

**EMUNI ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016
&
MERID REGIONAL EVENT**

**MIGRATION, DIASPORA AND BRAIN CIRCULATION – DRIVERS FOR EU-
MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

BARCELONA, SPAIN

12 MAY 2016

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ESADE BUSINESS & LAW SCHOOL

CONFERENCE Report & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) organised its annual conference and a regional event along the MERID project on Thursday May 12th 2016. The event was organised in collaboration with ESADEgeo - Centre for Global Economy and Geopolitics - at The ESADE Business and Law School in Barcelona, Spain.

Along two keynote speeches and three dedicated panels, the conference addressed the current pressing issues facing the region, with particular focus on Migration, the refugees' crisis in the Mediterranean and Middle East regions, Brain Circulation and the constructive use of Mediterranean and Middle East diaspora as drivers for cooperation, trust-building and intercultural understanding between the EU and the Mediterranean neighbours.

A regional event of the MERID project, a coordination and support action funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, was conducted within the conference, focusing on the societal challenges of Water and Energy and addressing the potential for cooperation in these thematic fields. On Friday May 13th, a roundtable discussion along the MERID project tackled identification and overcoming the remaining obstacles for cooperation in Research and Innovation between the EU and the Middle East countries.

The conference was attended by around 130 participants from 29 countries. 28 eminent Speakers and Panellists from 24 countries and international organisations participated in the event. Along the conference, the meetings of the EMUNI Management Board, Senate and General Assembly were also held.

The Welcome notes were delivered by Jonathan Wareham, Dean of Faculty and Research of ESADE Business & Law School, Spain, Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry, President of the Euro-Mediterranean University, Slovenia, Ilan Chet, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Cristina Maria Russo, Director for International Cooperation, DG Research and Innovation at the European Commission and Tom Mc Grath, European External Action Service.

HE Javier Solana, President of ESADEgeo and former EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy delivered a Key-note Opening speech. Mr Solana highlighted the role of Science Diplomacy in mediation of political conflicts, exhibiting cases and examples from his rich experience and political engagement in the region.

Another keynote, setting the scene, was given by Refaat Chaabouni, former Minister of Higher Education and Research in Tunisia, who underscored the role of Innovation in EU-Mediterranean cooperation and the important role of diaspora in establishing a true partnership between people of the region.

The conference panels were quite animated, featuring lively interventions by the panellists and interactive discussions with the audience.

PANEL I: MIGRATION AND DIASPORA: IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

12 May 2016 (11h00 – 12h45)

Moderator: **Hanan Dowidar**, Vice-president of Forum for Euro-Mediterranean Innovation in Action (FEMIA), France

Panellists:

Angela Liberatore, Head of Unit, Social Sciences and Humanities, ERC Executive Agency, European Commission

Claudio Bogliotti, Head of Unit – EU Research Policy and Planning, CIHEAM-Bari, Italy

Hatem Atallah, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation

Octavi Quintana-Trias, European Commission, DG for Research and Innovation, Principal Adviser on Migration, European Commission

Rami Ayoubi, Member of the International Development Team, Cardiff Met University, UK and Director of National Erasmus+ Office in Syria

The panel focused on discussing the challenges and opportunities for Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation offered by Migration. In particular panellists focused on the role of Diaspora and their effect on fostering the cooperation in Science and Innovation. The distinguished group of speakers, with diverse extensive experiences, shared with the audience their organisation's initiatives with regard to how functional cooperation in various fields of science at Euro-Mediterranean or sub-regional levels could be further enhanced.

The discussion specifically addressed the following topics:

1. Migration as a complex phenomenon

Speakers tackled the complexity of the migration process, its reasons, and patterns and how to limit it from different perspectives. It was underlined that Migration is a complex phenomenon requiring policy responses based on facts, figures and scientific evidence. In addition to political conflicts, environmental challenges caused by climate change and economic challenges are key to driving mass migration. South-South migration was also addressed. The fact that science and innovation in the south countries are the biggest losers in the current migration crisis was stressed, since most of the migrants or refugees are young, in the age when they are supposed to be involved in education and research in their home countries.

