



Radhi Meddeb IpeMED's President

Reinventing the Euro-Mediterranean process

► 2011 was an event-packed year. In southern Mediterranean countries, the Arab awakenings brought about an upturn in a region that political analysts had described as fossilized. Populations rose up to reject obstructions, unemployment, bad governance and countless discriminations. Countries in the North continue to flounder in a sovereign debt crisis that threatens the very foundations

of the euro zone and heralds a huge economic and political crisis.

2012 is set to be a perilous year. In the South, elections reveal an Islamic wave that has little experience of power and is keen to follow suit of the regimes it replaces. Threats are piling up, disorder is setting in, extremism is flourishing in new regimes worryingly out of touch with inhabitants' economic and social demands.

To the North, sovereign states' ratings are slipping, leaving little room for manoeuvre to boost and support economies. Recession is rearing its head in the shape of unemployment, decreased spending power and the

inevitable extremism and xenophobia. Under these conditions, the Euro-Mediterranean process must rise out of the quagmire, open up to civil society and mobilize it. It must reinvent its view on proximity and social responsibility. This will involve a civilization-based project taking in the whole region. It is our duty to reinvent the Euro-Mediterranean by democratizing the idea, sharing the vision and turning inhabitants into genuine stakeholders. This is how our inevitable rapprochement project can bounce back, express its potential for growth and development, and in doing so benefit all of the region's inhabitants.

Arab transitions: which hand to lend?

ARE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CAPABLE OF ACCOMPANYING THE CURRENT DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS OR WILL THE TURKISH MODEL PREVAIL IN THE SOUTH?

The current upheavals in southern Mediterranean countries have sparked off transition periods whose outcomes still remain unclear. Transition will no doubt be long, even though things are now moving much faster and peoples' impatience for change matches the frustrated decades spent under dictatorships. In our rapid information era, there is a

risk of trying to make the media timescale and the political timescale correspond.

The main challenge facing the new players takes the shape of demonstrators' political and social demands. Observers have expressed concern about the economic programmes of parties claiming to represent Muslim politics, which won the majority vote in Tunisia, Morocco and soon Egypt. These same parties are keen to reassure foreign investors on the economy, at the risk of being rapidly contested by voters. At a recent travel congress in Monastir, Hamadi Jebali, Secretary General of Ennahda, was careful to

point out that, "*Ennahda is not a religious party, it's a civil political party.*" Yet the Central Bank of Tunisia has sounded the alarm, warning that local and foreign investors need more visibility on economic policies, and called for a faster government-forming process to win back investors' confidence.

DEFICIENCIES. Islamic parties won votes because they represented the impoverished, making up for state deficiencies. Never having exercised power, they are not yet worn down by it, and they have called for regional and international policy to be more autonomous vis-à-vis the United States and Europe. The Turkish model is thus attractive to them: strong economic growth coupled with dialogue on an equal footing with Washington and Brussels. Does this mean that the Turkish experience is likely to prevail in southern Mediterranean countries? Ankara would probably like to see that happen. European countries need to tackle the challenge of supporting transitions by striking a balance between non-indifference and non-interference and opening up to encourage genuine exchange rather than undecidedly closing in on the north bank.

Agnès Levallois



Following Ennahda's election victory, Hamadi Jebali is the party's official candidate for Tunisian Prime Minister.

Moroccan Solar Plan

Lynchpin of the Mediterranean Solar Plan?

Could the Moroccan Solar Plan be the “lynchpin of the Mediterranean Solar Plan”?

That was the question posed by France’s minister for industry, Eric Besson, during a recent trip to Rabat. He used the occasion to meet the Moroccan project’s promoters and announced a package to develop solar energy worth 100.3 million euro from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). The AFD’s board approved the allocation of the funds (a 100 million euro loan and a subsidy of 300,000) to the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy (Masen) to help set up the Moroccan solar plan and build a solar power station in Ouarzazate, due to start operating in 2014.

