



Address of Father Hady Mahfouz
President of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik
USEK Internationalization Forum
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Always further: the title chosen for our gathering today is simply great. It implies hope and brings happiness. And going further is about building global education bridges. So our internationalization forum is about developing, and about building, continuously.

We develop our international dimension so our local life would be built in a positive way. And we build our local environment having in mind that a good local context contributes to the development of the international world. We therefore highlight the concept of “glocalization”. It is about having care for our common home, as it is nicely stated in the title of the recent encyclical of the Holy Father Pope Francis reflecting on the environmental issue.

Our double focus and action were experienced in many fields and in many units. Let me especially mention all what is related to quality assurance, where the

international practices brought nice things to our local functioning. We spare no effort to develop this aspect of the university life. Our huge and increasing number of the ongoing and incoming mobility missions is a solid proof of our way of thinking and acting.

This action which embeds our principles of development and building is undertaken in very delicate national, regional and international circumstances. I am thinking of the wars hitting our region and spreading its lethal consequences all over the world. We do condemn solemnly all terrorist acts perpetrated in many countries, lately, with Russians, in Lebanon and in France. Our beloved Holy Father Pope Francis said: “terrorism is evil! Evil in its origin and evil in its results. It is evil because it is generated by hatred. It is evil in its results because it destroys and it does not build” (May 24th, 2014).

In this very context of turmoil caused by a multifaceted terrorism which destroys, our will is to build, to build international bridges, to go always further and to care for our common Home. This can be done in loving every human being, without any discrimination, and all the human being, in all his/her dimensions.

In the face of any circumstances, even if negative, we do our best to go further. At USEK, we do believe that the positive spirit is the key in dealing with every matter, the key for success. We do build. We do meet others.

Going always further is to look ahead from where one stands. It is about foreseeing, farseeing, planning and taking action. At USEK, the IASC, which stands for International Affairs Steering Committee, examines our international strategy and action. It is my big honor to chair this committee and I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to its members: Fr. Dr. Joseph Wakim, Vice President for International Affairs, Fr. Prof. Georges Hobeika, Deputy President for Francophone

International Affairs. I would also like to thank Dr. Rima Mattar, Director of the International Affairs Office, not only for being member of the IASC but also for initiating many positive actions in the International Affairs at USEK. She was behind the idea of organizing this forum and she proposed that USEK be the first university from outside Americas to partake in the Internationalization laboratory in the ACE, the American Council on Education. And so it was. A task force from different units at USEK was consequently created and trained in the USA thanks to a State department grant. The efficient action of its members and of all Deans and Directors is highly perceived in our daily life and our programs. So many thanks for every one of them. Heartfelt thanks also to all the team of our International Affairs Office.

In a special note, I would share with you that one of our main concerns at USEK is to nurture the spirit of our students with internationalization through a global culture and through student and faculty mobility.

I also address my thanks to all our international and national partners, here present, and to all moderators and speakers in all panels. Let me also address special thanks to Her Excellency Michelle Cameron, Ambassador of Canada, and His Excellency Francois Barras, Ambassador of Switzerland for being kind enough to deliver their speeches in this inaugural session.

Through this forum, we are building global education bridges. So we are moving further and we will go on, always further.