



Brussels, 16 December 2025
(OR. en)

16939/25

MAMA 292
MED 107
RL 7

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Relations with Lebanon - European Union's position for the Association
Council's 9th meeting (Brussels, 15 December 2025)

Delegations will find attached the European Union's position for the 9th EU-Lebanon Association Council.

9TH MEETING OF THE EU–LEBANON

ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

(Brussels, 15 December 2025)

Statement of the European Union

1. On the occasion of the ninth meeting of the EU–Lebanon Association Council, the European Union (EU) reaffirms a strong commitment to deepening its ties with Lebanon. Today’s meeting marks the beginning of a renewed phase in our bilateral partnership, building on the Association Agreement, which forms the legal, institutional and political basis of the partnership and cooperation between the EU and Lebanon, and gives new impetus to our relationship. The EU aims to jointly adopt Partnership Priorities with Lebanon as a framework document to reinforce our joint cooperation.
2. Lebanon represents a unique model of coexistence and diversity. In line with the European Council Conclusions of 23 October 2025, the EU reiterates its support for the Lebanese government and its people. It welcomes the reform-oriented efforts of the Lebanese authorities to stabilise the economic and security situation and supports the government’s efforts to exercise its sovereignty over its whole territory and its plan to establish the state’s monopoly on arms while recognising the challenging environment in which the Lebanese authorities operate. In line with the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2790, the EU expresses strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, stability and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognised borders.
3. A new opportunity has emerged in Lebanon after numerous multifaceted political, financial and security crises, with the election of a new President and the formation of a new government opening the way to strengthen state institutions, restore full sovereignty and steer the country toward lasting stability and prosperity. The EU is committed to collaborating with the Lebanese government, institutions and civil society to enhance the country's political, economic, and security landscape, and to help navigate the multiple challenges — domestic, regional, and global — it faces.

4. In this vein, the EU is ready to assess options to modernise the Association Agreement, and to explore possibilities to elevate its relations with Lebanon to the level of a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership, pending concrete progress on structural reforms.

Global and regional security challenges

5. The EU emphasises the strategic significance of the EU-Lebanon partnership in addressing the consequences of the ongoing regional and global crises. In this new context, it is crucial for the EU and Lebanon to reaffirm their joint commitment to a rules-based international order, international law, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and an effective multilateral system.

6. As regards the situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, the EU welcomes the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 2803 about the operationalisation of the Comprehensive Plan to end the Gaza Conflict and stands ready to contribute to the implementation of the plan through the variety of the tools at its disposal, based on the EU's longstanding engagement and substantial support for peace in the region, in a consistent manner with international law, including international humanitarian law. The EU is contributing to the international efforts on stabilisation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in particular through its CSDP missions EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS. The EU will continue supporting the Palestinian Authority and its ongoing reform agenda notably through the Palestine Donor Group, also in view of its return to Gaza. The EU reiterates its unwavering commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council (UNSC), on the basis of the two-state solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine living side-by-side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both states. The EU also recalls the High-Level Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in New York co-led by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The EU reaffirms its call for safe access to the holy sites and for the Status Quo to be upheld. The special status and character of Jerusalem and its Old City, the inviolability of its sacred spaces and the viability of all its communities must be preserved and respected by all. The EU reiterates its strong condemnation of the escalation of violence in the West Bank, following increased settler violence, including against Christian communities, the expansion of settlements, and Israel's military operations. The EU also strongly condemns continued terrorist attacks against Israel.

7. More than three years after the start of Russia's full-scale, illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine in serious violations of international law, including the principles of the United Nations Charter, undermining global security and stability and inflicting untold suffering on the people of Ukraine, the EU stands firmly and unwaveringly with Ukraine and its people. The EU welcomes Lebanon's support for the UN General Assembly resolutions of 2 March 2022, 24 March 2022, 12 October 2022, and 24 February 2025. Lebanon's support in multilateral fora for a rules-based international order is an important element of EU-Lebanon relations. The EU underlines the importance of supporting the call for a full and unconditional ceasefire with the objective of ending Russia's war of aggression and restoring peace, which must be comprehensive, just and lasting, based on the principles of the UN Charter and of international law, including sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

EU support for renewed relations between Lebanon and Syria

8. The EU reiterates its support to a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition in Syria, free from harmful foreign interference, and the importance of protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Syrians regardless of their ethnic or religious background and of transitional justice and reconciliation. The EU will continue to support Syria's path to stabilisation, democratization, inclusivity and reconstruction, in line with the Council Conclusions of 23 June 2025.
9. The EU welcomes recent high-level contacts between Lebanon and Syria, and their efforts to define new relationships, respectful of the sovereignty of each State, with the objective to bring concrete progress on key bilateral issues — including cooperation on border management, border demarcation, fate of the missing, detainees and assets. The EU stands ready to back initiatives that foster stability, reciprocal respect, economic opportunities, migration management and governance, and constructive neighbourhood ties.