FASTER FUNDING FOR THE PLAN The aim of the Mediterranean Solar Plan (MSP), one of the UfM’s six major public interest projects, is to extend the use of renewable energy sources and improve energy efficiency in southern Mediterranean countries. It should lead to 20 GW of electricity production by 2020, of which 5 GW could be exported to Europe. Morocco is one of the most advanced Mediterranean countries in the domain. Eric Besson said that he would like to accelerate funding for the plan, “by mobilizing multilateral institutions, electricity imports from northern countries, and private investors.” To transfer sustainable electricity from South to North, a project for a trans-Mediterra-

Parabolic trough mirrors, the most common technology, are used by the world’s most powerful solar power plants (here in California).

IN RABAT, ERIC BESSON, FRENCH MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY, ANNOUNCED A 100.3 MILLION EURO PACKAGE FOR DEVELOPING SOLAR ENERGY

nean electricity network has been developed: MedGrid. It brings together several companies working with electricity network transportation, production and management. At a meeting held at the UfM headquarters in Barcelona on 5 and 6 July, emphasis was laid on the project’s significance in promoting renewable energy, and a timetable was set. Another meeting to discuss the financial aspects took place on 19 September in the presence of the European Investment Bank and the European Institute of the Mediterranean.

Morocco benefits from some of the most considerable solar resources on the planet (3,000 hours per year) and contains desert areas suitable for concentrated solar power plants. The Moroccan Solar Plan was launched in



Mustapha Bakkoury, chairman of the board of the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy (Masen)

2009 with the objective of developing a solar-based electricity production capacity of at least 2,000 MW by 2020. Electrical power generated from renewable energy will thus make up 42% of Morocco’s electricity production. The public company Masen was created in January 2010 to implement the plan. The priority for the green electricity produced will be the local market, with a proportion going to Europe. The Ouarzazate programme will be developed in several phases, the first comprising a parabolic trough with a capacity of 125 MW to 160 MW, equipped with an energy storage system.

A.L.

Private public partnerships

● The World Bank has granted Morocco a 297 million dollar loan to build a solar electricity production complex in the southern town of Ouarzazate. The institution’s president declared that the project could “boost the technology’s potential, create new jobs in the region, help the European Union meet its CO₂ reduction targets, and foster economic and energy integration throughout the Mediterranean”. The loan will help co-finance the development and construction of parabolic troughs under a private-public



partnership between the Moroccan Agency for Solar Energy (Masen) and a private partner. This phase corresponds to a first tranche of 160 MW and will potentially allow Morocco to save the equivalent of

240,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. According to the World Bank, this agreement fits in perfectly with the development plan for concentrated solar power stations (CSPs) in North Africa and the Middle East.

UfM

New investments for 2012

● The seed capital, development and orientation fund (Faro), which provides subsidies to encourage partnership between innovating entrepreneurs in Mediterranean countries, is boosting its programme with a view to funding twenty-five new projects this year. Among the eight already launched are: Prestige Solaire, which is developing a solar monitor system for photovoltaic panels in the Maghreb; Advansolar, creating a solar recharge station for electronic machines in urban areas in Morocco and Tunisia; Lenara, working on a procedure for modifying the skin on Tunisian prickly pears to use as animal feed in Morocco; and a call centre in Bethlehem's economic zone that will involve Israeli and Palestinian operators working together. Seven other projects are being studied by Oseo, which oversees the funds' administration, with the Anima network ensuring coordination and promoter follow-up. Faro was created at the initiative of the UfM's inter-ministerial mission on 27 May 2010. It operates a million-euro budget with the objective of supporting forty entrepreneurs to start up innovative projects that associate French entrepreneurs with partners from the southern Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). Chosen projects receive a maximum subsidy of 20,000 euro, which finances up to 50% of the total

costs involved. Promoters eligible for Faro are companies, laboratories, research centres under contract, economic interest groupings (EIGs), and professional associations and federations with head offices in the EU that employ under 250 staff.

AMU

Arab Maghreb Union re-emerges

● The fifth Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders was held in November in Barcelona, organized by the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Mediterranean (Ascame), the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), the secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). *"Extending North African integration is the only way to improve development and it is an imperative for AMU and European Union*



Tunisian diplomat Habib Ben Yahia has been secretary general of the Arab Maghreb Union since February 2006.

