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MEDITERRANEAN SUB-GROUP**

EWG 11 bis

**The Western Sahara Issue :
A Security Stake for the European Union**

**EUROPEAN SECURITY IN NEED
OF A SETTLED AND DEVELOPED WESTERN SAHARA**

by

Major General (ret.) Alain Faupin
Ms Béatrice Guillaumin

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OUTLINE

PROSPECT OF THE STUDY

The prospect of this study, conducted by the GTE 11bis French members is to show that a settlement of the Polisario-Moroccan issue is indispensable to restore conditions for a better exchange between the European Union and the Maghreb in the fields of security and development.

Despite the political sensibility of the issue, avenues must be found to improve the current situation which will remain in a stalemate insofar as no major efforts from friendly states are made to help solve it.

This study includes an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion including recommendations.

The introduction briefly addresses the overall and current security, social, political and cultural aspects of the region after the Arab-Muslim revolutions, with a zoom effect on the Sahel. It includes our conviction that the peaceful and rapid settlement of the Sahrawi case would have an important impact on European Security.

The first chapter deals mainly with the basic problem of international law posed by the succession of the former Spanish Sahara and its juridical aspects today.

The second chapter emphasizes the current situation of the territory in the economic and developmental areas within its geostrategic environment, with a twin focus on the interaction of the different parties concerned (Africa - EU- US - UN), and on the security challenges for Morocco, Maghreb as a whole, Sahel, Western Africa, the Western and Central Mediterranean and for the EU. Also included is an overview of the diplomatic responses.

The third chapter deals with the diverse factors of evolution, especially in the fields of development and international cooperation, of human rights, of self-government, and neighbourhood issues. It sheds light on what the direct and indirect effects of progress would mean for the E.U. whose role in the Mediterranean basin is desirable, expected, possible and irreplaceable. It shows the

essential role the E.U. could play in bringing about peace and reconciliation between the parties concerned.

The conclusion and recommendations touch on topics such as a the need for a strong diplomatic involvement of the E.U., for long term investments leading to the creation of local jobs and of new capacities, for high level professional education and training (in every field), for transfer of technologies, for technical security, air and maritime cooperation. This should lead to the adoption of juridical constraints especially in the monitoring of human rights, but also to reshuffled cultural and commercial exchanges.

All in all, this study stresses the need for strong political and diplomatic action by the E.U., relayed by a good communication policy, hand in hand with the United Nations and the international institutions of the African continent. It is the *sine qua non* prerequisite to ensure a long term, institutional, serene, safe, efficient and smooth relationship between our two continents in these times of deep geopolitical and societal changes.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It is frequently stated that « Security in Africa is a cornerstone of European security ». What is true for sub Saharan Africa applies as well to the Sahel region and to the Maghreb which are closer to the European continent and share with it the Mediterranean and the East Atlantic spaces.

1. PAVING THE WAY TO A UNIFIED MAGHREB

One can easily imagine the impact of the settlement of the Western Sahara issue on the security of the whole Maghreb, of Sahel and even of West Africa. This would allow the opening of the borders between the two main regional powers, Algeria and Morocco and pave the way to a united Maghreb.

That would also help immensely in controlling trafficking of all sorts between the failed countries, the Mediterranean and beyond. Such a settlement would powerfully contribute to the economical, social and cultural development of the whole region, creating jobs and keeping the local population from migrating overseas. It would also foster and facilitate cooperative action against terrorism.

Furthermore, it is easy to understand and to show how an agreement between Morocco, Algeria, the UN and the Sahraoui population would directly serve the interests of the European Union. This point is very obvious not only to specialists of the issue, but also to an extended public, well aware of the overall stakes. Undoubtedly, both sides of the Mediterranean would draw an immense profit from the return to normal international relations and from the solution of legitimate grievances.

In 1970, under pressure from the Sahara Liberation Army (SLA) Spain relinquished its sovereignty over Western Sahara to two states : Morocco and Mauritania.

Indeed the lessons of the past still shed light on the present situation, but nothing is irreversible, for the worse and for the better. We have seen for ourselves and in recent memory, the fall of the Berlin wall, after forty years of cold war between the Soviet and the Western world : hundreds of millions of lives were at stake. The output has been positive with the progressive integration of former Soviet-bound states inside the European Community.

The example of the Berlin wall is brought up on purpose: between Morocco and Algeria, stands a 2000km sand wall, the so called «Berm», manned by a large number of troops since the early 80s and watched over by a UN mission, MINURSO¹, since 1991. No major incidents have been reported in the last ten years. The dispute concerns a local population, formerly nomadic, which has to chose between three options : integration within the kingdom of Morocco, regional autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty, or independance. The local Sahrawi people, of indeterminate numbers, belong to several conflicting tribes while speaking roughly the same languages and practising the same religious dogma and rites. They are scattered partly West of the Berm, and partly East of it where they mainly live in refugee camps sometimes located on Algerian territory (Tindouf).

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND A SHORT HISTORY

The coastal part of Western Sahara is developing rapidly using all the assets provided by nature (ocean, sun, wind, phosphates, herds of camels, salt and sand),

¹ MINURSO/ *Mission des Nations Unies pour l'Organisation d'un Référendum au Sahara Occidental* or *Misión de las Naciones Unidas para la Organización de un Referendum en el Sáhara Occidental* or *United Nations Mission for the Organization of a Referendum in Western Sahara.*

by the Moroccan educational system, by the genuine qualities of the Sahrawi population and by very generous allowances from the Moroccan government - and heavy investments from abroad.

Conversely, the Eastern part of the former Spanish colony is in a shambles with no industry, no agriculture worth the name, a skyrocketing number of jobless people. It survives mainly through subsidies provided by the host State, by the UNHCR and by NGOs generally affiliated to former or current revolutionary and/or marxist States (e.g ETA, Cuba, IRA, Venezuela, Nicaragua etc.). For many observers this situation is artificially frozen for internecine political interests.

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is the government in exile claiming sovereignty over the former Spanish Colony of Western Sahara. The Polisario Front, the national liberation movement that administers the SADR, is headquartered in Tindouf and currently controls the area that it calls the Liberated Territories, a strip of Western Sahara territory East of the Moroccan Wall (the so-called '*Berm*') and administers the Sahrawi refugees camps.

It has conducted diplomatic relations with states and international organisations since its inception in 1973. Currently it is recognized by 35 states after having recently lost the recognition of several major countries. As early as 1966, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 22/29 affirmed for the first time the Sahrawi right for self-determination. The International Court of Justice while stating that religious links existed before colonization between Western Sahara and Morocco, denied any links of sovereignty with the latter.

