



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 5.7.2006
COM(2006) 365 final

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be adopted by the European Community and its Member States within the Association Council established by the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part, with regard to the adoption of a Recommendation on the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The 2002 Copenhagen European Council, closing accession negotiations with ten new Member States, recognised that enlargement presented an important opportunity to take forward relations with neighbouring countries based on shared values, and stated that the Union remained determined to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union.

The Commission Communication “Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours” of March 2003¹ proposed the establishment of Action Plans with partner countries. On 16 June 2003, the Council welcomed this Communication and invited the Commission, with the contribution, where appropriate, of the High Representative, to present proposals for Action Plans for all countries concerned as appropriate, commencing with Ukraine, Moldova, and Southern Mediterranean partners with Association Agreements.

On 14 June 2004, the Council welcomed the Commission Communication “European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy Paper”². The Council also welcomed the Commission proposal to pursue the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) through Action Plans to be agreed jointly with the neighbouring countries concerned and invited the Commission to propose such Action Plans. The Council also defined how to advance and monitor implementation of action plans.

The Commission Communication of December 2004³ submitted to the Council for approval a first set of draft Action Plans while the Commission Communication of March 2005⁴ submitted the Country Reports for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lebanon and Egypt recommending the starting of negotiations for the drawing up of Action Plans with these countries. On 16 and 17 June 2005, the Council welcomed the decision to establish action plans with the above mentioned countries.

The Commission, in close cooperation with the Presidency and the High Representative on issues related to political cooperation and the CFSP, has held exploratory talks with Lebanon which have resulted in agreement on a draft Action Plan. It covers a timeframe of five years. Its implementation will help fulfil the provisions in the Association Agreement and will contribute to an increasingly close relationship with Lebanon, involving a significant degree of economic integration and a deepening of political co-operation. Implementation of the Action Plan will significantly advance the approximation of Lebanon legislation and standards to those of the European Union.

The Action Plan is a broad tool for economic and political co-operation, carrying to a further stage the commitments and objectives contained in the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement.

In accordance with the Council Conclusions of 14 June 2004, stipulating that the Action Plans will be approved by the Council and subsequently endorsed by the respective Association or Co-operation Councils, the Commission attaches the text of a proposal for a Council Decision

¹ COM(2003) 104

² COM(2004) 373

³ COM(2004) 795

⁴ COM(2005) 72

on the position to be taken by the European Community and its Member States within the EU-Lebanon Association Council with regard to the adoption of a Recommendation on the implementation of the Action Plan in annex.

The Commission therefore requests the Council to adopt the attached proposal for a Council Decision.

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be adopted by the European Community and its Member States within the Association Council established by the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part, with regard to the adoption of a Recommendation on the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to Article 2 (1) of the Council Decision 2006/356/EC of 14 February 2006⁵ on the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, in particular Article 15 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission;⁶

Whereas:

- (1) The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part, was signed on 17 June 2002 and entered into force on 1 April 2006;
- (2) The Parties have agreed on an EU-Lebanon Action Plan, which will support the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement through the elaboration and agreement of concrete steps towards attainment of its objectives.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

⁵ OJ L 143, 30.05.06, p. 1

⁶ OJ C [...] [...], p. [...]9

Sole Article

The position to be adopted by the European Community and its Member States within the Association Council established by the a Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part, with regard to the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan, shall be based on the draft Recommendation of the Association Council annexed to this Decision.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*

ANNEX
draft
RECOMMENDATION

on the implementation of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan

The EU-Lebanon Association Council,

Having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part – hereafter the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement - and in particular Article 76, paragraph 2, second sentence thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 76 of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement gives the Association Council the power to make appropriate recommendations, for the purposes of attaining the objectives of the Agreement.
- (2) In terms of Article 86 of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, the Parties shall take any general or specific measures required to fulfil their obligations under the Agreement and shall see to it that the objectives set out in the Agreement are attained.
- (3) The Parties to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement have agreed on the text of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan.
- (4) The EU-Lebanon Action Plan will support the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement through the elaboration and agreement between the Parties of concrete steps which will provide practical guidance for such implementation.
- (5) The Action Plan serves the dual purpose of setting out concrete steps in bringing the fulfilment of the Parties' obligations set out in the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, and of providing a broader framework for further strengthening EU-Lebanon relations to involve a significant measure of economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation, in accordance with the overall objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement.

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION:

Sole Article

The Association Council recommends that the Parties implement the EU-Lebanon Action Plan in annex, insofar as such implementation is directed towards attainment of the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement.

Done at [...]

For the Association Council

The President

ANNEX

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY EU-Lebanon Action Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

The enlargement of the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004 has brought a historical shift for the Union in political, geographic and economic terms. The EU and Lebanon are now closer together than ever before and, as near neighbours, will reinforce their political and economic interdependence. Enlargement offers the opportunity for the EU and Lebanon to develop an increasingly close relationship, going beyond co-operation, to involve a significant measure of economic integration and deepening of political co-operation. The European Union and Lebanon are determined to make use of this occasion to enhance their relations and to promote stability, security and well-being. The approach is founded on partnership, joint ownership and differentiation.

The European Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union sets ambitious objectives based on commitments to shared values and effective implementation of political, economic, social and institutional reforms.

Lebanon is invited to enter into intensified political, security, economic and cultural relations, and shared responsibility in conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

The level of ambition of the EU-Lebanon relationship will depend on the degree of Lebanon's commitment to common values as well as its capacity to implement jointly agreed priorities, in compliance with international and European norms and principles. The pace of progress of the relationship will acknowledge fully Lebanon's efforts and concrete achievements in meeting those commitments.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is part of the European Union's response to the Government of Lebanon's Ministerial Declaration which was approved by the Parliament end of July 2005. The Government presented its broad agenda of essential political and economic reforms to the International Community in September 2005. On this basis the Government undertook to prepare a multi-annual political and economic programme containing more detailed, concrete reform measures. The challenge for the Government is to ensure the implementation of the "national agenda" of priorities and objectives through appropriate programmes of political and economic reforms. These objectives should be met through a process led by the Lebanese and reflected in Lebanon's own reform programme, and supported, where necessary by the international Community, including the European Union. The European Neighbourhood Policy offers through its Action Plan a strategic tool for the EU to accompany Lebanon in its reform process.

This Action Plan is a first step in this process. It is a political document, laying out the strategic objectives of cooperation between Lebanon and the EU. It covers a timeframe of five years. Its implementation will help fulfil the provisions in the Association Agreement (AA) and will encourage and support Lebanon's national reform objectives and further integration into European economic and social structures.

