



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
TO THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

**Speech by Claus Heiberg, Charge d'Affaires of the Delegation
European Commission to Jordan
on the occasion of Fourth Tempus Day**

Your Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint Al-Hasan

Prof. Hisham Ghaseeb, President, Princess Sumaya University for
Technology

Prof. Ahmad Abu-El-Haija, Director, National Tempus Office

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be among you today, representing the Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Jordan, to address this distinguished audience of academics and researchers from universities all over the country.

The presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya is a kind gesture and yet another sign of interest in a close partnership between Jordan and Europe.

In reality, today's theme and focus is the human capital of Jordan. A most valuable kind of capital that does not fade away during financial crisis, inflation and economic downturns. An important part of what we concentrate on at the European Commission is exactly to help developing that human capital, *i.e.* to develop the potential of individual Jordanians, and to promote the projects, ideas, aspirations and ambitions they carry.

We definitely share the vision of the Government of Jordan that well developed human resources are a formidable engine of development. As we share the fundamental choice Jordan has made of being an open society with equal access to education for everybody, irrespective of gender, origin and social condition. Basic political and social freedoms are necessary to make ideas flourish and turn into projects.

Jordanian higher education institutions have a long-established reputation for excellence, and the levels of education of the Jordanian population are recognized to be among the highest in the region. New challenges are nonetheless emerging: The Gulf States are undertaking important education reforms counting on ample pools of financial resources which allow them to easily recruit international expertise and equipment. But here again, in this friendly competition, Jordan will be able to maintain its regional status as one of the most advanced countries in the Middle East only if it continues the efforts to unlock all aspects of its vast human potential in the context of an open society as I mentioned.

However much has been achieved already, there is a long road ahead.

The European Commission is determined to continue providing a broad support to the Jordanian education system, with the aim of adapting it to the changing needs of the internal and external job markets.

Much of our support is about building institutions and adapting them to the society and the economy they will serve. However, institutions are one thing; they need to build on excellent individuals. Our programmes aim exactly at encouraging and enabling these individuals to study and to do research in Europe. We believe that international exposure of students and scholars will enrich them personally, promote a mutual culture of tolerance, and give substance and value to the partnership between Europe and Jordan.

To put it short: moving people is moving ideas.

This goes both ways: Let us not forget that students and scholars participating in mobility and research programmes, while in Europe, are not only exponents of their areas of excellence, but they are also inevitably Ambassadors of their region, their culture, their values.

**Your Royal Highness,
Ladies and Gentleman,**

Let me conclude by stating that investing in human resources for the sake of future economic growth and prosperity is a valuable objective that the European Commission is proud of contributing to achieve. But the ambition of our partnership goes beyond: to progressively bring our people closer and lay the foundations for a peaceful future.

Thank you for your commitment for change, thank you for your attention.

**Claus Heiberg
Charge D' affaires
European Commission Delegation to Jordan**

Amman, 25th February 2009