

EuroMeSCo Steering Committee Meeting

Milan, 8th October 2015, 10.30am

Agenda

1. Statement and news from the Secretariat (IEMed)
 - 1.1. State of the network and its perspectives
 - 1.2. Annual Report and financial information
 - 1.3. Work plan for 2016
2. Membership: Admissions and withdrawals
3. Institutional developments
4. Any other business

Attending members

ACPSS, Egypt (Rabha Allam)
Chatham House, (Claire Spencer)
CEMI, (Ahmed Driss)
CSS, Jordan (Musa Shteivi)
FIIA, Finland (Wolfgang Mühlberger)
IAI, Italy (Ettore Greco, Silvia Colombo)
IEMed, Spain (Senén Florensa)
IFAT, Hungary (Erzsébet Rózsa)
INESG, Algeria (Mustapha Dridi)
TEPSA, Belgium (Gunilla Herolf)
CSEPS, Israel (Ido Rosenblum)
GERM, Morocco (Kamal El Mehdaoui)

Apologies for absence

GPoT, Turkey (Mensur Akgun)

The Meeting was chaired by Senén Florensa, Executive President of the IEMed and Chair of the Steering Committee, and was also attended by Bichara Khader, Chair of the General Assembly, and Josep Ferré, Emmanuel Cohen-Hadria, Aleksandra Chmielewska and Francesca Fabbri from the Secretariat (IEMed).

1. Statement and news from the Secretariat (IEMed)

1.1. State of the network and its perspectives

The President of the Steering Committee opened the meeting and presented the main developments regarding the EuroMeSCo since the last General Assembly. He highlighted

that 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 had been selected for a 4-year grant under a co-financing formula by the European Commission and the IEMed. He stressed that the grant would not only help to increase the number of research and dialogue activities of the network, but also contribute to enhancing its recognition and influence in shaping current debates on Euromed policies. He informed the Steering Committee that, following the calendar of the project, the next EuroMeSCo General Assembly and Annual Conference would be held between March/April 2016.

Senén Florensa also announced the appointment of Emmanuel Cohen-Hadria as a new Head of Euro-Mediterranean Policies Department at the IEMed.

1.2. Annual Report and financial information

Senén Florensa continued with the presentation of the main activities of the network since October 2014. Firstly, he referred to the EuroMeSCo-Strategic Studies Network joint research programme “The Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective” and informed that the final research results have been published in a joint volume and also presented at the Annual Conference of the SSN in March 2015.

The state of implementation of the activities under the framework of the new EuroMeSCo ENI Project was reviewed. Senén Florensa reminded that three Research Groups created in the first year of the project were being led by Al Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies, Istituto Affari Internazionali and Center for Strategic Studies, and focused respectively on Security, Youth and Migration. He stressed that the groups had been formed taking into account gender and geographic balance and promoting cooperation between North-South researchers. He added that the participation in the research and dialogue activities of those groups was open to all the experts from the EuroMeSCo network.

Furthermore, he informed that over the past year the Academic Secretariat had coordinated the publication of one Joint Policy Study, four EuroMeSCo papers presented at the Annual Conference 2014 and one report. The EuroMeSCo had also contributed to the organisation of the conference “Oppositions and Transitions in the Arab World Post 2011”, led by Centre d’Études et de Recherches en Sciences Sociales (CERSS) and Arab Reform Initiative and organised the “European Neighbourhood Policy Review” round table, gathering 15 experts from the EuroMeSCo network. Senén Florensa also stressed that before the end of 2015, three Dialogue Workshops would be held in the framework of the new EuroMeSCo ENI Project. Finally, he reaffirmed the commitment of the Academic Secretariat to enhance the visibility of the research activities undertaken by the network, by updating the EuroMeSCo website, which throughout 2015 had received more than 18.000 visits and by producing and distributing the monthly newsletter. He added that the visibility of the network could be improved, by reaching out not only to the experts, but also to the interested general public.

1.3. Work Plan for 2016

The President of the Steering Committee went on presenting the activities to be developed in the 2016, which corresponded to the objectives of the 4-year EuroMeSCo ENI Project. Among them, he highlighted the organisation of the Working Packages, the core research activity of the project, consisting of the publication of the Joint Policy Studies and Policy Briefs and Recommendations, and the organisation of the Dialogue Workshops and Local Presentation; the organisation of the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference 2016; and the additional research activities, comprising of the publication of additional Policy Briefs and Recommendations.

He informed the Steering Committee that the three Working Packages for the second year of the project should be formed, including the definition of topics and the establishment of the research teams. He presented some possible topics to be considered, including Syria, sub-regional cooperation in the Mediterranean and the EU role in conflict resolution. He also invited the Steering Committee to submit to the Academic Secretariat any suggestions and comments regarding the possible topics to be tackled. The Working Group, composed of the Steering Committee and the representatives of the European Commission, would meet in end of 2015/beginning of 2016 to select the definite topics of the next round of Working Packages.

A debate on how to boost the EuroMeSCo joint research activities followed the presentation of the work plan. It was suggested that the Academic Secretariat should explore the possibility to strengthen the support for the joint activities of the member institutes, who lacked internal capacity and financial resources. President of the Steering Committee stressed that the Academic Secretariat was keen, whenever possible, to consider ways to assist both logistically and financially the member institute in the organisation of public activities.

The discussion then focused on the next General Assembly and Annual Conference, to be held between March/April 2016. The members of the Steering Committee highlighted the importance to organise the conference in one of the southern countries, as a political signal and in order to enable the participation of a wide range of Southern local stakeholders, including policy makers and the representatives of the CSOs. Turkey, Tunisia and Morocco were suggested as the possible countries where the conference could be organised.

The EuroMeSCo Steering Committee also discussed the research agenda of the network. It was stressed that the EuroMeSCo research agenda should be regularly updated and adapted to the ongoing challenges and developments in the region. Among various proposals, it was suggested that in order to be able to better follow the regional and countries responses to the key issues, the EuroMeSCo could produce short country reports of up to 2 pages, which would offer an insight into the dynamics and policy responses to specific developments. The Steering Committee suggested that the Academic Secretariat could coordinate the productions of such reports, by sending to the member institutes a set of few, very specific questions to be answered within a definite period of time.

The members of the Steering Committee also stressed that in order to be able to adequately respond to the developments in the region, the Policy Briefs should be produced more frequently

and in a timely manner. The Policy Briefs, as short and policy-oriented publications, were also considered the most adequate instruments to convey to the decision-makers. The President of the Steering Committee stressed the necessity to define the process of choosing the topics and authors of the Policy Briefs, in order to guarantee their scientific excellence and effectiveness.

Finally, the Steering Committee discussed how to boost the visibility and dissemination of the network research activities. Several proposals were raised, for instance by holding local presentations more frequently. The Steering Committee also highlighted the necessity to reach out to the broader public, with a special focus on young researchers. The possible ways could be the organisation of seminars and roundtables, which would promote the inclusion of young researchers, and the organisation of EuroMeSCo specific activities. It was also highlighted that the renewed EuroMeSCo website, to be launched in the first semester of 2016, would significantly contribute to strengthening the visibility of the network, by including a comprehensive database of the researchers from the institute-members of the network, indicating their affiliation and main areas of expertise.

2. Membership: Admissions and Withdrawals

The EuroMeSCo Academic Secretariat presented the list of applications by research institutes to become members of the network and to upgrade their status from observers to full members and the list of possible withdrawals. The Steering Committee agreed to submit to the General Assembly for approval the following list of admissions and withdrawals:

Admission as Full Members:

- Centre for Social and Economic Research – CASE, Poland
- CEI International Affairs, Spain
- German Development Institute – DIE, Germany
- German Marshall Fund – GMF, Belgium

Upgrading from Observers to Full Members:

- Arab Reform Initiative - ARI, France
- Regional Center for Strategic Studies – RCSS, Egypt

Withdrawal of Membership:

- Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais - IEEI, Portugal
- Mediterranean Institute Berlin – MIB, Institute for Social Sciences, Humboldt University, Germany

The Steering Committee also discussed the application requests of the following institutes, but recommended to review its application on the occasion of the next General Assembly on the basis of further information that would be requested to the institutes:

- Sadeq Institute, Libya
- Maastricht University – Department of Political Science, The Netherlands

3. Institutional developments

Senén Florensa informed the members of the Steering Committee about the need to rethink the statutes of the network and to renew the statutory bodies of EuroMeSCo, including the membership of the Steering Committee. The renewal would contribute to enhanced commitment of the members of the network to the EuroMeSCo activities. In this regard, renewing one fourth of the membership every year could provide the appropriate balance between renovation and continuity over the years. The Academic Secretariat committed to draft the amendments to the statutes and send them to the members of the Steering Committee for further consultation.

4. Any other business

No other business being raised, the meeting was closed at 12.40pm on 8th October 2015.