Despite this ruling, King Hassan II decided to assert his sovereignty over the former Spanish colony through a mass movement, « la marche verte » which brought into the territory hundreds of thousands of Moroccans. In 1979, another resolution, 34/37, reaffirmed the right of the Western Sahara people to self-determination and independence, recognising also the Polisario Front as the representative of the Western Sahara people. However, the RASD has no seat at the General Assembly of the UN. In the meantime, Polisario conducted a large

number of offensive actions against the two nation states which resulted in the withdrawal of Mauritania from the territory which was handed over to Polisario. King Hassan II decided to build a sand wall to protect his new territory from the Polisario's military actions. Completed in 1987, this wall now seals the area in two distinct zones.

In 1991 the UN proposed to settle the case by a referendum and by first setting up a UN military mission intended to pave the way to a referendum and to monitor the cease-fire between Moroccan and Polisario forces. The UN force is still there but the prospect of a referendum has been delayed by lack of proper identification of the potential voters. The exact number of Sahrawis is not precisely known and the criteria to bridge this gap are questioned. Several attempts have been made by the UN to resolve this apparent dead end, but with no real effect.

What has drastically changed locally between the erection of the wall and now, is the extremely swift and promising development of the coastal part of Western Sahara, called by Moroccans « the Southern provinces ». These efforts began under King Hassan II were marred by a relative insecurity. Now development is thriving under the shelter of the wall and the strong will of King Mohamed VI. Time plays in favor of Morocco. The Moroccan leadership has been spared by the Arab Muslim revolutions and has even managed to strengthen its authority over the State by rewriting a new and more democratic constitution inspired from the British and Portuguese ones. Ambitious programmes of development are being carried out throughout Morocco. King Mohamed VI requested last year the newly created CESE² to conduct a survey in depth of the durable development in the « Southern Provinces », judging that the return on investments has been too weak. A new action plan has been devised, which was due to be formally presented in 2014, but already translated into action especially in the domain of autonomy with an emphasis put on the responsabilisation of Sahrawi personel at every level and in all domains.

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² Conseil Economique Social et Environnemental



Map No. 3691 Rev. 71 UNITED NATIONS
March 2013 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

CHAPTER 1

THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

While strategic considerations remain of a paramount importance, it would be fatal to rule out the impact of the legal environment on the frozen conflict of Western Sahara. First of all, because the legal status of the Province has been, since 1975, the point of discord between Morocco and the Polisario Front (supported by Algeria). Next, because this territorial dispute entails consequences of a humanitarian nature over which the MINURSO, the peace keeping operation established in Western Sahara since 1991, has no responsibility whatsoever. Finally and in spite of the proactivity of the U.N, because this conflict seems to find no solution backed up by international law. Which is why the European Union, thanks to its conception of a multilateral approach for international relations, and due to its willingness to apply and enforce international law, could have a major role to play in the resolution of this frozen conflict.

1. The question of the legal status of the province: an insolvable territorial dispute in international law ?

The quarrel surrounding the legal status of the Western Sahara seems understandable seen through the prism of autonomy vs independence. For Morocco, Western Sahara is an integral part of the national territory. This official claim has become a dogma for the Moroccan nation. Thus the Kingdom champions an autonomy process for the Sahara within its territory, referring to « historical rights » over the province and promoting the conservation of the current borders in use before colonisation; in other words, arguing for the respect of territorial integrity. The only possible outcome thus appears to be autonomy,

and in addition, through a regionalisation process. As for the Algerians, openly supportive of the Polisario Front, they strive for the independence of Sahara. Their rhetoric rests on the sacrosanct principle of international law : the right of the peoples to self-determination.

a) Introductory considerations on the legal stakes

A Spanish protectorate from 1884 on, the Western Sahara is given in 1958, under Franco, the status of a 'Province'. This territory, coveted by Mauritania and Morocco, both arguing ancestral rights, is to be registered nevertheless, in 1963, by the United Nations on the list of 'non autonomous' territories following Morocco's request.

Under article 73 of the UN charter, Western Sahara is considered '*a territory whose populations do not yet administer themselves fully*'. And, in this context, from 1966 on, the UN exhorts Spain to organise a referendum on self- determination. Finally, in 1974, Spain gives way to that request. However this project aborts just because Morocco obtains from the UN its suspension until it gets an answer from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to a previous request. Indeed, Morocco had formally requested from the ICJ to recognise that, before the Spanish colonisation, Western Sahara was not a *terra nullius* with regard to the Moroccan historical rights on that territory (doctrine of the historical link). The CIJ's negative answer leads to an aggravation of the territorial dispute between the Polisario Front and Morocco, which seems, from then on, insoluble with regard to international law.

b) The procedure in front of the ICJ : from the rejection of the historical rights thesis defended by Morocco to the recognition of the right to self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

The dialectic presented by the ICJ in its consultative notice, dated October 16, 1975, strives to clarify the interactions between right to self-determination and respect for the national integrity of a sovereign State in a context of decolonisation.

As a result, the ICJ rejects the thesis supported by Morocco arguing that this Nation had exerted a territorial sovereignty on Western Sahara, considering that the latter did not present the characters of exclusivity and of effectiveness. It also

refuses to say that Western Sahara was a *terra nullius* on the ground that tribes established on that territory were socially and politically organised before colonisation occurred. The ICJ therefore and *de facto* concluded to the right of self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

Even if this right to self-determination is granted to the Sahrawi people, the indistinctness surrounding it, as well as the ambiguities concerning its articulation with the principle of territorial integrity remain. That principle has thus become the ground of ideological confrontation and of political instrumentalisation.

c) Unlawful occupation vs. Puppet State: Morocco, a *de facto* ruling power ?

Considering the ICJ's consultative advice contrary to their interests, the Moroccan authorities organised on November 6, 1975 a « Green March » during which more than 350.000 civilians strolled on Western Sahara territory, accompanied by armed forces. On November 14, 1975, the Madrid Agreements were concluded and signed between Spain, Morocco and Mauritania. Under its terms, Spain accepts a joint temporary administration of Western Sahara with Morocco and Mauritania. On February 26, 1976 the Spanish administration of Western Sahara ended, allowing the conflict between the Polisario, Morocco and Mauritania (before its retraction in 1979) to burst onto the territory.

At the same time, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (RASD) is proclaimed by the Polisario Front on the grounds of the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people. It is advisable to go back to the definition, nowadays, of a 'Puppet State' when referring to RASD. On one hand, because with regard to the State law, RASD does not present the constitutive elements (territory, population, government) of a State. On the other hand RASD is recognised neither by the United Nations, nor by the League of Arab Countries. From this it appears that the legitimacy of RASD and especially of the Polisario as the representative of the Sahrawi people is questioned.