10. The EU welcomes the ceasefire agreement of 27 November 2024 between Israel and Lebanon, and reiterates its call on all parties to respect and implement it. The EU recalls in that context the central role of the monitoring mechanism in order to achieve the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement. The EU also reiterates the fundamental stabilisation role of the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Southern Lebanon. Notwithstanding the completion of UNIFIL's mandate scheduled in December 2026, the EU will continue to support the Lebanese state sovereignty, territorial integrity and state building efforts, including by contributing to the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF). In this context, the EU calls for strengthened cooperation between the LAF and UNIFIL.

11. The EU calls on all parties to implement the UNSC resolutions 2790, 1701 and 1559 that require the disarmament of all non-state armed groups and Israeli withdrawal from areas North of the Blue line. The EU is seriously concerned by heightened regional tensions and the continued violations by Israeli Defence Forces of the ceasefire agreement, in particular the targeting of UNIFIL personnel, civilians and civilian infrastructure, which have resulted in civilian casualties. The EU condemns any attacks against UNIFIL and recalls that the safety and security of UN personnel and premises must be ensured in accordance with international law and UNSC Resolution 1701. The EU deplores Hezbollah's continued refusal to fully abide by the provisions of the ceasefire agreement.

12. The EU expresses its concerns regarding the risks of escalation and calls for the reinforcement of international support to a diplomatic solution. The EU welcomes Lebanon openness to constructive negotiations with Israel and the recent direct talks. Security concerns should be addressed through the monitoring mechanism established under the ceasefire agreement and in adherence to international law, and through further support to and strengthening of the LAF. The EU stands ready to facilitate discussions at various levels on comprehensive security and political parameters to achieve a lasting peace.

13. The EU strongly supports the Lebanese Government's decision of 5 August 2025 empowering the LAF to develop and implement a plan for establishing a state monopoly on arms and encourages its swift implementation in full. This historical decision should lead to the disarmament of all non-state armed groups, including Hezbollah and to the reinstatement of state security institutions across the entire territory, including in Palestinian camps. In this context, the EU emphasises its commitment to supporting the government's initiatives and calls on all actors to fully cooperate. The EU also calls on all international partners to participate in the future conference in support of the LAF and ISF. The EU recognises that the extension of State sovereignty and legitimacy across all parts of the country also requires strengthened national and local public institutions that provide reliable services and socio-economic recovery for its population. The EU stands ready to support the government's plan for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.

14. The EU, together with Member States, affirms its readiness to intensify collaboration in peace, security, defence, including mediation and dialogue efforts. The EU is willing to seek avenues for additional cooperation on security issues such as border control, combatting organised crime and supporting maritime security, with the involvement of relevant EU agencies. The EU is committed to further enhance its assistance to the Lebanese security sector, through heightened support for the LAF, the ISF and other security agencies, building on the ongoing assistance measures under the European Peace Facility, NDICI and on other EU instruments, to ensure coherent, sustainable and tailored-based support. The EU will explore the possibility of further CSDP engagement in Lebanon aligned with Lebanese needs and priorities.

15. The EU reconfirms its willingness to cooperate with Lebanon in combatting terrorism and violent extremism in accordance with international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including through EU-funded bilateral and regional projects. The EU advocates for enhanced dialogue and cooperation with Lebanon in dedicated multilateral counter-terrorism platforms, such as the Global Coalition against Da'esh, and supports implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

16. The EU welcomes the steps taken by the Lebanese government to stabilize the economic situation, and stresses the pressing need to pursue economic, fiscal and financial sector reforms for sustainable recovery and to the benefit of the entire Lebanese population. The impacts of the economic crisis, particularly the banking sector's collapse and the precarious fiscal situation, continue to heavily burden the Lebanese people. The EU emphasises that credible and irreversible progress on reforming the banking sector, including the implementation of a robust banking resolution framework and the adoption of a gap law aligned with international standards as well as modernising public institutions is crucial to securing an IMF programme, which is a precondition for a potential EU macro-financial assistance programme, and will bolster cooperation with an implementation of programming through the Lebanese government as well as attract potential international investment. This would also pave the way for a reconstruction conference mobilizing Lebanon's international partners, that France stands ready to hold in early 2026.

