

Bernardino León Gross

Director General
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Mr. León is a diplomat and politician with a long career focused mostly on the Arab world. Currently, he is the Director General of the Emirates Diplomatic Academy in the UAE. Previously, he was appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya in August 2015, he has served as Special Representative of the European Union for the Southern Mediterranean since 2011 and recently as European Union Special Representative for Libya.

Mr. León held several positions with the Spanish government, including Secretary-General at the Spanish Prime Minister's Office (2008-2011) and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (2004-2008). He also became Sherpa for the G20 in 2009. Mr. León joined the Spanish diplomatic service in 1989 and was posted in Liberia, Algeria and Greece. He also served as Personal Adviser to the European Union Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process (1998-2001).

Throughout his career, Mr. León participated in several projects related to dialogue between cultures and religions. From 2001 to 2004, he was Director of the *Three Cultures of the Mediterranean Foundation*, an institution for dialogue and mutual understanding among different cultures and religions in the Mediterranean. In 2003, he founded with Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said the Barenboim-Said Foundation, which focuses on the West Eastern Divan orchestra for young musicians from the Middle East. He later contributed to the launching of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2005. Mr. León has also supported several mediation processes. He has published extensively on the Arab world and its relationship with the West and lectured on these issues in several universities.