ARTÍCULO

**NORTHERN AFRICA: THE AWAKENING OF A NEW FUTURE**

If we saw the situation in the northern African countries one year ago and compared it with the current situation it would be difficult for us to understand how a peaceful region ruled by long-standing regimes has unleashed the so-called Arab Spring. Nonetheless, we should compare the situation in those countries up to now with their northern neighbors’ one.

The Mediterranean Sea is the natural border between two civilizations: the Christian Western Europe and the Muslim Northern Africa, both of them derived from the ancient Roman Empire. The wealthy lag between these two civilizations is one of the biggest in Earth. Moreover, northern African people know how the Europeans enjoy wealth and freedom due to the European media broadcasting, whose signal reaches their homes, while they suffer from poverty and totalitarian regimes.

It is clear that the lasting dictatorships of Northern Africa have been overthrown by a new generation of young people brought up in the age of the media and internet who try to achieve the western standards of living. This wave of young people claims for freedom and against the rampant corruption in their governments. If they were able to set up democratic systems in their countries there would be a hopeful future for them but they would have to go through a transitional period of instability. Consequently, European Union should support these movements so as to shorten that period of transition. If so, the future of both, Europe and Northern Africa would be beneficial for them from the economic and social points of view.

Miguel Rodríguez Sanchéz