

EMUNI Regional Day

3/5/2010

It gives me great pleasure and honor to welcome you to the EMUNI Regional Day in Lebanon. Holding this event, which is intended to introduce EMUNI to the EMUNI members, students and other interested participants in selected countries and regions, here reflects the special relation between BAU and the EMUNI University. Believing in cooperation on all levels related to education and research and acknowledging the opportunity created by the EMUNI for networking among universities north and south of the Mediterranean, BAU had the privilege of joining the EMUNI in 2008 and soon became an active member undertaking one of EMUNI's big projects, the ENPI 2009.

The project intends to sustain and support the development of academic mobility, tune the academic accreditation and validation processes of university and professional education and serve as a reference to future cooperation amongst academic and professional institutions. Beirut Arab University is hosting the project and is committed to making all facilities and services available for its implementation under the supervision of the project team leader Nihal Fareed, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration at BAU. Other research projects carried out at BAU include Tempus projects and research done in cooperation with the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research. Indeed, an integral part of BAU mission is insistence on excellence in education and research for the purpose of enhancing knowledge and serving the community.

In our immediate context of globalization and the postmodern influx of information and knowledge, research cannot be carried out in isolated laboratories or study halls. In fact, knowledge, higher education and society act upon each other in a way that may be viewed from two analytical perspectives. On the one hand, critical theory points up the skewed character of rationality in modern society: on this view, the changing definitions of knowledge in higher education can be said to be a shift in the direction of instrumental reason, with other forms of reason, such as the hermeneutic and critical forms, being down-played. Postmodernism, on the other hand, argues not for any such one-dimensionality but underscores the heterogeneity of thought forms. Higher education can be viewed in this way, too: the university is a social institution which celebrates differentiation of forms of thought and which plays many roles in society and in shaping relations among cultures and civilizations.

Hence, cooperation among universities and research centers on the local, regional and international levels has become a necessity. The establishment of The EMUNI University as an international network of universities, with 141 members from 37 countries in 2010, is an important step towards achieving cooperation in education and research in Mediterranean countries. The mission of the EMUNI University includes approving the quality of higher education through the implementation of postgraduate study and research programs with a special focus on cultural diversity.

It is important to bear in mind that promoting research and a culture of dialogue and peace does not only entail signing agreements and organizing events, it is also about mutual respect, acknowledgment of equal rights and opportunities, and recognition of cultural specificity while celebrating cross-cultural relations between north and south of the Mediterranean. We are proud of our partnership with the EMUNI University and hope that it will last and be translated into many aspects of cooperation in the fields of education, research, E-learning, conferences, and round tables.

We have experience in institutional partnership at Beirut Arab University. The university was established in 1960 as a manifestation of the commitment of Alexandria University towards Arab countries and towards south-south relations. This year we celebrate our 50th Anniversary; 50 years of hard and creative work in promoting education and research, during which Beirut Arab University has developed into a well-established independent higher education institution, while enjoying cooperation relations with Alexandria University.

Beirut Arab University is looking forward to forming partnerships with national and international institutions concerned with education and research, with the aim of widening the scope of the research done at the university and creating diversity.

Again, in our contemporary context cooperation is the keyword in our pursuit of the advancement of science and knowledge and the enhancement of education and research.

EMUNI Regional Day at Beirut Arab University is definitely an event that celebrates cooperation and I am sure that the discussions and presentations of today will be most interesting and useful to all parties concerned.