

EUROAFRICA: THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF AN IDEA

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Eurafrica is a geopolitical narrative developed in the interwar period by three thinkers of international politics, namely: *Richard Coudenhove Kalergi* - an Austrian diplomat, spokesperson for the pan-European movement and author of the seminal “PanEurope” published 1923, Eugène Guernier, a French political scientist, known of his *L'Afrique champ d'expansion de l'Europe*, published in 1932, and last but not least, Paolo d'Agostino Orsini di Camerota, an Italian Africanist and geographer, an author of the monograph under the title: *Eurafrica. L'Europa per l'Africa, l'Africa per l'Europa*, published in 1934.

Euroafrica was conceptualized by these thinkers in terms of a geopolitical project that was meant to be founded on the idea of complementarity or a sort of interdependence between Europe and Africa. Generally, Eugène Guernier’s and d’Agostino Orsini di Camerota’s perspective was framed in the context of colonial policy, a kind of an ideology justifying the interests of the French colonial power and the imperial policy of fascism (Gozzi 2021). Guernier's concept was based on the vision of Africa as a new living space, a land rich in mineral resources which Europe needed for its geo-economic and geopolitical expansion.

In the case of d'Agostino Orsini di Camerota, the idea of Eurafrika came into being in the 1930s. It coined as an economic and demographic concept to justify the policy of demographic colonialism in Africa. Later on, in the early 1940s, it evolved towards a political project.

Assuming that neither Europe nor Africa were economically self-sufficient, but rather closely interdependent, the Italian researcher argued that Eurafrika could be a third autarkic space, after America and Asia. It should be supervised by an axis of European states led by Italy, which, due to its colonial gains in Ethiopia in the 1930s, as well as historical traditions related

to the presence of ancient Rome in North Africa, would play a decisive role. According to this concept, the Mediterranean Sea was not a border, but an element connecting the two continents.

After the Second World War, the original project of Eurafrica understood as “Africa for Europeans” (d'Agostino Orsini di Camerota 1934) underwent a major shift in its character and was set up in a new context related to the dynamics of the Cold War and post-colonialism. The Euro-African alliance was to become an important factor of an equilibrium within international system, in particular as it was meant to be a response to the policy of the USSR and the United States in the Mediterranean basin, and a counterbalance to the Eurasia project. Both in the concept of Guernier and D'Agostino Orsini di Camerota, Europe linked with Africa was expected to become a balancing force between two superpowers, as well as an alternative to the emerging self-determination movements in North Africa.

In the 1950s, along with the ongoing European integration processes, the Eurafrica project became ever more relevant issue in light of the transformation of relationship between European colonies in Africa and the nascent European Community. In particular, the project was intended to guarantee France's privileged position in the African continent and allow it to maintain its status as a great power in the international arena. The need to maintain special relations between Europe and Africa found its expression in the Treaties of Rome. In articles 182 - 188 (former articles 131 - 136) IV part entitled Association of Overseas Countries and Territories of the Treaties establishing the European Community, a reference was made to the promotion of the economic, social and cultural development of the Overseas Countries and Territories and the establishment of close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole. This concept was strongly supported by Robert Schuman himself, who in an article entitled *Unité européenne et Eurafrrique*, in 1957, emphasised that the establishment of Eurafrica was “a revolutionary political act built on economic foundations”. The collapse of the colonial system in the 1950s and 1960s and the ongoing integration processes led to a re-evaluation of the European Community's Mediterranean policy. Gradually, the concept of Eurafrica evolved from a post-colonial perspective to a Euro-African policy. According to this new perspective, Europe should be integrated not only internally, but also it should strive for close integration with Africa, which was expected to advance Europe as the third superpower alongside the USA and the USSR.

The first attempts to approach the Mediterranean region in terms of as a single geopolitical and geo-economic region were made in 1972, when the Global Mediterranean Policy was launched during the Paris Summit in October 1972. On July 31, 1974, at a meeting of the Arab League representation with the President of the European Commission and the Council, the Euro-Arab Dialogue had been called into being.

