

Best Wishes for the Year 2023 from the Lebanese National Erasmus+ Office Team

Editorial

By Aref Alsoufi

It is sad to say that Lebanon is once more heading into a new uncertain year in all contexts. The educational sector will continue to suffer, particularly in its public wing. The Lebanese University is struggling to survive many of its adverse and painful multiple crises. We believe that whereas the public authorities stand impotent to help the Lebanese University, higher education institutions from the private sector are invited to find smart and innovative ways to support this public institution. It is in their strategic interest to keep this university alive and maintain it as one of the pillars of the country's higher education sector.

In this final newsletter of the year 2022, we would like to highlight some of the activities that characterised a year of Erasmus+ in Lebanon.

- A new Grant Agreement for the management of the National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) in Lebanon for the period 2022-2024 has been signed.
- The NEO continues to strengthen its liaison activities with local and international bodies active in the field of higher education. These activities covered cooperation with the Ministry, the EU Delegation to Lebanon, the EU-funded project HOPES-LEB, UNHCR and Kiron. The main action in this regard was the cooperation with HOPES-LEB on the topic of "*Higher Education in times of collapse*" which resulted in the publication of a policy paper about findings and recommendations.
- A new call for proposals under Erasmus+ was published on 23 November covering many Erasmus+ actions from which Lebanese institutions, organisations, academics and students in the fields of higher education, vocational education and youth can benefit either from capacity building projects or from international mobility scholarships. The deadlines for actions that concern partner countries like Lebanon are set between 14 February and 26 April 2023.
- The NEO of Lebanon launched a promotion and information campaign in preparation to the new Erasmus+ call by targeting many stakeholders based on geographical and sectorial coverage. A new campaign of support to potential candidates is launched by the NEO starting from January 2023 until the expiry of the deadlines of the different actions in this call for proposals.
- In a bid to support Lebanese institutions and improve their participation in the programme and particularly in this new call for proposals, Mr. Clivio Casali, our Country Officer, visited Lebanon between 28 November and 2 December. Besides monitoring 5 ongoing capacity building projects through site visits to 5 Lebanese campuses and visits to the rectors, the mission included meetings with Professor Abbas El Halaby, Minister of Education and Higher Education, the Acting DG HE Dr. Mazen El Khatib. Mr. Casali has conducted 2 training sessions at the Ministry: one for the projects selected in 2022 and another for potential project designers.

NEO Lebanon Information Campaign

In preparation for the new call for proposals, the NEO Lebanon launched its national information campaign as from October 2022. The overarching approach of this campaign was to address the different stakeholders and potential beneficiaries from the higher education sector in a more contextualised, focused and targeted way. For this reason, NEO Lebanon organised a series of info days in the different districts of Lebanon: South, North, Mount Lebanon and Greater Beirut. This approach attracted more people; many of them are newcomers, in a context of purposeful networking. The local info sessions gathered more than 260 participants including professors, deans and university rectors.

The local information days targeting Higher Education were conducted as follows:

- 5 October: Information session at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik targeting other HEIs in the area:
<https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/14681>
- 14 October: Information session at Rafik Hariri University targeting HEIs in South Lebanon:
<https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/14835>
- 27 October: Information session at Order of Engineers and Architects-Tripoli targeting HEIs in the North of the country:
<https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/14868>
- 15 December: Information session at MEHE targeting HEIs in Greater Beirut: <https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/15897>



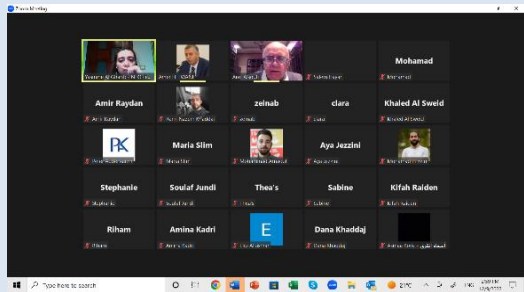
NEO Lebanon dedicated more information days to promote other actions targeting VET and Youth. Information sessions on Capacity building in the field of VET and Capacity Building in the field of Youth took place online on 18 November. Holding it online allowed more chances for networking; VET providers from Jordan and Palestine connected and shared their experience as partners in a CBVET project. Similarly, Lebanese NGOs who already benefited from CBY projects took part and shared their experiences too. More than 40 members from Lebanese youth NGOs attended the info session on CBY and more than 70 members from VET providers in Lebanon attended the session on CBVET.

