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Situation in Lebanon

European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2021 on the situation in Lebanon (2021/2878(RSP))

(2022/C 117/15)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular its resolution of 22 May 2008 on the situation in Lebanon ([1]),

— having regard to previous UN Security Council Resolutions, in particular 1559 (2004), 1701 (2006) and 2539 (2020), 2591 (2021),

— 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 ([2]),

— having regard to the Council Decision 2007/860/EC of 10 December 2007 providing Community macro-financial assistance to Lebanon ([3]),

— having regard to the final report by the European Union Election Observation Mission to Lebanon 2018,

— having regard to the commitments agreed in the framework of the EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities in November 2016, the CEDRE Conference in 6 April 2018, the Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) in December 2020 and the International Support Group for Lebanon meetings on 11 December 2019, 23 September 2020 and 19 May 2021,

— having regard to the statement of 5 August 2020 by Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on the explosion in Beirut,

— having regard to the International Conference on Assistance and Support to Beirut and the Lebanese People of 9 August 2020 and the Conference in Support of the Lebanese Population of 2 December 2020, organised by France and the UN,

— having regard to the joint statement of 23 September 2020 by the International Support Group for Lebanon,

— having regard to the statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU of 28 September 2020 on the resignation of the Prime Minister-designate of Lebanon,

— having regard to the report on the Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) adopted by the EU, the UN and the World Bank in December 2020,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 7 December 2020 on Lebanon,

— having regard to the World Bank's Lebanon Economic Monitor (LEM) of 1 June 2021 and to the Beirut Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) prepared by the World Bank Group in cooperation with the EU and the UN,

— having regard to the statements and remarks by Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Josep Borrell on 19 June 2021 during his visit to the country,

— having regard to the statement by VP/HR Borrell of 16 July 2021 on the Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri stepping down,

([1]) OJ C 279 E, 19.11.2009, p. 69.
([2]) OJ L 143, 30.5.2006, p. 2.
([3]) OJ L 337, 21.12.2007, p. 111.

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— having regard to the call of 16 July 2021 by the Chair of the Committee on Foreign, Affairs David McAllister, and the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries, Isabel Santos, for the Lebanese political leadership to resolve the deadlock after the Prime Minister-designate steps down,

— having regard to UNICEF's press release of 23 July 2021 entitled 'Lebanon: Public water system on the verge of collapse, UNICEF warns',

— having regard to the statement of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Spokesperson of 26 July 2021 on the government formation process,

— having regard to the statement of 28 July 2021 by the Co-Chairs of the second 3RF Consultative Group meeting,

— having regard to Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1277 of 30 July 2021 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Lebanon ([4]),

— having regard to the statement by VP/HR Borrell of 3 August 2021 on the one year anniversary of the Beirut port explosion,

— having regard to the Conference in Support of the Population of Lebanon which took place on 4 August 2021 by videoconference, and to the statement made by VP/HR Borrell during the Conference,

— having regard to the letter of 4 August 2021 from the UN Secretary-General to the President of the UN Security Council on extending the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL),

— having regard to the statement issued by the President of the European Council on 4 August 2021 at the third International Conference in Support of the People of Lebanon, held at the joint invitation of the UN Secretary-General and the President of the French Republic,

— having regard to the statement of 7 August 2021 by the EEAS Spokesperson condemning the firing of rockets from southern Lebanon,

— having regard to the statement of 26 August 2021 by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres on the deteriorating socio-economic situation in Lebanon,

— having regard to Decision No 1/2016 of the EU-Lebanon Association Council of 11 November 2016 agreeing on EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities, and to the proposal for a Council decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Association Council set up 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, as regards the extension of the EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities until new updated joint documents are adopted by the EU and Lebanon (COM(2021)0406),

— having regard to the incidents of August to September 2019, 14 April 2020, 17 April 2020, 27 July 2020, May 2021, 20 July 2021 and 4 to 6 August 2021 which occurred across the Blue Line,

— having regard to the joint communication of 9 February 2021 entitled 'Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood — A new Agenda for the Mediterranean' (JOIN(2021)0002),

— having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,

— having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

([4]) OJ L 277 I, 2.8.2021, p. 16.

