

COUNTRY REPORT: LEBANON

Monitoring of the ENP Progress report 2014

Introduction

The Arab Spring has fundamentally changed the political landscape of Europe's Southern neighbourhood – the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and clearly revealed the need for a new social contract based on respect for fundamental freedoms, dignity and rule of law, in addition to the revision of social and economic policies towards ensuring sustainable development and economic and social justice. Despite high expectations, after more than two years the revolutions have thus far been unable to produce consolidated and stable democracies and a growth-based economic model have been still promoted by national and international actors. Widespread non-democratic practices are still hindering the transition towards multiparty democracy and conflict in the region is alarming with the ongoing war in Syria, Libya and in Iraq. Thus while significant changes have been produced in all countries, the MENA region is still lagging behind the promises of the Arab Spring.

In the aftermath of the uprisings, the EU offered its Southern Mediterranean partner countries “A partnership for democracy and shared prosperity” in the context of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy that focused on democratic transformation, a partnership with people and civil society, and sustainable and inclusive growth.

With yearly progress on the implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy, the EU assesses the progress and regress in implementation of Action Plans. In light of the Progress Reports on the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy 2014, SOLIDAR in coordination with the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) and in cooperation with the CONCORD working group on Enlargement, Pre-accession and Neighbourhood (EPAN), Global Network Arab Countries and the Association of Local Development Agencies (ALDA) conducted a consultation process from April to October 2014 to provide an opportunity for the organisations within the “SOLIDAR Network for Social justice in the MENA region” to comment on the progress reports prepared by the EU. This country report presents the outcomes of the consultation which focused on the key topics when it comes to the promotion of social justice: Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly, Decent Work and Social Protection.

The responses to the consultation clearly indicate that in **Lebanon** several commitments in applying the key reform priorities of the EU-Lebanon Action Plan remain pending. Upcoming Progress Reports should pay specific attention to the developments that took place in 2013 and 2014. In addition while the revised Action Plan for Lebanon includes benchmarks and indicators on new priorities set for 2013-2015, the Progress Reports should be used specifically to demonstrate the progress and regress in light of these benchmarks and indicators.

Executive Summary

Please find below a general overview of the feedback submitted by partners through the attached feedback tables. The partners' feedback can in no way be taken to reflect the views of SOLIDAR and its members.

Freedom of association and peaceful assembly

1. Access to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs)

Lebanon guarantees freedom of expression according to article 13 of its Constitution. The country has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and political rights. However,

implementation still remains a major problem. For example, despite the Press Law has been amended three times, it only covers the print media and it prohibits publishing news contradicting public ethics, and national or religious feelings, thus limiting even further freedom of expression. With regard to the media environment, it is important to stress that Lebanon needs a media law reform, as the media sector continues to be highly dependent of political forces. While a law on access to information is still lacking, Lebanon has still not ratified ILO Convention No.87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize) whose provisions could strengthen the normative framework.

Lebanon is facing growing pressures on its public sector due to the worsening of the Syrian crisis. With regard to access to education and public health sector, Lebanon is still lagging behind in ensuring the basic right to education to the Syrian refugee population, while also the higher education system is weakened due to confessional reasons. Likewise, no major progress has been recorded in the health sector, whereby the health care system in Lebanon remains insufficient due to the absence of a coherent and sustained health policy.

On women's rights, no major steps have been taken to enhance the role of women in public sector and economic life. For instance, while the Lebanese Parliament has passed a law on April 2014 that should represent an important measure advancing women's rights, the law does not provide a detailed definition of domestic violence, therefore failing to fully protect women against domestic violence. In addition, the state continues to implement discrimination in the personal status laws refusing to grant women the right to pass on their nationality to their husbands and children.

2. Ability to establish associations and their access to funding

Lebanon has not yet ratified the ILO Convention no.87 on "Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize". Moreover, pressure and intimidation of union activists were reported, and the law to establish trade or labor union remains highly restrictive: public servants are prohibited and they are forbidden to establish or to take part in trade unions.

In addition, delays in registration of international non-governmental organizations were reported, thus an open space to operate effectively was highly limited. For this reason, international support aimed at ensuring the ability to establish associations and access to funding continues to be needed, however, the EU should ensure compliance with aid effectiveness principles enhance transparency and information sharing in its funds allocation for international and local civil society organizations.

3. Participation in decision making processes (including EU delegations)

Spontaneous consultations with civil society organizations remain weak and insufficient. Moreover, practices and policies to consult with civil society remains un-transparent despite the 2012 request from the Council of Ministers for all ministries to publish proposed policies and regulations by public consultation prior to endorsement. For instance, Lebanon is still lacking a comprehensive, participatory, inclusive and transparent national dialogue, as for example consultations on EU Action Plan were held in English, thus significantly limiting the space for CSOs to voice their opinions.

Decent work and social protection

1. Setup of social protection floors

Lebanon needs to revise its social protection approach from application of social safety nets, poverty targeting programs('National Poverty Targeting Programme' (NPTP)) and cash transfers to

considering social protection as a duty and an obligation that the state should provide to its citizens protection and dignity at different stages of their lives. In addition, Lebanon should consider social protection schemes in a broad development strategy aimed at achieving universal coverage, social justice and the realization of human rights. More specifically, Lebanon should create a system to ensure Elderly Protection Rights and an unemployment compensation system and eliminate any discrimination based on gender or disability in the social protection laws. Lebanon should also increase the scope of coverage to include the most vulnerable groups , and the action in the informal sector , and foreign workers and immigrants in general economically active , regardless of the economic and job

2. Growing informal economy and indecent work

Unemployment still remains a major challenge in Lebanon due to the country's failure to implement economic and social policies that could successfully address national development challenges. In addition with the Syria crisis there has been huge influx of Syrian refugees into the country that created further pressure on employment. In addition, unregistered refugees' labor rights face further challenges as their rights are not respected and protected, lacking regular payment and decent working conditions.

3. Respect for migrant workers' rights

The lack of legislation targeting migrant workers' rights and several structural problems related to illegal recruitment practices, the lack of monitoring of private employment agencies and restrictive immigration regulations remain the major problems hampering Lebanon's capacity to respect migrant workers' rights.

A draft law was submitted by the Ministry of Labour to the government in March, taking into account some of the articles of the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Yet this legislation was not adopted.

Recommendations

During the reporting period Lebanon took up several of the recommendations contained in the 2012 Progress Report, including limited progress towards ACAA negotiations as well as drafting legislation on public procurement, fight against corruption, and migrant workers. That legislation, however, was not adopted by parliament.

On the basis of the assessment of progress made in implementing the ENP in 2013, the EU-Lebanon partnership should:

- Ensure the continuation and enhancement of a structured multi-stakeholder dialogue with the CSOs and contribute to creating an enabling environment for civil society by building the institutional capacities, ensuring access to information, to resources with all kind and creating channels for permanent and free consultations;
- Ensure the ratification and genuine implementation of ILO Convention no.87 on "Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and highlight the need for a media law reform aimed at securing freedom of expression and democratic access to information
- Support the advancement of women's rights legislation including amendments to the Constitution by developing an article that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; amendments to Lebanese Nationality Law and by removing all reservations to CEDAW
- Support genuine implementation of obligations under international human rights law including those deriving from Lebanon being party to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

- Support the shift from fragmented and targeted social protection schemes to development of a comprehensive national strategy for social protection in which social protection is defined as right
- Support the revision of rentier economic approaches, weakly managed privatization, and overall economic liberalization policies towards economic and social policies that increase productive capacities, generate sustainable and decent jobs.
- Support the adoption of a comprehensive employment and wage strategy that includes the integration of the Syrian refugees in the economic cycle, particularly through regularizing the status of those refugees who entered illegally, enhancing registration process and issuing work permits.
- Contribute to a coordinated support to humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and enhance the national response to the presence of refugees from Syria in coordination with international partners, UN agencies and humanitarian organizations, including by improving the legal framework and swiftly concluding negotiations on a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
- Support electoral reform in due time before the November 2014 legislative elections, taking into account international standards and recommendations of the previous EU electoral observation missions;
- Enhance the protection of human rights and fighting all types of discrimination, particularly with regard to vulnerable populations (including full implementation of the existing laws on migrant Workers);
- Enhance the justice reform, especially with regard to ensuring the independence of judicial appointments, restricting the jurisdiction of military courts, improving prison management and detention conditions, and fighting impunity at all levels including through full cooperation with the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.



