



**Speech of Ambassador Christina Lassen,  
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon**

**7<sup>th</sup> Beirut Energy Forum**

Le Royal Hotel, Dbayeh – Wednesday, 21 September 2016

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Your Excellency Minister of Energy and Water, Arthur Nazarian,  
Vice-President of the Board of the Lebanese Centre for Energy  
Conservation (LCEC), Ziad El Zein,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating the Beirut Energy Forum's organisers who, once again, under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Energy and Water, have succeeded in developing a great programme that will allow for fruitful debates and exchange of know-how in the coming days.

The motto of this year's edition - "Energypreneurs – the synergy of science, finance and sustainability"- reflects a sense of optimism that I am sure most of us are keen to share.

Entrepreneurs - or Energypreneurs - are a key component of Lebanese society. Entrepreneurs take risks, contribute to national growth, foster innovation and create jobs. Lebanon needs all of that. Lebanon's entrepreneurs are known for their creativity and they have developed many business opportunities in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors over the past years. So to the Energypreneurs of Lebanon I would like to say: Keep up the good work, be the energy that boosts the market, be innovative, and create the jobs that the highly qualified Lebanese youth look for!

To get the most out of this entrepreneurial energy, we need to work in synergy, to cooperate. The European Union cooperates and creates synergies through its long lasting partnership with Lebanon in numerous sectors, including energy. In this sector, our key partners are the Ministry of Energy and Water, the Central Bank of Lebanon, Kafalat, the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the Lebanese Centre for Energy Conservation, LIBNOR, UNDP, several municipalities, and NGOs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Science - Finance - Sustainability" those three concepts are fully interdependent. There is no research without available sources of financing. New scientific schemes are profitable only if they are sustainable.

Lebanon and the international community must improve access to financing opportunities for entrepreneurs or "Energypreneurs", particularly access to funding targeted at a "greener" economy and in support of innovative financing schemes. One successful example of such opportunities is the National Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action, which is brilliantly managed by the Central Bank of Lebanon, and to which the European Union has provided a 15 million euro grant. Funding must also be made available to allow small communities the possibility of producing their own renewable energy, as the European Union-funded CEDRO IV is currently working on with Electricité du Liban.

Funding can also pave the way for municipalities to develop and finance their own Sustainable Energy Action Plans, as developed at national level by the CESMED project, also funded by the European Union. And last but not least, funding can promote green buildings standards that apply to any new building or the renovation of old constructions. In this field, the European Union has provided substantial support both to the Mediterranean region, as well as dedicated support to Lebanon with the SISSAF programme. I seize this occasion to invite you to take part to tomorrow's closing event of SISSAF, and to thank the SISSAF team of experts who have contributed in the past three years to supporting the implementation of national strategies in energy, water and land transport.

So in this field, I think it is fair to say that the European Union is a pioneer or even an Energypreneur. This is reflected in our own ambitions for Europe. The European Union agreed in October 2014 on the very ambitious headline targets for the EU framework on climate and energy from now until 2030. These include: a cut in greenhouse gas emissions for European Union Member States by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels; an EU-wide binding target for renewable energy of at least 27%; and an indicative energy efficiency target of at least 27%. Some countries are already close to some of those targets.

Similarly, we acknowledge Lebanon's ambitions as specified in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), and the coming National Renewable Energy Action Plan. We hope that the set objectives will be reached in a consensual manner, as a basis and as an example for further major political agreements in the energy sector and in other crucial domains that would improve the daily life and wellbeing of all Lebanese citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I could have concluded with a personal message of optimism, but I will let young "ambassadors" who we will meet later today pass this message. In the framework of our SISSAF programme and in collaboration with Fabriano, we have collected more than 12,000 drawings from schools all over the country on "how to save energy".

The 20 most creative drawings will be awarded a prize at the end of this opening session, and I am sure that you will appreciate their genuine and powerful way of sending messages to the Lebanese community. These children deserve a greener and more energy efficient Lebanon, and I hope that this Forum will contribute to achieve this important goal.

Thank you.