

Michelle Pace awarded UACES ARENA Bursary

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Michelle Pace (staff/profiles/government-society/pace-michelle.aspx), Senior Lecturer at POLSIS, (together with her colleague Francesco Cavatorta from Dublin City University) has been awarded a prestigious UACES ARENA Bursary to present her ongoing research at the UACES ARENA Seminar Series in Brussels during spring 2011.

The research Michelle will present in Brussels will focus on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) – which represent ‘the epicentre of world crises’. Recent events in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt have confirmed the strategic relevance of the region with the international community scrambling on how to best approach the changes taking place.

The research examines how the EU approaches and deals with the many issues emerging from the region, ranging from the rise in religious militancy to economic liberalisation and from armed conflicts to migration. The fundamental objective of this research project is to provide a broad understanding of the constraining frameworks of the EU and to discuss a range of country specific studies, which highlight the complexity and contradictions in EU foreign policy-making in the context of what Michelle Pace and Francesco Cavatorta define as the ‘post-normative turn’ of the Union.

Pace and Cavatorta provide a systematic analysis of how the EU conducts its external affairs on the ground within the larger policy frameworks that it has adopted and in the context of the changed strategic reality of the MENA region following the wars in Iraq (2003-), Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (2008-9) and the emergence of powerful non-state actors. How did the EU, directly or indirectly, contribute to bring about such strategic changes? How has it adapted to them? How have they influenced the way the EU perceives itself and its role in international affairs? What are the policies that have been successful and which ones have proved to be failures? What are the conditions under which adjustments can and should be made?

Pace and Cavatorta have guest-edited a recent Special Issue of the journal *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Number 15, 2010 on The Post-normative Turn in European Union - Middle East Relations. Both have published widely on the topic of EU-MENA relations and believe that given the ongoing events in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and across the region, this is indeed a timely research topic for a seminar presentation in Brussels. Both have also been highly sought after by the international media during the ongoing above mentioned events.

Further information: www.uaces.org/events/seminar (<http://www.uaces.org/events/seminars/>)

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