



*IOM's quarterly  
communication with  
expatriate groups from MENA*

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## UNION OF EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE

The Union of Egyptian Communities in Europe, an idea of the Association of Egyptians in Switzerland, was established in Geneva, Switzerland on June 12, 2011 at a founding conference attended by Egyptian community leaders from across Europe. The Union aims to enhance cooperation and exchange among the various associations of Egyptians in Europe and serves as an example of democratic interaction among its members in order to achieve cooperation between Egyptian expatriate communities. The Union serves to (i) create a link both between Egyptians living abroad as well as with key institutions in Egypt, whilst also stressing the right of membership for all Egyptians regardless of sect, religion, or political affiliation; (ii) establish unique opportunities for Egyptians abroad to get involved in supporting Egypt's future in practical and constructive ways; (iii) establish new cultural bonds and honest and respectful discourse on the latest developments taking place in Egypt.

Four years after its establishment, the Union has successfully held five general conferences, the first of which was the founding conference. The second conference was held in Paris in 2012; the third in Gutenberg in 2013; the fourth in Belfast in 2014; and the fifth was held in Geneva on March 14, 2015.

During the fifth conference the chair, Mr. Ibrahim Abu al-Rous from Spain, discussed

his continuous efforts to communicate with the European Parliament in order support development of policies in the best common interests of Egypt and Egyptians abroad. It was also decided to implement the 'Feast Clothes Project' – which was originally implemented in England in 2014 by Mostafa Rajab – among all Union member associations in 2015; this project collects clothing for people in need for the Eid holiday. Through a partnership with Egypt Air and a local NGO in Egypt, the project benefits from minimal costs for transportation and distribution. It was also agreed to support the 'Fisheries Project'; this project was launched by the government and aims both to benefit from and provide opportunities for Egyptians abroad by including them in investment and marketing opportunities.

On May 15, 2014, Union members had the honour of meeting with General Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi. The meeting allowed members to introduce the Union's vision on national issues and also learn about his vision for the future.

The Union has worked on numerous issues in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration. Most recently, the Union helped organize a youth camp in Egypt for second generation Egyptians. The camp brought together 105 Egyptians from Europe and the US for a two week visit that included cultural visits to Luxor, Aswan, and

the Suez Canal Project, as well as volunteer work in nature reserves in Upper Egypt.

In February 2014, the Union provided financial and technical support to install IP telephony between MOME offices and Egyptian communities in Europe. The Union also organizes regular video-conferences and holds an annual meeting between its member associations and MOME to discuss issues of interest to Egypt and Egyptians abroad.

But the Union is not only about business as it serves to develop cultural ties between its member communities as well. In recent years, two football tournaments and social gatherings have been organized in Paris and Geneva, bringing together many members of the various associations.



Union members meet with General El-Sisi

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**May 29:** The World Bank and the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) will host a conference on “Mobilizing the MENA Diaspora for Global Integration, Investment, and Knowledge Transfer” in Marseille, France. The event will bring together leaders of diaspora associations, policy advisors and other key stakeholders.

**June 2:** IOM will host a conference entitled “Migration & Development: Diaspora in Action” in The Hague. The event will bring together policy experts, leaders of diaspora associations, and participants from IOM’s Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals programme (including from Sudan, Morocco, and Somalia). Participants will share ideas and experiences, and develop recommendations for future collaboration.

## SUBMIT TO THE NEXT ISSUE

Submissions accepted for the following sections:

*Highlighting a Diaspora Group*

- This section, aimed at spotlighting an expat group, is on page 1.

*Notable Project*

- Are you or your organization running a project in MENA that you would like to publicize?

*Expatriate Success Story*

- Page 3’s article is designed to highlight a successful member of an expatriate community from MENA.

*Announcements*

- Tell us about upcoming conferences, workshops, events, calls for project proposals etc.

The next newsletter will be released at the end of July. For information and submissions, e-mail [iommenanews@iom.int](mailto:iommenanews@iom.int).

## LERC BIOGRAPHICAL DATABASE ON SUCCESSFUL LEBANESE AROUND THE WORLD – THE FIRST OF ITS KIND

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center is an academic research center at the Faculty of Law and Political Science of Notre Dame University-Louaizé (NDU). Established in 2003, it is the first center in the world dedicated specifically to the study of Lebanese emigration, and now hosts The Lebanese Emigration Archival Database (LEAD), one of the largest electronic archival databases on migration from, to and through Lebanon with over 60,000 indexed items and counting.

The database is a searchable electronic tool designed to profile individuals who are highly visible within their fields across the world. Entries range from inventors, to celebrities, to philanthropists – all of whom have Lebanese roots and ancestral ties to Lebanon.

LEAD has used a wide range of primary and secondary sources taken from the public record to build the Biographical Database (BD) which, in addition to profiling people, also contains information on Lebanese businesses, institutes, associations, clubs, organizations, and religious institutions around the world.

The biographical database has been used by a variety of local and international institutions (including the BBC, Al-Jazeera, UNDP, Relief International, and the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants) as well as researchers who have utilized contact information contained in the database to find experts in specific fields, individuals to be consulted or interviewed, or contributors to local developmental projects across Lebanon.

One of the individuals profiled is Dr. Josyann Abisaab, a Beirut native, who is currently an emergency physician at the New York Presbyterian Hospital. She is a member of the International Lebanese

Titanic Committee and of the Titanic International Society, an interest fuelled by a personal family story of her great-grandfather who perished on the Titanic.

The biographical database also has a wide range of artist profiles such as that of Lebanese-Mexican soprano, Olivia Gorra, from Mexico; Munir Nellmeldin, a Dabké choreographer and dancer from Argentina; Sid Chidiac a painter from Australia; Souraya Umewaka a filmmaker from Japan; and Dr. Raouf Rifai, a painter from France, among others.

LERC continues to compile data on Lebanese personalities from all over the world, and regularly updates existing profiles. The Research Centre continues to expand the database further.

**For more information, contact:**

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Top: Replica of the Titanic Presented to The Lebanese Migration Nucleus Museum at NDU for the Commemoration of the Lebanese who perished on the Titanic

Bottom: Lebanese-Mexican soprano Olivia Gorra performing



## SASTA – CONNECTING STEM COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE



Dr Wael Al-Delaimy, Associate Professor of Epidemiology at University of California – San Diego, discusses SASTA

### What is the role of SASTA?

The Society for Advancement of Science and Technology in the Arab World (SASTA) has emerged to fulfill a need for independent expertise in research and academia in the areas of science, engineering and technology in the Arab world.

According to reports by the OECD, Arab expatriates rank as one of the most highly skilled expatriate communities. Arab scientists have established themselves in developed countries and achieved recognition equal to their peers who are native to these countries; however, the expertise and experience gained by expatriates has not yet been fully utilized for the benefit of the Arab region.

SASTA has a regional focus and its expatriate members strive to work beyond the political divisions within the region. Given the lack of resources, all activities are voluntary and carried out by the board and its members. Members are nominated by existing members based on their academic achievement and interest in helping the region.

### When did SASTA begin as an organization?

The idea for SASTA began to develop when Arab expatriate scientists were invited to a conference in Doha in 2007 and then was fully developed to its current status when

the World Economic Forum selected twenty scientists to attend the Middle East and North Africa meeting in Jordan in 2009. Several of us scientists in attendance came together and created SASTA which was registered as a non-profit organization in 2010. Many Arab expatriate scientists and academics are carrying out individual efforts and collaboration but until SASTA, nothing was being coordinated as an organization.

### What are some of SASTA's key achievements in its short history?

One of SASTA's first initiatives was to hold the first Arab expatriate conference in collaboration with the Arab League in Cairo in 2012. This conference was attended by the League's Secretary General and Egyptian Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research as well as a cadre of regional and expatriate scientists and organizations. The conference had three primary areas of focus: health (with a focus on natural products), energy (particularly solar energy), and information technology and computing (with a focus on health technology). These projects are still awaiting major funding opportunities and sponsors in order to launch them in the region.

In addition to promoting exchanges among professionals, SASTA has developed a manual for Arab graduates on how to apply for graduate education in developed countries, and members have visited several universities in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, and Qatar to explore opportunities for collaboration and contribution to the development of these universities. Other SASTA activities in the region include mentoring of young scientists from the region, supporting young universities through consulting and review of grant proposals, as well as championing the creation of branches of professional societies in the region, such as the International Brain Research Organization MENA chapter. SASTA has also contributed to efforts by the U.S. State Department to develop scientific initiatives for the Arab region, including the Open Book Project, which is aimed at making educational texts and resources more freely available.

## WHAT'S NEW AT IOM

Continued interest in Migration & Development and diaspora engagement among many governments in the region has resulted in strong demand for training on the subject using IOM's tailored training materials which were developed and completed in 2014. IOM delivered the four-day training workshop to government officials and other stakeholders in Iraq (Erbil), Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia in February and March. These trainings increased awareness and capacities of participants to effectively identify links between migration and development and engage with Arab diaspora associations.

IOM signed agreements with the Ministry of Labour in UAE and Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour in Kuwait to support two large-scale research and capacity building projects aimed at building government knowledge and capacity to effectively manage labour migration and address unethical practices within international labour recruitment networks, including providing assistance to victims of trafficking.

IOM has stepped up its efforts in Libya to provide assistance to stranded migrants including performing evacuations and returns. On February 27<sup>th</sup>, 133 stranded Senegalese migrants were evacuated on an IOM-chartered flight and a further 138 were evacuated on a March 6<sup>th</sup> flight.

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SASTA members meet with the Secretary General of the Arab League on the occasion of the first Arab Expatriates Conference.

For more information visit [www.sastaworld.com](http://www.sastaworld.com), or contact: Dr. Al-Delaimy at: [wdelaimy@gmail.com](mailto:wdelaimy@gmail.com)