In a totally different pattern, as early as 1975, Morocco claimed sovereignty over the territory by strengthening its military presence and by developing in the diplomatic and legal fields a new list of selling points. On the basis of the Madrid agreements (November 14, 1975), the Moroccan authorities claim the status of administrative power. But this agreement did not stipulate any transfer of sovereignty, nor even any transfer of the quality of 'administrative power' because no State is authorised individually to transfer such a quality. However, from 2003

on, certain UN documents qualify Morocco as an ‘administrative power’. In the eyes of International Law, this is ambiguous: on one hand the ICJ note bestows on the Sahraouis the right to self-determination, and, on the other hand, the occupation of the territory was realised through a military intervention, which makes it unlawful (doctrine *Stimson*). Moreover, the « sand wall » erected by the Moroccan armed forces between RASD and the Moroccan Sahara constitutes a *de facto* border, though the unlawfulness of this construction is self evident. Therefore if it is possible to consider Morocco an administrative power *de jure*, it seems that it truly is one, *de facto*.

d) The referendum issue, the governing principle of the conflict

As early as 1966, the UN General Assembly called on Spain to organise a referendum, under the aegis of the United Nations, in order that the Sahrawis could express themselves on their future. This was in line with the principle of the peoples’ right to self-determination. Nevertheless, it is necessary to keep in mind that were such a referendum to happen, the endgame would certainly not be independence. However, nearly half a century after the first exhortations of the United Nations to set up such a referendum, nothing was ever put into practice. Behind this failure lies the fact that Morocco contested the results of the census conducted by Spain in 1974 bearing on 73,497 sahraouis. For the Kingdom this figure represented a reduced electoral body and therefore not worth the organisation of a referendum, thus considered as less than democratic.

e) The conflict settlement plans: from failure to setback

Since the beginning of the dispute, the UN, as well as diverse protagonists had tried to develop, in vain, plans of crisis resolution (especially the Baker plans, bearing the name of the of the United Nations’ Secretary General’s special envoy for Western Sahara). The only half achievement was the proposal made in 1988 by the UN and the African Union, comprising a cease fire, a transition period and a referendum. This plan was accepted by both the Polisario and Morocco and gave way, in 1991, to Resolution 690 of the Security Council stipulating the setting up of a peace keeping operation (PKO) : the MINURSO.

2) The setting up of a peace keeping operation in 1991 : heading for a progressive sliding down towards the human rights issue ?

Since 1991 and the adoption of Resolution 690 by the Security Council, the MINURSO is in charge of monitoring the cease fire on the territory fought for by Morocco and the Polisario freedom fighters. 226 military observers are deployed on the ground to notify any violation of the cease fire and to carry out various other operations such as mine clearance. One should also remember that the initial mandate of this PKO contained another part : that of supervising a referendum of self-determination; that mission failed due to several blocking mechanisms.

Besides, the MINURSO is the only PKO with no human rights dimension, due to the refusal of Morocco who consistently opposed it. The topic is however regularly at the heart of the negotiations for the annual renewal of the mission mandate. As a matter of fact, NGOs, as well as the UN, through the voice of its then Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, did not cease alerting the international community on the situation of human rights in Western Sahara (cases of systematic torture, the repression of opponents, the poor humanitarian situation in Sahrawi refugee camps of Tindouf – Algeria, etc.)

Recent developments show a continuous sliding from the grounds of international law regarding the legal status of the province, to the issue of respect for human rights. Moreover, the process of regionalisation, such as defined in the Moroccan constitution, tends now to appropriate this question : this point certainly constitutes a favourable factor of evolution, as shown later in this study.

Preliminary conclusion: It should be noted that the territorial dispute over Western Sahara constitutes a prime example of a situation in which the law finds its limits. Indeed, the instrumentalisation of the legal principles by the parties, the ambiguity of the resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the lack of willingness from the international instances to reach a definitive status for Western Sahara, are all factors contributing to freezing that dispute.

CHAPTER 2

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT, DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY

1. Economy and development

This development concerns in the first place the various communities living in the region, the relationships which exist between them and the particular place that should be reserved for the Sahraoui community itself, today deprived of proper internal structures and thus of representation and of a genuine identity. Sustainable development³ is solely compatible with this fragile society and this difficult but potentially wealthy natural milieu endowed with considerable human, animal and renewable resources.

The current level of development and the provisions made in this field by Rabat, in close liaison and cooperation with the E.U. already allows one to foresee a promising future for the former Spanish Sahara.

Facing such an endeavour, the need for security is very strong ; by reducing the social tensions and by filling the economic needs, sustainable development reaches its full and total justification. It is a powerful social tool for peace and regional stability.

a. What about today?

This territory is a zone of North-South interface : Europe in the North, and sub-Saharan Africa in the South. It should be considered geographically as the pivot of the north-south network, especially where migration issues are concerned.

³The two terms « development » and « sustainable » are neither really compatible in theory, nor in practical terms. Development has a dynamic meaning, characterised by open and moving systems, with a non linear attitude, in a state of unbalance, only slightly detreminist, with fluctuations and surprises (in technical terms), with highs and lows, extreme events even catastrophes and with a cahotic demeanour. Sustainability brings in mind notions of stability, of balance, of linearity in its progress and its tendencies, of foreseeability, more characteristic of close than of open systems. *Francesco di Castri (directeur de recherches - CNRS, Montpellier-2005)*

A recent report (2013) from the Moroccan Economical, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) defines a new model of development for the southern provinces with five simultaneous considerations :

- (1) Human rights are based upon economic, civic and environmental rights.
- (2) Management of national resources should benefit the local population.
- (3) Preservation of the traditional culture tends to disappear with modern development and switching between nomadism and settlement.
- (4) Due respect for the environment and ecosystems, in particular through the creation of a regulation agency on environmental risks.
- (5) The governance of the area should found itself on regionalization, participative democracy and answerable management with the setting up possibly of a local CESE and the signing of a contract between the State and the region.

The implementation of this programme is in progress and its application rests on three pillars :

- The State's role as initiator,
- the reinforcement of the private sector,
- the promotion of a social economy.

Objective observers⁴ have noticed that quite a few positive measures had already been introduced in the last ten years for the benefit of the populations through education, lodging, associations and health ; they also noticed the appearance of a Sahrawi middle class.

The development resources are comprised of renewable energies (wind, sun, sea water), fishery resources, mines and sand.

⁴ (experts of the EU, of the UN, of the IMF, the World Bank, of OSCE etc...)

