



**Demographics and Resource Use:
The EU's Interest
in Assisting
MENA Countries**

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Foreword

Discussion of the issue of population growth in academia often suffers distortions through a political lens, reductivist reasoning, a myopic timeframe, or simply a lack of breadth of scope. This report, by contrast, has its analysis and recommendations rooted firmly in the data which is leveraged dispassionately to inform EU strategy.

Contrastingly to Europe, where population declines are expected and governments will have to grapple with issues of aging populations and declining workforces, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is poised for exponential population growth. This growth, if not managed effectively, could strain resources and potentially destabilize the region, leading to mass migration and political upheaval.

Far from crude Malthusianism, this essay provides a comprehensive analysis of the potential impacts of population growth in the MENA region and outlines a series of measures that could be taken to mitigate these effects. It highlights the importance of proactive planning and international cooperation in addressing these challenges. The proposed solutions, which include effective voluntary family planning, a transition to clean and renewable energy, and efficient usage of water supplies, are feasible and in line with wider EU objectives on women's rights and the environment.

Others, including reducing barriers to private sector investment and basic education, are independently desirable and will help address poverty directly and through their effects on population. Together, these mean investments in technology, consultations with MENA governments, and wider strategic engagement with the region.

As you read on, I invite you to consider the interconnectedness of our world and the shared responsibility we all have in ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for all. The challenges are significant, but with informed understanding, proactive planning, and international cooperation, they are not insurmountable.

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Executive Summary

As the population grows in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), countries in the region will struggle to provide appropriate living standards for their residents. The decline in living conditions will gradually expose the ineptitude of the region's governments and will cause massive migration out of MENA unless comprehensive plans are drawn and immediate steps are taken. Such a migration would flow into the European Union, straining its resources and institutions.

The EU could be an important ally for MENA countries as they try to prevent a deterioration of living standards. With assistance from the EU, MENA countries could improve circumstances for their residents through several cost-effective measures, such as providing effective voluntary family planning, supporting a transition to clean and renewable energy, and introducing efficient usage of water supplies.

Introduction

The world population is currently estimated to be more than 8 billion and will be close to 10 billion by 2050.¹ The extraordinary growth can be attributed to increased longevity as a result of widespread improvement in “public health, nutrition, personal hygiene and medicine, and on the other hand, the persistence of high levels of fertility in many countries.”² Most of the population growth is occurring in developing countries, a trend that will continue well into the future. Close to 50% of the projected increase in the world's population from today until 2050 is anticipated to take place in a few large countries within the developing world, and the share of the developing world population will increase from 66% in 1950 to 86% by 2050.³ Moreover, the population of the developing world is young and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

Increases in population will strain the governments of developing countries, translating into more demand for food, water, health care, jobs, and energy, among many other needs. Simply put, it will be more difficult for “low-income and lower-middle-income countries to afford the increase in public expenditures on a per capita basis that is needed to eradicate poverty, end hunger and malnutrition, and ensure universal access to health care, education and other essential services.”⁴

The failure of governments in MENA to address quality-of-life issues as the population grows could lead to a complete collapse of their political systems, as witnessed in countries such as Libya and Syria. Current trends are paving the way for massive migration to European countries, which could experience similar strains in providing satisfactory living conditions. Given its status as a destination for migrants from the MENA region and its proximity to the region, the EU would be an important partner for MENA countries in their efforts to improve quality of life for their residents. The EU could assist MENA countries in adopting effective voluntary family planning, moving toward more reliance on clean and renewable energy, and implementing efficient water management practices.

Obstacles to a Better Quality of Life

Demographics

Population growth provides a glimpse of future trends of different regions. Governments have to react through outlining plans for either direction the population growth is heading. But it is insufficient, in our increasingly globalizing world, to focus solely on one country's borders. Population growth has a ripple effect, as the Syrian civil war has shown. It is therefore imperative to implement policies that address this issue not only at home but also abroad.

