

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

20th New Faces Conference

Citizenship and Political Participation in the Mediterranean Region

27 February to 2 March 2014

Istanbul, Turkey

In cooperation with:

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT** 
STIFTUNG

Dear Candidate,

We kindly invite you to apply for the upcoming 20th New Faces Conference entitled **“Citizenship and Political Participation in the Mediterranean Region”**. The conference is a project of the EU-Middle East Forum, a program for the advancement of Young Professionals at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). It is carried out in close cooperation with the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Turkey. Once you have participated in one of EUMEF’s events, you become part of a network that receives information on professional activities of other alumni, grants, scholarships, and other similar programs. Every two years, all alumni of EUMEF meet in Berlin for a reunion.

The main protagonists and hence target group of the conference are **Young Professionals** with approximately two to four years of professional work experience (aged around 27-35) in **academia, politics, the media, the private sector, and civil society organizations** who deal with political issues related to the topic of the conference. Participants should come from **Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Germany, the UK, France, Spain, Italy, and Greece**. The working language during the conference is English.

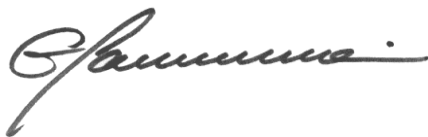
To apply, please submit the attached application form and a one-page outline of your intended contribution to the conference. Please read the Call for Applications as well as the Application Form carefully as they explain the details of the application procedure and the conference. The **application deadline is 1 December 2013**.

The organizers will cover accommodation and provide for travel subsidies based on the country of residence (maximum: 75 € for participants from Turkey, 200€ for participants from Tunisia and Egypt, 300 € for participants from Morocco, 250 € for participants from Spain and 200 € for participants from other EU countries).

Please do not hesitate to contact us at eumef1@dgap.org in case you have any further questions.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Eberhard Sandschneider
Otto Wolff-Director of the Research Institute

DGAP



Sarah Hartmann
Head of the EU-Middle East Forum

DGAP

Concept Note

I. General Outline

Since the beginning of the revolutions and uprisings in North Africa in 2010/2011, and during the subsequent democratic transformations, the quantity, modes and importance of citizen participation have changed considerably in the affected countries. In Turkey, the Gezi Park protests and demonstrations have recently sparked intensive debate on citizen participation in decision making.

In the course of these changes and debates, the conception of citizenship itself, what it means and entails, has come into question. Since the ousting of the authoritarian rulers in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, the rights and duties of citizens are being discussed, as are the shortcomings of certain conceptions and practices of citizenship, for example with regards to women or religious minorities.

It is obvious that the opportunities for citizen participation in the so-called “Arab Spring countries” have improved enormously: Relatively free and fair elections with the participation of many newly formed political parties guaranteed the formal political participation of citizens, but on the other hand, informal participation has remained relevant, as the frequency of demonstrations and the importance of social movements and civil society organizations is still high. Nevertheless, there are still barriers preventing citizens in general from political participation, and there are particular barriers for certain groups in society, such as the poor, religious and ethnic minorities and the youth.

This conference aims to analyze changes in conceptions of citizenship in the Mediterranean region, especially in North Africa and Turkey, as well as opportunities and barriers of political participation and visions for the future. It will enable cross-country comparisons and exchange of experiences, and bring together academics, practitioners and activists working in the field.

II. Topics

Contributions may address, but are not restricted to, the following topics and questions:

1. Conceptions of Citizenship

Citizenship is a very broad concept which entails many different aspects, such as political participation, the ability to claim certain rights and benefits (civil, political and economic rights), social and political identities etc. Even though the modern concept of “citizenship” in terms of individual legal rights vis-à-vis the state was coined in 18th century-Europe, the Arabic equivalent “muwatin” has been used since the days of pre-Islam. The question of who is being excluded from citizenship, or at least equal citizenship, is central: In Egypt, for example, women have complained that they were treated like “second class citizens”. The status of ethnic and religious minorities is also relevant in this context, as debates about the indication of religious affiliation on national identity cards indicate. Furthermore, the challenges of globalization have led many people to think about a more cosmopolitan vision of citizenship.

What does citizenship mean and entail, and how do these visions and conceptions differ in the respective countries and over time? Can the identity aspect of citizenship contribute to social integration? In what ways are minorities, such as Coptic Christians or Imazighen, participating in the discourse about citizenship? What efforts and initiatives are there for citizenship education and what role does and should the state play regarding this issue?

2. Forms of Citizen Participation

Political participation is one of the key dimensions of citizenship. The ways and modes of participation are numerous, be it through so-called “formal” channels like elections, political parties or trade unions, or “informal” ones like demonstrations, social movements or online activism. In Egypt and Tunisia, the formation of new political parties and their participation in elections has been an important element of the ongoing transformations.

What are the advantages and the disadvantages of the different forms of participation? What role do political parties play in the different countries, and what role are they supposed to play? Which channels of participations are frequently used by citizens in the respective countries and which are regarded with skepticism? How do aspects such as class or gender affect the ways in which people participate? In what ways has the so-called “digital age” influenced citizen participation?

3. Barriers and Visions

What barriers prevent citizens in general and certain vulnerable groups in particular, from participating in politics? How do economic aspects and education affect political participation? What initiatives, NGOs and movements are trying to shape citizenship and opportunities for participation in a more equal and fair way, and are they successful? How can legal frameworks and institutions be improved in order to guarantee a better participation of citizens?

I. Objectives of the Conference

The key objectives of the conference are to:

- analyze and discuss current developments and debates around citizenship and political participation in the Mediterranean region
- bridge academic and non-academic discourses by bringing together researchers, practitioners, policy makers and civil society representatives
- support the young generation of practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers to discuss their visions and findings with senior experts as well as peers
- establish a network of young professionals and initiate new partnerships by bringing together participants from North Africa, Turkey and the EU.

II. Target Group

The main protagonists and hence target group of the conference are Young Professionals with approximately two to four years of professional work experience (aged around 27-35) in academia, politics, the media, the private sector, and civil society organizations, who deal with political issues related to the topic of the conference. Participants should come from North Africa, Turkey, Germany, the UK, France, Spain, Italy, and Greece. The working language during the conference is English.

III. Methodology

The three-day conference is composed of 1) three to four senior experts' inputs in the plenary and 2) a series of working group sessions. There will be two working groups, in which each participant will present a brief input statement (around 2000 words) related to one or more of the indicated subject areas. These input statements, which do not have to be purely academic papers but can also be presentations of practical work and ongoing projects, are commented on by experts/discussants who will also act as facilitators of the working group discussions. During joint plenary sessions, participants will get an overview of the status and collective findings of the debates in each working group, allowing for intensive discussion and exchange among the whole group.

The tasks for each participant will hence include:

- Preparation and presentation of a concise written input statement in the form of a commentary addressing one specific aspect within the scope of the above-mentioned topics (around 2000 words; the complete paper is due on **26 January 2014**)
- Active participation during working group and plenary sessions

V. Application Process

Kindly fill out the attached application form and send it back together with a CV, a one-page outline of your intended contribution and a short email outlining your motivation to participate in the 20th New Faces Conference to eumef1@dgap.org no later than **1 December 2013**.