Regarding harbour activities, the example to quote is that of La Marsa (22.000 inhabitants), the port of the regional capital city, Laâyoune (2,000.000 inhabitants). It is a busy fishing and business oriented harbour ; its progressive development plan (1987, 1995, 2006 and 2012), is being carried out.

b. One of the most striking example is that of the region and city of Dakhla, also called the 'Southern region'.

This region covers almost 21% of Moroccan territory (10 times Belgium) with a 1000 km border with Mauritania, 600 km long Atlantic shores and roughly 200,000 inhabitants.

The economy is developing in secure conditions agreed upon by the UN and concern :

- (1) The coast, deep sea and craft fisheries
- (2) Farming and breeding, linked on the one hand to the use of water drawn from the salt water table and treated, on 600 acres corresponding to 3000 jobs (mainly tomatoes: 60 000 exported per year) and, on the other hand, on the valuation of camel products (meat and milk).
- (3) Renewable energies: sun, wind (over 300 days per year at 11 m/sec, the most powerful of all the Mediterranean basin) with an electricity production by wind mills and solar panels amounting to 660 MW connected to the national power grid.
- (4) Tourism: Dakhla is a four hours flight from Paris but the authorities are very strict as to environmental protection.

Now is the transition period between the State's initiation and local relays.

Since the Green March, from 40km of tarred roads, the territory has leapt to 1600km and to more than 1400km of tracks : over 3000km of roads suitable for vehicles have been built. On the teaching side, from one school in 1975, the province has developed 42 educational establishments and several institutes for professional teaching. Temporary airstrips have been turned into airports and, for maritime ports, the plan is to have one harbour for every 200km of coast.

The development has been 10 times faster in a much shorter period of time; being global it should above all fill the needs of local populations to prevent dissatisfaction which would generate insecurity and therefore limit the development momentum.

Yet there is still cultural reticence although not economic factors which could impact development : especially concerning the nomadic and pastoral population which needs to be converted into a sedentary population dedicated to fisheries, agriculture, tourism, production of energy, water treatment... in order to give every citizen a job.

In 1975, the town of Dakhla (formerly Villa Cisneros) was but a garrison city with military buildings. The local population used to live outside under tents and to enter the city once a week to fetch tea and sugar. Today, after a spectacular development due to the efforts of the Kingdom and of the Moroccan people, it is necessary to switch from a State governed pattern (with subsidies for fuel and foodstuffs), to an autonomous appropriation with a tolerance for migrants coming from West Africa (limited to less than one thousand) because already now, for certain tasks, manpower is lacking.

2. Security and Diplomacy

From the security standpoint, the most apparent problem is linked to the instrumentalisation of the human rights issue for political ends ; local populations must live together and not separately. Security and development constitute a couple that must not divorce. The largest number of Sahrawis live in Morocco, the most stable and democratic country in the Maghreb, with elected representatives. On the contrary on the Polisario's side, the 'representatives' are military. For lack of open information, elements of the Polisario have been suspected, rightly or wrongly, to be in contact with the Azawad dissidence in Mali and Niger, and even with AQMI.

The sanitary and health situation is growingly serious in the refugees camps and becomes a major problem, a factor of individual and collective insecurity, imperfectly and marginally coped with by MINURSO and a few NGOs.

Diplomacy remains nevertheless very active. It deploys from the major decision centers of Morocco, Polisario (RASD), Algeria, the U.N., the African and the European Union and the United States, either to drive the issue forward, to block it or even to make it worse.

The most active entities, if not the most efficient are in order : Morocco, the Polisario, Algeria, the U.N, the E.U, the A.U, the former colonial powers and the United States. For the time being, the Sahelian and Western African countries are rather more sound boxes than fully fledged actors.

a) The Cherifian Kingdom

Morocco displays an open and dynamic activity with all the partners mentioned. Its main objective is to see its rights upon Western Sahara reckoned with, as well as the considerable investments made in the territory and therefore to contribute to restoring peace, stability, security and good neighbourly relations in the region.

Very attentive to UN resolutions, and to the expectations of the European and American friendly nations, Morocco still suffers from the ostracism of the A.U in which it has suspended its membership and militates openly for the unification of the Maghreb, in the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA).

b. The Polisario (RASD)

RASD uses a diplomatic service out of proportion with what it really represents, and which did neither succeed in bridging its image gap nor limiting the attrition of its supporters (see Annex attached). Exclusively supported by Algeria in the logistical and domestic fields, RASD acts in the international caucuses (A.U, UN, UNHCR, etc.) as a member or an observer. Privileged and generously subsidised links with Libya have come to an end with the fall of Gaddafi. The EU provides a regular and substantial humanitarian assistance for the refugee camps of Tindouf, but, confronted with a lack of credible statistics, along with the UNHCR, it has reduced its donation.

Without a proper economic system and poorly equipped with outdated equipment and armament, the Polisario survives but by the will of Algeria which

provides the instruments for foreign and domestic political purposes. The President of RASD himself, regrets openly this loss of substance.⁵

The Polisario is thinly supported today by a few left wing countries of Latin America, Africa, Asia and certain tiny Pacific islands. No country in Europe has ever provided any form of recognition, neither has any of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

c) Algeria

Very discreet about Western Sahara, Algeria allows the Polisario to act on its own initiative despite having created it and continuing to support it as well as never refraining to support RASD in the diplomatic field, thus managing to keep a major stumbling block standing against the setting up of a 'Greater Morocco'. Algeria's land borders⁶ with Morocco have been closed since 1994⁷.

d) The United Nations

The UN has not deviated from its initial objective, i.e. to set up a referendum which, over the years, has proved to be an impractical utopia. It is currently looking, through the concept of *territorial autonomy* and through the respect of human rights, for a solution to the dispute while keeping in place an observation and monitoring mission : the so-called MINURSO.

e) The United States

Militarily and economically very present in the issue, Washington is prudently moving behind the UN especially with the human rights issue and would favour a greater involvement of Morocco in that field, without any hidden agenda.

f. The African Union (AU)

⁵ Interview of Mohamed Abdelaziz, leader of the Polisario (since its creation) to the Egyptian magazine Rose al Youssef of July 2014, in the framework of Marshall ben Sissi's official visit to Algeria.

⁶ Set up by the Treaty of Rabat, ratified in 1972 by Algeria and in 1992 by the Moroccan parliament.

⁷ Closed by Algeria following the Marrakech attack and the institution of a visa by Morocco.

