**Presentation: *THE MEDITERRANEAN WITHIN THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF ENERGY : A VIEW FROM FRANCE***

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France played an active and significant role in the conception of the new geopolitics of energy. Because it offers the possibility of liberation from the old strategic dependencies related to energy, which have shaped international relations and generated tensions for more than two centuries. For example, these tensions were reflected in the war that France did not want - the one in Iraq. But also, in the war in Libya - the one in which she is accused of interference. It’s true, the new energy mix on which the energy transition is based adds new ones to old strategic dependencies and thus multiplies sources of tension. However, as these tensions are of lower intensity, it is assumed that it will be possible to regulate them effectively through multilateral negotiations.

Meanwhile, the Mediterranean and its natural extension, the Middle East, remains the centre of the world's main energy source - petrol, and a significant gas reservoir. And the energy transition brings serious internal socio-economic difficulties, and further destabilizes fossil fuel-producing countries, as well as tensions between them that could escalate into regional conflicts. As the key to successful energy transformation is the capacity to master the technologies that enable it (patents relating to renewable energy sources, energy networks or environmentally friendly mobility), France stimulates the development of these technologies and industries in its southern Mediterranean neighbours. Especially in the Maghreb countries, although their communication with France is often dominated by a strong emotional charge, in the range between love and hate. Since the early 19th century, French influence has been ubiquitous there. Today, mainly because of its colonial exploits, France intervenes as a source of paradoxical legitimacy. That is, France is perceived as both a contested and a structuring political actor. Structuring actor when, as at the moment, it encourages it partners on the other side of the Mediterranean to choose diversification of their economies as the main strategic determinant, which will prepare them for the susceptibility of petrol and gas demand to global growth and transport dynamics and policies to combat climate change. This partnership in energy transformation creates a new interdependence between the two Mediterranean coasts, as well as between the Mediterranean and the Sahara-Sahel belt - another African area where French influence is significant and which is destabilized in relation to the situation in Libya.

From the outside, French policy in Libya is at least contradictory. But, seen from the inside, this contradiction expresses the troubles of France. First before the vague NATO strategy for this part of the world. Then, in front of the inability of the European Union to influence the course of events in its favour. Of course, the EU is really taking on its role as a defender of international law in the case of Libya. But it was this vocation that drove Italian and French ships into friction with the Turkish navy. The latter has indeed control of ships from Turkey and adopted hostile postures towards the ships deployed under the international mandate. Faced with this Turkish challenge, the Europeans have started to react, because their interests were directly threatened. In fact, the outcome of that conflict will result in the level of jihadist threat in the Mediterranean, in the rebound in waves of illegal migration and the ability of Europeans to ensure the sovereignty of Greece, Cyprus and Italy in the Mediterranean.

Regarding the particular reasons which animate the interventionism of France in Libya, we can put forward a few. First, France may be motivated by the need to end the supply of arms and funds to jihadist groups that threaten the fragile governments of Niger, Chad and Mali using supply routes that cross Libya. It could also be the prospect of major reconstruction and commercial contracts with the future winner in Libya (France is the second largest importer of Libyan petrol). What could arguably be linked to Paris’s alignment with the Emirati, Saudi and Egyptian regimes. France had signed arms deals with them valued at several billion dollars. These three Arab countries are wary of the Tripoli-based Sarraj government because of the support it receives from Turkey, Qatar and, reportedly, Iran. In addition, according to French logic, the conflict in Libya is linked to the fight against Islamic terrorism in the Sahara-Sahel belt. Libya under Sarraj has failed to show itself capable of tackling the jihadist wave in Libya, while Haftar has won many victories against these Islamist factions. Finally, the head of French diplomacy, Jean-Yves Le Drian reminds that, as a key actor of military intervention in 2011, and because the political follow-up was not carried out after the fall of Gaddafi, France also has a form of responsibility in this crisis. Not to mention that its seat as a permanent member of the UN Security Council gives France a special responsibility in major international crises.

