

The Arab Spring in a Comparative Perspective
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1. Project synopsis

The working group “The Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective” will bring together researchers from the Strategic Studies Network and EuroMeSCo, who will produce a joint edited volume on comparative perspectives of democratic transitions in the Arab world. The research of each of the working packages will be aimed at providing a better understanding of the democratic transitions in the Arab Spring countries and the role of external actors and regional integration processes. The papers produced will be policy-oriented and will also include analysis on the best practices of past transitions to democracy in the Euro-Mediterranean area. The comparative perspective and lessons learned from previous democratic transitions will be included in the different working packages and will be limited to the experiences in the Arab world and the Mediterranean.

2. Topics and participants

The Working Group will be divided into two main blocks and several working packages, each of them lead by two researchers. Other participants will join the working packages on the basis of the expressions of interest received. Their work and inputs to each of the working packages will be coordinated by the lead researchers, who will distribute the responsibilities and formats of participation of each researcher in line with the priorities and format of the final research product.

The IEMed, acting as the coordinator of the working group, will ensure the overall consistency and coherence of the research produced and the participation of the selected participants. It will establish an open working procedure so that all participants are aware of the developments of each working package and can contribute and comment on the quality of the papers submitted. It will also ensure the dissemination of the research outputs in relevant websites (at least

EuroMeSCo and the SSN) and consider other relevant platforms for the dissemination of the results.

The working packages of this working group will be divided as follows:

1. Internal changes in transition processes: What priorities?

1.1. State Building Processes and Reforms

Lead Researchers: Fouad Ammor (GERM, Morocco) and Benedetta Berti (INSS, Israel)

Participants registered so far: Silvia Colombo (IAI, Italy), Jawad Kerdoudi (IMRI, Morocco), Khaled Sarhan (King Abdullah Academy for Defence Studies, Jordan), Tonci Tadic (EMEF, Croatia), Erzsébet Rózsa (HIIA, Hungary)

This working package will analyse the processes of democratic reform in the Arab Spring countries, taking into account that the birth of democratic institutions (including the drafting of new constitutions and the holding of democratic elections) does not necessarily reflect a transition to a fully democratic regime. The research output of this package will focus on the processes of constitutional reform (assets and obstacles), the transformation of the public space in post-revolutionary processes and the diverse paths of institution building. It will also problematise the transition and democratisation paradigms by focusing instead on new political challenges (such as inclusiveness and pluralism, good governance, transitional justice, the resilience of power structures, the rising polarization, the role of media, religion and civil society, among others).

This working package will also tackle the functional dimension of the constitutional building processes (the setting up of new institutions and rules) and their aspirational dimension (the ethics, principles and ideals to attend in a phase of transformation of the political system, which has a direct impact on the expectations of the population and the legitimacy of the process). This working package will also draw comparisons with previous experiences in democratic transitions such as Eastern Europe.

1.2. Security Sector Reform

Lead Researchers: Eduard Soler (CIDOB, Spain), Florence Gaub (EUISS, France)

This package will focus on the two key dimensions of SSR, i.e. the delivery of security and the accountability or control of the security apparatus. Departing from the premise that in the Arab world governments are often not accountable to the people and that the populace is the subject of security rather than the recipient, research undertaken will be aimed at analysing the processes of reform of the security apparatuses and the transformation of authoritarian and coercive practices.

This package will also study SSR as part of a broader reform agenda, including the role of the security forces in the power structure, their attitude vis-à-vis social and political protests, and the scope and depth of the ongoing political reforms. Work undertaken will adopt a comparative perspective between Arab countries as well as other experiences in SSR in European and Mediterranean countries such as Spain, the Balkans, Central European countries and Turkey, among others. Research will also take into account international assistance on SSR.

1.3. The role of religion in transitional processes

Lead researchers: Patrycja Sasnal (PISM, Poland) and Stefano Maria Torelli (ISPI, Italy)

Participants registered so far: Ranjit Gupta (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, India), Oytun Orhan (ORSAM, Turkey), Arif Kamal (National Defence University, Pakistan), Tonci Tadic (EMEF, Croatia), Tarek Kahlaoui (ITES, Tunisia), Benedetta Berti (INSS, Israel), Erzsébet Rózsa (HIIA, Hungary)

The working package on the role of religion will be aimed at analysing why religion has become a powerful force in transitions to democracy, the reconciliation between religious principles and democratic processes, a comparative analysis on the role of religion in different Arab Spring countries and the main actors involved (their strategy and operations). Research will also tackle the inclusion of religious actors in the political arena, the emergence of new actors (including Salafism) and the limits of the presence of religious aspects in political programs without

endangering democracy. The package will also deal with issues such as the presence of religion in public spaces, the school, new forms of religiosity, religious cyber-activism and religious minorities, among others.

The underlying premise of the package is the difficulty of separating religion from the state in Islamic countries. Research will focus on policies of different players which contributed to the emergence of the current realities on the ground rather than the debates about the compatibility between Islam and democracy.

1.4. Socio-economic reforms in transitional processes

Lead researchers: Ali Koç (Akdeniz University, Turkey) and Anis Salem (ECFA, Egypt)

The purpose of this package will be to compare institutional frameworks and reforms from a viewpoint of socioeconomic transition perspectives in order to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality and enhance sustainable growth in southern Mediterranean countries. The package will analyse the socio-economic scenarios that led to the Arab uprisings as well as the reforms introduced so far and the challenges ahead.

The work will be organized according to sectoral levels of analysis and will include research on the changing economic programs in the countries of the Arab Spring, problems of food insecurity, social security packages, taxation policies, subsidies and strategic plans for inclusive economic growth. Research will be based on the socio-economic reforms introduced after the revolution and will also include the elements that hinder the wellbeing of Arab populations, including corruption and the lack of property rights, among others.

2. External actors and regional integration

2.1. The role of the European Union in supporting democratic transitions in the Southern Mediterranean

Lead researchers: Sven Biscop (EGMONT, Belgium) and Stefan Borg (Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Sweden)

Participants registered so far: Silvia Colombo (IAI, Italy), Tonci Tadic (EMEF, Croatia)

This working package will analyse the role of the EU as a normative power in Arab transitions. It will focus on the political aspects of the relationship between EU and its southern neighbourhood, departing from EU's interests and values in the region. It will also assess the performance of the principles and tools of EU's engagement, such as the "more for more", positive conditionality and the 3Ms. The package will also shed light on the reappraisal of the European Neighbourhood Policy in order to identify its benefits and flaws and the kind of democratic systems that the EU is promoting. Research will shed light on the reformulation of EU policies in order to strengthen their political aspects, reduce their programmatic approach and transform an approach based on "making policy *for* rather than *with* its southern neighbours". This includes a reformulation of the incentives offered, the diplomatic relations with third countries and the provision of technical expertise.

Research under this package will be structured around three main issues: lessons learned from the ENP, assessment of the interests, leverage and objectives of the EU and instruments and means of EU's action. Policy-oriented recommendations will be offered in order to improve the existing mechanisms of EU's policies towards Arab Spring countries.

2.2. Regional integration

Lead researchers: Alfred Tovias (Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Israel) and Erwan Lannon (Gent University, Belgium)

Participants registered so far: Sven Biscop (EGMONT, Belgium), Christian Koch (Gulf Research Centre, Switzerland), Omar Shaban (Palthink, Gaza), Murat Yesiltas (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies, Turkey), Erzsébet Rózsa (HIIA, Hungary)

The working package on regional integration will focus on the role of the EU as a promoter of economic integration between both shores of the Mediterranean. It will focus on EU's policies to support economic reform in Arab countries and the tools at its disposal, including DCFTAs, pre-accession and sectoral agreements and subregional cooperation tools, among others.

Frameworks for dialogue at the regional and subregional level (including the UfM, 5+5 and the EU-Arab League dialogue) will also be explored. Comparisons with EU's dialogue with other regions will also be drawn.

3. Format of the papers produced

- At least 6 research papers will be produced (one per working package), co-authored by the lead researchers.
- Papers will be policy-oriented, with recommendations included.
- Lead researchers of each package will be responsible for defining the scope and contributions of other participants, including in the form of independent papers, sections of the paper, text boxes within the paper, case studies, etc.
- Papers will be 10.000 words long, (approximately 20-25 pages). They will all be compiled in an edited volume, to be published with EuroMeSCO and distributed within the SSN. Publication in any other format will be considered depending on the quality and number of contributions received.
- Precise editorial guidelines will be distributed at a later stage (referencing, use of tables and figures, formal aspects of the submission, etc).

4. Timing of deliverables

- **February 2014:** Kick off meeting, initial discussions and outline of the working group.
- **March-April 2014:** Lead researchers of each working package develop and distribute a final outline and decide on a sub-division of the research amongst the participants. Participants not registered in any working package submit their applications by 31st March 2014 at the latest.
- **July 2014:** Participants send to the leaders of each working package their written contributions. Lead researchers of the working packages integrate the different contributions and produce a first draft.

- **October 2014:** The draft is sent to the IEMed and circulated to all members of the working group for comments and feedback. If resources of the SSN permit it, the first drafts are discussed in a workshop meeting organised by the SSN.
- **December 2014:** Based on the comments received, the drafts of each working package are modified and edited by the lead researchers.
- **January 2015:** A final paper is submitted
- **February 2015:** Compilation of all papers and publication of an edited volume