



National Erasmus+ Office, Lebanon

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#Beirutwillriseagain

Editorial

*By Dr. Aref Alsoufi
Coordinator of the NEO Lebanon*

- Erasmus+ will soon be closing its 7-year phase of its current journey and prepares for a new launch of the period 2021-2027 with an increased budget, confirmed objectives and improved procedures.

The call for proposals this year will be exceptionally reduced by being limited, as far as the international actions are concerned, to the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees EMJMD and Jean Monnet projects. Those stakeholders which are big fans of Capacity Building CBHE and International Credit Mobility ICM projects will have to wait till the call for proposals of October 2021 to be able to materialise their new ideas.

In line with this particular phase of the programme, the National Erasmus+ Office in Lebanon NEO is intensifying its follow-up policy that includes field monitoring of CBHE and ICM projects. It will also focus on reporting on and surveying the impact of the programme on the Lebanese higher education sector and draw lessons for the future programme.

- The selection results which were published last July following the 2020 call for proposals have shown a continued success in the field of CBHE projects (results of ICM projects have not been published yet). With regards to the EMJMD projects the results have shown a certain stability while the Lebanese universities have failed to benefit from the easy Jean Monnet action.

In this issue:

- Interview with Hervé Sabourin
- News about CBHE projects
- News about ICM projects
- Other News

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- The Lebanese higher education institutions prepare to kick off their academic year 2020-2021 (some have already started) in a highly volatile situation open to all possibilities and uncertainties. The economic and financial crisis, coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic and topped by the latest Beirut explosion, is digging deep and striking hard into the universities' plans. Moreover, the higher education sector in general, and the Erasmus+ projects in particular, have been suffering since last year from a strained relationship with the Ministry's services in charge of higher education. In this exceptional context, the NEO will continue to assist the universities in their implementation of their EU-funded projects. The universities are facing difficulties in implementing their projects due to the unjust measures illegally applied by the Lebanese banks vis-à-vis funds offered to Lebanese universities as grants paid by the EU taxpayers. A guidelines for the financial practices in the Lebanon crisis will be sent soon to project leaders.
- At the beginning of this September, Hervé Sabourin left his post in Beirut as the Director General of the AUF Moyen-Orient, to start a new endeavour in France as Director for strategic projects of the network FIGURE. Hervé Sabourin has been during 6 years of service in Lebanon one of the most active figures working in higher education. In an interview with him (below), we try to learn from his rich experience about his reflexions in the different topics related to the future of Lebanese higher education and to other general and personal issues. The space allocated to the interview in this Newsletter is too short to accommodate all the topics addressed. Over the past 6 years, one could hardly find an event on HE without his active presence and contribution. We, on behalf of the National Erasmus+ Office, express our gratitude to Hervé Sabourin whom we owe a lot.



Statement by Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on the explosion in Beirut, Lebanon

Brussels, 5 August 2020

"We share the shock and sadness of the people of Beirut following the deadly explosion that has taken many lives and left many more injured. Our condolences go to all those that have lost loved ones.

At this difficult time, the European Union offers its full support to the Lebanese people.

As an immediate first step, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated upon request of the Lebanese authorities.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism is now coordinating the urgent deployment of over a 100 highly trained firefighters, with vehicles, dogs and equipment, specialized in search and rescue in urban contexts. They will work with the Lebanese authorities to save lives on the ground.

Already, the Netherlands, Greece and Czechia have confirmed their participation in this critical operation. France, Poland and Germany have also offered assistance via the Mechanism and more Member States can offer support.

The EU has also activated its Copernicus Satellite mapping system to support the Lebanese authorities in assessing the extent of the damage.

We stand with Lebanon and its people and are ready to mobilise further help."



INTERVIEW WITH HERVÉ SABOURIN

Ex-Regional Director of AUF Moyen-Orient

Q1. After 6 years of working as Director General of AUF Moyen Orient, you are leaving to a new mission in France. Are you satisfied with this turn in your career and will you have the opportunity to work with Lebanese colleagues and partners again?

