



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

Delegation of the European Union to  
the Republic of Lebanon

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

## **EU Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst visits Roumieh Prison**

The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, visited Roumieh prison today.

Ambassador Eichhorst met with General Elias Saadeh, Commander of the Gendarmerie, General Antoine Zikra, the Director of Roumieh prison, and representatives of the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and the Ministry of Interior to discuss the security situation in the prison, the work of the ISF inside the facility as well as the detention conditions and the respect for the rights of detainees. The discussions underlined the importance of rehabilitation and preventing recidivism. Furthermore, Ambassador Eichhorst had an exchange with prisoners who presented activities undertaken in the prison's workshops. During her visit, Ambassador Eichhorst was joined by the Director General of the Ministry of Justice, Judge Maysam Noueiri and Judge Raja Abinader.

Following her visit, Ambassador Eichhorst stated: *"I would like to thank the Lebanese authorities for facilitating this visit and for providing a first-hand account of the situation in Roumieh prison. The challenges are huge. With 60% of detainees held in pre-trial detention, the need to give them swifter access to justice has become ever more pressing. At the same time, the overcrowding of prisons requires a pragmatic solution. Therefore, I would like to commend the Lebanese Government for its intent to build new prisons that comply with international standards of detention. We also encourage the authorities to finalise the transfer of responsibility for prison management from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice. Countering violent extremism starts with prioritising better functioning of the prison system."*

Ambassador Eichhorst added: *"This visit helps us to better appreciate the efforts undertaken by the prison management to improve the conditions inside the prison. Over the past years, the European Union has provided substantial assistance to prison management, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice, also as part of our counter-terrorism efforts. Further to working with the Lebanese authorities, the EU continues to support organisations that contribute to improving detention conditions and provide social services to female inmates, as well as psycho social assistance to mentally ill inmates and those sentenced to life in prison."*

*"In addition, the EU has just agreed on a new intervention aiming to improve medical and sanitary conditions and infrastructure in Roumieh and Kobbah prisons for 1.2 million Euros. In this context, we will provide medical and sanitary equipment to both prisons, help to train the prisons' medical staff and assist in the re-structuring of the forensic unit of the Ministry of Justice,"* Ambassador Eichhorst concluded.

