



| TUMUN V



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

TUMUN 2021

General Assembly



Greetings Delegates!

My name is Abbie Treff, and I am honored to be heading up the General Assembly for this year's TUMUN Conference. I am a senior graduating with a degree in International Relations and with minors in Sociology and French. Though this GA is not a traditional one, since the body is its own international organization not under UN jurisdiction, it is my hope that this smaller organization will allow you all to research these two topics which will have a higher degree of relevance to your assigned country. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) thus presents delegates with a unique opportunity in a Model UN conference to come up with solutions outside traditional GA resolutions.

Both topics presented for debate in this GA are of particular interest to me. Topic A is intended to spur delegates' best efforts at diplomatic resolutions, and collaborating for a resolution to drilling and naval disputes currently at issue in the East Mediterranean. The vast majority of the research on this topic was completed under an internship I completed last year, intended to discover if there was proof of an increase in naval exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean region over the past decade.

Topic B is focused on the migrant 'crisis,' which has slowed since the height of the crisis in 2015 and 2016. That being said, diplomatic efforts to reach consensus on policy approaches for both migration and asylum systems surrounding the Mediterranean Sea are still needed. At this stage, the long-term wellbeing of refugee and asylum seekers should be at the forefront of the minds of UfM members.

If you have any questions or concerns about these topics, the committee structure, or the conference more generally, please email me at abigail.treff@tufts.edu. I am looking forward to seeing you all in just a few weeks!

Sincerely,

Abbie Treff
General Assembly Chair
TUMUN 2021



Overview of Committee

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was founded as an international organization in 1995. Beginning with the Barcelona Process, this organization has now grown into a center of diplomatic, social and cultural activity, and has even earned observer status at the United Nations.

As a GA-structured committee, debate will proceed as normal, though any suggestion of new cooperative bodies will need to take place under the banner of the UN.

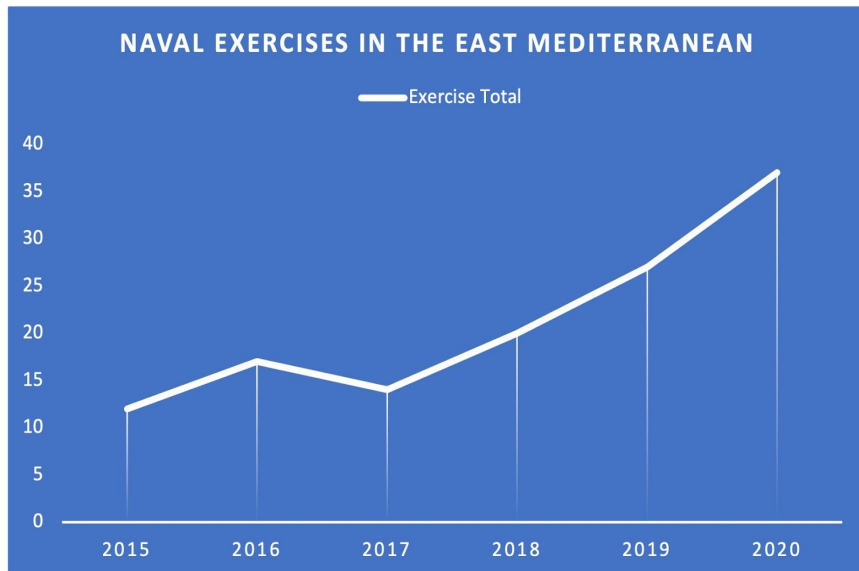
Topic A, which relates to the recent increase in activity for naval and drilling purposes in the East Mediterranean, impacts many of the member states of the Union for the Mediterranean. Topic B concerns the migrant crisis, which has now lasted a decade and continues to result in hundreds of deaths as migrants look to cross the Mediterranean and make their way into Europe. Between these two topics, this GA will be tasked with deciding which matter will generate the most debate and interest during the weekend of the conference.

