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WHAT HAPPENED IN THE WORLD IN 2014? A vision from CIDOB

Leaving 2014 behind. This was a year in which the EU was unable to completely overcome the crisis holding it back since 2008 and a year in which it also found itself surrounded by three serious conflicts: Syria, Libya and Ukraine. At CIDOB we analysed these overlapping crises while at the same time paying close attention to the apparent fragility of the main emerging powers and their impact on the world order.

2014 began with the protests in Maidan. Carmen Claudín had already warned that the Kremlin would not stand idly by as Ukraine potentially moved closer to the EU. The demonstrations in Kiev brought about the fall of the Yanukovich regime and spread tension throughout the post-Soviet sphere, adding uncertainty to the Eurasian Union project promoted by Russia. The annexation of Crimea followed by the downing of the Malaysian Airlines plane forced the EU to take a firmer stance in support of the new Kyiv government. Putin, the main advocate of the conservative turn described by Andrey Makarychev and Alexandra Yatsyk, leads a Russia with a vocational interest in strategic rivalry with the EU and the capacity to destroy the consensus between its member states. As Nicolás de Pedro and Carmen Claudín explain, Putin has opted for conflict, guided by old geopolitical calculations that are driving Russia towards an unsustainable economic situation. And although Ukraine is an eminently European issue, at CIDOB we studied its implications for Latin America and the Middle East.

At the start of 2014 our researchers warned of a year with few reasons for optimism in the Mediterranean. And, indeed, the crises have multiplied. The emergence of the so-called "Islamic State" has contributed to bringing Syria back to the top of the international agenda, even after the dismantling of its chemical arsenal and the failure of the Montreux negotiations. Héctor Sánchez and Eduard Soler explained how all this was to Assad's benefit, and added to the inventory of ignominies set out by Pere Vilanova. For his part, Eckart Woertz outlined the reasons why the economic sustainability of this new manifestation of transnational terrorism may be in doubt. If 2014 was another lost year for Syria, in Libya the evidence suggested that the country runs the risk of becoming a failed state (if it is not one already), as Francis Ghilès and Ethan Chorin argue. In the pages of *El País*, Juan Garrigues again put the focus on the role of militias and signalled the need for a process of national reconciliation. This was also the year that Gaza was bombed again. As Moussa Bourekba argues, the crisis ended with wounds unhealed and

the ingredients for a **new explosion of violence in Palestine** are still there. On the same issue, we finished the year by analysing the unusual activism of the European Parliament and the breaking of the taboo on a possible **recognition of Palestine** if the peace process remains at a standstill.

In this crisis setting, Roberto Toscano underlined the strategic importance of a successful outcome to the **negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme** and the fears of those who intend to boycott them. And what has become of the hope for democracy in the Arab world? Egypt and Tunisia are the heads and tails of the process of political opening-up begun in 2011. For Iván Martín, the 2014 **Tunisian elections** showed the fragile but unequivocal advance of the country towards democracy. By contrast, in the light of the **Egyptian elections** that installed al-Sisi, Ricard González warned of the risk of autocratic order being rebuilt on new foundations. While the two countries are politically different, they share a delicate economic situation. At CIDOB, a call for **additional financial resources** to underpin the Tunisian transition was made, and the extent to which Egypt now depends on the **financial aid of the Gulf states** was shown. Finally, this was the year in which Erdoğan was elected president of Turkey in a context marked by internal crises such as the **Soma mining accident**, difficult **relations with the EU** and the new centrality of the Kurdish question, above all, due to the siege of **Kobane**.

One of the most dramatic consequences of the conflict and insecurity in north Africa has been the increased number of refugees and internally displaced persons, many of whom attempt to reach European coastlines. Against this backdrop, Anna Bardolet insisted on the reform of asylum policies and, more specifically, proposed the creation of a **humanitarian visa**. Elena Sánchez and Eduard Soler drew attention to Spain's desire to make the critical situation in **Ceuta and Melilla** a European issue. Along with the intention to seal European borders in 2014, we observed the debate on freedom of movement within the EU with concern, as well as that held in other countries, such as **Switzerland**, where, through a controversial referendum, a decision was made to limit the settlement rights of EU residents. The new European commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, will have to tackle both dimensions in his **new migration portfolio**. These dynamics should be placed in the context of economic crisis, of new **emigration** flows and of the growth in **populism** in the old continent. The large-scale European recession has, according to Diego Muro and Guillem Vidal, provoked the **widening of the gaps** between citizens and institutions, debtor and creditor nations and among citizens themselves. We also gave attention to **new forms of citizen mobilisation**. Yolanda Onghena contributed to the debate on intercultural dynamics with her book **Pensar la mezcla** that invites us to rethink identity and difference.

