Letter from the MEEA President

I am pleased to greet you MEEA members in the MEEA Newsletter again after a slightly longer period than usual. The last time my letter appeared was in the Fall 2010 issue. We now changed our annual publication calendar so as to produce one issue in the fall, and one issue in the winter, as announced before. Our newsletter editor Mehmet S. Tosun also suggested that we move the President’s letter from the fall issue to the winter issue and we duly agreed. As a result, I lost my chances of addressing the membership in 2011, a particularly eventful year for our region, through the letter.

2011 has been an action-packed year for the MENA region indeed. The Arab Spring has affected so many things in so many ways, even stopping us from having our spring meetings that were originally scheduled to take place in Alexandria, Egypt in March 2011. Hopefully, political stability will be completely restored in the whole region soon, and all nations will start moving towards achievement of higher – material and non-material – standards of living under democratically elected governments. These governments would face the challenging task of successfully implementing pro-growth policies that boost employment generation capacity of their respective economies, while keeping an eye on the equality of income distribution, and serving their electorate by upholding democratic values, and respecting the rule of law, minority rights etc. I sure hope the new

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Letter (Continued from page 1)

As for the challenges we at the MEEA faced during the past year… The major challenge was the re-location of the spring meetings scheduled to be held in Alexandria in March 2011. Prior to this, in January 2011, we had the winter meetings in Denver where we scheduled 21 papers to be presented in the sessions held before the ASSA Conference, plus 15 posters and as many papers to be presented in the 4 ASSA session slots we have. We held pre-ASSA sessions on the campus of University of Colorado, Denver thanks to the arrangements that Dr. Hani Mansour of UCD so diligently made. I cite the number of papers scheduled to be presented, rather than the number of papers presented, as “no show”s continued to be a problem in Denver as well. Unfortunately, several presentation slots again went unused as the authors withdrew, often at the last minute. On the upside, the Ibn Khaldun Prize went to two very interesting papers nicely written by two young members of the MEEA, and presented at the 2010 winter meetings in Atlanta. The prize committee headed by former MEEA President Jeff Nugent announced that the prize would be shared by Abdullah Al-Hassan of the IMF, and Mohamed Saleh, a graduate student at the University of Southern California. Abdullah’s paper was entitled “A Coincident Indicator of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Business Cycle,” and Mohamed’s title was “Moslems, Christians and Jews in the 20th Century Egypt: Human Capital Differences and the Expansion of Modern Schooling.”

Many of the winter meetings participants said “bye, see you in Alexandria in March” as they were leaving Denver. Obviously, they had no way of foreseeing the developments in Egypt that led to cancellation of the spring meetings scheduled to be held in Alexandria. Since we had already communicated our acceptance/rejection decisions on submitted papers, however, I felt that we had to find an alternative venue. That’s when I contacted the Prof. José García-Montalvo, Director of the Center for Research on the Economies of the Mediterranean (CREMed), and asked him if we could somehow have our spring meetings jointly with or around their meetings in June. He and his colleagues kindly agreed and we moved our spring meetings from Alexandria in March to Barcelona in June. The re-location required a lot of additional work but meetings were a huge success, thanks to the hard work of Edward Sayre, our treasurer, and the support we received from CREMed staff, particularly Dr. Eva Ventura, Executive Director of the Center, and Mélanie Ator who was then working at the Center.
In addition to about 80 papers presented in parallel sessions, we had a nice opening session featuring a welcome address by Ambassador Senén Florensa, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Government of Catalonia and President of the Executive Committee of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), and a panel discussion on the “Implications of the Arab Spring for MENA Economies” that I moderated. Panelists were José García-Montalvo, Director of the CREMed; Javier Albarracin Corredor, Director of Socioeconomic Development at the IEMed, and our own Sohrab Behdad, Professor of Economics at Denison University and a former President of the MEEA.

