

DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT



MIDDLE EAST

Factsheet dossier

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ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

This dossier contains country factsheets on diaspora engagement in the Middle East. The factsheets were produced during EUDiF's global mapping on diaspora engagement, the full results of which are available via an [interactive map](#) on the project's website.

Statistics included in the factsheets come from UN and World Bank datasets; where data was unavailable for 2021, the 2019 dataset is used, as per the initial publication of the mapping. As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration. We are aware that this does not include all who consider themselves diaspora. In certain cases national statistics are included in the fact sheets.

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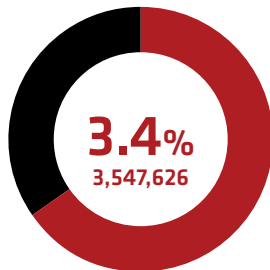


Diaspora engagement mapping EGYPT

Facts & figures

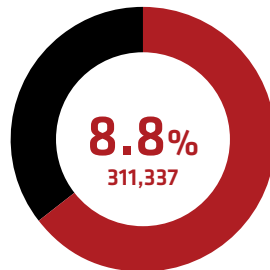
Emigration

% of emigrants in total population



♂ 64.7%
♀ 35.3%

% of which in the EU



♂ 65.5%
♀ 34.5%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **8.3%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **29,603**



Top countries of destination¹

Saudi Arabia	938,649
United Arab Emirates	886,291
Kuwait	410,831
United States	203,205
Qatar	186,840



Political rights



Dual citizenship²



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad³



Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



Terminology: Egypt refers to its diaspora as 'Egyptian citizens abroad'
(المواطنون المصريون بالخارج al-mawāṭinūn al-maṣriyyūn bi-l-khārig)

Egypt does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

In 2017, IOM started to work with the Ministry for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriate Affairs to develop a national diaspora engagement policy and strategy. The strategy has not been adopted yet and no information on its advancement is currently available.

¹ Revised Constitution 2014, Article 208, English version available: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf

² As of 2004, Egyptian mothers married to non-Egyptian fathers may pass their Egyptian nationality to their children. See Law no. 154 of 2004 amending some provisions of law no. 26 of 1975 concerning Egyptian nationality, Official Gazette, Vol. 28, 14 July 2004, English version available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/58bebc444.html>

³ Historically, voting rights for Egyptians abroad (whether or not they were dual citizens) was a politically sensitive subject. It was only after the Egyptian revolution in 2011 that attitudes started to shift and Egyptians abroad were permitted to vote in national elections.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 1983** ● **Law 111: Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law** outlines the Egyptian government's efforts to create legislation covering Egyptians abroad.⁴ The law incentivises Egyptians to be engaged in the development of Egypt, although awareness of this law by most Egyptians is low.
- 2014** ● **Revision of the Constitution of Egypt** established the state's commitment to take care of the interests of Egyptians residing abroad: to protect them and ensure their rights and freedoms, and to enable them to perform their general duties towards the state and society and make a contribution to the development of the country.⁵
- 2015** ● **Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS): Egypt Vision 2030** includes diaspora engagement as something which contributes to and impacts Egypt's development agenda through encouraging diaspora remittances, investments, and skills transfer for the socio-economic development of the country.⁶

» Trends & achievements :

From the 1970s onwards, Egypt has implemented various initiatives to engage with its diaspora. The focus of government policy was formerly on labour migration and increasing contributions of migrant remittances to the country's economy, while placing controls on migration to prevent this leading to labour shortages at home. Egyptian policymakers have tended to view what it has traditionally referred to as 'permanent migrants' (i.e. Egyptians living specifically in the West) as educated and successful, and have developed schemes within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other agencies to promote return migration and diaspora investment, and to stem brain drain. This has included providing government-paid trips to Egypt to promote diaspora return and/or investments, as well as targeted outreach to diaspora members via embassies and consulates. As Tsourapas argues, this has "contributed to a multi-tier emigration policy that has favoured Egyptians in the West at the expense of those residing in Arab countries."⁷

In September 2015, the reestablishment of the Ministry of State for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriate Affairs demonstrated the government's will and strengthened its capacity to engage with Egyptians in the diaspora. This reflects the awareness and commitment of the Egyptian government to the importance of diaspora engagement.

Currently, Egypt's strategic objectives vis-à-vis emigration and Egyptian citizens abroad include:⁸ encouraging and increasing the contribution of expatriate Egyptians to invest in the country; increasing the volume of remittances of Egyptians abroad; strengthening the links of Egyptians abroad and their children with the homeland (especially the second and third generation); and protecting the interests of Egyptians abroad, providing them with full support, and solving problems they face abroad.

In early 2020, the Ministry of State for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriate Affairs stated it had concluded international cooperation agreements between the Ministry of State for Immigration and a number of European countries (Germany, Italy, Austria, the European Union) in the areas of migration and development, with the aim of promoting circular migration, and productive diaspora return.

4 <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultEn/Pages/lawdetails.aspx?lawCode=12> (Arabic only)

5 <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultAr/Pages/default.aspx> (Arabic only)

6 English version available at: http://www.arabdevelopmentportal.com/sites/default/files/publication/sds_egypt_vision_2030.pdf

7 Gerasimos Tsourapas (2018, 'Egypt: Migration and Diaspora Politics in an Emerging Transit Country', available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/egypt-migration-and-diaspora-politics-emerging-transit-country>. See also Mai Abu Samra 2018 ; and Lea Muller Funk 2017, 'Managing Distance: Examining Egyptian Emigration and Diaspora Policies' in *Egypte Monde Arabe* 15:17 (available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/ema/3656?lang=en>)

8 <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultAr/Pages/achivementdetails.aspx?AchCode=7> (Arabic only)

Obstacles



- **Political polarisation** in Egypt and in the diaspora has contributed to a lack of trust between the government of Egypt and its diaspora.
- **Government bureaucracy:** The bureaucratic nature of many Egyptian government departments presents a major barrier to diaspora engagement. Egyptians abroad actively try to minimise their interactions with the Egyptian state as they view this as a significant limitation on realising their initiatives in Egypt (and abroad).
- **Reluctance to Return:** Egyptians abroad show little interest in returning to live in Egypt, in large part due to a lack of economic opportunities and an increasingly tense domestic and security situation in the country.⁹

SPOTLIGHT



Ministry of Emigration and Affairs of Egyptians Abroad e-portal

The ministry's e-portal provides digital services to Egyptians abroad. These include a diaspora complaints portal, guides on investment opportunities in Egypt (especially in the housing and infrastructure sectors, but also IT), remittance service registration with the Central Bank of Egypt, guides on housing for Egyptians abroad, a 'Science Hub' for skills and knowledge collaboration and exchange; and an e-fatwa service providing religious guidance.

<http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultAr/Pages/services.aspx> (Arabic only).

DIGITAL

Tax relief and mobile banking services

Only approximately 10% of remittances to Egypt are sent formally, entering the Egyptian banking system. In order to promote greater remittance inflows and to strengthen hard currency reserves, Egypt offers Egyptians abroad the opportunity of ten-year tax relief on remittance transfers if they register with the National Bank of Egypt. The National Bank of Egypt also provides e-banking and mobile banking services, and Egypt has launched debt certificates denominated in dollars and euros to ease hard currency shortages.

<https://www.nbe.com.eg/en/Default.aspx?AID=6&CID=8#Title>

REMITTANCES

Government-diaspora consultations

The Egyptian Ministry of State for Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates' Affairs (MoSEEA) carries out regular outreach sessions and consultations with its diaspora, organised with the support of Egyptian embassies and missions. As an example of this, it organised a workshop with Egyptians residing in Italy to discuss mechanisms for their involvement in the implementation of small-scale local community development projects in Egypt in 2017 in Milan, Italy.

<https://egypt.iom.int/en/news/government-egypt-and-un-iom-support-expatriate-engagement-italy>

OUTREACH

⁹ <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/284159/inside-egypt-diaspora-wants-home-again.aspx>

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

Egypt is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Egypt as part of the AU CIDO Continental Meetings. <https://au.int/en/cido>



Arab League & Community of Sahel-Saharan States

Egypt is also a member of the Arab League (based in Cairo) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States. <http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/Pages/default.aspx> (Arabic; English version under construction) https://web.archive.org/web/20060731190126/http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/RECs/cen_sad.htm

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Emigration and Egyptian Expatriate Affairs (MoSEEA) <http://www.emigration.gov.eg>

Established in September 2015, the MoSEEA is the lead agency for management and care for the affairs of Egyptians residing outside the geographical borders of the Egyptian state, working in coordination and cooperation with the other ministries, agencies, and bodies concerned with such matters, under the auspices of the Council of Ministers. The MoSSEA specifically frames its strategies and activities in relation to helping deliver Egypt's 2030 Vision and the SDGs in order to 'promote economic and human development by stimulating the contribution of Egyptians abroad in creating an innovative and knowledge-based society'¹⁰.

Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs <https://www.mfa.gov.eg/English/Pages/default.aspx>

The MFA shares responsibility for Egyptians abroad with MoSEEA, especially in terms of providing consular services and assistance through Egyptian missions worldwide.

- At sub-ministerial level

Higher Committee for Migration

Established in 1977, the High Committee's mandate includes policy development, coherence, and coordination of all bodies involved in mobility management.¹¹

¹⁰ <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/DefaultAr/Pages/strategy.aspx> (Arabic only)

¹¹ <https://www.mei.edu/publications/regulation-migration-egypt> ; see also <https://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvrr/son/html/laws02.htm> (Arabic only)

Diaspora organisations in Europe



Egyptian diaspora organisations in Europe are generally limited to professional and business associations, examples of which include:

British Egyptian Society: UK 1990 <https://britishegyptiansociety.org.uk/>

Development activities

BES was set up to further British-Egyptian relations outside politics. Its mission is to exchange ideas and knowledge, and to improve understanding, of the history, culture, arts, music, literature, religions, beliefs and practices of Egypt. BES holds regular public meetings, lectures, debates and events in the UK in support of this aim, and often contributes grants in support of Egyptian scholars, Egyptian museum specialists and conservators on attachment to the British Museum. It also supports some development projects in Egypt.

Conseil franco-égyptien des affaires France <http://www.egypt-france-business.org/>

Development activities

The council's mission is to promote and strengthen bilateral business, trade and investment relations between Egypt and France and to act as a problem-solving link. It is composed of 20 businesspersons from both countries: heads of major corporations in France who have an active interest in Egypt and a diverse group of Egyptian business actors with close ties to France. It promotes French investments in Egypt, conducts media advocacy about Egypt in Europe and has been involved in many projects to train the Egyptian workforce in various fields.

France Alumni Egypt Network (FAEN) France

<https://www.egypte.campusfrance.org/en/france-alumni-egypt-network-be-at-home>

Development activities

An initiative of CAMPUS France Egypt, FAEN connects professionals in Egypt and across the Egyptian diaspora for education, training, and employment opportunities.

Egyptian Doctors Association in Ireland <http://www.edaireland.com/>

Egyptian Doctors in Germany

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Egyptian-doctors-in-Germany-138488376162513/>

Development activities

Egyptian-German Association for Helping Disabled Children Germany 2007

https://www.facebook.com/Egyptian-German-Association-for-helping-disabled-children-188463971186016/?ref=nf&hc_ref=ARTt0cl1HvBXl6l46R_PcZm4jjztzOswC2n5LQp0bAQ4c3HVulzSJ-8rkqbgpH04IQw

 **Development activities**

An NGO founded to raise awareness of mental disabilities, it provides guidelines for parents on how to support their children, as well as speech therapy and special training for children, parents and therapists in Egypt. Specialised doctors from Egypt diagnose the cases and provide therapeutic programmes.

Egyptian Medical Society UK <http://www.egyptianmedical.org.uk/>

 **Development activities**

The Egyptian Medical Society-UK is a non political, non religious, non profitable charity established to serve Egyptian doctors in the UK. It aims to help promote Egyptian doctors working in the UK within both the local community and also to support those in Egypt. As well as local UK events, it provides support and charitable contributions to medical establishments in Egypt.

- **Faith groups :**

Al-Azhar University www.azhar.edu.eg (Arabic only)

 **Development activities**

Al-Azhar University is a faith group that maintains links with Egyptian communities abroad, both via MoS-SEA's e-fatwa service, and via Mosques in countries of residence.

Egyptian Coptic Church <https://st-takla.org/Links/Coptic-Links-02-Churches-c-Europe.html>

 **Development activities**

The Egyptian Coptic Church has branches in several European countries.

Written by: **AFFORD**
Edited by: **EUDiF**
April 2020
Updated October 2021



Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union





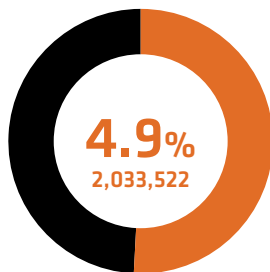
Diaspora engagement mapping

IRAQ

Facts & figures

Emigration

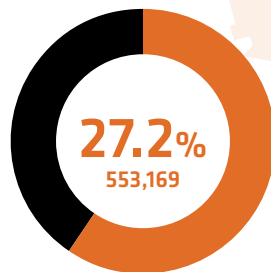
% of emigrants in total population



♂ 51.1%
♀ 48.9%



% of which in the EU



♂ 59.5%
♀ 40.5%



Remittances as a share of GDP: 0.4%
Remittances inflow (USD million): 717



Top countries of destination

USA	230,469
Turkey	230,277
Jordan	213,658
Syria	202,831
Germany	188,759



Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



Terminology: The term 'persons of Iraqi origin residing abroad' is usually used to refer to diaspora. The government does not use the term 'diaspora policy'.

1 Iraqi Nationality Law, Iraqi Official Gazette Issue 4019 dated March 7, 2006, No.26.

2 <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/iraqi-expats-in-21-countries-vote-in-general-election/1141285>

The Policy on Engagement with Iraqis Abroad for the period 2019-2022



The policy has four broad objectives:

1. to facilitate connection between the diaspora and local communities and structures within Iraq;
2. to support the diaspora to accumulate and mobilise their knowledge toward Iraq's development;
3. to incentivise and create structures through which members of the diaspora may provide financial support for Iraq's development;
4. to foster close ties between the diaspora and the Iraq state through mutual trust, recognition, and cooperation.

In particular, the policy foresees to facilitate the exchange of the diaspora's human capital, including in areas such as academic exchange and skills transfer. It includes pathways for economic development of Iraq such as sharing information on regulations and requirements related to starting a business or investing in Iraq; and proposes an online platform to facilitate contact between the Iraqi population abroad and Iraq.

The General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the responsible national body for approving policies has, in principle, approved the policy with a score of 88%.

While, the Kurdistan Regional Government has promised to work with its diaspora in a range of areas, it does not yet have an institutionalised diaspora policy.³

» Trends:

Engaging Iraqis Abroad remains a relatively new policy discussion in Iraq. The country, however, recognises the potential of Iraqis Abroad and is enthusiastic to work with them. The priority of the Iraqi government is to address the internal and external displacement of its population. Iraq encourages its nationals abroad to return home and support the development of the country, with a strong emphasis on attracting qualified and skilled Iraqis. The Policy on Engagement with Iraqis Abroad represents a landmark first step in Iraq on formalising relationships with the diaspora. However, it should be underlined that whilst institutionalising diaspora engagement through a policy is a new departure in Iraq, diaspora engagement initiatives have already been implemented for several decades.

Institutional and leadership development: There are a limited number of sustainable Iraqi diaspora organisations and it is important to connect those through networks.⁴ At state level, there is the understanding that dedicated institutions should be created to support the mobilisation of Iraqis abroad by providing clear communication channels and to help build trust with the government.

³ Bahar Başer (2019) Engaging Diasporas in Development and State-Building: The Role of the Kurdish Diaspora and Returnees in Rebuilding the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, *Ethnopolitics*, 18:1, 76-91, DOI: 10.1080/17449057.2018.1525167.

⁴ Martin Russel, *The Iraqi Diaspora and Policy Development: A Situational Analysis*, ICMPD, 2017.

Human capital support and investment: In post-conflict settings, diaspora contributions are key as they can contribute to knowledge sharing and capacity building⁵. Iraq has already benefitted from short-term knowledge transfer schemes, as presented in the Spotlight section, and sees the value of strengthening such practice. Moreover, social remittances, such as networks, are considered as key to push for the development of civil society and human rights as well as democratisation.⁶

Financial mobilisation and investment: In 2006, the Government of Iraq passed Investment Law No. 13⁷ (last amended in 2015), laying out the foundation for attracting foreign investment into Iraq. The law laid out several strategic initiatives including tax incentives, investor guarantees, and obligations of investors. However, no specific scheme was targeting the diaspora. The Policy on Engagement with Iraqis Abroad shows a shift in Iraq's approach as it aims at specifically targeting diaspora direct investment and job creation.

