

Speech of Mr Marcello Mori
Minister Counsellor
Head of the Sustainable Development Section
at the European Union Delegation to Lebanon

Euromed Business Opportunities

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H.E. Dr Alain Hakim, Minister of Economy and Trade,
Mr Emmanuel Notary, Director of ANIMA,
Mr Maroun Chammas, Chairman of Berytech,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here today to participate to this Euromed Business Opportunities – Roadshow Lebanon, held under the patronage of the Ministry of Economy and Trade. I would like to thank Anima Investment Network, Berytech and the Beirut Creative Cluster for organising such an important event.

The European Union encourages cross-border innovative business events such as this one, which allows Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and international groups, start-ups, entrepreneurs and diaspora

talents and investors to get together and improve Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Boosting the international development of enterprises and enhancing business partnership is at the heart of today's event, which will be a good opportunity to mobilise Lebanese skills and talents and unleash the Lebanese creative spark.

As you know, the European Union has been supporting the private sector in Lebanon over the past years and believes that this sector is an engine for growth and job creation. Since 2003, more than 70 million Euros have been allocated to enhance the capacity of SMEs, to boost the private sector and to improve the business environment. This support is particularly relevant now, when so many Lebanese companies struggle in their daily business because of the difficult situation in the country and the region.

With this financial support, the European Union aims to ensure that the Lebanese private sector, known for its dynamism and resilience, fully develops its potential. Funding business incubators - such as Berytech or the Beirut Creative Cluster -, supporting the improvement of quality, innovation and competitiveness of enterprises, creating financing mechanisms for SMEs, helping to modernise the National Quality

Infrastructure and other public institutions, are some of the many interventions of the European Union in Lebanon.

We are convinced that the private sector has a key role to play in the economic development of the country. Worth stressing, future economic growth and jobs opportunities will increasingly have to come from innovation in products, services and business models. Innovation is not only a crucial investment for the future of the European Union. It is also crucial for Lebanon. We are happy to witness such a high potential in Lebanese entrepreneurs and we are confident in the potential and the future of this country.

On that note, let me end by thanking again the Minister of Economy and Trade, H.E. Dr Alain Hakim, and the organisers for the continued efforts to strengthen the cooperation between the European Union and Lebanon.

I thank you all for your attention and wish you a fruitful match-making event.
