



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to
the Republic of Lebanon

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PRESS RELEASE

EU bolsters support for justice and governance in Lebanon

European Union funding, allocated on 17 August 2011, will help to reform the Lebanese justice system by implementing new training for clerks and opening up a national debate on the independence of the judiciary system by giving the Lebanese people the chance to make their views heard in conferences and seminars.

The funds, part of the Annual Action Programme for Lebanon, will also improve the environmental performance of the public sector in Lebanon by helping the Ministry of the Environment to better plan and implement environmental policy.

Lebanon's municipalities will also benefit from this programme through the provision of new training and expertise to make administration in the municipal sector more effective and better able to manage public funds.

EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, announcing the adoption of the Annual Action Programme 2011 for Lebanon, said: "Supporting our Lebanese partners in their efforts to create a well-functioning public administration system and boosting sustainable growth and democracy in the country is of vital importance. These reforms will give the Lebanese people more of a say in how their country is run, and help to build up trust and legitimacy of the justice system as a result."

The 2011 Annual Action Programme is a €33 million cooperation package, made up of three reform areas: municipal finance, environmental governance and justice.

All areas of reform support are in line with the priorities of the two Joint Communications of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; "A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean"¹ and "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"². These reform areas are also reflected in the ministerial statement issued by Prime Minister Mikati's cabinet.

In more detail, the objectives of the programme are:

- **Support to the reform of municipal finance (€20 million)**

This programme aims to achieve better balanced socioeconomic development through modernised municipal administration and effective central support to local governments. To achieve this, improved effectiveness and efficiency of municipal sector management, combined with strengthened municipal finance systems to sustain service delivery will be pursued.

1 [COM\(2011\)200](#) of 8 March 2011.

2 [COM\(2011\)303](#) of 25 May 2011.

- **Support to Reform – Environmental Governance (€8 million)**

This project, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, aims to improve the environmental performance of the Lebanese public sector by reforming environmental governance. Training will be given to the Ministry of Environment, as well as to other stakeholders in the sector, to help them better plan and implement environmental policy, including law enforcement.

- **Support to the Reform of the Judiciary (€5 million)**

The EU has already supported reforms in the area of the Lebanese judiciary through programmes in the past. In line with these, the new programme will contribute to a more independent and better-performing judiciary system in Lebanon, thus increasing its legitimacy and trust among the Lebanese public. Tackling the issue of independence of the judiciary is a crucial step towards improving its functioning and the EU stands ready to assist the government of Lebanon to achieve this objective.

For more info

EU-Lebanon relations:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/lebanon/lebanon_en.htm

On the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP):

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm