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Case study report

The view of the EU cultural and science diplomacy from Egypt

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1. Introduction

1.1 European cooperation in culture, higher education, scientific research and innovation between the EU and Egypt

As a reminder of the framework of this study, it is worth mentioning, even in general terms, a few schemes and figures.

A EU-Egypt Association Agreement (2004) and a EU-Egypt Partnership (2017) have been guiding the relationship between the European Union and the Arab Republic of Egypt, which was maintained throughout all the recent historical events and mishaps of this big country.

EU assistance to Egypt under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for 2007-2013 was over 1 billion €. Under the Single Support Framework for the period 2014-2016 a total amount of 320 million € in EU grants were committed by the EU. For the period 2014-2020, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) is the main financial instrument for EU cooperation with Egypt. A “Memorandum of Understanding regarding the EU’s Single Support Framework 2017-2020” was signed with Egypt (for an amount of 500 million €), defining priority sectors, amongst which economic modernisation, energy and environment, having been consensually determined by both parties.

The “**Euro-Mediterranean agreement** establishing an association between the European communities and their member states and the Arab Republic of Egypt” (2004) already included some articles about culture, science and innovation¹.

Article 71 of the “Euro-Mediterranean Agreement” specified that “the Parties agree to promote cultural cooperation in fields of mutual interest and in a spirit of respect for each other’s **cultures**. They shall establish a sustainable cultural dialogue. This cooperation shall promote in particular:

- conservation and restoration of historic and cultural heritage (such as monuments, sites, artefacts, rare books and manuscripts);
- exchange of art exhibitions, troupes of performing arts, artists, men of letters, intellectuals and cultural events;
- translations;
- training of persons working in the cultural field.”

Article 43 established the objectives of **scientific and technological cooperation**:

- “encouraging the establishment of durable links between the scientific communities of the Parties, notably through: the access of Egypt to Community R&D programmes, in conformity with existing provisions concerning the participation of third countries; the participation of

¹ “Euro-Mediterranean agreement establishing an association between the European communities and their member states and the Arab Republic of Egypt” (30/9/2004): https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/06_aaa_en1.pdf

Egypt in networks of decentralised cooperation; the promotion of synergy between training and research;

- strengthening research capacity in Egypt;
- stimulating technological innovation, transfer of new technologies, and dissemination of know-how."

And the article 60 of the "Euro-Mediterranean Agreement" also mentioned that the "regional cooperation" shall focus on "scientific and technological research" and "cultural matters".

In these specific fields, Egypt signed a "Science and Technology agreement" with the European Commission in 2005, as well as in parallel many bilateral agreements in science and technology with 25 member states. The "Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development" amounted to more than 120 projects.

In addition to bilateral EU funding, Egypt also benefits from EU **multi-country co-operation** instruments like Erasmus+. Before that existed the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) (2007-2014), and Tempus Meda III (30 million €) was an important partner in the pluri-annual "Higher Education Enhancement Project" (HEEP).

Pertinent data on the topics are to be found in the reports "Egypt in Horizon 2020" (2014-2017)², and "Research and innovation cooperation between Egypt and the European Union member states" (2015)³.

A special dossier of the French agency "Campus France" on higher education and scientific research in Egypt includes an interview with Yasser El-Shayeb, Erasmus+ coordinator, who draws a good picture of the scientific cooperation between Egypt and EU. It started with Tempus III (2002-2007) and Tempus IV (2008-2013)⁴. Amongst the outcomes of the programmes launched, he mentions the "Master of Euro-Mediterranean Studies" at Cairo University. Between 2002 and 2013, 103 projects have been realised. Erasmus Mundus (2006-2013) allowed almost 1000 mobilities. In 2014, Erasmus+ was launched, with 500 mobilities and 20 projects strengthening the relationships between the academic word and the economic and social environment.

1.2 Objectives of the study

Work Package 4, Task 3 is entitled "the view of the EU cultural and science diplomacy from the outside". It is an impact study that wants to show how the EU's cultural and science diplomacy is perceived in the MENA countries (Tunisia and Egypt) and Turkey. The primary question was: what do the EU's partners think of its approach to science, innovation and its enhancement of external cultural relations? The main objective was thus to measure the degree to which populations notice and appreciate European cultural and science diplomacy actions.

Through interviews (qualitative study) and survey (quantitative study), WP4 Task 3 is a measurement of the reception of the EU's messages in the considered countries. This study aims at understanding better the partners' image of the EU.

