



Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries

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1. Objectives and political context of the visit

A Working Group of the Mashreq Delegation comprised of Chaiman Mário David, Vice Chairs Marisa Matias, Saïd el-Khadraoui, Elena Antonescu, Frieda Brepoels, and Ria Oomen-Ruitjen visited Lebanon from 31 October-5 November 2010.

In this first visit to Lebanon under the current legislature, the Delegation's main purpose was to renew contacts with the Lebanese parliament and key political leaders. Thematically, the programme put an emphasis on assessing three main issues: 1. The security situation and the implementation of UNIFIL's mandate in Southern Lebanon in particular. 2. The situation of the Palestinian refugees and the reconstruction of the refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared near Tripoli. 3. The state of play of electoral reform as a follow-up to the EU election observation mission to Lebanon in 2009.

These thematic issues could be tackled as planned. Yet, domestic tension over a possible indictment of Hezbollah members by the Special Tribunal on Lebanon (STL) triggered by rumours and speculations over a new outbreak of sectarian violence took a prominent role in all political meetings.

Indeed the Delegation found a political environment in which the STL issue absorbs the whole political energy of the country while key legislation is on hold. Neither is the Parliament fully operational nor could scheduled meetings of the Council of Ministers and the National Dialogue take place during our Delegation visit.

Lebanese parties had been generating an artificial dilemma over the past months by insinuating a choice between support of the STL to unveil the truth about the assassination of former PM Hariri and the broader goal of keeping Lebanon a stable country. The Delegation was unanimous that it would not let itself drag into such a choice, but rather uphold core EU values in external relations including the respect of international law.

2. Security

Following the incident on the Israeli-Lebanese border on 3 August 2010 which came after a period of relative calm since 2006, but killed four people and highlighted the precarious stability in the South, the Delegation sought insight in the conditions of UNIFIL operations and UNIFIL interaction with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

While UNIFIL has been deployed in the area since 1978, its current mandate and scope (15,000 staff including from 17 EU Member States) is enshrined in UNSCR 1701 which was adopted against the background of the Israeli war against Lebanon in 2006. UNIFIL patrols, monitors the cessation of hostilities, ensures stability in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and prepares a gradual transfer of responsibilities to the LAF with the aim of restoring effective authority of the Lebanese government in the area.

UNIFIL received the Delegation at their headquarters in Naqoura on the Southern Lebanese border with Israel. The Delegation met with UNIFIL Commander General Alberto Asarta Cuevas, officials and the Portuguese contingent.

Main issues brought to the attention of the Delegation included the demarcation of the Israeli Lebanese border along the "Blue Line"¹. Whereas 66 km have already been demarcated, UNIFIL expects 80% of the border demarcation to be achieved within two years. Progress, however, is slowed down by demining activities. Another issue concerns denial of free movement to UNIFIL troops by civilians who happen to drag UNIFIL troops into often stage managed incidents. The most important issue are systematic violations of Lebanese airspace

¹The Blue Line is a border demarcation which was published by the United Nations on 7 June 2000 for the purposes of determining whether Israel had fully withdrawn from Lebanon.

mostly by Israeli drones, but also by warplanes. In general, UNIFIL representatives felt that the implementation of their mandate is dissociated from the STL issue.

On the areas of contention between Lebanon and Israel, UNIFIL expects a soon Israeli withdrawal from Ghajar (a border village which Israel occupies in violation of the Blue Line). UNIFIL is to look into a temporary arrangement in case this is decided. However, UNIFIL has no mandate on another area of contention, namely the line of buoys marking the Sea border south of Naqoura where Lebanese fishing vessels are confronted with the IDF. UNIFIL sees also a major risk in Palestinian groups firing rockets into Israeli territory, underlines, however, the limited impact of these artisanal rockets.

To better implement UNSCR 1701, UNIFIL has established a tripartite Forum with LAF and IDF. The Forum operates successfully as a confidence building mechanism. Under this framework discussions are currently under way on how to prevent incidents like the one on 3 August.

The Delegation found a rather complex UN representation in Lebanon which includes in addition to UNIFIL, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) headed by Michael William. UNSCOL was established in 2000 to help the Lebanese State recover control over Southern Lebanon. In 2005, its mandate was expanded to the whole of Lebanon with the main task being to monitor the implementation of UNSCR 1701.

