

## Political developments in Libya and prospects of stability

### SUMMARY

Six years after the ousting and death of Libya's dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 the country is facing political instability, economic problems and deteriorating security. The violence between rival factions resulted in tens of thousands of casualties, the collapse of the oil industry, favoured the rise of ISIL/Da'esh and contributed to the country's increasing role as a transit country for migrants hoping to reach Europe. Although the December 2015 UN-brokered agreement resulted in the creation of an internationally recognised Government of National Accord, the latter is still struggling for legitimacy. A political solution to address the instability in Libya is crucial, both for Libya and for its neighbours.

The EU remains committed to an inclusive political settlement under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), and to supporting the Presidency Council (PC) and the Government of National Accord (GNA), headed by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj, and backed by the United Nations. It welcomes their efforts to restore unified governance, prosperity and security to Libya. The EU works closely with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to facilitate the implementation of the LPA and to support mediation efforts in the interest of all Libyans. The EU also supports the mediation activities of neighbours and regional partners including by coordinating efforts with the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) in the framework of the Libya Quartet, in order to advance the political process and assist Libya in its democratic transition.



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## The evolving political landscape

[Three main phases](#) can be identified in post-Gaddafi Libya and the third is still evolving:<sup>1</sup>

1. The immediate post Gaddafi phase, which started in 20 October 2011 and lasted until July 2012. This phase focused on identifying interim leaders and recovery from the 2011 conflict;
2. The much-disputed transitional period between July 2012 and May 2014, which focused on legitimising and testing the viability of interim institutions; and
3. A period of confrontation since May 2014, which has been characterised by tensions and violence among different political militias, and in turn multifaceted conflict between these militias and violent Islamist extreme groups.

The momentum which led towards the **first phase** started when protests in Libya [began on 15 February 2011](#) in Benghazi following the arrest of human rights lawyer [Fathi Terbil](#), who represented the relatives of [more than 1 000 prisoners allegedly massacred by security forces](#) in 1996. A [Day of Rage](#) was declared on 17 February 2011 by the [National Conference for the Libyan Opposition](#). The [protests](#) were against Gaddafi's 42 years of [authoritarian and system-less](#) rule, and called for democracy, human rights and freedoms. Peaceful demonstrations turned into confrontations with the military, in which [live ammunition](#) was fired at protesters. After the withdrawal of security forces from Benghazi, anti-Gaddafi forces established the [National Transitional Council](#) (NTC) on 27 February 2011, which became Libya's interim legislative authority. On the whole, the decision to establish a national council appeared to be received very well internationally. Just five days after the council's statement that they were the sole representative of Libya, France [confirmed](#) that it was recognising the NTC as the only legitimate government. Others were slightly slower to follow suit, although by September the majority had agreed on the NTC's power. This was emphasised by the United Nations' decision to award the country's seat to the NTC on 20 September.

Following Gaddafi's [threat to massacre the people of Benghazi](#), on 17 March 2011 the [United Nations Security Council](#) invoked the '[responsibility to protect](#)' (R2P) principle and adopted [resolution 1973](#), which aimed to protect civilians. NATO responded to the United Nations (UN) call to protect the Libyan people, and a coalition of NATO allies and partners began [enforcing](#) an arms embargo, maintaining a no-fly zone and protecting civilians from attack under [Operation Unified Protector](#) (OUP). On 19 March 2011, Western (mainly French) planes participating in [Operation Odyssey Dawn](#) saved Benghazi from potential annihilation. In August 2011, the NTC adopted a [Transitional Constitutional Declaration](#) (TCD) as a roadmap for democracy. The Gaddafi regime [came to an end](#) when members of the rebellious [Zintan militia](#) captured and killed Muammar Gaddafi on 20 October 2011. The [insurrectionists](#) grouped together as the [National Liberation Army](#) (NLA), and were accompanied by individual militias linked to various cities or [tribal communities](#).