Obstacles



- **Trust:** Between the diaspora and Iraq government there is an issue of trust, particularly in terms of corruption in the public sector and concerns about how their personal information or data would be used. Engagement is sometimes considered as a “one-way street”, in which the state would like to receive information and resources from the diaspora without meaningfully trying to meet their needs.⁸
- **Perceived unresponsiveness** of the government to the needs of the diaspora is rooted in the sentiment that consular services for Iraqis are poor, and that the communication strategy between Iraqis abroad and the state is absent or weak.⁹
- **Divided diaspora:** Each group has a particular history of persecution that it tends to emphasise over those of others.¹⁰ As a possible consequence, Iraqis Abroad have troubles creating strong organisations, and they are designated as a fairly weakly organised diaspora in the literature.¹¹
- **Lack of funding:** Iraq will need sizeable and systematic donor support in the early phases of developing the Policy on Engagement with Iraqis abroad and implementing its action plan to make it viable.¹²
- **Transfer of money to Iraq is difficult:** Less than 25% of Iraqi adults have a bank account, mainly because banking services are seen as too expensive and due to a lack of trust in financial institutions. The banking sector is largely dominated by public banks with few branches and a very small number of ATMs making banking inaccessible for many.¹³ Western Union is an alternative to the inadequate banking system but its high costs still makes it an undesirable option.¹⁴

5 Hamdouch, B., & Wahba, J. (2015). Return migration and entrepreneurship in Morocco. *Middle East Development Journal*, 7(2), 129-148.

6 Bahar Başer (2019) Engaging Diasporas in Development and State-Building: The Role of the Kurdish Diaspora and Returnees in Rebuilding the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. *Ethnopolitics*, 18:1, 76-91, DOI: 10.1080/17449057.2018.1525167.

7 http://investpromo.gov.iq/nic_flash/laws/english/investment_laws/investment_law_no._13_en/mobile/index.html

8 Policy on engagement with Iraqis abroad (draft), ICMPD, 20 June 2019.

9 Policy on engagement with Iraqis abroad (draft), ICMPD, 20 June 2019.

10 Maegan Hendow, *Iraqi Diaspora and Temporary Return Migration: The Role of Opportunity, Motivation and Expectation*, Master Thesis, Universität Wien, 2010. Available at http://othes.univie.ac.at/13444/1/2011-01-11_0868185.pdf.

11 Danish Refugee Council, *Iraqi Diaspora Organisations in Denmark*, November 2018. Available at: https://drc.ngo/media/5230180/iraqi-diaspora-organisations-in-denmark-mapping-report_design-phase-2-003.pdf; Walt Vanderbush, 'The Iraqi Diaspora and the US Invasion of Iraq' in Josh DeWind and Renata Segura (eds) 'Diaspora Lobbies and the US government: convergence and divergence in making foreign policy' (New York University Press, 2014).

12 Policy on engagement with Iraqis abroad (draft), ICMPD, 20 June 2019.

13 International Monetary Fund, *Iraq country Report No. 19/249*, July 2019. file:///C:/Users/Tittelf/Downloads/1IRQEA2019002%20(1).pdf

14 <http://www.irfad.org/iraq-banking/>

- **Statistical data on Iraqis abroad is scarce** and can be difficult to collect. In depth information on the characteristics and structures of the Iraqi community abroad is limited.
- **Difficult return and reintegration:** The diaspora engage in grass-roots and political activities to support Iraq from abroad. There are clear signs that whilst the Iraqi diaspora is open to participation in Iraq's development, the return option is not popular.¹⁵ Moreover, returnees have faced several issues impeding their reintegration such as access to education for their children.¹⁶

SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices



Iraqis Rebuilding Iraq (IRI)¹⁷ 2004-2007

https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/return_migration_development_070708/iraqis_rebuilding_iraq.pdf

SKILLS
TRANSFER

IRI was implemented jointly by IOM, UNDP and the Ministry of Planning and development Cooperation (MoPDC). The objective was to fill gaps in Iraqi ministries with expatriate expertise in order to encourage diaspora members to return to their home country, to develop local experience, and to create a roster of potential experts willing to return to their home country.

Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals 2012-2016

SKILLS TRANSFER +
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals¹⁸ programme has facilitated 48 assignments in Iraq in the areas of education, health, engineering and humanitarian assistance. A second phase of the project is currently ongoing within which members of the Iraqi diaspora in the Netherlands could contribute to the development of Iraq through their expertise, knowledge and entrepreneurship by participating to the IOM's Connecting Diaspora for Development (CD4D) project¹⁹. Through temporary assignments, professional diaspora members were linked to the selected institutions in Iraq to share knowledge and expertise. Through this project, IOM also enabled diaspora entrepreneurs to start or expand a business in Iraq. Selected candidates could participate in go-and-see missions in Iraq to scan the business climate to decide if their business idea is viable.

Germany-Iraqi Management Training Academy (AGI)

SKILLS
TRANSFER

The AGI is a German consultancy company. Since 2005, hundreds of Iraqi scientists, medical doctors and company leaders gained expertise through qualification programmes arranged by AGI. AGI builds a human bridge between Germany and Iraq that brings knowledge, understanding and development from both sides.²⁰

15 https://drc.ngo/media/5230180/iraqi-diaspora-organisations-in-denmark-mapping-report_design-phase-2-003.pdf

16 Bahar Başer (2019) Engaging Diasporas in Development and State-Building: The Role of the Kurdish Diaspora and Returnees in Rebuilding the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, *Ethnopolitics*, 18:1, 76-91, DOI: 10.1080/17449057.2018.1525167

17 https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/return_migration_development_070708/iraqis_rebuilding_iraq.pdf

18 TRQN III, 1 December 2012- 31 March 2016 <https://iom-nederland.nl/en/migration-and-development>

19 <https://iom-nederland.nl/en/migration-and-development/connecting-diaspora-for-development-cd4d>

20 <https://www.access-germany-iraq.de/>

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions



- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Migration and Displaced²¹ https://momd.gov.iq/En_Posts/Index?categoryId=74

Created on 30 September 2003. The ministry is in charge of the return of Iraqi refugees and of diaspora affairs. The Policy on Engagement with Iraqis Abroad envisions that the Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) will act as focal agency for all matters related to the community of Iraqis abroad. The MoMD will lead further development of the policy and the action plan for its implementation. As the central body, MoMD will consult and coordinate with other state bodies in further tailoring of the policy and in generating resources needed for its implementation. The MoMD has the clearest mandate to execute activities for and with the population of Iraqis abroad, but other institutions within the government of Iraq have valuable expertise, knowledge, and resources that can address the needs and interests of Iraqis abroad, such as the other ministries listed here.

Ministry of Interior <https://moi.gov.iq/>

Moi deals with requests for reinstatement of nationality for persons who have lost or given up Iraqi citizenship and with Iraqis returned through bilateral or multilateral agreements²².

Ministry of Planning²³ <https://mop.gov.iq/en/>

MoP is in charge of the development of Iraq. It is also in charge of developing investments in the country, and of international cooperation (including implementation of foreign-funded development projects).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs²⁴ <https://www.mofa.gov.iq/en/>

Is in charge of consular services provided to Iraqis abroad.

Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works

The ministry grants Iraqis who left the country prior to 2003 and are now returning with the right to receive a piece of land from the state.

Council of Ministers

The Cabinet Secretary is in charge of national coordination at inter-ministerial level, and is comprised of various Directorates, which can be directly relevant in this context.

21 https://momd.gov.iq/En_Posts/Index?categoryId=74.

22 <https://moi.gov.iq/>

23 <https://mop.gov.iq/en/>

24 <https://www.mofa.gov.iq/en/>

- At sub-ministerial level

The Iraqi National Committee for Investment²⁵ <http://investpromo.gov.iq/>

The UBCU was established in 2007 to be the face of private investment in Iraq and serve as promoter, facilitator, monitor, and policy advisor for investment into Iraq.

- At local level

Specific activities and policies relating to the population of Iraqis abroad have been largely led by implementing agencies, often on a very local level (such as the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works in terms of return and reintegration support).

Since April 2003, women's organisations and initiatives have been mushrooming all over Iraq. Many organisations – such as the National Council of Women (NWC), the Iraqi Women's Higher Council (IWHC), the Iraqi Independent Women's Group and the Society for Iraqi Women for the Future – have been founded by prominent professional women with close ties to political parties. Many were initiated by returnees, Iraqi women activists who were part of the diaspora before 2003. While mainly founded and represented by elite women, some have broad memberships and branches throughout the country. Their activities revolve around humanitarian and practical projects, such as income generation, legal advice, free health care and counselling, as well as political advocacy. Many of the initiatives fill gaps in state health and welfare provision.²⁶

Diaspora organisations in Europe



Dansk Irakisk Hjælpeorganisation Denmark <http://diho.dk/>

Development activities

The organisation implements projects in Iraq to create jobs for women (e.g. micro loans, jobs in farming, cooking, sewing), improve infrastructure and conditions in slum dwelling in rural Iraq, and provide boarding school for poor or orphaned children. They mainly work with Muhammad Ameen Organization based in Iraq.

Den Irakiske Kvindeliga Denmark

Development activities

The organisation works to integrate Iraqi women into Danish society. The organisation supports Iraqi families and communicates with others women's associations. They also provide courses on empowerment for young women in Iraq and courses to train teachers in Iraq about progressive thinking.

