

EUROPE'S SOUTHERN NEIGHBORHOOD

May 7–8, 2013, Brussels, Belgium

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 EU to fundamentally rethink 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 decisionmaking toward 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. The event brought 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. It will convene high-level representatives from the MENA region and relevant European stakeholders in order to discuss the key issues dominating the EU-MENA agenda.

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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

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DAY 1: "Understanding Political Islam: Views from Within"

May 7, 2013, European Parliament, József Antall Building, Floor 2, Room JAN2Q2

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8:45–9:00 a.m. Opening Remarks: Elmar Brok, Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee, European Parliament

9:00–10:45 a.m. Governing Transition: Building New Institutions After the Elections

In the wake of the wave of change that swept the Arab region, voters of Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco have chosen Islamist political parties to lead their governments. 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:**
 - **Aïcha Dhaouadi**, Ennahda Party, National Founding Assembly (Tunisia)
 - **Elhabib Choubani**, Minister of Relations with the Parliament and Civil Society, Justice and Development Party (Morocco)
 - **Dr. Abdul Mawgoud Dardery**, Member of Parliament, Spokesperson of the Foreign Relations Committee, Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt)

10:45–11:15 a.m. Coffee Break

11:15 a.m.–1:00 p.m. From Dictatorship to Democratic States: Citizenship, Polarization, and the "Balance of Power"

Youth comprise the majority of the population in the MENA region and were the vanguards of recent uprisings. They raise 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 citizens' rights? What is the question of the "balance of power" between state and citizen—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, Anchor and Senior Roving Correspondent, *Al Arabiya* (Lebanon)

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

1:00–2:30 p.m. **Lunch Break***

2:30–4:15 p.m. **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 unemployment crisis? Are the economic policies that 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 support 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 Henien**, Member, Shura Council (Egypt)
 - **Mohamed Ben Salem**, Minister of Agriculture, Ennahda Party (Tunisia)
 - **Dr. Hakima Fasly**, Member, Justice and Development Party; Professor, Hassan II University (Morocco)

4:15 p.m. **Closing Remarks:** Edward McMillan-Scott, Vice President, European Parliament

** Participants are welcome to purchase lunch in the European Parliament cafeteria on the ground floor of the Altiero Spinelli (ASP) building. A variety of cafés and restaurants are also located in Place du Luxembourg. Those leaving the European Parliament are kindly asked to keep their visitor badges and to reenter via the JAN building only.*