### The ensuing elections and the descent into civil war

The **second phase** commenced when [elections](#), supported by the [United Nations Support Mission in Libya](#) (UNSMIL), were held for legislative bodies and a [constitutional drafting assembly](#) in [2012 and 2014](#). Though the elections were soundly administered, they failed to achieve the [desired inclusiveness](#). The [General National Congress](#) (GNC), elected on 8 August 2012, was tasked with writing a new constitution within 18 months of the start of its mandate. However, the process of political and institutional reform initiated by the transitional authorities [failed](#) to establish and uphold the rule of law or to address human rights violations. [A rift emerged](#) in the GNC that grew into a civil conflict, owing to the

ambiguous relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government. The GNC, using a [controversial legal basis](#), attempted to exclude officers who had participated in Gaddafi's counter-revolutionary war effort from holding public office, while improving the prospects for integration of [thuwwar](#) (rebels). Also, the terms 'army' and '[militia](#)' mean different things to different Libyans and this is [one of the consequences](#) of the political power struggle that has continued.

Since 2014, Libya has been in the **third phase**. The conflict deepened when a military offensive, [Operation Libya Karama](#) (Dignity), was launched by former Gaddafi loyalist [General Khalifa Haftar](#) in May 2014, against [militias](#) in Benghazi and Tripoli that were aligned with Islamist parties. It called for the dissolution of the GNC, with the aim of cleansing Libya of 'terrorism and extremism'. It was against this backdrop that [elections for a House of Representatives](#) (HoR) took place on 25 June 2014. Again, liberals and former regime supporters [gained a majority](#) of seats. A significant number of them moved to set up the HoR in Tobruk, rather than in Tripoli or Benghazi as planned in the NTC's transitional roadmap, while the GNC parliamentarians remaining in Tripoli declared the HoR illegitimate. Militias supporting GNC parliamentarians then launched a counter-offensive, [Libya Dawn](#), against Operation Libya Dignity. Libya became fragmented, with two governments and two parliaments: one, the HoR in Tobruk, internationally recognised, but with limited control over its ministries; the other a self-appointed, [Islamist-backed government in Tripoli](#), controlling several key institutions. The Tobruk HoR was declared [invalid](#) by the Tripoli-based Supreme Court on 6 November 2014, leaving Libya with no parliament or government able to claim national legitimacy.

### The ensuing power vacuum

After the 2011 revolution in Libya that toppled Gaddafi and destroyed many state institutions, tribes and armed groups stepped in to fill the vacuum. The trend increased after the collapse of central state security in 2014. Tribes played [a renewed role](#) as guarantors of social stability and providers of security and justice services in the country during that period, and continue to do so today.

### Tribalism and its meaning for Libyans

As Mattia Toaldo and Mary Fitzgerald [explain](#), in summer 2014, after political power was split between two rival governments in Tripoli and in Tobruk, 'several types of actors scramble for power in Libya: armed groups; 'city-states', particularly in western and southern Libya; and tribes, which are particularly relevant in central and eastern Libya. Governance in Libya has long been influenced by tribal leaders alongside central authority.' This trend increased after the collapse of central state security in 2014.

In Libya, there are actually very few truly national actors. The [vast majority are local players](#) based in different geographical communities: beyond the three main regions (Cyrenaica, Tripolitana, Fezzan), local communities have been the [fundamental actors](#) since 2011. The most prominent 'pro-revolution' ones have had some national influence; they include Misrata, Zintan and Al Zawiyah in the north-west, and Benghazi in the north-east. Tripoli has comprised a mix of 'pro-' and 'anti-revolution' communities. Bani Walid and Sirte in the north-west are major communities which have been deemed 'anti-revolution'. Tribal groupings have remained important in Libyan political and social life, and have played out alternatively as conflict drivers and as resources for conflict management. Ethnicity has at times been a part of conflict dynamics. Major ethnic groups include Arabs, Amazigh, Tuareg and Tubu. Further actors have included urban notable persons; networks based on workplace or neighbourhood; and civil society as a whole.

### The Islamic State group in Libya

Amid the chaos in Libya, ISIL/Da'esh (or, as it is known by Libyans, Tandhim ad-Dawla [Organisation of the State]) and al-Qaida-affiliated groups have gained ground. ISIL/Da'esh [made use of the vacuum](#) to gain a foothold in November 2014, forming a Libyan branch with a number of Libyan locals and militias joining. Since taking [control of Sirte](#) (Gaddafi's hometown), ISIL/Da'esh has imposed horrific punishments on anyone daring to oppose it, and has forced [thousands to flee](#) their homes, generating nearly half a million internally displaced Libyans (7.9 % of the population) and more than a million refugees. The expansion of ISIL/Da'esh in Libya constitutes a major threat to the future of the transition and is of increasing concern to all neighbours, including Europe. Libya has also become [a major transit country](#) for many migrant journeys, with human traffickers and smugglers exploiting the [country's power vacuum](#). ISIL/Da'esh now controls the central Mediterranean coast of Libya around the city of Sirte, and has carried out attacks in all major Libyan cities, including the capital Tripoli. ISIL/Da'esh also has a presence in other parts of Libya, such as Derna, Benghazi and Sabratha, although it has suffered significant setbacks in all three cities since the beginning of 2016.