17. Following Lebanon's placement on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list in October 2024, the EU notes Lebanon's commitment to implement its FATF Action Plan and stands ready to continue supporting the Lebanese authorities in their efforts to strengthen their AML/CFT framework.

18. The EU highlights the need for Lebanon to create fiscal space to recapitalize the Central Bank, strengthen state institutions and public services and advance reconstruction, especially in the South of Lebanon. The EU further stresses that negotiating a comprehensive debt restructuring and repayment plan with Eurobond holders is essential to exit sovereign debt default and restore financial stability. The EU recognises the scale of reconstruction needs and the importance of coordinated international support for urgent recovery. The EU confirms its readiness to support reconstruction once reforms are enacted.

19. The EU also remains committed to accompanying Lebanon towards a sustainable economy, as well as a sustainable agriculture and blue economy, enhanced energy security, digital transition, a functioning cost-efficient water and sanitation sector, the mainstreaming of climate adaptation and resilience. The EU will support also efforts to strengthen Lebanon's economic competitiveness and explore ways to enhance trade and investment opportunities. These are key areas of improvement in order to strengthen the social contract between state and citizen. The recent appointment of the electricity and telecommunications regulatory authorities are positive steps forward.

Rule of law, democratic principles and human rights

20. Promoting, protecting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms, are the cornerstone of democracy, security and socio-economic long-term stability. The EU underscores the importance of guaranteeing equality, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and belief, and the right to due process. Lebanese efforts on media sector reforms, including the submission of a draft media law to Parliament in May 2025, which aims to abolish pre-trial detention and prison sentences for speech-related offences and repeal criminal defamation and insult provisions are important steps forward. The EU reaffirms its strong and unequivocal opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and under all circumstances as capital punishment violates the inalienable right to life and is incompatible with human dignity and encourages the Lebanese authorities to formally abolish the death penalty. The EU is ready to support a continued engagement of Lebanese authorities to strengthen accountability and ensure respect for human rights in law and practice. The EU will also continue to support the work of civil society actors in this and all other areas of EU engagement. The EU encourages Lebanon to provide sufficient resources to the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared, which would bring answers to families of missing persons as a result of past and current armed conflicts, encouraging closure and reconciliation.

21. Lebanese authorities are committed to organise transparent and credible elections next spring, for which they have invited the EU to deploy an EU Election Observation Mission. The EU highlights the importance of holding these elections according to the agreed timetable, continuing the democratic process, a dialogue with the different stakeholders, including on follow-up of the recommendations from the 2022 Election Observation Mission.

22. The EU emphasises its commitment to gender equality and non-discrimination, underlining the importance for Lebanon to advance reforms of Lebanon's personal status laws and to remove remaining legal provisions that discriminate against women and girls. The EU stresses the importance of guaranteeing women's and girls' equal rights in family law, as well as their full enjoyment of human rights, and to strengthen their participation in political, public, and economic life. The EU believes that working on a Women, Peace and Security agenda and amplifying women's role and contribution to the political and economic transformation of the country will have a very positive impact on the Lebanese reform process. EU also highlights the need to respect, protect and fulfil the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI persons, including combating discrimination and violence against them

23. The EU welcomes the recent positive steps taken by the Lebanese government to launch the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the identification, assistance and protection of victims of trafficking. Concrete implementation of these measures is now essential to ensure follow-up.

24. A comprehensive reform of the judiciary will foster greater independence and ensure a more efficient and transparent justice system. It is therefore important that the Parliament finalises and adopts the relevant legislation, notably the law on the independence of the judiciary, as a first step towards respecting human rights and the rule of law in this area. This includes the prevention and prohibition of torture and the right to fair trial, which must be ensured. The EU stands ready to continue supporting the legislative reforms aiming to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive justice system, aligned with international standards. The EU highlights the enactment of the EU-Lebanon Agreement on judicial cooperation in criminal matters between EUROJUST and the competent authorities of Lebanon and invites the Lebanese authorities to establish a compliant data protection system, including an independent regulatory body, to facilitate its application and provide for adequate financial and human resources for authorities involved in judicial cooperation in criminal matters.
25. The EU calls for justice and accountability for the 4 August 2020 Beirut Port explosion and welcomes the steps taken recently that have enabled progress in the investigation. The EU calls upon the relevant authorities to ensure the conditions are in place so the investigation can be concluded in a thorough, impartial and transparent way and looks forward to the fair delivery of justice without further delay. The EU has called for an independent investigation in the UN Human Rights Council. The EU encourages Lebanese authorities to enhance their cooperation with relevant EU agencies and Member States' jurisdictions and stands ready to support the judiciary reform process.
26. The EU emphasises the importance of fighting and preventing corruption through ensuring the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and key legislation, as well as reinforcing the role and capacity of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and other mandated institutions. It is essential to translate commitments into action, ensuring that investigations and prosecutions are effectively pursued.
27. The EU underlines the need to promote transparency across public administrations, including through digitalisation, as accountability and openness are key to improving the efficiency and fairness of public service delivery for all citizens.

28. The EU encourages the Lebanese government to swiftly ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Human capital, people to people exchanges

29. The EU reaffirms its determination to strengthen people-to-people ties between Lebanon and Europe and to invest in Lebanon's human capital, explore the possibilities offered through, for example, Erasmus+ and within the team Europe approach. The EU stresses that the country's recovery and long-term stability depend on empowering its people — particularly youth and women — through research and innovation, culture, education, skills development, and access to decent work. Support will focus on improving access to quality education, advancing technical vocational education and training, and ensuring inclusive and equitable learning opportunities that enable all children and young people to learn and thrive in safe and supportive environments.

30. By investing in resilient schools, training centres, and community spaces, the EU and its Member States aims to enhance learning outcomes, strengthen employability, and foster entrepreneurship and the social economy. Recognising the private sector's vital role in resilience and recovery, the EU will continue supporting Lebanese enterprises — particularly micro, small and medium ones — while offering assistance to tackle structural challenges that hinder job creation and labour participation. These efforts, aligned with the priorities of the Pact for the Mediterranean and the Union for the Mediterranean, seek to promote decent work, boost economic inclusion, and place human capital at the centre of Lebanon's sustainable recovery.

31. The EU will continue its efforts to support Lebanon in addressing the needs and protection concerns of the persons in the most vulnerable situations, including internally displaced persons, vulnerable Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian refugees. This entails providing lifesaving interventions, including cash assistance for basic needs, access to food, targeted support for access to documentation, legal aid, and safeguarding access to quality education, healthcare, shelter, social assistance and livelihoods. For assistance to be as effective for Lebanese and refugees alike, close cooperation between authorities and NGO and UN partners is pivotal. Increasing the state budget for essential basic services is critical to reduce reliance on donors and help rebuild the social contract.

32. The EU fully acknowledges the significant challenges Lebanon faces as host of the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. The fall of the Assad regime has altered regional dynamics and raised hopes for returns, with a number of Syrians already returning home. The EU reaffirms that refugee protection remains central to its engagement, stressing the importance of upholding international law, particularly the principle of *non-refoulement*, and international humanitarian law. The EU will continue working with Lebanese authorities, Syrian transitional authorities and UN partner to support durable solutions based on voluntary, safe, dignified returns and complementary pathways to third countries. The EU will continue advocating for preserving protection space in Lebanon, strengthening migration management and governance, including border management and helping improve Lebanon's labour market by reducing informality and enhancing working conditions.

33. In relation to combating migrant smuggling, the EU welcomes Lebanon's engagement in the context of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling and looks forward to strengthening its cooperation with Lebanese authorities.

Regional cooperation

34. The EU welcomes the Pact for the Mediterranean launched in Barcelona on 28 November 2025, which aims to open up new opportunities with its Mediterranean partners, address common challenges and advance together towards a partnership based on mutual trust and respect, joint responsibility and collective development. The EU looks forward to deepening cooperation with Lebanon, in a spirit of partnership based on mutual trust and shared responsibility, through concrete initiatives and priority actions in areas of mutual interest to deliver results for people of all ages, businesses and entrepreneurs.
35. The EU appreciates the constructive role of Lebanon in the framework of regional cooperation initiatives, including on regional platforms where both parties are active participants, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Conclusions

36. The EU stands ready to support Lebanon's leadership and people on the path towards reform, recovery and renewed sovereignty. The Association Council of 15 December 2025 paves the way for the resumption of the work of the different instances of the Association Agreement, including the Association Committee and the different subcommittees.
37. The EU reaffirms its objective to strengthen its bilateral relations with Lebanon and elevate its relationship through a Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership once the necessary reforms are implemented. The Association Council of today offers an opportunity to look ahead to the future of the EU–Lebanon partnership by jointly identifying priority areas of mutual interest for the coming years.