The Action Plan will be taken forward in the context of our common commitment to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, acknowledging the important objective of restoring Lebanon's full sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with International Law and relevant United Nations Resolutions. It is also in this context that a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue in Lebanon will be found.

Implementation of the Action Plan will significantly advance the approximation of Lebanon's legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union. It will also build solid foundations for further economic integration based on the adoption and implementation of economic and trade-related rules and regulations with the potential to enhance trade and investment with the EU. Such measures will be consistent with the efforts already being made by the Lebanese authorities, with support from the International Community to devise and implement policies and measures to promote economic growth, employment and social cohesion, to reduce poverty and to protect the environment, thereby contributing to the long-term objective of sustainable development.

The execution of the Action Plan requires a serious commitment from the political authority to endorse and implement an administrative reform that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration: Special emphasis must be put on control, accountability and transparency to achieve "good governance". This requires an update of legislation; especially with regard to redefining the missions and responsibilities of the Ministries and public agencies and consequently restructuring these organisations and mobilising competent and motivated human resources.

Lebanon and the EU will cooperate closely in implementing this Action Plan.

New Partnership Perspectives

The European Neighbourhood Policy opens New Partnership Perspectives:

- The perspective of moving beyond cooperation to a significant degree of economic integration, including through a stake in the EU's Internal Market, and the possibility for Lebanon to participate progressively in key aspects of EU policies and programmes.
- An upgrade in the scope and intensity of political cooperation in particular through a regular political dialogue.
- The opportunity for convergence of economic legislation, the opening of economies to each other, and the continued reduction of trade barriers which will stimulate investment and growth.
- Increased financial support: EU financial assistance for Lebanon will be better targeted to support the actions identified in the present document, mainly to support the political and economic reform agenda of the Lebanese Government. The Commission has furthermore proposed a new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for this purpose, also covering the very important aspect of cross-border cooperation. The EIB will also help support infrastructure investment and private sector development and partnership through the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP). Possibilities of gradual opening of or reinforced participation in relevant Community programmes, promoting i.a. cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links.

- Support including technical assistance and twinning to meet EU norms and standards and targeted support and advice for legislative approximation through mechanisms such as TAIEX.
- Deepening trade and economic relations, extending them progressively to cover agriculture and the service sector, and to provide the conditions for increasing investment and exports.
- Enhanced direct cooperation between administrations based on the bodies set up by the Association Agreement in particular institutionalised thematic sub-committees.

In light of the fulfilment of the objectives of this Action Plan and of the overall evolution of EU–Lebanon relations, consideration will be given to the possibility of a new contractual relationship. The Commission has suggested that this could take the form of a European Neighbourhood Agreement. The advisability of any new contractual arrangements will be considered in due time.

Priorities for Action

This Action Plan sets out a comprehensive set of priorities in areas within the scope of the Association Agreement. Among these priorities, all of which are important, particular attention should be given to:

- Enhance political dialogue and co-operation, based on shared values, including issues such as democracy and political life promoting the protection of human rights, consolidating the freedom of media and expression.
- Continue to develop an independent and impartial judiciary and to further reinforce the administrative capacity of the judiciary.
- Establish a comprehensive human rights strategy, including protection of rights of minorities, marginalised populations and non-citizens.
- Take steps to develop further freedom of media and freedom of expression.
- Cooperate to promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.
- Further promote equal treatment of women, including by preparing a plan to increase women’s participation in political and economic life as well as eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.
- Strengthen political dialogue and co-operation on issues of international and regional interest including the Middle East Peace Process, the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Take steps to bring the fiscal position to a sustainable basis while reducing the debt burden and improving public finance management.
- Take measures to improve business conditions to enhance growth, increase investment and to create jobs in Lebanon.

- Enhance Lebanon's export potential by further liberalisation of trade in goods and agriculture, simplifying and upgrading customs legislation and procedures, improving industrial standards and modernisation of the sanitary and phytosanitary systems.
- Prepare for progressive liberalisation of trade in services and right of establishment.
- Improved cooperation on the management of migratory flows and dialogue on visa issues.
- Strengthen the environmental dimension of public policy and EU-Lebanon co-operation.
- Promote sustainable development policies and actions, and design and implement a comprehensive social development strategy that contributes to poverty reduction.
- Develop the transport, energy, water and information society sectors and networks through sector liberalisation, investment in infrastructures and interconnection with EU networks.
- Strengthen co-operation on science and technology.

Progress in meeting these priorities will be jointly monitored in sub-committees established by the Association Agreement. The European Commission will issue a mid-term report on progress accomplished.

2. ACTIONS

2.1. Political dialogue and reform

Democracy and rule of law

Work together to promote the shared values of democracy and the rule of law including good governance and transparent, stable and effective institutions.

- Pursue the ongoing reform efforts aiming at a more effective and efficient public sector, including streamlining of procedures.
- Support ongoing efforts to improve good governance and transparency in line with the relevant UN Conventions to which Lebanon is a party.
- Establish a political dialogue between the European Parliament and the Lebanese Parliament.
- Implement plans for decentralization and local government reform.

Fight against corruption

- Exchange information on ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption and other relevant international instruments.
- Strengthen measures against corruption through the effective implementation of a national anti-corruption strategy, including the institutional framework and the enforcement capacity and public awareness and advocacy.

- Promote cooperation on anti-corruption matters between the Lebanese law enforcement agencies and international organisations as well as with corresponding services of the EC and EU Member States.

Reform of the electoral law and the election framework

- Promote the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for reform of the system of political representation and the election framework, including fair representation of women, taking into account the recommendations set out in the final report of the EU Election Observation Mission.
- Strengthen the election system addressing electoral and other laws, election administration, and the election complaints system, and develop ways to improve media access.
- Develop joint cooperation and exchange of experience in the field of elections.

Further enhancement of the independence and impartiality, the capacity and efficiency of the judiciary, upgrade its quality and strengthen administrative capacity

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for judicial reform, and implement measures to strengthen the capacity and efficiency of the justice administration and of bodies entrusted with the implementation of the law; improve access to justice and competences within the court system.
- Improve detention and prison conditions to meet international standards.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms

- Promote a comprehensive human rights strategy, including protection of rights of minorities, marginalised populations and non-citizens.
- Strengthen institutions guaranteeing the protection and defence of human rights.
- Ensure effective implementation of Lebanon's international commitments with respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Work towards improving the cooperation with the relevant UN treaty bodies and the implementation of their recommendations.
- Develop the human rights Ombudsman institution.
- Establish a dialogue for cooperation on Human Rights and Democratisation in the framework of the Association Agreement.
- Ensure the conduct of informal exchanges of views with representatives in the permanent missions at UN Headquarters before the meetings of the UN Human Rights Council and of the UN General Assembly where appropriate, as part of the overall Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights dialogue.
- Examine the possibility of acceding to the optional protocols and of lifting reservations regarding the core UN Human Rights Conventions to which Lebanon is a party.