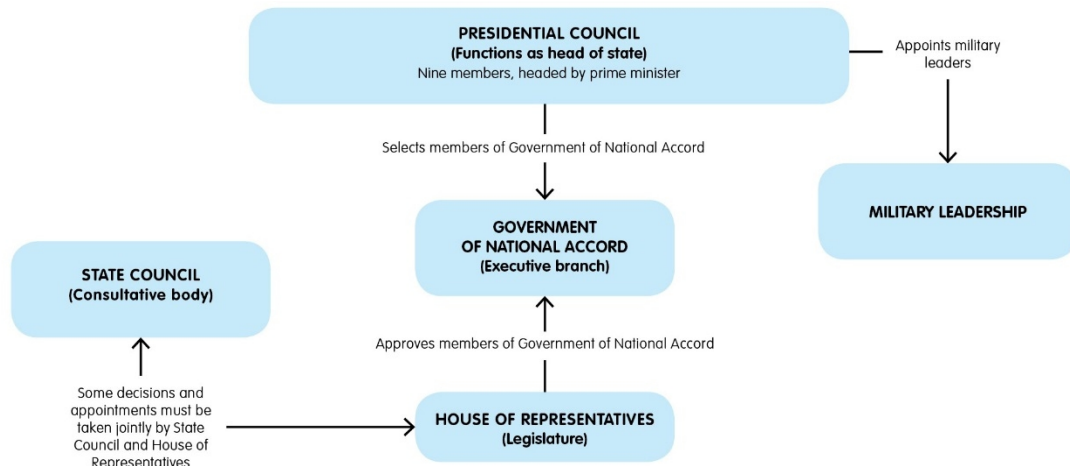
### The current state of affairs in Libya

Libya's political situation evolved on 17 December 2015, when representatives of Libya's duelling parliaments [signed](#) a UN-brokered agreement – the [Libyan Political Agreement](#) (LPA) – based on four principles: ensuring the democratic rights of the Libyan people; a consensual government based on the principle of the separation of powers, oversight and balance; empowering state institutions to address the serious challenges ahead; and, respect for the Libyan judiciary and its independence. On 15 February 2016, [Libya's Presidential Council](#) (LPC) nominated a transitional unity government – the UN-backed Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) – with [Fayez Al-Sarraj](#) as Prime Minister. The GNA finally [moved to Tripoli](#) on 30 March 2016. The most serious political hurdle, however, remains endorsement by the HoR as a whole, through a [vote of confidence](#). The political settlement that led to the GNA was reached under considerable pressure from the UN and the EU, and not all constituents of the two broad coalitions supported the negotiations. To ensure national unity, the GNA needs also to engage the tribes and key militias. Libya's economic situation also [faces serious threats](#), as the Eastern Libyan government operates a different currency, and [oil production](#) has declined.

### Where does Libya stand today?

There are currently **three centres of power** in Libya, as mapped out by Mattia Toaldo. In his recent paper, '[A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players](#)', maps out the situation in Libya in the following scheme.

The **first centre of power** is the [Presidential Council \(PC\)](#), located in the Abu Sittah navy base, in Tripoli, since 30 March 2016. The PC is headed by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj – a former member of the Tobruk Parliament. This was born out of the signing of the UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) in December 2015. According to this agreement (see Figure 1), the PC presides over the Government of National Accord (GNA), which is currently based in Tripoli. The GNA [needs to be endorsed](#) by the House of Representatives (HoR) which was previously based in Tobruk but could move elsewhere to guarantee the safety of its members some of whom have repeatedly reported being stopped from voting and threatened by members hostile to the GNA. For this reason, the HoR has been prevented from voting on the government, although on two occasions a majority of its members have expressed their support for it in a written statement.

**Figure 1 – Libya's institutions under the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA)**

Source: Toaldo, M., [A quick guide to Libya's main players](#), European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017.

