



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to
the Republic of Lebanon

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PRESS RELEASE

Strength through partnership: EU support to improve the national health system for all people in Lebanon

In response to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon, the European Union and the Ministry of Public Health celebrated today the successful closure of the first phase of their cooperation in the health sector and the launch of the next phase. This cooperation has been implemented by the Ministry of Public Health in partnership with WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF and International Alert.

The achievements of the first phase and the activities to be undertaken during the second phase of the programme were presented today at a press conference held at the Ministry of Public Health by Minister Wael Abou Faour and Ambassador Christina Lassen, Head of the European Union Delegation to Lebanon, in the presence of representatives of the partner organisations.

Steered by the Ministry of Public Health, the partner organisations have worked together over the past years to help improve service delivery and access to health care at the community level. The main goal of the partnership has been to enable the Ministry to meet the increased challenges of serving the populations living in Lebanon, through strategic institutional support to the Lebanese primary health care system.

EU Ambassador Christina Lassen said: "Our support is visible all over Lebanon. Those who benefit from European Union's support may have visited one of the 197 Primary Health Care Centres and 8 hospitals to benefit from new equipment, free medicines and vaccines for children". She underlined that the EU's support comes as a necessary and urgent response to the tremendous task Lebanon has taken upon itself by welcoming the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. "This is why the European Union and its Member States have stepped in quickly and we are today the biggest donors when it comes to assisting Lebanon in handling the consequences of the Syrian war, also in the health sector". Ambassador Lassen reiterated the EU's commitment to continue to work in close partnership with the Ministry of Public Health, WHO, UNHCR and UNICEF in responding to the needs of the health system and to peoples' demands.

Minister of Public Health Wael Abou Faour stressed the importance of the relationship between the Ministry and the EU and international organisations that impacts, in particular, the development of the public health system. He said that "during the past few years, the primary health care managed to deliver health services to more than a third of the Lebanese people and to more than 600,000 displaced Syrians, and maintained Lebanon free of polio in collaboration with the national health sector institutions that play a key role in the development of the

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primary health care system in Lebanon." The Minister noted the importance of continuous cooperation with the EU and international organisations to confront the future challenges at the health level, thanking the EU Ambassador and the representatives of UNICEF, UNHCR and WHO.

The key achievements of the coordinated programme include:

- Provision of vaccines at Primary Health Care Centres (PHCs) in Lebanon to cover all needs;
- Provision of essential medications for acute and chronic diseases to 430 PHC centres across the country;
- Provision of medical equipment to 11 governmental hospitals and 200 national PHCs;
- Establishment of 8 water laboratories across Lebanon enabling hospitals to monitor the quality of water and stay alert for any potential outbreaks of water-borne diseases;
- Training health workers to deal with stress and enhance their communication skills.

All these measures have helped to defuse tensions at the community level, which had been exacerbated by the increased demand for services.

Given the continuous pressure on the Lebanese health system, the EU will continue to support the health care system in Lebanon working alongside the Ministry of Public Health and its partners.

For further details on the initiative and results, please refer to the FACT sheet attached.