

AYBARS GÖRGÜLÜ

Preface

Between July 2017 and May 2018, a team of researchers led by the Center for Public Policy and Democracy Studies (PODEM), an Istanbul-based think-tank established in 2015, working in collaboration with the Arab Studies Institute – Research and Education Methodologies (ASI-REM) within the MEDRESET project funded under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Programme for Research and Innovation, conducted an extensive field research in the Mediterranean, a region substantially changing in terms of geopolitical dynamics and drivers.

This edited book is a compilation of nine country reports—on Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey—where the qualitative fieldwork (i.e. Elite Survey) took place as part of the MEDRESET project. Each report respectively presents and discusses the findings of the field research, investigating how the policies of the European Union (EU) in the region are perceived and assessed by various stakeholders at the elite level. Respondents were asked to analyse their countries’ resistance to or adoption of the EU conceptualization of the Mediterranean, evaluate EU policies addressing the region, and identify current geopolitical issues they consider of crucial importance.

Since its inception in 2016, the MEDRESET Project has functioned as a research consortium bringing together academic institutions and think-tanks of Europe and the Middle East and North African region, focusing on a broad spectrum of disciplines in the Mediterranean region to develop alternative visions for a new regional partnership and corresponding EU policies. The primary objective of MEDRESET has been to think and understand the definition of the Mediterranean by means of mapping a region which has changed considerably in terms of geopolitical dynamics and in key policy sectors; identifying the old and new stakeholders, while shedding light on their interaction; and determining the major policy issues around which this interaction flows.

As PODEM, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Daniela Huber and Maria Cristina Paciello of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), the scientific co-ordinators of MEDRESET Project, for all their generous efforts, contributions, and constructive insights throughout the duration of the project. We also wish to express our thanks to Elie Haddad of ASI-REM and his colleagues for their continuous assistance in the project implementation.

Additionally, we would like to thank each of the independent researchers we collaborated with for the field research, who worked whole-heartedly and showed great patience and consideration throughout the process. Their contribution is an invaluable part of the efforts exerted in this book.

PODEM would also like to acknowledge the support of Peter Lang for their efforts in the realization and publication of this book, and Prof. Lorenzo Kamel of University of Turin as the series editor.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone including the MEDRESET Project management team and copy-editors, who participated in the research process and the preparation of the reports.

It is our hope and expectation that this book will make a meaningful contribution to the literature on Euro-Mediterranean relations and offer tangible policy recommendations to the relevant stakeholders, most specifically the European Union, on advancing its relations with the countries in the region through a renewed approach, while remaining in pursuit of regional prosperity, stability, and development at various levels.