The **second centre of power** is the [rival Government of National Salvation](#) headed by former Prime Minister [Khalifa Ghwell](#) based on the authority of the General National Congress (GNC), which was originally elected in 2012. It is also based in Tripoli, although it no longer controls any relevant institutions. The GNC which is also known as the 'Tripoli Parliament' is now part of the State Council, a consultative body created under the LPA which convenes in Tripoli.

The **third centre of power** is made up of the [authorities based in Tobruk and al-Bayda](#), which also have to concede power to the GNA. The House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk is the legitimate legislative authority under the LPA, while the government of [Abdullah al-Thinni](#) operates from the eastern Libyan city of al-Bayda, and should eventually concede power to the GNA once this is voted into office by Parliament. The Tobruk and al-Bayda authorities [are under the control](#) of Egyptian-aligned, self-described anti-Islamist general [Khalifa Haftar](#), who leads the Libyan National Army (LNA). There is an ongoing movement among a large number of members of the HoR to change the location of the House to a more neutral place in Libya.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Sarraj's power-base required [two very important steps](#) to consolidate its power: 1) getting the pledge of loyalty by the two major Tripoli-based economic institutions (the Central Bank and the National Oil Corporation) and; (2) the statements of support by several municipalities in the west and south of the country. Two ministers from Al - Sarraj's government particularly stand out: Firstly, the Minister of the Interior [Al-Aref al-Khuja](#) has a police background and is in close contact with Tripoli's militias. Secondly, the Minister of Defence [Mahdi al-Barghathi](#), who is an army colonel from the Libyan National Army of Haftar, but politically distant enough from him to be accepted by other groups – and, in fact, has been rejected by Haftar himself.

Last but not least, the role played by the [Temporary Security Committee](#) (the TSC) which has conducted the security negotiations that allowed the PC to move peacefully to Tripoli on 30 March 2016 has been of [high significance](#). In the longer-term, according to the LPA, the TSC should be replaced by a proper National Security Council.

## The coup attempt of 14 October 2016

Elements of the former General National Council (GNC) and its Presidential Guard, headed by Ghwell, [took over the Rixos hotel in central Tripoli](#) on 14 October 2016. The hotel is the former seat of the transitional legislature, the GNC, and subsequently the seat

of the State Council, the upper house of parliament which succeeded the GNC under the Libyan Political Accord of December 2015. Ghwell's group forced out the State Council loyal to the GNA, and in a press conference declared they were back in power. They ordered government ministries to stop dealing with the GNA and its leadership, the Presidency Council, which Ghwell accused of undermining Libyan unity. The coup attempt [did not result in any further seizure of power](#), however. Militia forces policing central Tripoli remained loyal to the GNA, and although the news prompted a brief increase in new checkpoints and militia visibility on the streets, it did not trigger wider confrontations on a significant scale. Most of the clashes that did occur appear to have been continuations of older feuds rather than indicating a new drawing of 'battle lines' between Ghwell supporters and opponents.

The coup attempt called attention, however, to the numbers of anti-GNA elements still present in Tripoli, including militia formations which backed Ghwell. These included the Presidential Guard (although another group with the same name remained loyal to the GNA) and the Libya Revolutionary Operations Room, which had supported the Ghwell government and Operation Libya Dawn in 2014, but which had remained quiet in recent months. The incident [showed fissures](#) among Libyan political and security forces. Statements from two similarly composed but opposing militia blocs on 18 October 2016 highlighted the divided and fragmented nature of militia loyalties. The coup attempt is best seen as yet another move, albeit a particularly crude and direct one, in an ongoing complex, nationwide set of negotiations and testing of positions among Libyan factions over their political futures. It demonstrates the extent to which the GNA, and perhaps also the UN as its principal backer, is at risk of becoming a bystander in these conversations.

[Observers](#) argue that there seems to be a [disconnect](#) between the UN's goals and the kind of issues that concern Libyans: in a statement issued on 19 October 2016, the UN envoy to Libya, [Martin Kobler](#), said 'there are three main problems in Libya to be addressed as a matter of urgency: fight against terrorism, irregular migration and organised crime'. According to the [HoR speaker](#), these problems however, seem to [reflect](#) the Western goals, not the concerns of ordinary Libyans. For the majority of Libyans, the [major problems](#) are the proliferation of militias rather than terrorism itself, the associated impunity that feeds crime and corruption, and the lack of public services.

The UN process currently [risks stalling](#) because the UN Envoy, Martin Kobler, has reached the end of his term and so far there is no replacement in the pipeline. The USA rejected the appointment of former Palestinian Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad. The danger is that could cause [the ongoing mediations](#) to come to a standstill and a genuine conflict [could therefore erupt](#).

