



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to
the Republic of Lebanon

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PRESS RELEASE

A new and ambitious European Neighbourhood Policy

The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, held today a press conference to present the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of the European Union (EU).

Following a comprehensive review of the ENP launched in 2004, the EU announced new orientations that reiterate the EU's commitment towards its neighbours. In response to the challenges and opportunities raised by the transformations in the Arab world, the EU will provide particular support to partners committed to building a deep democracy, enhance its assistance to civil society as an agent of change, and increase its cooperation aiming at reducing social inequalities.

"The partnership between the EU and its neighbours will reflect their needs, capacities and reform objectives", Ambassador Eichhorst said. Additional funding of up to €1.24 billion for the neighbourhood, on top of the €5.7 already planned for 2011-2013, will be allocated to support partner countries in the political and economic reforms they want to undertake, at their own pace. Mrs. Eichhorst explained that *"increased EU support will depend on progress in building and consolidating democracy and respect for the rule of law. The more and the faster a country progresses in its internal reforms, the more support it will get from the EU"*.

The first objective of this new policy is to support progress towards "deep democracy". *"Our support to Lebanon in this matter is not new. Thus, we will continue to work with all stakeholders to push forward the independence of the judiciary, as well as electoral, penitentiary and administrative reforms",* Mrs. Eichhorst underlined.

To promote democracy and human rights, the new ENP also foresees increased support to civil society. The European Union has already established strong ties with the Lebanese civil society, which is particularly dynamic: a total amount of €15 million is currently allocated to 27 NGOs. The creation of a Civil Society Facility and of a European Endowment for Democracy will enable to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the civil society.

Finally, the EU intends to encourage sustainable and inclusive economic development in its neighbourhood. *"This is already the basis of our action in favour of an economic development that should benefit all Lebanese",* said the EU Ambassador. Supporting business incubators, funding loans for job creation in rural areas, or promoting decentralisation in partnership with municipalities, are examples of the EU's action. However, a number of economic and social reforms are now necessary to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of Lebanon.

For more information:

- Communication on "a new response to a changing neighbourhood" (May 25, 2011):
http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com_11_303_en.pdf

- Report on the implementation of the ENP in Lebanon in 2010:
http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/progress2011/sec_11_637_en.pdf