Mes six années d'exercice en tant que Directeur régional de l'AUF au Moyen-Orient ont été pour moi une expérience extraordinaire et je suis globalement extrêmement satisfait des activités et projets que nous avons pu développer, tant au Liban qu'au niveau de toute la région. Plusieurs éléments déterminants m'ont permis de mener à bien ma mission :

- Un potentiel important de talents individuels et collectifs au sein des universités du Moyen-Orient qui a beaucoup facilité la mise en place de projets structurants.
- De nombreuses universités déjà engagées dans les grands défis universitaires de notre temps et qui sont, à mon sens, les suivants :
 - la mise en place d'une politique de la qualité,
 - la mise en œuvre d'une stratégie de l'innovation pédagogique,
 - le développement d'une recherche ciblée et efficace,
 - la transformation numérique,
 - le renforcement du lien avec le monde socio-économique,
 - la nécessité de l'internationalisation.
- Une dimension et un dialogue inter-culturels naturels dans cette région qui ne peut qu'enrichir les collaborations et les échanges



Bien-sûr beaucoup reste à faire, mais je crois que l'AUF a su, notamment au Liban, inscrire son action dans un accompagnement continu à la réponse aux défis cités précédemment. Sa visibilité régionale est grande et son rôle fédérateur auprès de tous ses partenaires universitaires mais aussi non académiques est bien établi. L'AUF a également souhaité développer de solides collaborations avec les grandes instances ministérielles, ce qui a permis et facilité la mise en place de beaux et fructueux projets nationaux et internationaux.

Je n'oublierai pas toutes les rencontres que j'ai faites au Moyen-Orient, tous les talents que j'y ai croisés, ni les grandes souffrances que certains des peuples de cette région traversent ni leur formidable courage à les affronter, et je pense en particulier à mes amis libanais en ce moment.

De retour en France, je viens de reprendre une nouvelle fonction, celle de « Directeur pour les projets stratégiques du réseau FIGURE », réseau formé d'une trentaine d'universités principalement françaises dont l'objectif est de mettre en place des programmes innovants de formation au métier d'ingénieur ; ce réseau souhaite s'étendre à l'international, j'ai été chargé de deux secteurs, l'Europe et le Moyen-Orient, je reviendrai avec grand plaisir au Liban dans ce nouveau cadre.

Q2. We know that your attachment to Lebanon dates to a long time ago. Can you retrace for us the main stages of this journey?

Mes souvenirs du Liban remontent à bien loin, à mon enfance en fait. J'ai découvert Beyrouth il y a une cinquantaine d'années, j'y ai passé 4 ans, alors que mon père travaillait à l'ambassade de France à Beyrouth, j'ai été, durant cette époque, élève au collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour. Je suis ensuite revenu au Liban quatre à cinq fois par an, entre 2006 et 2014, pour des raisons professionnelles, en tant que Vice-Doyen de la faculté des Sciences de l'Université de Poitiers, puis Vice-Président de l'Université de Poitiers en charge des Relations Internationales, avec pour objectif de renforcer les collaborations de mon université avec les universités libanaises; j'y ai déjà rencontré beaucoup des partenaires avec lesquels j'allais travailler à partir de 2014 en tant que Directeur régional de l'AUF.

Q3. Based on your longstanding observation of the Lebanese higher education sector, do you think it is evolving in the right direction? Why?

Il y a beaucoup d'universités au Liban, sans doute un peu trop... mais il y a parmi elles un nombre consistant d'universités qui ont acquis un niveau d'excellence intégrant ou se rapprochant des standards internationaux. Pour des raisons autant historiques que conjoncturelles, le Liban est depuis toujours tourné vers l'extérieur et donc ouvert à l'international, la diaspora libanaise est

There are probably too many universities in Lebanon...

Areas like Research and Internationalisation need to be approached in a more structural and constructive way.

très importante et répartie dans le monde entier, et les relations entre le pays et le reste du monde ont toujours été fortes et intenses. Les universités libanaises n'échappent pas à cette règle et ont cherché à profiter d'exemples ou de modèles internationaux pour améliorer leurs performances ce qui explique pourquoi nombre d'entre elles ont dans leurs stratégies les réponses aux grands défis universitaires, tels que je les ai listés dans la première question.