2. Intercultural dialogue for building cohesive societies

The Panellists reiterated that migration offers opportunities that should be explored, stressing on the importance of avoiding misconceptions, reversing the negative connotation the word migration implies and avoiding the associated use of negative vocabulary, eg. "refugee crisis". The role of International organisations like the Anna Lindh Foundation and EMUNI in nurturing intercultural dialogue was emphasized. The importance of communication and speaking different languages was underlined,

therefore translation initiatives are important to further intercultural dialogue and support migrants' integration in their new communities. It was underlined that the future successful cities are those which are multicultural.

3. **Investing in education and youth** for building a better future

The Speakers as well as distinguished participations highlighted the importance of investing in education and building the capacity of young people to prepare them for confronting future challenges. Since Education necessitates long-term investments, accordingly focus on education needs to start immediately.

Panel II: ENERGY AND WATER: KEY SOCIETAL CHALLENGES AND KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

12 May 2016 (14h00 – 15h45)

Moderator: **Angel Saz-Carranza**, ESADE Business & Law School

Panellists:

Ayman Rabi, Executive Director of Palestinian Hydrology Group, Palestine

Ebrahim Asl-Soleimani, Professor in Electrical and computer engineering, University of Teheran, Iran

Lucila Candela Lledó, Technical University of Catalonia (UPC), Spain

Muhammad Shatanawi, Professor of Water Resources and UNESCO Chair on Water, Jordan

Nesreen Ghaddar, Qatar Chair of Energy Studies at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Saadi Kadhim Al-Naseri, Director of Water Research Centre, MoST, Iraq

The Panel featured sturdy technical discussions by eminent experts in their fields, yielding detailed specific conclusions and recommendations, deserving a special annex (attached).

Three main tracks were tackled under this panel:

1. Science in public policy
2. Adapting technology to capacity and local context
3. Input from NGO's

PANEL III: BRAIN CIRCULATION AND DIASPORA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION COOPERATION

12 May 2016 (16h15 – 18h00)

Moderator: **Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry**, President, Euro-Mediterranean University

Angelo Riccaboni, Rector of the University of Sienna, Italy

Mouin Hamze, Secretary General of the National Council for Research and Science, Lebanon

Rym Ayadi, President of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, Spain

Sultan Abu Orabi, Secretary General of the Association of Arab Universities, Jordan

Tanveer Kausar Naim, Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC

Mohammad Hosseini Moghadam, Manager of Planning Office, Iran's National Elites Foundation

The Panel deliberated quite interactively with the audience on the important role of brain circulation as a driver for EU-Mediterranean and EU-Middle East cooperation and the use of diaspora as catalysts for this cooperation. The engagement of the different stakeholders was explored, including the Universities, the higher education associations and networks, the policy makers, the NGOs, the private sector and the individual diaspora. Several best practices and success stories were highlighted by the panellists and the audience, including initiatives addressing reversal of brain drain or attaining brain circulation. Existing programmes, like UNDP's TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge through Ex-Patriate Networks) and the EU's ERA Chairs were highlighted.

The panel debated the role of the governments, policy makers and legislators and whether the issue of brain circulation should be addressed top-down or bottom-up. The importance of establishing a conducive and productive environment for diaspora to enable them to return or cooperate with their countries of origin was underlined. Actions supporting brain circulation in government policies and multi-government funding initiatives were advocated by some panellists, as well as linking brain circulation to big global initiatives like the UN's Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). Other proposals included better mapping of diaspora and brain circulation initiatives, providing incentives to encourage diaspora to return or engage in cooperation with their home countries and establishing synergies between national programmes for brain circulation. Two proposals of particular interest were raised by interventions from the audience, namely capitalising on **young diaspora** and **entrepreneurial diaspora**.

Towards the end of the exciting and intriguing panel, some concrete proposals were formulated, including developing a **regional comprehensive programme for supporting diaspora** of Mediterranean and Middle East origins to engage in constructive cooperation with their countries of origin.

Conference Recommendations*

- **Mapping patterns of mobility and migration flows**, in order to better understand the complexities of migration and address its root causes and consequences
- **Organising specialised meetings and events on migration**, by EMUNI and other international organisation, with specific topical focus, with the aim of providing arguments and evidence to influence the policy debate
- **Supporting translation initiatives** to further intercultural dialogue and support migrants' integration to new communities. The role of international organisation like the Anna Lindh Foundation and EMUNI was emphasized
- **Youth education and capacity building and developing infrastructure** are, on the long-term, the most effective measures to manage migration and limit its detrimental effects, particularly on the sending countries
- **Raising awareness on the importance and added value of brain circulation** to both the EU and the Mediterranean/Middle East countries. This could be conducted by organisations active in the region as EMUNI and CIHEAM
- **Integrating brain circulation and reversing brain drain in policy making**, through raising awareness and building capacity of policy makers, in the EU and the Mediterranean and Middle East regions
- Embracing **actions to support mobility of diaspora and cooperation** with their countries of origin in multi-government organisations' funding initiatives, eg. the EU's H2020 programme, the UN 2030 Agenda and bi-regional co-funding programmes like PRIMA
- Develop **synergies between national and regional programmes** supporting brain circulation in the south Mediterranean region and the Middle East
- **Mapping of best practices to reverse brain drain and support brain circulation** ("win-win situations") in other regions, as in south East Asia
- **Supporting** particular groups of diaspora, contributing to enriching the cooperation, like **young and entrepreneurial diaspora**. In this regard, setting up a network by EMUNI for young and entrepreneurial diaspora was suggested.
- **Develop a co-funded programme for brain circulation** capitalizing on the south Mediterranean Diaspora in Europe, including joint research activities, staff and students' mobility, capacity building and infrastructure development, particularly in areas of common interest and mutual benefit.

* These are the recommendation of panels 1 & 3. Panel 2 report and recommendations are in a separate document

Synthetic Conclusions from the Energy & Water Panel

Angel Saz-Carranza, Marie Vandendriessche, Alison Courtney

Conclusion 1: The need for science in public policy

Science introduces rationality into the public policymaking cycle.

All speakers on the panel were technical experts with strong, specialized knowledge on the scientific foundations of their field of study. They were thus able to provide policy-makers with concrete and indispensable information, both on their academic research fields and research cooperation in their fields.

Specific examples of how scientific data and research can improve public policy included:

- Shatanawi (Jordan) and Rabi (Palestine) engaged in a conversation on possible technical solutions to the Dead Sea's ongoing evaporation.
- Shatanawi illustrated the critical energy-water nexus, arguing that energy produced through hydropower could in turn be used to provide drinking water, by powering the desalination plants which will become ever more necessary in the future, as the effects of climate change become apparent in the region.
- Candela (Spain) underscored the need for specific cost-benefit analysis and financial sustainability in water projects, to guarantee their execution and survival.
- Ghaddar (Lebanon) promoted out-of-the-box thinking to develop alternative solutions to address the modern-day and future challenge of global warming, including localized cooling systems, bioclimatic planning for outdoor thermal comfort, and the use of solar energy to power cooling and dehumidification solutions.
- Al-Naseri (Iraq) provided a detailed diagnostic (rationally the first step in any policy-making process) of the water situation in Iraq, and highlighted the need to improve the energy efficiency of desalinization and water treatment processes.
- From the audience, Woertz (Germany) raised the issue of complex interactions, for example, the behavioral and scientific research that has found that raising efficiency can drive consumption up (Jevons Paradox, or the rebound effect).

In short, scientific research and knowledge must be taken into account when designing policies, thereby introducing rationality into policymaking, which was also mentioned by Octavi Quintana-Trias (EC) in the previous panel.

However, as Ghaddar remarked, in order to create a mutually beneficial relation between science and politics, there is a stark need for trust between the two parties (as was also mentioned by Javier Solana in his key note speech). Science must trust politics and vice-versa. This requires enhanced transparency and openness in governance.

Recommendation 1: Foster dialogue between scientists and policymakers in order to increase the rationality of public policy.

