



League of Arab States (LAS)

The League of Arab States is a regional organisation bringing together all Arab countries, with the purpose of promoting and strengthening cooperation among its members.

Established in 1945, it gathers 22 member States from Africa and the Middle East:

1. Algeria
2. Bahrain
3. Comoros
4. Djibouti
5. Egypt
6. Iraq
7. Jordan
8. Kuwait
9. Lebanon
10. Libya
11. Mauritania
12. Morocco
13. Oman
14. Palestine
15. Qatar
16. Saudi Arabia
17. Somalia
18. Sudan
19. Syria (Participation suspended by LAS since 2011)
20. Tunisia
21. United Arab Emirates
22. Yemen

The LAS traditionally embodies both the idea of Pan-Arabism (the principle of an Arab homeland) and Arab nationalism (respect of each member state's sovereignty). Among LAS main achievements the 1950 Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty; 1995 Draft Agreement on turning the Middle East into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction; and the 1999 Arab Agreement on Combatting Terrorism, should be mentioned.

Main LAS bodies are the Council of the League (a supreme decision-making body which comprises three levels: Heads of State, Foreign Ministers and Permanent Delegates); the Joint Defence Council; the Economic and Social Council; the Committees; the Arab Parliament; and the Secretariat General in Cairo.

Nabil El-Araby (EGY) performed the function of the SG in the period 2011-16. Ahmed Abul Gheit (EGY) is the SG since July 2016.

EU-League of Arab States relations

The dialogue and cooperation between the EU and the LAS entered a new phase during the Libya crisis in 2011. High-level dialogue between EU and the LAS was established and conducted regularly since then, concentrating on regional challenges.

EU-LAS Foreign Ministers meetings have taken place in 2012 (Cairo) and 2014 (Athens), and next expected in 2016. The [2014 Athens Declaration](#) established the "EU-LAS Strategic Dialogue", fostering a regular dialogue on political and security issues (incl. Crisis management, Counter-Terrorism, etc.), which was launched in November 2015 in Brussels.

Cooperation between EU and LAS is well fostered by regular Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM) between the representatives of both organisations, and annual meetings between the EU and LAS high foreign policy representatives.

In 2015 a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the LAS General Secretariat was signed enabling, inter alia, practical cooperation and exchanges of diplomats. The EU regional project "Training and Information Course on Euro-Arab diplomacy" (El Hiwar) facilitates the flow of information and promotes dialogue and cooperation between officials from both organisations.

Recently **security** and **stability** became priority concerns for the EU and the League. A focused cooperation has been fostered to address regional challenges such as the fight against terrorism and regional conflicts, especially in Libya, Syria and Yemen. The Euro-Arab cooperation aims to provide integrated regional responses to these strategic challenges, preventing and counteracting crises in order to build peace in the region.

EU-LAS cooperation on conflict prevention, early warning and crisis response is implemented since 2010 - through the project "Strengthening crisis response capacities of the League of Arab States". Its first phase ran from 2010 to 2014 pursuing the following objectives:

1. Establishment of a the LAS Crisis Response Centre;
2. Enhancement of relevant technical knowledge and skills of LAS staff;

3. Holding of institutional dialogues and networking with relevant stakeholders.

The second phase started in 2015 and was accompanied by the signature of the EU-LAS letter of commitment for reinforced cooperation in the field of Early Warning and Crisis Management.

Documents

[Declaration adopted at the Third EU-LAS Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting, June 2014](#)

www.eeas.europa.eu

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