- Engage in a dialogue on aspects of the death penalty, including adherence to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Support freedom of media and strengthening freedom of expression

- Intensify ongoing efforts to promote freedom of expression and independence of the media.

Support freedom of assembly, association and Development of Civil Society

- Intensify ongoing efforts to promote effective freedom of assembly and association by reforming the administrative framework.
- Promote development of civil society and strengthen its capacity to contribute more effectively to the democratic and political process and to economic and social progress.

Fight against torture including implementation of UN Conventions

- Explore the possibility of acceding to the optional protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or punishment.
- Strengthen effective enforcement of legal provisions against torture.

Promotion and protection of the rights of women and children

- Promote the enhancement of women’s participation in political, economic and social life as well as their role in the political decision-making process.
- Promote gender equality, in particular in the field of employment and reinforce the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence, including review of legislation on personal status, nationality and penal code.
- Discuss the lifting of reservations to the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) to which Lebanon is a party.
- Promote the rights of the child; apply the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and revise existing legislation taking into account the recommendations of the relevant UN Committee.
- Accede to the optional protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.
- Develop a child welfare strategy and related national action plans and formulate a child protection policy targeting neglected and abused children.
- Enhance protection of rights of children and intensify efforts to progressively eliminate child labour.

Fight against discrimination, racism, religious intolerance, xenophobia and racial hatred discourse

- Cooperate in the fight against discrimination, racism, xenophobia and racial hatred discourse.
- Cooperate to promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

Promotion of fundamental social rights and decent work including core labour standards

- Develop a dialogue on fundamental social rights and decent work including the role and independence of trade unions.
- Ensure adherence to and enhance the effective implementation of core labour standards as defined in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and related ILO Conventions.
- Ensure implementation of the relevant International Labour Conventions to which Lebanon is party.

Security sector reform

- Develop the administrative capacity of core security actors including law enforcement institutions; security management and oversight bodies, justice institutions.
- Ensure consistency of the management and operation of the security system with respect for human rights and democratic norms.

Co-operation on foreign and security policy

Strengthen political dialogue and co-operation on Common Foreign and Security Policy matters

- Develop an enhanced political dialogue and regular ex-change of information on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) matters.
- Work with the EU to make multilateral institutions and conventions more effective, so as to reinforce global governance; strengthen coordination in combating security threats and address related development issues.
- Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and make the necessary legislative amendments for its implementation, while preserving its integrity.

Regional and international issues, conflict prevention and crisis management

Strengthen dialogue and cooperation on regional and international issues, conflict prevention and crisis management and common security threats in accordance with national law

- Establish contact points and carry out exchanges of information on ESDP matters with the Secretariat of the Council and the Commission.

- Contribute to UN efforts and work together to resolve regional conflicts and promote effective multilateralism.
- Further develop co-operation in the context of the Middle East Peace Process with the ultimate objective of reaching a just, comprehensive and durable peace in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.
- Promote the objective of reaching, once conditions are favourable, a Euro-Mediterranean Peace and Stability Charter.
- Participate in training activities on conflict prevention, crisis and natural disaster management.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery and illegal arms exports

- Cooperate on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and ballistic missiles, including through implementing UNSC Resolution 1540/04, ensuring full compliance with and national implementation of existing international obligations and promoting the accession to and implementation of other relevant international instruments.
- Further develop co-operation in the prevention of and fight against the illicit trafficking of WMD and their means of delivery, and related materials.
- Co-operate on developing effective systems of national export control, controlling export and transit of materials related to WMD and their means of delivery, as defined in UNSCR 1540, including WMD end-use control on dual use of goods and technologies, and effective sanctions for breaches of export controls.
- Improve overall coordination in the non-proliferation area and the scope of cooperation in addressing this challenge.
- Promote the relevant provisions on the political and security partnership of the Barcelona Declaration with the objective to pursue a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.
- Improve internal legislation in line with the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.
- Explore the possibility of acceding, when conditions permit, to the 1997 Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Cooperation on preventing and combating terrorism

- Strengthen EU-Lebanon co-operation on the fight against and prevention of terrorism.
- Ensure respect of human rights in the fight against terrorism based on the recommendations of the relevant UN bodies.

- Cooperate to reinforce the role of the UN in the multilateral fight against terrorism, including through implementation of all relevant UNSC Resolutions and through signature, ratification and full implementation of all relevant UN Conventions.
- Ensure the implementation of the standards laid down in the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on terrorist financing.
- Pursue efforts to arrive at a Comprehensive UN Convention on Combating Terrorism.
- Exchange information on terrorist groups and their support networks.
- Exchange views on means and methods used to counter terrorism, including in technical fields and training, and by exchange of experiences in respect of terrorism prevention, with the objective of promoting national capacity building in the field of terrorism prevention.
- Explore means and initiatives to foster international cooperation in the fight against and the prevention of terrorism by addressing all the factors which contribute to terrorism.

2.2. Economic and Social Reform and sustainable development

(a) Fiscal policies, monetary and exchange rate policy

Short Term

Fiscal sustainability and macro-economic stability

- Pursue fiscal consolidation and enhance fiscal discipline.
- Adopt and implement a comprehensive debt reduction strategy.
- Develop and implement a national macroeconomic stabilisation programme.

Medium-term

- Create macroeconomic conditions for sustainable growth
- Improve the quality of public finances and introduce tools for medium term budget planning.
- Implement policies for achieving sustainable public finances addressing the issue of quasi-fiscal deficit and contingent liabilities.

(b) Functioning of Market Economy

Short-term

- Enhance the performance and competitiveness of the Lebanese economy
- Implement actions to improve contract enforcement and property rights.

Improve the business environment and investment climate to enable firms to invest, create jobs and expand

- Develop and implement a strategy to promote investment.
- Improve the regulatory framework and reduce the red tape.
- Implement actions to facilitate SME access to finance.

Progress with the establishment of fully functioning market economy

- Restructure public utilities, implement the privatisation programme and increase the transparency of the privatisation process;

Improve transparency and accountability of public administration including in the area of public finance management

- Improve public finance and management in line with the recommendations of the CFAA.
- Publish complete and timely information on the budget, fiscal outcomes and audit reports.
- Continue work on methodology, scope and quality of statistics.