In the absence of a political agreement between the belligerents, the military solution - and chaos - continues to prevail. Turkey and Russia became the new key players in that crisis. This happened after the geopolitics of energy had a decisive influence on the electorate of US shale petrol-producing countries and led to the election victory of Donald Trump in 2016. Consequently, there was the most significant reshaping of international relations in the last 30 years. America withdrew from the Paris Climate Agreement and questioned the energy transition strategy. Open conflicts between NATO allies started. Today, Westernism crisis is in full swing. On June 22 French President Macron accused Ankara of playing a dangerous game in Libya, in which he saw another demonstration of NATO's brain death. He also claimed that Russia was playing a card of "ambivalence" stemming from the presence of a private Russian militia - the Wagner militia and not Russian army in Libya and pointed to "Turkey's historical and criminal responsibility". The bitterness of Europeans amuses Russia and Turkey more than anything else. They are extremely pleased with the humiliation of that Europe which lied to them that they will join the EU.

So, much has been said about the Total-ENI rivalry in Libya. But the new world is Gazprom, Tatneft and Rosneft, which have signed contracts with NOC - the Libyan national petrol company. And the Central Bank and the NOC are still in Tripoli. That’s why the Russians wish to control both sides (Haftar's and Sarraj's) in Libyan conflict. Also, there is no reason to maintain illusions about Turkey's aid to the GNA. It is clear that Turkey defends its own interests in Libya. What talks about a division of tasks between the two countries: Russia controls Haftar's party while Turkey insists on GNA's legitimacy. So even if they support militarily rivals, there is an understanding between them, as they have concluded that their common interest is to eclipse Europe in this part of the world. So, like a kind of revenge to European diplomacy, the two countries - after having inaugurated the Turkstream gas pipeline at the beginning of January - have also managed to set up an ephemeral ceasefire between the Libyan war protagonists.

The situation in the Mediterranean is becoming more and more complex, and requires closer and more efficient cooperation among Europeans. This requires more autonomous EU in terms of military strategy and capability, as well as a harmonized diversification of European economies and energy sources - the guarantee of a successful energy transition.

At the same time, in France, intellectuals are dealing with France’s moral responsibility in the war in Libya and linking it to President Sarkozy’s alleged moral sin. Indeed, everything suggests that at that time for Paris Colonel Moammar Gaddafi was a man who must be killed. Thus, in 2011, France intervened directly in Libyan territory under the leadership of Nicolas Sarkozy - advised and guided by the philosopher Bernard Henri-Levy. As early as 2012, documents were published suggesting the existence of Gaddafi's payment of 50 million euros to finance Nicolas Sarkozy's 2007 campaign. An international political-financial affair arose with a judicial epilogue in France. It turned out that the accusations of Gaddafi's covert funding of “candidate Sarkozy” could explain Sarkozy’s desire to intervene in Libya. Which would mean that now the petrodollar can make and break the careers of Western leaders.

Whatever, since the official fall of Gaddafi in October 2011, Libya has never experienced the stability so promised.

**SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIE FOR A CONFERENCE**

 An independent international cooperation consultant and geopolitical analyst, Sanja Vujačić was born in Zagreb - Croatia. She earned her PhD in Political Science from Paris-Saclay University -PSU in France. Her research examines regulation of interstate relations in a position of dependence, throughout a systemic approach to international relations and complex thought. Apart from her research work in this field at CARPO and VIP laboratories, she worked as a research engineer in charge of European R&D and international cooperation programmes for the components of the Paris-Saclay research & business cluster in the field of innovation: mobility and handicap in the smart city, Eldercare, E-Health, humanoid robotics, energy and digital transformation in the automotive/transport sector. Together with LISV laboratory and Mov’eo - the competitiveness cluster which brings together the main players of the French automotive industry in the collaborative R&D field, she participated in various transdisciplinary projects such as EIT Knowledge Innovation Communities - KIC Urban Mobility; piloted European projects like AAL MOBILITY-MOTIVATOR and worked on academic partnerships between PSU and Tshwane University of Technology South Africa, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and Lebanese University.

Mrs Vujačić is a member of the Croatian international studies association – HUMS and of the Institute for European and globalization studies – IEGS. She is writing and publishing articles and geopolitical analyses in Croatian newspapers and peer-reviewed journals.

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