

# Political Stability and Transportation within Euro-Mediterranean Countries: A Foreword to the Thematic Issue

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Political stability is the main issue in transportation geography to enable a liberal goods flow in cross border trade. Nowadays a new transition is being witnessed in the Mediterranean basin, starting from Tunisia and expanding through Egypt, Libya and surrounding countries. In the case of political equivocacy situations three main subjects come into prominence: energy, communication and transportation. These three subjects are vital not only for regional economies, but also for wider geographies.

Because of these conditions some risks occur both for countries' internal policies and for international stabilities in a 600 billion dollar market. Until gaining political stability and regenerating regional economies, it is inevitable for Mediterranean countries not to be affected by existing conditions.

From the transportation aspect, fluctuations in political conditions result in economical crisis. These crises cause dwindling of business volumes in the transportation sector as well as the economy sector in the short term. Decrease in freight volume negatively affects shipping industry, ports, all transportation operators, relevant business areas and their employees. Some activity subjects in the sector are observed to be irrevocably affected by the crisis.

On the other hand, as in all other crisis types, the existing crisis conditions create some new challenges for surrounding countries. Especially for the new governance in these countries, there is an important need for a new roadmap of the transportation sector to obtain integration with the global economy.

[4] At this stage, the main obstacle to cross-border trade is the harmonization and the standardization subject of the customs system to simplify the goods flow. The reciprocal harmonization of the customs work processes of the Mediterranean basin with the European region is a part of accelerating the goods flow. In the harmonization process, developing standard work procedures for all processes related with transportation system infrastructure, vehicles, freight and drivers is required. Although some countries do cover some ground in simplifying, harmonizing and standardizing work procedures, unfortunately this is still not enough in full.

A huge amount of transportation is carried out by sea transportation in the Mediterranean basin. Because of this, to regularize goods flow with minimum waiting times, improvement is needed in all processes from ports' physical land usage to information technologies. Container shipping and Ro-Ro transportation issues also stand out in front of regular sea transportation. The entire process of freight from origin to destination needs to be handled together in sea transportation. One of the main transition factors in accelerating goods movement is the transformation of container and Ro-Ro transportation to a transport chain by integrating with other transport systems. Generating of combined transportation depends on developing main relations in logistics and transportation related with technology, qualified man power, port infrastructure, etc.

This situation obliges one to have an environment that functions properly, regularly and continuously for the transportation sector, with internal and external dynamics in a wide geographic area, starting from the Mediterranean basin and spreading to Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The main aim of shippers and receivers is to have freight on time and non-damaged, while logistics service providers' aim is to have a high standard service quality. Realizing these aims will have an important role in the economic development of countries. For the logistics service providers, it is not enough to have an appropriate freight transportation system; perpetuity must also be ensured in order to solve local and international problems quickly and permanently.

The competitive structure of the sector necessitates high perfor-



mance work plans to perform long term collaborations in customer relations, instead of one-time transportation agreements. In order to achieve this, the development of business structures with a qualified labour force, quality based solution approaches, information technology based processes and innovative business analysis are all significant. [5]

Lastly, one of the main obstacles to the improvement of cross border trade and harmonisation and standardisation of subjects is that of illegal migration. Especially the migration to the Euro region is a considerable issue facing the liberalising of transportation and trade in the region. To prevent the illegal migration from the Mediterranean basin to the developed countries, instead of one side studies, mutual and multi dimensional efforts should be undertaken.