A. whereas the current situation in Lebanon is extremely alarming and deeply concerning due to the political, economic, social, financial and health crisis, and the state of institutional breakdown; whereas Lebanon is a close and important partner of the European Union; whereas this partnership is based on common interests, long-standing historical and cultural ties, regular political and social dialogue and wide-ranging people-to-people contacts;

B. whereas Lebanon has a vibrant civil society with numerous activists, community leaders, academics, artists and youth groups mobilising and calling for urgent reforms;

C. whereas the situation in Lebanon was critical and led to a financial crisis at the end of 2019; whereas mass protests already took place on 17 October 2019 calling for social and economic rights, accountability, the end of corruption and the resignation of all political representatives, also called Lebanon's October Revolution; whereas on 29 October 2019, former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced the resignation of the government;

D. whereas on 4 August 2020, a devastating explosion of a large amount of ammonium nitrate at the Beirut port caused more than 200 deaths, wounded more than 6 500 people and damaged over 74 000 homes, directly affecting 300 000 people; whereas in the aftermath, former Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned; whereas one year after the blast, the investigation into the causes that led to the explosion has not yet been concluded — largely because of corruption — and those responsible have not been identified or held to account; whereas a Human Rights Watch report issued on 3 August 2021 shed light on evidence implicating officials in explosion; whereas on 4 August 2021, a further mass street protest took place in Beirut demanding accountability for the port explosion; whereas leaked official documents indicate that Lebanese customs, military and security authorities, as well as the judiciary, had warned successive governments of the dangerous stockpile of explosive chemicals at the port of Beirut on at least 10 occasions over six years, yet no action was taken; whereas Lebanon's key political figures have obstructed the local investigation into the subsequent explosion, with authorities dismissing the first investigative judge after he summoned political figures for questioning, and rejecting the second investigative judge's requests to lift the immunity of suspected members of parliament and question senior members of the security forces;

E. whereas corruption is one of the key challenges stifling Lebanon's development and prosperity, and deepening alienation from and distrust of the political system; whereas corruption is widespread and permeates all levels of society, as reflected by the country's global and average performance scores in most governance areas; whereas the National Anti-Corruption Institution is still not operational as the appointment of its commissioners is pending;

F. whereas Lebanon finally formed a government on 10 September 2021, after three prime ministers-designate, Mustapha Adib, Saad Hariri and Najib Mikati; whereas the new government will urgently need to deliver the necessary substantive policy package of reforms in order for Lebanon to combat corruption and to preserve its stability, unity, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity;

G. whereas municipal, parliamentary and presidential elections in Lebanon are scheduled for May 2022 and October 2022; whereas it is crucial for all political leaders to respect the electoral calendar of 2022 and to ensure inclusive, transparent and fair elections with equal access to campaigning for all and access to vote for all Lebanese citizens, including those who reside outside the country as the most recent electoral law adopted in 2017 allowed them to and as the Lebanese Constitution stipulates; whereas the Supervisory Commission for Elections lacks the necessary means to carry out its mandate, raising concerns regarding the transparency and fairness of the campaign and the elections scheduled for next year;

H. whereas immediately after the massive blast the EU jointly undertook a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment with the World Bank and the UN to estimate the impact on the population, physical assets, infrastructure and service delivery; whereas the findings include USD 3,8 to 4,6 billion in damages with the housing and culture sectors most severely affected, USD 2,9 to 3,5 billion in losses with housing being the most hit followed by transport and culture, and USD 1,8 to 2,0 billion in priority recovery and reconstruction needs, with transport needs highest followed by culture and housing; whereas the main outcome has been the establishment of the Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction

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Framework (3RF), co-managed by the Government of Lebanon; whereas there has been no progress on reforms under 3RF because of months of government formation deadlock; whereas in May 2021, Lebanon's main electricity producer Electricité du Liban (Electricity of Lebanon) announced that it no longer had enough money to buy fuel; whereas Lebanon is reaching out to several countries in order to address its immediate energy needs;

I. whereas, despite the suspension of the banking secrecy law, there has been no progress on the forensic audit of the Central Bank; whereas, following reports of a Swiss investigation into transactions allegedly involving the Governor of the Central Bank, Riad Salameh, and his brother, the Lebanese public prosecutor launched an investigation and French prosecutors opened a preliminary investigation into money laundering allegations concerning Salameh; whereas the Governor of the Central Bank denies all allegations;

J. whereas the EU has committed to supporting the stability and unity of the country through economic assistance; whereas the EU has provided substantial assistance to tackle the immediate consequences and needs following the blast; whereas it mobilised EUR 33 million for emergency needs and more than 250 rescuers from EU Member States; whereas in 2021 alone, the EU has provided Lebanon with EUR 55,5 million in humanitarian aid; whereas an additional EUR 5,5 million were released during summer 2021 to strengthen Lebanon's COVID-19 response; whereas the EU and its Member States have mobilised EUR 24,0 billion since 2011;

K. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already ongoing and generalised crisis in Lebanon, where there is widespread corruption at all levels of society; whereas both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups have been severely affected; whereas since the beginning of the pandemic more than 610 000 coronavirus cases and 8 150 deaths have been recorded in Lebanon; whereas the neighbourhoods most affected by the housing destruction caused by the explosion were Gemmayze Ashrafiedh, Mar Mikhael and Rmeil Medawar, and the lack of alternatives today for those whose homes were destroyed could affect the historical social structure, fabric and cohesion of Lebanon;

L. whereas the Council Decision of 30 July 2021 established a framework for targeted sanctions against persons and entities responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon; whereas these include an EU travel ban and assets freeze for persistently hampering the formation of a government or seriously undermining the holding of elections, for obstructing or undermining the implementation of plans approved by Lebanese authorities and supported by the EU to improve accountability and good governance, including in the banking and financial sectors, or for serious financial misconduct concerning public funds, for acts covered by the UN Convention Against Corruption or for the unauthorised export of capital;

M. whereas the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia found that between 2019 and 2020, the headcount poverty ratio had already jumped from 28 % to 55 %; whereas the multidimensional poverty rate in Lebanon has nearly doubled from 42 % in 2019, to 82 % in 2021, and 'extreme multidimensional poverty' affects 34 % of the population today; whereas the unemployment rate has risen to over 40 % of the workforce and an increasing share of households have difficulty accessing basic services such as food, water and healthcare; whereas the World Bank reported in its Lebanon Economic Monitor of June 2021 that Lebanon is enduring a severe and prolonged economic depression, likely to rank among the most severe episodes of crisis globally since the mid-19th century;

N. whereas the war in neighbouring Syria has forced many to flee to Lebanon, which has taken in an estimated 1,5 million Syrian refugees, in addition to some 15 800 refugees of Ethiopian, Iraqi, Sudanese and other origins registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and approximately 207 700 Palestine refugees; whereas, according to the World Food Programme, in 2021, 22 % of Lebanese nationals, 50 % of refugees from Syria and 33 % of refugees of other nationalities are food insecure; whereas Lebanon is one of two countries in the Middle East hosting large numbers of migrant domestic workers regulated by the kafala system; whereas since 2011 the EU has contributed EUR 2.4 billion to help Syrian and Palestine refugees through various instruments such as the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI);