Medium-term

Create conditions for an employment generating growth

- (c) Social development, employment and poverty reduction

Short-term

Accompanying social measures to economic reforms

- Engage in a dialogue on employment and social issues including the social consequences of economic reforms, with a view to developing possible measures in this field.
- Strengthen social safety nets and reform the social security system, improving their efficiency, targeting and coverage while progressively reducing subsidies, tax exemptions and economic distortions.

Medium-term

Enhance Social development and Co-operation and address unemployment

- Adopt a comprehensive strategy for social development and poverty reduction. Improve statistical data related to poverty, among others on poverty survey, households' income and expenditures and regional disparities.
- Develop a strategy for reforming the pension system.
- Develop reform and strategic plans aiming at improving the quality of education and vocational training and their relevance to the labour market.
- Develop and implement market driven strategies, involving social partners, to address unemployment and increase the participation of women and youth in the labour force; modernise the National Employment Office.

- Strengthen social dialogue at all levels (tripartite and bipartite).
- Engage in a dialogue on programmes and initiatives aimed at fostering social inclusion and fight against discrimination, with particular attention to marginalised groups.
- Improve public service delivery particularly in health and education and other social services with access for all, and avoid the duplication of government subsidies between the public and the private sectors.

(d) Agriculture

- Identify and adopt accompanying measures providing for the structural, institutional, legal and administrative support necessary in order to ease access to export markets, including approximation of technical legislation.
- Identify and adopt measures and appropriate legislation in the sector of rural development, and at the level of the development of quality production i.e. local products, organic products, geographical indications, with the aim of encouraging the diversification of activity and the creation of new remunerative and sustainable trade flows.
- Increase co-operation in the field of international marketing standards for fruits and vegetables, and for other agricultural and processed agricultural products; promote equivalence schemes of certification for organic products.
- Develop measures to encourage private investment.
- Strengthen the administrative capacity of the land cadastre.
- Address the role of agricultural research centres in improving the productivity, food safety and quality, of agricultural and processed agricultural products; promote cooperation with European Research Centres, particularly in the areas of genetic engineering and biotechnology.
- Promote the distribution and exchange of information on the agricultural policies and contribute to the transfer of expertise and experience.
- Promote the use of modern technology in the agricultural sector and in different production phases.

(e) Fisheries

- Reinforce cooperation to implement the actions identified in the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fishery in the Mediterranean (Venice, 25-26 November 2003) in the framework of the relevant international instruments.
- Promote further the creation of fishermen associations with a view to implementing responsible fisheries; improve their capacity to be represented in international and multilateral organisations.
- Increase the scientific and technical capacity to monitoring fisheries and evaluate the state of the exploited marine resources and marine environment.

- Improve scientific cooperation with the Regional Fisheries Body and in particular the GFCM to strengthen a concerted and regional approach suited to the needs of sustainable fisheries.
- Undertake necessary marketing infrastructure upgrading to cope with market demands and standards.

(f) Regional development

Medium-term

Strengthening socio-economic cohesion of Lebanon's regions

- Develop a programme for Regional Development, including expanding economic activities beyond the Greater Beirut area.
- Strengthen the regional development management structures, and re-examine the role of the regional councils and funds.

(g) Sustainable Development

Promotion of sustainable development

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development.
- Establish the administrative structures and procedures for strategic planning and co-ordination.
- Ensure integration of sustainable development into sectoral policies.

2.3. Trade related issues, market and regulatory reform

2.3.1. Movement of goods

(a) Trade Relations

Liberalisation of trade in goods

- Continue work towards the objective of WTO accession.
- Identify areas with export potential to the EU; further enhance export potentials by increasing the quality of Lebanese products and their competitiveness on international markets.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Lebanese administration on international trade relations.
- Participate in regional and sub-regional trade initiatives including conclusion and implementation of FTAs.
- Establish rules of procedure for dispute settlement under the Association Agreement on economic/trade matters.

(b) Agriculture and Fisheries

- Further progressive liberalisation of trade in agriculture, processed agricultural products and fisheries products, building on the Rabat roadmap and in coherence with the reform process in agriculture and rural development.

(c) Customs

- Further harmonisation and simplification of customs legislation and procedures in accordance with WTO rules and the Palermo recommendations, including computerisation with further upgrading and rolling out of the NAJM and NOOR systems to the whole customs territory.
- Strengthen co-operation between customs and other agencies working at the border to develop an Integrated Border Management Strategy.
- Reinforce customs controls on imports and exports of pirated or counterfeit goods.
- Adopt and implement the Pan-Euro-Med Protocol of origin allowing participation in the cumulation system; provide training on the application of the new protocol.
- Strengthen co-operation with the EU to combat irregularities and fraud in customs and related matters.
- Develop EU-Lebanon co-operation with regard to risk based customs control ensuring safety and security of goods imported, exported or in transit; define standards for certification of operators (exporters and transporters) intervening in commercial exchanges.
- Provide the customs administration with sufficient internal or external laboratory expertise.
- Adopt and implement a Customs Ethics Policy based on the Arusha Declaration.

(d) Standards and conformity assessment (EU harmonised areas)

- Implement the Palermo Action Plan for the Free Movement of Industrial Products of July 2003. Prepare for negotiations on an Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products.
- Strengthen the administrative capacity of institutions in charge of implementing product legislation.
- Strengthen the administrative and technical capacity of the Lebanese Standards Institution (LIBNOR), conformity assessment bodies (including the Industrial Research Institute) and the accreditation body (COLIBAC).
- Ensure harmonisation of national standards with European and international standards for industrial products.
- Converge towards EU legislation on liability for defective products and general product safety including market surveillance.

(e) Restrictions and streamlined administration (EU non-harmonised areas)

- Analyse legislation and administrative procedures to identify and progressively remove discrimination and restrictions against imported products.
- Designate a central contact point to facilitate information flows and co-operation with economic operators.

(f) Sanitary and phytosanitary issues

Increase food safety for Lebanese and European consumers and facilitate trade through reform and modernisation of the sanitary and phytosanitary sectors

- Upon accession to the WTO, implement the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures and participate in relevant international bodies.
- Exchange information on and explore possible areas of convergence with EU practice in the field of sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues.
- Progressive fulfilment of EU requirements on animal health and for the processing of animal products (c.f.: Import Conditions – Importing Live Animals).
- In the medium-term, draw up a first list of measures for gradual convergence towards EU general food safety principles and requirements; start approximation of Lebanese legislation in this area.