Despite the projected increase of the world population, the populations of most of the developed world will decrease. Europe, for example, will reach a peak of 449 million in 2026 and will start decreasing to 441 million in 2050 and 416 million in 2100 because of low fertility rates.⁵ Another important factor is aging brackets as the young population decreases while the population over 50 years old increases. Youth in the EU will account for less than 15% by 2050.⁶ On the other hand, the European population aged 80 or above will increase from 6% to nearly 15% by 2100.⁷ This shift will increase the dependency ratio, i.e., the number of working-age individuals for every older person. Population “projections suggest that the EU-27 old-age dependency ratio will continue to climb and will reach 56.7% by 2050, when there will be fewer than two persons of working age for each older person.”⁸

Although the effects of population decrease vary from one country to another, the effects on major European countries will depend on the level of migration. The population of Italy, for instance, has been shrinking since 2014 with a total loss of more than 1.36 million inhabitants.⁹ The shrinkage of the population entails other consequences such as falling productivity, decreased innovation and economic growth, and increased welfare costs.¹⁰

Spain will undergo a similar process. It is estimated that the country will lose 5.3 million residents – or 11% of its population – by 2050, and Spaniards above 65 will constitute nearly 35% of the population.¹¹ The population of Spain, however, grew by 267,000 in 2018 because of immigration to the country.¹² Germany will also benefit from immigration. Although in 2006 it was estimated that Germany's population would decrease from 82.5 million in 2005 to nearly 69 million in 2050, the numbers have been adjusted.¹³ In 2022, the population increased to more than 84 million because of refugees coming from Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq.¹⁴

The arrival of immigrants will not reverse Europe's population decline, but it will slightly offset this trend. In recent years, because of conflicts and worsening conditions around the European continent, the number of asylum seekers increased by 34% from 2021 to 2022. However, despite the positive effects of this inflow, there are adverse ramifications. The 2015 crisis in Europe spawned the increased popularity of right-wing political parties and limited the EU's ability to take in more migrants.

In contrast to the projections of the European population, MENA will experience an exponential population growth. The population of the region has quintupled since 1950 from below 110 million to 569 million in 2017.¹⁵ The total fertility rate of MENA was approximately 6.5 from 1975 to 1980.¹⁶ The region was one of the highest in terms of population growth in the world, with annual growth of 2.1% between 1990 and 2003.¹⁷ For example, Algeria's population will exceed 72 million in 2050.¹⁸ Iraq, which had a population of 41 million in 2021,¹⁹ is expected to reach 75 million by 2050.²⁰ Currently, the population

growth rate in MENA is 1.7%, which is higher than the 1.3% world average. Despite predictions that population growth in MENA will decrease to 1.3% by 2030, the population is expected to double in size by 2050.²¹ This will have a tremendous impact on the economy because numerous studies have pointed at the adverse relationship between rapid population growth and economic performance.

Such robust population growth will make it harder for MENA governments to provide adequate resources, including energy and water. Moreover, with the least arable land per person in the world, the MENA region will not be able to absorb the population increase at the current rate.²² Population growth can reduce general well-being.²³ These negative effects impact mostly poorer families, and “the associations between larger family size, poverty incidence and vulnerability to poverty are strong and enduring. These results have important implications for efforts at poverty reduction.”²⁴ The larger the family size, the less that family can save, and the family will be unable to provide all of its children with schooling, which, in turn, increases child labor.

No government in the developing world, except for some oil-rich countries, has been able to eradicate poverty while simultaneously having a high fertility rate.²⁵ To the contrary, countries that have adopted voluntary family planning had their economic development accelerate.²⁶ Lower fertility rates, other studies have found, help in reducing poverty and are associated with improved schooling and health of children,²⁷ increased participation of women in the labor force, improved maternal health, and higher household earnings.²⁸

In addition, MENA will be severely affected by climate change; it is already suffering the repercussions in terms of increased heat. Low fertility can “help the poorest countries’ efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change so that the shocks affect fewer people, and more resources per capita are available for coping with them.”²⁹

Women, naturally, are the most vital part of any family planning. With more access to reproductive services, women find it easier to move out of poverty. Additionally, empowering women with more education helps in implementing successful family planning. The mere completion of secondary education for women would significantly reduce childbirths.

Even though migration from MENA will mitigate the decreasing population of the EU to a certain extent, European countries will be unable to absorb all the potential immigrants. Many millions of immigrants will seek a better life, and the closest destination is the European Union. By comparison, the migration that precipitated the 2015 crisis in Europe consisted of less than 1 million migrants. Therefore, it is imperative to devise a strategy to address this impending predicament through improving living standards in MENA.

