



PRESS RELEASE

UNIMED President advocates for Integrated Leadership Skills Across Disciplines, at the Barcelona Summer School on Higher Education Policy and Management

Rome, June 24th, 2024 - Dr. Kherieh Rassas, President of UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union, participated in the Barcelona Summer School 2024 on Higher Education Policy and Management, held in Barcelona from June 18 to 21, 2024. The event was organized by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI), with the participation of a distinguished select of academics, experts, and representatives of international academic networks and institutions.

In her role as a key speaker in a session titled “**Challenges and Opportunities of Being Part of International Alliances and Consortia**,” Dr. Kherieh Rassas emphasized that in today’s rapidly changing educational landscape, international alliances are pivotal in reforming and transforming higher education while boosting global cooperation. Dr. Rassas highlighted that collective efforts enhance the global impact of universities by providing opportunities to utilize a wide array of educational resources, technologies, funding, and expertise. This makes educational systems more resilient and responsive to fast-growing technologies and the emergent need for specialized skills, thereby playing a stronger role in influencing decision-making and policies. She added, “*In our interconnected and globalized world, university networks play a crucial role in fostering intercultural dialogue and scientific cooperation by building bridges and breaking down barriers and boundaries.*”

Dr. Rassas also emphasized that UNIMED stands out as an exemplary collaboration in a region rich with diversity and history. Founded in 1991, it has grown from a modest group of universities to 162 members from 25 countries. She stressed the importance of academic unions and alliances, as evidenced by the growing international support for An-Najah University and UNIMED’s Technical Support Initiative for Higher Education Students in Gaza. Through this initiative, partner institutions mobilize their resources, capabilities, and expertise to enable students in Gaza to continue their university education despite all restrictions.

In a separate session moderated by Dr. Rassas on “**University Leadership and Management**,” She stressed that harmonizing our relations, skills, capabilities, and resources, whether human or financial is key to university leadership and management. She also clarified that management styles depend on external factors such as pandemics, conflicts, and economic recessions, as well as internal factors like national and institutional interventions and priorities.



She noted that, in these turbulent times, managerial and leadership skills are put to the test, forcing us to re-evaluate these capabilities in the face of challenges and disruptions. She mentioned, "*Organizations prosper when leaders foster resilience within their teams, creating a culture that considers challenges opportunities for growth.*"

Regarding leadership in the 21st century, Dr. Rassas highlighted that it is no longer about top-down directives. Instead, we are witnessing a significant transition from traditional, hierarchical leadership to more inclusive and collaborative models. She affirmed that developing leadership at all levels within universities is essential for the growth and sustainability of our institutions and society. Additionally, Dr. Rassas called for integrating leadership programs into various courses across different disciplines in universities through continuing education, micro-diploma programs, and micro-certifications.