

**Dutch Center Director Mr. Taco van der Zwaag visits LERC**

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Reported by Elie Nabhan

Mr. Taco van der Zwaag, Director of the soon to be established Netherlands Institute in Beirut (NI-Beirut), paid a visit to the Lebanese Emigration Research Center at NDU.

After being shown through the LERC premises and given a thorough presentation of LERC's electronic archives, Mr. van der Zwaag met with LERC Director Ms. Guita Hourani.

NI-Beirut, as a student assistant organization is geared towards helping Dutch students interested in higher education find suitable courses in all areas of Lebanon. By covering all disciplines of higher education, NI-Beirut will facilitate access into Lebanon for interested students and researchers by recommending the right courses in Lebanese universities and by connecting Dutch researchers, scholars and research institutions with their Lebanese counterparts. Such is the range of assistance available that even help with finding the right accommodation is accorded.



In this light, both Ms. Hourani and Mr. van der Zwaag discussed issues relating to student exchange and networking between Lebanese scholars and researchers. They agreed to promote LERC in the Netherlands as the migration center in Lebanon.

Ms. Hourani explained about the activities and research infrastructure at LERC, which provides to visiting scholars, the position of Adjunct Associate Researcher, Research Fellow, Research Affiliate, or positions as LERC Interns or as Research Assistants for younger students. Ms. Hourani emphasized LERC's expertise in facilitating and outsourcing field research support along with its regular services. Ms. Hourani also stated her keen interest in out-of-country voting and expressed her hopes that LERC will be able to learn more about the Dutch model of such systems.

Mr. van der Zwaag is also cooperating with the Department of Political Science at NDU on the politics of concession and the Dutch system of 'pillars'.

In his parting statement, Mr. van der Zwaag expressed his delight at his introduction to LERC and expressed his optimism that "many Dutch students and researchers will make their way to the Center and contribute to fruitful exchanges".