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Delegation of the European Union to
the Republic of Lebanon

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PRESS RELEASE

EU Ambassador visits EU-funded water projects in Akkar

Ambassador Christina Lassen, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon, visited today three EU-funded projects in Akkar, all implemented by the Economic and Social Fund for Development (ESFD).

The three finalised projects improved significantly the provision of clean water to the area, while at the same time mitigating the additional pressure on the water distribution network caused by the large presence of refugees in the region.

In Mhamara, Ambassador Lassen visited newly constructed water well, ground reservoir of 500 m³ and water tower of 100 m³. The new infrastructure has contributed to ending the water shortage in this area, directly benefitting approximately 5000 residents.

In Qoniah, the EU delegation saw how the rehabilitation of an existing water well and the construction of a pumping line have improved the daily lives of around 2700 residents.

Ambassador Lassen's final stop was in Kfartoun, where the ESFD recently finalised a project of drilling and equipping a new water well between Kfartoun and Akroum. Municipal officials and the project's beneficiaries explained about the impact of the water well on the daily needs of the community. The project has succeeded in improving the water supply for around 15000 people, i.e. the entire population of the villages of Akroum and Kfartoun, including for the Syrian refugees residing in the area.

During her meeting at Kfartoun with local authorities and the project's beneficiaries, Ambassador Lassen highlighted: "It is very encouraging to see the positive impact on the ground of the initiatives that we are funding in the Akkar region. The improvement of existing water infrastructure and construction facilities is having a direct impact on ordinary peoples' life in this area. I am very happy to see that the European Union's funding makes it possible for the municipalities to provide basic services to all residents, both Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees."

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Background

The European Union contributes to support Lebanon in the water sector through different projects:

- **5 infrastructure programmes** aiming at **upgrading water supply facilities for host communities in Lebanon affected by the consequences of the conflict in Syria (EUR 72 million; 2013-2018)**. These projects finance: the rehabilitation of boreholes and optimisation of water supply from springs, the construction and/or rehabilitation of permanent municipal water storage facilities, the extension/rehabilitation of (i) existing pipe networks and/or (ii) waste water infrastructure and treatment facilities. These projects are implemented through the public institutions (CDR, ESFD), international NGO's or UNHCR.

- **a technical assistance project to the Ministry of Energy and Water, and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport** (in the framework of the "SISSAF Programme"; **EUR 9 million; 2013-2016**) currently under implementation, whose objective is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and financial sustainability in the sectors of water, energy and land transport. The SISSAF programme proposes to strengthen the three sectors' institutional capacities, coordination structures and line ministries' leadership.

- **the construction of local water distribution networks and waste water treatment plants in South Lebanon (EUR 9 million; 2010-2016)**. These projects delivered an improved water connection for more than 100000 people in the South and access to irrigation for more than 9000 farmers. Three municipalities, a total of 15000 inhabitants, will benefit from a proper sanitation system including a local waste water treatment plant.

- **a EUR 8 million grant for the construction of wastewater facilities in the region of Tyre, South Lebanon** (with a waste water treatment capacity of approximately 80000m³/day). The total project's investment costs amount to EUR 110 million out of which EUR 45 million is financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB). The facilities should be operational early 2017.

- **a EUR 10 million grant for the construction of wastewater facilities in the region of Greater Beirut** (with a waste water treatment capacity of approximately 325000m³/day). The total project's investment costs amount to EUR 155 million out of which EUR 60 million is financed by the EIB.

- **a EUR 10 million grant (through the Neighbourhood Investment Facility) for the construction of water and wastewater facilities in the coastal area of the Keserwan region, North of Beirut** (with a waste water treatment capacity of approximately 150000 m³/day, benefitting to 350000 inhabitants). The total projects' investment costs amount to EUR 186 million out of which EUR 70 million are financed by the EIB and EUR 70 million from the AFD.