Another important factor of this growth is the number of the youth within MENA. In 2018, there were 80 million youths living in MENA; by 2050 there will be approximately 271 million children and youth (0-24 years) living in the region.³⁰ Governments need to build a solid basis for this young population to thrive. The youths of MENA aspire for improvements in the social, economic, and political spheres, and without meaningful change, this segment will seek transformation through non-peaceful means.³¹ However, governments in the region have proven strikingly incapable of maintaining continuous investment in education, infrastructure, job creation, and more.³² Individuals between 15 and 19 constitute approximately 30% of the population in MENA. Simultaneously, the youth unemployment in 2022 stood at 30% in North Africa³³ and nearly 26% in the Arab world in 2021.³⁴ For women

and girls, the number is much higher at 42.1% in 2021.³⁵ Lack of economic development, in combination with other factors such as poverty, paves the way for conflict and civil war.

Unfortunately, governments in MENA have proven inept at reforming their political systems and absorbing public discontent. The Arab Spring is a clear example of the mounting pressure in the MENA region that will only increase as unemployment grows alongside the population. Moreover, the urge to immigrate will increase as living standards deteriorate. In fact, MENA, although it constitutes 5% of the world population, is the source of “47 percent of its internally displaced, and 58 percent of its refugees – the latter growing from 34 percent in 2000.”³⁶ When the global population of forcibly displaced grew from 43 million in 2009 to 70 million in 2018, most of the added tens of millions came from countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.³⁷

Energy Demands and Costs

Booming population growth will, naturally, increase the demand for energy in many countries within MENA that either subsidize energy or rely heavily on its export.³⁸ Subsidizing energy can ultimately contribute to economic and social development and help the lower-income section of society to save more money. This was the initial aim of many MENA countries; however, energy subsidies began to distort prices and led “to underinvestment in some of the region’s energy sectors, to fuel shortages and encourage large-scale cross-border fuel smuggling.”³⁹ Energy subsidies have also transformed into an unsustainable budgetary burden with a pressing need to reform energy prices. According to the IMF, for example, energy subsidies in the MENA region constitute nearly 13% of the region’s GDP.⁴⁰

Algeria and Iraq, for instance, both provide energy subsidies and rely heavily on the export of fossil fuels. The rentier nature of the Algerian economy was integrated into its public policy for decades, and socialism became one of the pillars of establishing legitimacy in the country. In this centralized economy, indirect energy subsidies amount to 7.7% of the budget, which is a fraction of other subsidies as well.⁴¹ The Algerian budget is excessively dependent on the export of hydrocarbons, which make up nearly 94% of the country’s income, and it is affected by fluctuation in the global market.⁴² The increase in population means that the government’s exports of oil and gas will decrease to meet the growing domestic needs of the country. In other words, the government’s budget will continuously shrink with population growth.

Iraq, in many aspects, is in a similar situation. The Iraqi government spends more than \$6.5 million a day for energy subsidies,⁴³ and its electricity sector relies mostly on fossil fuels.⁴⁴ The Iraqi economy is considered as one of the most dependent economies in the world on oil as it constitutes more than 90% of the government’s revenue.⁴⁵ Looking ahead, the Iraqi government will shift much of its energy production from export to domestic demand, steadily decreasing a budget that relies mostly on oil exports. Similarly, Algeria is lagging in its transition from fossil fuels, and it is only generating 3% of its power from renewable energy. Some predictions indicate that if Algeria does not add “significant renewable resources to its power generation mix by 2035, it will need to forgo hydrocarbon export revenues to supply domestic power demand.”⁴⁶

Egypt and Morocco have also provided energy subsidies, but they have imported most of their energy needs. For decades, the Egyptian government has subsidized energy despite the rise in prices in recent years. The government paid nearly \$3 billion to subsidize diesel alone.⁴⁷ Although Egypt started to reduce energy subsidies in 2014 to address its budgetary

deficit, it was forced to increase subsidies for other products such as bread and rice, as well as social security pensions.⁴⁸ Egypt witnessed sporadic protests immediately after the reduction of subsidies because it mostly affected the poor, which constituted nearly 30% of the country's population in 2022.⁴⁹ Morocco ended subsidies of gasoline and fuel oil in 2014 and reduced the subsidy of diesel by more than 50%, but it continues to subsidize other commodities such as wheat and gas for fear of public unrest.⁵⁰ Population growth in MENA means most governments in will reap the adverse fruits of their decades-long misguided policies in terms of either subsidizing energy, relying on its export, or both.