The Delegation met with UNSCOL senior adviser Diego Zorillo who explained that UNSCOL coordinates all UN offices in Lebanon, but is not integrated with UNIFIL since the EU troop contributors didn't want to see their troops under civilian command. It seems that the inflow of arms from Syria is concentrated at the South-Eastern border of Lebanon. A running border management project initiated by Germany on the northern border serves as a pilot and should be extended to the South.

3. Palestinian refugees

Lebanon hosts some 400,000 Palestinian refugees. In collective memories the Palestinian issue is closely linked to the civil war and Lebanese perceive in particular the refugee camps as a challenge to the country's security and stability. In May 2007 the issue of Palestinian refugees and Sunni fundamentalist-inspired militancy reemerged at the northern Lebanese refugee camp Nahr al-Bared. There, the small Al-Qaeda-inspired Fatah al-Islam group, made up of both Palestinians and foreign jihadists, had been behind a spate of criminal activity until the Lebanese Army decided to intervene. The three months fighting claimed the lives of 168 Lebanese soldiers, 226 militants, an estimated 52 civilians. This Lebanese Army intervention was the first since a deal struck in 1969, which prohibits the army from entering the camps and puts the Palestinian groups in charge of the security in the camps.

Nahr al-Bared camp was completely destroyed in 2007 and the adjacent areas had sustained severe damage. Roads and water and sewerage networks were badly damaged or destroyed. 31,000 refugees had to flee and abandon their homes. Today, the refugees live in temporary shelters adjacent to the Nahr al-Bared area or in the near Beddawi camp which in 2007 saw a population increase from 15,000 to 30,000 almost overnight. UNRWA caters for their shelter, food security, water and sanitation, health, and education.

The EU's response combines different budget lines (ECHO, ENPI, IfS). From 2007-2010 it amounted to 36.2M€ compared to an estimated overall need for reconstruction of 277M USD.



UNRWA is currently carrying out the unprecedented task for a UN organisation to reconstruct an entire city. The Delegation witnessed the multiple constraints which make this task highly



challenging. Reconstruction has scrupulously to respect the former demarcation area of the camp, leaving very little space for an already dense population. For security reasons, the LAF request broader roads than before, thus further cutting available space for housing, and restrict the height of new buildings to four floors. Additional constraints stem from the huge amount of rubble that had to be removed and unexploded ordnance that had to be cleared. Together with the discovery of archaeological sites which needed to be explored and protected; both factors raised the costs and extended the duration of reconstruction.

Moreover, Nahr el-Bared reconstruction aims at recreating the social fabric of the destroyed camp both and a comprehensive mapping of every apartment and the assets of each family had to be undertaken. Better housing quality in terms of air and light and "green" construction in terms of sewerage

While UNRWA has undertaken initiatives through business reactivation grants, capacity development, employment services centres, vocational training and apprenticeships, economic recovery of the areas adjacent to the camp is hampered by restrictions on movement imposed by the LAF. Together with the slow pace of delivery of reconstructed housing units, the severe access regime is the major grievance brought forward by the Palestinian stakeholders with whom the Delegation met. The Delegation heard from the Minister of the Interior Ziad Baroud that he wants to issue refugee ID cards for all Palestinians which would facilitate both control and free movement, but that the Lebanese government cannot fund the measure.

Some Palestinian stakeholders also complain about discrimination between Lebanese citizens or Palestinians holding Lebanese passports who received financial compensation for their losses while neighbouring Palestinians without Lebanese passport haven't seen money from the amounts pledged at the donors' conference in Vienna in 2008.

The Delegation understood that UNRWA struggles to cope with weak Lebanese interlocutors. Indeed the Lebanese administration is feeble, competencies are unclear and/or overlapping. The authorities are apparently lacking an overall vision of the governance of the camp and on how to deal with the camp after reconstruction. Truly, the Palestinian issue in Lebanon is linked to the traumatic experience of the civil war and progress on reconciliation is still missing. Hence for the time being, the security perspective seems to be the authorities' only approach to the governance of the camp. Many political issues linked to the Palestinians require the Lebanese State to take decisions. However, the fragmented Lebanese political system seems unable to take these decisions and misses the advantage of an unprecedented situation where the authorities are in control of a Palestinian refugee camp.

