

Section 8 – Relazioni internazionali

Panel 5. Assisting them at their home? Italian and European Security Policies in Sahel and North Africa

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In January 2018 Italy's parliament approved an increased military presence in Libya and the deployment of troops in Niger and Tunisia. As stated by the Italian government, the goals of the missions were to "guarantee stability in the area", providing security assistance and capacity building. Officially, Italy aims to support African countries mainly to "fight illegal trafficking of migrants and terrorism". In line with the last White Paper (2015), Italian Defense started to focus on the "Enlarged Mediterranean" as a key-strategic area, relocating troops from Afghanistan and Iraq to Sahel and Northern Africa. At the same time, several diplomatic and development initiatives have been planned in the region. Also, the EU and European countries (such as France) have been extremely active in Sahel and Northern Africa, with manifold political and military efforts. By combining different methodological approaches, as well as junior and senior scholars from different fields (IR, security studies, defense and foreign policy, area experts), the panel aims to investigate the patterns of (political and military) involvement of Italy, the EU and other European countries in the region. A comparative perspective and a multi-scalar focus would allow analyzing variations across national and multilateral approaches, but also reconfigurations at local level. The panel would like to collect papers that provide new evidence on the ways through which Italy, the EU, and other European countries have addressed the "instability at the Southern borders", especially concerning:

- The main traits, problems, consequences, and opportunities in security-assistance approaches in the region;
- A critical perspective on the securitization of, and responses to, "failed states", including capacity-building, state-building and stabilization;
- The strategic shift of the Italian foreign policy towards Sahel and Northern Africa;
- The coordination, cooperation, and conflicts between European countries, both at EU level as well as on the ground;
- The security-development-migration nexus in the region;
- The decision-making processes that have led to the deployment of troops;
- Different approaches and tensions in "the fight against illegal migration and terrorism";
- The reconfiguration of local governance in the framework of influence competition and changing priorities of foreign assistance;
- The ambiguous status of informal networks and non-state actors in the framework of security-assistance.