



Call for papers - Special Session on Recent Trends and Regional Development Challenges in MENA Region and Asia

We are pleased to invite you to contribute papers for a Special Session on **Recent Trends and Regional Development Challenges in MENA Region and Asia**, which we will organize at the 11th RSAI World Congress on April 25-28, 2016. The RSAI World Congress will take place in Istanbul (Turkey) and will be a major international event.

Aim and Scope:

A rapid economic integration has led to some important outcomes on the developing countries over the last three decades. Especially most of the Asian countries' economic developments are outstanding. In the Middle East Region and North Africa, the development attempts of countries were not exceptional as in the many Asian countries; however, there were some challenges. The Gulf countries make an effort to reduce the fuel income share and diversify their economies whereas the Maghreb countries develop their manufacturing sector. In addition to their own effort of the MENA countries, the economic interests of Asian economic power China towards the Maghreb countries, and in general African countries increased. However, the positive development trends are broken with the Arab Spring in these politically fragile countries. The uprising in many countries and the subsequent political instabilities created new economic obstacles for the region countries.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has a very strategic geographical position. This region comprises a heterogeneous country group. The development level of the countries and their institutional structures display different characteristics. Some of them resource and some of them labor abundant countries. Many region countries suffer from high unemployment. Youth unemployment and low female labor participation are the other important labor market characteristics of these countries. The countries also suffer from macroeconomic instabilities, corruption and transparency issues. Limited competition and large public sector, and low level of entrepreneurial activities are other known characteristics of the region countries.

However, the MENA countries also have many opportunities. A demographic structure with a high young population in the high populated MENA countries is an opportunity as a labor force. These countries did not complete their structural changes yet. Therefore there is still a way to go for manufacturing and services.

The political and economic instability in the MENA Region has a potential to affect the East and West side of MENA in different ways. First, migration is expected to rise from the region to the western side of the hemisphere as a consequence of this unstable situation and increasing political conflicts. Western countries are worried about the immigration from the Middle East region, other African countries, and Afghanistan. Although the effects of this chaotic environment on the East side of the globe are not clear, Russia as a political actor and China as an economic actor would have

effects on the region countries and they will be affected what is happened in the region.

An assessment of the economic structures of the MENA region should consider the region's heterogeneities and diversities. However, the domestic structures of the countries would be also critical in the assessment. In this framework, regional differences and spatial characteristics of economic activities in each country will be crucial issues. This Special Session aims to highlight the recent trends and developments in the MENA Region and Asia by focusing on the regional patterns and spatial characteristics of the countries.

The papers of this Special Session will be published as a book. The organizers have already contacted with Springer Series Editor of Regional Development: Asian Perspectives and the book idea has been informally accepted. Potential contributions are expected from Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, United Arab Emirates, Turkey and European countries including France, Portugal and The Netherlands. Recent trends and developments in Asian countries including South Korea and China are also expected.

Session Organizers:

Prof. Tüzin Baycan, Istanbul Technical University, TURKEY

Prof. Fatma Dogruel, Marmara University, TURKEY

Submitting an abstract

Please submit an abstract (400-500 words) indicating title; authors(s), affiliations and emails (indicate the corresponding author); three keywords; and two potential topics to the session Organizers, by sending an e-mail to tbaycan@itu.edu.tr.

Abstract submission deadline: December 15, 2015

Details about the Conference: <http://2016worldcongress.regionalscience.org/>