



**AMERICAN
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American University of Beirut hosts international conference on maritime, humanitarian, and agro-food supply chain and logistics

The Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) at the American University of Beirut hosted the “International Conference on Maritime, Humanitarian, and Agro-Food Supply Chain and Logistics: Disruption, Implications, and Opportunities” that was held in a hybrid format. The conference is part of the activities organized under the Global Supply Chain Management for Southern Mediterranean (GLOB-SM) project currently being led by the American University of Beirut in collaboration with European, regional, and national partner higher education institutions including Kedge Business School (KBS), University of Antwerp (UA), Princess Sumaya University of Technology (PSUT), Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University College for Innovation (TAGUCI), and Saint-Joseph University (USJ).

The project is funded by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) program of the European Union (EU) with an objective to launch the first in the region Master of Science in global supply chain management with concentrations in maritime, humanitarian, and agro-food supply chains and logistics. The program sets the scene for collaborations with the private and public sectors in these three domains.

The conference brought together international and national participants, with a mix between the private sector, academia, and NGOs. During the event, Dr. Maya Nabhani, director of Continuous Academic Improvement at FAFS Dean’s Office at the American University of Beirut and conference moderator, welcomed the speakers, panelists, and attendees, and introduced the opening session.

The opening session, led by American University of Beirut President Fadlo Khuri, included speeches that introduced the GLOB-SM project and program, and provided visibility of its significance and context in Lebanon, Jordan, and the region.

In his welcome message, President Khuri highlighted the significance of the American University of Beirut's collaboration with other national and regional leading institutions and with top-tier EU universities with expertise in supply chain management. He also emphasized the importance of the agro-food sector, port management, and humanitarian aid support and how they are critical sectors in Lebanon due to the nature of the economy, geographic location, and natural and man-made crises.

In his opening note, Dr. Ammar Olabi, interim dean of FAFS, highlighted the faculty's role in providing a multidisciplinary program for training qualified graduates with skills needed to address challenges facing supply chain and logistics.

As conference keynote speaker, Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, founder and chairman of Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Global, discussed the challenges facing the supply chain and expressed enthusiasm to explore the future role of the GLOB-SM program in dealing with these challenges.

Program Assistant at the Economy, Green Deal, and Local Development Section of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Orla Colclough, also emphasized the relevance of agro-food, humanitarian and maritime logistics and supply chain management and the role of the EU collaboration in stimulating these sectors. Additionally, Dr. Aref Alsoufi, the National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) coordinator in Lebanon, introduced the GLOB-SM project and praised its content and relevance, while Project Manager at NEO Lebanon Yasmine Al Gharib gave an overview of the Erasmus+ opportunities including capacity building in higher education (CBHE) and others.

The significance and context of the GLOB-SM program for Lebanon, Jordan, and the region were shared by various constituents from the American University of Beirut and partner regional higher education institutions. Dr. Bacel Maddah, professor and chairperson of the Department of Industrial and Engineering Management at the American University of Beirut highlighted the role of the GLOB-SM program in offering students in Lebanon and Jordan a unique exposure to the principles of global supply chain management. Dr. Luai Jraisat, associate professor of Marketing and Supply Chain Management at TAGUCI, and Dr. Radhi Al-Hamadeen, associate professor of Accounting and Director of the International Relations at PSUT, then explained how the

GLOB-SM program will fill the shortage of specialists and managers with skills compatible with the ever-increasing opportunities in supply chain management.

Following that, the European perspective regarding the opportunities and the significance of the GLOB-SM project and program was presented by Dr. Elisabeth Jouannaux, associate professor and academic director of the International Trade and Logistics Master at KBS, and Dr. Wouter Dewulf, professor and academic director of the Centre of Maritime and Transport Management at the University of Antwerp. The session focused on the rigorous framework for ambitious cross-cultural projects and the valuable partnerships between Europe and the Middle East that are being created through the GLOB-SM project.

Following the opening sessions, three-panel discussions were held on disruptions, implications, and opportunities in the following tracks: maritime, humanitarian, and agro-food logistics and supply chain management. Dr. Maya Nabhani wrapped up the conference by showcasing the significance and timeliness of the GLOB-SM program and its role in setting the scene for collaborations with the private and public sectors in maritime, humanitarian, and supply chain logistics and supply chain management.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 800 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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