O. whereas in April 2020 the Lebanese Government approved an economic plan and requested an IMF programme on the basis of the necessary reforms; whereas talks with the IMF are still ongoing; whereas according to the IMF, Lebanon urgently needs to initiate comprehensive reforms to bring public finances into order, restructure public debt, restore the banking system, expand the social safety net, reform state-owned enterprises and improve governance; whereas the IMF has designated USD 860 million of special drawing rights to strengthen the country's depleted reserves and to help with the many urgent needs; whereas the Financial Committee of the Lebanese Parliament rejected the government's plan for a bail-in that would have allowed the savings of 98 % of the population to be preserved by guaranteeing the assets of bank accounts holding less than USD 500 000 in savings; whereas in the face of criticism about the recovery plan from MPs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published three statements supporting the government's proposed plan; whereas the MPs who rejected the recovery plan have vested interests in preserving the interests of Lebanon's banks, given their relationships as or with shareholders of those banks;

P. whereas Article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code is still used to prosecute and arrest LGBTI people; whereas in some areas of the country, men suspected of same-sex relations are routinely arrested and subjected to degrading treatment in police stations;

Q. whereas on 30 June 2021, the Lebanese Parliament approved a USD 556 million exceptional credit law to fund a ration card system that will provide cash assistance to support the most vulnerable families, replacing the current subsidies system; whereas the implementation of the ration cards should follow the principle of non-discrimination;

R. whereas the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement is based on respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which constitutes an essential element of the agreement;

S. whereas the latest UN Security Council resolution on Lebanon, Resolution 2591 (2021), unanimously adopted on 30 August 2021, extends the mandate of UNIFIL for another year and recalls the need for a permanent ceasefire in line with the principles and elements set out in resolution 1701 (2006);

T. whereas Lebanon's neutrality is the key to its future stability; whereas a stable, fully sovereign, united and democratic Lebanon is of crucial importance for the stability, security and peaceful development of the whole of the Middle East; whereas the recently formed government and its ministers must reach political independence and resist any external interference from countries in Lebanon's neighbourhood or further afield; whereas external interference is detrimental to Lebanon's development and stability; whereas Hezbollah still controls key ministries in the Lebanese Government; whereas Hezbollah has been listed as a terror organisation by several EU Member States; whereas Hezbollah has repeatedly shown its strong ideological allegiance with Iran, which is destabilising the Lebanese Government and undermining its much-needed cohesion;

1. Considers Lebanon's present situation to be a man-made disaster caused by a handful of men across the ruling political class; notes the recent formation of a government after 13 months of political deadlock; regrets the fact that the new cabinet contains only one woman; deeply urges Lebanese leaders to keep their promises and be a functional government that is mission-driven, credible and accountable, that leaves parliamentary divisions aside and that is free from foreign influence; believes that enforcing accountability, upholding free and fair elections and providing basic public services must outweigh any personal consideration within Lebanon's political class; recalls that elections in May 2022 must by no means be postponed, given the political stalemate and increasing dysfunction of state institutions, and must abide by international democratic standards of freedom, fairness and transparency;

2. calls on the Lebanese authorities to request that the VP/HR deploy an election observation mission, or alternatively, if it is deemed necessary, an election expert mission, months ahead of the elections; calls on the new Lebanese Government to implement in full the recommendations stemming from the 2018 EU Election Observation Mission; urges the Commission and the Member States to provide all the technical and financial assistance to enable the elections to be held in the best conditions possible and to strive to guarantee the fairness and transparency of the whole process; urges the new Lebanese Government to provide the Supervisory Commission for Elections with all the necessary funds, staff and equipment in

order to fully carry out its mandate; calls for an International Humanitarian Task Force under the auspices of the UN to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance and oversee the use of the funds; recalls that the UN has developed a framework to support women as candidates and voters and thus promote greater participation by women in the political process and calls for this framework to be fully integrated into plans for electoral reform;

3. Calls for the EU to offer Lebanon the deployment of a comprehensive EU administrative advisory mission in order to address the urgent need to counter the accelerating breakdown of public administration and basic services; urges the new government to swiftly implement key governance and economic reforms that will ensure political and economic recovery, including the credible regulation of key economic sectors, such as the electricity sector;

