

# Iceland and Lebanon: Antipodes of the EU

The conference will start on the evening of Sep. 30th with a public lecture by Prof. David Björgvinsson, who will inaugurate our Centre's activities in Academic Year 2005-6. It will be followed by a seminar which will take place over three half days on 1 and 2 October.

The topic of the seminar is unusual, but the idea emerged from the realisation, in an encounter with distinguished Icelandic colleagues in Vienna last year, of how little both the people of Iceland and Lebanon knew about each other, at a time when they find themselves on the diametrically opposed sides of the EU and much affected by its emergence.

So the first objective of the conference is to allow Lebanese to meet colleagues 'at the antipodes', hear about Iceland and benefit from the experience of a remarkably civil country and people. Discovering the contrasts between our two societies would probably be most beneficial, but we also think that there is a commonality deriving from the need for small populations and territories to adapt to the emergence of a huge and unprecedented construction which is the EU.

HH Judge Prof David Thor Björgvinsson and Prof. Chibli Mallat will chair the discussions. The presentations and discussions will take place in English and French.

## Program

### Friday 30 September 2005 - 18h00

USJ, Social Sciences Campus, Huvelin Street, Building of the Faculty of law

Inaugural 2005 lecture of the CEUE and of Amnesty International- ME Regional Office

Chair: **Prof. René Chamussy s.j.**, Rector, USJ

#### **The Icelandic constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights**

HH Judge Prof David Thor Björgvinsson, Judge, European Court of Human Rights

### Saturday 1 October 2005 • 10h-12h30

### Saturday 1 October 2005 • 14h-16h30

USJ, Human Sciences Campus, Damascus road, Room Zaarour (6<sup>th</sup> floor)

#### **Discovering each other**

The first half day will include a general and mutual discovery of each other's country and society.

#### **1. Iceland presented from Iceland: Iceland in global affairs, or what features determine the size of states?**

Prof. Baldur Thorhallsson, University of Iceland

#### **2. Iceland as seen from Lebanon**

Prof. Chibli Mallat, USJ

#### **3. Lebanon presented from Lebanon**

Prof. Roland Tomb, USJ

#### **4. Lebanon as seen from Iceland**

Prof. Gudmundur Hálfánarson, University of Iceland

#### **Rule of law in Iceland and Lebanon**

The second half day will focus on the legal-political structures within each country, with a special attention given to the protection of democracy and the transparency and dynamism of the economy.

#### **5. Rule of law and the economy in Iceland: experience and constraints.**

Prof. Olafur Isleifsson, University of Iceland

#### **6. L'accord d'association Liban - UE: avancée lente mais sûre**

Dr Georges Saad, Lebanese University

#### **7. Protecting and enhancing democracy: comparativism of small states**

Alexander Stutzmann, European Parliament

**Sunday 2 October 2005 - Morning**

**The EU and its antipodes, an application of the proximity policy**

The third and final half day will address the issue of the EU with contrastive visions

**8. Iceland and the EU: Why is Iceland not a member?**

David Thor Björgvinsson

**8a. Comment from Scandinavia, HE Ambassador Svein Sevje**

**9. Lebanon and the EU: the Association agreement**

Roger Melki, *Consultant and Professor, USJ*

**9a Comment from another Arab/Mideastern country**

Sadeq Jalal al-Azm, *Prof. University of Damascus*

**10. The EU politics of proximity, Iceland, Lebanon and vice-versa- Roundtable discussion**

**Conclusion**

**A brief note on the speakers**

**Professor René Chamussy**, s.j. is Rector of Saint-Joseph's University.

**HH Professor Judge David Thor Björgvinsson**, Judge, European Court of Human Rights, and a former professor of law at University of Iceland and Reykjavik University School of Law. He is a specialist of legal/constitutional aspects of European Integration from the point of view of Iceland. Co-chair of conference.

**Dr. Baldur Thorhallsson**, associate professor of Political Science, University of Iceland, Faculty of Social Science. Expert of the role of small states in the international community, and of the position of Iceland in relation to the Union and European integration.

**Prof. Roland Tomb**, Faculty of Medicine, USJ, heads its dermatology service. A specialist of ancient Levantine languages and theology, he has been preparing a book introducing Lebanon to the educated reader.

**Professor Dr. Gudmundur Hálfðanarson**, University of Iceland, Faculty of Arts. Expert on Iceland's struggle for independence and in particular the role of and the idea of sovereignty in that respect and the development of that idea and its significance in relation to the European integration.

**Dr Prof Olafur Isleifsson** teaches at Reykjavik University, School of Business.

**Dr Georges Saad** teaches at the Faculty of law, Lebanese University. He established and presides over the Lebanese Association for the Philosophy of Law.

**Alexander Stutzmann** is the Administrator of the Foreign Affairs Commission, European Parliament.

**HE Ambassador Svein Sevje**, ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Lebanon and Syria.

**Roger Melki** is a partner art Etudes et Consultations Economiques-ECE, Beirut, and teaches at the Strategic Studies Centre at USJ.

**Sadeq Jalal al-Azm** is Emeritus Professor, Damascus U., presently professor at Princeton.

**Chibli Mallat** is principal, Mallat law offices, and EU Jean Monnet Professor in law, USJ, and director of the Centre of the Study of the European Union, USJ. Convenor and Co-chair of conference.