Moving from fossil fuel to renewable and clean energy not only mitigates greenhouse emissions but also benefits the governments economically because of the high prices of oil and natural gas. This shift also increases economic growth, creates jobs, and improves public health. In addition, "cheap clean energy can directly improve the livelihoods of poor households by enhancing their economic status, increasing agricultural productivity, improving health, and saving time."⁵¹ Developing countries, however, do not have the public funds to build the structure for renewable energy, keeping in mind that foreign investment is attracted after the infrastructure is ready.⁵² Many countries in MENA, therefore, depend on fossil fuels and subsidize it for their societies even though it is inefficient and inequitable because in many "developing countries, about half of the public resources spent to support fossil fuel consumption benefits the richest 20 percent of the population."⁵³

Water Supplies

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), demand for water will increase by 55% in the next three decades and currently more than 40% of the population in the world live in water-stressed zones. Moreover, 1.4 billion people will not have access to basic sanitation and 240 million will lack access to clean water by 2050.⁵⁴ The U.N. has already warned that the world will face a 40% global water deficit by 2030, and nearly 1.6 billion people face "economic" water scarcity in which water is physically available but they do not have the infrastructure for accessing it.⁵⁵ Simply put, water governance is "about who does what, at which level of government, and how."⁵⁶ Water scarcity in MENA is more salient than in other regions, and the crisis is worsening.

Several MENA countries have water-related problems. Tunisia, for example, is witnessing its fourth year of drought, spurring the government to introduce water rationing. Tunisia's Ministry of Agriculture stated that water shortages will be disastrous for the country's harvest as crops will decline more than 500,000 tons this year. It also banned the usage of water in agriculture from April to September 2023.⁵⁷ Dams in the country have decreased in capacity by nearly 1 billion cubic meters.⁵⁸

Similarly, Algeria has been facing water shortages for many years after decades of mismanagement. Because of fluctuations of the oil market and its impact on the Algerian economy, the government had to cancel many water infrastructure projects. This is translating into more food imports as the agricultural sector is affected by water scarcity. Algeria also began to ration water, increasing its citizens' grievances against the government.⁵⁹

In Libya, UNICEF indicated that over "4 million people, including 1.5 million children will face imminent water problems if immediate solutions are not found and implemented."⁶⁰ Part of the water problem is also the years of conflict in Libya in which warring parties used water as a weapon against adversaries.

Population growth will also strain water availability in the region. MENA is considered one of the most water-scarce regions in the world, with water resource per capita at 444 cubic meters, which is less than half of the U.N. water scarcity limit of 1,000 cubic meters per person per year.⁶¹ MENA countries are mostly arid or semi-arid, meaning they receive less than 250 millimeters of annual rainfall.⁶² In fact, 12 out of the 17 countries that are experiencing extremely high water stress are in MENA, while another seven MENA countries are in the high water stress category.⁶³

Libya is the country affected the most by water scarcity in Africa, followed by Algeria, and water availability is unevenly distributed, making it challenging to manage water resources.⁶⁴ Yet water consumption has increased – because of population growth – 346% in Algeria, 337% in Libya, and 240% in Tunisia between 1962 and 2017,⁶⁵ while Morocco witnessed “thirsty protests” because of water scarcity.⁶⁶ The main cause of water insecurity is man-made: Studies show that “22% of the water shortage can be attributed to climate change and 78% to changes in socioeconomic factors.”⁶⁷ Iraq, another example, was considered a water-rich country in the 1970s but it will have the Tigris and the Euphrates dry in 2040.⁶⁸

Societies in MENA are increasingly looking for other sources of fresh water, but the gap between supply and demand will continue and will harm sectors such as agriculture. To compensate for water scarcity, many have resorted to groundwater in MENA to meet demand, but extraction is exceeding recharge. Population growth has increased this extraction, which “harms the future viability and productivity of the aquifers and, in coastal areas, may result in the intrusion of seawater into the aquifer as a consequence of the formation of large cones of depression.”⁶⁹ The misuse of water in general and groundwater in particular will have a grave impact on agriculture.