Iraqi Association United Kingdom <http://www.iraqiassociation.org/about.html>

The Iraqi Association is a non-profit organisation that exists to enable Iraqis to settle and integrate in this country with rights to express their cultural identities. Its work is aimed at Iraqis, by providing volunteerism, advice, public health support, counselling, training, employment guidance, information services, and organising cultural events. Its mission to raise awareness about relevant events in Iraq and the integration process in this country.

²⁵ <http://investpromo.gov.iq/>

²⁶ <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/iraq.pdf>

Iraqi-Swedish Business Centre Sweden <http://www.isbc.se/>

The Iraqi-Swedish Business Centre (ISBC) role is to expand the business communication exchange between Iraqi and Swedish Companies. The concept is to allocate and broaden the business information channels in response to the huge demand for information from both Iraqi and Swedish companies. ISBC efforts are therefore to assist companies from both countries with the necessary information and to support all partners to establish successful business relationships.

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April 2020
Updated October 2021

Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union



Find out more at www.diasporafordevelopment.eu

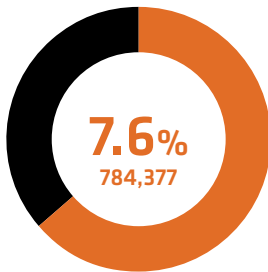


Diaspora engagement mapping JORDAN

Facts & figures

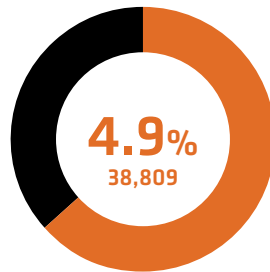
Emigration

% of emigrants in total population



♂ 63.8%
♀ 36.2%

% of which in the EU



♂ 63.6%
♀ 36.4%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **9.0%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **3,901**



Top countries of destination



Saudi Arabia	234,661
UAE	166,467
United States of America	81,375
State of Palestine	55,322
Kuwait	53,365

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Terminology: Jordan refers to Jordanians (residing) abroad as 'expats' or 'expatriates', terms used interchangeably with 'emigrants' or 'émigré'. Official Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan government sources use the term 'mughtaribin' in Arabic. The term diaspora is not used in the Jordanian policy context.³

Jordan does not have a diaspora engagement policy.⁴

1 Migrant Facts Jordan (2014). Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/fact_sheets/Factsheet%20Jordan.pdf.

2 CARIM - Migration Profile Jordan. European University Institute. Retrieved from <https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/22436/MP%20EN%20Jordan%20with%20links.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

3 JEMPAS. An overview of Jordan's emigration patterns and policies. A profile of Jordan Expatriates.

4 Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jordan. Diaspora Engagement Strategy and Executive Plan. Retrieved from <http://mfa.gov.jo/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=eCSNbVTEWLE%3d&tabid=71>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 1978** ● **Law on National Social Security (NSS, Law # 30 of 1978)**, amended in 2010 and 2014 mentions that the Jordanian Diaspora working, living or studying abroad are eligible to enrol in the NSS, which is a financial protection mechanism for many Jordanians upon retirement or return to the homeland.⁵
- 2014** ● **EU-Jordan Mobility Partnership:** A key feature of the Mobility Partnership focuses on strengthening efforts to derive all the potential benefits from migration and linking them to development. It aims at strengthening the capacities of Jordan to more effectively reach out to and engage with expatriate communities for the development of Jordan.⁶ The Mobility Partnership includes measures taken to improve the information available to Jordanian citizens on employment, education and training opportunities available in the EU and the mutual recognition of professional and university qualifications.
- 2014**
∨
2019 ● **Five Year Strategy and Action Plan for Expatriates** incorporated four strategic aims:
- Defending the rights and interests of Jordanian expatriates;
 - Establishing and deepening outreach and communication activities between Jordanian expats and the country;
 - Increasing consular services offered by Jordanian missions;
 - Encouraging expat contributions and participations in overall development activity in the Kingdom.
- 2019**
∨
2023 ● **Five Year Strategy and Action Plan for Expatriates incorporates** four strategic aims:
- Enhancing the participation of expatriates in supporting comprehensive and sustainable development initiatives in Jordan;
 - Improving the quality of services provided to expatriates;
 - Developing communication mechanisms between expatriates and the homeland;
 - Strengthening institutional capabilities through capacity building to improve efficiency while serving expatriates.⁷

The activities that took place since 2019 included upskilling the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants and consular staff to better understand and engage with the needs of Jordanian expats through intensification of communication and engagement, development of electronic services and information, providing support for Arabic language classes for 2nd and 3rd generation Jordanians and the creation of an expatriate investment fund for national development.⁸

» Trends

The Government of Jordan's diaspora engagement priority is to establish links with diaspora communities and encourage remittances and local investments, particularly in trade and tourism. To achieve this, the government organises expatriate conferences to consolidate business links between Jordan and the diaspora communities. Moreover, the diaspora engagement strategies aim to collect information on Jordanian professionals working abroad in OECD and Arab Countries to devise policies on return migration.

5 Carim Migration Profile Jordan: Rights and Settlement. Retrieved from https://migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Jordan.pdf

6 European Commission. EU-Jordan: a new partnership to better manage mobility and migration. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_14_1109

7 Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2019-2023 Strategy and Action Plan for Expatriates 2019-2023. Retrieved and translated from <https://www.mfa.gov.jo/content/expatriates-strategic-plan>

8 JEMPAS. A profile of Jordan's Expatriates. An overview of Jordan's emigration patterns and policies.

The Government of Jordan also aims to create a bridge between the diaspora and civil society initiatives run by various Jordanian Organizations, in addition to providing services for Jordanians abroad. An example is the Jordanian Diaspora Network US, launched in 2015, whose first meeting of Jordanian professionals abroad was held in Sunnyvale, California, and included Silicon Valley executives seeking to support entrepreneurship and market access for their compatriots in Jordan.⁹ Unfortunately, there is no additional information on any activities or initiatives that occurred subsequently.

Although usually, Embassies do not organize cultural events or gatherings, nor are there any reported activities or efforts held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the Covid-19 crisis, the Embassy of Jordan in London was reported to communicate directly with Jordanians residing in the UK via email. It provided contact details of Jordanian doctors in the UK who volunteered to give free advice on the phone.¹⁰



Achievements

Bilateral labour agreements¹¹ (as well as access to the National Social Security Programme) has encouraged emigration and as a result has been identified as a government strategy to relieve unemployment, attract foreign aid from migrant receiving Gulf Coordination Council (GCC) states and increase remittances.¹²

Obstacles



- **Communication:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs website was not updated until July 2020 and still lacks information. One of the main obstacles to diaspora-use of the website is the lack of language options.
- **Use of data:** There have been several efforts exerted by the “Support to the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Jordan” (JEMPAS) project to map the Jordanian diaspora, however the use of this data by the authorities has been limited.
- **Lack of policy coordination and implementation:** Policy implementation remains a challenge due to issues of resource allocation and poor coordination between government departments. The pressure exerted by different diaspora actors are not coordinated which results in an inability to link policies, strategies and priorities. This has also put business actors off investment.

9 Jordan Times. <https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanian-diaspora-network-marks-us-launch>

10 <http://jordanembassy.org.uk/covid-19-information/?fbclid=IwAR0i5gOrW4-nuDBUzBCXDnhO8S1SWjOJfqMEUIDNnthGO7O97Giff4UXOzk>

11 Qatar (1997), Kuwait (2001), United Arab Emirates (2006).

12 The largest distinction of the “migratory process” of the Jordanian diaspora is not conflict-induced but a result of socio-economic conditions.

SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective (MESMES) 2016 - Present

SKILLS

The interventions supported by the Ministry of Labor include supporting and regulating the emigration of Jordanians abroad by providing an online portal that allows Jordanians to search for employment opportunities in Jordan and abroad. In addition, due to rising unemployment rates, the Ministry promotes emigration by tracking job opportunities in Gulf countries and supervising the activities of private recruitment agencies. There are 73 private recruitment agencies currently supporting potential emigrants in finding employment abroad.¹³ Moreover, MESMES verifies emigrants' level of education and work experience by approving the diplomas and certificates received from all public and private training and educational institutions, as well as from official employers in specific sectors.

Med Generation Project for Jordanian Expatriates Projects¹⁴ 2013-2016

INVESTMENT

The project was implemented by the ANIMA Investment Network, a multi-country cooperation platform for economic development in the Mediterranean, in partnership with the Jordanian Investment Commission. Its objective was to map and mobilise Jordanian expatriate 'talent' in the OECD countries, including senior executives, entrepreneurs, scientists and investors, in order to support the country's economic and human development. When the project ended, ANIMA issued a white paper, which seems to have been circulated internally, proposing six specific measures to remove the obstacles preventing the diaspora from contributing to the Jordanian economy. These relate to issues of mobility, economic attractiveness and cooperation to be adopted by economic development policy makers and actors in the Mediterranean territories. ANIMA suggested to align these ad hoc projects with diaspora strategies and to implement them through coordinated structures, legal provisions and an improved database system.