Even if it still supports in principle RASD, a member of the organisation, it tends today to move closer to Morocco which had earlier opted out. It is not so active on this issue but could change its policies to take into account the growing development of diplomatic, economical, cultural and security relations between the Cherifian Kingdom and Western Africa countries.

g. The European Union (EU)

Developed from Brussels by the European External Action Service (EEAS) the European Union diplomacy regarding this dispute is rather cautious. It is relayed by an important and very active delegation in Rabat, but does not tackle directly the issue. The sustained tempo of exchanges as well as the permanent dialogue between the EU and Morocco is due to the Advanced Status granted in 2008 to Morocco after the implementation of the association agreement signed in 1996 in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The Moroccan Action Plan (MAP)- mutually approved between EU and Morocco- deals with all the aspects of life in a document of more than one hundred pages addressing nine key domains : - the political and strategic dialogue,-the rule of law,- democracy and governance, -mobility, migrations and security, -economic and social reforms, -trade, markets and statutory reforms, -infrastructures, - environment and sustainable development, -education higher education and vocational training, -research, development information society.

It is obvious that new windows of opportunity are currently being opened, as well in the legal domain as in the more political fields of diplomacy and security, moving towards a settlement of this dispute which remains the only true obstacle to the reunification of the Maghreb.

The reopening of the borders between Morocco and Algeria is essential to reach this goal and to promote the creation of a developed and secure pole in the Northwest of Africa, on the intercontinental route connecting Europe and Sub Saharan African countries ; this route necessarily runs through the Cherifian Kingdom.

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CHAPTER 3

EVOLUTIONARY FACTORS

CONSEQUENCES OF A SETTLEMENT FOR THE EU

The current situation of the Western Sahara may evolve under the influence of several factors. The first one is the issue of human rights and of the autonomy of the Sahrawi people. The second one is sustainable development and international cooperation. The third one is linked to the neighbourhood relationships. If the evolution of these factors were to impact the resolution of the dispute, that would certainly bear very positive consequences for the EU in the fields of economy, sustainable development, security and society.

A. EVOLUTIONARY FACTORS

1- Human rights and Sahrawi autonomy *(foreseeable solutions to improve the legal environment)*

a. Toward a salutary resolution of the territorial dispute: An autonomous Western Sahara under Morocco's auspices

Today different ways to settle the dispute other than the self-determination

referendum are on the table. One of them is **Sahrawi autonomy within the Moroccan State**. In the current process of regionalisation of the Kingdom, the granting of a status of broad autonomy to Western Sahara would be a positive element for the resolution of the dispute, in that regional autonomy could be an expression of self-determination.

It is relevant to consider that solution a median one as it allows both the right of peoples to self-determination and the respect of the territorial integrity of a State, as claimed by Morocco.

Furthermore, it is a substantial progress in the resolution of the conflict for it constitutes a step toward an international consensus.

Such a process has already been initiated by Morocco through its July 2011 State Constitution which stand for a decentralisation process in the framework of which state power is bestowed on the elected regional authorities. It offers also the Sahrawis new guarantees in order that they may efficiently self-govern themselves. It remains obvious that the dissociation between the so called « principle of autonomy » and « Moroccan victory » must be enforced to keep from exacerbating the tensions.³

b. Improvement of the Human Rights issue: a much needed association of Morocco with the various mechanisms

Morocco should be associated with the mechanisms of protection of human rights in Western Sahara. Even more, these mechanisms must be understood **on** a national rather than on an international scale. As a matter of fact, the democratic character of Western Sahara, its opportunities in the field of sustainable development, the improvement of its standards of living – also a result of a better equality, could constitute a vector of satisfaction for the Sahrawi people as well as a token of Moroccan good will to grant a large autonomy to the region. In the endgame, such dynamics could make the Sahrawi refugees still living in the camps of Tindouf, and generally exasperated by their conditions of life and by the attitude of the Polisario, aware of the seriousness and relevance of the Moroccan proposal.

2. Sustainable development and international cooperation

The Cherifian Kingdom has striven to develop at best the territories occupied during the Green March in order to win the loyalty of the population, to settle it and to raise their economy to the same level as the other provinces of Morocco. However, in the mindset of the political leaders, it was just a step in a long term and carefully planned process of development.

It is only relevant here to speak about Morocco whose open statistics and advanced status granted by the EU permit to measure the reality of improvements and assess projections into the future. RASD for its part has neither resources nor any development plan, only claiming the riches exploited and developed by the ‘Moroccan occupant’, especially regarding phosphates and fisheries and even, if and when found and drilled, oil.

Morocco has three reference instruments determining their long and short term development goals as well as the mostly environmental conditions of ‘sustainability’.

a) The Economic, Social and Environmental Council

The Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE), created in the wake of the new constitution promulgated in 2011, has set up a ‘barometer’ allowing the economic, social, and environmental authorities of the country to have qualitative and quantitative data at their disposal. This initiative cannot be separated from the objectives aiming at raising the moral standards of public life, and at reforming the legal and institutional sectors : « *The council considers that the existence of a solid constitutional base constitutes an opportunity to be taken rapidly into account by the official bodies, in connection with the economic and social players, to make the constitutional arrangements effective and to impulse new dynamics for reforming.* »

The deepening of foreign deficits linked to weak competitiveness, a dull mood for business (tax system, financing opportunities, public services and environment) and the social dialogue (role of the Unions, purchasing power, social welfare, employment) constitute the three domains of action for which the CESE gives directions and hints to reshuffle growth, local economies, competitiveness and to take advantage of the potential of the regions through the ‘territorialisation of public policies’.

That last point meets the other political wish to proceed toward the economical autonomy of the regions and, in particular, of Western Sahara. The efforts already

yielded by Rabat to stimulate, secure and render autonomous the southern territories have been gigantic but are seen as scantily productive. Not only the method, but also the ways and means should change ; new arrangements must improve the cost-effectiveness ratio.

The elites and technicians training is a permanent concern which still stumbles on the lack of job security : too many graduates for too few really available jobs.

b. D.C.F.T.A

The second instrument, économical and commercial in kind, but connected to the international instances is the EU-Morocco Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Though the impact of this agreement may look marginal for the EU (830 millions Euros), it certainly is important and very opportune for Morocco (1.6 points of GNP). Therefore this agreement is seen in Rabat as a reform accelerator « *which allows more rapid progress than would have been possible with merely a political impetus from the Nation.* »

c) The Moroccan Project for Autonomy (MPA)

The third instrument is the Moroccan Project for Autonomy, considered as Morocco's answer to the UN request for a 'status of autonomy of the Saharan region'. This 2007 project is the founding block of the Moroccan policy in the appropriation field. Its litteral application cost a very expensive price for the Cherifian State which became involved in a spending spree in order to create from nothing a Moroccan Sahrawi identity, endowed with all the local powers and managed by natives claiming their identity as precised in Article II, paras 12 and 13.

