



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon

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PRESS RELEASE

Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst inaugurates EU funded projects in North Lebanon

Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, Head of the Delegation of the European Union, and Mr. Jamal Krayem, Director of the Water Company in Northern Lebanon inaugurated in the presence of the mayors of the municipalities concerned, the newly rehabilitated Nahr el Bared canal. This project was funded by an EU grant of 755 000 euros.

Following the conflict in Nahr el-Bared, which had dramatic repercussions also on the surrounding Lebanese communities, the European Union mobilised funds to rehabilitate Nahr el-Bared canal. This 11 km canal is the main source of irrigation for farmers in the regions of Minya and Akkar. Serving municipalities of Bebnine, Mhamra, Wadi Jamous, Borj al Arab, Al Amara, Qobbet Shamra and Deir Dalloum, the canal benefits nearly 35,000 people and provides irrigation for 1,500 hectares of land.

Beyond the important works of rehabilitating the main canal, awareness raising activities on water management were held with communities along the canal, so that they will ensure the canal's maintenance and respect the environment in their agricultural practices.

On this occasion, Mr. Jamal Krayem said: "The Water Company in Northern Lebanon and its team were able to acquire new expertise in the design, management and execution of a contract concluded with the EU, according to its conditions and criteria. This is a first experience for us."

Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst said that "the EU always followed a dual strategy: the implementation of high impact local development projects, and the institutional strengthening of relevant authorities. In this regard, the partnership with Water Company in Northern Lebanon is promising."

Ms. Angelina Eichhorst then met the team of the Council for Development and Reconstruction and the Economic and Social Fund for Development, responsible for the implementation of the "Programme to support local development in Northern Lebanon". Through a grant of 18 million euros, this programme will fund agricultural rural infrastructure and support local initiatives implemented by municipalities.

Ambassador Eichhorst then visited the village of El Bourj to inaugurate the photo exhibition entitled "The natural resources of High Akkar", conducted as part of the project "Promoting economic and public participation of women in Lebanon". This project is funded by an EU grant of 414 000 euros. Organised by the Rene Moawad Foundation and MADA NGO, the exhibition comprehensively displayed the rich natural heritage of North Lebanon. A discussion with elected officials - mayors and deputies - was held on the subject of the natural park of Qammoua.

On this issue, Mrs. Eichhorst said that "there is no appreciation or protection of resources without a common vision and prior and coordinated planning. The strategy should be elaborated at regional level and involve all development stakeholders. In the High Akkar, the European Union is committed to supporting this local development dynamic by financing a plan on land use at the regional level."