JEMPAS 2016-2019

DATA

JEMPAS (Support to the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Jordan), was the first project established by the EU-Jordan Mobility Partnership. It was implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development and aimed to both support Jordan and the Jordanian diaspora.¹⁵ JEMPAS hosted an event in Berlin in April 2019 targeting Jordanians in Germany working in STEM and gathered 50 Jordanian professionals. The main outcome of the project was the publication of a practical guide on methodologies for collection of data and information on Jordanian's abroad, a profile of Jordanian expatriates, and an overview of Jordan's emigration pattern and policies.¹⁶

13 Migrant Support Measures From An Employment And Skills Perspective (Mismes) Jordan

14 [https://www.med-tso.com/mediterranean.aspx?f=&title=Mediterranean+Project+1+\(2015+-+2018\)](https://www.med-tso.com/mediterranean.aspx?f=&title=Mediterranean+Project+1+(2015+-+2018)) and [https://www.med-tso.com/mediterranean2.aspx?f=&title=Mediterranean+Project+2+\(in+progress%2c+2018+-+2020\)](https://www.med-tso.com/mediterranean2.aspx?f=&title=Mediterranean+Project+2+(in+progress%2c+2018+-+2020))

15 JEMPAS. <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/capacity-building/regions/mediterranean/ongoing-projects/jempas-support-to-the-mobility-partnership-between-the-european-union-and-the-hashemite-kingdom-of-jordan/>

16 JEMPAS Event. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/ICMPDinJordan/photos/pcb.1197239150431601/1197238590431657/> and an internal report within ICMPD titled "Outreach Event for Jordanian Expatriates in Germany Involved in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Industries: Report and Recommendations"



Joint Training on Expatriate Engagement and Consular Crisis Management (MICIC) 2015 - 2019¹⁷

The Migrants in Countries in Crisis Project (MICIC) support project (funded by the EU and implemented by ICMPD) and JEMPAS coordinated with the Jordan Institute for Diplomacy to enhance consular crisis management capacities in Jordan.¹⁸

¹⁷ MICIC <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/policy-research/policy/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/>

¹⁸ JEMPAS and MICIC joint event. <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/project-news-jempas-micic-conduct-joint-training-on-expatriate-engagement-and-consular-crisis-man/>

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **National institutions**
 - At ministerial level

Ministry of Education 1982

The role of the Ministry of Education concerning the Jordanian Diaspora is to certify education degrees and certificates for Jordanians abroad and for non-Jordanians who wish to study in Jordan.¹⁹

Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1939

The Department of Expatriate Affairs aims at strengthening the communication between Jordanians abroad through strategic and practical programs through serving and protecting the interests of the Jordanian expatriates.²⁰

Ministry of Labour 1976²¹

Section of Employment Offices and Workers abroad under the Employment Directorate and the Labour Inspection Directorate focuses on all issues related to Jordanians workers abroad.

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research 1982

The Ministry is responsible for implementing the higher education policies, coordination among HEIs, conducting agreements with other countries, recognition of universities and degrees from other countries.²²

The Royal Hashemite Court (RHC) 1946

RHC functions as the link between His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Hussein, the state's institutions and citizens. The official entity oversees the preparation and implementation of the King's activities locally and abroad. Moreover, it is also responsible for the execution and the follow-up on the various political, economic and developmental royal initiatives.²³

19 Retrieved from the Ministry of Education official website. <http://www.moe.gov.jo/>

20 Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Diaspora Strategic Plan 2014-2018. Retrieved from <http://mfa.gov.jo/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=eCSN-bVTEWLE%3d&tabid=71>

21 Ministry of Labour. Retrieved from <http://www.mol.gov.jo/Default/Ar> and Migrant Support Measures from an Employment & Skills Perspective (MISMES) Jordan. Legal Framework For The Emigration Of Jordanians. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321158718_MIGRANT_SUPPORT_MEASURES_FROM_AN_EMPLOYMENT_AND_SKILLS_PERSPECTIVE_MISMES_MIGRANT_SUPPORT_MEASURES_FROM_AN_EMPLOYMENT_AND_SKILLS_PERSPECTIVE_MISMES/citation/download

22 Sphere. Higher Education in Jordan. Retrieved from https://supporthere.org/page/higher-education-jordan#_Toc10632084

23 Royal Court. Retrieved from <https://rhc.jo/en/royal-court/about-royal-hashemite-court>



Diaspora Organisations in Europe



Arabisch-Deutscher Kulturverein (Al-Huda Moschee) 2011

☑ Integration activities

The organisation has the mission to guide younger generations of Jordanians growing up in Germany by teaching them about the Arabic culture and spreading it in the society in a courteous manner and with respect to other religions. In this context, the organisation arranges Arabic and religion classes, hosts cultural activities and gatherings, and promotes social engagement.

Deutsch-Jordanische Gesellschaft e.V 1963

☑ Development Activities

By facilitating meetings and gatherings, the organisation aims to bring together private and professional networks between Jordan and Germany, foster intercultural dialogue and create awareness within the German-Jordanian society, as well as act as an information broker between the two countries.

Jordanische Gemeinde Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. 2005

The association brings together members of the Jordanian diaspora to engage in social and cultural activities. At time of writing, it had no ongoing activities.²⁴ Al Sausanat is a chapter of the Jordanian diaspora organisation in Berlin that is purely for women. This group was established as a platform to increase the engagement in women's issues. It involves active and motivated women from various professions, such as translators, city officials, child-care providers, embassy employees, and travel agencies.²⁵

Jordanische Gemeinde-Deutschland e.V. 2012

☑ Integration activities

Brings together the Jordanian diaspora through cultural and societal engagement as well as organizing cultural activities and sponsoring small initiatives in Jordan.

Jordanischer Verein in Deutschland 1986

A platform for positive interaction among the Jordanian diaspora members in Frankfurt by organizing cultural events and meetings.²⁶

Jordanian Women in the UK

The first official platform and gathering for Jordanian Women residing in the UK, its main objective is to connect, support and promote discussion among Jordanian women, as well as collectively promote the Jordanian heritage and identity in the UK.²⁷

24 The group connects via Whatsapp group

25 Mapping and Study of Jordanian Diaspora in Jordan: Whatsapp group

26 The group connects via Whatsapp

27 Interview with Jordanian in Nottingham who referred to this association

The Highest Jordanian European Authority 2018 Germany

- ☑ **Integration activities**
- ☑ **Development Activities**

An initiative that began in 2016 and was later established in 2018. The organisation's general management and headquarter is based in Berlin. The organisation aims to be an EU umbrella organisation for all the Jordanian diaspora groups, with the objective of promoting collective action as well as strengthening solidarity and social cohesion among members of the Jordanian diaspora as well as Germany.

The German chapter of The *Highest Jordanian European Authority* aims to contribute positively to the Jordanian citizens in Europe who are considered ambassadors to their country, and strengthen the meaning of identity and support the stability and overall development of Jordan and the Jordanian citizen in the diaspora. The chapter's activities include creating a database of all Jordanian diaspora members, containing professional information, in addition to creating a strategic plan for the diaspora for the next 25 years.

Vereinigte Jordanische Gemeinde, der BRD e.V. 2015 Germany

- ☑ **Integration activities**

The organisation aims to consolidate relations between the Jordanian diaspora and German society as well as to explore economic opportunities between Jordan and Germany in the areas of tourism, economy, culture, and art. In this regard, the association hosts cultural gatherings and organises sports activities.

Written by: **Awad Nelly ICMPD**
Edited by: **EUDiF**
September 2020
Updated October 2021

Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union



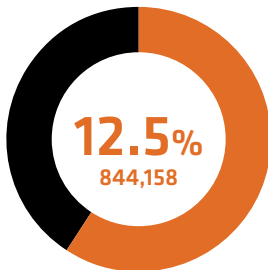


Diaspora engagement mapping LEBANON

Facts & figures

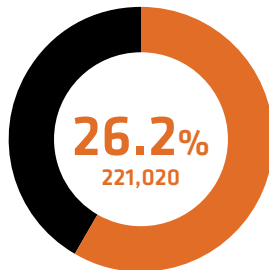
Emigration

% of emigrants in total population¹



♂ 59.2%
♀ 40.8%

% of which in the EU³



♂ 58.4%
♀ 41.6%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **32.9%**
Remittances inflow (USD billion): **6,298**



Top countries of destination

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	150,183
United States of America	127,280
Australia	99,705
Canada	94,516
Germany	73,746



Political rights



Dual citizenship²



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad³



Voting from abroad:

Online/at embassies or consulates



Terminology: Lebanon refers to its diaspora as 'the Lebanese Expansion' (Arabic, الانتشار اللبناني *al-intishar al-lubnani*; also الجالية اللبنانية *al-jāliyyah al-lubnaniyyah*).