Concerning the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in general, the Delegation commended the symbolically important decision that the Lebanese Parliament took in August 2010. For the first time the Palestinian refugees were formally granted access to the labour market and may enjoy social security and medical care, but only upon retirement. The Delegation also heard the demands of the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation (PHRO) which claims benefits of social security equal to Lebanese workers, exempting registered refugees from the need to obtain work permits, and dropping the condition of reciprocity (i.e. compared to Lebanese workers in Palestine) required for joining some syndicates that regulate liberal professions. Due to the political stalemate in Lebanon implementation decrees to this legislation are still missing. It will also depend on them if gaps left by the amended laws can be bridged. In the meanwhile PHRO asks for allowing Palestinian refugees to extract permanent work permits, eliminating the need to employers' guarantee to obtain such permit, and lifting administrative and financial burdens which discriminate Palestinian employment seekers.

4. Electoral reform

The European Parliament had been closely involved with Lebanese elections over the last years. Parliamentary Delegations joined the EU Election Observation Missions in 2005 and 2009 and associated themselves to the recommendations on electoral reform. The Delegation met with Minister of the Interior, Ziad Baroud, to discuss the state of play of the implementation of these reforms.

Ziad Baroud is former Secretary General of LADE (Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections) and former Member of the Boutros Commission which drafted an electoral reform law in 2006 that was never passed due to the Israeli war on Lebanon.

The new electoral law adopted in 2008 which served as the basis for the 2009 parliamentary took only 30 percent of the Boutros proposals. Key reforms were rejected such as a mixed electoral system combining majority and proportional voting, a modern and transparent mechanism of election monitoring, a 30% quota of female candidates on electoral lists, lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18, and the right to vote for Lebanese citizens living abroad. The absence of pre-printed ballots is another case in point for the flaws of the incumbent system.

Mr Baroud appeared strongly committed to a new electoral comprising the Boutros proposals and additional reforms. However, structural problems and lack of interest of political parties prevent reform. In this sense, the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a new municipal election law for the May 2010 elections was a success, but the law could not be voted in Parliament which is not operational. According to Baroud abolishing confessionalism is impossible for the time being. Hence he suggested managing it instead.

Mr Baroud wishes to see procedures in place which ensure momentum even beyond his mandate. Part of his efforts to enact whatever is possible without the formal hurdle of adopting a new law is his policy not to chair the Electoral Commission which he prefers to work without ministerial oversight. Another measure enacted is to grant the civil society campaign for electoral reform (around 30 NGOs) an office within the Ministry from where it can accompany the reform efforts and document flaws.

Asked after the role of municipalities and decentralisation, Baroud pointed to comprehensive prerogatives combined with few and uneven resources at municipal level. Lebanon counts too many municipalities (964) with Beirut (budget: \$350M) on one hand comparing to hardly viable micro-municipalities on the other. Baroud praised the new approach to decentralisation under the financial angle which includes the consultation of local and sectoral stakeholders and encouraged associations between municipalities to enhance efficiency and synergy. According to PM Hariri, decentralisation is part of the government's programme, but today the moment is not right: "People would oppose it for the sake of opposing it".

The Delegation understood that conceptually and structurally electoral-law reform, decentralisation, and overcoming vested interests in the confessional system are intertwined. Ziad Baroud leads an almost impossible battle against the complexity of an entrenched order.

5. The Special Tribunal on Lebanon

The Special Tribunal on Lebanon is at the core of the current political crisis in Lebanon. As a consequence the issue was raised with all interlocutors during the visit.

Positions vary between and within the 14 March and the 8 March camps.¹ Hezbollah is opposing the STL in principle which it perceives as a political instrument against it. Hezbollah believed itself in a comfortable domestic position after the Doha agreement in 2008, but considers a possible indictment of its members by the STL as an existential threat. Mohammed Raad (leader of the parliamentary bloc of Hezbollah) rejected the idea that Hezbollah agreed to establishing the STL: "Parliament didn't approve. A divided Lebanon did and the President didn't sign. Hezbollah's approval was tacit and part of a compromise deal". In contrast, Samir Geagea (Leader of the Lebanese Forces and Christian ally of PM Hariri) insisted the STL was fruit of a national consensus after the Cedar revolution.

