

## **EuroMeSCo General Assembly 2015**

Annual Report (October 2014 - October 2015)

From October 2014 to October 2015, the EuroMeSCo Academic Secretariat has focused on the implementation of the Work Plan 2015, following the agreements of the last General Assembly, held in Tarragona on 2nd October 2014.

After the Annual Conference 2014, the Academic Secretariat has been working on the finalisation of the proposal and has been providing additional administrative information to the European Commission. As a result, the project proposal submitted to the European Commission Call for Proposals "Support to dialogues, political and economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" (Lot 1) with reference EuropeAid/135-333/C/ACT/MULTI, has been selected for a 4-year grant under a co-financing formula by the European Commission and the IEMed.

Between January and March 2015, the Academic Secretariat has produced all the documentation and templates, necessary for the implementation of the project. Since 1st March 2015, the Academic Secretariat has started to implement research activities under the framework of the new project "Euro-Mediterranean Political Research and Dialogue for Inclusive Policymaking Processes and Dissemination through Network Participation". New EuroMeSCo Papers, Joint Policy Study and Report have been issued. Additionally, the Academic Secretariat has undertaken a series of activities in order to enhance the visibility of the EuroMeSCo network, regularly updating the EuroMeSCo website and producing the monthly newsletter.

As a result of its progress over the last few years and its enhanced research activities, for the second year in a row the EuroMeSCo network was ranked as the seventh best network of think tanks in the world, according to the University of Pennsylvania's 2014 "Global Go-To Think Tanks Ranking".

## **MAIN ACTIVITIES**

### **1. Research Programme**

#### **EuroMeSCo-SSN Joint Research Project "The Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective"**

The Academic Secretariat has continued the coordination of a research programme focusing on comparative perspectives of the political transformation processes unleashed by the Arab uprisings. The meeting of the lead researchers of Working Group, composed of the experts from the Strategic Studies Network and EuroMeSCo, took place in December 2014 in Barcelona. The aim of the workshop was to present and discuss the research outputs of five working packages: State Building Processes and Reforms and Security Sector Reform; The Role of Religion in Transitional Processes; Socio-

economic Reforms in Transitional Processes; The Role of the European Union in Supporting Democratic Transitions in the Southern Mediterranean and Regional Integration.

The final papers produced by the researchers from the Working Group have been gathered in a joint policy-oriented volume, aiming to provide better understanding of the political transformations in the Arab Spring countries. The final results of this research programme were also presented by the President of the EuroMeSCo Steering Committee, Mr. Senén Florensa at the Annual Conference of the SSN in March 2015.

### **New EuroMeSCo ENI Project “Euro-Mediterranean Political Research and Dialogue for Inclusive Policymaking Processes and Dissemination through Network Participation”**

Since 1st March 2015, the Academic Secretariat has started to develop and implement research activities under the framework of the project, co-financed by the European Commission and the IEMed. The project aims at reinforcing dialogue, political research and studies on key issues and trends of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It is centered on three types of activities: *Research activities*, consisting of the publication of Joint Policy Studies, Papers and Policy Briefs and Recommendations; *Dialogue activities* in the form of Dialogue Workshops and Conferences and *Dissemination activities* of the project results through Local Presentations, presentations at the Annual Conferences, Newsletter and a new website.

The kick-off meeting of the EuroMeSCo Project was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April in Brussels. The meeting was attended by the members of the Steering Committee and representatives of the European Commission. The main objective of the meeting was to define the topics of the Working Packages to be developed in the first year of the project and the topics of the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2015.

The Working Packages, led by a member of the EuroMeSCo Steering Committee, will comprise of the production of a Joint Policy Study, two Policy Briefs and Recommendations, a Dialogue Workshop to present and discuss the initial research findings of the Joint Policy Study and of Presentations of final research outputs at local level and at the Annual Conference.

