



FEMISE Annual Conference 2011

15-16 December 2011

Marseille, France

Concept note (DRAFT- not to be circulated)

Theme: "Arab Awakening and the Role of the EU-Med Partnership"

I. Background

The uprising in most Southern Mediterranean (Arab) countries- often called the 'Arab Spring' - is a dramatic turn of events in an otherwise politically dormant region. While the process is still unfolding and the future remains unclear, one reality cannot be ignored: things will never be the same again. At this juncture, and despite the short-term losses, the region is offered a historical opportunity for a brighter future. The promise of moving toward more democratic regimes is likely to pave the way toward a new development strategy where growth and equity are central. The time is therefore ripe for the region and concerned partners to: (1) examine what went wrong in the past; (2) how best to address the challenges of the transition; and (3) chart a new pathway to achieve the dual objectives of political and economic liberalization for the benefits of most people.

The forthcoming FEMISE annual conference, which will be held in Marseille, France, **December 15-16, 2011**, will address these questions in three plenary sessions as detailed below. The speakers will build on accumulated knowledge and the experience of transition in other regions, share actual experiences on the ground and make suggestions regarding the role of the EU partnership in supporting the transition process.

The FEMISE annual conference is the right place to discuss these issues, given that it is a platform for members of the network, academics, policymakers and representatives of the EU to engage in a constructive dialogue about the future of the region and the role of the EU in supporting the process of transformation.

II. Plenary and parallel sessions of the conference

The conference will comprise: three plenary sessions focusing on the theme of the Conference; four parallel sessions involving the presentation of the output of selected research projects funded by FEMISE (through the European Commission grant); and a General Assembly meeting for members of the network.

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(1) Plenary sessions:

Plenary I: The Fall of Authoritarian Regimes and the Rise of Democracy: Root Causes and Economic Consequences

Moderator: Jean-Louis Reiffers, President of Scientific Committee & Coordinator of FEMISE

The speakers in this plenary will identify the root causes for revolts and explore the economic consequences of the shift in political regimes. They will shed light on the prevailing view that the revolts were the product of a mix of social and political exclusion, the failure of the autocratic regimes to create sufficient employment opportunities for young people, as well as dysfunctional education systems. They will also discuss the economic consequences of the political turnaround, both in the short and medium runs.

Keynote speakers:

1. Lahcen Achy, National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (INSEA), Rabat and Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut, Lebanon
2. Elyes Jouini, ex-minister of economic and social reforms of Tunisia (TBC)
3. Ahmed Galal, President & Coordinator of FEMISE and ERF Managing Director

Plenary II: Towards Political and Economic Inclusion: Managing the Transition and Beyond.

Moderator: Jan Michalek, Warsaw University

The political transition towards democracy is neither easy nor costless. It is associated with short-term losses (in economic and social terms) at a time of rising expectations. However, if the transition process is handled successfully, the revolts are expected to generate medium term gains, also both in economic and social terms. Speakers in this panel will address alternative policies and measures to ameliorate the short term costs associated with the uprisings and maximize the potential of lasting and shared prosperity in the medium run.

Keynote speakers:

1. Mohamed Chafiki, DEPF, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco, Morocco (TBC)
2. Nicholas Peridy, Université du Sud Toulon-Var
3. Jean-Louis Reiffers, President of Scientific Committee & Coordinator of FEMISE

Plenary III: Roundtable discussion on the Role of the International Community in Supporting the Transition

Moderator: Ahmed Galal, President & Coordinator of FEMISE and ERF Managing Director

It is clear that Arab awakening was an endogenous process and the transition process is likely to remain so. It is however important to realize that success can be helped by appropriate support from the international community, especially from the EU. The speakers in this roundtable discussion will give their insights on what type of support the region will now need, including financial support, revisiting the Neighbourhood Policy, and/or new forms of collaboration. This will be followed by an open discussion among speakers as well as participants from the conference.

Keynote speakers:

1. Mats Karlsson, Marseille Center for Mediterranean Integration (TBC)
2. Samir Makdisi, American University in Beirut, Lebanon
3. Henry Marty-Gauquié, Director of liaisons with international Organizations, European Investment Bank Group in France (TBC)
4. Jean-Louis Reiffers, President of Scientific Committee & Coordinator of FEMISE
5. Raed Safadi, Deputy-Director, Trade and Agriculture Directorate, OECD
6. EU Representative (TBC)

(2) Parallel sessions:

The conference will include 4 parallel sessions, 2 sessions per day. These will include presentations of selected FEMISE ongoing research projects. These sessions will be on the following topics: Integration and FDI, migration, sustainable development, financial markets, employment and well-being, competitiveness and firms' behaviour.

(3) Closing Session and General Assembly Meeting

At the end of the conference, FEMISE network members will participate to their annual General Assembly to discuss the activities and progress achieved by FEMISE.