create the environment of every social activity. It is not about the climate security itself but about possible implications of its change on the functioning of societies. Such climate security is a part of a broader concept of environmental security whose focal point is to preserve the already achieved level of civilization development marked by interdependencies between societies and the need for preventive actions. In case of the Mediterranean Sea, the primary objective is to establish structures that facilitate crisis management of the threats that stem from environmental changes.³ The Mediterranean Sea is facing a number of threats that can also be perceived and addressed from the global standpoint. These include: depletion of energy and water resources, progressive urbanization, deforestation, droughts caused by the greenhouse effect. To the latter two, one may easily add extensive logging, overgrazing, extensive agriculture, intensive cultivation resulting in land degradation as well as floods and locust attacks. These are therefore common dangers that should be dealt with through collective effort. The chances of solving them are materializing in the UfM.

By combining the abovementioned elements, the aim of this paper is to analyze the securitization process of environmental risks in the Euromed. To achieve this aim it is necessary to clarify and present the evolution of security as such and its widening scope that addresses the environmental dimension. In order to examine securitization of environmental problems, an analysis of the specific functional and institutional structure of the UfM is required.

¹ M. Pietraś, *Międzynarodowy reżim zmian klimatu*, Toruń: Wydaw. Adam Marszałek, 2011, pp. 93–94.

² R. Avilash, *Beyond tradition: Securitization of climate change*, http://www.sspconline.org/opinion/BeyondTradition-SecuritizationofChange_AvilashRoul_010507 (accessed: 27.10.1015); *Securitisiation and the Environment*, <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/en/faculties/economics-and-social-sciences/subjects/ifp/lehrende/ipol/research-projects/climasec/project-details/securitisation-and-the-environment.html> (accessed: 27.10.1015).

³ A. Kerdoun, "La dimension environnementale de la sécurité dans l'espace méditerranéen", *Les Cahiers de l'Orient* 2008, No. 91, p. 70.

Widening the scope of security and its environmental dimension

The main reason of a change in thinking about security (its redefinition) stems from the late 1960s and the disturbing predictions of heavy degradation of Earth's natural resources accompanied by population growth. In his world bestseller from 1968, *The Population Bomb*, Paul Ehrlich sketched a terrible and frightening vision of an Earth deprived of everything ("hunger will strike, hundreds of millions will die because of food scarcity") as an outcome of a demographic explosion.⁴ In the academic field a debate on environmental threats⁵ was launched especially by G. Hardin's article "The tragedy of the commons", published in 1968 in *Science*. Hardin suggested that extensive exploitation and consumption of natural goods will inevitably lead to the depletion of the global commons such as freshwater, energy resources, non-contaminated farming soil and fresh air necessary to humankind's functioning.⁶

Similarly, U Thant's report and the Report of the Club of Rome were inspired by the vision by Thomas Malthus (1789) who pointed out the gap that would occur in food supply, caused by geometric population growth in relation to arithmetic increase of food production.⁷ He predicted that this process would lead to mass hunger and, by implication, to social unrest as well as political coups d'état. In his report "The problems of human environment" released in 1969, U Thant warned against the consequences of population growth, excessive urbanization and inadequate integration of technology and the requirements of natural environment.⁸ Secondly, in the Club of Rome report from 1972, attention was also drawn to the problem of depleting natural resources (non-renewables), degradation of habitat combined with intense population growth. Consequently, the Club drafted a prospect for the next 100 to 130 years, during which further possibilities for human development would be halted and living conditions for humans would deteriorate due to the catastrophic condition of the ecosystem.⁹ What is more, a number of NGO's such as Greenpeace or Friend of the Earth were created in the meantime aiming at natural environment protection. They played a vital role in

⁴ P. Dauvergne, *Globalizacja a środowisko naturalne*, in: J. Ravenhill (ed.), *Globalna ekonomia polityczna*, trans. A. Gąsior-Niemiec, M. Dera, Kraków: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2011, p. 554.

⁵ On ecological risks, see: B. Molo, *Rozwiązywanie problemów globalnych na przykładzie ochrony środowiska*, in: E. Cziomer (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w XXI wieku. Wybrane problemy*, Kraków: Akademia Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego, 2010, pp. 181–193.

⁶ G. Hardin, "The tragedy of the commons", *Science* 1968, Vol. 162, No. 3859, pp. 1243–1248, <https://www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full> (accessed: 27.10.2015).

⁷ For more on the population theory by T. Malthus, see: P. Dauvergne, *Globalizacja...*, op. cit., p. 549; A. Bąkiewicz, U. Żuławska, *Od teorii wzrostu do ekonomii rozwoju*, in: A. Bąkiewicz, U. Żuławska (eds.), *Rozwój w dobie globalizacji*, Warszawa: PWE, 2010, pp. 67–68.

⁸ "Człowiek i Środowisko" *Raport Sekretarza Generalnego ONZ U Thanta z 26 maja 1969 r.*, "Biuletyn Polskiego Komitetu do spraw UNESCO" special issue, Warszawa 1969.

⁹ D.H. Meadows, D.L. Meadows (eds.), *Granice wzrostu*, trans. W. Rączkowska, S. Rączkowski, Warszawa: PWE, 1973, p. 11.

promoting environmental matters and transforming them into security issues of utmost importance (process of their securitization).

In the realm of international relations security is a dynamic concept in an ongoing process of evolution.¹⁰ This process is characterized by its changing dynamics and intensity. Two major elements of security – i.e. the guarantee of survival of a given entity and the freedom of its development – are especially prone to constant changes driven by transformation of its surroundings and by internal changes as well. These alterations affect the nature, scale and sense of insecurity.¹¹ Security remains a global quest and should take into account not only diplomacy and strategy, but also demography, politics, economics, environment, social and cultural variables etc. Security is therefore an atomic and undivided form that is dependent on both national and international factors.¹²

When analyzing securitization, it is worth to focus not on the objective criteria of change in scope of the very notion of security but on inter-subjective factors as well.¹³ The end of the Cold War was largely a psychological factor as it provided for a redefinition of the concept of security and its broadening agenda. Both superpowers and the rest of international system members stated a weakening importance of military force in the new post-Cold-War strategic viewpoint. The conflict erupted in the wake of the collapse of the bipolar world was primarily characterized and sustained by non-geopolitical logic, ignited by demographic, economic, or environmental features. Generally speaking, security could be seen through the prism of either the objective state of risks or entities' perception of them – as Daniel Frei modelled two dimensions of objective and subjective security in his work from the 1970s. Consequently, as a category of analysis, securitization refers to the second, subjective sense of security.¹⁴

For researchers representing the Copenhagen School – Ole Weaver or Jaap de Wilde – the change in security discourse is embodied in the securitization process. Among many different securitizing actors who define problems affecting security agenda, one could easily find experts, scholars, NGO's as well as organs of IGO's. By publishing reports, articles or organizing global conferences they managed to convince (securitizing moves) a specific audience – predominantly policy makers and citizens – to address new security problems and treat them as a category of existential,

¹⁰ See: M. Pietraś, *Bezpieczeństwo ekologiczne w Europie*, Lublin: Wydaw. UMCS, 2000, p. 6; M. Lasoń, *Bezpieczeństwo w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, in: E. Cziomer (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w XXI wieku...*, op. cit., p. 11.

