**Panel 1**

**Arab Emigration and Fortress Europe: The European Union and a Middle East in Transition**

*Directors*

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*Panel Rationale*

Since the catalytic events of 1989 and the securitization of world politics in the post-9/11 period, academic efforts have striven to conceptualize the post-Cold War international system and to grasp the complexity of multiple emerging challenges (Volgy et al., 2009). Within this framework, the massive protests across the Arab world over the past three years have introduced novel factors of potential destabilization to an already highly sensitive geopolitical arena, underlying the importance of the Mediterranean region in global affairs Lannon, 2012). The European Union (EU) has been intricately linked to processes in the Arab world, given both its geographical proximity and the socio-political ties that have forged historically strong European relations with the Middle East (Khader, 2013).

In examining both the post-2011 era in the Arab world and Europe’s position within that system, the tremendous rise in population movements across countries of the Middle East comes across as surprisingly under-researched. In fact, one of the major consequences of the 2011 Arab uprisings has been overlooked, despite the fact that many countries in the region, from Egypt or Tunisia to Lebanon and Syria are experiencing novel patterns of migratory waves (Fargues, 2013). In this sense, protest movements and political transitions in the Arab world cannot be disassociated from the migratory effects they have triggered. However, whereas social science researchers and decision-makers examining the effects of the 2011 uprisings have focused on domestic political economy implications, regional security repercussions, or the consequences of international military involvement, much less attention has been paid to regional migratory pressures. In fact, diverse phenomena such as the heightened degrees of diasporic empowerment, novel politically minded emigration and renewed waves of economic migrants, coupled with an ever-increasing wave of refugees have yet to enter academic debates.

This lacuna is not a novel occurrence, given that academic interest in the political aspect of Mediterranean migration remained relatively minimal, despite the fact that population movements emanating both from the African and the Asian continents have particularly affected southern EU member-states, which have been called upon to manage large immigration waves in times of a severe financial crisis (Cassarino, 2010). The concept of an integrated border management structure has been at the top of the EU agenda (Carrera, 2007), fuelling a policy dialogue on the capability of the ‘Old Continent’ to effectively respond to new regional realities. At the same time, the immigration debate constitutes an interesting case in point on how Europe perceives itself as a major regional player, capable of exporting and respecting the values upon which it claims it is based.

Ultimately, the complex relationship between Middle East migration, regional security, and foreign policy remains largely unexamined, despite being at the core of EU-Middle East relations: what was EU’s institutional priorities in response to post-2011 migratory pressures, and how have these priorities been translated into specific actions? To what extent do these actions represent the interests of European policy-makers, or EU member-states? Do they represent a break from pre-2011 EU involvement in the field of migration and why? Do these ideas correspond to normative or realist aspects of EU migration-management policy?

*Potential Contributions*

The main research aim of this panel will focus on the role of the European Union [EU] in the broader MENA region during the past few years with a particular emphasis on population movements. The research questions it aims to put forth relate to the continuing importance of Arab migration, as seen through the legal, economic, and socio-political spectrum of the EU and its member-states.

Potential original contributions to this panel should fit broadly within its main theme of migration in EU-MENA relations. Particular research questions include, but are by no means limited to, the degree of EU member-state cooperation on the field of immigration originating from the MENA region; the effects of bilateral treaties, such as Mobility Partnerships, between EU member-states and MENA countries; the evaluation of obstacles that prevented the development of a uniform EU response to the migration-related issues arising out of the 2011 events; the interaction between the EU and local non-state actors in activities related to migration; specific EU member-states initiatives with regard to migratory pressures. Contributions from researchers examining such issues from a MENA perspective are particularly encouraged.

*Research Dissemination*

Following the conference, participants need to send their fully revised papers, which will be further edited for submission either as an edited volume or in a special issue of a peer-reviewed academic journal.