² https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/egypt_in_horizon_2020_2014_-_2017.pdf

³ http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/index_en.htm

⁴ Dossier Campus France, "Egypte", n°37, July 2017, p.14.

https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/agence_cf/dossiers/fr/dossier_37_fr.pdf

1.3 Methodology

The case-study is based on both a qualitative study (interviews) and a quantitative study (survey).

For the **survey**, 273 samples have been collected and analysed.

Interviews have been conducted in Egypt with 14 people engaged in European programmes, people having benefited from those programmes, or people well aware of the existence of them.

1.4 Team

At **EMUNI**: Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry (President), Kinga Konya (Project manager), Jerneja Penca (Research fellow), Antoine Hatzenberger (Research fellow).

In **Egypt**: Alia Al-Mahdi (University of Cairo, Faculty of Economics and Political science), with the support of Egypol.

2. Survey

For the **survey** (quantitative study), 273 samples have been collected and analysed.

The samples come from a population composed mostly of representatives of the academic world: students, professors as well as administrative staff members. The study has been led within the premises of different higher education institutions:

- Cairo University;
- Ain Shams University (Cairo);
- Helwan University (South-Great Cairo);
- Al-Azhar University (Cairo);
- Tanta University (Delta region);
- Sadat Academy for Management Sciences (West-Great Cairo).

The survey includes undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students from Cairo University and the other mentioned universities, from different disciplines.

The vast majority of the people interviewed have a university degree, and more than 50% of the respondents were women.

The analysis of the results of the survey shows:

2.1 Evaluation of the European cooperation with Egypt

The measurement of the perception of the EU's **involvement** in shaping the scientific effort in Egypt shows that a majority of people (49%) think that EU is "somewhat involved". People thinking that it is "closely involved" and people who "don't know" are at the same level (19%). Only 12% think the EU is "not involved at all" in Egypt.

Asked about the **ways** in which the EU partners cooperate with Egypt in the field of science, 31% take that Egyptian scientists receive funds from the EU to perform their research; and 27% state that Egyptian scientists cooperate with European researchers on common projects". 21% "don't know".

Statements about the science cooperation between Egypt and the EU establish a **ranking** of the EU in Egyptian partnerships: EU is considered as the second or third most important partner of Egypt (41%), the most important partner for 26%. 13% think EU is not an important partner, while 19% don't know.

As for the **benefits** for Egypt of scientific cooperation with the EU, they seem to be multiple. Answers are equally spread across different options, where no single one is prevailing. Although, only 2% think that there are no benefits at all, people have not constituted a majority to choose one of the benefits below:

- improved knowledge (45%);
- access to funds (42%);
- economic interests (patents, revenues) (40%);
- development of global science (35%);
- understanding of other cultures (32%).

Amongst the other individual answers given:

- clarifying the misconceptions spread in the EU about Egypt
- capacity building for university staff and students;
- transfer of new technologies;
- making use of the EU financial resources that are made available to Egypt;
- cultural exchange between the EU and Egypt.

Part of the **evaluation** of EU's actions, judging from the scientific cooperation, people think that the level of the EU's intervention is acceptable (with potentially some reservations about the implementation) for 33%. They consider it appropriate and good for 27%. And 21% could not produce an answer on that point. 17% think that the EU is interfering with internal affairs.

Amongst the **reasons** for the EU's effort in international scientific cooperation:

- the EU is seeking cooperation with international partners to convince others of the EU political or economic agenda, wanting to appear stronger than others (43%);
- the EU is seeking cooperation because science knows no borders, and the EU wishes to create a platform for scientific dialogue (32%);
- the EU is cooperating in science because the US, China, Australia and other actors are also doing it (9,5%).

2.2 Gender issue

Enquiring in how scientific cooperation does affect the status of women, the survey shows that a majority thinks that intensifying scientific cooperation encourages women to make better use of their potential and advance their traditional role (59%). On the contrary, 20% believe that scientific activity requires women scientists to assume a role that is not compatible with the traditional position of women in the Egyptian society. 11% think that women's engagement in scientific activities does not impact their status. And 9% do not know.

Comparing the position of women scientists in the EU and in Egypt, 55% think that women are more empowered in the EU, and 20% that women are more empowered in Egypt. For 9%, the position of women in science is about the same in the EU countries and in Egypt. 15% have no idea about that.

2.3 Perception of European values

Reflecting on the **principles** associated with the EU, even though a majority of the people were unable to choose amongst the suggested categories, an order can be drawn from the answers:

- Human dignity and human rights (43%);
- Democracy (39%);
- Political stability (37%);
- Rule of law (36%);
- Gender equality (31);
- Freedom (30%);
- Equality (22%).

Someone has added “work ethics” to the list of values.

Moral **values** and notions associated to the EU are as follows:

- Authority (93%) / Shyness
- Learning (87%) / Ignorance
- Creativity (83%) / Dullness
- Growth (82,8) / Stagnation
- Openness (82,5%) / Intolerance
- Popularity (81,5%) / Hostility
- Success (80%) / Disappointment
- Optimism (78%) / Pessimism
- Security (77%) / Fear
- Happiness (76,7%) / Depression
- Community (76,3%) / Individualism
- Wealth (75%) / Poverty
- Responsibility (73%) / Unreliability
- Stability (71%) / Uncertainty
- Peace (69%) / War, Interventionism
- Curiosity (66%) / Apathy
- Secularism (64%) / Faith (Religion)
- Fairness (59%), not far from Injustice, double-standards (41%)
- Compassion (53%), not far from Indifference (46%)
- Wisdom (52%), not far from Materialism (47%)

Regarding specifically **human rights**, and EU’s contribution to their protection of worldwide, it appears that 34,5% take a critical stance in stating that the EU advocates human rights but applies them in a selective manner and has double-standards. 32% think that the EU itself is based on the ideals of human rights. For almost 16%, the key issue in the EU actions is self-interest and it is that, not human rights, that motivates the EU. Almost 9% think that the EU is shifting to nationalism and xenophobia. Just one person chose not to reply, which shows a general interest for this question. Euroscepticism amounts then to more than 50%.

When it comes to the question of the **influence** of the European set of values on Egyptian culture, we are met with more positive answers, as European values are perceived as having influenced Egyptian culture to a limited extent for 52%, and influenced it considerably for more than 20 % (which means almost two third of positive answers). 22,4% think that European values are without any influence in Egypt. Very few people did not answer this question (less than 5%, which is less than the usual “don’t know” rate).

2.4 Definition and impact of culture

When reflecting on what comes to mind when one thinks about the world “culture”, no conceptual category got a majority to constitute a definition in itself.

People only agreed on a general **definition of culture**, referring to traditions, culture, customs and social or cultural communities. Otherwise, people refused the suggested categories and components, which can nevertheless be ordered like this:

- Traditions, languages, customs and social or cultural communities (51%);
- Civilisation (43%);
- Knowledge and science (37%);
- Values and beliefs (including philosophy and religion) (27%);
- Life style and manners (25%);
- Arts: visual arts (13%), literature (9%);
- History (14%);
- Museums (4%).

Someone added this interesting item to the definition of the word “culture”: the historical heritage and information derived from ancient people.

Cultural interactions are widely considered as a means to convey peace and toleration.

64% totally agree, and 25% tend to agree with this statement that culture and interactions with other cultures can play an important role in developing greater understanding and tolerance in the world, even where there are conflicts or tensions.

56% totally agree, and 32% tend to agree with this statement that culture and interactions with other cultures should have a very important place in the EU so that citizens from different member-states can learn more from each other and feel more European.

31% totally agree, and 37% tend to agree with the statement that Europe, with its long-standing culture and values, is particularly well placed to contribute to greater tolerance in the world.

2.5 Sense of belonging

The chart of relative attachment (to city, region, country, Europe, the world) acts as a measure of the sense of identity – between local and global.

The same amount of people (42%) say being very attached to their country and very attached to Europe. There is more or less the same level of fair attachment to one’s region (40%) and to the world (43%). 10% do not feel attached to Europe at all.

2.6 EU’s best access to its neighbours

What would best help Europeans and neighbouring countries get to know each other:

- increase exchange programmes for students and teachers (59%);
- develop the teaching of foreign languages at school (57%);
- implement programmes enabling people who do not usually travel to meet one another (38,5%);
- support exhibitions and live performances (such as plays and concerts) in tours beyond national borders (30%);

- support town-twinning across Europe (23%);
- support the production of TV documentaries about other EU member states (22%);
- support the distribution of movies originating from other EU member states (14,5%).

Individual suggestions include:

- grant college students educational scholarships to study in the EU;
- a scientific approach as the best way to understand the other;
- allowing university staff and doctors to visit and train in Europe so that they can transfer the - knowledge to our country;
- tolerance and considering the public interest rather than the private interest;
- art-works and exhibitions;
- increasing the scientific cooperation and joint research.