4. Recalls that a transparent, independent, neutral and effective investigation into the Beirut port explosion is a priority and must be ensured; urges the Lebanese authorities to respect the judicial procedures and the independence of the judiciary and assist every effort that would allow those responsible for the decisions that led to the blast in the port of Beirut to be properly investigated and held to account; calls for an independent international fact-finding mission to Lebanon to investigate the Beirut explosion within the framework of the UN; insists that those found directly or indirectly responsible must be held accountable for the lives lost and the damage done to the Lebanese people;

5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to release additional humanitarian aid, given the dire conditions on the ground, in particular food aid and hospital and pharmaceutical material, and to provide alternative energy resources including solar panels for all schools and hospitals, channelled through entities other than public entities such as well-known non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, and faith-based organisations in Lebanon that are able to deliver on reforms; insists on the need to include local civil society organisation in the design, planning, coordination, implementation and evaluation of aid programmes for Lebanon; calls on the Commission to find mechanisms that strategically and flexibly apply the criteria to enable organisations to swiftly access the funds in order for immediate needs to be addressed, while always respecting the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and international humanitarian law; underlines the need for robust monitoring of EU aid to ensure that it is transferred directly to those in need; strongly deplores the extremely high level of mismanagement and lack of financial oversight over funds delivered in the past;

6. Calls on the Commission and EU Member States to engage constructively with the new Lebanese Government in delivering the structural and sectoral reforms required to unlock significant EU macro-financial assistance and in strengthening our trade relations, on the condition that tangible progress is made on the implementation of necessary reforms as included in the 3RF;

7. Calls on the Lebanese authorities to resume talks with the IMF as soon as possible in order for reforms to be tangible for people struggling in Lebanon; urges the Lebanese authorities to implement prior commitments made in the context of the Economic Conference for Development through Reforms with the Private sector (CEDRE) of April 2018, with the support of the International Support Group for Lebanon, and as agreed by all of Lebanon's political leaders, which entail meaningful and deep economic and governance reforms, including restoring economic stability and the credibility of the financial sector, guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary, ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law, and fighting corruption; calls on the Lebanese authorities to provide support for the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon, including through social safety nets; calls on the Lebanese authorities to approve the 2021 budget and prepare the 2022 budget, including a strong programme on social protection, implementing the Emergency Social Safety Net Programme and the National Poverty Targeting Programme; urges the Lebanese authorities to provide for a sufficient budget line for the 2022 elections;

8. Stresses that due to the Assad regime's all-out repression against the Syrian popular uprising of 2011, Lebanon has hosted the world's highest proportion of Syrian refugees; points to the particular responsibility of the Syrian regime in the continuation of this dramatic humanitarian situation; recalls that in order to achieve enduring solutions for displaced persons, sufficient long-term funding and programming are crucial to support internally displaced persons and refugees beyond the humanitarian programme cycle; recalls the vulnerability of Syrian and Palestine refugees in Lebanon and stresses the need to provide adequate, predictable and multi-layered funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other actors working with refugees, to ensure the full provision of essential services

to refugee communities in the country; stresses the need to enhance cooperation and dialogue with NGOs and other service providers helping refugees in the country;

9. Urges the new Lebanese Government and President to undertake all necessary measures to dismantle corrupt practices, including transfers of public capital and tax evasion, to ensure the full independence of the future members of the National Anti-Corruption Institution and to request the technical support of the international community through UN mechanisms and the UN Convention Against Corruption in order to guarantee both transparency and full accountability to the Lebanese people; recalls that the EU, the World Bank and the UN have demanded the establishment of an independent and transparent judiciary, the adoption of a modern public procurement law and the enactment of an anticorruption strategy, and denounces the lack of action by successive Lebanese governments over the past years;

10. Stresses the particular responsibility of Hezbollah and other factions in repressing Lebanon's 2019 popular movement and in Lebanon's political and economic crisis; calls on all external powers to refrain from meddling in Lebanon's internal affairs and calls for its sovereignty and political independence to be respected; urges all political factions in the government to end sectarianism and to implement vital reforms for all people living in Lebanon, with no religious or ethnic discrimination;