Topic A: Naval & Drilling Disputes in the East Mediterranean

Subtopic 1: Naval Activity

In the past decade, the frequency of naval exercises in the East Mediterranean Sea has increased dramatically. Alongside this growth, the regional powers have looked to bolster their naval capacity and create stronger alliances with their neighbors. There have been several changes to the geopolitical landscape as well, including the Egyptian government, discovery of valuable gas fields, and shifts in involvement of outside powers, due in part to the Syrian and Libyan civil wars. To better understand how these naval activities play into the geopolitical relationships of the East Mediterranean, it is essential to understand the naval exercises and capacities of Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Turkey, and other foreign powers at play.

By analyzing the number of naval exercises occurring in the East Mediterranean, there has been demonstrable growth in activity since 2015, including 37 exercises through November 2020, even with COVID-19 causing several exercises to be cancelled. To the left, Figure 1 shows the number of naval exercises occurring in the region has more than doubled from 12 in 2015 to 27 in 2019. Part of this growth is likely due to the more recent availability of tracking such events via websites and social media, but can also be attributed to heightened activities in the region. With the discovery of valuable gas fields, exploration and drilling has become paramount to the regional powers, causing a build-up in their respective navy's presence around their fields. Countries like Cyprus



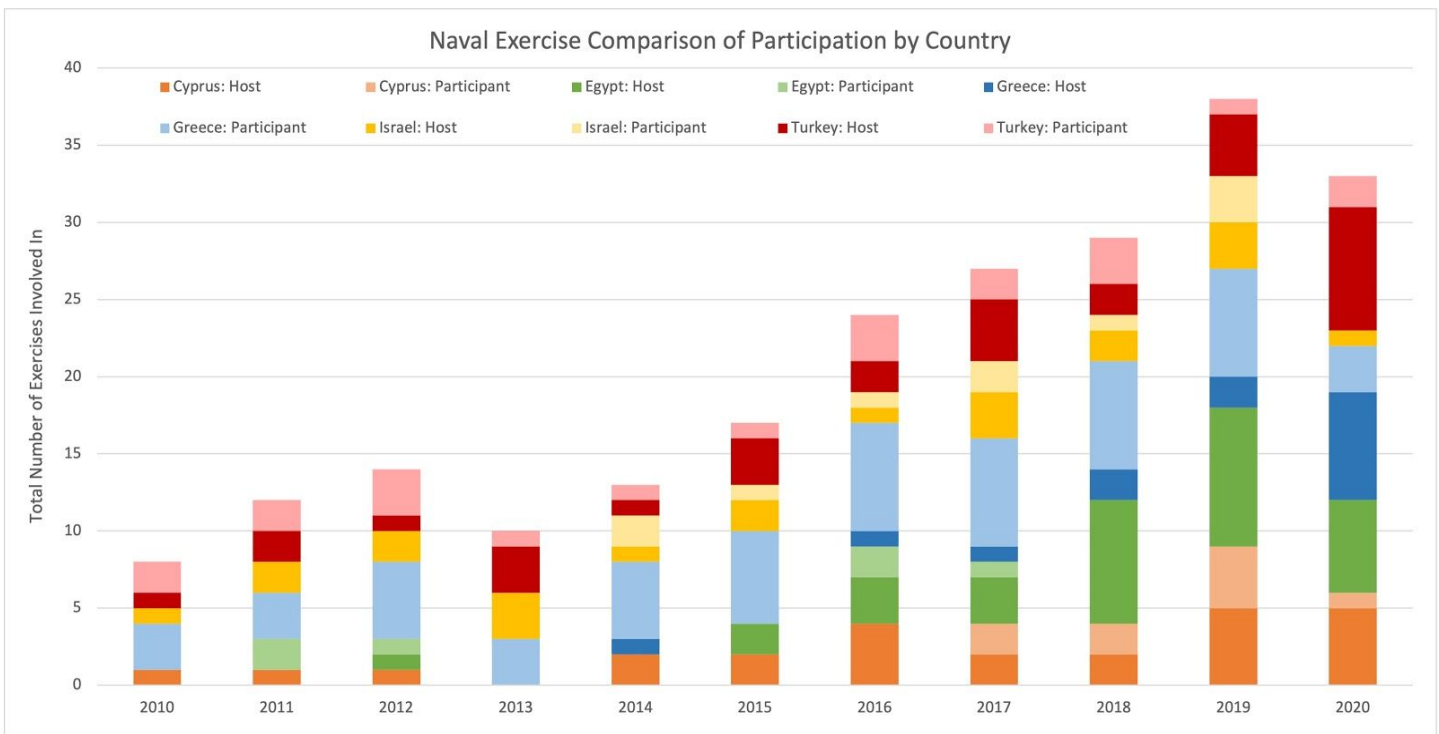


have taken a bigger part in naval activity recently, going from taking part in four exercises in 2018 to nine in 2019, joining an annual exercise called Noble Dina alongside the Israel and the US (which used to include Turkey) and upping cooperation with France to defend it's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This overall increase in activity is also affected by the souring of Israeli and Turkey's relationship since 2010, on top of Turkey's refusal to acknowledge Cyprus as a sovereign state. Egypt has played a minor role in these specific tensions, but have trended towards participating in exercises alongside Cyprus, Greece, and outside powers. They have more recently