Ainsi, pour au moins les établissements mentionnés plus haut, l'évolution va dans le bon sens. Il me semble cependant qu'il serait souhaitable de travailler sur une approche plus structurante de quelques grands secteurs-clés, comme la recherche ou l'internationalisation, qui n'est sans doute pas assez présente dans les stratégies d'établissements et repose trop souvent sur des initiatives individuelles.

Q4. *What, in your opinion, are the main challenges that the Lebanese higher education sector has been and will be facing in the future?*

Trois grands défis me semblent se poser à l'enseignement supérieur libanais dans les années à venir:

- Organiser une meilleure structuration de la recherche scientifique
- Accomplir la transformation numérique de l'enseignement supérieur libanais
- Renforcer l'internationalisation des universités libanaises, notamment dans le contexte actuel

Q5. *In his last visit to Lebanon, President Macron has honoured Fayrouz and the Cedar as iconic symbols to mark a certain attachment to the real Lebanon. Do you see other symbols missed that mark the real Lebanon?*

Les deux symboles choisis par le Président Macron pour illustrer le Liban d'aujourd'hui me semblent particulièrement pertinents, Fayrouz est en effet une icône non seulement libanaise mais pour l'ensemble du monde arabe d'hier, d'aujourd'hui et de demain, rassemblant par sa voix toutes les attentes et les sensibilités de cette partie du monde. La majesté du cèdre, son ancrage profond dans la terre libanaise, son aspect solide, voire indestructible, symbolisent bien à mon sens l'attachement profond du peuple libanais à son pays et sa ferveur inégalée à s'engager pour lui, y compris dans les situations les plus dramatiques.

Besides the 2 Lebanese symbols honored by President Macron, "live together" is another symbol which is so specific to Lebanon

Ces deux symboles m'amènent à en proposer un troisième, celui "du vivre ensemble" qui est si propre à ce pays, le Liban. Je ne crois pas qu'il existe dans le Monde un autre pays qui symbolise à ce point la capacité au dialogue entre cultures, entre communautés qu'elles soient sociétales ou religieuses, même si ce dialogue n'est pas simple, même si ce dialogue est parfois source de conflits et tensions multiples.

Q6. *Are you optimistic about the future of Lebanon?*

La période actuelle est évidemment particulièrement dramatique pour le peuple libanais, confronté en même temps à de multiples fléaux : une crise économique et financière sans précédent qui a fait s'effondrer le niveau de vie de chacune et de chacun, une crise politique qui montre les limites du pouvoir actuel, une crise sanitaire due au COVID19, auxquelles s'ajoute la catastrophe humanitaire causée par l'explosion du 4 août.

The only force still alive in Lebanon is ... its people

La seule force vive qui reste présente dans le pays est ... son peuple, dont on ne peut qu'admirer chaque jour son extraordinaire courage et sa faculté exceptionnelle de résilience. Le peuple libanais est le meilleur atout du Liban, comme l'histoire l'a souvent révélé.

Ce pays mettra sans doute beaucoup de temps à se relever, des années sans doute, mais il se relèvera un jour, j'en suis convaincu, par et avec les libanais. Je suis confiant pour le Liban et pour son peuple, que je remercie chaleureusement de m'avoir accueilli avec autant de générosité et d'amitié pendant tout mon séjour.

CBHE projects News

MED2IaH CBHE project – 2 consortium meetings

The MED2IaH initiative stems from the necessity to cover an important aspect of internationalisation in Mediterranean countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan) higher education system that has not been tackled adequately until now – Internationalisation at Home (IaH).

This project is coordinated by the Euro- Mediterranean University (EMUNI), Slovenia.

It includes the following Lebanese partners: Antonine University and International University of Beirut, in addition to other partners from Spain, Italy, France, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

NEO Lebanon participated in the second and third consortium meetings held remotely by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building project MED2IaH on the July 13 and September 8, 2020.

For more info

<https://emuni.si/projects/med2iah/>



MORALE CBHE project – Preventive monitoring

Preventive monitoring to the CBHE project MORALE has been conducted on July 7, 2020 on ZOOM. MORALE is coordinated by the Beirut Arab University.

It involves partners from Lebanon, Syria, Italy, Greece, Germany and Spain. It aims at providing the sector of NGOs with high skilled professionals trained to effectively

manage and operate in NGO environments by means of modernising social and behavioural sciences curricula and by offering Lifelong Learning courses targeting NGOs professionals at partner universities.