¹¹ B. Balcerowicz, *Procesy międzynarodowe. Tendencje, megatrendy*, in: R. Kuźniar et al. (eds.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe*, Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe Scholar, 2012, pp. 59–78.

¹² A. Kerdoun, “La dimension environnementale...”, op. cit., pp. 63–64.

¹³ K. Pronińska, *Nowe problemy bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego: bezpieczeństwo energetyczne i ekologiczne*, in: E. Cziomer (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe w XXI wieku...*, op. cit., p. 304.

¹⁴ See more: A. Ziętek, “Kategoria sekurytyzacji w bezpieczeństwie kulturowym”, *Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations* 2011, Vol. 44, No. 3–4, pp. 198–200.

imminent threat.¹⁵ Consequently, countries and NGO's have started to undertake action aiming at prevention of new security threats, including environmental ones.

In the definition provided by O. Weaver, who initiated the constructivist paradigm of the Copenhagen School, security can be interpreted as an act of speech. A mere expression is an act in its nature. When constructing a security agenda, a state-government sets a given case in a particular area and defines the means to prevent or counteract it. Therefore Weaver's definition focuses on the speech acts that determine whether a certain phenomenon or process is or is not a threat.¹⁶ He posits that "securitization" itself stands for labelling an object as a threat by a legitimate authority and accepting this fact by the majority of population and/or international society (audience).¹⁷ Secondly, there is a clear distinction between "securization" and "securitization". The former means simply making a given object or area more secure, while the latter *updates* and expresses an alarming or insecure situation through security-oriented discourse. In other words, securization is an art of securing that needs to engage a complex of financial and human resources in order to ensure stability of a given socio-political area. In most cases securitization is followed by securization. In its rhetoric securitization heralds securization, or marshalling of extraordinary measures in a situation defined as exceptional and urgent.¹⁸

A. Wolfers, however, distinguishes security in its objective and subjective sense.¹⁹ While the former measures lack of threats for already established values, the latter rather means lack of fear that these values will be targeted.²⁰ This definition was formulated in 1952 and it seems to give more analytic space than the previous ones. According to Wolfers, security is still an "ambiguous symbol" unless we respond to two crucial questions: (1) whose security? (referent object), and (2) security of which values and which threats therein? In order to answer the first question, it suffices to determine the reference object or securitizing actor (individual, state, region, international system etc.). The second issue forces us to diagnose which security sectors are engaged (political, economic, environmental, social etc.), and especially which values are endangered by their internal dynamics?²¹ As a consequence, a change of thinking about security and security policy occurred in Western Europe. U. Beck added that in case of specific threats, a mere reaction in an extraordinary situation loses importance to rule of caution and preventive mode of action towards threats.²²

¹⁵ K. Pronińska, *Nowe problemy bezpieczeństwa...*, op. cit., p. 305.

¹⁶ T. Balzacq, "Qu'est-ce que la sécurité nationale?", *Revue internationale et stratégique* 2003/2004, No. 52, p. 39.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ It should be mentioned that acts of speech are imperfect due to their rhetorical and conceptual character.

¹⁹ See: A. Ziętek, *Bezpieczeństwo kulturowe w Europie*, Lublin: Wydaw. UMCS, 2013, pp. 62–69.

²⁰ T. Balzacq, "Qu'est-ce que la sécurité nationale?", op. cit., p. 40.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² See more: U. Beck, *Spoleczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności*, trans. S. Cieśla, Warszawa: Scholar, 2002.

Environmental changes, which are the corollary of degradation of habitat (i.e. sea level rise, deficit of fresh water or limited access to resources), may trigger future conflicts or even directly ignite the use of force (armed conflicts) in the next decades. The former means that they may act as an indirect factor conditioning conflict, creating a complex of its determinants.²³ Moreover, W. Hauge and T. Ellingsen put forward the thesis that society and the environment are correlated and those relations may lead to destabilization of social systems and consequently to violence.²⁴ It appears that just such factors exist and became a sufficient condition²⁵ of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, which in turn launched a flurry of Arab revolutions.

These environmentally-driven conflicts most often erupt in developing states defined by their social, political and economic instability. According to K. Spillmann and G. Bachler, most conflicts after the Second World War have stemmed from various forms of environmental changes, were internal in their nature, and affected developing states.²⁶ Accordingly, the environmental dimension of those conflicts was linked to dilemmas of development.

As already known, globalization has launched a set of ecological processes that could impact social systems in a constructive and/or deconstructive way. Advocates of a globalizing world have a completely different vision of the current and future state of the global natural environment than its critics. Interestingly, some data supporting the thesis of globalization as a habitat-friendly force seem convincing. However, there are even more convincing statistics showing globalization's bad and destructive impact on the environment.²⁷ It turned out that globalization opened *inter alia* a chapter of multipolar world with a catalogue of multidimensional problems for international society. This world faces a crisis, which is clear if one looks at the debacles of international stabilization efforts in many destinations (including states of the southern flank of the Mediterranean Sea). Therefore, as a consequence, the situation of chronic insecurity and violence has replaced relative stability of the Cold War. Despite this an idea of restoring security and international peace by building partnerships and systems of collective security is on the rise.²⁸

²³ See: W. Hauge and T. Ellingsen, "Beyond environmental scarcity: Causal pathways to conflict", *Journal of Peace Research* 1998, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 299–317; A. Giddens, *Klimatyczna katastrofa*, trans. M. Głowacka-Grajper, Warszawa: Prószyński Media, 2010, p. 31, 178; H. Welzer, *Wojny klimatyczne. Za co będziemy zabijać w XXI wieku*, trans. M. Sutowski, Warszawa: Wydaw. Krytyki Politycznej, 2010, pp. 95–100.