The current international context is hostile. In the last issue of **Afers Internacionals** of 2014, we asked the question of how the European Union should act in such an unfavourable climate in order to maintain its capacity to influence multilateral institutions and the mechanisms of global governance. We also analysed the weight and influence of the anti-establishment movements, especially in the light of the **European parliamentary elections** in May. The previous year, along with other southern European think tanks, we attempted to show the differences between Europhobic, Eurosceptic and Euro-critical groups and, in relation to Spain, we predicted that the erosion of bipartisanship would create a **political vacuum** that could be occupied by a mixture of smaller parties, protest movements and citizens' platforms. Elina Viilup analysed the **results** of the European elections, pointing out the slight increase in participation and the fact that the resulting parliament, though more fragmented, was overwhelmingly pro-European. A new political cycle began. Carme Colomina and Elina Viilup set out the elements that would determine the success or failure of the **new Commission** led by Jean-Claude Juncker in what Carles A. Gasòliba has called a **last chance**.

Alongside the stability of its neighbours, the economy has been the EU's main priority. Thus, Jordi Bacaria put the emphasis on the European Central Bank and, specifically, on the beginning of the **Single Supervisory Mechanism**, which reaches 82% of eurozone banking assets. Finally, the Scottish vote to decide on its possible separation from the United Kingdom caught the attention of the whole of Europe. Marc Gafarot gave us the **keys to understanding a referendum** that posed the question of how Scotland's membership of the EU would be affected if it became independent, which is also a recurrent theme for Catalonia. In relation to this debate, Graham Avery **stated** that the EU would initially reject the Scots in order to accept them, pragmatically, later on, with the condition that the process leading to independence was considered constitutional.

And what has been happening in the rest of the world? At CIDOB we continued to analyse the reconfiguration of power at a global level, the dynamics of regional integration and the new and old trouble spots. One of the characteristics of 2014 was that, in addition to Russia, other emerging powers found themselves in political and economic trouble. China, with the persistent and aggravated conflict in **Xinjiang** and the protests in **Hong Kong**, and Brazil, which has entered recession and which, over the summer, faced a wave of public protests on the eve of the football World Cup. Japan has also fallen into recession. CIDOB gave special attention to Japan in 2014 in order to draw **lessons** for other economies in crisis, such as Spain's, and to gauge the **regional impact** of Tokyo's policies. Oriol Farrés finished the year by analysing the implications of **Shinzo Abe's re-election**. Lastly, in India, the sweeping **victory of Narendra Modi** began a new phase in the country's internal politics as well as its **external relations**.

In Latin America it was a year of intense electoral activity. **Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil** and **Uruguay** are some of the countries whose elections CIDOB followed closely and in which continuity prevailed. While Argentina continued to be plagued by **disputes**, as Santiago Villar explained, Mexico began 2014 with great expectations for the reforms begun by Peña Nieto, only for their viability to be thrown into question by the serious **violent** incidents in Iguala this autumn. We also analysed the reconfiguration of **regional leadership** and its repercussions for the EU: Anna Ayuso and Jordi Bacaria spent time on the analysis of the new phase that the **Ibero-American Summit in Veracruz** is beginning, arguing for greater citizen involvement. For the Americas, 2014 ends with two dynamics that offer some hope: Paula de Castro analyses why there is a real opportunity to achieve **peace in Colombia** and Anna Ayuso addresses the **normalisation of relations between the USA and Cuba**.

Such hope seems sadly remote in the case of other conflicts. **The elections in Afghanistan** brought Ashraf Ghani to power but that does not mean the end of the violence. Worse, it is extending to neighbouring countries. Emma Hooper analysed **four major challenges for Pakistan**: extremism and violence, weak government, a precarious economy and the need to change its foreign policy. A sign of the delicate situation in the country was the murder of more than a hundred children in Peshawar by the **Pakistan Taliban**.

It is certainly a gloomy landscape, but one that we trust will improve in 2015. At CIDOB we will continue to analyse the major international themes of the day, without forgetting those that are partially concealed in blind spots and go unnoticed until a crisis erupts. Europe will continue to be immersed in debates that were already present in 2014: political and institutional crisis, territorial tensions, fear of a third recession, TTIP negotiations, new economic stimulus, etc. In 2015 we will also focus our efforts on the challenges to the security order in Europe in the year that we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Accords. Twenty years after the launch of the Barcelona Process, we will consider the necessary adaptation of European policies towards the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

And following the electoral effervescence in Latin America in 2014 and the surprising announcement about Cuba, we will look into possible alterations to regional balances. Finally, 2015 will be a critical year for such large global subjects as the new sustainable development objectives, the fight against climate change, the possible slowdown of the emerging economies and the geopolitical repercussions of the fall in oil prices.