



Annual Plenary Meeting and the Tenth Anniversary

Conference of the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)

Tunis, 31/10-1/11/2015

SUMMARY

Dr. Ioannis N. Grigoriadis represented ELIAMEP in the **Annual Plenary Meeting and the Tenth Anniversary Conference of the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)**, which took place in Tunis on 31 October and 1 November 2015.

The Arab Reform Initiative (ARI) is a consortium of policy analysis institutes, founded in 2005, that mobilizes research capacity to advance democratic change in Arab countries. Panel discussions referred to the course of the Arab uprisings with emphasis on Syria and Tunisia. In the panel of Tunisia, members of the An-Nahda party, civil society activists and experts discussed the reasons why the Tunisian revolution has proved to be the only successful in terms of promoting democratization reform, in particular with reference with the role of the An-Nahda party in the process and its relations with other political parties and movements. The conditions for ensuring the successful continuation of the process were also discussed. The situation in Syria was also widely discussed together with the humanitarian crisis linked to the rising refugee wave from the Syrian warzones and the emergency that this has generated in southern European Union member states.

The Tenth Anniversary Conference focused on the role of the youth in the Arab revolutions. In the first panel, “New Definitions and Visions of Youth Action” were discussed with the participation of academics and activists from Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. A conceptual framework for exploring notions of youth action was provided and the links between revolutionary protest movements and new forms of social and political participation were discussed. In the second panel, entitled “The Young Ones: From Dreamers to Actors” youth mobilization in diverse contexts was discussed. Activists and social entrepreneurs from Egypt, Syria and Tunisia took part, recounting their experiences in various domains of social entrepreneurship, as well as their understandings of new forms of political and social action.