6th August 2014

An Evolving EU Engaging a Changing Mediterranean Region

Report of the Conference held on Monday 5th May 2014. Organised with the support of the University of Malta and the LLP programme of the European Union

The conference’s speakers. From left to right: Prof. Ahmed Ghoneim, Mr. Milan Pajic, Dr. Arsalan Alshinawi, Prof. Fadel Lamen, Ms. Berta Fernandez, Prof. Michele Pace, Prof. Roderick Pace, Prof. Adeel Malik, Dr. Marcello Carammia, Prof. Aylin Guney, Mr. Stefano Moncada.

The Institute for European Studies organized the second Jean Monnet Chair conference on An Evolving EU Engaging a Changing Mediterranean Region. The conference was communicated to the media three weeks before the date of the event in order to attract a good number of public participation. A number of resident academics from the University of Malta, from foreign universities, research professionals, experts and scholars were invited to the conference which was chaired by Professor Roderick Pace, holder of the Jean Monnet Chair and which took place on 5th May 2014 at Dar I-Ewropa, Valletta. The main participants were the following:
- Prof. Fadeel Lameen, Chairman Libyan National Dialogue
- Prof. Michelle Pace, Roskilde University, Denmark
- Prof. Dr. Aylin Güney, Jean Monnet Chair, Yaşar University, İzmir, Turkey
- Prof. Adeel Malik, Oxford University
- Prof. Ahmed Ghoneim, Cairo University
- Mrs Berta Fernandez, Intra-ACP Migration Facility, Brussels
- Prof. Manfred Weissenbacher, University of Malta
- Dr. Arsalan Alshinawi, University of Malta
- Dr Marcello Carammia, University of Malta
- Mr Milan Pajic, Korean Embassy to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Duchy of Luxembourg and the European Union, Brussels
- Mr Stefano Moncada, University of Malta

The conference formed part of the activities led by Professor Roderick Pace, Jean Monnet Chair and Director of the Institute focusing on research and teaching on the changes taking place in the EU and the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The conference’s output by guest speakers will feature into the publication of Occasional Papers between 5,000 and 6,000 words including footnotes (using the footnote method). Occasional Papers are either a final work or a work in progress which has already attained a sufficient level of development. These papers are currently being edited.

Publications uploaded on the Institute’s dedicated web-page after review and editing are normally notified to all networks of which the Institute is a member, namely: TEPSA, EuroMesco, FEMISE, EADI and others – including those on the Institute’s own database, alumni and press. The scope of this is to ensure the broadest dissemination.
What follows is a brief report of the presentations that took place. The main objective of the Jean Monnet Project is to analyze and assess key developments in the EU as it evolves further particularly in the light of the Lisbon Treaty and enlargement as well as developments in the Mediterranean Region following the Arab Spring. A further aim is to disseminate the findings of this project as widely as possible.

Adeel Malik – From resource curse to rent curse: toward a new political economy of the Middle East

The Middle Eastern political economy has long been studied through the prism of the resource-curse. That is: how resource riches have undermined the region’s economic and political development. While many of the region’s pathologies are rooted in an economic structure heavily reliant on external windfalls, existing literature tends to overstate the role of oil. This paper develops the case for a broader conceptualization of rents that includes, not just windfalls from hydrocarbons, but also rents derived from aid, remittances and government manipulation of the economy. Reliance on these rent streams is the “original sin” that perpetuates underdevelopment.

Discussions of Arab political economy should therefore be framed as part of a broader enquiry on the relationship between rents and development. This requires, in turn, a deeper understanding of business-state relationships and the role of regional linkages in development.
Ahmed Ghoneim - The Roots of Economic Challenges Facing Egypt in the Aftermath of the 25th Revolution

Since the revolution of 25 January 2011, the Egyptian economy has been suffering on all fronts. Almost all the economic indicators have been pointing towards a deteriorating situation, that in many cases have reached the trough. Yet, the economy is still surviving, even if all indicators have been pointing towards a near collapse. This is mainly due to the unprecedented support of some of the Arab Gulf countries, whose unconditional aid has helped to mitigate the deteriorating economic conditions.

The economic challenges facing Egypt have exacerbated after the 25 January revolution mainly because of the deteriorating political and security conditions which have interrupted the functioning of the economy. This is not to say that revolution has caused such challenges. In fact the challenges that the Egyptian economy has been facing have deep roots in the socio-political-economic context, which this paper aims at explaining. The revolution and its aftermath have brought to the forefront these challenges which have been always mitigated by short term solutions that never dealt seriously with their root cause. In addition, the revolution has brought additional problems associated with the macroeconomic imbalances. As a result, the challenges became more complex especially in the light of the need to balance the social and economic aspects. Among the main challenges there are subsidies’ reform and unemployment. These two main issues have led to the creation of additional challenges.

The paper aims at explaining the gravity of these issues while explaining the political-economic context in which they have evolved. It also aims at suggesting the different means of meeting them and how the forthcoming regime can mitigate the economic problems which Egypt is facing while lessening the associated political and social costs.

Arsalan Alshinawi - State-building in Iraq since 2003: Challenges and Lessons

In recent years, the controversy on the war on terror, the US unilateral actions in the Middle East and the efficiency of state-construction approaches generated numerous debates among politicians, diplomats and researchers. Democratization reforms, or democracy making, including military intervention, has been one the major pillars of US foreign policy, which perceives failed and rogue states as the biggest threats to world peace and prosperity in the foreseeable future. In Iraq, after the US-led invasion in March 2003, when the dictatorship and tyranny of Saddam Hussein was overthrown, the American President declared his government’s intention to ‘build a decent and democratic society at the centre of the Middle East’ that ‘will become a place of progress and peace’.

However, at the time of writing of this article, elections and parliamentary polls appeared to be in disarray after the mass resignations of election commissioners, while many soldiers and civilians were killed by gunfire and suicide bombs, amid fears of a return to the worse phase of the internal war that
tore state and society apart between 2004 to 2008. Since 2003, unrest, insurgency and violence continued, in a political and security situation that could be only be described as disastrous.

Iraq was reported as one of the world's top 5 unstable states in Failed States Index, produced by Foreign Policy magazine and the Fund for Peace. In all 151,000 violent deaths between March 2003 and June 2006 were reported by the largely local, Iraq Family Health Survey. According to the United Nations, over 1,000 Iraqis were killed in July 2013 alone, after 3,200 lost their lives in the first half of 2013.

Despite the investing hundreds of billions of dollars into the state-building structures and processes, in the past eleven years the whole country has suffered from instability, insecurity and deprivation, against a dark backdrop of heavy sectarian and ethnic tensions and disputes related to rights, territory, and sharing of political-power and economic-revenue. What many called Iraq civil war hindered economic recovery and terribly lowered living standards for most of the population, and made the eventual breakup of the country a strong possibility and the future of the country uncertain.

In Iraq, the US had to make a complete military withdrawal by 2011, after enormous losses on both American and Iraqi sides, the army occupation and the objective of wholesale political stabilisation and transformation turned into an extremely difficult task. It was demonstrated that the state-building mission in Iraq was much more complicated then at first thought, a task not undertaken since the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after the Second World War. It required solid commitment to provide massive financial, military and political resources for a long time.

In this paper, the author focuses on some of the more salient issues related to the war in Iraq, the attempts to establish democracy, constitution-building processes and state reconstruction, whether for strategic or humanitarian reasons, arguably a watershed in world politics that could for some years to come occupy research agendas in a number of sub-fields in International Relations (IR). The focus is on the main challenges of state-building in Iraq, which are multiple, some appear as more common in societies with a long history of totalitarian rule, others inherent in the post-Cold War international system, and still others, remarkably specific to a country like Iraq.

The article also surveys and interprets evidence on the US experience with governance in Iraq, underlining some of its key implications for IR theory and practice, and emphasizing the major conflicts and clashes characterizing the continuing fragmentation and ongoing disorder in Iraq. The aim is to help at increasing understanding and awareness, to benefit analysis and policy-making, in order to achieve domestic reconciliation, peace and development of the people of Iraq.

Aylin Guney - Model countries in political analysis?: is Turkey a model for State-Building in the Arab World?

This study analyzes the Turkish case as a model country for the state-building process in the Arab world in the aftermath of the Arab revolts that took place in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. To this end, it deals with
the Turkish case in three phases: the founding of the Turkish Republic, political developments until 2002, and the post-2002 Justice and Development Party period. The study focuses on state-society relations manifested in the form of a secular-religious cleavage intertwined with problematic civil-military relations. Each phase of Turkey’s history is compared to cleavages and civil-military relations in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. After analyzing the constitution-making processes in the latter three countries following the Arab revolts, the study concludes by discussing the viability of the Turkish model in the light of Turkey’s search for a new constitution.

Berta Fernandez - The movement of people in the Mediterranean Region: future scenarios and the EU Responses

In recent years, the global discussion on migration and asylum has evolved from polarization of perspectives and mistrust - to improving partnerships and fostering cooperation between countries and regions. The paradigm has shifted from control and security exclusively, to an increased awareness of the ramifications of migration into development and labor markets, the increasing demographic gap, and the dangers of exclusion faced by migrant workers (regular or irregular). It has become evident that there is a need for greater convergence of policies (migration/mobility, fundamental rights, and economic growth), with a migrant-centered approach.

The evolving demographic and economic changes have made it evident that the competitiveness of the EU (Europe 2020 Strategy) is also at stake, particularly if an adaptable workforce with the necessary skills is not secured in view of shortfalls in skill levels and serious labor mismatches. Therefore, labor market strategies for meeting needs and promoting integration of regular migrants is still a pending task for the Member States (MS) in terms of the free movement of people, but also in relation with neighboring and partner countries.

Migration is now firmly at the top of the EU’s political agenda. In 2005 the response of the European Commission (EC) to this challenge was the introduction of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), an overarching strategic framework of the EU external migration policy - revised in 2011 to include international protection and the external dimension of asylum, as well as the concept of “mobility”. The GAMM is implemented through several instruments (political, legal, and operational support and capacity-building), and relies on genuine partnership with third countries, based on mutual trust and shared interests.

However, its non-binding and flexible nature has mostly translated into little engagement and often-timid financial contributions from the Member States (MS) in the GAMM cooperation frameworks, such as Mobility Partnerships. This calls for the roles of EU actors (EU agencies, EC, and European External Action Service) and MS to be more clearly defined and for tangible engagement. Only in this way can GAMM be implemented coherently and honestly, and thereby pave the way for a future common migration and asylum policy for the EU and its neighbours.
Fadel M. Lamen - Libya’s National Dialogue: Between Revolution to Reconciliation the Necessary Foundation for Security and Prosperity

Three years after the overthrow of a brutal dictator, the Libyan people are in the midst of a struggle to define the future shape and direction of their state. The revolution that led to the collapse of the former regime left behind a society devoid of working institutions; the direct result of the previous regime's systematic disassembling of institutions and structures that could challenge the ruler's authority. The path forward is currently defined by three tracks; the political, the constitutional and the national dialogue. While drafting a new constitution and establishing representative democratic governance are important and necessary, their ultimate success or failure will hinge on a process of collective agreement around national unity, national identity and common vision for the future. These foundational elements are being established through a two phase National Dialogue process. With an official mandate, but independent of government, and specific political parties and trends, the National Dialogue is the process by which the foundation for lasting state-building will be accomplished. Drawing on international best practice and specifically the recent experience of the Yemeni National Dialogue the Libyan National Dialogue is quickly becoming a model for how this framework dialogue can overcome societal divisions to produce durable results in the Arab World.

Manfred Weissenbacher - The Geopolitics of Energy: Global Transitions and Euro-Med Impacts

In early August 2013, over two years after the Syrian Civil War had first begun, and the death toll from this war had risen above 100,000, Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan visited Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. Bandar, who may be best known for having served as Ambassador to the United States for more than 20 years, but was now heading the Saudi Intelligence Agency, attempted to convince Putin in a closed-door meeting to curb, if not to outrightly drop, support for Assad, and not to block any United Nations Security Council resolutions on Syria. In exchange Saudi Arabia reportedly offered a number of inducements, prominently featuring a guarantee that Gulf gas would not threaten Russia’s position as a main gas supplier to Europe. This episode hints at how the Euro-Mediterranean region, linking three continents, is being affected by transitions in the global energy arena. The relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia, the West’s key energy partner with strategically invaluable oil spare production capacity, is speculated to undergo a profound change in light of the shale oil and natural gas boom that allowed America’s energy import dependency to wane. (Other factors, including America’s pursuit of a nuclear deal with Iran, are playing a role as well.) Meanwhile Saudi-Russian relations, though traditionally strained because of disparate interests regarding Iran and the OPEC view that Russia has often been free-riding on OPEC production cuts to maintain oil price targets, may be warming again as they had done in the 1990s.

Qatar is another critical player. Though allegedly ridiculed by Bandar as “only 300,000 people and a television station” (referring to Al Jazeera), Qatar is now the largest LNG (liquefied natural gas) exporter and boasts the highest per capita GDP in the world. Angering its large neighbour, Qatar has been using...
its energy wealth to support the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (and Syria), with the Saudis labelling it a terrorist organization. Saudi Arabia recently recalled its ambassador from Qatar, and threatened further action that may eventually go as far as attempting to expel Qatar from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League. However, for America and Europe, Qatar remains a critical partner.

