

Speech of Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst,
Head of the EU Delegation to Lebanon

**The National Council for Scientific Research, CNRS
Golden Jubilee Ceremony**

Grand Sérail, Beirut – Wednesday 6 June 2012 at 10:00 am

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H.E Mr. Najib Mikati, President of the Council of Ministers,

H.E Mr. Hassan Diab, Minister of Education and Higher
Education,

H.E Mr. Vrej Sabounjian, Minister of Industry,

H.E Mr. Hussein Hajj Hassan, Minister of Agriculture

H.E Mr. Nazem El-Khoury, Minister of Environment,

Dr Georges Tohmé, President of the National Council for
Scientific Research

Dr Mouïin Hamzé, Secretary General of the National Council for
Scientific Research

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here with you, representatives of the Lebanese Government and Research Community, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Council for Scientific Research. I am truly impressed by the achievements of this Council and I am also very pleased with the cooperation between the Council and the EU.

It is particularly significant for me, as the EU seeks to promote further partnerships with our Southern neighbours in all sectors – not just through political dialogue, trade relations and development cooperation but also in people to people contacts, including academic and scientific partners as well as the business community. The path to knowledge is best travelled in company. Today, finding solutions to major global challenges such as research into infectious diseases and climate change requires collective knowledge and collaborative research.

With an overall budget of EUR 50.5 billion and a time span of 7 years (2007-2013), the European Union's current 7th Framework Programme is not only the world's biggest single publicly funded research programme, but also the most concrete manifestation

of the EU's efforts to promote collaborative research and share knowledge inside and outside our continent.

Amongst the concrete contribution of the Framework Programme, lie the Joint Research Centre, a network of seven research institutes across the European Union, and some flagship projects such as the positioning system Galileo or the experimental fusion reactor ITER under construction in Cadarache, France.

The Framework Programme, through its international scientific co-operation programme INCO, is also the European Union's main instrument to fund research in Neighbouring countries. It brings together all research-related EU initiatives under a common roof. Lebanon has continuously benefited from INCO for instance, to improve the monitoring capacities for integrated environmental and coastal ecosystem management.

So far, under FP 7, Lebanon has 16 signed grant agreements, involving 19 participants from Lebanon benefiting from an EU financial contribution of EUR 2.1 million. In spite of a fairly good rate of success in their application, it seems that the funding opportunities are still not used to their full potential in Lebanon. Fostering partnerships between European and Lebanese

research centres, exploring new sources of funding such as the EU's Technical Assistance Information Exchange programme (TAIEX) are just some paths to explore to further boost our cooperation.

For a country like Lebanon, where researchers have traditionally a solid scientific expertise and knowledge, more research cooperation with the EU could allow a greater flow of ideas, people and transfer of technology. It also opens up new research opportunities for both the European and the Lebanese scientific community. I look forward to exploring together ways of turning ideas into concrete actions.

Cooperation is the cement that holds together the European Union and the best response to crisis. The European ideal is all about working together towards a common goal. This is particularly relevant in the scientific world, where international cooperation has long been a central policy aim.

I look forward to celebrating together your Diamond Jubilee. I wish us great success in all our joint scientific endeavours.

Thank you