On a more practical level, political factions disagree on the sequencing of the next steps. 14 March wants to see indictments published before judging the work of the STL. 8 March considers that the Tribunal has lost its credibility and that investigations into the affair of false testimonies should be conducted before issuing accusations. Michel Aoun (leader of the Free Patriotic movement and Hezbollah's ally) wants the West to halt its aid to the STL until the latter recovers its credibility. Mohammed Raad asserted that the STL will postpone the indictment until March 2011 upon PM Hariri's demand, but warned strongly against a new outbreak of violence in case Hezbollah members are indicted.

President Sleiman stated that the Lebanese public's confidence in the STL has eroded: "The Tribunal has now to look into all hypotheses and conduct a thorough investigation in order to produce a solid indictment."

PM Hariri commented on the STL saying: "Impunity has to stop. I chose the civilised way, not vengeance". He further recalled that the STL was established by UNSCR 1757 after the expiry of an ultimatum, as Lebanon itself failed to set it up. The STL is a matter of fact and only a new Security Council Resolution could change it. For Hariri Lebanon's stability is not at stake: "Hezbollah could topple the government tomorrow. They do not need a military coup". He firmly believed that the national unity government is the right formula: "Ta'if (i.e. the agreement that put an end to the civil war in 1990) is about partnership. But this requires every party's responsibility".

6. Regional situation and Middle East Peace Process

Many interlocutors including Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Hussein Al Shami, raised the Middle East Peace Process with the Delegation. President Sleiman regretted the current stalemate and expressed his hope for intra-Palestinian reconciliation. Importantly, he insisted that Israeli-Syrian negotiations should be led in parallel to push the Palestinian track and the Process as a whole. He also expressed his concern over the Israeli policy of judaisation in the occupied territories.

PM Hariri stated that the window of hope for the Peace Process is closing. When the Process started in 1991, the challenge of Islamist extremism was not the same. Today it is a major threat and Lebanon has to pay setbacks in the Peace Process. He further deplored the right-shift in Israel: "I don't blame Israel for everything. But the Palestinian question is at the core and has to be solved".

¹ Around the Cedar Revolution leading to the departure of the Syrian troops in 2005, two political blocs were formed and remain loosely intact until today. Backed by US, Saudi Arabia and France, anti-Syrian 14 March was formed when the Sunni Muslim Saad al-Hariri joined forces with Walid Jumblatt, head of the Druze community along with Christian leaders. In August 2009 Jumblatt quit 14 March. 8 March, backed by Iran and Syria, comprises Shi'a Hezbollah and Amal and the Christian Free Patriotic Movement led by Michel Aoun who shifted camps in 2006.

MP Yassin Jaber (Amal) noted that the Arab-Israeli conflict poisons the work of the Political Committee of PA UfM. While feeling that the Members of the European Parliament have a good understanding of the issues at stake, he believed that there is no Israeli partner for peace.

The Delegation regretted the EU's lack of ambition and pleaded for its stronger political involvement in the negotiations. It also invited the Arab League to take bigger risks and promote the Arab Peace Initiative. Asked on their position towards the Arab Peace Initiative, no interlocutor advocated its withdrawal, but all, to various degrees, shared scepticism over Israel's willingness to achieve peace. MP Farid el-Kazen (Free Patriotic Movement) said that the Initiative needs an Israeli counter-offer. MP Mohammed Raad (Head of the parliamentary bloc of Hezbollah) expressed his doubt that there is any chance of a settlement with Israel.

On Lebanon's relationship with Iran and Syria, Michel Aoun commented saying that the alliance with both increased Lebanon's space of security. PM Hariri commented the recent controversial visit of Iranian President Ahmadinejad to Lebanon saying: "Ahmadinejad's visit was for the EU, telling you: if you want to talk about the region, talk to me."

7. Interparliamentary meeting

The Delegation deplores that, as apparently it happened with previous EP Delegations, it could not meet with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

The formal interparliamentary meeting took place in the newly renovated premises of the Lebanese Parliament. On the Lebanese side, Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Abdellatif el Zein (the most long-serving Lebanese MP and member of Amal) was accompanied by Yassin Jaber (Amal) and Walid Khoury (Free Patriotic Movement) who are regular participants to PA UpM meetings, and Farid el Khazen (Free Patriotic Movement), the rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Committee. All belong to the 8 March coalition. The polemics on how to deal with the false testimonies in relation to the STL investigations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the prospects of negotiations and the Arab Peace Initiative made up the core of the discussions with the Lebanese counterparts.

