

RegioConf - 10th October 2014

The internal project workshop hosted by the Institute Affari Internazionali (IAI) on the 10th October 2014 provided an overview over the current drafts of each researcher and further gave everyone the opportunity for final feedback and for eventual last revisions. One of the most important questions for the workshop was how to combine the individual findings with each other and to suggest possible linkages to create cross references between each of the chapters. The workshop also had the aim to indicate what eventually was still missing and what could be improved for the final draft. The one-day workshop was composed by 5 Panel sessions each dedicated to one of the regions analysed by the project: namely Europe, the Mediterranean, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia. It began with a warm welcome and a first introductory session to the project framework presented by both project leaders Thomas Diez and Nathalie Tocci. After a short introduction, Thomas Diez expressed his gratitude towards all participants praising the outcome of the project having turned out very satisfactory.

The first panel of the workshop focused on the European regional conflict transformation policy, which was presented by speaker Eva Scherwitz. Findings so far revealed that regional integration efforts of the EU have led to certain frustrations. Currently, the EU does not act as a proper active model for regional integration. In particular in the African case, the EU believes to lack sufficient capacities because of limited financial capacities. Second, credibility and self perception is low, as the EU believes that it cannot be an important security player for Latin America or Asia. According to the EU, alternative model settings such as the Gulf Cooperation Council or regional powers such as China prove to represent better models for solving regional issues.

The second panel was dedicated to the Mediterranean with the presentations of Justine Luis and Herah Azhar. Justine Luis argued that regional integration in the Maghreb is not developing properly and that EU regional initiatives have led to a bilateral shift which goes against its main purpose of encouraging regional integration. She also highlighted in detail how the EU in recent years has engaged in conflict resolution in the region compared to the past. Other alternative models have better reputations such as the Gulf Council Cooperation in terms of negotiating. The EU believes in a present disinterest by its partners following a European active model setting. The EU suffers of a current passive self restraint and is not representing an active model.

The third panel of the workshop was about the Sub-Saharan Africa region presented by Giulia Piccolino. She mentioned that the EU has been contributing to conflict transformation through economic driven models. It seems that today ECOWAS is more in the focus of the EU and that their strategic relationship has increased over time. The continent is much less violent than it was twenty years ago. However, economic integration is still hampered by unfavorable conditions and

has not helped to solve regional conflicts in the area. ECOWAS is also less equipped to face increasing non-conventional security threats.

The fourth panel of the workshop was dedicated to Latin America presented by Kai Lehmann and Octavio Forti Neto. Kai Lehmann argued that the key theme is what the role of the EU currently is in the region. It does not deal with regional conflict but more with the consequences of the conflict, such as the refugee crisis in Ecuador. Second, there is a contradiction in what the EU says what its obligations on the continent are and what it really does on the ground. Often South American actors demand a more coherent strategy which the EU has not been able to achieve. In Central America the EU has been more consistent and the overall situation since the EU's involvement with the region has effectively supported further integration in the region, reinforcing signs of stability and security.

The final panel of the workshop focused on Asia and was presented by Moosung Lee. He argued that the EU's ambitions in fostering regional integration faced a number of obstacles and that neither the EU nor regional cooperative frameworks could currently help in dealing with security threats in the region. He also mentioned that currently it seems that the role of the European Union in Asia is perceived as less relevant than the role of the United States.

After the short presentations and discussion rounds of each panel project manager Thomas Diez and Nathalie Tocci asked for thoughts and comments on the introduction. Last details concerning the chapters were also thoroughly discussed. At the end all participants discussed eventual details about the next meeting in Brussels that is going to take place on the 14th of November such as the timetable of the event. All participants understood and agreed on further plans that were set out.

List of Workshop participants:

Thomas Diez, University of Tübingen

Eva Scherwitz, University of Tübingen

Nathalie Tocci, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Eleonora Poli, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Mark Valentiner, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Marco Pinfari, The American University of Cairo (AUC)

Hirah Azhar, The American University of Cairo (AUC)

Justine Louis, The American University of Cairo (AUC)

Giulia Piccolino, GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies

Kai Lehmann, University of São Paulo

Octavio Forti Neto, University of São Paulo

Moosung Lee, Myongji University