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The following table outlines the feedback provided by local partners on the 2014 EU progress Report

Benchmark	Report 2014	Feedback (comments, analysis, feedback)
Freedom of association and peaceful assembly:		
<p>1. Access to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCRs)</p>	<p>Civil society organisations reported cases of limitations on people’s freedom of expression. The authorities’ poor record in prosecuting such violations is a matter of concern. 2013 saw an increase in the number of assaults and attacks against journalists in Lebanon, particularly when covering security incidents.</p>	<p>Despite being guaranteed by Lebanese Constitution Article 13 and despite Lebanon ratifying International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the violations of freedom of expression is systematic in Lebanon and requires a comprehensive reform of the related laws. For instance, the Press Law-although has been amended three times- remains limited covering print media only. Moreover, the ambiguity within the law- as in Article 75 of the Press Law that prohibits publishing news that “contradicts public ethics or is inimical to national or religious feelings or national unity- results in further limitations violating the freedom of expression.</p> <p>Although imprisonment is not common for journalists (rather they are fined), as noted by the progress report the assaults and attacks against journalists are in rise. Yet, in addition to cases in covering security incidents, it is important to note that journalists face trials with regard to the news covering corruption cases. As noted by Reporters Without Borders, several journalists found guilty of defamation and received fines due their corruption related news. (<i>read more at http://en.rsf.org/lebanon-legal-harassment-and-harsh-20-03-2014,46024.html</i>)</p> <p>The progress report makes no reference to the lack of independence in media sector, which is a critical concern in Lebanon given the political practices of the media and</p>



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		<p>continuous use of media sector in the political power game. Moreover, a related right, access to information is not mentioned, while the law on access to information still lacks in Lebanon.</p> <p>In this context, rather than applauding media sector (as it has been continuously done in progress reports) the EU report should highlight the need for a media law reform in Lebanon. This reform should aim at allowing the creation of new newspapers and journals-in order to ensure various opinions and views to be expressed. As currently the fees with regard to establishment/ownership are very high which makes it out of the reach of the ordinary and independent people, the reform should also bring new regulations on the fees implemented. Moreover, the social protection for the journalists should be tackled as in the current system they are not allowed to practice or to benefit from social protection unless they belong to the syndicate of Journalists while accessing the syndicate is not easy.</p>
	<p>Education and protection of children is an increasing cause for concern. Finding solutions that will allow refugees' children access to education without over-burdening the already weak public school system is a challenge.</p>	<p>The progress report sheds light on the increasing stress in public sectors in Lebanon due to huge influx of Syrian refugees, including education. Whereas 300,000 school-aged children registered with the UNHCR in Lebanon, around 63,000 Syrian children have been registered in the normal, first shift of public schools, which means two-thirds of the child refugees remained without formal education in 2013-2014 academic year.</p> <p>(http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Mar-19/250662-second-shift-opens-school-doors-to-syrian-kids.ashx#ixzz32nz8JWxL)</p> <p>With regard to the monitored year, namely in 2013, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in collaboration with humanitarian actors, enabled about 30,000 Syrian children to</p>



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Governance of the **higher education** sector continued to be highly centralised. Adequate quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms have yet to be put in place. Two draft laws were submitted to parliament concerning the organisation of higher education and the establishment of a Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

enroll in the public school system. UNICEF notes that another 45,000 vulnerable children – among them Syrians, Lebanese returnees and children from vulnerable Lebanese populations – accessed non-formal education. Given the limited formal education possibilities, informal education is considered as an alternative for Syrian refugee children. Yet recognition of this education by Lebanon authorities remains as a challenge to ensure the basic right to education of the refugee children in Lebanon.

