



Challenges for Catalonia in the new geopolitical context of the Mediterranean



CATALUNYA
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Report IV

CHALLENGES FOR CATALONIA IN THE NEW GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Executive summary

1. Del Consolat de Mar a la Catalunya contemporània: 750 anys de projecció catalana a la Mediterrània

- The Consulate of the Sea was a fundamental institution, articulating Catalonia's commercial interests in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages.
- The Consulate of the Sea was a source of expansion of Catalan law and customs in the Mediterranean, leaving a strong mark on international maritime law that lasted centuries.
- The existence of a centuries-old institution such as the Consulate of the Sea can and must be a source of inspiration to recover and strengthen Catalonia's projection in the Mediterranean.

Pere Ripoll is a professor and research of history of law at UPF and URV.

2. The geopolitics of migration crises in the Mediterranean

- The combination of climatic, economic, and security crises will increase migration flows from the South to the Northern Mediterranean over the next decades.
- Catalonia needs to overcome its purely moralistic approach to migration. Catalonia's migratory policy should be based on the interests of the Catalan people and on the real possibilities of guaranteeing integration and coexistence from a cultural and linguistic point of view.
- In this respect, Catalan authorities must be prepared to comply with international commitments when the circumstances arise, including border control.
- It is essential to contribute to mitigating the structural causes of emigration in the source countries while considering the material and legal possibilities available to Catalonia today.

Daniel Roldán is a specialist in the European Union, the Middle East, and North Africa.

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3. Geoeconomics and security in the Mediterranean: perspectives from Catalonia.

- In the Mediterranean context, as in the rest of the world, we are beginning to see greater overlap between security, industry, connectivity infrastructure, and trade.
- The Western Mediterranean offers a less conflictive context than the Eastern Mediterranean, making it easier for Catalonia to project its interests.
- The development of inter-Mediterranean connectivity networks offers new economic opportunities for Catalonia.
- Catalonia must design its industrial policy to increase its sovereignty linked to the opportunities offered by Mediterranean connectivity.

Miquel Vila is the executive director of the CGI, specializing in geopolitics and China.
Rosa Cabús is a specialist in security and in the Middle East and North Africa region.

4. Regionalism and regionalization in the Mediterranean

- The Mediterranean has an underdeveloped institutional architecture compared with the economic and cultural importance of the region. This means that it lacks structured institutional frameworks for cooperation between East and West and that North-South relations are mostly developed within the framework of the EU rather than through international organizations within the Mediterranean area itself.
- The Union for the Mediterranean is a sclerotic institution that has not fulfilled the objectives for which it was created since countries do not use it as a structured forum or as a vehicle for bilateral cooperation policies.
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- At the civil society level (regionalization), the Mediterranean has a dense network of regional institutions. Still, although Catalonia hosts the headquarters of important bodies in Barcelona, such as the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Mediterranean, it is far behind France and Italy, which gather most institutions.

Jofre Rocabert is specialist in international organizations and West Africa.

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Recommendations

Recovering Catalonia's historic legacy in the Mediterranean and making it an integral part of an inspiring story for the Catalan nation.

We believe that Catalonia must better incorporate the historical legacy of the Catalan Mediterranean to reinforce the logic, coherence, and legitimacy of the framework of our external relations. Reinforcing our national identity, projecting it with a narrative that does justice to the Catalan historical reality. In addition to incorporating these elements in a transversal way, specific actions can help in this direction, such as revitalizing and empowering historical institutions like the Consulate of the Sea.

Designing a realistic migration policy based on the interests of Catalan citizens and avoiding moralizing tendencies.

Catalonia cannot adopt an unrealistic discourse, freeing itself of any responsibility for migration policy. In this regard, without betraying its values, Catalonia must take a favorable approach to border control which responds to the interests of its citizens and not to virtue signaling. This also means that these approaches must be formulated within the currently limited tools available to Catalonia's self-governing institutions and the national and linguistic emergency in which the country finds itself.

Building a Mediterranean relations policy through selective bilateral relations beyond ineffective international institutions.

Catalonia must develop its engagement policy with the region, targeting specific actors that may share common interests. This policy must be built through concrete actions at the institutional level, trade missions, delegations, economic links, cultural exchanges, and joint development projects.

Make Catalonia's (re)industrialization the priority axis of Catalan economic policy in the Mediterranean.

Catalonia needs to take advantage of the new geoeconomic context in the Mediterranean. Catalonia should combine its vibrant technological sector, the logistical capabilities of the Catalan territory, and its energy sector to promote the re-industrialization of the country. Understanding that Catalonia's industrial and economic projection in the Mediterranean is a fundamental element empowering.





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