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Agenda

'Pluralism and Democracy: Prospects for the Arab Middle East and North Africa'

Thursday 6th December & Friday 7th December 2012

At the Canadian Cultural Centre, 5 rue de Constantine, 75007 Paris, France

Organized by the European Council on Foreign Relations and the Council for a Community of Democracies, in association with the Department of Foreign Affairs of Canada, the Arab Reform Initiative, FIDH, and the Institute for Research and Debate on Governance.

After the wave of uprisings that swept across the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, a debate of vital significance appears to be playing out across the region. How far will the dramatic changes of the last 18 months – and the more gradual reform processes that may be following in their wake – lead to unified societies, where the people are able collectively to take control of their countries' future in an inclusive way? And how far, conversely, will political opening and the disruption it entails, in complex societies with often difficult historical legacies, lead to division and political settlements that do not have consensual support?

This workshop will offer an opportunity to explore these questions through an in-depth discussion led by a diverse group of activists and analysts closely involved in contemporary developments in the region. The aim is to provide the space for a comparative exploration of how the challenge of pluralism is being addressed across

the region, and to allow European policymakers to consider the way that they can best support it.

<u>Thursday 6th December 2012</u>

13.00 – 14.00   Informal buffet lunch

14.00 – 14.20   Welcoming statement by Souhayr Belhassen, President, FIDH

14.20 - 15.50   Session 1: Current state of political pluralism in North Africa

Introductory comments by Issandr El-Amrani, Radwan Masmoudi and Azza Maghur, chaired by Anthony Dworkin

The first session will launch the conference by assessing the current situation of inclusive pluralism in North Africa. The aim is to look at developments in the region since the uprisings of 2011, with particular reference to Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, and explore how far the transition processes have succeeded in moving toward new political settlements that give a fair representation to all democratic groups and viewpoints.

15.50 – 16.15   Break

16.15 – 17.45   Session 2: State of inclusive pluralism in the Middle East

Introductory comments by Bassma Kodmani, Labib Kamhawi and Nadim Houry, chaired by Salam Kawakibi

In the second session, discussion will turn to an assessment of the current state and prospects for pluralism in the Levantine Middle East, focusing on Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The discussion will explore how far the conflict in Syria has worsened sectarian divisions in the country, and what hopes there are for reaching a settlement that incorporates all parts of Syrian society. The session will also look at the impact of the conflict and other political developments in Lebanon and Jordan, asking what are the factors that are uniting or dividing their complex societies.

18.00 – 20.00   Reception at the Canadian Cultural Center hosted by the Embassy of Canada

With remarks by Kim Butler, Plenipotentiary Minister, Embassy of Canada, and Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Chair of the French Commission on the White Book on Defence and National Security and ECFR Council Member

<u>Friday 7th December 2012</u>

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09.00 – 09.30   Coffee

09.30 – 11.05   Session 3: Pluralism in political life

> Introductory comments by Ibrahim El-Hodaiby, Emad Shahin and Abdallah Saaf, chaired by Antoine Bernard

Following the survey in the opening sessions of current developments, the conference will move on during the second day to thematic discussion of the best ways to understand and implement pluralism in the context of the Middle East and North Africa. This session will explore the place of pluralism in political life – including the notion of representative government, the relationship between political partisanship and national responsibility, and the role of opposition parties and the media. How should elected parties understand the mandate they receive from the voters, and how far should they strive to represent all of society, including those with different viewpoints? What are the best ways in divided societies to reach political consensus and avoid polarization?

11.05 – 11.25   Break

11.25 – 13.00   Session 4: Constitutions, law and governance

> Introductory comments by Ajmi Lourimi and Zaid al-Ali, chaired by Séverine Bellina

This session will look at the role of constitutions and the legal framework of governance in entrenching pluralism. Among the questions to be explored are how best to devise a set of "rules of the game" that can be agreed by all a country's citizens, and how to deal with different understandings of the role of the state in representing the values of the country. How much is there disagreement within the Middle East and North Africa about the balance between collective values and individual rights, and how can this be addressed? And how should constitutions approach the question of the distribution of power between executive, legislature and judiciary to ensure both effective government and inclusive pluralism?