Tackled briefly in the progress report, higher education is another relevant concern in Lebanon. The Lebanese University is weakened due to linking its administration and management to the confessional system and related considerations. Moreover, recent discussions in the government did not bring any decision about the nomination of the new Dean's council (deans and directors) because of the attachment including 1000 names of part time professors suggested to become with a fixed term contract; in fact the list was supposed to include 500; which means that additional 500 were suggested without any justifications (qualifications, years of service as part time, evaluation of their services, etc.)

While the core problem with regard to salary scales and wages strike relates to lack of public resources, it equally highlights the need for an administrative reform in Lebanon; when the public sectors are managed properly, they can indeed bring the needed amount to ensure public resources.

In relation, the government and the parliament tend to ask for more taxes (increase VAT 2% from 10 to 12%) and they also propose to include additional tax on the benefits from the interest rates on the banks' savings. Yet such debate is



	<p>postponing the issuing of the related law, which as well results in teachers not coming back to work, thus creating severe challenges for education sector in Lebanon.</p> <p>Overall with regard to enjoyment of the right to education, the Progress report did not focus on core challenges including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase of sectarian schools in Lebanon • The huge gap between public and private schools in terms of quality of education and fees • The huge bills paid by the government to cover the enrolment in private schools which limits its capacities to pay for developing public education..
<p>In the public health sector, Lebanon faced additional demands for medical services from refugees from the crisis in Syria.</p>	<p>As noted by the progress report, health is another sector in Lebanon that faces severe challenges due to Syria crisis. In fact, about half of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not getting the medical care they need. Several eradicated diseases are once again witnessed in Lebanon, including cases of polio, tuberculosis, and scabies due to lack of access to healthcare and further pressure on the already insufficient health facilities where Syrian refugees are hosted. In relation to these problems, the report points the campaigns launched in Lebanon targeting children and related EU support to public healthcare services.</p> <p>Yet it should be noted that the situation is especially serious for unregistered refugees. A survey undertaken by MSF in Bekaa valley reveals that %56 of those registered had access to free hospital care as opposed to % 20 of those not registered, and %47 of registered refugee children were vaccinated, compared to % 27 of those not registered. (http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Feb-08/205550-registration-system-slows-syrian-refugee-access-</p>



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	<p>tohealth-care-msf.ashx#ixzz2cQAX1D2b)</p> <p>While the issues covered in the progress report reflects the challenges deriving from the Syria crisis, it is important to recall that the health care system in Lebanon remains insufficient due to the absence of a coherent and sustained health policy. In this regard, apart from short-term assistance, the partnership should focus on the need to reform the health system in order to establish a health policy that prioritizes protection of the citizen in need of health services, that aim universal health coverage and , and promotes a stable and long-lasting partnership between the public and private health sectors.</p>
<p>The influx of refugees from Syria put new pressures on Lebanon's water, sanitation and solid waste management infrastructure, which even before the crisis had been insufficient.</p>	<p>The Syrian crisis has put great pressure on the water and sanitation facilities in Lebanon, that still need to be installed or upgraded in many of the large and small shelters to agreed minimum standards and with cooperation of landowners and municipalities. Another problem is the limited capacity of Lebanon Water Sector as the Water Establishments and municipalities lack capacity (human and financial resources) to deal with the increased demand for water, sanitation and collection and disposal of solid waste. Poor water and sanitation networks in much of rural Lebanon, lack of wastewater treatment, and the lack of solid waste collection and land fill sites are among the key challenges increasing the need for emergency/short-term interventions. In this context, the partnership with the EU should focus on hygiene promotion through multiple communication methods via hygiene promoters, schools, women's groups, youth groups, mass media campaign, and working with Water Establishments and</p>