After Barcelona meetings, we gathered in Chicago in January for our winter meetings. We held our pre-ASSA sessions at Loyola University of Chicago. Mine Cinar, another former President who is currently teaching in the Business School there nicely took care of all arrangements. In addition to about 35 scheduled presentations in pre-ASSA sessions, we had about 30 presentations scheduled in our ASSA meeting slots, including the 13 posters accepted for presentation. I thought the poster session at Chicago meetings was exceptionally good this year and many colleagues agreed. At the business meeting, Jeff Nugent announced Eric Chaney of Harvard University as the winner of Ibn Khaldun Prize. Eric won the prize with the very nice paper he presented at Denver meetings the year before: “Sultans, the Shari'a and Seven Empty Ears: Economic Catastrophes, Church and State”.

In sum, the MEEA has become a professional society that could successfully organize two reasonably well-attended meetings a year in different parts of the world – one that could re-locate one meeting from a country on a continent to another country on a different continent on short notice. This is certainly a good thing, something that we could be proud of. The sad thing though is we don’t do much, besides conference activities. The MEEA is still a society without a publication of its own. Even as far as the conferences are concerned, we are simply watching as many presentation slots that we scheduled in various meetings (particularly the winter meetings in the US) go unused, as we do not have the funds to partially or fully cover travel expenses of bright young scholars from the region to attend the MEEA meetings in the USA or elsewhere.

The opening session in Barcelona that I mentioned above received some local media coverage, adding 2011 spring meetings to the meetings held in Istanbul the year before as the second MEEA event where our activities were communicated to the society at large. Still, I feel that we could do a lot better than that: We could do a lot better in making opinions of our members about the developments in or issues relevant to the economies of our region heard and discussed by much wider audiences. We need to get involved and take a more active part in the whole policy debate about the areas and paths of reform needed in MENA economies in the years ahead. I personally have come to believe that this is a more important duty than ever for fellow economists from the region. Please let me know how we could get more effective use of the MEEA as a channel to get our members’ voices heard by interested parties.

I wish you a productive season until I see as many of you as possible in Alexandria in June.

Serdar Sayan
TOBB University of Economics and Technology
ANNOUNCEMENTS

IBN KHALDUN PRIZE

Reminder that submissions for the Ibn Khaldun Prize for the best paper on one or more Middle Eastern countries by a junior economist (no more than five years since receiving Ph.D.) must be received no later than December 14, 2012. The submissions should be sent electronically to Professor Jeffrey B. Nugent at nugent@usc.edu. The entries will be evaluated by a three-person committee. Please visit http://meeaweb.org/honors.htm for further details.

ERF 19TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE RISE OF ISLAMIST PARTIES,
KUWAIT, KUWAIT, MARCH 2013

The 19th Annual Conference provides a unique opportunity for researchers from the region to interact with one another and with international researchers. The theme of the plenary sessions this year is “Economic Development under the Rise of Islamist Parties”. The themes of the parallel sessions are varied and broad to accommodate diverse research interests. The deadline for proposal submissions is July 1, 2012. More details can be found at http://www.erf.org.eg/cms.php?id=events_details&news_id=76

CONFERENCE ON MENA ECONOMIES, ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY, ISTANBUL, TURKEY, JUNE 21-23, 2013

The conference, hosted by Istanbul Bilgi University, will focus on themes including growth prospects and income inequalities, monetary and fiscal policy design and business cycles, forecasting key economic aggregates, and political economy of the region. The deadline for abstract submission is September 1, 2012. More information can be found at http://mena2013.bilgi.edu.tr/

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, TURKISH MIGRATION IN EUROPE: PROJECTING THE NEXT 50 YEARS,
LONDON, UK, DECEMBER 7-9, 2012

The conference welcomes contributions on the international mobility of Turks, with a focus on potential future migration patterns and processes in relation to the past migration experiences. The interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together academics, researchers, policy makers, media specialists, and civic organizations to discuss the experiences of immigrants, host societies, challenges and the future projections of Turkish populations in Europe. More informational can be found at http://www.turkishmigration.net/

EBES 2012 CONFERENCE—WARSAW, POLAND, NOVEMBER 1-3, 2012

The focus of the conference is Europe and Asia but all papers from major business, finance, and economics fields (theoretical or empirical) are highly encouraged. The deadline for abstract submission is July 31, 2012. More information on the conference, including publication opportunities for qualified conference papers and online submission, can be found at http://www.ebesweb.org/Conferences/EBES-2012-Conference-Warsaw.aspx

(Announcements continued on page 6)
## New and Recent Titles

As part of the information services to MEEA members, the newsletter publishes a selection of new titles on the political economy of the Middle East and North Africa. Please email the newsletter editor if you wish to include your recent book publications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Arab Economies in a Contemporary Global Order</td>
<td>Held, Colbert C., and John Thomas Cummings. (2010).</td>
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<td>The Arab Revolutions of the Revolutionary Era</td>
<td>Lynch, Marc. (2012).</td>
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<td>Iran's Struggle for Economic Independence: Reform and Counter-Reform</td>
<td>Pesaran, Evacilia. (2011).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Governance In the Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>Venardos, Angelo M. (2010).</td>
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If you are interested in becoming a member of the Middle East Economic Association, please fill out this form and return it to the Treasurer. The membership fee is $25 for faculty and other professionals, $20 for students, and $10 for all members residing in a MEEA country. Payments can now be made via check or credit card. Be sure to include credit card number and expiration date if paying by credit card.

Name: ____________________________
Affiliation ____________________________
Address ____________________________
Telephone ____________________________
Fax ____________________________
Email ____________________________

Send to: Edward Sayre  
Treasurer, Middle East Economic Association  
Department of Political Science and International Development  
University of Southern Mississippi  
Box #5108  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
edward.sayre@usm.edu  

The Middle East Economic Association, a non-profit international organization, was formed in 1978 and is affiliated with the American Economic Association and the Middle East Studies Association. The main objective of MEEA is to foster scholarship and to establish lines of communication among specialists interested in the Political Economy of the Middle East. Web: www.meeeweb.org  

The following are past presidents of MEEA:  
Charles Issawi  
Princeton University  
1978-1983  
Stanislaw Wellisz  
Columbia University  
1984-1985  
Manoucher Parvin  
University of Akron  
1986-1989  
Abbas Alnasrawi  
University of Vermont  
1990-1994  
Sohrab Behdad  
Denison University  
1995-1996  
Fatemeh Moghadam  
Hofstra University  
1997-1999  
E. Mine Cinar  
Loyola University Chicago  
2000-2003  
Jeffrey Nugent  
University of Southern California  
2004-2006  
Hadi Esfahani  
University of Illinois  
2007-2009

The China Center for Economic Studies (CCES) and the Society for the Study of Emerging Markets (SSEM) are organizing the international conference “Institutions, Economic Growth and International Trade.” The deadline for abstract submissions is June 15, 2012. More details can be found at http://www.cces.cn/ssem/  

Hassan Aly and Hadi Esfahani have been elected by Economic Research Forum’s (ERF) research fellows as new members of the Board of Directors of the ERF for a five-year term starting in 2012. Our congratulations go out to both Hassan and Hadi.  

Serdar Sayan co-organized and directed a workshop on “Causes and Effects of the Shadow Economy: MENA and the Mediterranean Countries versus the Rest of the World” as part of the 12th Mediterranean Meetings organized by the Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies of the European University Institute. The workshop was held March 21-24, 2012 in Montecatini Terme, Italy (for more info, please visit: http://bit.ly/Ktr9eC)  

Economic Research Forum’s 18th Annual Meetings were held March 25-27, 2012 in Cairo. This year’s theme was “Corruption and Economic Development”. Several MEEA members actively participated in the pre-conference events (March 21-23, 2012) as well as the conference itself as presenters or discussants. In addition to papers presented in parallel sessions by the members, Serdar Sayan and Jeff Nugent each delivered a talk in plenary sessions. The conference agenda can be reached at http://bit.ly/KVamYf.

Other News  
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