²⁴ W. Hauge and T. Ellingsen, "Beyond environmental scarcity...", op. cit.,

²⁵ On the sufficient condition in international relations research methodology, see: F. Devine, *Metody jakościowe*, in: D. Marsh, G. Stoker (eds.), *Teorie i metody w naukach politycznych*, Kraków: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2006, pp. 251–269.

²⁶ For more, see: "Ecological conflict in the Third World and peaceful ways of resolving them"; cited from: T. Bernauer, T. Böhmelt, V. Koubi, "Environmental changes and violent conflict", *Environmental Research Letters* 2012, No. 7, p. 2.

²⁷ P. Dauvergne, *Globalizacja...*, op. cit., p. 553.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

Environmental security threats in the Mediterranean Sea Basin

The very distinct feature of environmental threats in Europe are processes of their institutionalization.²⁹ These processes are under way also in the Mediterranean Sea Basin and are determined by its characteristics, including especially depletion of non-renewable resources.³⁰ It soon turned out that the state of natural environment had immense significance not only for European security but also for the entire international society (especially when a bordering country is an industrial polluter). Ignoring existing ecological threats may cause tension and social conflicts of international scope. The Mediterranean Sea area is characterized by population growth on its southern and eastern rim, whereas the population of the northern coastal states has already achieved its peak and is aging. Over the last 30 years, the population of the southern Mediterranean flank doubled and reached 124 million in 2000, and it is predicted to rise by 96 million in the next 25 years. Conversely, the coastal states of the northern flank amounted to 193 million in 2000 and will rise only slightly (by 4 million inhabitants) to 2025.³¹

Obviously this overall population growth is not neutral for food demand as the Mediterranean Basin will be inhabited by 530 million people by 2020.³² As a result of demographic rise and economic opportunities, there also occurred a significant rise in flows (sea and air transport etc.) between 1970 and 2000. The Mediterranean Sea is among the world's busiest waterways, accounting for 15% of global shipping activity.³³ Nevertheless, the Mediterranean shipping is limitedly controlled – even in case of transport of hazardous materials. Sea transport often causes irrevocable environmental damages. It is also responsible for ozone pollution as well as detrimental noise pollution that affect 51% of the Israeli population, 45% of Malta, and one-third of Italy. A vast amount of harmful gases emitted are the result of burning oil and its derived fuel.³⁴ About one-third of carbon dioxide and seventy percent of nitric oxide emissions concentrate in big agglomerations on the northern coast of the Mediterranean. Additionally, covering the shoreline with concrete and building roads too close to the coast must destabilize the natural equilibrium in habitat.³⁵

Along with the potent increase of flows in the Mediterranean Sea, some 266 ecological accidents with oil leakage were registered between 1977 and 2010 (catastrophe of Prestige and Erika) with costs potentially higher than those on the

²⁹ M. Pietraś, *Bezpieczeństwo...*, op. cit., p. 91.

³⁰ K. Stachurska-Szczesiak, *Program MEDA w polityce pomocy Unii Europejskiej państwom Maghrebu*, Toruń: Wydaw. Adam Marszałek, 2007, p. 43.

³¹ G. Benoit, "Environnement et développement en Méditerranée", *Futuribles* 2006, No. 321, p. 18.

³² S. Abis, P. Blanc, "Le retour de la question agricole", *Confluences Méditerranée* 2008, No. 67, p. 151.

³³ G. Benoit, *Environnement...*, op. cit., p. 30.

³⁴ I.e. ingredients of exhaust, mainly of diesel engine; particulates consist of soot and unburned hydrocarbons, and are believed to be detrimental to health.

³⁵ G. Benoit, *Environnement...*, op. cit., p. 30.

Atlantic.³⁶ The overall situation is even more complex due to intense urbanization, also along the coastline, which leads to change of consumption patterns. It is especially the case on the southern and eastern coast of the Basin. According to estimations in 2025, 75% of the population of these states will live in cities.³⁷ It is of course connected with the problem of waste management that both flanks of the Basin have in common. Suffice it to say that 80% of waste is not managed by the states of the southern and eastern coast, which amounts to 282 kilograms per capita per year (compared to 566 kilograms per capita waste on the northern coast, which is estimated to rise to 600 kilograms in 2025). This volume will triple in the south and double in the north of the Mediterranean Basin.³⁸

Shaken by disadvantageous climate conditions, the Euromed states experience reducing the ration of water per capita despite huge donations for waterworks. Globally the Mediterranean Basin has a half of its population with insufficient access to fresh water (fewer than one thousand cubic meters/per person/per year), and almost 30 million are completely deprived of access to fresh water. The Mediterranean Sea Basin is also one of the regions where climate changes are at their most acute. According to the report of Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (GIEC), in this area, the consequences of global warming of the last 20–30 years are worrying. It causes more and more heats and droughts. Precipitation will rise on the northern coast of the Basin (on average by 20% in 2100), and simultaneously drop on its southern flank (by 20% in the same year). It also rains more often in winter and hardly ever in summer, when demand for water is the highest.³⁹ Growing average temperature will also lead to increased evaporation and at the same time reduce water absorption capacity in snow and ice at high altitudes. Generally, average access to water in the Mediterranean Sea Basin could fall by 30% in 2100, which furthermore hardens the fragility of this region.⁴⁰ Climate changes will definitely affect the sectors of urban planning and tourism.⁴¹ They also determine internal inequality patterns in individual states as well as in the entire region, especially its southern coast. To those threats one could add the problem of famine, endemic diseases, epidemics, and depletion of resources. All of them make violence more likely and lack of regional stability more probable.⁴²

³⁶ See: M. Albakjaji, *La pollution de la mer Méditerranée par les hydrocarbures liée au trafic maritime*, Université Paris-Est 2010 (PhD thesis), <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00598492/document>, p. 67 (accessed: 26.10.2015).

³⁷ G. Benoit, *Environnement...*, op. cit., p. 32.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ P. Beckouche, Z. Luçon, A. Taithe, *L'eau en Méditerranée: fonder une stratégie commune. Services de l'eau, climat et sécurité*, Paris: Éditions Hartmann, 2010, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 13.

⁴¹ By 2025 the number of tourists in the Mediterranean Basin will rise by an additional 140 million per year.

⁴² E. Dupuy, "Reconstruire une Méditerranée plurielle", *Études Géopolitiques* 2008-II, No. 9, pp. 35–36.

In the face of these data and predictions, one could wonder whether the environment and water are capable of causing tensions and conflicts in the Mediterranean? To answer the question, since the end of 1980s, two research centres in Zurich and Toronto tried to point out the dependences between natural environment and security. However, the experts distanced themselves from their final report (they criticized it as too general and not useful enough). A prospect of wars for water was especially ambiguous if it was considered as a simple relation between conflict and water, without other variables. On the other hand, there are approaches that bond the ecological factor with important social, political, economic and cultural contexts – when the protection of environment is inseparably connected with food challenges or access to water and energy. In this context F. Galant indicates a particular role of forerunners like France, the US and Great Britain, willing to make the Mediterranean Sea Basin a space of strategic development.⁴³ Thus, natural environment and security are inseparable, and the links are even too apparent in some world regions, especially in the Mediterranean Sea Basin.

Securitization of the Euro-Mediterranean Area

The concept of security in the Mediterranean area – in its preventive and corrective sense – is a broad and precise construct.⁴⁴ It is broad because it embraces a plethora of factors and tends to widen the very understanding of Earth security and security related to atmospheric phenomena. An emphasis should be placed on these factors of insecurity in the realm of natural environment which should trigger cooperation and partnership between actors and especially states from the region. With this in mind, the project of the UfM anticipated the future and impressed upon societies of coastal states of the Basin the need to “engage in historic process which would lead to unity of the area because... [they] create a commonwealth of destiny in which all are equal”.⁴⁵ This concept of security is also precise because it refers to both the security of people and of goods. As a result, it is about establishing real cooperative patterns and a unique partnership in order to facilitate “taking a destiny” for the Mediterranean and the responsibility of partnership and cooperation on the basis of solidarity to protect the natural environment. This responsibility of everybody towards the habitat is a common value of humankind, as atmosphere, oceans, wildlife has been shared among all the people and nobody could claim to abuse them. Today consciousness of ecological security, given its threats and challenges, refers to the entire international society and even to those states not directly imperilled, yet aware of this common challenge.⁴⁶

⁴³ It is proved by privileged relations of the US with Turkey, Israel, Algeria, Morocco, or Ethiopia; however, Gibraltar’s localization indicates strong involvement of Great Britain in the project of the UfM.

⁴⁴ For more on preventive action by France, NATO, and the EU, see: J.-F. Coustilliere, “Questions de sécurité en Méditerranée”, *Confluences Méditerranée* 2008, No. 67, pp. 117–125.

⁴⁵ A. Kerdoun, “La dimension environnementale...”, op. cit., p. 66.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

As globalization intensifies, threats and challenges to natural environment, commitments must also be kept at the international level.⁴⁷

In the face of these threats, the Rio Summit of 1992 attempted to securitize the natural environment considering its degradation in many regions of the world. Ecological threats may have disastrous effects on Earth climate and on security and people's life. Therefore, it could be said that the nature of global security of people constitutes an immanent part of factors consisting of political, economic, socio-cultural security where the environment protection matters a lot. The degradation of habitat in the Mediterranean Sea Basin, and especially in case of the states of its southern flank, is so disastrous that only an effective strategy of poverty reduction could preserve the ecosystem⁴⁸. Poverty is also presented as the main cause of unsustainable development. It is said that poverty of the South comes from the position of developing states in the global structure. The best way to progress – as it is assumed – is to incite economic growth, not to slow it up. However, this cannot lead to uncontrolled growth like in the 1960s and 1970s, but rather to self-sustaining growth.⁴⁹

In an analysis of the environmental security concept, it can be easily noticed that international cooperation constitutes the requisite for its realization. Such cooperation, in turn, reflects the internal dynamics of states, above all their strategies of development.⁵⁰ A particular interest has been given to the idea of sustainable development (sometimes known as durable development).⁵¹ The core of this idea relates to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.⁵² It therefore creates the premises of environmental modernization of societies, common standards, norms, institutions, and other new forms of international cooperation.⁵³

⁴⁷ Globalization has caused the economic crisis because it maximizes economic growth which provokes states to exploit their natural resources excessively as well as inflate production within development. As a matter of fact, such growth, based on production patterns and unbalanced consumption, has negative impact on habitat and leads to such phenomena as: deforestation, soil erosion, impoverishment of farming, water and air pollution or stockpiling of industrial waste along the shoreline.

⁴⁸ During the Stockholm conference in 1972 the term "pollution of poverty" was coined to express belief that poverty is the biggest threat to global environment.

⁴⁹ P. Dauvergne, *Globalizacja...*, op. cit., p. 557.

⁵⁰ The old belief that environment protection is incongruous with the idea of development or (worse of all) is an obstacle to it, is out-of-date and downright antiquated. Indeed, the former is a crucial element of prosperity.

⁵¹ B. Hours, *Le développement durable, instrument d'intégration globale*, in: J.-Y. Martin (ed.), *Développement durable? Doctrines, pratiques, évaluations*, Paris: IRD Éditions 2002, p. 344; On sustainable development, see: D. Kielczewski (ed.), *Od koncepcji ekorozwoju do ekonomii zrównoważonego rozwoju*, Białystok: Wydaw. Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej, 2009, pp. 7–310; D. Kielczewski, *Konsumpcja a perspektywy zrównoważonego rozwoju*, Białystok: Wydaw. Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej, 2008, pp. 7–278; J.-P. Maréchal and B. Quenault (eds.), *Le développement durable. Une perspective pour le XXI^e siècle*, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005, p. 13–422; *Développement durable. Les grandes questions*, Paris: OECD, 2001, pp. 3–536.

⁵² *Nasza wspólna przyszłość. Raport Światowej Komisji do Spraw Środowiska i Rozwoju*, Warszawa 1991, p. 41.

⁵³ M. Pietraś, *Bezpieczeństwo...*, op. cit., p. 8.

The Mediterranean Basin is a region where the idea of sustainable development is crucial because of at least three main reasons. Firstly, it is an eco-region,⁵⁴ outstandingly rich in natural resources yet fragile at the same time. This fragility of development is defined by its high dependence on natural environment that is after all seriously afflicted. Secondly, this Basin is one of the main areas of contacts, splits and interdependencies along the North–South line. Finally, it constitutes a unity of states and areas whose stability and prosperity depend upon their ability to implement policies and their ways of development and cooperation integrating ecological, social and economic dimensions of such development.⁵⁵

Hence, the Mediterranean strategy for sustainable development indeed puts emphasis on a few key fields like water resources management, energy, transport, tourism, urbanization, marine and coastal environment. The strategy was elaborated in 2001 by 21 Mediterranean countries and the European Community. It aims at adjusting regional conditions to international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)⁵⁶ in order to implement domestic strategies and launch dynamic partnerships between states at different stages of development.⁵⁷ All territories engaged in armed conflicts for natural resources dramatically illustrate the impact of environment protection on all the Mediterranean polities. Unsurprisingly, the issue of securitization of development in the Euromed makes up a real challenge and a vehicle of security agenda in the UfM. Such securitization leads to group recognition of a whole spectre of chronic threats that affects all Mediterranean states, without any exception.

Nowadays, a geopolitical picture of the Mediterranean Sea Basin seems difficult to characterize. As D. Cambarau puts it, in this “Mediterranean bazaar”,⁵⁸ a political and economic blockade of the Mediterranean world contrasts with changes occurring throughout the world where everything speeds up and falls into place in a new mode. As a result, substantial alterations have been visible for several years now also in the heart of Mediterranean societies.

Those transformations are corollary of the Arab Spring⁵⁹ with regard to political, economic, social and security sphere of social behaviour. Pursuing the analysis of S. Parzymies concerning the evolution of the Arab Spring, a question arises whether

⁵⁴ It is famous for its sea, climate, cultural heritage and beautiful landscapes; this eco-region is also the main hot spot of world's biodiversity: 10% of species of plants live on its 1.6% of land, and 7% of wildlife on less than 0.8% of ocean area. Many of them are endemic and specific for this area.

⁵⁵ G. Benoit, *Environnement...*, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵⁶ See: Millennium Development Goals (MDG), www.un.org/millenniumgoals (accessed: 26.10.2015).

⁵⁷ See more: *Stratégie méditerranéenne pour le développement durable. Un cadre pour une durabilité environnement et une prospérité partagée*, p. 2, http://195.97.36.231/acrobatfiles/05WG270_Inf13_fre.pdf (accessed : 26.10.2015)..

⁵⁸ D. Cambarau, “Union pour la Méditerranée. Rubicube diplomatique ou grand bluff?”, *Confluences Méditerranée* 2008, No. 67, p. 11.

⁵⁹ The Arab Spring began in February 2011 and embraced at first five Arab states: Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen, then Bahrain, Jordan, and Morocco. In most cases, the pre-Spring regimes survived and still present administrative and political weaknesses.

these changes are for the better and really anticipated by Arab societies and the international community.⁶⁰ It would be a mistake to believe that the geopolitical balance in the Mediterranean is in a deep evolution.⁶¹ The former president of the Arab World Institute in Paris, D. Bauchard, concluded at the beginning of 2012 that “it is only certain that nothing will be the same again when it comes to internal political life of the (Arab) countries, the balance between regional actors or the interests of out of area powers”.⁶²

The nature of this Mediterranean “bazaar” implies a growing disorder in the realm of political initiatives that paints a picture of a security agenda which is now rather overloaded than empty. The European Union prioritized ensuring security on its southern borders through development of the Mediterranean Sea Basin. Consequently, since the 1970s, the EU has prepared some agendas (Global Mediterranean Policy, New Mediterranean Policy),⁶³ and some more significant initiatives such as the Barcelona process known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), inaugurated in 1995.⁶⁴ It was especially aimed at balancing European security needs with the development needs of southern and eastern Mediterranean countries.⁶⁵ Although the Barcelona process was a politically indispensable and useful initiative, its realization, irrespectively of its undoubted success, left a lot to be desired.⁶⁶ This quite dissatisfying balance of the Barcelona process led the European Commission to propose on 13 March 2003 the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), intended to give additional protection to the already charged Mediterranean cooperation.⁶⁷ This schedule was also supplemented with a novel initiative – i.e. the UfM. In spite of the enthusiasm or criticisms it provoked, the project constituted a fresh attempt to reinvigorate cooperation in the Basin.

At the beginning, many members of the EU were excluded from the UfM, which paradoxically lead to emphasizing Mediterranean problems and placing them at the European level of debate.⁶⁸ UfM could be compared to diplomatic sliding puzzles

⁶⁰ For more, see: S. Parzymies, “Arabska wiosna – dwa lata później”, *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 2013, No. 1, pp. 63–92.

⁶¹ D. Cambarau, “Union pour la Méditerranée...”, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶² *Politique étrangère* 2012, No. 1, p. 70, cited from: S. Parzymies, “Arabska wiosna...”, op. cit., p. 91.

⁶³ For more on the activity of the EU towards Mediterranean states, see: K. Stachurska-Szczesiak, *Program MEDA...*, op. cit., pp. 49–61.

⁶⁴ For more on the initiatives in the realm of security, see: J.-Y. Moissoner, *Le partenariat euroméditerranéen. L'échec d'une ambition régionale*, Grenoble: PUG, 2005, p. 55–57; S. Abis, “2007: Année zero pour la Méditerranée?”, *Futuribles* 2006, No. 321, pp. 47–65; E. Romeo, “The European Union and North Africa: Keeping Mediterranean “Safe” for Europe”, *Mediterranean Politics* 1998, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 21–38.

⁶⁵ Ch. Bertrand, *L'Euro-Méditerranée*, in: P. Icard (ed.), *La politique méditerranéenne de l'Union Européenne*, Bruxelles: Bruylant, 2012, p. 3.

⁶⁶ B. Patrie, E. Español, *Méditerranée*, Paris: Sindbad, 2008, pp. 65–77.

⁶⁷ *Communication de la Commission au Conseil et au Parlement Européen, L'Europe élargie – Voisinage: Un nouveau cadre pour les relations avec nos voisins de l'Est et du Sud*, COM (2003) 104 final, Bruxelles, 11.03.2003, http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_fr.pdf (accessed: 26.10.2015).

⁶⁸ Within the EU, without the participation of the Mediterranean partners, this debate was initiated by France.

played by the governments. It was an initiative proposed and defended – not without difficulties – by France and its President, N. Sarkozy, in particular. Germany's initial opposition to the first draft of the French project showed that all EU member states felt affected by Mediterranean problems.⁶⁹ Since his address in Toulon in February 2007 during the presidential campaign, the newly elected French president pushed for concretization of this idea.⁷⁰ A tripartite Rome Declaration of 20 December 2007, signed by France, Italy, and Spain, was presented as a crucial step towards its construction. It has immense significance as it officially smuggled the ideas of the Mediterranean Union (*Union méditerranéenne*) into the concept of the UfM, since then “based on cooperation, not integration”. The President of France desired to make UfM a political priority not only for France but also for other European countries.