2.3.2. Right of establishment, Company law and services

(a) Establishment and company law

- Review national legislation with a view to identify measures to facilitate establishment of companies, including foreign-owned companies. Work towards the progressive removal of barriers to establishment.
- Adopt and implement new bankruptcy legislation.
- Strengthen corporate governance, in particular for public companies, in line with international standards.
- Work towards the adoption of international and EU relevant accounting and auditing standards and the promotion of a highly qualified audit profession.

(b) Services

- Pursue bilateral negotiations on services and establishment in accordance with the Association Agreement and the Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration.
- Develop a strategy to enhance the competitiveness of the Lebanese services sector including regulatory simplification and administrative facilitation for Lebanese and EU sectors.

- Facilitate the supply of services including the development of the necessary administrative structures and the removal of identified barriers.

Financial services

- Continue the implementation of the Financial Services Assessment Programme (FSAP).
- Work together to train independent authorities to ensure effective supervision.

2.3.3. Movement of capital and current payments

- Provide information, and jointly assess, the national regime for capital movements and current payments (including the restrictions referred to in Art 33.1 of the Association Agreement).
- Exchange views and experiences concerning liberalization of capital movements.
- Ensure the protection of foreign investments.

2.3.4. Regional co-operation

- Develop conditions for south-south trade and regional or sub-regional co-operation initiatives; promote trade and investment among the regional partners.

2.3.5. Other key areas

(a) Taxation

- Continue the modernization and simplification of the tax administration, including addressing the necessary administrative structures and procedures.
- Continue efforts to develop the network of bilateral agreements between Lebanon and EU Member States on avoidance of double taxation, taking into consideration Lebanon's specificity, including the improvement of transparency and the exchange of information in accordance with international standards.
- Gradual approximation of the national tax legislation with the principles of the EU acquis. Depending on the level of Lebanon's access to the Internal Market, adopt and comply with the principles of the Code of Conduct for Business Taxation.

(b) Competition policy and State Aid

Antitrust

- Adopt and enforce the draft competition law and establish an independent and adequately-resourced competition authority.

State aids

- Develop a system to exchange with the EU an annual report on the total amount and distribution of State aid, based on a binding, uniform definition of State aid which is compatible with that of the EU and a national mechanism for collecting information on state aid.

- For sectors participating in the internal market ensure a State aids control regime and legislation meeting the requirements of the EU acquis.

(c) Intellectual and industrial property

- Ensure a level of protection of Intellectual and Industrial property rights similar to that of the EU and strengthen enforcement of legislation in accordance with Art 38 of the Association Agreement.
- Adhere, within the agreed timeframe, to the international agreements and conventions stipulated in the Association Agreement.
- Introduce new legislation, notably on trademarks and geographical indications, to ensure conformity with TRIPS requirements.
- Strengthen the administrative capacity for enforcement of legislation and implementation of sanctions.
- Reinforce the fight against counterfeiting and piracy in selected areas, notably through an increase in seizures and improve cooperation among relevant authorities involved, including the police, customs and judiciary.
- Increase awareness at both public and private level. Extend cooperation with third countries authorities, industry associations and organisations of rights holders and users of Intellectual Property.

(d) Statistics

- Ensure that legislation on official statistics is in line with the fundamental UN principles.
- Adopt a National Statistical Master Plan ensuring harmonisation with European and International standards, including means for its implementation, in the relevant areas, covered by this Action Plan (demography, national accounts, living conditions; prices and balance of payments etc).

(e) Public procurement

- Improve the functioning of the current system; increase transparency, information, limited use of exceptions and easy access to judicial review. Extend its scope to all levels of the public sector.
- Improve training of contracting authorities and the business community.
- Initiate reform of the existing public procurement legislation with a view to adopt key EU and international principles of transparency, information, non-discrimination, open competition, and access to remedies procedures.
- Cooperation with the EU on the introduction of modern tendering procedures, including e-procurement.

(f) Enterprise policy

- Improve business conditions including through the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise.
- Work towards implementation of the October 2004 strategy of the Euro-Mediterranean Working Programme on Industrial Cooperation.
- Create a dialogue between business, administration and academic institutions for the identification of priority actions for business improvement and the exchange of best practice.

(g) Public Finance Reform, including Public Internal Financial Control

Accounting, Fight against Fraud and control of EU-funds

- Improve compliance of the public sector with international public sector accounting standards to improve efficiency, accountability, transparency and predictability.
- Fight against fraud and other irregularities affecting national and international funds; adopt a modern anti-corruption law and strengthen the relevant administrative and judicial structures.
- Ensure cooperation with the relevant EU Institutions and bodies in the management and control of EU funds.

Public Internal Financial Control

- Establish a Central Audit Coordination unit within the Ministry of Finance; develop a strategy and policy paper for the public internal financial control system (managerial accountability and decentralised internal audit).
- Establish the legislative framework for public internal financial control.
- Pursue gradual harmonization with the internationally agreed standards (IFAC, IIA, INTOSAI) and methodologies, as well as with EU best practices for the control and audit of public income, expenditure, assets and liabilities.
- Ensure and publish regular audits, along the best international standards, of the CDR, the National Social Security Fund and the Municipal Development Fund.
- Introduce internal audit units in all budgetary entities, in line with agreed strategy.

External Audit

- Further strengthen the administrative and procedural capacity of the Court of Accounts; focus its role on external audits solely (work on attest, systems-based and performance audits of public sector bodies); strengthen the independence of the Court of Accounts by ensuring that it reports to and having its budget approved by Parliament.

2.4. Co-operation in the field of Justice, Freedom and Security

Further develop co-operation between Lebanon and EU Member States' judicial and law enforcement authorities

(a) Migration issues (legal and illegal migration, readmission, visa, asylum)

Establish a dialogue on migration issues with a view to maximise the benefits of migration both for Lebanon and the EU

- Develop a comprehensive and balanced dialogue on various migration-related issues of interest, including asylum, movement of persons, control of illegal migration and return, visas.
- Monitoring and analysis of migration: ensure synergy with Euro-Med initiatives on research on migration and the Consortium on Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) in particular.
- Possible participation of Lebanon in relevant Community programmes, including the AENEAS programme.

Manage legal migration, admission policy and stay, social integration of migrants

- Establish a dialogue on legal migration to exchange information on admission policies and stay, work on offer and skills available in Lebanon, employment opportunities and procedures in Europe and the procedures and integration (including non-discrimination, protection from xenophobia, etc.).
- Provide information on the risks of smuggling and trafficking of migrants.
- Improve the linkages between migration and development: ensure dialogue and cooperation on the possible role of diasporas in the development of the country of origin, on facilitating remittance flows and their productive uses, or the impact of migration of trained persons on the country of origin.