13.00 – 14.00   Informal buffet lunch

14.00 – 15.30   Session 5: Citizen engagement in the democratic process

> Introductory comments by Khadija Cherif and David French, chaired by Robert LaGamma

Democratic pluralism is not only a matter of the structure and approach of political parties, but is rooted above all in the culture and attitudes of society as a whole. This session will look at the role of citizens in a pluralistic democracy and the kind of engagement that is necessary to sustain it. What is the place of social movements in ensuring that the interests and viewpoints of all groups are fairly

represented? What kind of education can help to foster democratic ideals and mutual respect among people? What are the most important steps in helping to develop a culture of democracy across the Middle East and North Africa, where some countries have little historic experience of pluralistic politics?

15.30 – 15.50   Break

15.50 – 17.20   Session 6: International cooperation and role of outside actors

                Introductory comments from Denis Pietton, Maurizio Massari and Séverine Bellina; chaired by Jeremy Kinsman

Building on the earlier discussions, this concluding session will ask what contribution can be made by outside actors – including EU institutions and member states, and civil society organizations – to encourage the development of pluralism in the Middle East and North Africa.

17.20 – 17.30   Conclusion and thanks

Participants (* = confirmed)

Zaid al-Ali   Senior Advisor on Constitution Building, International IDEA*
Kurt Bassuener   Research Director, Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy
Development Support*
Souhayr Belhassen President, FIDH*
Séverine Bellina   Director, Institute for Research and Debate on
Governance (France)*
Antoine Bernard   Directeur-General, FIDH*
Anne Bourlond   Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium*
Khadija Cherif   Secrétaire générale, FIDH (Tunisia)*
Daniel Costello   Director-General for Strategic Affairs, Dept of Foreign
Affairs, Canada*
Anthony Dworkin   Senior Policy Fellow, ECFR*
Issandr El Amrani   Political analyst and editor of *The Arabist* (Egypt); visiting fellow,
                     ECFR*
Ibrahim El Hodaiby   Senior Researcher at House of Wisdom Center for
Strategic Studies (Egypt)*
Manar El-Shorbagy Professor of Political Science, American University of Cairo;
                     former member, Egyptian constituent assembly
Juan Jose Escobar   Ambassador for Mediterranean Affairs, Ministry of Foreign
                     Affairs, Spain   *
Jean-Pierre Filiu   Professor of Contemporary Middle Eastern History,
Sciences-Po (France)*
Fredrik Florén   Head of Mediterranean Section, Ministry for Foreign
Affairs, Sweden*
David French   Executive Director, Alexandria Trust (U.K.)*
Emanuele Giaufret Assistant to the Managing Director for MENA, European External
                     Action Service*
Nadim Houry   Deputy Director, Middle East and North Africa, Human
Rights Watch*
Labib Kamhawi   Spokesman and member of executive board, National Front for
                     Reform, Jordan*
Salam Kawakibi   Deputy Director and Research Director, Arab Reform Initiative*
Saad Khiari   Institut de Relations Internationales et Strategiques (France)
Michel Kilo   Syrian Democratic Forum
Jeremy Kinsman   Head, International Democracy Support, CCD*
Bassma Kodmani   Executive Director, Arab Reform Initiative; ECFR Council
member*
Robert La Gamma   President, Council for a Community of Democracies*
Stephane Lacroix   Assistant Professor of Political Science, Sciences Po (France)*
Ajmi Lourimi   Political Bureau, Ennahda (Tunisia)*
Azza Maghur   Lawyer, Maghur & Partners (Libya)*
Maurizio Massari   Special Envoy for the Mediterranean, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Italy*
Radwan Masmoudi President, Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy
(Tunisia)*

Aud Lise Norheim   Director General, Dept for UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs,
                     MFA, Norway

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Denis Pietton	Directeur du Cabinet du Ministre des Affaires Étrangeres, République Française*
Olivier Roy	Professor, European University Institute; ECFR Council member
Abdallah Saaf	Director, Centre for Studies and Research in Social Sciences, Mohammed V University (Morocco)*
Emad Shahin	Professor of Public Policy and Administration, American University of Cairo*
Irfan Siddiq	Director, Arab Partnership Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK