

**Address of Ambassador Angelina Eichhorst, Head of the EU  
Delegation to Lebanon**

**Second Conference on Wastewater Treatment Plants in Keserwan  
Ftough**

**Bethania, Harissa  
Friday December 7, 2012**

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Mr Farid El Khazen, Member of Parliament,

H.E. Mr. Gibran Bassil, Minister of Energy and Water,

H.E. Mr Nabil El Jisr, President of the Council for Development and  
Reconstruction,

H.E. Mrs Birgitta Siefker-Eberle, Ambassador of Germany,

H.E. Mr Patrice Paoli, Ambassador of France,

H.E. Mr Giuseppe Morabito, Ambassador of Italy,

Mr Samir Farah, Lebanon's representative of Friedrich Ebert Foundation,

Dear representatives of municipalities, many of whom I see here today  
which I welcome with great joy,

Distinguished participants,

Thanks to the initiative and engagement of MP Farid El Khazen, we  
come together today to discuss a very important topic that is often  
neglected in the public debate.

Nature provides us with pure water - enough to serve the daily lives of  
the more than 4 million inhabitants of Lebanon. We all need – and in fact,  
often take for granted – a steady and safe water supply. However, once  
we use the water, we pay little attention to the way we "return" it to  
nature.

Let us be frank and realistic: It is difficult to accept that less than 8% of  
the consumed water in Lebanon is being treated, particularly since  
renewable water resources per capita are already well below the scarcity

threshold in Lebanon. Not to mention the negative effects of climate change to be expected in the coming decades.

To tackle the problem of waste water (mis)-management, the Lebanese authorities *have* taken steps in the past years. Waste water treatment plants of various sizes have been built and valuable initiatives for waste water treatment have been kicked off. I will not enter into details about these projects as the next speakers will probably mention them.

I would simply like to highlight important initiatives supported by the EU, where impact is tangible not only in the environment but also on public health and socioeconomic development. I would like to refer here to the multisectoral character of the EU support to Lebanon's infrastructure. Indeed, the EU is active not only in the water and waste water sector, but also in the transport, energy, environment, agriculture, and local development sectors. The amount of EU projects in these fields, ongoing and under preparation, exceeds €150 million, in addition to EIB loans amounting to €400 million.

In particular, the EU currently finances the construction of three waste water treatment plants in the Casa of Nabatieh. Also, the preparation of a further €33 million EU-funded programme is ongoing. This programme will aim at supporting infrastructures in Lebanon in view of climate change. The integrated approach of this programme will also include waste water treatment.

In Keserwan, the construction of two waste water treatment plants in Zouk Mikhael and Adma is planned. This will be done in close partnership between the EU and EIB, AFD and CDR. The total EU and Member States financing for this project amounts to €150 million in loans and grants. These infrastructures will not only improve the sanitary conditions of the population of the Keserwan area, but they will also help the preservation of the Mediterranean Sea.

Such projects are challenging in terms of implementation but also maintenance. Some have not yet proven to be as satisfactory as originally hoped for (in particular in Tripoli). I therefore urge municipalities, government authorities, donors and all parties involved to pay particular attention to the implementation and to the financial and technical sustainability of these ambitious projects. Not only the inhabitants of the Keserwan area are expecting functioning and lasting infrastructure, but the European partners as well.

It's a simple equation: Good water treatment contributes to overall nature conservation. But even *better* water preservation could be achieved through a more appropriate management of resources by every citizen, in particular as regards daily water consumption. It is not only our duty, but also our responsibility to ensure that human needs can be met in the present and for generations to come. This challenge is ambitious, but clearly in our reach.

Thank you for your kind attention.