

IMS NEWSLETTER

6/2021, NO. 1



The IMS Newsletter is a biannual digest of the most important news in the Mediterranean area. It provides links, short summaries and occasionally comments about all aspects of the Mediterranean that appeared in the news of the last six months.

CONTENTS

CURRENT ISSUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1. Covid19 Pandemic in the Mediterranean
2. Blockage of the Suez Canal

POLITICS

1. Greece and Turkey
3. Israel and Palestinians
3. Refugees and Ceuta

CULTURE

1. Egyptian Mummies Parade
2. Underwater
3. Environment

IMS NEWS

1. International Conference
2. Upcoming Conference
3. Publications

homepage : www.ims.or.kr

email : meditstudies@bufs.ac.kr

IMS NEWSLETTER

CURRENT ISSUE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1. COVID19 PANDEMIC IN THE MEDITERRAN

As for the rest of the world the ongoing pandemic caused by the spread of SARS-CoV-2 has had a tremendous effect on each part of life in the Mediterranean. Throughout the pandemic and again from the beginnings of vaccinations the social and economic disparities between the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea become very obvious. The countries of the EU see different infection rates and respond individually to contain the spread of the virus, but there is at least a general strategy to provide support for those countries that are struggling to keep their health care system on a functioning level.

As tracking of infection chains, the fast reporting of newly emerging clusters and lockdowns proved to have some effect on the rate of new infections, countries without a fast administration and a well-functioning infrastructure suffer the most. It is clear that unsolved problems of the region such as the civil wars in Syria and Libya as well as the ongoing refugee crisis pose serious threats for containing the pandemic. On the opposite, Israel has managed in a nation-wide vaccination campaign to bring the infections to a halt which proves that the only way to stop the pandemic will be a global vaccination program. Once more the obvious becomes visible: a global crisis requires global and concerted measurements and this is particularly true for an area as the Mediterranean.

An assessment of the “Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East” published by the end of 2020 holds valuable observations and opinions.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-either-shore-of-the-mediterranean/>

A report of the WHO of the impact of Covid19 on the eastern Mediterranean is almost one year old but contains valuable insights that are still of relevance:

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332818/WHOEMHEC050E-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

The effectiveness of the mRNA vaccines observed through the example of srael:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)00947-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)00947-8/fulltext)

2. BLOCKAGE OF THE SUEZ CANAL



Source: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Efforts-to-dislodge-ship-blocking-Suez-Canal-enter-sixth-day>

In March 2021, the Mediterranean region witnessed a serious challenge affecting the world's trade due to the obstruction of the Suez Canal, which is considered as one of the world's most vital maritime routes. For one week this was a hot issue in the world's news, starting with the reports on March 23rd about the incident of a large vessel buffeted by winds to appear blocking

the waterway with its bow and stern stuck in the canal banks. As a result, within few days, more than three hundreds ships queued waiting for passing the canal. This incident was said to affect about US\$9.6 billion worth of the world's trade. Efforts for refloating the vessel continued till 29th of March, when it finally could be freed to move again. Thus, by 3rd of April, the backlog of ships queued by the blockage was cleared. Compensations of more about billion US dollars are claimed by the Suez Canal Authority for the loss of revenue and the cost of the salvage operation, this led to the seizure of the vessel by Egyptian authority. The negotiations over this issue are still to continue. The shipping delays due to this problem had its impacts on the world's trade rising the prices of many items including oil which is a strategic item, and also livestock which was affected by that blockage, as some countries decided to suspend the loading of livestock ships for exportation temporarily until the blockage of the Suez Canal is cleared.

This incident shed the light on the important role played by the Suez Canal in the International trade providing a fast route connecting the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea saving time and money for transportation between Europe and Asia.

For more information about this incident:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/56523659>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-56567985>

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/29/world/suez-canal-stuck-ship>

POLITICS

1. GREECE AND TURKEY

Geostrategic resources are the cause of conflict and tensions all around the world. If different players who claim these resources for themselves have also other ongoing or unresolved issues of the past, the situation becomes complex and often impossible to settle. Greece and Turkey have been in a problematic relationship for a long time. The unsolved conflict about Cyprus and the incidents at the border to Greece in course of the refugee crisis have kept the tension high. Prospections of offshore resources south of Turkey and in the waters west of Cyprus have led to severe diplomatic tensions between both countries in the past months. Turkey expressed its claims for extending its EEZ (exclusive economic zone) by sending its Seismic vessel "Oruc Reis". Accompanied by a naval squadron the deployment was a clear signal to Greece and to other states in the Eastern Mediterranean that Turkey is willing to enforce its claims and to put limited attention to the arguments of its neighbors.

Meanwhile both sides are striving for rapprochement have agreed to tensions but the actual issue remains unsolved.

Links:

- <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-extends-mission-for-oruc-reis-seismic-vessel-in-region-of-antalya-gulf-161063>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/greece-turkey-int-idUSKBN2AI2CM>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-turkey-idUSKBN2B82PL>
- <https://www.dw.com/en/greece-turkey-agree-to-work-on-relationship/a-57728237>

2. ISRAEL AND PALESTINIANS

One of the decades-long conflict in the Mediterranean with various ramifications in other political spheres became acute in May after Israel has managed as one of the first countries in the world to fend off the threat of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

One of the triggers for the outbreak of violence were clashes between Israeli security forces and believers at Al-Aqsa Mosque on the temple mound in Jerusalem. An additional ruling of an Israeli court that allowed the expulsion of Arab families from their houses in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah in Jerusalem caused the Hamas, which is holding the rule in Gaza, to issue an ultimatum to Israel. With the end of the deadline hundreds of missiles were shot over three days from Gaza towards numerous targets in Israel which forced the Israeli military to retaliate. The disparate power relation between the Israeli army and the terror groups in Gaza is expressed by the uneven number of casualties that both sides have to bemoan. The Hamas has kept its past strategy to launch their missiles from residential areas which inevitably results in the injury and death of bystanders in case Israel is targeting these areas.

Along with the battles between Hamas and the Israeli army numerous riots broke out in Israel between Arab and Jewish citizens.

Links:

·<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/how-jerusalem-tensions-sparked-heaviest-israel-gaza-fighting-years-2021-05-12/>

·<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-57081848>

·<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/conflicts-with-palestinians-rarely-leave-scratch-israels-markets-2021-05-18/>

3. REFUGEES AND CEUTA

Although the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean was by no means solved or less of a problem in the past year, the COVID19 pandemic overshadowed everything else. Although the pandemic had also an impact on the numbers of refugees, reports of border crossings on the sea as well as officially illegal pushbacks of people who attempted to enter Greek waters have been reported. In May the crossing of ca. 8000 people from Morocco into the Spanish exclave Ceuta has made international headlines.

The lack of a clear policy by the EU and the international community to find solutions for the numerous reasons that cause people to leave their home and to enter the EU is highly problematic, since there is no doubt that the refugee and migrant problem will be a more pressuring issue in the years to come.

Links:

·An incident that stands pars pro toto for the situation:

<https://www.euronews.com/2021/04/25/rescue-groups-and-pope-decry-inaction-by-italian-and-libyan-coastguard-as-130-die-at-sea>

·About the incident in Ceuta: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2021/06/09/spain-morocco-north-africa-ceuta-migrant-crisis-240821>

·A more in depth explanation: <https://www.dw.com/en/why-is-ceuta-migrant-crisis-happening/a-57594562>

CULTURE

1. EGYPTIAN MUMMIES PARADE



Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/4/4/in-pictures-egyptian-mummies-paraded-through-cairo>

On 4 April, world news headlines highlighted the celebrating event held in Cairo for the opening of the newest Egyptian museum “National Museum of Egyptian Civilization”. It was opened to the public in the new museum. A luxurious parade participated by Egyptian celebrities was accompanying the mummies of 18 kings and four queens while transporting them in oxygen-free

nitrogen capsules by vehicles bedecked with golden ancient Egyptian motifs. On April 18, those mummies were exhibited to the public in the new museum. The event was participated by the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi who received the mummies at the entrance of the new museum. Also, the heads of the UN cultural agency UNESCO and the World Tourism Organization attended the ceremony.

Related to this event, news in the social media witnessed some debates on the so-called "curse of the pharaoh", as the past days of the parade witnessed several disasters in Egypt including a deadly rail collision, a building collapse, and the blockage of the Suez Canal.

For more details about the related news:

·<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-56508475>

·<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1836886/lifestyle>

·<https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/4/4/in-pictures-egyptian-mummies-paraded-through-cairo>

2. UNDERWATER

Although many branches of culture and tourism still suffer from the pandemic-related lockdowns, travel-bans and social distancing schemes, a few activities have been in the headlines of the last months. One of them is the opening of the underwater museum near Sainte-Marguerite Island off the coast of Cannes in France. The museum is only reachable through scuba-diving and besides the aim to present sculptures made by the artist Jason de Caires Taylor in a spectacular and unusual environment, the museum aims to point on the environmental issues of the Mediterranean coast with many species under threat.

Underwater archaeology in the Mediterranean has been an important source for outstanding and paradigm-changing discoveries. The excavation of a Roman ship wreck near Cyprus is of specific interest for the historical branch of Mediterranean Studies due to the direct evidence of cross-regional connectivity.