The decrease in water availability will put the food security of the region at risk because it must rely on imports of food. The agriculture sector in MENA is 70% rain fed, and it is “the largest employer in many Arab countries and contributes significantly to national economies.”⁷⁰ The repercussions of water scarcity are already being felt in Iraq. Between 2017 and 2022, many families abandoned their agricultural livelihoods, and more than 12,000 individuals from the southern part of the country migrated.⁷¹ This type of migration will be replicated in other countries such as Morocco⁷² and Egypt⁷³ that respectively have 46.8% and 25% of their populations employed in the agriculture sector. It is also noteworthy that Syria, three years before the civil war, had a crop failure that forced nearly 1 million Syrians to move to urban areas.⁷⁴

MENA has a high dependence on rainfall to cultivate crops, and climate change is expected to disrupt rainfall patterns, jeopardizing the agricultural sector with droughts. This will impact the livelihood of more than 80% of MENA’s rural population, which produce half of the region’s food.⁷⁵ Ultimately, agricultural production will fall, leading to massive migration from rural to urban areas and increased food insecurity.⁷⁶ The result will be more food imports and thus dependence, making the region more vulnerable to fluctuations in the international market.⁷⁷ MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa are the only two regions in the world where the number of undernourished has increased since the last decade of the previous century.⁷⁸ In such deteriorating circumstances, it is clear that the Arab Spring was only the beginning of social unrest that has not resolved the core problems of the region, and the citizens of MENA will continue their attempted escape from poverty and inequality in larger proportions.

Future generations of MENA will also be more susceptible to climate change, which will be detrimental to several facets of life. The region is already classified as a “hot spot” on the global scale because it is predicted that climate change will be above normal.⁷⁹ The average summer in MENA is expected to be 1 to 2 degrees Celsius hotter by 2030, and the temperature increase will continue well into the 21st century.⁸⁰ The strongest “warming is projected to take place close to the Mediterranean coast. Here, but also in inland Algeria, Libya and large parts of Egypt, regional warming by 3 C with 2 C global warming is projected by the end of the century.”⁸¹

The increase in temperature will naturally be reflected in rising sea levels. Predictions indicate that sea levels will rise from 0.1 to 0.3 meters by 2050, which will have a more severe impact on MENA than the rest of the world, affecting low-lying coasts in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, among others.⁸² Additionally, rising sea levels will impact port cities that represent economic hubs for many countries. There will be 43 port cities in MENA affected by sea level rise. According to the World Bank, a rise of 0.5 meters could displace 2 million people and result in a \$35 billion loss in Alexandria, Egypt.⁸³ This will be only a part of the 6 million refugees that will be in Egypt, with 4,500 kilometers of agricultural land flooded in the Nile Delta.⁸⁴

The Role of Inadequate Governance

MENA is facing several pressing challenges. Many countries within MENA have strained communal relations that morphed into civil unrest lasting for many years.⁸⁵ Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, and Yemen, among others, witnessed civil wars that devastated society and the economy alike and resulted in migration of tens of millions. The violence can be attributed not only to social relations but also to dilapidated political systems that have failed to improve the living standards of citizens. Although population growth is a factor in energy and water supply issues, food insecurity, and simmering violence, the common denominator for these factors is poor government.

The revolt under the umbrella of the Arab Spring is incomplete; shortly after the removal of some of the dictators, there was a regression to autocratic rule in countries that had witnessed some progress. Attempts at “industrialization and urbanization of the countries since the 1980s did not exempt the region from global trends; these trends are generally associated with an increase in the education level of society and an increasingly global network.”⁸⁶ The authoritarian nature of the regimes in MENA created barriers to reform the political system to the extent that it became unreformable. The marginalization of the youth (especially women), poor level of education, and the high frequency of conflict and violence are but a few factors that make change an insurmountable task. Moreover, government institutions are dysfunctional and bloated. In Iraq, for example, public sector employment accounts for 40% of all jobs, a number that is continuously increasing because employment in the public sector is a form of corruption.⁸⁷

The labor force has been growing, but MENA governments are failing in creating jobs. Because population growth is increasing exponentially in MENA, creating jobs is becoming one of the most pressing issues for policymakers. The growth rate is translating into a labor force entering the market, but the economic systems of the region are mostly divided between socialist tendencies and crony capitalism.