Lebanon does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

¹ Although statistics conducted by the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs indicate that the total number of Lebanese emigrants does not exceed the 1 million mark, other data highlighted in the Economic Vision report (2018) namely, estimate the Lebanese Diaspora at around 10 million emigrants, of which 68% are residing in North America. This largely being a function of the specific definition of what constitutes a member of the "diaspora".

² Law of 1946, as amended by Decree No. 10828 of 1962. Legal text unavailable in English. www.gfmd.org/files/pfp/Lebanon_EN

³ Lebanese electoral law (2017) (Chapter Eleven: Voting for Lebanese Diaspora). <https://www.mfa.gov.lb/Library/Files/Uploaded%20Files/Lebanese%20electoral%20law%202017.pdf>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2015** ● **Lebanese Citizenship Reacquisition Law: Law no. 41⁴** enables emigrants of Lebanese descent to reclaim their citizenship. Although lauded by some, it was deemed controversial and discriminatory against women by others, as it is applicable only to individuals of patrilineal Lebanese descent.
- 2017** ● **Voting for Lebanese Diaspora, Lebanese electoral law:⁵** In an attempt to bolster an ever-absent representation of Lebanese immigrants in the country's democratic life, the Lebanese electoral law of 2017 was adopted and governed the parliamentary elections of May 2018. The unprecedented law highlighted the right of Lebanese expatriates to register and vote. It additionally allocated six parliamentary seats (of 128 total) to the diaspora. According to the National Democratic Institute,⁶ the MFA successfully registered 82,970 voters in 40 countries.

» Trends

Driven by high unemployment rates, inflation, and political instability, amongst a plethora of other push factors, emigration has long been a recurring theme – sometimes an aspiration – for Lebanese nationals.

Diaspora support to Lebanon is often seen as a reaction to crises because government efforts are seen as sporadic and un-sustainable. For example, the civil unrest that began in October 2019, commonly referred to in Arabic as 'Thawra', witnessed significant diasporic engagement and support. In an unprecedented display of unity with their country of origin and the social and political challenges it faces, Lebanese emigrants organised peaceful protests, fund-raising events, lobbying campaigns, and created online platforms to facilitate coordination and news sharing across the globe. Their participation and support to the movement have been crucial in it gaining traction.

In March 2020, the diaspora supported Lebanon in its fight against Covid-19 by donating PPE and testing kits⁷ and to support an aggravated economic crisis that had left the country financially crippled.⁸ Numerous initiatives, like the Lebanon Diaspora 2020 Crisis Relief Effort⁹ proved that Lebanese abroad, 'may be far in distance, but close at heart'. The diaspora also showed their support through different initiatives following the explosion in the port of Beirut¹⁰.

Governmental efforts to strengthen relationships with the diaspora have been mainly focussed on attracting foreign investments, namely through the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL). A plan developed in 2006, envisaged the establishment of 'special economic zones, tax-free and specialised in high potential sectors like medical tourism, media, high-tech and food processing'.¹¹

4 A translation of the law into English can be found here https://web.archive.org/web/20160304024817/http://eudo-citizenship.eu/docs/Translation_Draft%20Law%20_Lebanon.pdf/

'Bassil announces implementation of citizenship law for Lebanese diaspora', *The Daily Star*, May 05, 2016 <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2016/May-05/350667-bassil-announces-citizenship-law-for-lebanese-diaspora-in-effect.ashx>

5 Refer to footnote 3.

6 'Lebanon 2018 Parliamentary Elections Final Report', *National Democratic Institute*, accessed June 29, 2020, https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Lebanon%202018%20Parliamentary%20Elections_Final%20Report%20%28v.3%29.pdf

7 'COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #31: Diaspora engagement', *IOM UN Migration (IOM Research)*, 6 May 2020, https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/documents/covid-19_analytical_snapshot_31_-_diaspora_engagement.pdf

8 ASSAF Claude, 'One million dollars raised in one hour: the Lebanese Diaspora in the US join hands to help the most disadvantaged', *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 8 April 2020, <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1213746/one-million-dollars-raised-in-one-hour-the-lebanese-diaspora-in-the-us-join-hands-to-help-the-most-disadvantaged.html>

9 <https://www.givingloop.org/livlove>

10 <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2020/8/25/after-beirut-blast-grief-and-guilt-in-lebanons-diaspora#:~:text=On%20a%20balmy%20August%20evening,homeless%2C%20in%20a%20matter%20of>

11 <https://www.nordeatrade.com/en/explore-new-market/lebanon/investment#:~:text=The%20Lebanese%20government%20has%20just,high%2Dtech%20and%20food%20processing.>

When it comes to future priorities in terms of diaspora engagement, the Economic Vision Report (2018),¹² highlights that the adoption of an emigration policy remains a priority. This goes hand in hand with the enhancement of ties with the diaspora in a way that drives the Lebanese economy through remittances, knowledge sharing and market access. Efficient lobbying and advocacy channels and mechanisms also need to be put in place.



Achievements

Policy of 'Concord'¹³ and international success

Generally, the Lebanese government adopted a policy of 'concord' (as depicted by the MFAE) vis-à-vis the diaspora. Although proper legislative support is still lacking, the 'concord' approach can be translated as the government's support to diasporic networks and organisations. It encourages the transfer of remittances, facilitates returns, promotes dialogue with international organisations dealing with emigrants' issues (see UNDP, TOKTEN), and motivates its expatriates to exercise their democratic rights. The adoption of the *Voting for Lebanese Diaspora* law, as part of the Lebanese electoral law and the *Lebanese Citizenship Reacquisition Law*, remain two of the main achievements on this front, given their importance. Generally, the unwavering success and influence of the diaspora have led to better support to Lebanon, through the establishment of diasporic networks, organisations and fora.

Obstacles



- **Lack of unity and political polarization:** Abroad, just as in the homeland, the Lebanese political landscape has always been shaped by sectarianism. This segmentation is mirrored within the diaspora and has led to tensions amongst different Lebanese communities abroad and it remains a challenge for the disparate groups to express their demands vis-à-vis the Lebanese government in unison.¹⁴
- **Absence of adequate legal framework:** Despite its recent efforts to engage with Lebanese abroad whilst attempting to reinforce the Lebanese identity, Lebanon still lacks a migration policy. This has provoked a deterioration of quality of connection with the second and third generation diaspora.¹⁵
- **Poor coordination and unreliable support:** There is a lack of coordination between Lebanese ministerial institutions dealing with the diaspora. This is exacerbated by cumbersome bureaucratic processes that make it difficult for Lebanese generally – in-country or abroad – to access said institutions and benefit from their services.¹⁶
- **Priority dissonance:** The Lebanese government has always given priority to attracting diasporic investment,¹⁷ rather than focussing on what they, as a government, could offer in return.

12 <https://www.economy.gov.lb/media/11893/20181022-1228full-report-en.pdf>

13 Migration Policy Centre- *Migration Profile, Lebanon*, June 2013 https://migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Lebanon.pdf

14 Fakhoury Tamirace, 'Lebanese Communities Abroad: Feeding and Fuelling Conflicts', *Arab Reform Initiative*, 5 December 2018, <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/lebanese-communities-abroad-feeding-and-fuelling-conflicts/>

15 'SUMMARY OF LEBANON ECONOMIC VISION', *Consultation and Research Institute*, March 7 2019, https://www.fes-lebanon.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Mckinsey_Plan/Summary_of_the_Economic_Vision.pdf

16 This was experienced first-hand during the process of working on the fiche for Lebanon. Most ministerial institutions contacted were extremely difficult to reach; some of their websites were out-dated/inaccessible.

17 Labaki Boutros, 'THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES IN FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*', UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION, UN/POP/EGM/2006/13, 12 May 2006, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/pdf/expert/11/Paper13_Labaki.pdf

SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



Lebanese Diaspora Village

NETWORKS & CULTURE

Diaspora Village شبكات وثقافة (DV) is a project initiated by Lebanese Diaspora Energy with the aim to create a hub for the Lebanese Diaspora in their homeland in order to build and support a cohesive and dynamic community. Diaspora Village's members will interact culturally, socially, educationally and economically. It will be a point of reference for any information and research on the respective Diaspora and a unique place, combining activities of a museum and its library, a guest house, an indoor multipurpose hall, an outdoor square for special events, a café, a gift shop, a bakery, a studio and several houses for Diaspora of Lebanese origin around the world.

Lebanese Nationality Program 2017 – ongoing¹⁸

DIGITAL

Initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, the program aims at re-establishing ties with Lebanese expatriates by offering an online platform through which emigrants of Lebanese descent can apply for nationality. Available in four different languages, the website highlights the various benefits of reclaiming the Lebanese nationality such as voting rights and residency.