CBY: <https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/15198>

CBVET: <https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/15200>



Students had their share of the information campaign. An information session promoting students opportunities was conducted on 9 December. Students from different HEIs as well as Youth in the country were presented on exchange projects under International Credit Mobility, Erasmus Mundus scholarships for Master degrees as well as other EU initiatives pertaining to virtual exchange, European solidarity corps and Salto. More than 100 students/youth joined via zoom and 114 joined via the live streaming on [NEO Lebanon Facebook](#) page. Testimonials of Erasmus+ beneficiaries in ICM, EMJMD and European voluntary service were presented to the attendees. <https://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/15838>



❖ *Further to our information campaign that was launched since October at the occasion of the publication of the Erasmus+ 2023 call for proposals, NEO support to all stakeholders (institutions, organisations, VET providers, Youth, students) will continue during January 2023 and until the expiry of the submission deadlines set by the programme through bilateral meetings and individual forms of assistance with potential proposal writers.*

A reminder of the deadlines as follows:

- *Jean Monnet Actions (JMA) : 14 February 2023, 18:00 Beirut time*
- *Capacity Building projects in the field of Higher Education (CBHE), 16 February 2023, 18:00 Beirut time*
- *Erasmus Mundus Actions (EMJM, EMDM) : 16 February 2023, 18:00 Beirut time*
- *International Credit Mobility (ICM) : 23 February 2023, 13:00 Beirut time*
- *Capacity Building in the field of VET (CBVET) : 28 February 2023, 18:00 Beirut time*
- *Capacity-building in the field of Youth (CBY) : 8 March 2023, 18:00 Beirut time*
- *Virtual exchanges in the field higher education and youth: 26 April 2023, 18:00 Beirut time*

Tell us about your participation in the Erasmus+ 2023 Call for proposals [here](#)

Promotion Activities

1-HOPES-LEB Virtual Study Fair

NEO Lebanon participated in the Study and Career Opportunities Virtual Fair on December 8. NEO Lebanon and Jordan joined efforts on the virtual booth dedicated to Erasmus+ Opportunities. They promoted the programme among higher education students and alumni, in particular refugees and vulnerable youth, from different majors and degrees across Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. A total of 381 visits were recorded on the booth with multiple conversations with the NEO teams and numerous downloads of the promotional documents made available on the virtual booth.

<https://regional-alumni-network.eu/the-study-career-opportunities-virtual-fair/>

2-Arab Volunteering Union Fair at UNESCO

The National Erasmus+ Office Lebanon participated in the fair on Youth Volunteering Vision at UNESCO palace on 5-6 December on the occasion of the International Volunteer Day and Declaration of Beirut as the capital of Arab Youth for the year 2022. The Arab Volunteering Union initiated this annual event under “Youth Volunteering Vision Towards Inclusion and Reduced Inequalities” in collaboration with the National Commission of UNESCO and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The event was under the patronage of his Excellency PM Mr. Najib Mikati., It gathered 70 national and international organizations on the booths and 15 speakers on the “WE TALK” panels where the NEO LB participated as a speaker.

More than 24 NGOs and about 100 students/youth passed by the NEO booth over the 2-day event.

NEO participated in the WE TALK panel of the topic “Open Opportunities in Volunteering” and promoted the different opportunities of the programme and other EU initiatives for Youth.



https://instagram.com/youth_volunteering_vision?igshid=Zjc2ZTc4Nzk=

3-Coffee talk with EUD in Saida – EU Jeel Connectors

NEO Lebanon participated in the 4th ‘EU Coffee Talk’ that took place in Saida on 11 October 2022 targeting the youth in South of Lebanon. The COFFEE TALKS are series of small-scale events involving 20 to 25 young people designed as part of the ‘EU Jeel Connect’ activities. These Coffee talks aim to gather youth with EU representatives and have informal discussions around themes that are important for young people in the country. Ms. Alessandra Viezzer, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Lebanon was present as well as Ms. Orla Colclough from the EU Delegation. Luis Miguel, the Regional Media Officer/Arabic Spokesperson presented the EU in Arabic. Among the introductory words, NEO Lebanon participated and promoted the programme to the present youth. NEO had the chance to film a short promotional video about Erasmus+ Opportunities with Luis Miguel. The video was posted on the EU in Arabic Instagram page and gained more than 10,800 views. #EUJeelConnect, #EUCoffeeTalk



Link to promotional video about Erasmus+ programme with Luis Miguel at EU bil Araby Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CjnOa0bM3G-/?igshid=Zjc2ZTc4Nzk=>

4- General presentation on the Erasmus+ opportunities in UPGRADE Information day at UOB

An information day at the University of Balamand was organized on 13 October in presence of the European partners and faculty members from UOB and partner universities. The info day included scientific presentations organized by the UPGRDAE team at UOB, as well as tour to the labs at the university. On this day, NEO presented an overview of Erasmus+ programme opportunities to the faculty members many of whom are newcomers.

Clivio Casali mission to Lebanon

The project and Country Officer from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) in Brussels has visited Lebanon at the end of November 2022. During his mission, Mr. Casali and NEO Lebanon conducted 5 monitoring visits to projects coordinated by Lebanese institutions. These were University of Balamand for the project SWaTH, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik for the project LEBPASS, Beirut Arab University for the project MORALE, American University of Beirut for the project GLOB-SM, Saint Joseph University for the project CONECTE. During his visits to LHEIs, Mr. Casali met with the President of the Lebanese University, Prof. Bassam Badran; Rector of USJ, Professor Father Salim Daccache; President of UOB, Professor Elias Warrak; and AUB Provost, Professor Zaher Dawy.

SWaTH- <https://www.swath.eu/en/events/44/swath-monitoring-visit>

LEBPASS- <https://www.lebpass.org/>

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

GLOB-SM- <http://glob-sm.net/>

CONECTE- <https://ccib.org.lb/conecteproject/>



On another line, a training to new projects selected for the 2022 call for proposals was conducted on 28 November 2022 at MEHE in presence of the Lebanese partners participating in the 2 selected projects under the last 2022 call for proposals.

Besides, a cluster meeting was organised by NEO Lebanon on December 2 for potential CBHE project coordinators. This meeting gathered more than 40 faculty members from different Lebanese HEIs, many of whom are newcomers. Bilateral sessions were also conducted which allowed those who have ideas for proposals to share them with Mr. Casali and the Lebanese NEO team and discuss their questions. <http://erasmusplus-lebanon.org/event/15554>



Mr. Casali met during his visit the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Professor Abbas El Halaby and the Director General of Higher Education, Dr. Mazen El Khatib where they discussed the overall impact of the crisis on the HE system in Lebanon and on the implementation of Erasmus+ projects. Ideas for future Erasmus+ project proposals under CBHE in which the Ministry is planning to take part were also discussed with the Minister and the DGHE.



HE in times of collapse – Joint initiative with HOPES-LEB

National seminar to announce the recommendations of “Higher Education in times of collapse initiative”

As a follow-up to the series of stakeholder dialogues “Higher Education in times of collapse”, the HOPES-LEB project together with the National Erasmus+ Office of Lebanon organised a final event on Thursday 10 November 2022 in collaboration with the Directorate General of Higher Education of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

This gathering is the final event of the series of stakeholder dialogues organised on a national level in 2022 with professionals and academics, representatives of universities, institutions and organisations as well as students, to further discuss the current situation in the higher education sector in light of the unstable health, economic and political context of Lebanon. More than 80 representatives of Lebanese HEIs, VET institutes, local and international organisations attended the seminar.

The day was opened by Dr. Mazen El Khatib, Acting Director General of Higher Education and Ms. Alessia Squarcella, Deputy-Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon.

The first session included a presentation of the Higher Education in Times of Collapse initiative by Dr. Aref Alsoufi, NEO Lebanon coordinator, and presentation of the set of recommendations by Rima Rassi, Research Development Manager at Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut.

The second session about “Reflections on the way forward”, was moderated by Carsten Walbiner, Director of the HOPES-LEB project and included interventions by the following guest speakers:

- Véronique Kazpard, Coordinator of the International Relations Office at the Lebanese University
- Aref Alsoufi, Director of the National Erasmus+ Office of Lebanon
- Mazen El Khatib, Acting Director General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon
- Orla Colclough, International Aid Cooperation Assistant, Higher Education focal point at the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon
- Hana Addam El Ghali, Senior Educational Specialist, World Bank

This panel discussion allowed to have a reflection on the recommendations from different perspectives and focused on approaches and potential measures to be adopted to better define priorities for action and guide future interventions of assistance from donor agencies.





<https://www.hopes-madad.org/higher-education-in-times-of-collapse-final-event-10-november-2022/>

As part of the overall initiative, this event was preceded by a meeting on 20 October 2022 to discuss with the stakeholders the draft recommendations and identify concrete measures and suggestions to be added as an annex to the final paper for immediate donor support.

<https://www.hopes-madad.org/higher-education-in-times-of-collapse-meeting-20-october-2022/>



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