



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

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Federal Ministry
of Research, Technology
and Space

National, regional, and EU funding programmes to strengthen Syrian academic capacities and resilience

Date: Friday, 26 June 2026, 9:00 – 14:00

Venue: Le Louise Hotel Brussels, Avenue de la Toison d'Or 40, 1050 Brussels

Background

The conflict in Syria has had a profound impact on the country's higher education system, disrupting academic institutions, displacing students and scholars, and threatening the continuity of education, research and knowledge production. At the same time, Syrian students, doctoral candidates, and academics continue to demonstrate resilience and commitment to their education and professional development. Supporting this human capital is essential not only for individual futures but also for the capacity, reconstruction and development of Syria's higher education system and society as a whole.

This event brings together key stakeholders from national, regional, and international higher education to share insights and experiences in rebuilding the higher education sector in Syria. The first session will focus on diverse initiatives led by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), including scholarships, capacity-building workshops, and leadership programmes that aim to strengthen the academic skills of Syrian students and scholars and foster a new generation of leaders prepared to contribute to Syria's reconstruction.

In the second session, participants will discuss the alignment of national, regional, and EU-supported initiatives. The event is designed in a Roundtable format, enabling participants to engage in an interactive discussion.



Time	Agenda
09:00 - 09:30	Welcome coffee and registration
09:30 - 09:35	Words of Welcome <i>Dr Kai Sicks, Secretary General, DAAD</i>
09:35 – 10:00	Rebuilding Syria within a regional context <i>Inputs provided by Professor Jens Hanssen (Director, Orient-Institut Beirut) and Professor Dr Hani Harb, German-Syrian Research Foundation</i>
10:00 – 10:30	Reflections on the impact of the Leadership for Syria programme • DAAD perspective ○ <i>Dr Christian Hülshörster, Head of Division, Scholarship Programmes Southern Hemisphere</i> • The alumni perspective ○ <i>Mustafa Karahamad, Research Associate, Goethe University Frankfurt</i> ○ <i>Orwa Eyade, Research Associate, University of Hildesheim</i> ○ <i>Jumana Alasaad, Trainee at the European Commission</i>
10:30 –11:00	DAAD programmes to strengthen the Syrian higher education system and Syrian higher education students, doctoral candidates and post docs Moderator: Michael Hörig, Director, DAAD Brussels Office • Short-Term Research mobility scheme to Syria <i>Muhammad Khaskeia, Head of Section, Scholarships North Africa, Middle East</i> • Regional activities of the DAAD offices in Amman and Cairo <i>Dr Hebatallah Fathy, Director, DAAD Regional Office Amman</i> <i>Dr Wiebke Bachmann, Director, DAAD Regional Office Cairo</i> • Projects in support of Syrian Higher Education <i>Stefan Bienefeld, Head of Division, Transnational Education and Cooperation Programmes</i>
11:00 – 11:15	Discussion
11:15 – 12:00	Coffee Break and light lunch snacks



12:00 – 13:15	Towards a coordinated approach: aligning national, European and regional support for the reconstruction of the higher education sector in Syria Moderator: Yannick du Pont, CEO, Glocalshift Foundation Input by <i>Professor Marwan al-Halabi, Minister for Higher Education and Research, Syria presented by Ambassador Abdullatif Dabbagh, Head of Mission, Embassy of Syria in Brussels</i> followed by a moderated discussion with • <i>Henrike Trautmann, Director Middle East, DG MENA, European Commission</i> • <i>Georgiana Plesu, Policy Officer, International Cooperation Unit, DG EAC, European Commission (unable to attend the event)</i> • <i>Anke Reiffenstuel, Envoy for Foreign Science, Education and Research Policy, Federal Foreign Office, Germany</i> • <i>Augustus Della-Porta, UK Trustee at Educate a Child International, Education Above All Foundation (EEA) and Partner at Bateswells</i> • <i>Professor Dr Ala'aldeen Al-Halhouli, President of the German-Jordanian University</i> • <i>Marcello Scalisi, Director, UNIMED</i> Q&A
13:15–13:45	Interactive participant discussion How can national, regional and EU initiatives complement each other? How can local knowledge be combined with expertise from the diaspora and international partners? Which opportunities are there for better coordination? How can synergies be created while avoiding duplications? What ideas are there for joint collaborations?
13:45-14:00	Wrap up and closing of the event