threatened getting further involved in the Libyan Civil War due to Turkey supplying arms to the Government of National Accord (GNA) in defiance of the UN arms embargo towards Libya. Since August, tensions have sharply escalated between Turkey and Greece related to drilling rights in the region as well. To compare the increased roles that these powers are playing within the region, Figure 2 below demonstrates how Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel and Turkey

have expanded their navy's presence in the East Mediterranean.

Outside Powers

As the East Mediterranean region has become a global area of interest, various outside powers have looked to increase their influence and also offer their assistance as needed. The United States, Russia and China have all indicated their attentiveness to seeing how events unfold in the region, and shown interest in defending their allies. Cooperation between regional and outside powers has also grown, and both France and the US have participated in exercises with nearly all of the East Mediterranean powers. The US' participation is also reliant on the strong relationship it has with Israel and the Souda Bay Naval Base which hosts the US, NATO and Hellenic navies. Russia's increased presence starting in 2015 can also be explained by their establishment of a naval port in Syria due to their involvement in the Syrian Civil War which has also allowed them to be involved in ongoing tensions over Libya. France has looked to increase its involvement particularly as drilling tensions have increased between Turkey, Greece and Cyprus. China has only participated in





exercises with Russia or Egypt for their three total.

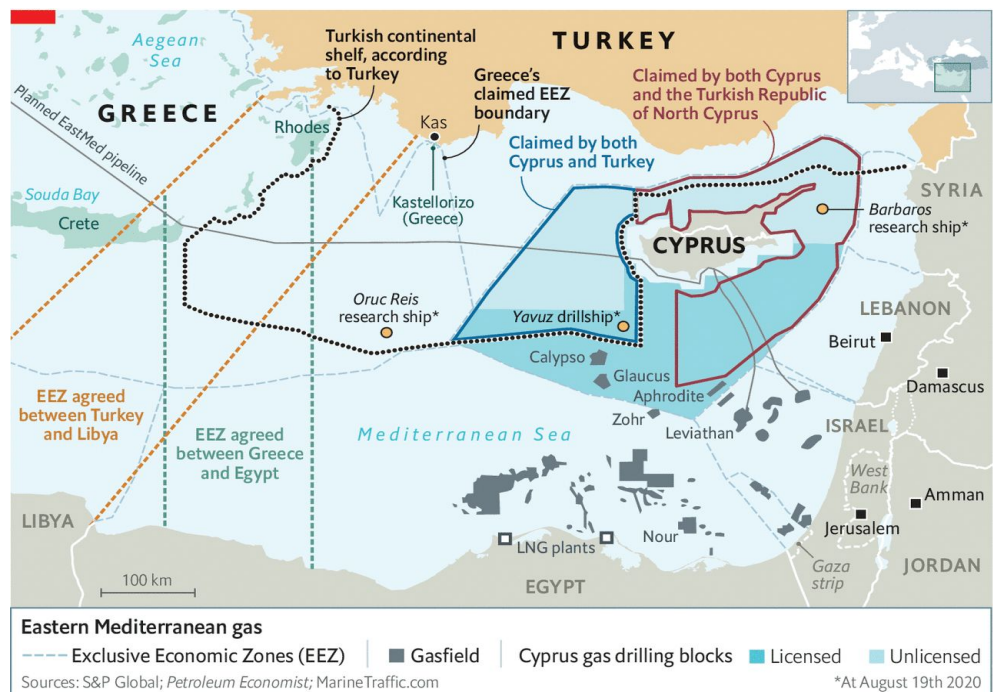
The increase in naval activity in the East Mediterranean should not go unnoticed, as drilling and exploration of gas fields have the potential to further escalate existing tensions. In some ways, these exercises are a show of force, to defend their rights and flex the cooperation built between allies, but in others have been responses to skirmishes and contesting one another's rights for drilling and exploration. These naval events represent a microcosm of the geopolitical balance in play in the region, and show how repeated iterations of cooperation indeed build stronger relationships at both military and diplomatic levels.

