

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

***Lebanon – EU Aviation Safety Partnership Forum 2***

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

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

H.E. Mr Ghazi Zeaiter, Minister of Public Works and Transport,  
Mr Mohammad El Hout, Chairman of Middle East Airlines,  
Mr Martin Robinson , CEO of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association in the  
United Kingdom,  
Mr Daniel El Haiby, Acting Director General of Civil Aviation,  
Mr Omar Kaddouha, Director of Flight Safety,  
Dear Colleagues from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA),  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The first Lebanon-EU Aviation Safety Partnership Forum was held at these premises four months ago, and I thank the organisers of this second forum for giving us an opportunity to assess the evolution made since then as regards (i) the situation of aviation in Lebanon and (ii) the partnership between the European Union and Lebanon in this field.

The regular dialogue between the Lebanese authorities and the European Commission on air safety, as well as the support given by the European Aviation Safety Agency are very important and should pave the way for gradually reaching a safe international aviation system.

Today there are very important issues that concern the aviation partnership between the EU and Lebanon: when it comes to flight safety, risk management,

quality management, flight operations; all issues which, due to their technicality and their impact on the safety of each flight operated from or to Lebanon, cannot be dealt with lightly.

For many years, the EU wants to develop a solid aviation partnership with many countries in its neighbourhood. For instance we have signed in 2006 an aviation agreement with Morocco that, not only opens up the markets gradually, but also aims at approximating the legislation of the two parties. This fosters fair competition, regulatory convergence and new opportunities for operators.

We have had a similar approach with Lebanon, but important pre-requisites that could allow for a faster pace of implementation are not yet fulfilled. As foreseen in law n° 481/2002, Lebanon needs an independent Civil Aviation Authority that should be appropriately resourced, in order to ensure a reliable safety oversight. We recalled this at many occasions, in particular during the recent technical meetings held on 27 February 2014 with Lebanese authorities, EASA and the EU Member States. Should specific needs appear in terms of capacity building once this authority is formally institutionalised, the European Union could look for a potential earmarking of funds from a bilateral cooperation envelope for this purpose.

Let me hereby reiterate the European Union's commitment to working closely with the Lebanese authorities in order to reach the aim of building up a safe international aviation system, whilst keeping an eye on the current safety risks and guaranteeing that they are adequately contained.

Thank you.