A dinner offered by the Head of the EU Delegation enabled the Delegation to exchange with additional Members of Parliament including Ahmed Fatfat (PM Hariri's Future Movement), Elie Aoun and Marwan Hamadé (Democratic Gathering, the parliamentary bloc of Walid Joumblatt), Ghassan Moukhayber (Free Patriotic Movement). In this context, these and other issues like electoral reform or the current debate about the precarious situation of housemaids in Lebanon could be touched upon.

The Delegation would have it found easier to hold an interparliamentary meeting gathering representatives of all political forces. In fact, it turned out that not all Members of the Lebanese Parliament were aware of the visit of our Delegation. In order to cover the whole political spectrum, the Delegation had to pay individual visits to key political figures at their respective residences including Mohammed Raad, Michel Aoun, Samir Geagea, and Mohammed Kabbani (Future Movement). The latter, who has been member of a Friendship Committee with the European Parliament since 2003, complained about the lack of a systematic follow-up of bilateral parliamentary relations. As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee he joined MP Joseph Maalouf (Lebanese Forces and Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee) in regretting the "selective invitation" to the interparliamentary meeting with the EP Delegation.

8. EU-Lebanon cooperation

The total ENPI allocation (2011-2013) amounts to €150 million. The average €50 million a year represents a 7% increase over the previous programming period, leaving Lebanon with one of the highest allocations in terms of aid per inhabitant.

The Delegation understood that EU cooperation has shifted from humanitarian and reconstruction aid after the 2006 conflict with Israel to the revitalisation of the Lebanon's socioeconomic structures. The EU accompanies the modernisation of specific sectors. It also answers urgent needs and priorities (support to elections in 2009, assistance for the reconstruction of Nahr el Bared refugee camp in 2007).

In practice, the three priorities of EU assistance in the years 2011-2013 (National Indicative Programme) receive uneven shares: political reform (16.7%), social and economic reforms (60.7%) and recovery and reinvigoration of the economy (22.7%).

Overall EU intervention focuses on:

- Governance, security, rule of law
- Support to Private Sector Development
- Education
- Recovery: Infrastructure; Demining (where the EU is the first donor)
- Support to municipalities (capacity building, project management, training of staff)
- Support to Civil Society and Human Rights
- Palestinian refugees: focus on social programmes (education) and infrastructure.

Unlike "non traditional donors" (Qatar, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait etc.) the EU Delegation systematically seeks the involvement of the Lebanese authorities and aims at long term capacity building in order to sustain cooperation.

Specific ENP tools like twinning are appreciated, albeit not fully exploited in Lebanon. Generally speaking, the Delegation found that Lebanon does in fact not make full use of the opportunities offered by the ENP. Weak capacity of the Lebanese administration and a complex political environment are considerable obstacles for the implementation of EU cooperation.

In this sense it was telling that EU-Lebanon cooperation was not on the agenda of the interparliamentary meeting. Indeed, the Delegation got the impression that cooperation on the ENP Action Plan is not a major concern, at least at parliamentary level. This situation is somehow related to the overall political blockade of Lebanese politics where Parliament has accumulated a backlog of 69 legislative acts, part of which are linked to structural reform.

Unlike in neighbouring countries, no obstacles to freedom of association hamper Civil Society activities in Lebanon. Rather are NGOs affiliated to parties and/or families, promoting their interests, with only few non-affiliated NGOs. This specific structure of Civil Society in Lebanon limits its capacity to act as a factor of change. EU cooperation has to cope with this and aims, in term, at developing complementarities between NGO and government activities.

Visit of an EU-funded project in the Higher Chouf region



A strong Druze leadership has preserved the green area of the Higher Chouf region from salvage urbanism which prevails in most of the other parts of Lebanon. The Higher Chouf is part of 12 Lebanese pilot areas where the EU works with official and informal clusters of municipalities to strengthen their capacities.

