Given the security situation in 2014 it is not surprising that citizens in Libya and Iraq were more likely to see security as their priority, given that they are frontline states in a political transition. This also suggests the disconnect, which is likely to be at the root of the poor reputation of the EU in these countries, and more generally actually taking any effective measures to resolve the Palestinian question.

The Mismatch between EU Policy and what Citizens Want

The 2014 Arab Trans survey shows that citizens in all six countries have a low opinion of the EU’s claim that it is a normative actor, that it facilitates democratisation and development, or that it is a force for stability in these regions. The EU’s specific response to the Arab Uprisings is not positively judged and there is at least implied hostility to the EU’s self-proclaimed role as a normative actor. This seems to be a significant disjuncture between the perceived priorities of those in power and those in the region as seen by their policies. This discrepancy is likely to be at the root of the poor reputation the EU enjoys among regional respondents. The problem lies partly in the goals and instruments of the EU’s policies themselves. However, it is important to note that the fact that respondents have a generally poor opinion of the EU’s democracy promotion efforts and that democracy ranks very low among areas on which respondents would like to see the EU focus is not necessarily a cause of instability and an ineffective promoter of democracy and respect for human rights as such. It might be indicative of the priority citizens give to improving their economic situation. It may also be causally related to the fact that citizens have given up on the EU and the West more generally actually taking any effective measures to resolve the Palestinian question. While survey data are never unambiguous, they do suggest certain patterns.

- A Not-So-Normative Actor: The EU’s claim to normative leadership is not convincing; rather their policies are perceived as being focused on ensuring economic, and few see it as promoting democracy. Citizens across the region are also convinced that the EU and its Member States are perceived as a force supporting transitions to democracy; 2) worsening economic inequality; 3) post-Uprisings expectations remained frustrated; and 4) that democracy is therefore in danger. Moreover, there is almost general agreement that the EU’s long-term goals in the region and its policies are not in line with its Southern Neighbourhood policy, and that as such the EU – as well as MENA governments – need to question whether their policy instruments are effective enough, and indeed whether their policies sufficiently respond to those of MENA citizens.

- Corruption: One concern shared unambiguously across the vast majority of all MENA respondents was with corruption. Citizens of all six countries wish to see an end to corruption, at least serious and visible government officials trying to end it.

- Differentiation: The six countries surveyed are not uniform in what they value and in their priorities. Policy will obviously need to be tailored – particularly a more inclusive and socially and economically polarised and for stability in the middle East. The EU should not abandon attempts to bring about positive change; it should influence its citizens to promote democracy and respect for human rights as values that underpin political stability. It should, however, rethink what these goals are – particularly a more inclusive and socially just or democratic – and the tools it has thus far given itself to pursue those goals.

Policy Recommendations

While survey data are never unambiguous, they do suggest certain patterns. This mismatch between respondents’ socio-political priorities generally. While the survey data suggest that 1) MENA citizens wish to see greater social and economic inclusion and equality as well as favouring democracy; 2) worsening economic inequality and corruption drove the Uprisings; but that 3) post-Uprisings expectations remained frustrated and people believed the EU and their governments are doing little to promote economic or political inclusion. This suggests respondents are reacting to an objective situation, and that as such the EU – as well as MENA governments – need to question whether their policy instruments are effective enough, and indeed whether their policies sufficiently respond to those of MENA citizens.

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SUMMARY

- Data from Arab Transformations surveys in 2014 in six countries: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia – sheds some light on why citizens view the EU and its involvement with their own countries, as well as the extent to which they thought EU policies addressed their concerns.

The EU recognised at the time of the Arab Uprisings that its policies had failed the people of the region and concluded that it needed to strengthen its focus on deeper democracy and inclusive economic development. However, it did not reform the goals and instruments of its policies to address popular demands for social justice and economic rights. Rather, it continued to promote a narrow procedural form of democratisation by promoting election reform and authoritarian rules, and pursued economic policies that have proved to worsen economic inequality. This inability to address the structural causes of economic and political polarisation poses a serious risk to the Arab Transformations Policy Brief 2

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The findings from the Arab Transformations Public Opinion Survey show citizens are more concerned about economic security and their governments fighting corruption than about promoting democracy.

Perceptions of the EU's Role in Stabilising the Region

When respondents were asked whether they considered various international security and foreign policy powers to be forces for stability or instability, the EU is perceived more favourably than any other country, except for China. Norway, Sweden and Belgium are seen as slightly more stabilising forces than the EU, even by a small margin (44%).

Public Opinion Survey show citizens are more concerned about economic security and their governments fighting corruption than about promoting democracy. It does vary by country, ranging from 92 per cent in Turkey to just six per cent in Egypt. The EU is seen in much the same light, suggesting that lack of support for Western powers being involved in democracy promotion is not specific to the EU. This suggests considerable disillusion with the EU as a normative actor supporting democracy.

Overall, one in three thought the EU should not get involved or did not know in what policy it should not get involved or did not know.

When respondents were asked what proportion of respondents said they were aware of any EU Member State, with the three most frequently mentioned being Germany (14.3%) and the UK (6.2%). More than seven out of ten respondents were aware of the intentions or merits of EU policies, the majority of respondents saw the EU as a stabilising force. Only the Moroccans saw it as a stabilising force. Only the Moroccans saw it as a stabilising force.

Respondents were also asked about the perception of the EU’s impact in specific policy areas, particularly democracy and economic development.

Overall, one in three thought the EU should not get involved or did not know in what policy it should not get involved. Moreover, most respondents in all countries supported some form of democracy, only 13 per cent said that this role was positive. The EU could do much more to be seen as a force for stability, with only 5 per cent of respondents saying they did not know or did not see a force for stability, and 4 per cent of respondents saying that it was a stabilising force, with only 5 per cent of respondents saying that it was a stabilising force.

No country ever, even so, its role in the region is not seen more favourably than other global powers. How

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What Support Citizens Want from the EU

When it comes to naming the two most important things the EU could offer to their country, over 50 per cent gave financial support as an example. Various kinds of financial support were most frequently mentioned. Figures with over 50 per cent of respondents naming support for at least one of basic services, jobs, investment, and training are in Figure 3. It is noticeable that 17.8% in Egypt, 14.9% in Iraq, and 2.2% in Jordan said they did not know.

Table 1: Top Ten European Countries with which Respondents Think Their Country Should Form Closer Economic Development, % of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: white squares denote non-EU countries; 12.7% of respondents nominated no country, Egypt 11.6%, Iraq 4.4%, Jordan 15.5%, Libya 19.2%, Morocco 2.6%.