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STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the government formation in Lebanon

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"I congratulate Prime Minister Tammam Salam on the formation of the new Lebanese government, after difficult negotiations and following the strong engagement of President Michel Suleiman. I warmly welcome the government formation, a key step in Lebanon's efforts to tackle effectively the extraordinary security, economic and political challenges the country is facing, in particular the unprecedented refugee influx.

I trust that the new government will renew strong and proactive governance in all sectors, maintaining peace and security in Lebanon including by the reassertion of a policy of dissociation from the Syrian conflict, upholding the spirit of the Baabda Declaration and the culture of dialogue, complying with its international obligations, and ensuring the continuity of Lebanon's institutions by the timely preparation and execution of this year's elections in accordance with the Constitution.

The EU will continue to contribute to meeting Lebanon's growing needs in the face of the current challenges, and to support the implementation of its reform agenda. The EU is steadfast in its commitment to the unity, stability, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

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I pay tribute to the outgoing Prime Minister Mikati and his ministers and I look forward to an intensive and productive cooperation with Prime Minister Salam and his government.”