## Regional actors

In addition to national actors, militias and tribes within Libya, the power balance is tipped further by the influence of other actors in the neighbouring region.<sup>3</sup>

**Egypt.** The Arab state which plays [the most influential role](#) in Libya is Egypt. The relationship between Tobruk and Egypt is [not just defined](#) by significant arms deliveries but also by a shared political project: eradicating political Islam and enhancing the autonomy of eastern Libya.

**Algeria and Tunisia.** The two Maghreb countries, while they have a high level of interest in what happens in Libya, have [not built a network of proxies](#) in the country like other

Arab or regional powers. Both countries have been vocal supporters of reconciliation and a political solution while closely coordinating with each other to contain the spill-over from ISIL/Da'esh's presence in Libya.

**United Arab Emirates (UAE).** The UAE, though having similar goals to Egypt, [appears](#) to be more supportive of UN negotiations. Emirati weapons seem to be [delivered](#) to both Haftar and the militias of the city state of Zintan, according to a report from a UN panel of experts.

**Turkey and Qatar.** [Turkey and Qatar](#) have less influence on the Government of National Salvation than Egypt and the UAE have on the Tobruk side. Turkish companies have, according to the UN panel of experts, [delivered weapons](#) to one side (the former Libya Dawn coalition) and Qatar [has links](#) with one Libyan politician and former jihadist – [Abdelhakim Belhadj](#).

**Russia.** Russia is largely pursuing [national security interests](#) in the Middle East. A new stable regional system of international relations with the Middle East, including Libya, being a major aim. To this end, Russia has stepped up efforts to deal with Libya to settle the country's conflict. It may be argued that by involving itself actively in Libya's affairs, Russia could be seeking in the long term to improve, on the one hand, relations between Moscow and Brussels through [Russia's Mediterranean policy](#), and the country's ties with EU Member States whereby the refugee-affected countries are seeking Russia's active involvement in Libya's affairs; and, on the other hand, a friendly or loyal regime in Libya could emerge as part of the Russia-dominated axis of Damascus, Cairo and Tripoli.

### The European Union's response

In the absence of an Association Agreement with the EU, [Libya](#) remains outside most [European Neighbourhood Policy](#) initiatives. Libya is however eligible for funding under the new [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#) (ENI) and its regional and thematic assistance programmes. In February 2011, the EU took [a number of steps](#) and disbursed €80.5 million for humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, treat the injured, assist refugees, prevent human rights abuses, and support demining. The [EU's total programme in Libya](#) now stands at €130 million (2014-2020) and focuses on institution-building, public administration, security, democratic transition, civil society, health, vocational training and education. The EU has actively supported the UN-led dialogue. When the GNA arrived in Tripoli, the EU had an immediate [€100 million financial package](#) to distribute, based on priorities to be decided by the GNA. The EU and its Member States [support](#) the GNA as the sole legitimate government of Libya, and consider [UN Resolution 2259](#), adopted on 23 December 2015, to remain the basis for political progress in Libya.

### Stabilisation of Libya and its neighbouring region as a priority

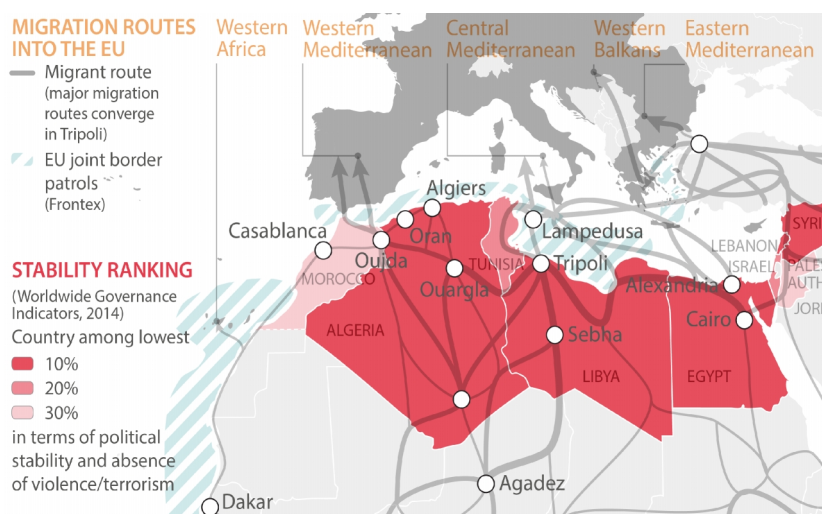
The destabilisation in Libya is of concern, as the power vacuum has created lawlessness that could also spill over into the neighbouring regions and Europe (see figure 2). The [stability of the EU's southern neighbourhood](#) needs also to be addressed by Europe and its partners in a wider context.

