

## ASREN Newsletter

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### MAGIC outreach

***MAGIC - Middleware for collaborative Applications and Global virtual Communities - involves 19 Research and Education Network (REN) partners from all over the world, who have been actively cooperating towards building interoperable services for research and education communities.***

***One of the project objectives is to establish a small set of relevant user communities working on areas/topics that are of high interest in a significant number of world regions. So far four Global Science Communities (GSC) have been raised in e-Health, Biodiversity, Environment and Remote Instrumentation. Each one of these GSC had its first virtual meeting during February, introducing actions to all interested scientists, worldwide.***

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Face-to-face training sessions on Authorization and Authentication Infrastructures, eduroam and NRENum.net have been carried out in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Arab States. In addition an on-line course on NRENum.net and DNS Configuration has been set on-line to all those who are interested in NRENum. The purpose is to allow REN member institutions the possibility to register their voice over IP identities in a global directory.

These projects started in El Salvador, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, Chile, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Ethiopia and Moldova as members of NRENum.net (an end-user ENUM service run by the GÉANT Association).

## Lebanon Joins Global Research and Education Networking Community



Building on an on-going dialogue among the Lebanese Ministry of Education and the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research CNRST, GEANT Association, and the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN), the American University of Beirut (AUB) has signed a cooperation agreement to link its ICT infrastructure to the European GEANT, the US Internet2, and other world advanced research and education networks. With support from GÉANT and ASREN, AUB has allocated 10 Mbps of its existing Internet bandwidth to a dedicated link to interconnect with GÉANT via ASREN PoP in London. The link allows AUB to integrate seamlessly with advanced computing facilities, resources, and repositories available in many advanced research institutions across the globe.

“With AUB linkage, the cornerstone of developing the Lebanese National Research and Education Network connecting all Lebanese Universities through a dedicated network at the national level in between them and to the Arab, European, American and the world research and education networks. This will support advancing research, improve education, accelerate progress, provide hope, and enable better opportunities for the young scientists in Lebanon” Said Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of ASREN.

The setup of AUB link will serve as a nexus for the development of a Lebanese Research and Education Network based on the European best practice NREN model and on the examples of the National Research and Education Networks already implemented in many Euro-Mediterranean countries.

In welcoming the connection to GÉANT, Steve Cotter, CEO GÉANT, commented:

“The American University of Beirut and other Lebanese institutions have a long history of academic and scientific excellence. The connection to GÉANT will open up further opportunities for their researchers and students to engage in exciting international collaborations with their peers in Europe, and allow Lebanon to be an active partner in the EUMEDCONNECT3 project in the Eastern Mediterranean.”

This step accelerated efforts to set up an NREN in Lebanon. Discussions are underway between AUB and 10 universities and research centers across Lebanon to formally establish LERN (Lebanese Education and Research Network). Value-added services like eduroam, the secure, world-wide roaming access service, have been a key in the benefit debate about LERN.

“It can be challenging to convince institutions in Lebanon about the value of an NREN, especially

when the infrastructure, tariffs and political climate are all but favorable,” explained Yousif Asfour, CIO at AUB.

“But by moving the NREN discussion away from how can we build a fast and cheap network,” he continued, “it opens the doors to putting the focus on providing shared services to build a community and then using this community as leverage to build the high bandwidth. The implementation of eduroam at AUB has delivered a key argument to secure a critical mass of support.”

To accelerate the process of formalizing LERN, AUB intends to open the current connection to other Lebanese institutions and to jointly take up additional services such as eduGAIN (interfederation). The current link capacity is therefore expected to be increased in the near future.

## **GÉANT Partners up with Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) to Support the Digital Economy in the Mediterranean**



GÉANT has recently been given official recognition by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) of its role in research and education networking. It was invited to use its expertise to help UfM implement its digital economy agenda in the Southern Mediterranean.

GÉANT’s role was confirmed in Barcelona to implement the recommendations of the 2014 UfM Summit of Digital Economy Ministers to accelerate the development of the digital economy for Euro-Mediterranean citizens, consumers and businesses. As well as regulatory and commercial initiatives, the importance of high-speed connectivity for all Southern Mediterranean countries with GÉANT was expressly recognized and this is to be built upon through DEWoG’s activities.

GÉANT is now formally granted the status for research and education promotion activities. This clearly reflects GÉANT’s active support of the development of high-speed networks in the Southern Mediterranean in the context of the EUMEDCONNECT and AfricaConnect2 projects. David West, GÉANT’s project manager for this activity welcomed UfM’s recognition: “This is a great endorsement of GEANT’s work in the region. The agreed priorities for our involvement are to connect all Southern Mediterranean countries to GEANT, secure additional EU funding for Eastern Mediterranean countries beyond 2016 and to promote the use of GEANT connectivity to the user communities in the region. These efforts are very complementary to GEANT’s core activities and it is hoped that UFM’s endorsement will bring additional political support to achieving them.”

The UfM is an intergovernmental institution bringing together the 28 EU member states, the European Commission and 15 Southern Mediterranean countries to promote cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

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