

**Intervention of Mr Diego Escalona Paturel, Head of Cooperation,
Delegation of the European Union**

Lebanon – EU Aviation Safety Partnership Forum

***Beirut, 14 January 2014
Middle East Airlines, Cedar Hall***

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Dear Mr. Omar Kaddouha, Director of Flight Safety,
Dear Colleagues from the European Aviation Safety Agency,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is always a pleasure to be part of events organised in Lebanon in the frame of projects funded by the European Union, and witness EU's support to this country in particular in the current unstable period.

We are here today to address very important issues as regards the aviation partnership between the EU and Lebanon: we indeed talk about flight safety, risk management, quality management, flight operations and many other domains that, due to their technicality and their impact on the safety of each flight operated from or to Lebanon, do not suffer any approximation.

The EU has developed since many years a solid aviation partnership with many countries of its Neighbourhood, and some countries like Morocco have signed in 2006 an aviation agreement with the EU that not only opens up the markets gradually, but also aims at approximating the legislation of the two parties.

For many years, the EU supports a similar approach with Lebanon, but many pre-requisites are not fulfilled yet that could allow for a faster pace of

implementation, like for instance the establishment of an independent Civil Aviation Authority, as foreseen in law n° 481/2002. This instrumental milestone has been recently recalled by the European Commission while presenting the conclusions of the Air Safety Committee of November 2013, based on information from the ICAO Coordinated Validation Mission of December 2012 and some significant concerns raised by ICAO.

Let me hereby reiterate the European Commission's commitment to working closely with the Lebanese authorities in ensuring the aim of a safe international aviation system, whilst ensuring that any current safety risks are adequately contained. We also encourage Lebanon to profit from the support given by EASA in the framework of the MASC project (Mediterranean Safety Aviation Cell).

I now leave the floor to the experts, hoping that this seminar will open on increased ways of cooperation between Lebanon and the EU, for the benefit of a more prosperous and mutual enriching aviation partnership.

Thank you for your attention.