The three Research Groups selected for the first year of the project are:

- Research Group on “Security Threats in the Euro-Mediterranean Region”, led by Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (Egypt);
- Research Group on “Youth Activism in the South and East Mediterranean Countries since the Arab Uprisings: Challenges and Policy Options”, led by Istituto Affari Internazionali (Italy)
- Research Group on Migration, led by Center for Strategic Studies (Jordan)

In the current phase of the project, all the Research Groups have already held their kick-off meetings and are currently producing drafts of the Joint Policy Studies. The preliminary research results of the Joint Policy Studies will be discussed at the Dialogue Workshops to be organised between November/December 2015. Each Dialogue Workshop will gather 20 people including authors of the study, the external reviewer and top experts in the field (both researchers and practitioners). The 7

researchers from the EuroMeSCo network willing to participate in the Dialogue Workshops will be selected on the basis of a Call for Participants, to be launched jointly by the Academic Secretariat and the leading institute of each of the Research Group. The Call for Participants for Dialogue Workshop “Radical Groups: Security Threats in the Euro-Mediterranean Region” has been launched on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2015. The two remaining Calls for Participants are to be launched early October.

The submission of the final version of the Joint Policy Studies is foreseen for January/February 2015, and the publication of the three joint volumes is scheduled for February/March 2015. The final research results of the three groups will be presented at the Local Presentations, to be held in February/March 2016 and at the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2016, to be held in March/April 2016.

## 2. Publications

In line with the Work Plan 2015, one Joint Policy Study, four Papers and one Report have been published throughout this year.

### EuroMeSCo Joint Policy Study

- EuroMeSCo-SSN Joint Policy Study *The Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective* (March 2015)  
This publication is the product of the cooperation between two think tank networks, the Strategic Studies Network (SSN) and EuroMeSCo. Both SSN and EuroMeSCo have combined their efforts to produce policy-oriented analyses aimed at providing a better understanding of the democratic transformations in the Arab world and help regional and external policy-makers to devise better policies and support strategies. The publication is divided into five chapters: “State-Building Processes and Institutional Reforms”, “The Role of Religion in Transitional Processes”, “The Role of Socio-Economic Policies in Arab Spring Countries”, “A New Concept for a New Neighbourhood” and “EU’s Promotion of Regional and Sub-regional Economic Integration and Cooperation”.

### EuroMeSCo Papers

The last papers published by EuroMeSCo are:

- EuroMeSCo Paper 26: *The State of Arab Statehood. Reflections on Failure, Resilience and Collapse*. By Wolfgang Mühlberger, Senior Research Fellow at The Finnish Institute of International Affairs (September 2015)  
This paper develops the idea that state failure triggered the upheaval known as the Arab Spring. The increasing number of Arab states on the brink of collapse and the rising phenomenon of fragmented central state authority invite to revisit – and relaunch – the ‘Arab state debate’. To this end the author analyses Arab state structures to better understand their intrinsic characteristics, the dominant type of state-society relationships, and the potential of the Arab state system for reform. Authoritarian regimes thrive on patrimonial power structures, criminalising instead of modernising states in the worst case. Widely used informal strategies, such as co-optation, additionally hollow out formal state structures and undermine their legitimacy. These marginal states are ripe for contestation and risk tipping from failure into collapse.
- EuroMeSCo Paper 25: *The Tunisian Transition: Torn Between Democratic Consolidation and Neo-Conservatism in an Insecure Regional Context*. Isabel Schafer, Lecturer at Humboldt-

Universität zu Berlin/Senior Researcher at German Development Institute (DIE) (August 2015)  
The paper by Isabel Schäfer assesses the different phases and achievements of the transition process in Tunisia before looking at the challenges, difficulties and future perspectives. The newly emerging Tunisian political system is analysed in the context of the current developments in the wider MENA region. This paper considers the Tunisian transition as a very particular and unique case, and not as a "model". Compared to other states in the MENA region, it is the only country where a comprehensive process of democratic consolidation is taking place so far. The hitherto success of the Tunisian transition results from a particular constellation of different factors, suggesting that the perspectives for a long-term democratic transformation process look positive but the challenges remain multifaceted.