The Lebanese Expatriate Project: Live Lebanon 2009 – 2020¹⁹

FUNDING

Live Lebanon is a programme implemented by UNDP that engages with the Lebanese diaspora, amongst other stakeholders, to fund development projects. Their work supports the most vulnerable, underprivileged communities of Lebanon through activities ranging from donation of medical equipment to the renovation of local schools.

Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) 2005-2018²⁰

HUMAN CAPITAL

In partnership with the Council for Development and Reconstruction, TOKTEN is a UNDP mechanism that allows the utilisation of expatriates' expertise by facilitating short-term consultancies in Lebanon. According to the final report of TOKTEN (2010-2012), the project benefitted 16 Lebanese institutions, trained 600 nationals, and deployed 19 experts from around the world.²¹ No figures on more recent deployments are available.

MIEUX (Migration EU eXpertise) Project (2015 - 2018)

CAPACITY BUILDING

MIEUX is an initiative implemented by ICMPD. Its main goal was 'to maximise the impact of Lebanese diaspora investment and activity in the socio-economic development of Lebanon.'²² Although promising in its early stages, the project's action, focussed on IDAL (*Investment Development Authority of Lebanon*) lacked sustained commitment from Lebanese counterparts. The action was closed prematurely and no action document was developed.

18 <http://www.lebanity.gov.lb/>

19 <https://www.facebook.com/LiveLebanonUndp/> *Official website inaccessible as the project is ending in July 2020

20 <http://www.toktenlebanon.org/>

21 <https://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Governance/Projects/Project%20document.pdf>

22 <https://www.mieux-initiative.eu/en/actions/150-lebanon-diaspora-affairs-migration-and-development>



Lebanese Diaspora Energy conference (LDE)²³ 2014

Initiated by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, LDE annual conferences gather an abundance of Lebanese expatriates to celebrate the diaspora's successes worldwide and explore horizons of cooperation.

NETWORKING

23 <https://www.lde-leb.com/>

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

The Arab League 1945

Lebanon is a member of the Arab League, a regional organisation that aims at enhancing ties between Arab countries in Africa and Western Asia while promoting better coordination and cooperation.

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (MFAE) 1943

The MFAE is responsible for diplomatic and consular missions in addition to the general management of the Lebanese diaspora. It is supported by the General Directorate of Emigrants.

General Directorate of Emigrants (GDoE) 1993²⁴

GDoE operates under the MFAE and is dedicated to maintaining the ties with Lebanese expatriates by facilitating the relations between the diaspora and Lebanon in the field of registration, inheritance and property transactions amongst others.²⁵

- At sub-ministerial level
- At local level

World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCA) 1959

The WLCU is an international, non-governmental, ECOSOC-accredited organisation with offices around the world. Supported by the Lebanese government, 'but working independently'. It defines itself as 'secular, non-denominational, and non-profit' and is considered one of the biggest channels working on diaspora engagement in Lebanon and abroad.

Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) 1994

Under the tutelage of the President of the Council of Ministers, IDAL is a national investment promotion agency working across a range of sectors (agriculture, industry and tourism). In addition to attracting, facilitating, and retaining foreign investments, IDAL is also responsible for the promotion of Lebanese exports.

²⁴ Official website inaccessible.

²⁵ Refer to footnote no. 17/p.18.



Lebanese International Finance Executives (LIFE Lebanon) 2009

LIFE is a global, non-religious, apolitical support network of Lebanese professionals taking its roots in the diaspora, with a global reach encompassing more than 10 countries worldwide, including Lebanon. LIFE deploys the expertise of highly-skilled expatriates around three main pillars: 'Connect' (creating ties among Lebanese professionals), 'Nurture' (focused on the development of younger generations) and 'Promote' (targeting the Lebanese economy). LIFE organises business networking events, offers scholarships and mentoring programmes, and promotes job creation whilst encouraging the development of economic and financial policies in Lebanon.

Diaspora organisations in Europe



Amis du Liban en Suisse (Friends of Lebanon in Switzerland)

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

Amis du Liban is a Lausanne-based, secular, apolitical association promoting peace in Lebanon and supporting under-privileged communities.

Association Culturelle Franco Libanaise (ACFL) (Franco-Lebanese Cultural Association) 1949 France

- ☑ **Integration activities**

ACFL is a Paris-based association that aims to reinforce cultural ties between Lebanon and France. The association manages the *Maison du Liban* (House of Lebanon) that hosts Lebanese students on its premises, part of the *Cité Universitaire of Paris*.

Association Franco-Libanaise des Professionnels de l'Informatique (AFPI) France

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

AFPI is a professional network of Lebanese diaspora in France involved in the IT sector. It strives to both strengthen the network and employ the skills and connection of network members to support social and economic development in Lebanon.

Association pour un Liban Laïque (ApLL) (Association for a Secular Lebanon) 2005 Belgium

- ☑ **Integration activities**

ApLL is a Brussels-based independent association promoting the establishment of a secular state in Lebanon while protecting religious freedoms and minorities in the private sphere.

Written by: Saleh Sarah, ICMPD
Edited by: EUDI F
August 2020
Updated October 2021

Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union



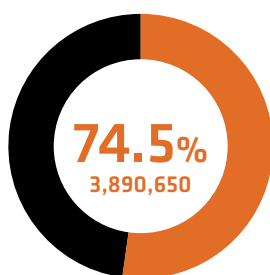


Diaspora engagement mapping PALESTINE¹

Facts & figures

Emigration

% of emigrants in total population



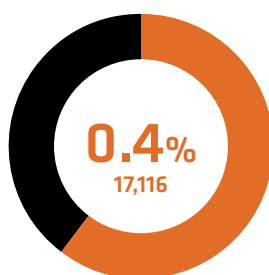
♂ 52.4%
♀ 47.6%



Remittances as a share of GDP: -
Remittances inflow (USD million): -



% of which in the EU²



♂ 60.5%
♀ 39.5%



Top countries of destination



Jordan	2,118,267
Syria	595,847
Lebanon	487,270
Libya	303,601
Egypt	134,080

Political rights



Dual citizenship³



Voting from abroad



Palestine does not have a diaspora engagement policy.

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2016** ● **National Policy Agenda 2017-2022:**⁴ Policy priority number three, “One Land, One People”, recalls that most Palestinians currently live outside Palestine’s borders and that a significant portion of them are registered as refugees. In light of these realities, the Agenda advocates for improving service delivery to displaced populations in neighbouring countries (mainly via humanitarian and socio-economic assistance) and providing opportunities for expatriates to participate in the state-building process via “investment, financial assistance, expertise or advocacy”.

1 This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of EU Member States on this issue.

2 This number is in all likelihood a significant underestimation. For example, this figure does not include Palestinians living in Germany which by many accounts, hosts the largest diaspora community in Europe. Because Palestine is not recognised as a state in many receiving countries, Palestinians are not accounted as such in migration data sources. Instead, they often registered under various nationalities depending on their status and/or travel documentation provided upon entry. See Koch & Ragab, “Mapping and Study of the Palestinian Diaspora in Germany”, 2018, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance.

3 The PNA is not equipped with a formal nationality law, leaving the question open from a legal perspective. In practice, multiple citizenship is permissible for West Bank and Gaza residents. See Qafisheh, ‘Who has the Right to Become a Palestinian Citizen? An International Law Analysis’.

4 2017-22 National Policy Agenda: Putting Citizens First, State of Palestine, December 2016.



Trends

The Palestinian diaspora was mainly generated by the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli conflicts. The fate of displaced populations, and the “right to return” issue, constitute a cornerstone of Palestinian foreign affairs as well as a pillar of its national identity.⁵ However, the ongoing occupation and limited progress in state-building has impeded the state’s capacity to articulate meaningful engagement strategies and frameworks, despite the existence of active community-based networks.⁶ In the meantime, the diaspora’s gradual insertion into global economic circuits - in North America, Europe and Gulf countries - has generated substantial remittance inflows (Palestine is the largest recipient of remittance as a percentage of GDP in the region), highlighting the potential and attractiveness of diaspora engagement as a subject for policy-makers.⁷ In this sense, the government is becoming acquainted with diaspora issues in line with objectives outlined in the National Policy Agenda. For instance an inter-institutional committee has been set up to foster in-depth discussions with various actors involved (Ministries, CSOs, private sector). The committee seeks to identify current shortcomings in diaspora policy and examine ways to both increase engagement and better respond to expatriates’ needs; priorities include streamlining investment towards crucial domestic development projects, but also promoting positive public opinion on Palestinian statehood in receiving countries.

