

Speech of the National Tempus Office Director

Professor Ahmad Abu-El-Haija

Third National Tempus Day, 4th March 2008

Your Excellency Professor Turki Obaidat, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Your Excellency Mr. Patrick Renauld, Ambassador of the European Union to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Professor Hisham Ghaseeb, President, Princess Sumaya University for Technology

Your Excellencies, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to have you with us today, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the third national Tempus day.

The Jordan National Tempus Office was established in March 2004 after the approval of the Council of Ministers, with a generous grant from the European Commission, and the kind hosting of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Office is engaged in a number of activities that aim at establishing and strengthening the collaboration between Jordanian and European higher education institutions. I am pleased to inform you today that the Tempus program is now quite visible and very well respected by the academic community in Jordan, as evidenced by the large participation in Tempus projects, and also as witnessed by your distinguished presence in today's event.

Tempus, which is the Trans European Mobility Scheme for University Studies, is an important exchange program in the higher education sector between European and Partner countries. We have just completed an important phase of the Tempus program, which is Tempus III, and we are happy today to launch the forthcoming phase of the program, which is Tempus IV. Because Tempus IV was carefully designed based upon lessons learnt from the previous phases of the program, it includes several

enhancements as compared with its predecessor. This will be explained today.

Although Jordan started participating in the Tempus program as of December 2002, 18 Joint European Projects and five Structural and Complementary Measures projects have been funded by the European Commission, and 26 Individual Mobility Grants have been awarded to individuals to visit higher education institutions. More impressive, in this relatively short period of time, collaboration with 14 European countries and seven Mediterranean countries is already taking place. This involves the mobility of faculty members and students from Jordan to Europe and vice versa, thus achieving the objectives on the Tempus program in providing the proper environment for cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the peoples of Jordan and Europe.

The Tempus program has significantly contributed to the process of higher education reform and development in Jordan, in spite of the fact that the funds available are quite limited. There is more and more interest in the Tempus program from both Jordanian and European higher education institutions, which led to severe competitions among projects submitted lately. It is to be noted that the success rate of the projects that involved Jordan for the past three rounds has been quite low, so that only one project was selected for Tempus funding out of every seven projects submitted. This reflects the high interest in the Tempus program on one hand, but also the high quality of selected projects on the other hand.

We have just completed a booklet that is available to you today, which includes a summary of the Tempus projects funded by the European Commission, some statistics about the involvement of European and Mediterranean countries, Jordanian institutions participating in such projects, the national priorities for Tempus and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window as determined by the government in 2007, and highlights about the main activities of the NTO for the past few years.

The program of the third National Tempus Day was carefully designed to provide you with up-to-date information and advice not only on the Tempus IV program, but also on Erasmus-Mundus, Erasmus-Mundus External

Cooperation Window, Framework Program 7 for cooperation in research, and the experiences of some organizations that have collaborated with Europe for the past decade or more. We hope that such experiences and lessons learned will help you make better project proposals in the future, which will enhance the probability of success of your projects. The Tempus day also gives you the chance to network and talk about possible consortia that may work together.

For us, at the National Tempus Office, besides our main goal of assisting you, we aim at making the Tempus projects involving Jordan more and more competitive. This will enhance the quality, and will in turn contribute to the on-going process of the higher education reform in Jordan.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the European Commission for including Jordan in the Tempus program and providing the necessary funds, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for hosting and supporting the Tempus Office. We also thank Princess Sumaya University for Technology for hosting this Day. The team from the National Tempus Office and the counterpart team from Princess Sumaya University who worked very hard on all the details of this day also deserve our thanks and appreciation. Last but not least, our warmest thanks to all of you who came from different parts of Jordan to participate in this activity.

We look forward to strengthening further the collaboration between Jordanian higher education institutions and their European counterparts, through the Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, and other programs in higher education and scientific research.

Thank you so much again, and we wish you a pleasant and successful day.