This preventive monitoring enabled the team from NEO Lebanon to meet the different

partners of the project and to learn more about the progress made by the project and the results achieved so far.

For more info

<http://www.moraleproject.org/>



StEER-Leb CBHE project – Extension till 14/10/2021

The CBHE project StEER-Leb (Student Empowerment Engagement & Representation in Lebanese Universities) has been extended for 1 year until 14/10/2021.

The StEER-Leb project's objective is to boost student empowerment, engagement and representation infrastructure in Lebanese universities. Within the frame of

this project, European and Lebanese universities will exchange their experiences and share good practices in order to enhance student empowerment, engagement and representation.

StEER-Leb is a 3-year national project, it involves 3 universities from Lebanon: USEK (coordinator), USJ and LAU plus the Ministry of Education and

Higher Education. From Europe the project involves Université de Rouen, Universidad de Cadiz, Università di Bologna and UNIMED.

For more info
www.steer-leb.eu



HEBA CBHE project – Extension till 14/7/2021

The CBHE project HEBA (High Level Renewable and Energy Efficiency Master Courses) has been extended for 9 months up until 14/7/2021.

The project aims to reform and improve existing master programs in Energy Efficiency (EE) and Renewable Energy (RE) on single technology and energy systems

level, improving existing or establishing Centers/Laboratories of EE+RE in Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt.

The project is coordinated by the University of Innsbruck in Austria. It includes the following Lebanese partners: American University of Beirut and Lebanese University, in addition to other partners from

Cyprus, Italy, Germany, Egypt and Jordan.

For more info

<http://sites.ju.edu.ijo/en/heba/Home.aspx>



MENASAFE CBHE project – Impact monitoring

Following the online impact monitoring visit conducted by NEO to the Erasmus+ Capacity Building project MENASAFE that was held via Zoom on May 12, 2020, a face-to-face visit has been conducted on July 8, 2020 to the project at the Faculty of Engineering, BAU at Debbyeh Campus.

The project is coordinated by Gdanska University of Technology in Poland. It includes from Lebanon Beirut Arab University and Modern University of Business and Science.

The overall aim of the project is to design, develop, adapt and implement a new master curriculum (60 ECTS- ten obligatory and elective courses) in the field of Road Traffic Safety within joint efforts between EU and EG-JO-LB partner Universities.

This monitoring visit was an occasion for the team to learn more about the impact and sustainability of the project results at the institutional level, beyond institutions, the continuation of the project beyond its funding period, and the challenges to sustain results.



For more info

<http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015%20MENASAFE.pdf>

ELEGANT CBHE project – Webinar

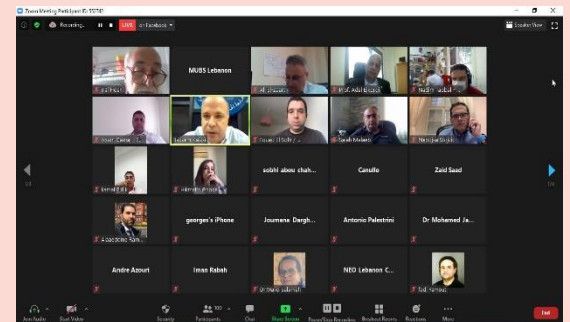
NEO participated in a Webinar on September 23, 2020 organized by the CBHE project ELEGANT under the title “Enhancing IT graduates Employability through Skills Development & Curricular Innovation”.

The project is coordinated by University of Dubrovnik, Croatia. It includes from Lebanon Beirut Arab University, Modern University of Business and Science,

and the syndicate of computer science in Lebanon. It includes other partners from Portugal, United Kingdom, Italy and Jordan.

The project aims at enhancing university enterprise cooperation in Jordan and Lebanon in order to improve employability of graduates.

There were up to 100 participants in the webinar from the different partner countries.



For more info

<https://www.elegant-project.eu/>

Selection Results: CBHE 2020

The results of the Erasmus+ 2020 call for CBHE proposals have been published by EACEA, Brussels.

Six capacity building projects (CBHE) have been selected for EU funding to be implemented by Lebanese institutions.