Links:

·Underwater museum: <https://www.euronews.com/living/2021/02/08/underwater-museum-is-protecting-marine-life-in-the-mediterranean-sea>

Roman shipwreck near Cyprus: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/roman-shipwreck-discovered-cyprus-mediterranean-sea-a8978496.html>

3. ENVIRONMENT

Environmental issues in the Mediterranean have been a pressing issue for a long time. The number of actors in the region and the complicated political situation renders it difficult to find common solutions. Those are, however, necessary to preserve the sea as a sustainable source for marine economy and the most important income source for many Mediterranean countries: tourism.

Despite other issues, a few regulations have been set in force in order to battle the problem of plastic pollution in the sea as has been done by the Balearic Islands, one of the main destination of touristic travels from Europe. In the Adriatic a program for the protection of fish stock has been launched. Although both of these initiatives are clearly regional, their example will hopefully encourage other countries to implement similar measures in order to protect the sea with its flora and fauna.

Links:

·Plastic pollution: Balearic islands to abolish single-use plastic:

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/01/10/a-holiday-in-the-balearics-will-soon-be-free-from-single-use-plastic>

·Fish stock protection program in the Adriatic:

<https://www.euronews.com/2021/02/23/protecting-the-sea-gives-glimmer-of-hope-to-fish-stocks-in-the-adriatic>

IMS NEWS

1. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE(2020-2021)

교육부 한국연구재단
인문한국플러스사업단 해외지역연구분야



2020 International Mediterranean Conference

“Exchanges, Conflicts and Coexistence
in Central Mediterranean”

17. Sep. (Thur.) ~ 18. Sep. (Fri), 2020

Place _ Hotel OHEVDAY, Namwon

| Host | Institute for Mediterranean Studies (Busan University of Foreign Studies),
Mediterranean Institute (University of Malta)

| Sponsor | NRF, BUFS, AFOMEDI, Hotel OHEVDAY



2021
African Studies Center
Annual Conference

Politics, Economics, and Socioculture of
Northwestern Africa in COVID-19 Era

June 25th, 2021.
Busan University of Foreign Studies,
Man-O Auditorium(G203),
Business-Tech Center(I215)



| HOST | IMS 한국외국어대학교
| SPONSOR | 한국연구재단 한국외국어대학교 NRE

Opening Ceremony of
the Africans Studies Center :

**COMMEMORATIVE
ACADEMIC-SEMINAR**

COMPETITIVENESS OF AFRICA
IN THE GLOBAL ERA

October 23th(Fri), 2020 13:30~18:30

Mano Auditorium(G203) in Mano Memorial Hall,
Busan University of Foreign Studies



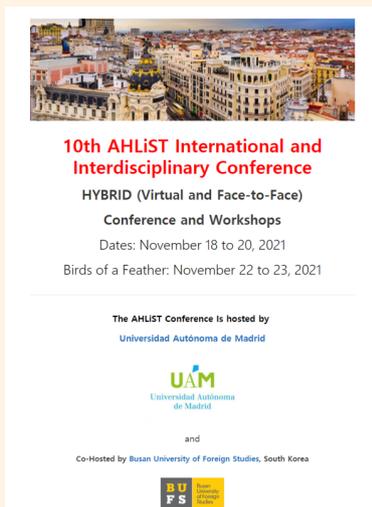
2. UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE(2021)



Renaissance of Civilizational Exchange in the Central Mediterranean

This conference includes the academic field of History, Literature, Philosophy, Art, and Politics in the perspective of exchange with in depth presentation and discussion of domestic and international expertises in Mediterranean Studies. It also aims to seek opportunities to approach Mediterranean Civilizational-Exchange Studies in multiple.....

more information : ims.or.kr/icims.html

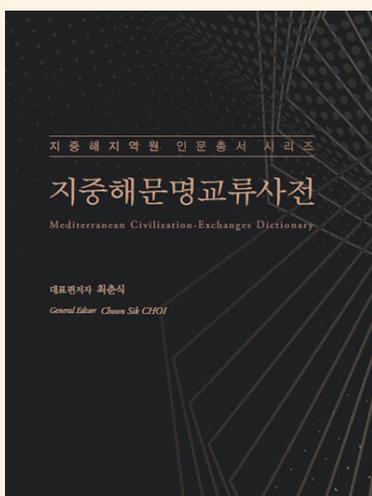


General Conference Topic: Identity and Wellbeing

Through the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of (bio)technology has become essential to sustain society, community and livelihood of human beings. On the individual level, while trying to survive the coronavirus and maintain the status quo, s/he has to juggle multiple types of realities: pandemic reality, social(-distance) reality.....

more information : <http://ahlist.org>

3. PUBLICATIONS



Mediterranean Civilization Exchange Dictionary

『Mediterranean Civilization Exchange Dictionary』 is a valuable attempt to explore the possibility of Mediterranean studies beyond the poverty of domestic Mediterranean civilization exchange discourse.