Recommendation 2: In order to maximize the effectiveness and the scope of the science-policy dialogue, trust between scientists and policymakers is critical. Trust can be built and grown by improving the transparency of governance and its processes.

Conclusion 2: Adapt to the context. Develop appropriate technology & capacity-building

A key conclusion is that technological solutions are not automatically appropriate in different contexts, and that new technologies require specific capacity-building. Rabi, speaking from the Palestinian context, strongly advocated for the latter.

While Al-Naseri strongly supported science and technology to solve the main water issues confronting the region, Ghaddar complemented his remarks by underscoring that one-size-fits-all does not apply in this case: confronted with climate change for example, some countries have gone nuclear, others are going solar.

Candela called for transposing, with the necessary adaptation to the local context, technologies which had proven successful in foreign settings. Spain's experience during the past decades could be a guiding example, where scientists were trained abroad, then returned and adapted learnings to local context.

Asl-Soleimani (Iran) argued that there are critical problems with local engagement and knowledge: many programs are started; then abandoned because of lack of knowledge. He proposed, on the one hand, that it was necessary to improve knowledge of research and science so that people understand their usefulness for their daily lives.

On the other hand, and again speaking from the Iranian context, with which no formal and consistent research cooperation frameworks have existed up to now, Asl-Soleimani suggested that scientific cross-border cooperation should attempt to generate the necessary local institutions capable of producing locally appropriate technologies. In other words, he believed research funding should be used to set up practical or theoretical institutions in the destination countries in order to define research needs, develop new research and cooperation, and assist in determining the optimal distribution of research funds at the local level.

Recommendation 3: Ensure policies supporting science and research are adapted to local contexts, making sure to explore issue linkages when designing these policies.

Recommendation 4: Focus on local capacity-building, both (a) for the implementation of new technologies and (b) to determine local needs in terms of research funding and priorities.

Conclusion 3: Include input from non-governmental stakeholders to improve effectiveness, implementation and reach

Many panelists pointed out that involving all stakeholders in research planning was key in ensuring effectiveness; it is an important step in generating broad support along the full research life cycle. Involving businesses, civil stakeholders, and end users, particularly, was pointed out as a critical element. As such, several interesting points were put forward.

Candela suggested that strategic research plans involve stakeholders and users, and pointed out that in Spain, research funding is conditional on the involvement of all stakeholders, including users, in the project proposal phase.

Regarding business, a comment from the floor underscored that many technically viable solutions are hampered by the obstructing efforts of incumbent market players. Rabi thus replied that precisely because of this, business must be taken into account as a key stakeholder.

Ghaddar also pointed to the critical role of stakeholders in both research and education, suggesting to create alliances between hard sciences and humanities in order for the former to speak the language of the people. This may also help attract young talent, as well as improving research dissemination and communication.

Asl-Soleimani explained that this also applies in Iran, remarking that the mass emigration of scientists is in part due to the current governance, which has led to a clear lack of research facilities at home. In this context, he repeated the call for dialogue between scientists and policymakers to address this situation.

Lastly, again from the floor, Bogliotti proposed the idea that perhaps some sort of permanent platform or institution on water in the Mediterranean region could be set up, including all stakeholders, including governments and research institutions, in order to (a) advocate for change, including at the political level, and (b) substantiate and implement the solutions currently available rather than creating yet another shopping list of demands.

A comment from the floor underscored that a great deal of research has been carried out in the region, including on STI cooperation. However, there has been very little progress in implementation. One proposal is therefore to pause new research for one year, and simply implement existing research. This exercise will aid in identifying, among the countries of the region, the elements that are missing in order to reach the critical implementation phase.

Recommendation 5: Link businesses, technology, and research challenges: include all stakeholders – including businesses and end users – in research planning in order to ensure effectiveness of research outcomes and improve their chances of implementation.

Recommendation 6: Creating links between hard sciences and humanities and improving communication on research can both extend the reach of research outcomes and help to attract young talent to research fields.

Recommendation 7: Focus on implementing existing research outcomes first and identifying bottlenecks in implementation rather than embarking on new research funding and endeavors.