THE FIGURE

2,6%

growth in 2011 in southern Mediterranean countries with the risk of a drop

This is the figure put forward in a report by the economic and financial studies department of the European Investment Bank entitled "Banking in the Mediterranean: Challenges and Opportunities".

countries. It is vital that we continue the road together and provide the necessary impetus through concrete partnerships and concerted action," said the AMU's secretary general at the event.

www.eib.org/attachments/med/economic_report_banking_med_en.pdf

SURVEY

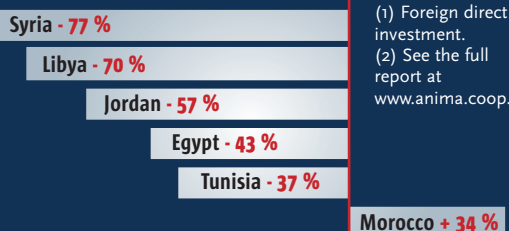
Arab public opinion in 2011

● Each year, a survey of Arab public opinion is published by Shibley Telhami¹ with Zogby International. The year 2011 revealed some interesting findings on Turkey. The country has significantly benefited from the Arab Spring, and is viewed as having played the most constructive role in the Arab uprisings. Although France remains relatively popular, its influence suffered as a result of its role in the Libyan intervention: 46% of pollsters think that the international intervention was an error. In 2009, 23% said that if there were only one superpower they would prefer it to be France; in 2011 only 10% thought so. The number of people who want to live in France has also dropped from 36% in 2009 to 28% in 2011. The survey polled 3,000 people living in Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon and the United Emirates in October 2011.

¹. Lecturer on peace and development at Maryland Anouar el-Sadate University and senior lecturer at the Saban Centre for Middle-East Policy at Brookings Institution.

FDI slumps in the Mediterranean

● After a rise of just 0.4% in 2010, FDI¹ inflows will be negative for 2011 due to the current Arab revolutions. According to the Anima Mipo² Observatory, which releases data in real time, the Med region showed an overall drop of 25% in FDI intentions for the first six months of the year, with some spectacular tumbles (see chart under). Only Morocco recorded an increase. The turn of political events will determine what happens next.



(1) Foreign direct investment.
(2) See the full report at www.anima.coop.

EBRD

Extending activities to Arab countries

● Shareholders of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) have given the green light to extend its activities to Arab countries. The governors' committee ratified the decision following an almost unanimous shareholder vote (99.85%). The bank could now provide technical cooperation to Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan and invest in the South and East Mediterranean, "over the next few weeks or months to prepare future investment projects there," announced the institution. Its president, Thomas Mirow, had previously said that the bank could start investing in Morocco and Egypt from spring 2012. Support



Thomas Mirow, EBRD's president.

from EBRD and its shareholders "is fully in line with initiatives launched by France during its presidency of the G8 with the Deauville Partnership," a French government spokesman said. Mr Valero added that France shall continue to "work closely with the Ebrd to support countries in the region with their democratic transition."

What are the routes to successful convergence?

Numerous Euro-Mediterranean figures took part in the conference-debate organized by IPEMED on 9 December 2011 in partnership with the Caisse des Dépôts on *The Mediterranean in 2030, what propositions for better convergence?* – the theme of a forecasting study recently concluded by IPEMED. The work was unanimously praised and the various speakers enjoyed adding their own contributions.



Laurent Vigier

Director of European and International Affairs at the Groupe Caisse des Dépôts

“The Groupe Caisse des Dépôts has made the Mediterranean area a focus of its international strategy since 2007 – resulting in the creation of several financial instruments, and in particular the In-framed fund, which is currently reviewing 40 projects for funding. We believe in the future of the South Mediterranean. We have no lessons to give, but we would like to look for common solutions together and build a shared path for the future.



Jean-Louis Guigou

Delegate-General and founder of IPEMED

“At IPEMED we have identified four decisive factors in the Mediterranean’s future: the regionalization of globalization; the democratization of Arabic countries; North-South convergence; and economic integration, as the Germans did with Eastern European countries. Europe had still not integrated its south, unlike the other major regional blocks (Alena, Nafta, etc.) Yet, the block that wins will be the one that makes the best connection with its south.