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⁸ « 12. In respect of democratic principles and procedures, the people of the Sahara Autonomous Region acting through legislative, executive and legal organs would have, within the territorial limits of the Region, competency over the following domains : local administration, local police and jurisdictions of the Region ; economical : economic development, regional planning, calling for investments, commerce, industry, tourism and agriculture ; the budget and taxes of the Region ; infrastructures : water, hydraulic installations, electricity, public works, and transport ; social : housing, education, health, jobs, sport, social security and protection ; cultural, including the promotion of the Sahrawi cultural heritage ;

« 13. The Sahara Autonomous Region would have at its disposal the financial resources needed for its development in all fields. These resources comprise : taxation and territorial contributions decided by the relevant organs of the Region; revenues

All three instruments are in operation but need external assistance to open new markets, to improve and spread exchanges. The South is and will increasingly be wide open thanks to current communication assets : Morocco, in the first place, is well-placed at the start of the European road to Africa

d. The importance for Europe of a negotiated solution

A negotiated solution to the Western Sahara dispute between Algiers and Rabat would obviously be most welcome. Open to the world, Morocco is in the first place the European Union's privileged partner. Among considerable investments made recently, Morocco chose to equip its Atlantic coast with harbours capable of competing with their European counterparts and even to outclass them, especially in Tangiers, Casablanca and southward, in the Sahrawi territory, with the brand new ports of Laâyoune, Boujdour, Dakhla and La Guera, mainly, but not exclusively, dedicated to fisheries.

Besides, MPA stresses in its article 15 that « *the autonomous Sahrawi region can, in connection with the central government, develop cooperation links with foreign regions to develop inter-regional dialogue and cooperation.* »

3- Evolution of neighbourly relations

The development of neighbourly relations between Algeria, RASD and Morocco follow the same pattern as the development of international relations and depend on three factors : circumstances, deeply rooted national interests and statesmen.

a) Algeria

Several separatist, autonomist (Aurès, M'Zab, Kabylia), social and terrorist movements are currently marring the stability of the country; as a consequence, they draw excessively on the security forces, which seem tired, demoralised and not so efficient. This drives society into insecurity and political hardship. This degraded

from the exploitation of natural resources allocated to the Region ; part of the natural resources located in the Region and administered by the State ;- the resources needed by the Region and allocated in the framework of national solidarity ; traditional resources coming from the patrimony of the Region. »

situation prevails and in parallel the political organisation of the State shows evident signs of weakness : the Chief of State, President Bouteflika, seems increasingly handicapped and as social unrest is growing due to a very high level of unemployment, to a very unfair sharing of riches (hydrocarbons for the main part), to invasive corruption and to excessive centralisation. Internal repression tools remain efficient but would probably not have the resilience to overcome riots or a general upheaval.

In this situation, the population, already urbanized at 75% and with deeply rooted national convictions clearly demonstrate their frustration. Emigration trends are increasing. In this dull landscape what is the face value of Polisario for the Algerian citizen ? Western Sahara is no longer an internal policy argument because the Algerian people's expectations regarding Polisario are dwindling, if not zero. They less and less understand this costly support to a puppet state, to the detriment of Algeria's borders with Morocco, still closed against their will.

In short, things cannot stay put much longer.

b) Polisario (RASD)

It is almost impossible to examine the RASD using the three criteria mentioned above. Because its motivations, statistics and projects are known to none. Circumstances are less favourable than ever : the RASD has lost most of its financial backing and the lacks infrastructure adapted to modern life in a region subject to extreme weather conditions ; it cannot attract international cooperation even on a temporary basis.

Nevertheless, a few humanitarian and cultural NGOs, generated from Hispanic or north European countries – and the MINURSO for the UN - still address the miserable conditions of the refugees which have been prevailing for over 40 years under the undemocratic leadership of a single leader, Mohamed Abdelaziz. Besides, it seems that grave human rights infringements are currently perpetrated in a quasi institutional manner. It is only thanks to the international food and health programme that the population can survive in this very desolate and harsh environment. The population, artificially separated from its cultural and tribal base, is aging ; the youth, generally well educated in European and South American universities, emigrate for lack of a future.

In brief, the situation of this puppet state cannot last much longer. Through a popular uprising, a change in the RASD leadership, dictatorial and apparently despised by the international community, could make this instable and artificial construction topple at any time in the near future.

c) Morocco

King Mohamed VI, well aware of the complex international circumstances, has adapted his policy in accordance. He has succeeded in preempting an ‘Arab Spring’ in his kingdom by an audacious constitutional reform and by favouring the development of a parliamentary democracy.

Under the shelter of a two thousand kilometers long sand berm manned by over eighty thousand soldiers which provides protection from Polisario aggressive actions and raids, Morocco continues to develop its ‘Southern Provinces’ and awaits a negotiated solution to the dispute. It is no longer question of violating international law, even if forty years later, Morocco is still blamed for the Green March. Given time, such criticism is gradually fading away.

The King, popular because of the radical reforms and the ambitious development projects he supports, benefits from three assets : he is young, he is legitimate and personally exerts two powers : Head of State and supreme religious leader to whom tribes and brotherhoods (often outside the political borders) have pledged allegiance. He moves forward cautiously but willingly, on the only path authorised by the UN, that of the province’s autonomy.

Moroccan diplomacy is very active and very efficiently manned by a high quality and well trained foreign service. It works along two lines of force : the Europe connection with Africa and the unification of the Maghreb.

For the Cherifian Kingdom, deeply rooted national interests, statesmanlike qualities and current circumstances are favourable to the the settlement of this dispute regarding the Western Sahara already added to the Royal domain under the name of the ‘South Provinces’.

Thus, from now on, there might well be a window of opportunity to bring to an end the Western Sahara issue, opened forty years ago and deeply detrimental to a whole sub-region.

B. DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONSEQUENCES OF A SETTLEMENT ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

Ancient, contemporary and recent history, through a multitude of studies and testimonies, shows that the fate of the countries North and South of the Mediterranean Sea was and remains closely linked. The Spanish study on the security in the Mediterranean is clear on this point when it concludes by a call for a closer relationship between the North and the South⁹. The same remark can be made for the French White Paper on National Defence and Security published in July 2013.¹⁰

1. Regional and sub-regional stability stakes.

Confronted with the Arab revolutions but deprived of a common foreign and defence policy worth the name and of autonomous crisis management tools, the EU and its member States have had to think seriously about these events.¹¹

Quite a few European Nations which used to feel immune discover new dangers at their doorstep. They acknowledge, through the migratory flows, the terrorist acts perpetrated on their territory and through other non equivocal signs, that the data have changed and that the South of the Mediterranean is now less a tourist destination than an area of turbulence. Therefore, without any exaggeration, whatever could be used to ease and settle tensions should be strongly endorsed by a public opinion generally inspired by peaceful values.

⁹ « The EU should be more attentive to the political, social, economic and cultural developments going on in the MENA countries after 2011. The EU should bring to them the technical, industrial and financial know how they badly need. In that prospect an updated Union pour la Méditerranée could be a possible tool to reach that objective »

¹⁰ « The strategic importance for Europe of her eastern neighbourhood, of the Mediterranean, of the African regions stretching from the Sabel to Equatorial Africa is not considered in the same way by all our partners and allies. France, beyond any doubt, estimates that these approaches represent areas of priority interest for the European Union as a whole and that a common vision of risks and threats is desirable and urgent. Such a collective European priority should be openly displayed because our US and Canadian friends expect from us to take hold of a major part of the responsibilities in areas where they themselves do not feel directly involved. » French White Paper on Defence and Security- Paris 2013

¹¹ « In this respect, the Maghreb takes on for France and for Europe a particular importance, especially in the unstable context following upon the 'Arab revolutions'. The security risk in certain countries or zones represents a potential challenge for the whole Mediterranean Sea and Southern Europe. » French White Paper on Defence and Security- Paris 2013

Western Sahara falls into this category : Morocco is not only a good ally for Europe but also a reliable economic partner. Its territory is a safe road to Western African markets and developing countries.

As a complement to the current effort aiming at restoring security and stability in the Sahel through a broad Euro-African coalition, the involvement of the EU in the Western Sahara issue might well confront the terrorist threat, perhaps slightly exaggerated, but universally resented on the two sides of the Mediterranean by anxious public opinion.

Besides, it is obvious that an unconditional alignment on American defence and security policy, through NATO, could lead to a dead end.

Under the control of the UN, and through the MINURSO (Mission des Nations Unies pour la Recherche d'un Referendum au Sahara Occidental), the situation in Western Sahara no longer presents a risk of military clashes between Morocco and the Polisario. As a matter of fact, a growing number of the States which initially supported RASD have withdrawn their recognition (44 out of 84- See Annex). This « state », a fiction still held at arms length by a stumbling Algerian power and by a few complacent NGOs, is marred by impoverishment, illegal migration, and occasionally by the enrolment of a left over youth in armed groups suspected of trafficking, of terrorism and even of djihadism.

2. E.U's possible and expected role

Through its delegation in Rabat, the EU actively participates in the drawing up of development strategies with the Moroccan government and in coordination with other donors and funders (IMF, Member States, World Bank, UN, European Credit Bank etc.). The EU is also quite instrumental in the field of commercial relations. The mission of the delegation, opened in Rabat as early as 1979, is to strengthen the partnership between Morocco and the EU, to support economic reform, to boost cooperation and to contribute to the socio-economical balance of the Kingdom.

a) A lawful & ambitious agenda

In order to meet the challenges of the political changes occurring to the South of the Mediterranean, and to reinforce their neighbourhood policy, the High Representative and the EU Commission in 2011 put together a « *partnership for democracy and a shared prosperity with the South of the Mediterranean.* »

The suggested approach, symbolised by three 'Ms' standing for Money, Markets and Mobility is very topical :

- Increasing financial assistance for the strengthening of democratic transition, especially dynamic in Morocco.
- Commercial negotiation in view of an overall and detailed Free Trade Agreement (ALECA) initiated in March 2013 and materialising the integration of Morocco within the inner EU market.
- Partnerships in the fields of migration, mobility and security constitute a new offer with the signing, in June 2013, of a political declaration on cooperation in the domain of lawful and unlawful migration.
- Cooperation in the field of fisheries which translates into multi-annual protocols.

b) In this context, why is a settlement of the dispute so important ?

It must be stressed that the non-settlement of the dispute could, in one fell swoop, lead to the resumption of military action between Polisario and the Moroccan forces. In a region prone to instability and insecurity, granting Western Sahara the status of an autonomous province of the Cherifian Kingdom would beyond any doubt permit an efficient fight against transnational criminality. Through this regionalisation process, the Sahrawi authorities would therefore inherit prerogatives regarding the lawful use of force. Thus this large desert area could avoid being turned into a grey zone; the Kosovo precedent has illustrated how easy it can be, in the case of territorial disputes, to see a region tipping into an area of lawlessness. Autonomy might well be the right answer to regional instability.

c) Lastly : what role for the EU?

First of all, the EU could increase its political legitimacy on the international stage by acting as a major actor for the resolution of this dispute. Moreover, it would restore the EU's image after bitter disappointments related to the negotiations between Israël and the Palestinian Authority.

The 'Union Pour la Méditerranée' (UPM) could have installed a cooperation between the countries in the field of human rights, but the EU still has influential vectors that allow the promotion of democracy and rule of law in this region.

Finally, one should keep in mind that, in 2008 and in the framework of its neighbourhood policy, the EU has granted Morocco an 'advanced status'. In that respect, Morocco is the second beneficiary in of European assistance distributed in the Middle-East and Africa (after the Palestinian territories). Morocco is part of the SPRING Programme (**S**upport to **P**artnership, **R**eform and **I**nclusive **G**rowth) aiming at supporting democratic transition.

The financial and cooperative assistance provided by the EU is therefore a formidable lever in favour of the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. This tool, however, needs permanent improvement.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The search for a solution intended to unlock the situation prevailing in the Western Sahara since well before the end of the Cold War should use several parallel and converging avenues simultaneously.

Given the turn of events in the Machrek and the Middle East, along with the Libyan decay and the institution of a so called Islamic Caliphate astride the Irak-Syrian border, it is very urgent that the States bordering the huge Sahara region continue to take their part of the job initiated in Mali and in the Sahelian region by France with its African and European allies to create a pole of strategic security in the North West of the African continent.

Beyond any doubt, the first obstacle to overcome is the Western Sahara issue :

- In terms of legal rights and according to the UN, both Morocco and the Polisario take the same stand.

- The economics are very much in favor of Morocco which is succeeding in turning this arid territory into a sustained and developed area, profitable for the whole sub-region, to include Algeria.

-The politics are unhelpful: the land borders remain closed between Algeria and Morocco; the two countries do not communicate except to exchange reciprocal accusations, often ungrounded.

-The security situation is clear cut: facing an under-equipped and poorly manned Polisario, Morocco has the capacity to maintain the status quo for years, but at a heavy price due to the deployment of huge military and logistical assets which would be definitely more useful elsewhere, under this form or another.

