



COMITATO ATLANTICO ITALIANO

AGENDA

THE NEXT FRONTLINE – THE EMEA REGION FACING THE CRISES OF
RUSSIA’S WAR IN UKRAINE
OCTOBER 11-14
ROME, ITALY

**INTERNATIONAL
REPUBLICAN
INSTITUTE**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11

10:00-19:30 **Participants Arrive**

20:00 **Welcome Dinner**

Venue: Restaurant Hostaria Romana
Via del Boccaccio, 1
00187 Rome

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12

10:00-11:00 **Introductory Remarks (Open to the public)**

Speakers: Jan Surotchak, Senior Director for Transatlantic Strategy, IRI
Sen. Adolfo Urso, Senator (Fdi), President of COPASIR
Rodney M. Hunter, United States Deputy Permanent Representative &
Chief of Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome

Venue: Sala Apollo
Sina Bernini Bristol Hotel (1st floor)
Piazza Barberini 23
00187 Rome

11:00-12:30 **Roundtable #1 – Food Security Challenges in the EMEA Region**

Russia’s war in Ukraine, the blockade of Ukrainian ports, and the retaining of grain bound to Africa and the Middle East from both Ukraine and Russia silos are highlighting not only the dependence of many countries on Russian and Ukrainian grain, but also Russia’s willingness to weaponize food to promote its agenda, may that lead to starvation and instability in other parts of the World. At the same time, food prices have risen as a result of Russia’s various blockades, and the risks of hunger unrest all over the World grow. The Africa and Middle East regions find themselves particularly vulnerable as they must import grain, which has traditionally come from the Black Sea region. How can nation-states in the region secure food security for themselves and their neighbors in this challenging new environment? Can North America but also Europe, who have capped their food production in the past decades, prop it up to help compensate for the

lost food exchanges? To what extent is the food security crisis tied with the energy crisis? What are the solutions to avoid food shortages and unacceptable rises in prices that would, in turn, have effects on the stability of society?

Moderator: Giulia Pompili, Journalist, Il Foglio
Speakers: Yuriy Grynevetskyi, First Secretary (FAO/IFAD/WFP), Embassy of Ukraine in Rome (FAO/IFAD/WFP)
Pépin-Stéphane Gopaye, Development Expert, Central African Republic
Assem Abu Hatab, Senior Researcher, the Nordic Africa Institute, Egypt/Sweden
Dr. Kanj Hamade, Adjunct Lecturer at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, American University of Beirut

Format: One-hour panel, followed by group discussion. Question for discussion: What initiatives (policies, campaigns, etc.) can Europe, Africa, and MENA take respectively to address food security challenges posed by the Russia's war in Ukraine?

12:30-13:30

Lunch

Venue: Hotel Restaurant IL BIZIO (8th floor) – Sina Bernini Bristol Hotel

13:30-15:00

Roundtable #2 – Energy – an EMEA key to a more diversified energy world?

Russia's war in Ukraine has made painfully clear the levels but also the costs of Europe's energy reliance on Russia – at the beginning of the year, the European Union had to import 40% of its gas from Russia. As the EU urgently aligns its supply lines to the martial realities of Eastern Europe, can Africa, the Med, and the Middle East region provide viable alternative energy sources, from Qatari LNG to Nigerian and Angolan oil? Can the Americas play a role in providing energy to Europe (and potentially Africa) and transporting safe energy to Europe? As Africa and the Middle East have abundant energy sources, can those be traded responsibly with foodstuff from Europe that would be produced in larger quantities in the future? And how will a shift to non-fossil-fuel energy sources impact ties and relations between countries in these regions (e.g. reduced demand for petroleum, increased competition for lithium)?

Moderator: Fred Niehaus, Managing Partner, Interactive Management Solutions, United States

Speakers: Velina Tchakarova, Director, Austrian Institute for European & Security Policy (AIES), Austria
George Wentz, Founder and CEO, MAD Energy, United States
Gaetano Massara, Geopolitical and Energy Analyst, Italy

Format: One-hour panel, followed by group discussion. Question for discussion: What initiatives (policies, campaigns, etc.) can Europe, Africa, and MENA take respectively to diversify energy consumption away from authoritarian actors?

15:00-15:30

Coffee Break

15:30-17:00 **Roundtable #3 – Stability and Migrations: can a new cycle of violence and migration waves be avoided?**

The role played by the increase in food prices in the 2007-2010 period in the outbreak of the Arab spring is now well-documented, and the parallel with the current inflation of prices, especially in agricultural products, is plain for everyone to see. Price will not be the only issue, though, as many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, while already facing food supply issues before Russia's war in Ukraine and are now in a critical situation with food shortages threatening to increase instability in the entire region. This could in turn have consequences down the road in terms of civil wars, but also migrations, both short- and long-distance. Beyond direct assistance, can there be more co-operation between North and South to promote stability South of the Mediterranean, and can a new North-South partnership for stability be devised to reduce the risks not only in Africa and the Middle East, but beyond in the Med region and in Europe, where the migration waves are increasingly headed to?