However, the Cold War rivalry projected onto the Mediterranean area blocked the mechanisms of interregional cooperation significantly. As correctly observed by Guido de Marco, Malta's Foreign Minister, "the Mediterranean region emerged after the Cold War as an area totally unprepared to deal with regional conflicts, neither in terms of generally accepted practice nor in an institutional sense."

Hence, it became necessary to develop new mechanisms of cooperation between the Mediterranean countries of the European Community (France, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and the Arab Maghreb Union's countries (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia). One of the first initiatives in this direction was the establishment of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean Basin and the establishment of the 5+5 Group in September 1990.

A real breakthrough in Euro-Mediterranean relations was the adoption of the Barcelona Declaration on 28 November 1995. It marked the new chapter in cooperation between the European Union and non-Mediterranean countries within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (also known as the Barcelona Process). The Barcelona Declaration assumed three levels of cooperation: 1) political dialogue and security; 2) economic and financial cooperation; 3) cultural dialogue as well as social and humanitarian assistance.

Another attempt to institutionalize cooperation in the Mediterranean was the Union for the Mediterranean, presented by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Toulon on February 7, 2007. Sarkozy's *idée fixe* was that the Union was to be a complementary structure to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, whose role was basically to support the existing forms of political and economic cooperation between the rich countries of the North and the poor South (Wojaczek 2013). Sarkozy firmly advocated strengthening cooperation between the European Union and the Arab countries of the Mediterranean. He intended to make France and Algeria, a former French colony, the main axis of the region. Initially, Sarkozy's idea

met with skepticism from Germany, as well as a complete lack of approval from the Libyan president, Col. Muammar al-Gaddafi. In its ultimate form, the new initiative was designed not only for the Mediterranean countries, but also for all participants from the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It was further extended into Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Mauritania, Monaco, and Libya. The Union for the Mediterranean was formally established in Paris on July 13, 2008, during the bilateral summit of the European Council and North Africa and the Middle East leaders. Its main objectives included: 1) enhancing the peace process negotiations in the Middle East, 2) boosting cultural and educational exchange between interested parties of the region; 3) establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area; 4) setting up legal regulations regarding immigration policy in the Mediterranean area.

Unlike the Barcelona Process, the Mediterranean Union was expected to build bridges linking North Africa and the African Union with the European Union. It was designed to implement projects such as: 1) preventing further contamination of the Mediterranean Sea; 2) improving infrastructure of the transport connection system; 3) advancing solar energy system; 4) improving natural and manmade disaster prevention system; 5) developing joint higher education and research programs.

Questions for students:

- 1) Discuss the evolution of the idea of Eurafrika as envisaged in Guernier's and D'Agostino Orsini di Camerota's concepts in the 1930s as well as in the post-colonial perspective.
- 2) How was the concept of Euro-African cooperation accommodated in the Treaties of Rome?
- 3) What were the goals of the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean?

Primary References:

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Supplementary references list:

- Peo, H. and Stefan, J. (2014), *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism*, London.
- Gilbert M. K. (2012), “Africa and Europe: Ending a Dialogue of the Deaf?” in A. Adebajo and K. Whiteman (eds.), *The EU and Africa: From Eurafrique to Afro-Europa*, London.
- Akinyetun T.S.(2016), *Africa in International System: From Eurafrique to Afro-Europa*, „International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science”, vol.1.

Useful links:

- *Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)* < https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/union-mediterranean-ufm_en>
- *European Neighbourhood Policy* < https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy_en>
- *Middle East and North Africa (MENA)* < https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/middle-east-and-north-africa-mena_en>

Treaties and other international agreements:

- Treaty of Rome PART FOUR ASSOCIATION OF THE OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, <https://netaffair.org/documents/1957-rome-treaty.pdf>, pp46-47.
- Barcelona declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference - 27-28/11/95 <https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/euromed/docs/bd_en.pdf>
- Union for the Mediterranean, <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:161E:0126:0136:EN:PDF>>

Audio-video materials available online:

- *Eurafrica: The Colonial Origins of the European Union*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQ_IJOWQJx4