Yadh Ben Achour

Former President of the Higher Political Reform Commission (Tunisia)

“We mustn’t forget the cultural aspect, because if we don’t take care of it at the same time, it will be a failure. In the rift we are witnessing between the elites’ secularized culture and the peoples’ confessional culture, there is a confrontation that borders on violence. We should strongly disseminate the universal culture of Human Rights to show its superiority. I think that we can do that, because the culture of Human Rights is superior to the culture that made Man into God’s slave.



Miguel Angel Moratinos

Former Spanish minister of foreign affairs

“My tenth recommendation is political – because I refuse to be governed by economists, which is the reason why everything’s in such a mess! We need to make a political commitment to resolve the major crises that had such a negative effect on the Barcelona Process. It should involve opening up borders, ending the Western Sahara conflict and refusing a continuation of the Middle East conflict. We need to make peace now because the Arab democracies are going to ask for it.



Abderrahmane Hadj Nacer

Former Governor of the Bank of Algeria

“I’m an economist, but I only believe in politics! There isn’t enough political analysis of the fact that the European Union has no long-term vision. It’s remarkable to see so much short-term thinking in Europe. Is it because of the way Europe has been built? Current reforms in Algeria are in regression compared with the situation twenty years ago! Yet just recently, a [French] official came to congratulate us... We’ve given up supervising people in the mosques, and we’ve destroyed all mediation in civil society. Now we’re seeing the danger emerge of a movement that would like to break the momentum [of the Arab spring]... I can’t help wondering whether our European neighbours realize what’s happening. I’m not sure they do.



Élisabeth Guigou

Former Minister and a member of parliament

“Nothing will ever be the same again in those countries. The revolutions sprang from inhabitants’ extremely strong aspiration and their desire to break free from despots. Yes, we need to totally restructure the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and inspire trust: it’s a good thing that the results of the elections have been respected at last, unlike what happened with Algeria. But, as a woman, I’ll be keen to make sure that all they’ve achieved is not put in jeopardy. We’re lucky enough to experience a second Arab Renaissance – after the Nahda in the 19th century, which saw Tunisia abolish slavery in 1846, two years before France, and set up a constitution separating civil society and religion.



Behind Jean-Louis Guigou, from left to right, Laurent Vigier, Agnès Levallois, Jean-Louis Chaussade, Bahadır Kaleagasi et El Mouhoub Mouhoud.



Adel El-Beltagy

Chairman of the
International Centre for
Advanced Mediterranean
Agronomic Studies
(CIHEAM)

“We need to rediscover each other so that we can work together with joint responsibility, otherwise we won’t succeed. Given the need to create 50 million jobs in the south, what can Europe offer? Knowledge, institutions and know-how that can be transferred, in a win-win spirit, resulting in better integration and less trouble in Europe.



El Mouhoub Mouhoud

Professor
of economics
at Paris Dauphine
University

“Countries in the south need to work with each other on regional integration. This is already happening in the East Mediterranean, where Turkey plays a major economic and political role and increasingly stands out as a social, cultural and religious model. The first stage in regional “integration” around Turkey could have an effect on better Mediterranean integration.



Radhi Meddeb

President
of IPAMED

“The Mediterranean will not move towards convergence unless the rifts between east and west are eliminated. The Euromed process needs to be thoroughly overhauled. It should also become a project for the people and not just the elites. That could be the key to the convergence scenario that we are all so keen on finding.



Carmen Romero Lopez

Member of
the European
parliament
(Spain)

“The Arab uprisings involve creating new relationships and prompt us to overcome numerous prejudices and misunderstandings. We need to help transition, create new routes for convergence, and reinforce civil society.



Jean-Louis Chaussade

Chief Executive Officer
of Suez Environment,
Chairman of IPAMED’s
Supervisory Board

“Only 3% of global water resources are located in Mediterranean countries, and the South side only possesses 13% of Mediterranean reserves, with demand set to rise by 25% to 30%. In other words, I can’t see how we can work towards North-South convergence if we don’t resolve the water issue together. We need to define a genuine common water policy, and create a Mediterranean water agency. If (good) governance could be established, we could make the investments.