Moderator: Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jon Davis, Chairman, MAD Energy, United States

Speakers: Majdi Karbai, Member of Parliament, Democratic Current, Tunisia
Pierre-Henri Dumont, Member of Parliament, Les Républicains, France
Loredana Teodorescu, Head of European and International Affairs, Luigi Sturzo Institute, Italy
Ikhlas Osman, Coordinator of the Gender, Governance and Migration Master Studies program at the Regional Institute of Gender Diversity, Peace and Rights (RIGDPR), Ahfad University for Women, Khartoum, Sudan

17:00-17:30 **Conclusions – Lessons from Day One**

Speaker: Patrick Quirk, Senior Director for Strategy, Research & the Center for Global Impact, IRI

20:30 **Dinner**

Venue: Restaurant Le Grotte
Via della Vite, 37
00187 Rome

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

10:00-11:30 **Roundtable #4 – The Mediterranean – Frontier, Barrier or Solution?**

The Mediterranean stands between the three regions most vulnerable to Russia's war-induced crises: Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. And "the Sea between lands" can be seen geopolitically as much of a problem as a solution: the diversity of life on its different shores can make it a hard border where cooperation is complicated and conflict rife, leading to added insecurity. On the other hand, the greater Mediterranean basin can also be a zone of exchange where a dominant power (or alliance of powers) can contribute to stabilizing the mainland. Can stability be maintained in the Mediterranean, and can that stability be extended inland not only from the Med, but also the Black Sea, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean?

Moderator: Walt Teter, CEO, Firebird LNG, United States
Speakers: Paolo Quercia, professor of Strategic Studies at Perugia University, Director of the quarterly “GeoTrade – Magazine of geopolitics and foreign trade”, Italy
Prof. Ahmet Han, Professor of International Relations at Istanbul Kadir Has University, Turkey
Nadim Houry, Executive Director, Arab Reform Initiative (ARI)

11:30-12:00 **Coffee Break**

12:00-13:30 **Roundtable #5 – Countering Russian and Chinese Authoritarian Narratives about the War and the Crises**

Authoritarian powers have used the current war in Ukraine as vectors through which they can instill new narratives in the Med and Africa regions, not only to get the blame for the war passed on to the West, but also to promote their own narrative of how a “Westless” world would be more beneficial to Africa and the Middle East. Russia has clearly developed these narratives in a larger war against the West that they hope to extend far beyond the European and Black Sea theaters. Still, other actors like China have also developed their own narratives to discredit the West in a crisis that is of Russia’s doing. What specific narratives are being promoted from North to South, and are they similar in the emotions they seek to trigger? If so, can democratic actors better coordinate and share experience to counter these anti-Western narratives?

Moderator: Łukasz Kondraciuk, Advisor on Countering Foreign Influence, IRI
Speakers: Sen. André Gattolin, Senator (Renaissance), France
Laura Harth, Campaign Director, Safeguard Defenders, Italy
Eleonora Mongelli, Vice President of the Italian Federation for Human Rights (FIDU), Italy
Nigel Fomumbod, Programs Manager of IVFCam, Cameroon

Format: One-hour panel, followed by group discussion. Question for discussion: What initiatives (policies, campaigns, etc.) can democratic actors take to counter foreign authoritarian propaganda ad disinformation?

13:30-15:00 **Lunch**

Venue: Hotel Restaurant IL BIZIO (8th floor) – Sina Bernini Bristol Hotel

15:00-16:30 **Roundtable #6 – A New Western Narrative for the EMEA Region?**

Over the past decade, partisans of a more open and free society have been set on a back footing around the World, as authoritarian narratives have made headways in many places, including in the West. In Europe, populist narratives have gained ground; in the Middle East and North Africa, the promise of more open societies, which seemed to be ushering out of the Arab Springs, has led the way to disenchantment, civil war and authoritarian offensives; in Africa, authoritarian regimes have often cornered Western actors into “dominant” boxes, allowing malign actors to increase their influence simply by deconstructing the Western narrative. Beyond the debunking of disinformation and

malign foreign influence, can we build a new, positive narrative for the future of the EMEA region(s) that provides room for growth on both sides of the Mediterranean and goes beyond past experiences without denying them? How can a new narrative be promoted that would be different in both tactics and nature from the authoritarian narrative in the EMEA region?

Moderator: Allan Kavall, Journalist, Le Monde, France

Speakers: Balkan Devlen, Senior Fellow, McDonald Laurier Institute, Canada

Velina Tchakarova, Director, Austrian Institute for European & Security Policy (AIES), Austria

Sascha Tamm, Director of Transatlantic Dialogue and Latin America, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Germany

Adewunmi Emoruwa, Lead Strategist, Gatefield, Nigeria

17:00-17:30 **Coffee Break**

17:30-18:30 **Conclusions and Closing**

20:00 **Farewell Dinner**

Venue: Restaurant San Marco
Via Sardegna, 38/g
00187 Rome

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

09:30-18:00 **Participants Depart**