Prevent and control illegal immigration into Lebanon and the European Union

- Exchange information and experiences on illegal migration including the scale of illegal immigration into and via Lebanon and monitor migratory movements; review policies for the return of migrants in an illegal situation; support activities to prevent and counter illegal migration, including by sea.
- Strengthen cooperation with the EU, countries of the region and countries of origin to prevent and fight illegal migration; ensure close coordination with actions concerning countries of origin.
- Exchange information and cooperate on transit migration.

Improve cooperation regarding readmission of own nationals, stateless persons and third country nationals

- Improve cooperation between the EU and Lebanon on all forms of readmission including the possibility of negotiating a readmission agreement between Lebanon and the EC and its Member States.
- Cooperate on consular affairs and issuing of travel documents.

Movement of persons

- Improve cooperation on the management of migratory flows.
- Cooperate on facilitating the movement of persons in conformity with the EU acquis, in particular examining the scope for facilitating visa procedures for short stay for some categories of persons travelling to Europe or vice-versa.
- Cooperate to improve the security of travel documents and visas in conformity with international standards.

Initiate a dialogue on asylum and international protection issues

- Mindful of the special circumstances of the Palestinian refugee presence in Lebanon, cooperate to improve their economic and social situation.
- Start developing a comprehensive protection system, in line with international standards, to process and follow-up on asylum applications.
- Exchange information and best practices on asylum policy and international protection issues.

(b) Border management

Enhance border management cooperation with neighbouring countries and the EU Member States

- Develop a strategy for an integrated system of Border Management, enhancing inter-agency cooperation, in particular with regard to the implementation of a common risk strategy and to the coordination of controls, as well as cooperation with neighbouring countries, including proper border demarcation.
- Improve the administrative capacity at border crossing checkpoints; develop effective surveillance along the green and the blue border; ensure provision of training, modern equipment, adequate infrastructure and facilities.
- Develop a comprehensive education and training strategy with regard to border management matters.
- Develop cross border and regional co-operation between relevant law enforcement agencies (police, border guards, migration and asylum services and customs).
- Initiate contacts for cooperation at the operational and technical level between Lebanon border authorities and FRONTEX.

(c) Fight against organised crime (including trafficking in human beings)

Enhance international co-operation in accordance with the UN Convention against Trans-national Organised Crime and its protocols on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons and on illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms

- Implement the UN Convention against Trans-national Organised Crime and its Protocols on smuggling migrants, trafficking in persons and illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms.
- Develop national provisions in line with relevant international standard and conventions.
- Establish a network of contact points with EU Member States' law enforcement authorities to promote co-operation, in particular to exchange information.
- Exchange expertise and experiences on best practices in combating organised crime, in particular with regard to trafficking in persons; exchange information on patterns and modus operandi, enhance public awareness, foster cooperation with countries of origin and transit, enhance police and judicial cooperation in witness protection programmes and assistance to victims.
- Develop law enforcement and judicial cooperation between the EU Member States and Lebanon in this field. Cooperate in the field of training.

Cooperate in the fight against cyber crime

- Co-operate to fight cyber crime, including child pornography.

Reinforce the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, and smuggling of illegal migrants, as well as activities to prevent trafficking in human beings and to reintegrate victims

- Promote regional and trans-border co-operation between relevant law enforcement bodies (police, border guards, customs and judiciary).
- Develop protection mechanisms, legal and social assistance and psychological support to victims aiming at their reintegration.

(d) Fight against drugs

Continue the fight against illicit drug trafficking, including precursor diversion, and against drug abuse in particular through prevention and rehabilitation, in accordance with the 1988 UN Convention on Illicit Traffic of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances and with Art .58 of the AA

- Exchange information on the implementation of the 1988 UN Convention on illicit traffic of Narcotics and Psychotropic substances and on national anti-drug strategy covering drug supply and demand, including prevention programmes to combat drug addiction and programmes for treatment of drug addicts.
- Develop international cooperation in fight against trafficking narcotics and drug addiction, in particular prevention of drug abuse, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

- Cooperate on preventing drug precursor diversion.
- Cooperate on the implementation of the relevant UN Conventions.

(e) Fight against money laundering

Strengthen efforts and co-operation in the fight against money laundering in line with the standards laid down by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- Exchange information on the existing European structures (Financial Intelligence Unit) and the existing system in Lebanon as regards the fight against money laundering.
- Intensify co-operation and promote exchange of information among law enforcement agencies and between Lebanon and international organisations, such as the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, as well as with corresponding bodies in EU Member States.
- Strengthen Lebanon’s system of financial information with particular emphasis on the monitoring of cash movements and wire transfers abroad.
- Identify administrative/technical support and training requirements for the development of the capacities of the Lebanese Financial Investigation Unit on combating money laundering.

(f) Combating terrorism

- Implement the counter-terrorism related UN Resolutions and Conventions.
- Cooperate to implement the provisions of the Euro-Mediterranean Code of conduct on countering terrorism.
- Develop cooperation to strengthen the fight against the financing of terrorism in line with the standards laid down by the FATF recommendations on terrorism financing.
- Develop cooperation between Lebanon and EU Member States’ counter-terrorism and law enforcement agencies.
- Develop judicial cooperation on combating terrorism.
- Work together to fight the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes.

(g) Judicial cooperation

- Exchange information on ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions related to co-operation in criminal and civil matters.
- Develop judicial cooperation between Lebanon and EU Member States’ courts in civil and criminal matters, in particular with regard to family law.
- Promote concrete solutions of family disputes in order to prevent and resolve conflicts with regard to custody, visiting rights and child abduction of children of mixed couples; promote mediation, judicial cooperation and judicial training.

2.5. Transport, Energy and Environment, including Water

(a) Transport

Implement the National Transport Policy

- Further develop the national transport policy for the development of all modes of transport and related infrastructure, emphasizing the importance of sustainability. Ensure intermodality and integration of all transport modes. Examine the possibility of further approximation of legislative and regulatory frameworks with European and International standards, in particular for safety and security.
- Strengthen and if necessary establish the administrative structures to prepare specific plans for priority sectors and develop the necessary independent regulatory authorities.
- Develop an infrastructure policy to identify the priority infrastructure projects in various sectors as well as addressing financing issues.

Regional or sub-regional element

- Participate in the Euro-Mediterranean regional transport project
- Continue participation in the development of GNSS (Galileo) in the Mediterranean region, in particular by giving an active role to the Galileo Euromed Cooperation Office based in Cairo; take part in particular in the new regional cooperation activities on satellite navigation systems.
- Participate in the planning and identification of priority regional infrastructure projects and their connection with trans-European transport networks.