3. Interviews

Interviews have been conducted in Egypt with people (14) engaged in European programmes, people having benefited from those programmes, or people well aware of the existence of them.

Interviewees come from different backgrounds and disciplines, and work within different institutions (academic and governmental):

- Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport (Alexandria);
- Agricultural Research Centre (Alexandria);
- Centre for Special Studies and Programmes, Bibliotheca Alexandrina;
- Suez Canal University (Ismailia);
- University of Cairo;
- Helwan University;
- French University in Egypt;
- Heliopolis University;
- Ministry of Education;
- Ministry of Antiquity;
- Swedish Institute.

The interviewees have been asked 20 questions organised in 4 main categories:

1. "You, your country and Europe";
2. "European values";
3. "Evaluation";
4. "Recommendations".

The questions concentrated firstly on the information the partners got about the European programmes; the initial incentive of their participation; and the roles they played in the cooperation. The interviewees had then to evaluate the impact of EU programmes on individuals careers, on institutions, and more generally, on Egypt. They had also to evaluate the methodological impact on scientific procedures. The interviewees had also to elaborate on the perception of European values, to compare European programmes with those of other countries; to express their reservations and their recommendations – if any.

The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire shows:

3.1 Positive evaluation of the impact of EU programmes

The impact of European programmes in Egypt is generally considered positive, or very positive, in terms of the good conditions they allow and the methodologies they implement.

3.1.1 *Impact on the infrastructure of scientific research*

The **funding** available through European programmes (compensating the lack of Egyptian funds for culture, science, research and innovation) is often cited as the first incentive for cooperation, as well as **mobility** opportunities, networking and increased number and better quality of **publications**.

European international cooperation means logistical aid (for example, some centres of excellence in various specialisations have been equipped with high-tech instruments). It fosters research and has a boosting effect on publications.

EU programmes are valued for their encouragement to capacity building, through mobility projects aiming at sharing of experience and continuing education, joint degrees (with credit transfers through the Learning agreement) and joint publications. EU programmes benefit both the students and the higher education staff at large – academic and administrative. Participation to international programmes has increased the number of students in Egypt (including foreign students).

The benefits of international exchange are perceived as general, as they impact the country itself, and not only individuals and institutions. Thus, South-Mediterranean countries focus on innovation and entrepreneurship because of the EU's incentives, which have an indirect effect on creation of enterprises, job market, and employment. Some interviewees are even to say that EU scientific programmes could have an impact on preventing illegal migration.

3.1.2 *Methodological impact*

Publications with European co-authors in European scientific journals, as well as the co-supervision of doctoral thesis with European professors, allow a better appreciation of Egyptian research in worldwide rankings.

European programmes encourage inter-disciplinarity, intercultural dialogue, and put scientific values at the core of all projects.

EU programmes allow to be exposed to new academic disciplines and to be introduced to new learning techniques. With the help of the EU programs, the new and very important academic disciplines were introduced for the first time at Egyptian (for example nanotechnologies or heritage and museum studies).

Representatives of University of Helwan note the positive impact of having introduced the credit point system alongside EU programmes. Several capacity building opportunities were offered to academic staff, and a new library was established.

EU programmes value the sustainability of the projects: they take into account from the start how successful projects can continue working after the funding ends. They also insure a positive impact on the beneficiary institution. The progress made in science means a progress in social and economic development.

3.1.3 *Awareness impact*

Taking part to EU programmes has induced a **change of mindset** in many domains, especially sustainable development and reflections on climate change. One could trace the change in students' attitude and way of thinking, especially in their sense of responsibility towards society. Ethics and

values have been adapted by many students, who better understand the concept of global citizenship and wish to be part of it. Students are discussing more and more sustainable campus and take part to climate change social initiatives. There is globally more enthusiasm about global issues and, at the same time, more appreciation of Egyptian local heritage.

In many EU programmes, especially in culture, as the national cultural policy involves many stakeholders – academics, amateurs, professionals, youth –, the outcome is the resultant of national social dialogue, to such extent that cultural cooperation brings the Egyptian people together, while bringing nations together.

EU projects are perceived as extremely valuable as they improve the status and life of people. The funding, technical support and evidence-based projects are highly appreciated.