The Middle Eastern and North African countries which enjoy cooperation within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) – namely [Algeria](#), [Egypt](#), [Israel](#), [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Libya](#), [Morocco](#), the [Palestinian Authority](#), Syria (until May 2011) and [Tunisia](#) – face numerous challenges. They are experiencing [slow economic growth](#), owing to both the global slowdown and local factors. Oil exporters (Algeria and Libya) have

suffered significant losses with lower oil prices, while the profit for oil importers did not offset the economic downturn caused by security concerns and instability (for example, tourism in Egypt and Tunisia suffered a 40 % decrease in bookings in 2015). [Climate change](#) and [water scarcity](#) are set to aggravate economic difficulties, in particular in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon.

Politically, [Egypt](#) enjoys relative stability but [violence against civil society](#) organisations might lead to further trouble; [Tunisia](#) is struggling to achieve its democratic transition. [Unresolved Western Saharan and Palestinian](#) issues feed international tensions and frustration among populations. Against this backdrop, non-state armed groups – some of them supposedly [backed by ISIL/Da'esh](#) (Islamic State) – have settled in almost all the southern neighbourhood countries.

**Figure 2 – Migration routes and political stability in the EU's southern neighbourhood**



Sources: [Migration and the EU: A long-term perspective](#), EPRS, May 2016 (with data from [govindicators.org](#), 2014) and [European Neighbourhood Policy: Southern Neighbourhood – Migration Issues](#), EPRS, December 2015 (with data from [Frontex](#), 2015).

### EU initiatives to build resilience in the southern neighbourhood

Reacting to this changing context, considered to be [threatening its own security](#), the European Union has used a variety of tools to foster resilience – that is 'the [capacity](#) ... to withstand, to adapt, and to recover quickly from stresses and shocks' – in its southern neighbourhood, including Libya.

#### On the diplomatic front

The EU, together with some of its Member States, has been engaged in most international efforts to hold [high-level dialogues](#) with [Syria](#), [Libya](#), [Israel and Palestine](#). As part of diplomatic efforts towards Libya, the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), jointly forming the '**Quartet**', [held a first meeting](#) and at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo on 18 March 2017, then [a second meeting](#) in Brussels on 23 May 2017 to discuss the situation in Libya and further coordinate their efforts in order to advance the political process and assist Libya in its democratic transition. In their initial [joint statement](#), the Quartet reiterated their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya and its institutions under the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) signed in Skhirat. They underscored the urgent need for a Libyan-led peaceful resolution of the situation and reiterated their rejection of the threat or use of armed force by the Libyan parties as well as any foreign military intervention in Libya.

#### Promoting democracy and the rule of law

[Enforcement of the rule of law](#) complements peace and governance agreements. Since the Arab Spring uprisings, the EU has increased its spending on democracy support, which now represents about 18 % of the total ENP (South and East) budget. The EU has also

strengthened its [engagement with civil society organisations](#) and developed a [joint programme](#) with the Council of Europe to support constitutional reform in the southern neighbourhood, and promote regional cooperation on human rights and the rule of law.

### **Social and economic measures**

A wide range of European projects in the southern neighbourhood aim at mitigating the effects of [climate change](#) and boosting the [economy](#), with a focus on better inclusion of the most fragile population groups: [young people](#) and [women](#). The new [Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) is also designed to support such projects. Undoubtedly, the intention is partly to [address the causes](#) of uncontrolled [migration flows](#), so that harder measures, such as deployment of the [EU naval force](#) to tackle migrant smugglers in the Mediterranean, can remain limited in scope.