11. Expresses deep concern at the continued lack of progress towards a permanent ceasefire and other key provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) in view of the latest and continuing tensions along Lebanon's southern border; reaffirms its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, in line with the recent UN Security Council Resolution 2591 (2021); recalls the position of the EU that the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 (2005) and 1701 (2006) must be fully respected;

12. Calls on the international community to provide the necessary financial support to enable the Lebanese armed forces and internal security forces to fulfil their essential role in preventing a further collapse of state institutions, securing humanitarian aid and ensuring security and stability, while respecting the right to protest and to freedom of expression; reiterates that accountability of public servants is essential and condemns any violence against protestors;

13. Calls on the EEAS to propose a list of accountable authorities in Lebanon in cooperation with the Member States; calls for the use of targeted sanctions under the framework adopted by the Council on 30 July 2021, on all persons or entities that fulfil the criteria of that framework; stresses that the introduction of targeted sanctions for obstructing or undermining the democratic political process remains an option that could be activated should the responsible actors in Lebanon continue to stonewall reform and the fight against corruption; calls on all EU Member States without exception to fully cooperate with and strengthen the EU's new targeted sanctions against corrupted leaders and those responsible for undermining democracy and the rule of law and their affiliates in Lebanon; urges the EEAS and the Council urgently to allocate sufficient resources to the effective development of the new mechanism; calls on the EU Member States and their partners, such as the UK and Switzerland, to cooperate in the fight against the alleged misappropriation of public money by a number of Lebanese officials; suggests that the Member States initiate legal proceedings in their national jurisdictions against the owners of illicitly acquired capital held in their territories and to promote efforts towards the restitution of illegal funds to the Lebanese population;

14. Recalls that the Association Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Lebanon provides for a political dialogue between Parliament and the new Lebanese Parliament on the basis of the establishment of political cooperation between the two institutions, which may serve as an additional framework, if requested by the Lebanese authorities, to support the recently formed government and overcome the institutional stagnation;

15. Recalls its strong support for all human rights defenders in Lebanon and their work; encourages civil society and the social and economic partners to play their respective roles in the national dialogue by voicing their aspirations and putting forward proposals for peace, the development and future of the country, and praises the initiatives of local communities and civil society; is extremely concerned by the increasing emigration of the Lebanese population and consequent brain drain, affecting the human resources essential to the reconstruction and recovery of Lebanon and its democratic life;

16. Calls on Lebanon to ensure the necessary protections against forced labour, as enshrined in national labour law and international human rights standards, including fundamental principles and rights at work, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189 of 2011) in order to address the exploitative nature of the kafala system;

17. Reiterates its support for the EU's determination to assist Lebanon in its economic restructuring and the reconstruction of its infrastructure; calls on the Commission to reform the long-term funds and reformulate the strategy and recovery plan for Lebanon in the framework of the EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities under the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument — Global Europe, and to consider funding additional potential partners within civil society, especially in order to find urgent solutions to energy scarcity through renewable energy sources including solar panels;

18. Calls for the repeal of Article 534 of the Lebanese Criminal Code and for an end to all forms of legal and institutional violence and persecution of LGBTI people; calls for the abolition of other discriminatory laws such as those barring Palestinian refugees from enjoying the same rights as other foreign residents;

19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to enhance their support to the Lebanese vaccination campaign, which needs international support, and to alleviate the health crisis in Lebanon; calls for support for the salaries of hospital employees and the purchasing of paramedical items;

20. Reaffirms its strong partnership with Lebanon and its people, anchored in the common values of democracy, pluralism, rule of law and respect for human rights; reiterates its support for the determination of the EU to assist Lebanon in its economic restructuring; pays its respects to the victims of the Beirut port explosion; reaffirms its solidarity with and support for Lebanese civil society, especially journalists and whistle-blowers; calls on the Council and the Commission to continue their efforts to support the reconstruction and economic recovery of Lebanon and to establish closer cooperation with and better funding for civil society organisations in the country;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, and the Government and Parliament of Lebanon.