Therefore, it is capital that all the political, parliamentary, diplomatic, social, cultural, industrial, economic and security agencies working in the European caucus invest their efforts, experience and knowledge in these domains. They should better coordinate their respective actions, some of which are already successfully conducted.

Security :

Promote the cohesiveness of the Mediterranean Nations, to cooperate in the fields of border-guards and borders themselves, of maritime operations, of military equipment, of weather forecasting, of air space, doctrine, training, logistics, health, operational planning, intelligence, cyber warfare etc.

Diplomacy :

Rekindle the Mediterranean dialogues based on the experiment of the UPM and on the achievements of the Barcelona process; to initiate an « inter-union » dialogue between the EU, the AU and the Islamic Conference; to set up, in agreement with the conflicting parties, a « European mission of good offices » : not just a substitute for UN action, for it would benefit from the advantages of the area and proximity.

Politics :

Promote sound governance of the security sector by increasing exchanges on this theme with the European defence institutes and security academies ; encourage and increase the partnerships between townships and specific territories to ease the exchanges in all fields; in complete understanding and agreement with the States

concerned, install a joint human rights observatory in line with the resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations.

Economy :

Facilitate the information flow on the needs and the resources in the fields of industry, agriculture, international trade and finance ; rebut the unfounded accusations on the so called ‘cornering of the mineral and fishing riches by Morocco’ formally contradicted by the European /Moroccan development Plan (MAP).

Culture :

Increase the intergenerational cultural and artistic exchanges ; promote religious freedom and due respect of the ethnical differences through academic and cultural funded exchanges ; use the medium of sport to facilitate exchanges in that most popular field, through the organisation of Mediterranean competitions and games; take part in technical and university education and training, in situ, of Sahrawi, Moroccan and Algerian students in the same framework and with a jointly agreed curriculum.

Society :

On one side or the other of the Mediterranean, and in tight cooperation with the African countries, fight against unlawful African immigration at the source by the creation of local jobs and downstream by reinforcing border control at sea and on the ground ; increase medical cooperation through the setting up of mixed entities on both sides of the Mediterranean ; enquire objectively and often on the well-being of the populations, through mutually agreed NGOs.

Industry :

Put the emphasis on renewable energies to be developed for the benefit of the whole region ; promote association agreements and technological transfers in sectors of mutual interest ; contribute, by all means possible, to create local jobs.

All the points above should be advertised by a communication policy to be conducted in a dynamic way, far away from the strict respect of neutrality.

Neutrality is certainly a prudent and legal way but, politically, socially and economically, it is not relevant.

The awareness of the European nations and of their public opinion should be heightened on this issue which should have been solved since long ago. More than any other European institution, body or entity, the European Parliament should invest its energy in this case.

ANNEX

States having recognised RASD and States having withdrawn their recognition

According to the following table, as of January 2014, **44** States out of 84 have withdrawn their recognition of RASD, the last one being Mauritius.

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Madagascar	28 February 1976	7 April 2005
Burundi	29 February 1976	25 October 2010

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Algeria	6 March 1976	
Bénin	9 March 1976	21 March 1997
Angola	9 March 1976	
Mozambique	11 March 1976	
Guinea-Bissau	11 March 1976	30 March 2010
North Korea	15 March 1976	
Togo	15 Mars 1976	June 1997
Rwanda	30 March 1976	
Yemen	2 February 1978	22 May 1990
Seychelles	25 October 1977	17 March 2008
Congo	3 June 1978	13 September 1996
Sao Tomé-and-Príncipe	20 June 1978	23 October 1996
Equatorial Guinea	3 June 1978	May 1980

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Panama	23 June 1978	20 November 2013
Tanzania	9 November 1978	
Ethiopia	24 February 1979	
Cambodia	10 April 1979	12 August 2006
Laos	9 May 1979	
Vietnam	2 March 1979	
Afghanistan	23 May 1979	12 June 2002
Cape-Verde	4 July 1979	28 July 2007
Grenada	24 August 1979	16 August 2010
Ghana	24 August 1979	
Guyana	1 September 1979	
Dominica	1 September 1979	16 August 2010
Sainte-Lucie	1 September 1979	16 August 2010

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Jamaica	4 September 1979	
Uganda	6 September 1979	
Nicaragua	6 September 1979	
Mexico	8 September 1979	
Lesotho	9 October 1979	
Zambia	12 October 1979	2 April 2011
Cuba	20 January 1980	
Iran	27 February 1980	
Sierra Leone	27 March 1980	16 July 2003
Syria	15 April 1980	
Libya	15 April 1980	
Swaziland	28 April 1980	June 1997
Botswana	14 May 1980	

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Zimbabwe	3 July 1980	
Chad	4 July 1980	17 March 2006
Mali	4 July 1980	
Costa Rica	30 October 1980	22 April 2000
Vanuatu	26 November 1980	
New Guinea	12 August 1981	2 April 2011
Tuvalu	12 August 1981	15 September 2000
Kiribati	12 August 1981	15 September 2000
Nauru	12 August 1981	15 September 2000
Solomon Islands	12 August 1981	January 1989
Mauritius	16 July 1982	15 January 2014
Venezuela	4 August 1982	
Surinam	21 August 1982	

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Bolivia	17 December 1982	
Ecuador	14 November 1983	
Mauritania	27 February 1984	
Burkina Faso	4 March 1984	5 June 1996
Peru	19 August 1984	October 1996
Nigeria	11 November 1984	
Yugoslavia then Serbia-and-Montenegro	28 November 1984	28 October 2004
Colombia	5 March 1985	December 2000
Liberia	30 June 1985	September 1997
India	1 October 1985	26 June 2000
Guatemala	5 April 1986	
Dominican Republic	25 June 1986	23 May 2002

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Trinidad and Tobago	3 November 1986	
Belize	18 November 1986	
St Kitts and Nevis	21 February 1987	16 August 2010
Antigua-and -Barbuda	28 February 1987	16 August 2010
Albania	29 December 1987	11 November 2004
Barbados	27 February 1988	13 February 2013
Salvador	1 August 1989	
Honduras	8 November 1989	
Namibia	11 June 1990	
Malawi	16 November 1994	16 September 2008
Paraguay	9 February 2000	3 January 2014
Saint-Vincent-and the -Grenadines	14 February 2000	13 February 2013
East Timor	20 May 2002	

State	Date of recognition	Date of the withdrawal of recognition
Republic of South Africa	15 September 2004	
Kenya	25 June 2005	22 October 2006
Uruguay	26 December 2005	
Haiti	22 November 2006	11 October 2013
South Sudan	10 July 2011	

NB: As of now, neither any permanent member of the UN Security Council nor any European state recognizes RASD.

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