Subtopic 2: Drilling Activity

The drilling dispute between Turkey and Cyprus began heating up in early 2018 when the Turkish navy blocked an Italian drill ship that had been authorized by Cyprus, triggering a diplomatic standoff. A year later, Turkey sent two drill ships to search for oil and gas off the coast of Cyprus, leading to pushback from not only Cyprus, but the EU and US as well. The EU responded by halting dialogues with Turkey and drawing up a list of economic sanctions against the Turkish drilling activities. These sanctions were extended through November 2021 by the European Council. And in August of 2019, ministers for Greece, Israel, Cyprus and the US met in Athens to agree on enhanced cooperation for energy and cyber security. Late

in the year, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned against Turkey engaging in illegal and unacceptable drilling activities, and this year announced Cyprus' inclusion in the IMET program; in September, a one-year halt to the US embargo on Cyprus began to show support in their dispute with Turkey. Cyprus, Greece and Israel have also announced their intention to collaborate on the 'EastMed project,' a proposal for a 1900km pipeline to bring gas through the region into Europe. This project even gained an institutional form with the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, adding members Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority whilst sidelining Turkey.

In response to regional isolation, Turkey has doubled down on its support for the GNA. In response, the EU established Operation Irini, a naval mission intended to support the UN arms embargo against Libya. In June, French accusations of Turkish warships not responding to a French warship's call to inspect a vessel led to a NATO investigation of Turkish activity. As



The Economist



a result, France withdrew from NATO's Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean

Figure 3

Sea on 1 July. This was preceded by the EU asking NATO for enforcement assistance of the arms embargo under Operation Irini. As Turkey continues to support the Tripoli-based GNA, it puts itself on a path toward conflict with other East Mediterranean powers such as Egypt, who supports the rebel Libyan National Army (LNA), and Greece.¹ As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Libya and Turkey which demarcated EEZs across the Mediterranean (and overlapping onto Greek territory), Egypt and Greece signed a similar MoU in August to demarcate their own maritime jurisdictions.

In the same month, a Turkish research vessel accompanied by naval ships sailed into the Sea of Crete, which had been warned against by Greece. One of the Greek patrols in the area collided with one of the Turkish frigates on August 12, which rapidly escalated tensions between the two countries. Since these provocations, there has been a sharp increase in both the amount of naval exercises being conducted, as well as the threats of sanctions against Turkey for their actions. The events with the research vessel were precluded by Greece and Turkey signing an EEZ agreement to offer drilling rights in the East Mediterranean, which Turkey reacted to negatively.

Questions to Consider:

To what degree does the country I am representing care about the countries most involved in these tensions? What role has my country perhaps played at the negotiating table thus far, and if they have not been involved, which actors would I be allied with?

Are these naval exercises a sign of a breakdown of diplomacy, and with what jurisdiction can the UfM adjudicate the actions of its member states?