These projects involve 9 Lebanese universities and one partner from the socio-economic sector.

They also include partners from Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Sweden, Austria, Italy, France, Belgium, Estonia, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Finland and Germany.

They covered subjects such as: Urban transportation, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Hospitals Waste Water Treatment, Student-led Clinics, Entrepreneurship and Global Supply Chain Management in Food Security.

These projects will benefit from EU grants of a total of EUR 5,319,227 and expected to be implemented during the period between 2021 and 2023.

#EUinLebanon

“No call will be launched this year for Capacity Building in Higher Education CBHE & ICM projects. This is not the case for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees EMJMD & Jean Monnet JM”

International Credit Mobility (ICM) NEWS

AUB ICM Monitoring

The National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon has conducted an ICM monitoring via Zoom to the American University of Beirut on September 22, 2020.

Members from the Office of International Programs OIP joined the meeting.

This meeting enabled the NEO to have a better understanding of the management system of ICM at the

university, link to internationalization strategy, policies at the university level pertaining to ICM, preparation of mobilities, selection process of students and staff, recognition process, dissemination of the experience etc.

Testimonies from students and staff who underwent mobilities were also presented during the meeting. The NEO was able to identify issues

pertaining to the ICM implementation at the university.



Cluster Meeting on ICM

NEO Lebanon is organizing a cluster meeting to gather all the offices in charge of managing ICM in the Lebanese Universities on September 30, 2020. The meeting is held remotely via Zoom.

The meeting aims to learn about

the current situation in Lebanon, align the different positions, and hope to reach a better response to this challenging context.

Specific questions about planning incoming and outgoing mobilities in the context of the pandemic and

financial crisis will be addressed.

Other general questions related to the mode of teaching adopted by the Lebanese Higher Education Institutions during fall 2020 will also be addressed.

Other News

#ErasmusDays2019



Jad Khalil, the winner of the best video testimonial for #ERASMUSDAYS2019 from Notre Dame University-Louaizi (NDU), receiving his award from the National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon.

Erasmus students contributed to the #Erasmusdaysthrough posting video testimonials about their experience in the Erasmus+ study period they carried out. The best among these videos has been selected based on a clear and shared criteria.

Thanks to all students who #ERASMUSDAYS 2019.

Congratulations Jad Khalil

#EUinLebanon



#ErasmusDays2020



#ErasmusDays is an international celebration where a series of events are organized by different players of the Erasmus+ programme. The aim of #ErasmusDays is to share beneficiaries' experiences in mobilities, communicate results of Erasmus+ projects and be visible to people, professionals, media, policy makers ...

#ErasmusDays2020 will take place on next **15, 16 and 17 October**. NEO Lebanon will take part in this 2020 edition of ErasmusDays with an activity entitled "Photo & Story".

Beneficiaries are simply asked to post one picture that is related to their Erasmus+ experience with an interesting/remarkable story behind it.

#ErasmusDays2020

Statement of 11 Lebanese Universities

The group of eleven prestigious Lebanese Universities convened to discuss the issues and challenges faced by the Higher Education sector as a result of the current adverse economic, financial, health and political conditions in the country. The aim of the meeting was also to take urgent steps to mitigate the respective challenges.

This group involves the American University of Beirut (AUB), University Saint Joseph (USJ), Lebanese American University (LAU), Beirut Arab University (BAU), Balamand University, La Sagesse University, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), Notre Dame University (NDU), Islamic University in Lebanon (IUL), Antonine University (AU), and Haigazian University.

The group called for the support of Lebanese authorities on a number of issues to secure the survival and continuity of Higher Education Institutions. Issues include the proper implementation of laws and decrees, developing new laws including that of quality assurance, assigning General Director for Higher Education, lifting restrictions put by the Lebanese banks on the universities accounts under the current capital control, activating the role of Higher Education Council etc.



NEO Lebanon

National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon,
5th. Floor,
Ministry of Education and Higher
Education,
Habib Abi Chahla Sq. (Unesco
Palace Area)
Beirut – Lebanon
Tel. +961-3-654 180
Fax: +961-1-804 310

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.erasmusplus-lebanon.org

**The National Erasmus+ Office NEO
Lebanon is represented by Dr. Aref
Alsoufi.**

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