According to the Rome Declaration, the goal of the Union “is not to replace procedures of cooperation and dialogue which connect Mediterranean states, but its task – in the spirit of complementarity and cooperation with already existing institutions – is to supplement them and create extra incentive for action”. The European Council (13–14 March 2008) supported the “Barcelona process: the Union for the Mediterranean” initiative as a continuation of the EMP.⁷¹ Thereby, already existing institutions of dialogue kept their positions and could pursue their work.⁷²

A modification in the project's name sought to demonstrate strategic changes that were gradually advancing in the first half of 2008. This change was definitively articulated by the communication of the European Commission of 20 May 2008,⁷³ which did not leave anyone, not even skeptics, indifferent. The meeting that was held in Paris in July 2008, organized on the eve of the French National Holiday, was a formal expression of the creation of the UfM.⁷⁴ This summit proved great determination on the part of N. Sarkozy to carry out his project, considered by some as a diplomatic success.

⁶⁹ On the genesis of the Union of the Mediterranean, see: Ch. Saint-Prot and Z. El Tibi (eds.), “Quelle Union pour quelle Méditerranée?”, *Études Géopolitiques* 2008-II, No. 9, pp. 5–141.

⁷⁰ Official visits of the President of France in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt were the occasion to concretize this idea. A chance of winning over new partners such as Spain, Italy, and Germany also arose. On 20 December 2007, on the occasion of the Rome Declaration, the UfM aims were presented by Zapatero, Prodi and Sarkozy. A year later, on 3 March 2008 in Hanover, the Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the President, Nicolas Sarkozy, reached a consensus.

⁷¹ *Communication de la Commission Au Parlement Européen et au Conseil. Le processus de Barcelone: Union pour la Méditerranée*, COM (2008), 319 final, http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com08_319_fr.pdf (accessed: 26.10.2015).

⁷² Their actions complement therefore EU activities, for example in case of Forum 5+5 or the non-governmental Euromed platform.

⁷³ *Communication de la Commission Au Parlement Européen et au Conseil. Le processus de Barcelone...*, op.cit.

⁷⁴ Forty-three countries participated in the meeting, including 27 EU member states, 12 Mediterranean partners (10 countries involved historically since 1995, joined by Albania and Mauretania in 2008) as well as four new countries that accepted the Barcelona *acquis* (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Monaco). A number of international institutions were also present at the meeting, namely: European Commission, European Parliament, United Nations, Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf,

A key role in securitization of ecological threat in the Mediterranean Sea Basin was also played by Henri Guaino, a special advisor for UfM in the French government, who stated in an interview for *Le Point* that: “to solve the very important environmental problems in the Mediterranean Basin, which have economic consequences, a concrete, solid cooperation of all regional states is needed...”.⁷⁵ The UfM project was given support in the form of a letter to the summit’s participants from some personalities and retired politicians from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea, e.g.: M. Hamrush (former Algerian Prime Minister), A. Juppé (former French Prime Minister), F. Ulalu (former Moroccan Prime Minister), R. Prodi (former Prime Minister of Italy and the Chairman of the European Commission). It stated that the UfM project constituted “a solution perfectly tailored to global challenges”.⁷⁶ The Union itself is not a new structure but a renovation and revival of the Barcelona process to which new and hitherto neglected activities were added – i.e. the protection of natural environment, energy, sustainable development and transport.

The UfM, often referred to as “a union of projects”, was initiated to promote regional cooperation with aforesaid activities as its core pillars.⁷⁷ In such political formula, it is dialogue that ensures accommodation of different stakeholders’ interests and makes them responsive to matters referring to environmental security. This initiative was launched after it became clear that despite its strategic importance, the Mediterranean region had been neglected by Europe for several years. Irrespective of the simple continuation of regional cooperation, the Union’s operation results in many changes of the existing fabric. It seems that since then, the Euro-Mediterranean relations have transformed the multilateral mode of cooperation into one of more governmental character. As F. Bicchi puts it, thanks to the entrepreneurial and/or leadership efforts of key actors, the institutional setting of the Mediterranean relations shifted from “regionalism plus politicization” in the EMP via “bilateralism plus functionalism” in the ENP to “bilateralism plus politicization” in the UfM.⁷⁸ It constitutes another step towards bilateralism, shifting from regionalism in at least two ways.

Firstly, the main goal of the UfM is to promote projects among groups of states willing to cooperate, especially in contiguous regions. Certainly, there exists some capacity for this subregional collaboration. Moreover, a shift of cooperation could be

Arab League, African Union, Arab Maghreb Union, African Development Bank, European Investment Bank and World Bank.

⁷⁵ Guaino: “*L’UPM permettra des projets à géométrie variable*”, <http://www.lepoint.fr/actualites-politique/2008-07-20/guaino-l-upm-permettra-des-projets-a-geometrie-variable/917/0/261644> (accessed: 20.01.2014).

⁷⁶ S. Parzymies, *Unia dla Śródziemnomorza a Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa*, in: M. Pietraś, K. Stachurska-Szczesiak and J. Misiągiewicz (eds.), *Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej*, Lublin: Wydaw. UMCS, 2012, p. 224

⁷⁷ D. Cambarau, “Union pour la Méditerranée...”, op. cit., p. 15; J. Huntzinger, “La Méditerranée d’une rive à l’autre”, *Questions internationales* 2009, No. 36, p. 11.

⁷⁸ F. Bicchi, “The Union for the Mediterranean, or the Changing Context of Euro-Mediterranean Relations”, *Mediterranean Politics* 2011, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 3–19.

perceived as a sign of pragmatism that rather encourages than forces governments to undertake group effort. At the same time, the importance of the subregional level of cooperation clearly shows that the declared goals are unachievable at the regional level alone. On the other hand, the institutionalization of the subregional level defines an order of political interests of various actors that is difficult to settle on a multilateral forum. Thus, instead of promoting shared political projects originating from dissent, the way is to establish coalitions of the willing based on functional complementarities or common prospects of development. In short, the EU foreign policy focusing on the Mediterranean region has forfeited its impetus despite presenting a dose of realism. Secondly, the increasing number of actors contributes to dilution of regionalism. It can be argued that by augmenting the scale of disparate interests that must be addressed, a necessity of a subregional pattern emerges. Additionally, anything substantial is hard to achieve in a grouping which consists of over 40 states.