Implement selected measures and reforms in the road and rail transport sectors

- Introduce a transparent regulatory process for the issue of freight and passenger transport licences and for access to the profession.
- Develop an integrated action plan on road safety including the technical control/road worthiness testing of vehicles.
- Implement the relevant international conventions, notably on dangerous goods transport.
- Develop a policy on the restoration and upgrading of the railway network, separating regulatory responsibilities from operational interests; promote multimodal services and address issues of interoperability (also with regional networks).

Implement selected measures and reforms in the aviation sector

- Implement the existing national aviation policy including the development of the airports and further reinforce administrative capacity (including the establishment of an autonomous Civil Aviation Authority as a pure regulator).
- Start negotiations on a comprehensive EU-Lebanon aviation agreement once such a negotiating mandate is given to the EU side

- Assess and examine the possibility introducing at all airports open competition in ground-handling services.
- Reinforce the current level of liberalisation of charter and scheduled flights.
- Enhance administrative and technical capacity to fully implement jointly agreed JAA standards. Involve Lebanon in the work of EASA and for involvement in the Single European Sky.
- Co-operate on aviation security matters (common rules to combat international terrorism).

Regional or sub-regional element

- Take part in regional cooperation on safety, security and air traffic management.

Implement selected measures and reforms in the maritime sector

- Further develop and implement a comprehensive national maritime policy aiming at promoting and developing the maritime industry, increasing its competitiveness and promoting the participation of private sector in all aspects of maritime industry, including ports and port activities; strengthen maritime safety and security and develop the fleet; continue to implement the relevant international conventions; and approximate standards to EU legislation.
- Develop and implement the organisational reform of the ports sector with a view to introduction of an independent port authority responsible for regulation and control and an increase in the efficiency of ports.
- Assess and examine the possibility of introducing VTMS (Vessel Traffic Management and Information Service).
- Ensure effective co-operation in maritime security by focusing on the SOLAS/ISPS Code implementation requirements.
- Continue enforcing effective maritime safety measures through efficient implementation of Port State Control and Flag State Implementation systems.
- Speed up the phasing-out of single-hull oil tankers and apply without exception the changes recently agreed in the IMO Marpol Convention.

Regional or sub-regional element

- Further develop co-operation with EU and Mediterranean partners in the framework of IMO, and promote the participation in the new regional project on maritime safety and security (SAFEMED).
- Participate in regional cooperation in the field of maritime policy, ports and short-sea shipping.
- Continue participating in the regional cooperation on Motorways of the Sea.

(b) Energy

Develop a long term energy strategy converging towards EU energy policy objectives

- Take steps to adopt and implement a long term energy strategy converging towards EU energy policy objectives and covering, inter alia, all sub-sectors, the strengthening of institutions and financing.
- Explore the medium-term possibility for participation in the Intelligent Energy-Europe programme.

Gradual convergence towards the principles of the EU internal electricity and gas market

- Further restructure and as appropriate privatise the electricity sector.
- Take steps to improve the financial and operational performance of Electricité de Liban.
- Improve bill collection rates and work towards the gradual elimination of energy price distortions, while taking due account of social consequences.
- Further assess gas import sources in line with the Declaration of Intent of 2 December 2003 on the Euro-Mashrek cooperation in the field of natural gas.
- Establish a first list of measures for gradual convergence towards the principles of the EU internal electricity and gas markets.
- Establish an energy regulatory body independent from market operators.
- In the medium term, complete electricity sector reform and start to implement measures for gradual convergence towards the principles of the EU internal electricity and gas markets.

Oil sector reform/restructuring refinery sector

- Study options for the development of the oil sector including restructuring of the refinery sector.

Progress on energy networks

- Further rehabilitate electricity transmission and distribution networks and reduce network losses.
- Assess the feasibility of developing gas distribution networks for the introduction of gas for households.
- Further develop regional energy (gas, oil, electricity) networks (eg completion of the gas pipeline from Syria (GASYLE I) and the offshore national gas pipeline “GASYLE II”) in line with the Declaration of Intent of 2 December 2003 on the Euro-Mashrek cooperation in the field of natural gas.
- Improve safety and security of energy infrastructure.
- Further develop electricity networks in rural areas.

Progress on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources

- Take steps to develop an Action Plan including a financial plan for improving energy efficiency and enhancing the use of renewable energy.
- Reinforce the institutions dealing with energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.
- Pursue measures in energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.
- Progress to reach Lebanon's target to ensure that 10% of the country's energy needs are covered by the year 2015 by renewable energy sources.

Regional cooperation

- Cooperate, in the context of the Declaration of Intent of 2 December 2003 on the Euro-Mashrek cooperation in the field of natural gas including as regards the development of a regional Gas Master Plan.
- Explore possibilities for Euro-Mashrek cooperation in the electricity field.

(c) Environment, including water

Good environmental governance: ensure environmental security by protecting vital interests of individuals, society and natural environment from adverse human and natural impact as well as development trends that threaten sustainable functioning of ecosystems and functioning of human health

- Take steps to strengthen administrative structures, and procedures to ensure strategic planning of environmental issues, including financing strategies, and co-ordination between relevant actors.
- Finalise the National Environment Action Plan.
- Establish procedures regarding access to environmental information and public participation.
- Adopt implementing legislation on environmental assessments; reinforce structures and procedures to carry out environmental assessments.
- Prepare regular reports on the state-of-the-environment.
- Implement the environmental education and awareness plan.
- Support private sector and civil society actors as well as local authorities operating in the environmental sector.

Take active action for prevention of deterioration of the environment, protection of human health, and achievement of rational use of natural resources, in line with the commitments of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

- Develop framework and secondary (implementing) legislation and basic procedures and ensure planning for key environmental sectors (in line with the NEAP) –including e.g. water quality, waste management, nature protection).
- Strengthen administrative capacities including for issuing of permits as well as for enforcement and inspection.
- Implement national plans and programmes (e.g. the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan).
- Take steps to apply methodologies and practices of integrated water management and integrated coastal zone management.
- Take steps to establish a national environmental monitoring network (e.g. air quality).

Integrated water resources management

- Improve the quantity and the quality of water supply from both surface and ground sources by developing integrated plans, programmes and projects that ensure environmental protection, social stability and welfare, and economic development.
- Enhance the management of the demand on water from all sectors (municipal and touristic, industrial, agricultural and environmental).
- Protect surface and ground water resources from all sources of pollution.
- Establish a nation-wide surface and ground water - quantity and quality - monitoring network to accurately control surface and groundwater level and quality.