3.2 Exemplary programmes

Some interviewees wanted to specifically underline programmes judged to have had a particularly positive impact:

RUCAS Tempus project: “reorient university curricula to address sustainability” (2010-2013). The participating universities from Egypt and Jordan reoriented more than 150 courses to address sustainability in terms of content, teaching methodologies and assessment techniques.

Educamp Tempus project: “sustainable development beyond campus” (2010-2013), where participating universities from the EU provided TOT training for the staff members from different Egyptian universities. Also, kits of training and teaching materials for students aged from 8-15 were developed and pilot implemented in many schools in Egypt.

Climasp Tempus project: “developing an interdisciplinary minor in climate change and sustainability policy” (2013-2016). Centres of excellence were established and equipped in the beneficiary universities to host learning activities.

CCSAFS Erasmus project: “developing an interdisciplinary master in climate change, sustainable agriculture and food security” (2016-2018).

AdapTM Erasmus project: “developing a master degree in climate change adaptation and mitigation” (2017-2019).

MHCSM: “Master in Heritage Conservation and Site Management” (2015), between Helwan University and Brandenburg University of Technology (Germany).

Edu-MUST: “education and capacity building in museum studies” (2016). A consortium of several Egyptian and European universities has established a “Master Program in Museum Studies”.

3.3 Positive images of Europe

Often cited values associated to the European Union are: creativity, community, responsibility, learning, happiness, growth, understanding, support, guidance.

The exposure to different scientific disciplines and technologies has broadened the perspectives of Egyptian students and researchers. This has an impact on cultural representations as well.

Regarding gender issues, even though the presence of women in science is not perceived in general as a problem that EU should help to solve, some interviewees note that taking part to EU programmes

is an encouragement to women empowerment. European partners don't explicitly say "we are socially supporting women", but concretely they do so, which is seen as "a smart way of conveying ethics and values by doing not by saying."

If there is a global positive image of the EU on the cultural level, it is not so much the case on what is perceived as a European political agenda on the international scene. Although what this agenda could be remains vague for the interviewee who mentioned it, he resented it as something negative.

3.4 Comparative approach between multilateralism and bilateralism

Such a big country as Egypt has of course tied strong links with several foreign countries at different levels, including science, culture and innovation. In domains such as cultural heritage – a domain historically, scientifically and economically very important for Egypt, if we remember that it is linked to the tourism sector –, cooperation with UNESCO and ALECSO plays an important role, alongside bilateral cooperations with individual countries, European and others. Thus the relevance of the comparison between EU programmes and other international cooperation schemes.

In general – and quite logically –, EU programmes are seen as providing a broader context for multinational cooperation.

On the one hand, cooperation with the USAid seems to some both simpler and quicker, as the American agency makes half of the job, and gives out all the needed information. In some sectors, bilateral cooperation with France, for instance, is also considered simpler and quicker. With USAid, programmes are designed with unlimited funds. And as the EU pays a lot of attention to procedures, aside from impact, the US is only interested in impact, regardless of the paths taken to reach the objectives. Comparing EU programmes with the US funding, American procedures are perceived as more flexible, allowing extensions of delays, some deviations in the initial project, etc. Although in general the image of the EU in science seem equivalent to that of the USA, some interviewees tend to oppose European rigueur and American pragmatism.

On the other hand, bilateral cooperation does not necessary guarantee implementation of activities (for instance projects, training, mobilities, etc.), while EU programs include an integrated plan with funds and roadmap for implementation, so it is much more effective with a greater and more lasting impact.

Comparing now European programmes themselves, some think that a broad programme like Erasmus+ plus is much easier and efficient than programmes such as the "European Research Area" (EraNet).

3.5 Reservations about EU procedures

Within Egyptian teams, tensions sometimes arise due to lack of sufficient and precise knowledge on how to manage certain activities, how to spend the budget, how to differentiate eligible and ineligible costs, such knowledge if not well-known and well implemented may cause problems and partners try to blame each other for not successfully carrying out different tasks.

Symmetrically, tensions can arise in cooperation projects due to a lack of understanding of how the Egyptian bureaucratic system works.

Regarding European procedures, several criticisms are addressed to their complexity – verging on complication – and slowness. Application file are difficult to build up. The system is difficult to understand. And there is a lack of information from the EU Delegation in Egypt. Some feel that EU

actions are pursued within a network of the same partners, perceived as affiliated regulars. It happens as if the EU Delegation was waiting for the partners to come to them, rather than the other way round.

