

26 janvier 2012

Launching Ceremony of the Tempus project « Towards the Lebanese Quality Assurance Agency »  
(Université de Balamand, jeudi 26 janvier 2012 – 10h00)

Monsieur le Ministre,  
Madame l’Ambassadeur,  
Monsieur le Président,  
Messieurs les vice-présidents, recteurs, vice-recteurs et doyens,  
Mesdames et Messieurs, chers amis,

I am very happy to be with you today and I thank the University of Balamand for receiving us at the occasion of launching the Tempus project entitled “Towards the Lebanese Quality Assurance Agency.” I particularly greet the presence at this important manifestation of his Excellency Minister Hassan Diab, as well as Ms. Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst. I am delighted of the participation of France to this ceremony, which shows our engagement, besides the Lebanese universities, in favor of an academic system always progressing and whose programmes are continuously readjusted to the internationally recognized quality standards. Finally, I would like to salute the initiative of prof. Chafik Mokbel from the University of Balamand, without which this project may not have existed.

I am delighted in particular of the launching of the Tempus project at the University of Balamand, and establishment that, in addition of being ideally situated, permits to join the Anglo-Saxon and European educational systems. France is following with interest the development of this university that succeeded in thirty years to impose itself in the Lebanese university system. The academic quality of its programmes, provided in three languages, is today uncontested. The University has succeeded till today to preserve a linguistic equilibrium that reflects the Lebanese society, and that goes in pair with the diversity of its degrees. I would like to reconfirm here our wish to extend our cooperation with the University of Balamand. We are even more attached to that because of the numerous links the University maintains with France, as prove the partnerships developed by its arts and social sciences faculty, the Issam Fares Institute of Technology or ALBA, with first level French institutions.

In the higher education domain, the globalisation is characterized by an increasing mobility of the individuals, putting different national systems simultaneously in competition and partnership. In this increasing internationalization context of higher education, the recognition of degrees is crucial and force the universities to constantly adapt to the internationally recognized quality standards and to the evolutions of the labor market, which implies namely the evaluation and regular readjustment of the educational programmes.

In the perspective of the increasing international competition, the establishment of a national quality assurance system becomes a priority for the stakeholders of the Lebanese higher education, as it is proven by the draft law about the creation of a national agency for quality assurance. I am delighted of this draft law since, among all present reforms of the Lebanese higher education, this one is fundamental. Independent, the future agency shall be, in my opinion, a pillar of the evaluation and accreditation system of the Lebanese higher education institutions, their governance as well as their programmes. Constituting such agency would permit to establish a permanent link and to consolidate the trust between the universities and the state, for a better distribution of the efforts conducted in higher education. It will also facilitate the international recognition of the degrees delivered by the Lebanese universities.

France supports and will continue to support the reform of the Lebanese higher education. France has invested a lot in the upfront of the Tempus project in the quality domain and I would like, in this regard, salute the role that play the French universities and the Centre international d'études pédagogiques. This Tempus project prepares the execution of the law on the creation of the quality assurance agency. Actually, from one side it will contribute to the brainstorming about the quality standards and the associated internal and external evaluation mechanisms. From the other side the Tempus project would permit to assure the training of experts that will become the main assets of the future national quality assurance agency. For all those titles, the launching of the Tempus project is an important moment for the future of the higher education in Lebanon.

I thank you for your attention.