Xavier Beulin

Chairman
of Sofiprotéol
and the FNSEA

“Water and the risk of drought are pressing issues shared by both sides of the Mediterranean. With Henri Nallet, we have pushed for the idea of a EuroMed CAP. Europeans have nothing to fear, it could be an excellent platform for joint research. In France, for example, losses in purely agricultural jobs have been compensated by creations higher up and lower down in the chain.



Bahadır Kaleagasi

Chairman
of the Institut
du Bosphore
(Turkey)

“In an expanding world, Europe is shrinking! Europe should stop viewing its immediate neighbours as external and consider them as part of a big, inner Euro-Mediterranean circle. Turkey is en route for membership – over 60% of Community *acquis* are now transferred – but the EU is in the process of change. Europe reacted properly by giving Eastern European countries the opportunity to join the Union. Today, at a time when the South Mediterranean is experiencing revolutions, we need a credible, meaningful perspective.



Gérard Mestrallet

CEO of GDF SUEZ,
outgoing Chairman
of the IPAMED
Supervisory Board

“The UfM has been through something of a breakdown, but the role of business is to move forward without waiting for policies. Companies ready to commit themselves to cooperate with the South have a role to play, and getting them together was the goal of my work with IPAMED. That is also why we created the EMCC, the Euro-Mediterranean Competitiveness Council, to take the initiative and go forward, because the Mediterranean’s time has come! Our vision is to make the Mediterranean an integrated, powerful, socially responsible territory for growth and a great global region. The European Union crisis and the upheavals in the Arab world should reinforce our desire to act, firmly and fast.

Debates on Mediterranean energy policies



One priority is to speed up funding for the Mediterranean Solar Plan.

The workshop Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Energy Community, instigated by IPEMED and led by Samir Allal and Moncef Ben Abdallah, gathered experts from both sides of the Mediterranean. On the agenda: an overview of Mediterranean energy policies and ways of cooperating on regional energy. This is clearly a crucial theme, since the geographical proximity of countries in the region invites closer cooperation. In addition, south and east Mediterranean countries' demand for energy is set to rise sharply, along with its carbon content, at least until 2030. This project aims to coordinate the efforts of the various stakeholders so that they can adopt a shared, long-term vision.

The experts insisted on the need for adopting energy policies that are adequate, consistent, and open to regional and sub-regional cooperation, and for promoting technological transfer and management, at the same time as perfecting energy programming tools and methods and special-

GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY AND THE HIGH DEMAND FOR ENERGY INVITE A CLOSER LOOK AT POTENTIAL FORMS OF COOPERATION.

ized training for national and regional human resources. To do this, they highlighted three priority areas for cooperation:

- Help speed up funding for the Mediterranean Solar Plan to install twenty gigawatts of new electricity capacity in the South and East;
- Terminate the Mediterranean Electricity Ring by 2020 by creating and reinforcing North-South

and South-South interconnections, so encouraging market creation and developing exchanges of green electricity;

- Organize technological partnerships to create Euro-Mediterranean industrial channels for clean energy and electrical networks.

MORE JOINT DEVELOPMENT Participants pointed out that exchanges between European Union countries and those south of the Mediterranean needed to put more focus on multilateralism, solidarity and joint development. They said that the lack of regional cooperation could be explained by the fact that when it comes to energy, relations between national govern-

ments in the region are almost always bilateral. The European Union is not yet political and industrials are looking to expand into regional energy markets. It appears difficult to reconcile the demands of each of these groups of actors for short- and medium-term targets.

Lastly, one of the priority means for regional cooperation is regional energy transition, with the move from a carbon economy model to a carbon-free one. Given the EU's 20-20-20 targets, and the surge in energy consumption anticipated in SEMCS over the next few years, all countries in the region need to move towards energy transition accompanied by regulatory transition. New policies for energy saving and renewable energy production should be part of a regulatory framework. Each country needs to set up a plan offering investors better visibility and more trust. To encourage foreign investment in this sector, SEMCS would gain from working together to devise a common regulatory framework for renewable energy and energy saving.

