

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

**Lebanese Excellence Award**

Adnan Kassar Edifice for Arab Economy, 8 July 2013

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Caretaker Minister of State for Administrative Development, H.E. Mohammad Fniesh,  
Caretaker Minister of Economy and Trade, H.E. Nicolas Nahas,  
President of the General Union of Arab Chambers, H.E. Adnan Kassar,  
Director of QUALEB, Dr. Ali Berro,  
Excellencies,  
Quality experts,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to participate to the Lebanese Excellence ceremony held under the patronage of H.E. President Michel Sleiman.

The European Union is the main partner of Lebanon in the area of quality and excellence, which are two essential elements for economic growth and ultimately for job creation in Lebanon. Besides politics, economic development is indeed key and should be conducive to job creation, in particular for young people.

I particularly like the Excellence Award initiative because:

- It is an inclusive, participatory process with equal chances to become a winner;
- It is open to companies of all sizes, as well as to NGOs and public institutions; and
- It is modeled on the European quality award system.

Quality management in companies is important to ensure the excellence of products and services. This is a key priority in our continued efforts to help make Lebanese products more competitive on the global market.

Quality management is also important in our daily lives, in social events, at home. It is important for the villages and cities outside the capital: there is so much work in the rural part of Lebanon where local institutions are to provide basic infrastructure and services, yet most is left in the hands of private investors, non-governmental or charity organisations.

You are fortunate to have a diverse NGO community which is deeply involved in providing public services, often in direct cooperation with public institutions. NGOs take charge of health

care, education and a myriad of other needs. The Excellence Award we are launching today pays tribute to the importance of civil society, to the men and women who work sometimes in the most remote places in the country, and who assist those most in need. They deserve our recognition as essential social actors in the development of Lebanon's communities.

The Excellence Award is about looking critically at one-self, identifying where one can improve and how to set ambitious but realistic goals for the future. The Excellence Award is not a monetary award; it is the continuous reward for doing things different and better; an experience we can all take with us and apply to our businesses, institutions and individual livelihoods.

Allow me to thank Minister Mohammad Fniesh, Minister Nicolas Nahas and President Adnan Kassar for their continued efforts to strengthen the cooperation between the EU and Lebanon (*this is the second event we have together in four days only....*). Through you and so many of our Lebanese partners the partnership between European Union and Lebanon is developing and deepening by the day.

Thank you.