



“Major step on sustaining world-class research between Europe and the Arab World announced in Brussels by Chair of UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development”

Press Release

31 March 2010, Brussels – Today, Arab nations are playing a key role in advancing scientific collaboration. Dr Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chair of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) of the United Nations announces the launch of the Arab Scientific Research and Education Network (ASREN), at the EU-MED Event held in Brussels, Belgium, the 3rd in a series of high-level policy meetings.

This announcement marks a major step towards sustaining ICT infrastructures for research and education in the Mediterranean region for eScience across Arab nations. *“We recognize that investing in science in general and in universities in particular needs to meet the ambitions of the Arab countries, hence, ASREN will act as an enabler and catalyst for creating investment in the scientific research and development in universities”*, says Dr Ghazaleh.

ASREN is to be created as a legal entity under the auspices of the Arab League and the UN GAID to help secure sustainable e-Infrastructures across the Arab world. *“ASREN will also adopt GAID’s mission for the advancement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the use of ICT solutions. It is expected that ASREN will act as the Arab regional network for the ICT solutions matrix for the advancement of MDGs under the honorary chairmanship of the UN secretary general”*, adds Dr Ghazaleh.

Building on EUMEDCONNECT2, the high-capacity Internet network for research and education in the Mediterranean which is co-funded by the European Commission, ASREN sets out to widen its geographical footprint by connecting other Arab national research and education networks (NRENs) in addition to the current seven EUMEDCONNECT2 member countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia.

This is a strategic step that is expected to lead to long-term sustainability of e-Infrastructures in the Mediterranean and the neighbouring Gulf region, potentially serving a population of over 250 million people and ensuring that

DATE:

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TIME:

09:00 – 17:30

VENUE:

The International Auditorium
International Trade Union House
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, No. 5/2
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ORGANISED & SUPPORTED BY:

EUMEDCONNECT2
(www.eumedconnect.net/)

EUMEDGRID-Support
(www.eumedgrid.eu)

GÉANT
(www.geant.net)

TERENA
(www.terena.org)

European Commission
(<http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastuctures>
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)

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scientists and academics in the region can continue to participate in world-class research and education activities.

The use of e-Infrastructures, such as the EUMEDGRID infrastructure supported by the EUMEDGRID-Support project, is enabling a new wave of collaborative scientific research through remote access to computing services, instrumentation and resources bringing “real-world” benefits that impact our daily lives. The Arab-Mediterranean Region is no exception, as this event showcases user communities’ success stories of this exiting trend including:

- Collaboration between French and Tunisian neurosurgeons in the diagnosis and surgical treatment of epilepsy;
- Participation of Mediterranean high-physicists in the Large Hadron Collider (LCH) experiments to discover the origins of the Universe;
- Assessment of earthquake hazards across the region;
- Agricultural research against the backdrop of desertification and limited water resources;
- Making education more flexible and accessible through e-learning initiatives.

The conference builds on the success of the previous EU-Med Events and progresses collaboration between countries of the Mediterranean region and European Union (EU) in the field of e-Infrastructures and networking for research and education bringing together invited policy makers and civil servants from relevant ministries and institutions, executives and officials from international organisations such as the European Commission, UN agencies, private companies and foundations to deliberate high-level policy issues, as well as representatives from the user community to deliver insights into the state of play and future perspectives to define what is needed to further collaborative work on research and education.

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Organising Partners

The event is sponsored by three EU-funded projects chartered with fostering the creation of e-Infrastructures through important inter-related activities:

- EUMEDCONNECT2 (www.eumedconnect2.net), providing a high-capacity Internet network for over 2 million researchers, academics and students in 7 countries across northern Africa and the Middle East. With its direct link to GÉANT it is a gateway for the Mediterranean to participate in world-class research and education initiatives.
- EUMEDGRID-Support (www.eumedgrid.org), promoting the deployment of e-Infrastructures, and supporting existing and new applications, policy development and training.
- GÉANT (www.geant.net): a world-leading pan-European research network, bringing together at gigabit speeds the networks of the national entities, NRENs, which are collectively represented by TERENA (Trans-European Research & Education Networking Association – www.terena.org).

Event website: <http://www.terena.org/eumedevent3/>

Programme agenda: <http://www.terena.org/activities/development-support/eumedevent3/>