With gas reserves just below those of Russia and Iran, the massive LNG export capacity, and also the prospect of a gas pipeline to the Mediterranean, Qatar is especially relevant to the European Union that finds itself deprived of hydrocarbon resources and critically dependent on Russian gas. To diversify supply, the European Union long before the current Ukraine crisis stimulated the proliferation of gas pipelines through the Mediterranean, Algeria, which proved largely resilient to the Arab Spring movement, because the EU’s most important energy partner next to Russia and Norway. Meanwhile competition for international energy resources is steadily increasing as China’s import dependency is likewise growing rapidly.

Marcello Carammia - The Growing Scope of the EU Migration Agenda

Cooperation on migration issues in the EU started in the 1980s, as flexible cooperation outside of the treaty framework, and the Treaty of Maastricht made it a ‘matter of common interest’ in 1992. In the two decades that followed, migration became the object of feverish political activity in the EU: Subsequent rounds of treaty changes increased both the policy-making powers of EU institutions and the binding strength of migration outputs; EU institutions, in turn, approved a number of EU laws which now form a more or less coherent “EU migration policy”.

It may appear paradoxical that while the EU increased its migration-related jurisdiction, powers, capacity and outputs, criticism of the quality and effectiveness of EU migration policy increased rather than decreased. This presentation makes the somehow counterintuitive point that the two sides of the equation – increasing policy instruments and outputs, on the one side, and limited policy effectiveness, on the other side – might be strictly related. It starts by observing the growing scope of the EU migration agenda, and links that to the expansion of the field of participants to EU policy-making in migration. While the EU progresses in the development of a full-fledged migration policy, it involves more stakeholders in decision-making. Different stakeholders, in turn, advocate different interests and priorities. This makes the EU policy agenda broader, but also less focused and consistent. In addition, while incorporating migration policy within the EU institutional framework makes the decision-making process smoother, it also adds more political constraints to individual decisions.

As the EU progresses along the road of ‘integration in migration’, it increasingly resembles its Member States in terms of technical, institutional, and political constraints to migration management. This means that there is a gap between the expectations about the coherence and effectiveness of EU migration policy on the one hand, and the actual EU policy capacity on the other side.
Michelle Pace - The EU's interpretation of the "Arab Uprisings": Understanding the different visions about democratic change in EU-MENA relations

This paper focuses on how the EU has interpreted the Arab uprisings as they unfolded in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) since December 2010. EU actors have long acknowledged limits in the EU's strategy towards its southern neighbourhood, which largely bypasses the demands of local populations. The paper analyses the EU's efforts at recreating an 'enhanced' framework of support for political reforms in the south. It concludes that the EU and local partners in the south still have different 'visions' regarding democratic change, which shows the limitations of the EU's understanding of the MENA region.

Milan Pajic - The Integration of Serbia in the EU

This paper aims to provide an overview of Serbia's integration process which started with the fall of President Slobodan Milošević in 2000 and which was recently crowned with the opening of accession negotiations on 21 January 2014. The paper looks at the political developments in the area of EU integration in Serbia from the beginning of the country's integration process until the opening of negotiations. It also examines the current sentiment of the public, academia and politicians towards EU integration. Finally, it looks at the future of negotiations and what might be the thorniest areas for Serbia, as well as which EU Member States will be its main supporters for EU accession.

Stefano Moncada - Climate Change Adaptation and Development in the Mediterranean – EU Policy Commitments in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt

This research identifies key climate change impacts in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt and analyses the extent to which the political frameworks developed between the EU and these three countries address vulnerabilities created, or exacerbated, by climate change.

It does this by reviewing current available literature in the field of climate change impacts in the Mediterranean, with a focus on Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. This review includes a content analysis of the 2008-2013 Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), and where applicable of the National Indicative Programmes (NIPs), signed between the EU and Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. This analysis is undertaken with the aim of investigating the degree of attention, and political commitment, given to present and future climate change impacts in the three Southern-Mediterranean countries.

Preliminary findings suggest that there is little direct attention to climate change impacts in the CSPs, and that countries rarely refer to, or actively plan for future impacts. However, there appear to be some indirect effects stemming from planned interventions that could address those vulnerabilities being exacerbated by climate change, particularly in the agricultural sector.

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