Since the formal opening of the UfM, all of its members have welcomed more or less willingly the idea of cooperation at the intergovernmental level that contributes to fragmentation of the multilateral form within the past framework of the EMP. Thus, this Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is no longer shaped “block to block” (EU plus Med), as in case of the EMP, or “block to a single state” (EU plus a single Med state), as within the ENP. The substance of this dynamics is currently based on the relations between particular countries.⁷⁹ In the interconnected world, the Mediterranean example shows how various social processes stemming from there affect all of Europe in terms of economics, migrations, security and stability, and the protection of natural environment. Behind this impact, there exists of course a vast developmental gap between the standard of life in the North and the South of the Mediterranean Sea Basin.⁸⁰ No wonder, then, that the tasks of the UfM concern the fundamental challenges for development of the Mediterranean. In this sense, projects aiming at protection of natural environment and sustainable development have been given priority.

Challenges of the Union for the Mediterranean

The quest for new ways to revive Euro-Mediterranean relations in a concrete form such as envisaged by the UfM is the result of political engagement of European states and France in particular. The latter diagnosed a lot of essential issues which obstructed the EU's Mediterranean policy project for years.⁸¹ First of all, France established an

⁷⁹ Ibidem.

⁸⁰ According to Eurostat data from 2009, the average annual income of an inhabitant of the northern coast (EU-27) amounted to € 23,500, whereas in case of the southern coast it was much lower and reached € 3,000 (data from 2009); such discrepancies may provoke destabilization in the region.

⁸¹ K. Stachurska-Szczesiak, *Nowa polityka śródziemnomorska Unii Europejskiej*, in: E. Kuźelewska, A. R. Bartnicki (eds.), *Zachód w globalnej i regionalnej polityce międzynarodowej*, Toruń: Wydaw. Adam Marszałek, 2009, p. 343–356.

enhanced economic policy in which investments and infrastructure became the focal point. Secondly, it paved the way for sustainable development by combining ecology with economics thanks to the cooperation of northern and southern Mediterranean partners. Thirdly, the logic of the UfM is to establish an internal energy network with the creation of common and complementary infrastructures in the energy sector. Last but not least, the Republic of France initiated cooperation in the realm of organized crime, smuggling, and terrorism. Most of these dossiers had already been discussed on in other area meetings, but they were addressed only in the Euro-Mediterranean Policy that defined a new dynamics and is still used by the UfM.⁸²

The authors of the UfM have realized that, apart from the lack of political stability, the greatest dangers to the Euromed community arise from climate change, water scarcity, deforestation, water and air pollution.⁸³ Environmental protection and preservation of biodiversity are the key determinants ensuring the unity and security, essential to coastal Mediterranean states' prospects. There is no doubt that environmental concerns related to climate change and sustainable development should be addressed in the regional grouping due to their importance, regardless of developmental status and geographic position. In order to underline the enormous role of the Mediterranean Sea Basin, it could even be labelled "the liquid continent", because the name describes well its very nature and the crucial role it plays in protecting its inhabitants. This term stresses the importance of water as the main driver defining interstate and interhuman relation and shaping the flow of goods.⁸⁴

Insecurity related to water scarcity and to irrigation, which consumes 80% of water resources in some economies of the Mediterranean, is a burning issue. Modernization of irrigation systems is therefore a considerable challenge, and management of water demand should also be enhanced in this region. This shows why the Mediterranean is more often described today in categories of a community of problems (economic crises, environmental threats, demographic pressure, migration and transnational crime, religious fundamentalism and terrorism) than as a geographic region. The common regional heritage, water, could become a *de iure* binder of the UfM. The problems with water are accompanied by a developmental and technical fissure. There is still a division in terms of access to technology, knowledge and research tools in the Mediterranean. This division is deeply entrenched and determined by the political

⁸² A. Kerdoun, "La dimension environnementale...", op. cit., p. 73.

⁸³ The growing problem of environment dangers to the Mediterranean Sea had attracted attention by the 1970s. As the result of these fears, the UN elaborated the 1977 "Blue Plan" whose main goal was to focus on the issue of environmental protection in the Mediterranean – understood as natural connection between coastal states; thus, it opened a new era in environmental protection and especially inaugurated the new trans-Mediterranean cooperation, aiming at protection of *Mare Nostrum* against numerous dangers. For more, see: http://planbleu.org/sites/default/files/publications/red_resume_uk.pdf.

⁸⁴ E. Dupuy, "Le Processus de Barcelone: Une Union pour la Méditerranée: Compléter sans dupliquer", *Les Cahiers de L'Orient* 2008, No. 91, p. 19.

distinctiveness of regional actors.⁸⁵ To address the question of ecological threats in the region, a common position is needed that would strengthen the overall plan of action for the Mediterranean. Such a plan should be based on socio-political competences aiming to harmonize development and to ensure better and more reasonable resources administration.

The UfM project is an inauguration of an innovative approach to the protection of the common, if endangered, human, ecological and geological heritage. In the face of the ecological dangers in the Mediterranean, a struggle with numerous sources of pollution impacting people's daily life (standard of living, health, access to water) has become a priority for the states. The risk should be defined with caution given the pivotal role of tourism – the source of development and prosperity of southern and eastern countries, which is still one of the most stable sectors of the economy and a motor of economic growth for all Mediterranean states. In this sense, the project is intended to make the Mediterranean Sea one of the cleanest basins in the world (programme "Horizon 2020"). It was established in the framework of the Barcelona process in cooperation with the European Investment Bank, and was designed to protect maritime habitat and coastal areas.⁸⁶ This initiative tends towards pollution reduction in the Mediterranean in the 2020 perspective and towards fighting pollution caused mostly by inhabitants of Mediterranean coastal areas (80%).⁸⁷

The real environmental challenge for the region in the UfM is the need for involvement of all actors, irrespective of their governmental, nongovernmental or transnational specificity. This engagement should have one focus: a delineation of a common position and solutions which would address the new factors destabilizing the overall situation and obstructing intergovernmental contacts in the region in the short and long run. Given this fact, a long-range influence of the UfM on the society and global affairs that are more and more connected with global warming should serve as a main defining context of this project.⁸⁸ As concerted efforts are most welcome, according to F. Comair, establishing the UfM is a key action which will sign up regional players in the mechanism of sustainable development to enhance peace, stability and prosperity, given the catalogue of strengths and weaknesses of the region's very asymmetric nature.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ S. Abis, P. Blanc, "Le retour...", op. cit., p. 152.

⁸⁶ There are 130 spots that require intervention.

⁸⁷ Horizon 2020 was agreed at the ministerial conference for environment in Cairo in November 2006 and constitutes one of the main initiatives approved by the UfM. Its tasks are grouped into three areas: reduction of pollution (through "green" investments), capacity building (required by targeting the programme's goals) and evaluation, monitoring and research. This functioning of the initiative is based on existing political instruments and supports the development and fulfillment of obligations from the Barcelona Convention of 1976 on the protection of sea and coasts of the Mediterranean.