Achievements

Return and “Brain circulation”: In the past few years, a certain number of initiatives have targeted skilled diaspora members to return to Palestine for short-term ‘expert’ assignments. In collaboration with international agencies, Palestinian ministries have established channels of mobility devoted to supporting specific sectors of the economy, most often by harnessing the diaspora’s qualifications and ‘know how’. In particular, the academic, medical and ‘high-tech’ sectors have benefited from this type of expatriate involvement.⁸

Diaspora investment: Collaboration with the private sector has resulted in the establishment of various channels aiming to stimulate expatriates’ appetite for investment in Palestine. In particular, the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency’s (PIPA) is the lead agency working on bringing foreign investment and driving expatriate entrepreneurship in Palestine. For example, it has participated in the MedGeneration programme, a regional endeavour devoted to tapping into diaspora potential by connecting qualified professionals in Europe with Palestinian businesses.⁹ Other initiatives including diaspora bonds or seed funding have materialised via an active banking sector and the willingness of many expatriates to invest locally.

Whole-of-government approach: The Migration Technical Team (MTT), an inter-ministerial committee placed under the leadership of the Ministry of Interior, leads a multi-agency, transversal effort towards engaging the diaspora. The MTT, with support from the international community¹⁰, is currently holding consultations bringing together governmental and civil society organisations based in Palestine with a view to increasing synergies among initiatives and laying the groundwork for a national diaspora strategy. Importantly, the MTT is also collecting data on expatriate communities in order to best integrate their needs and motivations in future policy-making.¹¹

5 “The Ghosts of Palestine’s Diaspora” This Week in Palestine, 2016.

6 Labadi Taher, “The Palestinian diaspora and the state-building process”, Arab Reform Initiative, 2018.

7 Saad Ayhab “The Impact of Remittances on Key Macroeconomic Variables: The Case of Palestine”, Palestine Economic Research Institute, 2015.

8 “National investment into our Human Capital” This Week in Palestine, 2016.

9 National Investment in our Human Capital, This week in Palestine, October 2016.

10 <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euomed-migration-iv/>

11 The MTT is supported in this endeavour by the EU-funded EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) programme. EMM4 supports countries of the EU’s southern neighbourhood in the development of national migration capacities in line with domestic priorities by providing expertise, knowledge outputs, field visits and dedicated training. <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euomed-migration-iv/>

Obstacles



- **Uncertain political environment:** The occupation of the West Bank and the associated political uncertainty is a major obstacle to the development of more robust ties with the diaspora. While many diaspora members are prevented outright from entering Palestine, the burden of economic restrictions (constrained mobility inside the West Bank, lack of access to major resources) has a negative impact on business climate thereby crippling investor's confidence¹².
- **Focus on livelihoods assistance:** Vast portions of Palestinian expatriates are three-generation-old displaced populations, registered as refugees under the terms of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Scarce economic opportunities and instability in main destination countries (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan) have made these populations particularly vulnerable. For this reason, Palestine's relationship with its diaspora is traditionally geared towards providing essential services such as humanitarian or livelihood assistance.
- **Identifying the diaspora community:** The highly segmented nature and unique trajectory of the Palestinian diaspora - particularly in terms of geographic distribution, legal status and financial resources - challenges conventional understandings of 'diaspora' and/or strategies of engagement. For instance, many Palestinians abroad are not registered as Palestinian citizens, making it difficult for central institutions to locate them and interact meaningfully.¹³ This reality has a fundamentally impact on any potential engagement strategy(ies).
- **Lack of coordination:** The Palestinian diaspora is a profoundly heterogeneous and segmented body. The fragmentation of the diaspora and the lack of a network that could connect Palestinian associations in order to coordinate efforts impedes diaspora engagement on both sides.
- **Remittance channels:** Most incoming remittances are sent by 'commuting' Palestinian workers in Israel. In addition to being a source of instability for many remittance-dependent households, the political deadlock forbids the emergence of favourable transfer facilities and of therefore a potentially more significant income stream for Palestine.

¹² PalTrade, Investment in Palestine: The Reality, October 2010.

¹³ Mapping and Study of the Palestinian Diaspora in Germany, 2018, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance.

SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



Transfer of Capital through Expatriate Knowledge (TOKTEN UNDP) 1994 - present

HUMAN CAPITAL

The TOKTEN project, implemented by UNDP, deploys 'highly qualified' professionals from the diaspora to serve as short-term volunteers in various Palestinian institutions. Running since 1994 in the West Bank and Gaza, this initiative illustrates how a skilled expatriate workforce can contribute decisively through sectoral interventions – primarily in education, health and information technology – to institution-building processes in a challenging context while fostering a sense of national affinity.

Ramallah Diaspora Convention

NETWORKING

The Ramallah convention, supported by the Ramallah city hall and private businesses, is an annual meeting bringing together diaspora connected with the city. It uses an extensive list of locally-organised diaspora meetings which have grown in popularity since the 1990s in particular among the community in the United States.¹⁴ The success of such initiatives reveals how migrants can, in some instances, favour affiliation with specific towns or villages over national connections.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Palestinian Market Development Program (PMDP) 2014-2018

This initiative, funded by UK Aid and the EU, was designed to support job creation and sustainable economic development in Palestine. It provided Palestinian SMEs with technical and financial support in the form of grants to scale up local businesses and drive their integration into global value chains. As part of its activities, PMDP organised various diaspora working-groups to explore trade and investment linkages and facilitated connections between expatriate investors and local businesses.¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://afrp.org/about-us/>

¹⁵ <http://www.pmdp.ps/en>

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions



- **At regional level**

United Nation's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 1949

Established in 1949, the agency provides assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan). It is committed to the development and welfare of displaced Palestinian people in the absence of a permanent solution to “the Palestinian refugee problem.”

United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People 1978

The UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian people focuses on delivering multi-sectoral assistance to the West Bank and Gaza in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. It has implemented several initiatives revolving around diaspora engagement in the Palestinian context.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MOFAE)

The MOFAE ensures Palestinian visibility and liaison with the expatriate community through a network of diplomatic representations and missions. The representations ensure bilateral relationships while providing essential administrative services and cultural promotion for Palestinian communities.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) expatriates department (PEAD) 2007

The PLO expatriates department is a branch of the PLO aiming to foster connections with the expatriate community. Established in 2008, it focuses on identifying and forging links with Palestinian communities outside the Arab world.

PLO's Refugee Affairs Department (DoRA) 1996¹⁶

The Department of Refugee Affairs is responsible for the refugee portfolio and refugee affairs within the PLO. It also works on the issue of the right of return of Palestinian refugees.¹⁷

16 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/israelpalestine/bringing-back-palestinian-refugee-question>

17 <https://www.badil.org/en/publication/periodicals/al-majdal/item/741-the-plo-and-the-right-of-return-interview-with-the-plo-department-for-refugee-affairs.html>

Ministry of Interior and Migration Technical Team (MTT) 2017

The MTT is an inter-institutional body encompassing several agencies and ministries promoting concertation and coordination in the development of migration policy. Chaired by the Ministry of Interior, it builds upon effective exchange and evidence to address and advise on various emerging migration priorities.

Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA) 1998

PIPA provides a 'one-stop-shop' for helping potential investors set up investment projects in Palestine. It plays a key role in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by informing potential investors on Palestinian market opportunities, the tax system and financial regulations. In this sense, it is an essential interlocutor for all investment decisions coming from abroad.

Diaspora organisations in Europe



Deutsch-Palästinensische Gesellschaft e.V (DPG) [Palestinian Association in Germany] 1986 Germany

Integration activities

The association is Germany's biggest Palestinian organisation and serves as an umbrella for various Palestine-related entities. Its stated mission is to advance human rights for all Palestinians, inform the German public on the situation in the Palestinian territories and support the building of a democratic state in Palestine.

Palästinensische Gemeinde Deutschland [Palestinian Community in Germany]

Development activities

Integration activities

Beyond promoting Palestinian integration in German society, the "Gemeinde" (community) actively supports development in the Palestinian territories by collecting funds or organising youth exchange.

Palästinensisch-Österreichischen Gesellschaft (PÖG) [Palestinian Association in Austria, PAA] 1988 Austria

Integration activities

PÖG primarily intends to foster the integration of Palestinians in Austrian society by organising cultural events, integration counselling and support to newcomers

PalMed Europe 2007 Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden (plus other non-EU)

Development activities

Integration activities

PalMed is a profession-based diaspora organisation dedicated to supporting and strengthening links between Palestinian doctors and pharmacists practising in Europe. Born out of PalMed Germany, it also helps professionals to participate in humanitarian work in Palestine.

PalTech Europe 2013, several EU countries

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

Similarly to PalMed, PalTech Europe is a professional institution bringing together Palestinian engineers based in Europe around common projects, such as boosting business development and ties with Palestine.

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Edited by: EUDiF
July 2020
Updated October 2021

Implemented by



Funded by
the European Union



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