



European Union

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Thinking big for small businesses: New report assesses SME policies and programmes in Lebanon**

Key stakeholders met today to discuss reform priorities identified in the new report, *"SME Policy Index: The Mediterranean Middle East and North Africa 2014, Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe"*. The report assesses SME policies in Lebanon and eight other economies in the Middle East and North Africa region and puts forward key priorities and reforms to unleash the jobs and development potential of SMEs.

The report evaluates strengths and weaknesses in national SME policy design and implementation based on the "Small Business Act" for Europe (SBA), a comprehensive SME policy framework adopted by the European Union (EU) to promote SMEs. It was part of a highly collaborative process involving governments, public institutions, private sector organisations and civil society. The report builds on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) SME Policy Index methodology, which has been used in other regions by the OECD and partner organisations.

The report was authored jointly by the OECD, the EU and the European Training Foundation, in consultation with the European Investment Bank.

The results of the assessment have led to the following recommendations:

- Greater strategic coordination among ministries and institutions in charge of SME and enterprise support would help to increase policy effectiveness, facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of measures and identify policy gaps.
- Company registration could be facilitated through reforms and the introduction of one-stop-shops.
- The prompt passing and effective implementation of the new bankruptcy law will facilitate the resolution of insolvency cases, the exit of unviable businesses and the promotion of entrepreneurship.
- Given that Lebanon is highly dependent on international trade, a comprehensive export promotion strategy should be defined, an export promotion agency established, foreign trade procedures simplified and procedures for customs clearance computerised.



- While there are several initiatives in Lebanon to promote entrepreneurial learning, there is a need for more co-operation among the implementing organisations. The training needs of SMEs should be better analysed.

To support the implementation of actions and reforms in the priority areas identified, a follow up training will be organised in Beirut on 9 and 10 October 2014, within the framework of a 3-year project funded by the EU (€3 million) and implemented by GIZ IS.

**For more information please contact:**

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**Annex:**

**The "Small Business Act" for Europe**

The "Small Business Act" for Europe is based on 10 principles that guide the design and implementation of policies both at EU and national level.

Those principles are:

1. Create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded.
2. Ensure that honest (i.e. non-fraudulent) entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance.
3. Design rules according to the Think Small First principle.
4. Make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs.
5. Adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SMEs' participation in public procurement and make better use of available state aid for SMEs.
6. Facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions.
7. Help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the single market.
8. Promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation.
9. Enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities.
10. Encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets

For more information, see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/index_en.htm)