



Conference on Europe's Southern Neighborhood

7 – 8 May 2013: Draft Agenda

Background

The Arab Spring has fundamentally changed the political landscape of Europe's Southern neighborhood. In the emerging environment, Islamist parties rose as the strongest political contenders for power at the 2012 elections, particularly in Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt, and are likely to continue to do well in future elections in other countries.

After decades of focusing on relations with the incumbent, authoritarian regimes and limiting dealings with Islamists, there is a strong need for the European Union to fundamentally re-think its relationship with its Southern neighbors and to establish a link to the newly emerged parties in the MENA region. Simultaneously, the relations of civil society and moderate religious groups with political Islam need to be better understood. Any such effort must be based on a wider understanding of actors' views as well as their political, economic, and social ideas and goals - something that is currently lacking in Western capitals.

Europe's engagement with its Southern neighborhood must take into account this changed operational environment in order to move beyond immediate tactical decision-making towards a more conceptual approach to transforming the EU-MENA relationship. Understanding the range of political forces within MENA remains a challenge in European and Western capitals, in part because of weak or insufficient contacts in the past, in part because these forces themselves are changing.

Concept

To begin addressing the need for a deeper understanding of the MENA actors and promote stronger interregional engagement, Carnegie hosted a one-day conference in Washington DC in April 2012 bringing together high-level representatives of Islamist parties from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Jordan to exchange and discuss their political and economic ambitions for their countries during the ongoing transition.

Expanding upon the success of this endeavor in the United States, Carnegie Europe in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the European Parliament and the Egmont–Royal Institute for International Relations is hosting a two-day conference in Brussels convening high-level representatives from the MENA region and relevant European stakeholders in order to discuss the key issues dominating the EU-MENA agenda.

DAY 1: “Understanding Political Islam: Views from Within”

7 May 2013 (Venue European Parliament, room JAN2Q2)

8:45-9:00 **Opening Remarks by Elmar Brok, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, European Parliament**

9:00-10:45 **Governing Transition: Building New Institutions after the Elections**

Despite the major political changes happening on the ground, for now the people of Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco had chosen Islamist political parties to lead the governments of their countries. How are these incumbents advancing national governance structures and institutions and what are the challenges they face? Will democratic governance be the new mainstay in these countries?

Keynote address: Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General, European External Action Service

- **Chair: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra**, Member, Foreign Affairs Committee, European Parliament

Rapporteur: Sinan Ülgen, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe

- **Speakers:**

- Repr. Ennahda Party, National Founding Assembly (Tunisia) – **invited**
- **Habib Choubani**, Minister of Relations with the Parliament & Civil Society, Justice and Development Party (Morocco) – **invited**
- **Dr. Abdul Mawgoud Rageh Dardery**, Member of Parliament, Spokesperson of the Foreign Relations Committee Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt)

10:45-11:15 **Coffee break**

11:15-13:00 **From Dictatorship to Democratic States: Citizenship, Polarization and the “Balance of power”**

Youth comprise the majority of the population in the MENA region and have proved to be the part of society that calls for real change towards the development of the region. They contribute to the need for a new definition of citizenship that provides a clear framework in which the government and its people can interact. How do Islamist governments perceive the concept of citizenship and nationality? How can the independence of the judiciary be promoted to help safeguard the concerns of the people? What is the question of the “balance of power” – how is it addressed and within what context?

- **Chair: Pier Antonio Panzeri**, Chairman, Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union, European Parliament
- **Rapporteur: Rima Maktabi**, TV presenter and journalist, al-Arabiya (Lebanon)

- Speakers:
 - **Said Ferjani**, former Advisor to the Tunisian Ministry of Justice, Ennahda (Tunisia)
 - **Mustapha Elkhalfi**, Minister of Communications, Justice and Development Party (Morocco)
 - **Gehad El-Haddad**, Senior Adviser, The Muslim Brotherhood & The Freedom & Justice Party; Executive Director, Nahda Project (Egypt)

13:00-14:30 Speakers Networking Lunch

14:30-16:15 Economic challenges: Development, Cooperation and Crisis

The twin challenge of dealing with the political transition coupled with deteriorating economic conditions put the transition to democracy and economic stability at risk. How are the current governments responding to these economic challenges and what will be the priorities and the sequencing of economic reforms. Are there any short term solutions to the youth employment crisis? Are economic policies which are being implemented guided by Islamic doctrine and if so how is this compatible with international private law and WTO rules? How can external actors be supportive of the economies in these countries with enough guarantees on the level of free-trade?

- Chair: **Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck**, Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament
- Rapporteur: **Sarah Chayes**, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Speakers:
 - **Dr. Sameh Fawzy Heinen**, Member, Shura Council (Egypt)
 - **Ridha Saidi**, Economy Minister (Tunisia)
 - Prof. Hakima Fasly, Member, Justice and Development Party; Professor, Hassan I University (Morocco) *invited*

16:15 Closing remarks by Edward Mc Millan-Scott, Vice-President, European Parliament

DAY 2: “MENA in Transition: Players, Plans, and Positions”

8 May 2013 (Venue Fondation Universitaire, rue d'Egmont 11, 1000 Brussels)

9:00-9:30 **Opening Remarks: Marc Otte**, Director Policy Planning, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; former EU Special Representative to the Middle East peace process

Keynote address: Waddah Khanfar, President, Al Sharq Forum; former Director General, Al Jazeera Network (Palestine)

9:30-10:45 **Constitution Writing: Defining the Political Framework in View of Competing Value Systems**

As countries in MENA embark on constitutional reform, they face the challenge of providing for a legitimate, inclusive constitutional process that would lead to equal power distribution, establishment of an effective system of checks and balances, ensure fair and equal representation of all societal groups, particularly ethnic and religious minorities? What is needed to build a solid base for a peaceful democratic transition? What issues in the constitutional drafting process define the political system, the electoral process and the wider definition of political rights? What is the place of religion in the constitution and how will it be addressed?

- **Chair: Marc Otte**, Director Policy Planning, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; former EU Special Representative to the Middle East peace process
- **Speakers:**
 - **Ghazi Gherairi**, former Spokesperson, High Commission on Political Reform (Tunisia)
 - **Dr. AbdulMawgoud Rageh Dardery**, Member of Parliament, Spokesperson of the Foreign Relations Committee Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt)
 - **Omar Iharchane**, Member of the general secretariat of the political department and coordinator of the bureau for studies and research, Justice and Charity (Justice et Spiritualité "al adl wa alihsane") (Morocco)
 - **Noomane Fehri**, Member, Jamhuri party (Tunisia)

10:45-11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:15-12:45 **The Social and Economic Dimensions of Transition**

Western media was quick to paint the Arab Spring as a movement for freedom and human rights. While liberal values are certainly one part of the equation, the Western perspective tends to overlook the underlying socio-economic dimensions of the transition. How can equal access to economic opportunities be enhanced and widely assured? How can a vibrant media landscape be achieved and protected from censorship?

- Chair: **Marc Pierini**, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe
- Speakers:
 - Tamer Meky, Member, Shura Council, Asala Salafi Party; Chairmen, National Security, Arab and Foreign Affairs Committee (Egypt) **invited**
 - **Dr. Mondher Ben Ayed**, Chief Executive Officer, TMI and Oradist (Tunisia)
 - **Jihad Yazigi**, Editor in Chief, The Syria Report (Syria)
 - **Ahmed Jehani**, Head, Libyan Development Policy Center; former chairman, Libya's Transitional Stabilization Team; former Minister of Rehabilitation & Reconstruction of Free Libya (Libya)

12:45-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 The Role of Regional Powers: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, Israel

With the old status quo in the MENA region unravelled, regional powers are playing an increasingly important role in keeping regional stability. With the backdrop of the Saudi and Iranian quests for power risking a deepened (religious) divide in the region, can a regional settlement satisfying all parties be imagined? Can Qatar balance its support for the U.S. and Iran without risking alienation from both sides? Where do Turkey and Israel stand during this crucial period of transition, and how will they influence the process?

- Chair: **Ambassador Marc Franco**, former Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Egypt
- Speakers:
 - **Ambassador Shimon Stein**, former Ambassador of Israel to the Federal Republic of Germany; Senior Fellow at Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) (Israel)
 - **Nadeer Bakkar**, Co-founder and Spokesman, al-Nour party (Egypt)
 - **Prof. Kayhan Barzegar**, Director, Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies (Iran)
 - **Dr. Güven Sak**, Director, Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV)

15:30-15:45 Coffee Break

15:45-17:15 New Partnership: Future Perspectives and Challenges of European-Arab relations

The Arab Spring rapidly upset the regional order, leaving Europe struggling to formulate cohesive and solid policies to react to the changing political and social landscapes. So far, European countries have reacted to the events on an ad-hoc basis, lacking a systematic and effective approach towards the Arab

Spring. Considering the influence Western powers hold in the region, how can Europe engage effectively with regional actors? What the Middle Eastern and North African governments expect from the West? How the Foreign Policy of the new Regime will look like?

- Chair: **Jan Techau**, Director, Carnegie Europe
- Speakers:
 - **Rima Maktabi**, TV presenter and journalist, al-Arabiya (Lebanon)
 - **Mustapha Elkhalfi**, Minister of Communications, Justice and Development Party (Morocco)
 - **Dr. Amr Hamzawy**, Founder, Egypt Freedom Party; Professor, Department of Public Policy and Administration, American University (Egypt)
 - **Christian Berger**, Director for North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq, EEAS
 - **Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs** repr. (tbd)

17:15

Closing remarks:

- **Bernardino León**, EU Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean region

*****Please note that this Draft Agenda is indicative and subject to change*****