



## “Foreign Cultural Institutes in Egypt: Achievements and Challenges”

**Alexandria, 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 2015** – in collaboration with the European Union, and within the framework of the *Support to Cultural Diversity and Creativity in Egypt* program, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) organized a new cultural debate under the theme of “Foreign Cultural Institutions in Egypt; Challenges and Achievements”, at the Swedish Institute in Alexandria. Twenty-six officials, diplomats and public figures participated in the debate; including cultural attachés of various foreign embassies in Egypt, and directors of several cultural centers and programs.

The meeting is the 10<sup>th</sup> cultural debate out of 12, organized under “A Dialogue Process for a Cultural Policy in Egypt”; one of the three main pillars on which the *Support to Cultural Diversity and Creativity in Egypt* program is built. Through this pillar, the program aims at initiating a structured dialogue that will eventually lead to the formulation of a national cultural policy for Egypt. This dialogue is coordinated by the BA, involving a large number of experts in the cultural field, whether governmental, independent or foreign.

The 10<sup>th</sup> debate consisted of three sessions. The first was chaired by Engr. Hoda El-Mikaty; director of the *Support to Cultural Diversity and Creativity in Egypt* program and the head of the BA Cultural Outreach Sector. The role and achievements of the foreign cultural centers in Egypt were emphasized through the session, while participants also shared their experiences and knowledge about their various cultural projects and initiatives. The second session was chaired by Peter Weiderud; Director of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria. It discussed the main challenges that foreign cultural institutes in Egypt face, which impede the progress of cultural investment.

During the third and final session of the meeting, which was chaired by Ambassador Hatem Atallah, Director of Anna Lindh Foundation, participants brainstormed for practical solutions to the obstacles and challenges that were discussed in the previous session, as well as the means of cooperation that can result from the meeting.



A number of notable public figures and diplomats participated in the meeting including: Sandro Cappelli; the Italian Cultural Attaché in Egypt, Liu Yang; the Chinese Cultural Attaché in Egypt, Renáta Kovács; the Hungarian Cultural Attaché in Egypt, and Dr. Heba Sherif; Director of Pro Helvetia (the Swiss Arts Council in Cairo), amongst many others.

It is important to note that the project has also held many meetings with both independent cultural institutions and representatives of government officials, in order to draft a national cultural policy based on Egyptian reality, that would both meet the needs of the public as well as the workers in the cultural field.