Enhance co-operation on environmental issues

- Implement provisions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.
- Ratify the amendments to the Barcelona Convention and its Land-Based Sources and Dumping Protocols; sign the new Emergency Protocol and the Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity Protocol.
- Possible participation in selected European Environment Agency activities.
- Participation in the De-Pollution Initiative for the Mediterranean Sea (Horizon 2020).
- Work together to address regional and transboundary water resource management issues, including within relevant international frameworks, and identify possibilities with neighbouring countries for enhanced co-operation in this regard, as well as on desertification issues.

2.6. Information Society, Media, and Science and Research

(a) Information Society and Media

Progress in the areas of electronic communications policy and regulation

- Adopt a comprehensive regulatory framework for electronic communications services and establishment of an independent regulatory authority.
- Liberalise the market for fixed voice telephony.

Progress in the areas of advanced infrastructure and services as well as in scientific cooperation

- Deploy a broadband network in order to promote widespread Internet access.
- Introduce on-line services, such as e-Government, e-Health, e-Business, e-Learning, etc.
- Ensure awareness raising for the participation of Lebanese entities in the Information Society Technologies (IST) part of the EU Research Framework Programme.

Progress in the areas of audiovisual policy and regulation

- Promote an exchange of views on audiovisual policy, including co-operation in the fight against racism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia.
- Develop a transparent, efficient and predictable regulatory system including through the establishment of an independent regulatory authority in the audiovisual sector.

(b) Science and technology, research and development

Develop Lebanon's capacity in technological R&D to support the economy and society

- Develop a Research and Innovation policy relevant to the sustainable and equitable economic development policy objectives of Lebanon and its region, including reform of the scientific system and of the relevant regulatory framework.
- Reinforce human, material and institutional resources in order to improve the capacities in technological R&D; ensure adequate and increased investment in research through the public sector as well as through the private sector.

Prepare and encourage Lebanon's integration into the European Research Area and into the Community R&D Framework Programmes on the basis of scientific excellence

- Implement an appropriate information strategy to facilitate and encourage adequate participation of Lebanese research entities in the Community R&D Framework Programmes and joint projects; ensure a policy-driven dialogue to determine the particular priorities and the specific needs of Lebanon.
- Cooperate in high-level scientific exchanges; reinforce participation in international Marie Curie fellowships including support of the appropriate return mechanisms.

2.7. People-to-people contacts

(a) Education, training and youth

Continue and enhance efforts to reform and modernise education and vocational training systems within the framework of Lebanese plans, in order to promote competitiveness, employability and mobility, to bring Lebanon closer to EU standards and practice

- Continue and enhance a policy dialogue between Lebanon and the EU on education and training.
- Ensure access for all, especially for the poor, to high quality education.
- Reform primary, secondary and vocational education to improve quality; ensure human resources development for teachers, professors and administrative bodies.
- Enhance the adaptation of higher and vocational education to the needs of the labour market inter alia by increasing the involvement of entrepreneurs, social partners and stakeholders from civil society.
- Reform higher education in line with the principles of the “Bologna process”, in particular as regards definition and implementation of a homogeneous system of evaluation and quality assurance. Build institutional capacity for policy development and implementation. Develop new curricula for science and information technology. Promote reform of higher education and cooperation between higher education institutions in the EU and Lebanon through the TEMPUS programme.
- Enhance the capacities of institutions and organisations involved in developing and implementing quality assurance in the field of education and training, by using for example the tools offered by the TEMPUS programme.
- Encourage student mobility through participation in the Erasmus Mundus programme and the new scholarship programme.

Enhance co-operation in the field of youth and sports

- Enhance a dialogue between EU and Lebanon in the field of youth policy.
- Encourage youth mobility by promoting youth exchanges and enhance cooperation with the EU in the field of non-formal education for young people and promotion of intercultural dialogue.
- Promote a dialogue between the EU and Lebanon in the field of sports including exchange of experience with EU Member States.
- Promote the exchange of young professionals between European and Lebanese bodies.
- Ensure the successful implementation of the Euro-Med Youth programme by setting up of the relevant structures by Lebanon.

(b) Culture

Enhance cultural co-operation and dialogue between cultures

- Enhance participation in the relevant EC cultural cooperation programmes of the Euro-Med partnership.
- Exchange views on the UNESCO Convention on protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions and promote the ratification and implementation of the text.
- Enhance dialogue between cultures, taking into consideration the principles embodied in the Action Programme for the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations, adopted by the Valencia Ministerial Meeting in April 2002 and taking advantage of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogue between cultures.
- Encourage dialogue and exchange of information on cultural issues between the parties, inter alia at local level.

(c) Civil society co-operation

- Examine the scope for further improving the legal and administrative framework for the operation of civil society organizations.
- Ensure Lebanese NGOs contributing effectively to the economic, political and social development process in accordance with national legislation.
- Empower consumers and protect their legitimate economic interests.

(d) Public Health

Improve the health sector through reform

- Pursue health sector reform (e.g. enhance national capacities, increase sector efficiency, improve primary health care, enhance access for the poor in particular in rural areas, health financing reform).

Increase the level of health security, health information and knowledge

- Exchange of information and know-how on health indicators and data collection.
- Participate, as observer, in the meetings of the Network of Competent Authorities.

Communicable Disease Surveillance and Health Security (Epidemiological Surveillance and Control)

- Participate, gradually, in the European Communicable Disease and dedicated surveillance networks.

3. MONITORING

The Action Plan will guide the work between the EU and Lebanon. Should the need arise, on the EU side, for specific measures necessitating legally binding decisions, the Commission will recommend to the Council the adoption of the necessary negotiating directives.

The joint bodies established under the Association Agreement will advance and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan on the basis of regular reports on its implementation.

A first review of the implementation of the Action Plan will be undertaken within two years of its adoption.

The Action Plan can be jointly regularly amended and/or updated to reflect progress in addressing the priorities.

Glossary

CDR: Council for Development and Reconstruction

CFAA: Country Financial Accountability Assessment

EASA: European Aviation Safety Agency

FATF: Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering

FEMIP: Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership

GFCM: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

ILO: International Labour Organisation

IMO: International Maritime Organization

ISPS: International Ship and Port Facility Security

JAA: Joint Aviation Authorities

MARPOL: International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships

NAJM: Customs Clearance automated information system

NOOR: NAJM On-line operations

R&D: Research and Development

SME: Small and Medium Enterprises

SOLAS: International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea

TAIEX: Technical Assistance Information Exchange

TRIPS: trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

VTMIS: Vessel Traffic Management and Information Systems

WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction