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EU-Lebanon Association Council: cementing ties through a renewed partnership

The European Union-Lebanon Association Council took place today in Brussels. This is the sixth meeting since the entry into force of the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement in 2006. The EU-Lebanon Association Council was chaired by the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Adnan Mansour. Minister of Economy and Trade Nicolas Nahhas, who is the focal point for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in the Lebanese Government, also attended the meeting. The Cypriot Minister of Foreign Affairs Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis attended the meeting on behalf of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton. The European Commission was represented by Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle.

The Association Council was an opportunity to take stock of the achievements to date of EU-Lebanon partnership in the framework of the ENP and to define joint priorities for future cooperation. It was also an opportunity to exchange views on the developments in Lebanon and the European Union, as well as on the situation in the Middle East region.

The European side reiterated the EU's commitment to Lebanon's unity, stability, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, particularly given the deteriorating situation in Syria. The EU expressed as well support for the efforts of the Lebanese government to maintain stability in the country.

For its part, the Lebanese delegation stressed the importance of developing broad bilateral relations towards more tangible results for the business community and the citizens, and highlighted the importance of stepping up cooperation in all fields. Lebanon also reiterated its determination to advance the implementation of its reform agenda with the support of the EU.

P R E S S

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The Association Council discussed the new Action Plan which will guide EU-Lebanon cooperation in the years 2013-2015. The main priorities of the Action Plan were endorsed by the European and Lebanese sides. The Action Plan will serve as one of the milestones of the EU-Lebanon consolidated and sustainable partnership.

Both sides welcomed the comprehensive discussions which involved extensive consultations of Lebanese ministries, EU services and civil society in both Lebanon and Europe.

The European Union and Lebanon also recognised the importance of promptly and efficiently implementing the agreed priority objectives of the Action Plan, which are based on Lebanon's reform agenda. Their achievement will bring important benefits to the Lebanese population in the economic, social and political fields, as well as for the European Union.