Morgan Mozas



IPEMED PUBLICATIONS

New collection: *Ipemed Palimpsestes*

● In these working papers, international experts, analysts and researchers offer food for thought and debate in line with Mediterranean current affairs. The term *palimpsest* comes from ancient Greek and means *scraped again*. It denotes a parchment from which earlier writing has been rubbed out to make way for new writing, illustrating the impermanent nature of the written word.

ON THE NET

The European Union and the Arab spring

► Fride, a European think tank on international relations and dialogue, has just published a study called *The EU and the Arab spring: from munificence to geo-strategy*. The author pays tribute to positive European reactions in the face of events, but suggests that the European Union should rethink its long-term Middle East strategy and its influence on the region. Three other studies: *France and the Arab spring: an opportunistic quest for influence*, *Is Iran immune from the Arab spring* and *Don't forget the Gulf*, make up a package on the challenges that European policy will have to tackle as a result of changes in the Middle East.

www.fride.org/homepage_english



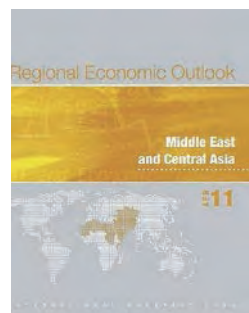
A new Mediterranean region: achieving fundamental transitions

Femise report

► The latest annual Femise report on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the status of Mediterranean countries focuses on the region's current transition phase. The Forum highlights the reasons for the uprisings: a development model favouring only an elite of closely knit politicians and businessmen; young people excluded from decision-making processes; unemployment and huge territorial disparity. All of these factors need to be taken into account to succeed the transition. The researchers then turn to what they call *the collapse of the authoritarian bargain model* before moving

on to the issue of work for the Mediterranean young, since young people are the main source of future wealth. Finally, the authors call on the EU and its partners to mobilize additional trade potential.

www.femise.org/2011/11/a-ne-pas-rater/rapport-du-femise-sur-le-partenariat-euromediterraneen-2011



Regional Economic Outlook. Middle East and Central Asia

IMF report on the informal economy

► *Regional Economic Outlook. Middle East and Central Asia*, published in October, devotes a chapter to the rise of the informal economy in countries importing oil from MENA. Levels reach 26% in Jordan, 30% in Lebanon and Tunisia, and as much as 44% in Morocco. According to the international organization, there are four main reasons behind the phenomenon: excessive regulations on work and produce markets, too much tax, and weak state and governing institutions. This has a negative effect on social protection and career perspectives for workers, and runs counter to integration.

www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2011/mcd/eng/pdf/oilimporters.pdf

People's Power. The Arab World in Revolt

► The Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation has produced a special edition of its *Perspectives Middle East* journal entitled *People's Power – the Arab World in Revolt*. Published last May, the paper analyzes the origins of the protest movements and questions what really happened, asking whether genuine change will really occur, whether counter-revolution movements will emerge, and how foreign interests might determine the

course of events. Should we talk about a spring, an awakening or a renaissance? Is a new political culture emerging? To what extent do these movements call the famous *Arab exception* into question? A variety of points of view from experts, witnesses and revolutionaries.

Print and online publication.
www.boell.de/publications/publications-perspectives-2-mai-2011-11961.html

Potential for French competitiveness clusters in the southern Mediterranean

Sophia Antipolis Foundation

► At the 7th Competitiveness Clusters Forum, the Sophia Antipolis Foundation presented a study of eight southern Mediterranean target countries: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Israel. *“Countries in the Mediterranean should be considered by clusters as high*



Jean-Noël Durvy,
managing director
of the Sophia
Antipolis
Foundation.

potential partners for cooperation outside of Europe”, said Jean-Noël Durvy, the Foundation's managing director. With the exception of Israel, most countries in the region have not implemented their own cluster networks, but they have set up support policies for creating technological centres to encourage and attract innovating companies. The study's conclusions pinpointed four countries as potential targets for competitiveness clusters looking for partners in the southern Mediterranean: Israel, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia.