Recommendations

Any EU strategy should consider a nexus of measures that improves living standards in MENA or at least alleviates the pitfalls of population growth. Even though migration from MENA will mitigate the decreasing population of the EU to a certain extent, European countries will be unable to absorb all the potential immigrants. It is imperative to devise a strategy to address this impending predicament through improving living standards in MENA.

Slowing population growth starts with comprehensive family planning. This is one area in which the EU can provide support for MENA countries through simple measures. Providing family planning vouchers, for example, is associated with increases in contraceptive use.⁸⁸ Basic education is another method that helps reduce the fertility rate. When Iran began family planning in the late 1980s, basic education of men and women about contraception led to a decrease in the fertility rate from 5.6 to 2.6 births per woman in a decade.⁸⁹ Iraq, on the other hand, has not been as successful. Though the government introduced the National Family Planning Strategy a few years ago, the use of “modern contraceptives is about 36%. It means that many couples and individuals who need [family planning] services do not have access to them, which violates their reproductive rights.”⁹⁰ The EU can aid the Iraqi government, as well as other MENA governments in similar situations, in many ways. For example, it can provide consultation to the Iraqi government on how to implement a successful family planning program and support NGOs in educating Iraqis on family planning, especially in rural areas.

The EU can also assist MENA countries in increasing their dependence on clean and renewable energy to alleviate the impact of population growth on the environment. Reducing greenhouse emissions by moving away from fossil fuel in MENA can happen by addressing the gap between the public and the private sector. This incentive must “reduce barriers to private-sector investment by generating information for developers, improving relevant infrastructure, or changing policies.”⁹¹ In other words, while the EU is indeed playing a positive role in supporting MENA countries’ transition from fossil fuels, it can push these countries to allow the private sector to play a bigger role. The EU’s cooperation with Egypt provides an example of how the bloc is partnering with countries of the region in terms of energy.⁹²

The EU can help many countries in MENA to better manage water resources. There are many practices within MENA that can be transformed to improve efficiency of water usage. For instance, countries such as Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya can use water of inferior quality for irrigation, install tanks to store rainwater for irrigation, and improve irrigation techniques. In addition, as indicated by the OECD principles on water governance, MENA can implement more coherent plans that take into consideration water security, ensure that these policies are adequately implemented, and continuously re-evaluate the governments’ policies for more efficient usage of water.⁹³ Finally, the EU can help MENA countries introduce better desalination methods; for example, the “reuse and use of brackish waters has evolved significantly in recent years and many users in the Mediterranean region can today use these waters at affordable prices.”⁹⁴

Conclusion

Mounting population growth in MENA, in combination with deteriorating living standards, indicates concurrent crises in the region. The political order in MENA that relied on stability

as an extension of autocracy is marked by fissures threatening its very foundation. The implication of this situation is not limited to the relationship between MENA citizenry and their governments but to other basic needs. Overreliance on fossil fuel is but one detrimental policy that successive governments pursued for decades that needs to be addressed. Likewise, water scarcity is creating compounding problems that have far-reaching implications. Water unavailability touches on the basic needs of people, but it is also linked to decreased agricultural output and the diminishing of employment in that sector. It also translates to vulnerability in food security as many MENA countries will be forced to import crops, affecting their budgets. These problems are insurmountable for the governments of MENA, and unless sound policies are introduced immediately with the help of the EU, these crises will be detrimental both for the EU and MENA countries in a variety of ways. Therefore, preventive measures to preclude large population growth, reduce water scarcity, and integrate clean and renewable energy are not a luxury but a necessity.

Cooperation in the fields mentioned above will be mutually beneficial for the EU and MENA countries. The long and arduous political transition that MENA is undergoing in combination with the above-mentioned problems points at inevitable migration from many countries within the region. Though some EU members would benefit from some degree of migration to compensate for the aging and decreasing population, it will be impossible to absorb the full migrant population. Therefore, the best outcome is to assuage the adverse implications of population growth and maintain living standards in MENA. The supportive role that the EU can play is both urgent and necessary in implementing efficient family planning in countries such as Egypt and Iraq. It can also aid Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and others to have more stable water supplies for their citizens and more competent water management. Finally, the EU can lend a hand to Algeria and Tunisia, among others, to forsake fossil fuel and rely more on clean and renewable energy. Simply put, failure to act now means reaping inimical results in the coming years.

About the Author

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