

Economic historian Bartoletto has written a short overview of energy use in the Mediterranean. Her primary interest is in showing how energy transitions happen and where the states in and around the Mediterranean are relative to the transition from hydrocarbons to renewable sources. The book includes discussion of the entire Mediterranean rather than just parts of it, which allows some comparison of strategies and challenges. The region has states like Algeria with huge oil and gas resources, states with new-found off-shore fields like Israel, and places with little or no hydrocarbon resources like Malta.

The book has five chapters and a conclusion. Most of data end with 2016, though some of the discussions includes information as late as 2018. Chapter 1 compares the countries on their economies and energy use. That data helps inform later chapters. Chapter 2 considers energy price dynamics, production and trade. The ups and downs of conflict, oil prices, and various political events drive the discussion and set up the third chapter on energy security concerns of the different countries. Chapter 4 on energy transitions and energy efficiency is the core of the book. It defines the concept and looks at past transitions in the region. Transitions have phases, as countries switch from older fuels to newer ones. Technological innovation slowly improves the performance of the new technology and associated technological systems change as well. That leads to more economic productivity (though not necessarily environmental health). Chapter 5 looks at renewables and CO₂ emissions, again in a comparative perspective. The conclusion notes that strong energy demand in the region will naturally have an impact on environmental policies elsewhere to limit climate change everywhere. The author summarizes how some of the Mediterranean countries are responding.

The volume would have been enhanced if more attention had been paid to specific policies, including more indirect ones, used by the Mediterranean. For example, the author notes increased emissions in Malta, but did not note that one reason for this was to allow more (less polluting) cars into Malta. There is no mention of the serious security discussion there about whether to close the oil-based Marsa power plant in favour of getting power from Italy. The plant was closed in 2017/18, but power cuts to the line (happening after the book was written) have caused it to be reopened. It has a very intensive demand for energy due to five desalinization plants. Yet that country has an energy and reduced greenhouse gasses plan that is being executed: An LNG gasification plant is now in operation and, like other

parts of the Mediterranean, many households use solar energy and food waste.

The book is easy to read and understand. The Mediterranean as a case region makes good sense. The region offers developing countries, energy-rich and poor countries, and highly technological ones.