¹ The Second Libyan Civil War (2014-2020) was fought primarily by the GNA and LNA, and after the UN arms embargo placed on Libya, criticisms of Turkey arose for backing the GNA and continuing to supply arms. See here for more information: <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/whos-who-libyas-war>.



Topic B: Migrant Crisis

Overview

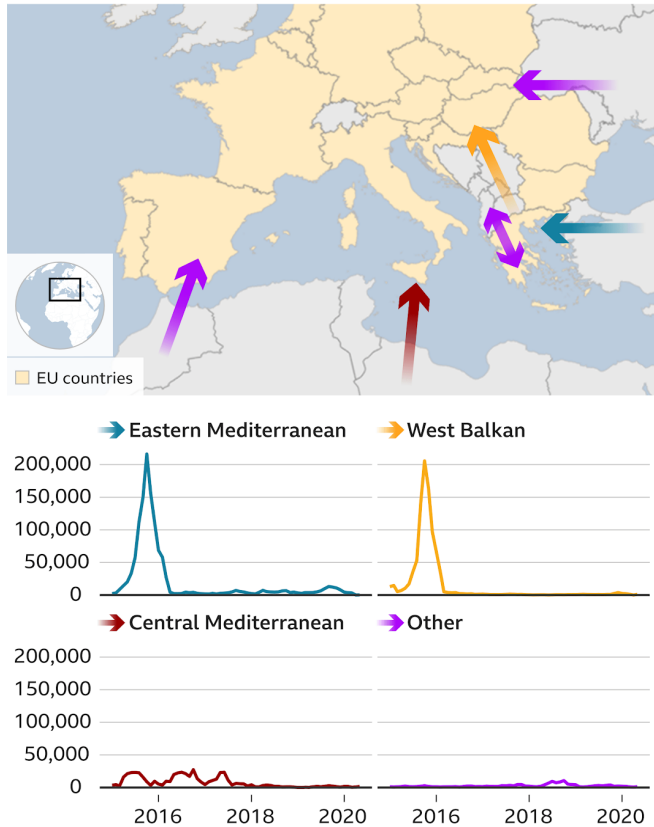
The European migrant crisis occupied the international spotlight in the mid-2010s. Though the European Commission declared the crisis to have ended in March 2019, refugees still traverse the Mediterranean Sea and through other paths to make their way to Europe. Considering the regional relevance of this issue to the Union for the Mediterranean, many member states still find themselves occupied with their refugee populations and their longer-term integration. The shipwrecks of overflowing migrant vessels take the lives of hundreds of migrants fleeing their countries of

origin every year. Even after the peak of the crisis in 2015/2016, asylum applications to the EU remain over three times as great as average numbers during the 2000s. Syria was the largest source of asylum applicants in 2016 and was a member of the UftM, though the country was auto-suspended in 2011. In recent years, Libya (an observer of the UftM) has also come under fire for evidence of mistreatment of migrants who have been returned to detention facilities under the direction of the Libyan Coast Guard. Each member of the UftM has no doubt been impacted in some way by this crisis, and this meeting allows each member to create collaborative proposals for addressing both short and long-term concerns in a proactive manner.

Figure 4

Which routes have migrants followed into Europe?

Illegal border crossings, 2015 to 2020



Source: Frontex



As shown in Figure 4, different regions within the Mediterranean have been impacted differently by this crisis. The majority of capsized vessels occurs in the Central Mediterranean, while the greatest numbers of migrants travel across or through the East Mediterranean and Eastern European regions. Land and sea crossings require distinct approaches by governments, and coordination between the local, federal and regional levels. Additionally, general migration policy and asylum policy are treated differently by each member (considering each country plays a different role in the migration pattern), so creating consensus in a forum like the UftM will necessitate nuance. The EU takes precedent for many of the UftM member states, so navigating a comfortable middle ground will be a difficult yet worthwhile process.



