

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Launch of EUNIC - "*Green Your Culture*" event

May 14, 2011 – Sanayeh Gardens

Speech by Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon

Excellencies,
Dear friends,

I am pleased to be in Sanayeh Gardens for the launching of EUNIC in Lebanon.

Today, we have the opportunity to communicate in a creative way through graphic arts, music, theatre and dance, about climate change and the environment.

The protection of our environment is crucial for our future, our economy, our security.

The protection of the environment starts with each and every one of us. We must change our habits to build a sustainable future, and this requires a change in thinking. It is therefore, first and foremost, a cultural challenge.

Concerning Lebanon, challenges related in particular to the management of waste and air pollution remain to be fully tackled. Second, if nothing is done, temperature rise, change of rainfalls patterns and the elevation of the sea level could lead to catastrophic consequences for the country.

Look at this garden. It is one of the last green public spaces in Beirut. Beirut is amongst the capitals with the lowest greenery *per capita* in the world. Not only do we all need green areas away from traffic and concrete, as we can still find in the Lebanese mountains, but also the city's air should be improved with more trees converting carbon monoxide to oxygen.

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I welcome the collaboration between the cultural institutes of European Union Member States, which made this event possible. I also want to thank Indyact for their continuous endeavour in the preservation of the environment in Lebanon, and the artists who work hard to make us change our habits.

Thank you.