

**Launching of Erasmus+ Project on Student Empowerment, Engagement and Representation in Lebanon (Steer-Leb)**

**March 22, 2018**

Dear Mr. Ahmad Jammal, Director General of Education and Higher Education

Dear Mr. Aref Al Soufi, Director of Erasmus National Office

Dear USEK international partners,

Dear members of USEK Academic and Research Council,

Dear students,

It gives me a great pleasure to be hosting you all today here at USEK for the launching of our Student Empowerment, Engagement and Representation in Lebanese Universities Project (Steer-Leb) that is being funded by the EU Erasmus+ program.

Our students are our main asset at USEK as, I believe, they are in other universities. Providing them with the propitious environment to be highly performant, utterly efficient and globally competent is our utmost concern. That is why USEK, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and with other universities and institutions in Lebanon, France, Italy and Spain, elaborated the Steer-Leb project that aims at optimizing engagement and representation of students, and paving the way for them to be the leaders of tomorrow we all want them and they want to be.

Edith Wharton, the renowned American novelist, said once: "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." And we are proud to consider the University as being both the candle that spreads the light of knowledge and the mirror that reflects, through its graduates, the light of a multitude of

potentials, skills and active leadership in the society. To the students who will be partaking in this very promising StEER-Leb, I say we will be building on what you acquire through exchange and sharing of ideas, and we will be counting on your active participation and on your being a mirror that reflects your leadership in a realm of increasingly elevated standards, constantly required excellence and highly globalized competences.

Throughout the past years, USEK has spared no effort to uphold the participation and engagement of students and to involve them in the decision making process and in sharing their feedback and their input on their wellbeing on campus and on their curricular and extracurricular life at USEK. And this Steer-Leb project comes to promote our endeavors and to establish national sustainable structures in this regard.

Here, I cannot but thank all the people who worked on the elaboration of the project and all the partners namely, Dr. Ahmad Jammal, Director General of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon. A word of thanks goes as well to Dr. Aref Alsoufi, National Erasmus Office Coordinator. And my warm thanks go in particular to Dr. Rima Mattar, Deputy President for International Affairs and Global Initiatives, for the highly professional steering of this project with her team. And I seize this opportunity to thank all the representatives of the partnering universities. It is always a great pleasure to see such an energized consortium that will be working in Lebanon and abroad over the period of three years to reach a national student representation and engagement structure that would ultimately benefit our beloved students and would, consequently, have a great impact on our society at large!

I wish you very fruitful meetings and working sessions today and tomorrow, and I am positive your efforts will eventually be an acme of success!

Thank you!