⁸⁸ E. Dupuy, "Le Processus de Barcelone...", op. cit., pp. 20–23.

⁸⁹ P. Beckouche, Z. Luçon, A. Taithe, *L'eau...*, op. cit., p. 17.

Unfortunately, the events of recent months (increased illegal immigration⁹⁰ and terrorist acts) greatly undermine the ecological securitization process in the Mediterranean. Terrorism in the form of extreme violence has always been perpetrated to produce revolutionary change.⁹¹ It is no different in North Africa and the Middle East. The Arab Revolution has made it possible for local terrorist groups (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) to expand in the entire African continent, giving them an opportunity to prepare new terrorist actions, both on land and at sea. Four years after the revolution in Tunisia, despite political changes (creation of a new government and a new constitution in 2014), the attack in Bardo (18 March 2015) then in the resort of Sousse (26 June 2015), where tourists were killed, frighteningly highlighted the direct threat to the new democracy, and to the common space of security.⁹² The situation in Tunisia and other Maghreb countries (North Africa) is aggravated by the Libyan state collapse and the growth of extremism in Syria's civil war.

Faced with this situation, the EU must first meet these challenges by taking immediate action at both the European and the regional level, not forgetting the efforts to protect the environment. For this purpose, the EU showed official support for the operation of the UfM.⁹³ Often underestimated, in 2012 the UfM was once again received by the organization as the main platform for cooperation in the region (with all concerned Mediterranean countries). In the second half of 2013, during a ministerial meeting of the UfM, discussions were conducted on topics such as: women, transport, energy, and environmental protection.

Modernized and adapted to the rapidly changing situation in the Mediterranean, the UfM is still an important framework for cooperation in the region. The organization is essential (even taking into account the specificity of its structure and functioning – the co-presidency) to discuss not only ecological, political or economic problems in the region (senior officials' meetings), but also social issues, i.e. support for civil society and cooperation with new local authorities.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ According to data from 2014, the number of refugees from areas of the Arab Revolution amounts to 276,000 people, which represents an increase of 155% compared to 2013.

⁹¹ For more, see: M. Madej, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne – istota, specyfika, faktyczna ranga strategiczna we współczesnym świecie*, in: S. Wojciechowski and R. Fiedler (eds.), *Zagrożenia asymetryczne współczesnego świata*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Nauk Politycznych i Dziennikarstwa Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2009, pp. 11–26.

⁹² For more, see: L. A. Ammour, *Les enjeux de sécurité émergents au Maghreb et au Sahel depuis le "printemps arabe"*, IEMED 2012, http://www.iemed.org/observatori-fr/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/ammour_fr.pdf (accessed: 26.10.2015).

⁹³ The increase in EU financial assistance to the region (in the programming period 2014–2020) also confirms the EU's political support for the UfM.

⁹⁴ *UfM and Spanish Civil Society Platform for Cooperation team up to support women's empowerment in the Southern Mediterranean*, 29.10.2012, <http://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-and-spanish-civil-society-platform-for-cooperation-team-up-to-support-womens-empowerment-in-the-southern-mediterranean/> (accessed: 26.10.2015).

A proof that the UfM adapts to the new reality are the words of C. Cortese (Senior Deputy Secretary General of the Union for Mediterranean and Head of the Business and Development Division): “UfM is well aware that social stability in the region will depend to a large extent on the capacity of the economies to safeguard and create the number of jobs needed for an increasing labour force. To this effect, efforts from national governments and international co-operation have to be coordinated effectively. Co-operation and development aid should not be competitive and overlap; on the contrary, it should be a constant flow of exchange, collaboration and strengthening of synergies [...] But such a challenge needs to be addressed from a wide scope of public and private programs with the close co-operation of international and local stakeholders. It could be led by the UfM Secretariat acting as intergovernmental, private sector and civil organizations platform and financial catalyser. To this effect, the UfM’s 43 member states gave it the mandate to reinforce development in six different areas: business, civil and social affairs, energy, transport and urban development, higher education and research, water and sustainability.

[...] the UfM Secretariat has the capacity to bring together and mobilise these actors, contributing towards regional integration, socioeconomic development, knowledge transfer and sustainable development in a little integrated area within a complex regional context. There is therefore a need to put more efforts into working hand in hand with all actors, ensuring close coordination and reinforcing synergies with the EU in its institutional renewal phase. It is only that we can achieve our common purposes and shared goals”.⁹⁵

Conclusions

As the Mediterranean Sea Basin serves either as a connecting space or as a divisive area, it is therefore well-suited and especially conducive to the development of EU external policy. While it makes up only 1% of global oceanic mass, about 30% of maritime trade and some 28% of global oil trade take place up there.⁹⁶ Inevitably, its geostrategic and geoeconomic importance only strengthens its economic fragility.

In the Mediterranean space, a key ecological problem emerged that was incorporated to the security agenda as a source of tensions and potential conflicts between parties. It legitimizes current efforts for Trans-Mediterranean security, perceived through the prism of securitization of this shared area, as a main concern for states none of which can afford degradation of habitat. Therefore, the UfM is presented today as a tool for

⁹⁵ C. Cortese, “The Euro-Mediterranean region needs to connect governments, private sector and civil society”, *Quality Europe* 17.12.2014, <http://www.friendsofeurope.org/quality-europe/euro-mediterranean-region-needs-connect-governments-private-sector-civil-society/> (accessed: 26.10.2015).

⁹⁶ S. Helbert, *La “dépollution” de la Mer Méditerranée, un enjeu du droit des relations extérieures de l’Union Européenne*, in: P. Icard (ed.), *La politique méditerranéenne...*, op. cit., p. 95.

promoting economic development of the region and its stabilization in the face of international challenges, one that calls for common actions to be responsible.⁹⁷

It seems that despite the present lack of stability in the states of the southern flank (civil war in Syria, continuing unrest in Egypt), the UfM, after its adaptation to changing conditions in the region, creates adequate frameworks to deal with environmental security threats with accepted political emancipation of the south of the basin. The legitimization of this approach and the use of this mechanism constitutes a solid base for future mutual understanding, solidarity, partnership and cooperation between Europe and Mediterranean states.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ D. Cambarau, "Union pour la Méditerranée...", op. cit., pp. 18–20.

⁹⁸ A. Kerdoun, "La dimension environnementale...", op. cit., pp. 75–76.