Recent Developments

In November 2020, the European Union presented its “New Pact on Migration and Asylum,”² intended as a legislative proposal on the EU’s approach. Agreement between EU member countries on migration marks an important step forward on these issues, but the forum of the UfM can allow for greater efforts of diplomacy that straddles the Mediterranean. The main pillars of this pact involve streamlining the migration and asylum systems, principles for fair sharing of responsibility and solidarity, and crafting a stronger legal framework within the EU itself. This pact is an important starting point for many members and should bolster the abilities of some countries to make stronger commitments on this topic.

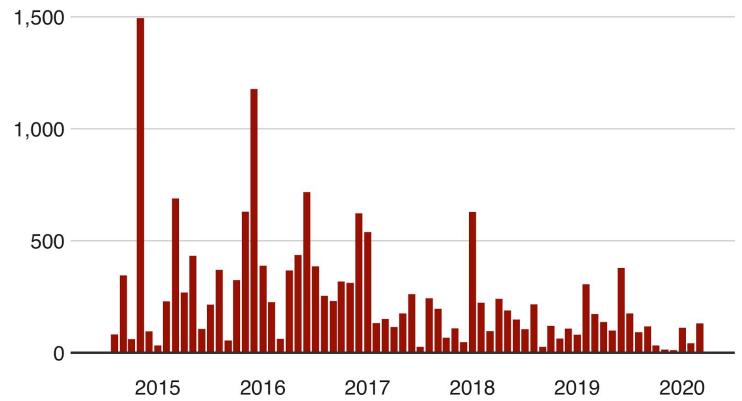
With the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing, there are implications of further patterns of migration once wealthier countries begin distributing vaccines to their broader population. The virus also creates additional concerns for the overcrowding of migrant facilities, on top of the alarms already raised about certain refugee camps around the Mediterranean. As new strains of the virus continue to spread, it will be imperative that states remain cognizant of the vulnerability migrant populations face from the primary and secondary impacts of COVID-19.

Data collected within the past year suggests that the largest migrant numbers have originated from Tunisia, overtaking Libya as the number one spot for migrants to make their way across the Mediterranean. Tens of thousands of migrants are living in camps across the Greek islands, whilst migrant employment in Germany appears to be an upward trend, but with only 49% earning employment over five years. The current data suggests that there is still a necessity for long lasting solutions to refugee and asylee issues here at the UfM.

² See ‘Further Resources’ below for more information.

Figure 5

Migrants dead and missing in the Mediterranean by month



Source: IOM Missing Migrant Project



Questions to Consider:

What attitudes about emigration and immigration does my country embody in a broader sense? Has the ‘migrant crisis’ which began in 2015 impacted these views positively or negatively, and what federal policies have been enacted in reaction to this crisis?

What role does my country play more specifically in the migration route? How does being a thorough-fare, destination or start point create unique challenges for citizens and non-citizens?

Though the peak of the crisis has passed, what longer term ramifications have been created at a local, regional, federal, and international level?



Further Resources for Delegates:

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HowUfMWorks-20200528-25.pdf>

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/12/09/is-there-a-new-window-of-opportunity-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-crisis/>

<https://www.courthousenews.com/eastern-mediterranean-turns-into-source-of-gas-and-conflict/>

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/turkey-europe-and-the-eastern-mediterranean-charting-a-way-out-of-the-current-deadlock/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53764449#:~:text=Five%20years%20since%20the%202015,die%20so%20far%20this%20year.&text=But%20people%20are%20still%20drowning,they%20try%20to%20reach%20Europe.>

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- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/craighooper/2019/12/16/get-ready-to-rumble-war-drums-in-the-mediterranean-sea/#26555b545fc1>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/turkish-navy-deports-israeli-ship-cyprus-territorial-waters-191215062253581.html>
- https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/eastern_med/timeline
- <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-libya/french-navy-intercepts-turkish-ship-carrying-weapons-libya-ria-novosti>
- <https://ahvalnews.com/eastern-mediterranean/countries-embroiled-east-med-issues-seek-project-naval-power-analysts>
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https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1706

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>