

## press release

Commitment to cooperation with the environment and culture in Lebanon

### **The Abertis Foundation organises the closing of the Erasmus+ project for applied research and education on Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves**

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- The project is coming to an end after 40 months of intense work and the involvement of more than 150 people, including professionals and university students from five Mediterranean countries.
  - The promoters of Erasmus+ EduBioMed are delighted to have succeeded in strengthening relations between Lebanese and Moroccan universities and reserves.
  - This initiative has funded the development and provision of tools for applied research in socio-environmental studies.
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**Barcelona, 25 February 2022-** Four years ago the European Commission awarded the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) and the UNESCO International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (UNESCOMED), headquarters of the Abertis Foundation, the Erasmus+ project Italy, an initiative whose main objective is to strengthen and improve academic activity between countries in the Mediterranean basin (Spain, France and) and Moroccan and Lebanese institutions, in the context of the Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves. This project is now coming to an end after 40 months of intense work and the involvement of more than 150 people, including professionals and university students from five Mediterranean countries.

The Erasmus+ EduBioMed project was presented today at an event held at the headquarters of the Cervantes Institute in Beirut and attended by its director, Yolanda Soler, as well as the director of the Abertis Foundation, Georgina Flamme, who presented the Foundation's strategic lines. The activities carried out through the UNESCO International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves (UNESCOMED) and the main conclusions of the Erasmus+ EduBioMed project were also presented at a panel discussion with the participation of representatives of the two main Lebanese universities collaborating in the project. The event was closed by the Spanish Ambassador to Lebanon, José María Ferré de la Peña.

The Erasmus+ EduBioMed project has focused on strengthening applied research and education in Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves, as well as reinforcing relations between Lebanese and Moroccan universities and reserves. The project has also funded the development and provision of tools for applied research in socio-environmental studies.

Other activities and results that have been promoted over these four years include surveys in Lebanese and Moroccan universities on the concept of Biosphere Reserves, workshops with local communities in order to align university activity with the needs of the territories, and the review of recommendations on public policies for the integration of MAB directives in Lebanon and Morocco.

Likewise, the production of a work agenda on Mediterranean Reserves has been promoted and the production of IT tools for collaborative research in Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves has been reinforced. More than 25 education and research projects in Lebanese and Moroccan Biosphere Reserves have also been promoted, as well as the mobility of more than 60 university students in the Erasmus+ project and the publishing of a publication on Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves.

Among other activities and initiatives, online courses on this subject have also been promoted and a position paper has been prepared on the production of recommendations on university curriculum development in Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves, and IT platforms for citizen and collaborative science, and equipment has been purchased for fieldwork.

### **Cervantes poets in Arabic: “*En resumidas cuentas*” by José Emilio Pacheco**

Coinciding with the end of the Erasmus+ EduBioMed project, tomorrow, 26 February, at 18:00, the presentation of the Arabic adaptation of the work “*En resumidas cuentas*” by José Emilio Pacheco will take place at the National Library of Lebanon.

This initiative is part of the “Poetas Cervantes en árabe” (POCENAR - Cervantes poets in Arabic) project, also promoted by the Abertis Foundation through the UNESCO International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves, which promotes a programme of publishing and translating into Arabic poets who have won the Cervantes Prize.

The Abertis Foundation's support for this initiative, which aims to disseminate his work in Morocco and other Arab countries, as well as to promote intercultural dialogue and highlight the work of young Moroccan translators, is part of the activities carried out by the UNESCO International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves to bring together the two shores of the Mediterranean under the auspices of UNESCO.

### **About the Mediterranean Biosphere Reserve Network**

The more than 70 territories constituting the Mediterranean Biosphere Reserve Network (RRBBMed) include a group of diverse and representative sites hosting exceptional treasures in terms of richness of biodiversity, landscapes and cultural expressions. The quality of these environmental and cultural resources situate these Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves as places of excellence for promoting all facets of sustainable tourism within a single environment of two coasts united by their culture and natural characteristics.

Castellet Castle (Barcelona), headquarters of the Abertis Foundation, was declared a UNESCO International Centre for Mediterranean Biosphere Reserves in 2013. This is the first experience of public-private collaboration in the field of category 2 centres of the Biosphere Reserves Network, recognised by the organisation belonging to the United Nations.

Category 2 encompasses centres and institutes under the auspices of UNESCO that represent a special category in the United Nations system: created and financed by Member States, their main purpose is to achieve the principal strategic goals of UNESCO's MaB (*Man and Biosphere*) programme.

Since then, the UNESCO International Centre has established itself as a place for the dissemination of ideas, projects and knowledge, which serves as a stimulus to interest in cultural and natural heritage, being a paradigm of its sustainable management.

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