As mentioned above, the EU seeks structural changes in government practice. It encourages municipalities to establish local development plans in



consultation with the population, to formulate of priority development projects and to raise funds for their implementation. The Delegation visited two projects: a water reservoir to enable steady irrigation of local agriculture and wooden chalets to generate local employment and income by attracting tourists to the area.

The Delegation understood that the hope behind such micro projects is to show the participating municipalities that structural changes in governance pay off and can translate into concrete benefits. However, it feels that micro projects should maximise local resources and labour force. This seemed not the case with regard to the Scandinavian-style wooden chalets which were in fact imported ready-made construction sets.

Support to the Lebanese Parliament

The European Parliament is strongly committed to promoting parliamentary democracy, in particular in the EU neighbourhood area. This is why the Delegation decided to look into the implementation of a new EU-funded project of parliamentary support in Lebanon. The EU co-finances 500,000 out of 625,000€ for a 21-months project run by the Westminster Foundation. It aims at strengthening technical capacities of the Lebanese Parliament to perform effective legislative and budgetary oversight functions.

Legislative and financial scrutiny in the Lebanese parliament is slow and insufficient as MPs and Committees have limited support and a number of employees who mainly do secretarial tasks and do not have the required backgrounds to serve and advise Committees from an expert point of view. The project established an Advisory Unit which is hosted by the Lebanese Parliament. It helps the Finance Committee Administration and Justice Committee with assessing their needs, recruiting, providing and using skilful resources; it assists them with planning and determining priorities and with communication with key stakeholders.

The overall ambition of the project is to enhance Parliament's impact and role through strengthening its key functions and bringing committee members together regardless of their partisan affiliation. While the impact of the project will necessarily stay limited unless the confessional Lebanese system as a whole evolves, positive echoes from our parliamentary counterparts suggest that it is a contribution in the right direction.

9. Conclusions

EU cooperation in Lebanon has to deal with a complex and precarious system of governance. Expectations should therefore not run too high and - as with other ENP beneficiary countries - the financial allocation to Lebanon which is one of the highest per capita in the region should take into account the absorption capacity of the country,

President Sleiman displayed a vision to move beyond Lebanon's entrenched confessionalism. PM Hariri elaborated clear ideas on economic and infrastructure development, including in the energy sector. Yet, prospects for structural political reforms are dire and the implementation of sectoral reforms hinges on functioning political institutions.

Hopes for transforming Lebanon according to the parameters of the Ta'if agreement, with electoral reform as a backbone, have almost vanished since most of the parties have vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Nevertheless, the EP should closely follow evolutions with regard to electoral reform in Lebanon and demonstrate through its activities its unbroken interest in seeing progress in this sector.

Lebanon is once again living a severe crisis putting stress on the stability of the country. Political actors tend to call third parties to witness their respective grievances and seek external sponsors for their domestic agenda. In the current context of polemics over the STL, the EU must avoid taking sides and insist that promoting justice and stability are not incompatible. Lebanese perceive the EU still as rather balanced compared to the U.S. or single Member States. This

should encourage the Member States to support an active EU diplomacy for the sake of Lebanon's future as a beacon of pluralism and peaceful coexistence in the region.

The repercussions of the unsolved Middle East conflict partly explain Lebanon's internal problems. To some extent, however, the conflict is used as a pretext to mask home-made deficits. With regard to governance of the reconstructed Nahr el-Bared camp, the Lebanese authorities might be loosing an opportunity. The Delegation is convinced that an inclusive approach to security beyond its military aspects can prepare a sustainable cohabitation, without prejudice to a final settlement of the Palestinian refugee question.

UNRWA is more than a humanitarian agency. It plays an important stabilising role by providing vital public services and serving as the refugees' key interlocutor with the Lebanese authorities. Importantly, UNRWA prepares future generations of Palestinians by running not only primary education as in other host countries, but also secondary education. Therefore UNRWA deserves our full support.

As other Arab countries, Lebanon wishes the EU to play a political role in promoting a peace solution in the Middle East which is in line with its financial efforts. The Lebanese actors commend the EU's commitment to international law, but criticise a policy of double standards when it comes to the implementation of UN resolutions involving Israel. This applies to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also to UNSCR 1701.

The Delegation shares this view. The EU must improve its coherence by claiming the respect of international law including UNSCR 1701 from all its partners in order to uphold its credibility. The Delegation entirely supports UNIFIL in carrying out its mandate.