

Editorial

The inspiration leading to the formulation of the Mediterranean Social Sciences Network by the Vienna Centre in 1987 was, primarily, to coordinate research within the Mediterranean region, with the hope of nurturing unity and development among the people of this inland sea.

This idea emerged from the awareness of evident scientific collaboration that exist among Northern European institutions and which is sadly lacking in the Southern part of Europe. It was precisely for this reason that we deemed it necessary to direct our attention to the South and encourage dialogue on a scientific level. We have already established contacts with various research institutions within this region and our major step will be to concretize these contacts by bringing people together on themes of unity and integral development.

In this light, we intend to organise a series of meetings for social scientists working on research concerned with the Mediterranean Region, aspiring that our philosophy will be translated into a reality. This sixth issue of the Mediterranean Social Sciences Network Newsletter features papers concerning sustainable development, island state economies and the aftermath of the 100 Day War.

The first article, "Pondering the Challenge of Sustainable Development" by Godfrey Baldacchino, gives insight into the ever-intriguing complexities surrounding sustainable development and the threats posed by irresponsible natural resources depletion onto future generations. It accentuates the policy implications involved in the actual operationalisation of sustainable development, and challenges the reader to question the consequences of non-sustainability.

Godfrey Baldacchino brings into comparison the differing global attitudes pertaining to the North and the South in terms of progressive, economic development and the resulting effects of industrialisation on their environments. In his article, he focuses on special microstates experiencing the repercussions of eco-catastrophe, declaring that these countries should serve as forewarnings to the larger economies; and also places Malta within this perspective, being a microstate itself.

As the name "Some Characteristics of Small Economies" implies, the author purports to define all those aspects that establish small economies. Lino Briguglio ascertains this position from four viewpoints, namely, foreign trade, export goods, the public sector and the 'vulnerabilities experienced by such economies. The author

Editorial

comes to the conclusion that these conditions are usually profoundly evident in small island states. This article, then proceeds to identify and account for the various constraining factors that impinge on these islands' economies.

Finally, Marios Nikolinakos's paper focuses on world political and economic situations after the Malta Summit of 1989 between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev. This paper emphasizes the Malta Summit as signalling the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Block. Here the author expounds on the challenges implied by these rampant changes to the world order, with special emphasis on the unification of Germany and the political prospects that this process ensues.

He also discusses the relevance of the role of the United States as an "international protector", with reference to the dangers poised to international stability by the Gulf War. Particular attention is given by Marios Nikolinakos, to the more generic themes related to recent political developments, such as the advent of post-modern globalisation and its effects on socio-economic progress.

Carmel Tabone O.P.