### **Tackling migration flows**

Libya has also become [a major crossing point](#) for many journeys, with people traffickers exploiting the country's power vacuum and increasing lawlessness. To tackle migration flows and combating human trafficking, EUNAVFOR MED / Operation Sophia is but [one element of a broader EU comprehensive response](#) to the migration issue, which seeks to address not only its physical component, but also its root causes as well including conflict, poverty, climate change and persecution.<sup>4</sup> On 8 September 2016, the [EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya](#) (EUBAM), set up to tackle organised crime and human smuggling, extended its mission. EUBAM Libya now supports the Libyan authorities in developing border management and security at the country's land, sea and air borders. As a civilian crisis management mission with a capacity-building mandate, EUBAM assists Libyan authorities at strategic and operational level. The work is carried out through advising, training and mentoring Libyan counterparts in strengthening the border services in accordance with international standards and best practices, and by advising the Libyan authorities on the development of a national integrated border management (IBM) strategy. On 6 October 2016, [the European Border and Coast Guard Agency](#) was launched, building on the basis of Frontex. The new agency will have a stronger role in supporting, monitoring and, when necessary, reinforcing national border guards, focusing primarily on early detection and prevention of weaknesses in the management of the EU external borders. In addition, the agency will have a mandate to assist neighbouring non-EU countries in handling high migratory pressure. The EU has been helping Libya [in capacity-building](#) by providing training to the Libyan coastguard in an effort to stem the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean, while the UN has been trying to develop a presidential guard. The EU [is also pressing ahead](#) to provide a Libyan land border authority, with vehicles, surveillance, intelligence and other technologies.

#### **European Parliament's position**

To complement this approach, on [13 April 2016](#) the European Parliament adopted a resolution about the future EU global security strategy, stressing the need for greater coherence between EU policies, in particular towards the southern neighbourhood. This is very much echoed in the Commission's April 2016 [proposal on resilience](#). In its [resolution of 12 April 2016](#) on the situation in the Mediterranean and the EU approach to [migration](#), Parliament stressed the need for cooperation with third countries in tackling the root causes of migration to Europe: poverty, natural disasters, climate change, war, political repression and violence of all sorts.

In its [resolution of 4 February 2016](#), Parliament reiterated the EU position and called for international support for Libyans in their efforts to implement the LPA and strengthen Libya's transition. Members condemned the destabilising terrorist attacks by ISIL/Da'esh against the people of Libya and called on the EU to use its diplomacy and foreign policy tools to assist

Libya's transition process. Parliament also expressed grave concern at the fate of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees in Libya. In a [resolution of 9 July 2015](#), Parliament pointed out that the ENP had not been effective in enabling the EU to adapt quickly to the deteriorating environment in its neighbourhood. Among other outreach initiatives, it suggested reinforcing inter-parliamentary dialogue and improving the way social media are used to keep in touch with all sections of society.

## Outlook

[Libya's statehood](#) remains at risk, and the power struggle between public figures, the increase in violence and the lack of control of migratory flows to and from the country create favourable conditions for [criminal networks](#) engaged in irregular migration and trafficking of human beings to Europe. Poverty in the neighbourhood is on the rise, particularly affecting [vulnerable groups in society](#). The destabilisation in Libya is of concern, as the power vacuum has created lawlessness that could also spill over into the neighbouring regions and Europe. The GNA, the only internationally recognised authority in Libya, may facilitate action against ISIL/Da'esh and people smugglers, since there would be a single and, it is hoped, more effective political authority, which would welcome some form of international assistance.

On 17 February 2017, Libyan factions [tentatively agreed](#) on an Egyptian-brokered peace roadmap which includes a joint committee to be formed between the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State to finalise amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), and new parliamentary and presidential elections to be held by February 2018.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For a full timeline of events see: [Libya profile – Timeline](#), BBC.

<sup>2</sup> For the main actors influencing these three power centres, read [A quick guide to Libya's main players](#), M. Toaldo, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> See [A quick guide to Libya's main players](#), op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> On operation EUNAVFOR Med Sophia and the cooperation with Libya: [EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia: mandate extended by one year, two new tasks added; Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2240 \(2015\), S/2016/766](#), 7 September 2016; [Fighting Transnational Crimes at Sea under UNSC's Mandate: Piracy, Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling](#), M. Bo, EJIL, 30 October 2015; [UN Security Council Resolution 2240: Authorizing Member States to Intercept Vessels off Libyan Coast Suspected of Migrant Smuggling](#), G. Proutière-Maulion, Université de Nantes, 19 November 2015; N. Frenzen, [EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA Six Monthly Report, 18 February 2016; De nouvelles tâches pour EUNAVFOR Med Sophia. Non sans difficulté](#), 6 October 2016.

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