- EuroMeSCo Paper 24: *Les transformations géopolitiques dans la région MENA : Les dynamiques structurantes*. Fouad M.Ammor, Chercheur et membre du comité exécutif du Groupement d'Etudes et de Recherche sur la Méditerranée (GERM) (July 2015)

This paper by Fouad M. Ammor analyses the geopolitical transformations in the MENA region through a multidimensional approach, by calling on: the recent history of the Euro-Mediterranean region; geostrategic challenges where it is not always easy to decide between interests and principles, discourse and action; and on going back to facts, in their descriptive and analytical outline. The author goes beyond the day-to-day analysis of the regional events while he tries to understand the structural dynamics and their underlining causes. The paper is divided into four parts on the following issues: oil wealth in the MENA region, the role of Israel in the Euro-Mediterranean area, modernisation crisis and human security in the light of the Arab present.

- EuroMeSCo Paper 23: *From Policies to Politics: The European Union as an International Mediator in the Mediterranean*. Pol Morillas. Research Fellow. Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) (February 2015)

This paper by Pol Morillas analyses the performance of the European Union as an effective mediator in its southern neighbourhood, with a particular focus on Egypt and the period of transition from the presidency of Mohammed Morsi to Abdul-Fattah Al-Sisi. Despite an initial focus on policy reform, the EU has shifted its approach into a more political response. The paper analyses the conditions that have contributed to the success and failure of the EU's mediation efforts, taking into account that the current high political stakes in the region have often prevented the EU from playing a more political role, precisely at a time when it decided to transform its policy oriented approach into a more robust political contribution to the Southern Mediterranean transitions.

The Academic Secretariat is also involved in the review and editing process of other EuroMeSCo Papers presented at the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2014 and of the EuroMeSCo Policy Briefs.

#### **EuroMeSCo Reports**

One new report is available on the EuroMeSCo website:

- EuroMeSCo-IEMed (Report No.7): *Increasing Diversity in the Euro-Mediterranean Region*. Report of the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014.

The Annual Conference 2014 analysed the increasing diversity and complexity of the region from different angles: the national conflicts and rivalries, the geopolitical transformations and the role of external actors, the scenarios for democratic consolidation and the patterns of political continuity. It also focused on the challenges posed by regional fragmentation to Euro-Mediterranean politics and produced a series of proposals to improve EU policies, in order to increase their visibility and effectiveness.

### 3. Workshops and Conferences

In line with the Work Plan 2015, the EuroMeSCo Academic Secretariat has contributed to the organisation of conferences and workshops led by institutes from the network. The aim of the joint conferences and workshops is to strengthen exchange and contacts among the EuroMeSCo researchers and to ensure increasing dialogue with national and regional policy-makers.

#### Activities organised by member institutes with the support of EuroMeSCo

- **“Oppositions and Transitions in the Arab World Post 2011”**. Organised by the IEMed in cooperation with the EuroMeSCo members Centre d Etudes et de Recherche en Science Sociales (CERSS) and Arab Reform Initiative, together with the Ibn Zohr University, Centre Jacques Berque and the Hanns Seidel Stiftung. Agadir, 11-12 November 2014.

The conference rationale was based on the assumption that after the outbreak of Arab revolts in 2011 most of the analyses have focused on the new elites, while disregarding the role of the newly emerging opposition movements. The conference aimed at filling this gap and study opposition movements and transitions experiences in the Arab world after 2011, thus providing an overall intelligibility of the current dynamics of political action. The opposition movements were analysed from three angles: forms and deployment areas of the opposition, the principal objectives of the opposition and the opposition and the public space.

#### EuroMeSCo activities

- **“European Neighbourhood Policy Review”**. Organised by IEMed, 30 April 2015.

The round table, gathering 15 researchers from the EuroMeSCo network and other experts, has been organised in order to respond to the Joint Consultation “Towards a new European Neighborhood Policy”, issued by the European Commission and the High Representative. The outputs of the Research Group contributed to the elaboration of the questionnaire for the 6th Euromed Survey of Experts and Actors on the ENP review. The Survey was launched firstly among the researchers from the EuroMeSCo network. The results of this first round of answers can be consulted in the Annex to the IEMedPaper 18 *“Reviewing the European Neighbourhood Policy”*.

In addition, before the end of 2015, the three Dialogue Workshops will be organised. The main objective of the Dialogue Workshops is to present and discuss the initial research findings of the Joint Policy Studies. The workshops will gather 20 people including authors of the study, the external reviewer and top experts in the field (both researchers and practitioners).

- **Dialogue Workshop “Radical Groups: Security Threats in the Euro-Mediterranean”.** Organised by Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in cooperation with the IEMed. Cairo, 5th November 2015.
- **Dialogue Workshop “Understanding Youth-Related Activism in the South and East Mediterranean Countries”.** Organised by Istituto Affari Internazionali in cooperation with the IEMed. Beirut, 18th November 2015.
- **Dialogue Workshop on Migration.** Organised by Centre for Strategic Studies in cooperation with the IEMed. Date and place is to be confirmed.

#### **4. Steering Committee Meeting**

The EuroMeSCo Steering Committee held a meeting in Tarragona on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014. The Steering Committee referred to the submission of the project proposal to the European Commission Call “Support to dialogues, political and economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership” (Lot 1) with reference EuropeAid/135-333/C/ACT/MULTI. It was highlighted that the additional funding will enable to upgrade the research and networking activities of EuroMeSCo. The Steering Committee discussed also the development of the research project “The Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective”, run jointly with the Strategic Studies Network.

The Academic Secretariat informed the Steering Committee that it would maintain its commitment to promoting and enhancing joint research activities and the visibility of the network and that it would continue to finance its programmes. Finally, a reference was made to the offer of the Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI) to organise the EuroMeSCo General Assembly and Annual Conference 2015 in Milan (Italy), on the occasion of the 2015 Universal Exposition.

#### **5. Enhancing the visibility of the network**

In line with the guidelines of the Work Plan 2015, EuroMeSCo Academic Secretariat has been working on increasing the visibility of the EuroMeSCo activities and on promoting the recognition of the network and its influence in shaping debates on political and security developments in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Throughout the year, the EuroMeSCo website has been regularly updated with the information on the network’s and its member’s activities, including conferences, workshops, research programmes and projects and new publications. From January to September 2015, the website has received more than 18.000 visits, The Academic Secretariat has been also working on developing a proposal of a new EuroMeSCo website, to be launched in March/April 2016. In addition to the dissemination online, the EuroMeSCo publications have been also presented on various events organised by the IEMed.

Additionally, the Academic Secretariat has issued the monthly newsletter of the network, gathering the most relevant publications and events of the network and the EuroMeSCo institutes. The number of recipients of the newsletter amounts to over 2000 people, among them experts, academics, policy-

makers, civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders. The publication of the newsletter and the activities of the network are also announced in social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter.

## **6. Funding**

The EuroMeSCo Academic Secretariat has actively pursued a fundraising strategy with relevant national and European bodies. The project proposal submitted by the Academic Secretariat to the European Commission Call “Support to dialogues, political and economic research and studies of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership” (Lot 1) with reference EuropeAid/135-333/C/ACT/MULTI, has been selected for a 4-year grant, under a co-financing formula by the European Commission and the IEMed.

The grant will enable to significantly strengthen the research and dialogue activities of the EuroMeSCo network and contribute to increased cooperation of think tanks and research institutes from both shores of the Mediterranean, thus increasing their capacities and influence in the policy-making processes.