What some interviewees call the EU bureaucracy has too lengthy requirements, and EU is overtly focused on procedures. The most critical of the interviewees stated this: "If the aim of the project is achieved, you know it, but the EU wants to know the details. Why is the EU doing what it is doing?" The EU is seen as being more focused on the following-up of the process itself – with a lot of attention for the details of the implementation – than in the real impact of the project.

According to some, the EU Delegation in the country would still have a wider potential, which is not yet explored enough, being too low-profile, and being more into papers properly written rather than efficiency and productivity...

3.6 Recommendations regarding the organisation of the cooperation

Facing what they consider to be procedural difficulties, Egyptian partners suggest finding some ways of simplification, especially in the organisation of the partnerships. Instead of only giving a long list of potential partners, the EU Delegation in Egypt should centrally coordinate the contacts between academic partners, and organise those contacts beforehand according to the specificities of the partners. Instead of insisting on having a lot of partners for the same project, the EU should allow only a couple of partners to work together, so to gain some time and spare money spent on communication.

International mobility being unanimously seen as a great opportunity for all students from south Mediterranean countries, some wish there would be some sort of quota for them.

The wish is also expressed that mobilities will be increased, and that, instead of one call per year, Erasmus+, would have two calls per year. More post-doctoral mobility grants would also be appreciated.

There is this idea of implementing a long-term support for research teams, centres and outstanding researchers who have had an excellent track record in previous EU projects in their field. The recommendation is also expressed to always keep a strong evaluation component in any project.

Were also expressed the need to have more co-supervised theses and joint degrees, as well as the need to link science and community through the media and science dissemination. Recommendation is made to use social media to disseminate the success stories and best practices amongst students and researchers to involve more people in European programmes. Another suggestion was to widen the circles of EU partners in Egypt in inviting new people at monthly round-table (policy events, conferences), as partnerships always start with real meetings and personal contacts.

3.7 Recommendations of priority fields

The topic of climate change and the measure to be undertaken to face it are now widely popular amongst the scientific community, thanks to EU sensitisation programmes. Interviewees showed interest also in projects about leadership and change management; control systems; the food-water-energy nexus; and sustainable technologies in agriculture to treat infested crops.

The other topics mentioned several times – which seems also rightly topical in Egypt, taking into account its famous historical context – are cultural heritage and culture management.

There are already on-going Egypt-EU projects in the field, but some more funds are expected to introduce fully heritage management and museum studies as new academic disciplines in all

Egyptian universities. The technical assistance that will be provided by the EU, through a consortium of some of Europe's most important museums housing Egyptian collections, would be invaluable.

Finally, the impression was expressed that the European Delegation to Egypt is more into hard scientific research, and not enough into socio-economic research. And staff from human and social sciences faculties think there are still things to be done in the domains of history of ideas (interculturality), comparative literature (travel writing), teaching of foreign languages and translation.

4. Conclusions

So then, what about the view of the EU cultural and science diplomacy from Egypt?

The Egyptian interviewees show a genuine interest in cooperating with the EU. EU's actions are generally well known and very positively perceived in the academic world and amongst the research community. The Erasmus+ Programme is particularly popular for the opportunities of mobility it gives.

In slight contrast, the widespread answers collected with the survey show quite a relatively high rate of undecided interviewees, who don't really know what to think about the EU, its inner values or its external actions.

A majority of questions got a lot of positive answers, but never a majority of them. For instance, many people feel that there are benefits for Egypt of the scientific cooperation with the EU, but they cannot precisely and positively define which one. Similarly, a lot of other answers are marked with caution.

Comparing the results of the interviews and the data of the survey, one has to acknowledge a slight discrepancy between the views of the experts and a more general point of view. Although the survey was conveyed within universities, it still targeted a more general public, and the collected answers show a far lesser involvement in the European projects.

Amongst the questions relating to European values, a firm criticism is expressed by the percentage expressed to show scepticism about human rights. More than 50% can be interpreted as a form of euroscepticism, fearing foul play and suspecting double standard.

The survey results in paradoxical answers about the definition of what the word culture stands for. The part allowed to museums in this definition is notably very limited, which is striking in a country such as the Arab Republic of Egypt, owning the most famous museums in the world (suffice to name the Egyptian Museum, and the long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum). This paradox may show that the perception of culture is sensibly different when viewed from the outside. It also indicates that one of the fields for future cooperation could concentrate precisely on the question of culture heritage, as some interviewees suggest.

About the author



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