[www.sophia-antipolis.org/poles2competitivite/manifestations/7forum-poles\(2011\)/fr/presentation/22.pdf](http://www.sophia-antipolis.org/poles2competitivite/manifestations/7forum-poles(2011)/fr/presentation/22.pdf)



La Révolution arabe. Dix leçons sur le soulèvement démocratique

JEAN-PIERRE FILIU

Fayard, 2011 (French only)

The author draws lessons from the uprisings in Arab countries based on a central idea: the start of a second renaissance, echoing the *Nahda* in the 19th century, a movement led by Tunisia and Egypt that aimed to break free from the clutches of the Ottoman Empire and modernize society. For Jean-Pierre Filiu, the movement is a long-term groundswell led by young people sharing the same ideas: transparency, the fight against corruption, demand for free elections, and shared power and wealth. We should not speak of *exceptions* in the Arab world because these demands are similar to those existing in other places and times. Mohamed Bouazizi's immolation in Tunisia was not an *Islamic gesture* but a particularly radical denunciation of oppression. Lastly, differences between countries should not overshadow the fact that all of the demonstrators are peacefully demanding the demise of a regime and a system in place since independence; they refuse to hide behind a leader who will simply replace his predecessor.

"Ipemed can give new impetus to Lebanese business"

Neemat Frem is chairman of the Association of Lebanese industrials, the Indevco group, and vice-president of Ipemed's supervisory board.

For what reasons do Lebanese companies join Ipemed?

With a rapprochement between Europe and the Mediterranean, the Union for the Mediterranean could be a significant dynamic force in reviving Mediterranean countries. Yet since its creation, the UfM has been blighted by numerous political deadlocks resulting from

the complexity of North-South relations in the region. Local public institutions in several countries need outside stimulation to break the prevailing apathy.

In focusing on economy and trade between the region's different zones, Ipemed can act as a catalyst to give new impetus. For example, its members could take advantage of networking.

Ipemed's research projects and expertise also boost the quality of exchanges and create opportunities.

Improved interaction

● The enrolment of leading Lebanese companies and banks in 2010 corresponds to Ipemed's internationalization, which aims to create a network carrying the voice of companies from the South, East and North Mediterranean to reach, among others, the political leaders of the European Commission. Ipemed Lebanon,

coordinated by Antoine Abou Samra, CEO of the Bader group, was set up to facilitate interaction between Beirut and Paris. It has organized several events in Lebanon, including a seminar on public-private partnerships in the Mediterranean based on an accredited study that has shown the way to other countries in the region.

Is this interest an expression of their commitment to Euro-Mediterranean rapprochement?

Lebanon has played a part in the Euro-Mediterranean zone's development for a very long time. The Phoenicians' achievements are a perfect illustration. More recently, because of their small domestic market, the Lebanese have actively traded with countries in

the region and even set up business there. The Euro-Mediterranean zone and Middle Eastern countries offer an ideal field for Lebanese economic players. Also, because of its geographic location, the country plays an important role in exchanges between the two zones. Lebanese institutions' interest in Ipemed is no doubt an expression of their commitment to Euro-Mediterranean rapprochement. It's a huge responsibility for Ipemed.

Following the event that you organized for us in Beirut, do you think that other companies will join Ipemed?

To accomplish rapprochement, over the next few years projects need to become a reality, we need to see the creation of genuine opportunities and synergy between members. Our objective is to expand our membership.

Interview by Agnès Levallois



JEAN-MICHEL RILLON

IPEMED'S OUTLOOK

Jean-Louis Chaussade elected supervisory board chairman

● At the annual meeting of Ipemed's Supervisory Board, Jean-Louis Chaussade, CEO of Suez Environment and a founding member of Ipemed, was elected chairman to replace Gérard Mestrallet, CEO

of GDF SUEZ, whose mandate had come to an end. Three deputy chairmen also joined the board's team: Isidro Fainé, chairman of CaixaBank, Neemat Frem (see above) and Jean-Luc Decornoy, chairman of the board of KPMG France and deputy chairman of KPMG EMA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), both of whom are IPEMED founding members.

New Spanish member

● As part of its internationalization process, Ipemed welcomes the membership of CaixaBank, one of the ten biggest banks in the euro zone by stock market capitalization and the leading retail bank in Spain. *Ipemed News* will give more details on this new membership in a future issue.