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		<p>municipalities to boost capacity and resources available for improving wastewater management. (https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=4589)</p>
	<p>In the area of women's rights, Lebanon still lacks legislation protecting against domestic abuse. Lebanese legislation continues to prevent Lebanese women from passing their nationality to their children, and Lebanon has not lifted its reservation on the respective provisions of CEDAW. Female participation in political life remains low; no woman holds a ministerial post and there are only four female members in the 128-member parliament.</p>	<p>Since several years, the progress report on the implementation of ENP in Lebanon has stated that no measures were taken to enhance the role of women in public and economic life, although women's rights are considered as a priority area in the partnership. The 2013 report reveals the same fact and the statements made by the EU reflect the violations of socio-economic rights of women in Lebanon.</p> <p>Women in Lebanon continue to face several violations in their enjoyment of human rights. The Lebanese government's reluctance to lift the reservations on CEDAW is constant, thus hindering real progress towards eradication of discrimination against women. In particular, the Lebanese state refuses to eliminate discrimination in the personal status laws and grant women the right to pass on their nationality to their husbands and children. The discriminatory statuses in the Penal Code, especially relating to adultery, rape, prostitution and abortion remain violating women's rights.</p> <p>The Lebanese parliament recently passed a law on domestic violence (April 2014) which is a progress on advancing women's rights. Yet, as a modified version of the draft law, it contains flaws and does not fully protect women from domestic violence. For instance, the law defines domestic violence narrowly, and thus it does not provide adequate protection from all forms of abuse. Moreover, it fails to specifically criminalize marital rape, which is not a crime under other Lebanese law.</p>



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		<p>The National Plan of Action on Human Rights of December 2012 stands as an important achievement, given its approach to women's rights (although not adopted) but it is still not enough. First of all, the plan recommended eliminating all the discriminatory provisions from the laws but without specifying it particularly, those of the Penal Code, the labor, social protection and personal status laws. Moreover, the plan recommended the adoption of positive discriminatory measures like the Quota for women, but it was also important to specify the number of 30% of women in the lists and results. The new government includes only one woman among 24 ministers.</p>
<p>2. Ability to establish associations and their access to funding</p>	<p>During the reporting period, delays in registration of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were reported, prohibiting these NGOs from operating effectively in Lebanon.</p>	<p>With regard to freedom of association, what has been noted by the progress report is very critical. However given the current context in Lebanon, another issue should be considered with regard to international NGOs activities in Lebanon, namely respecting to aid effectiveness principles.</p> <p>The need for international support is apparent in Lebanon. In this regard the pledges made by international community and donors should be kept and the humanitarian assistance provided by different donors should be in coordination. Moreover, particularly those NGOs taking part in relief work - where huge amounts of funds are allocated- must respect aid effectiveness principles. The incident, in December 2013 when the Syrian children froze to death, created severe concerns with regard to aid allocation and relief work in Lebanon in relation to corruption cases and NGOs' dealing with refugee crisis for business. (http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/18000)</p> <p>Furthermore, in line with aid effectiveness principles, the national ownership in humanitarian operation should be ensured; the Lebanese government should lead the process of</p>



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		<p>elaboration of a national comprehensive strategy taking into consideration the different dimensions of the operations. Accordingly, such operations also founded by EU, should have a long-term vision taking into consideration the period of the crisis and at the same time the long- term impact on Lebanon. Moreover, the EU should ensure transparency and information sharing both in its funds allocation to international and local civil society organizations. With regard to the latter, such funding and operations should also enable empowerment of civil society should be key, both in implementation and monitoring level.</p>
	<p>Pressure and intimidation of union activists were reported. Lebanon has not yet ratified the ILO Convention no.87 on "Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise"</p>	<p>While the report focuses on limitation on unions deriving from pressure and intimidation, it lacks focus on the law to establish a trade or labour union being very restrictive. Public servants are prohibited; they cannot set up and belong to trade unions and federations and thus cannot enjoy the freedom of association. Political parties are under the same law like the NGOs, but it is important to note that this might be misleading because they seek power while NGO do not. Moreover, although around 11% of the Lebanese population are Palestinians, it is important to note that they are not allowed to form any form of CSO including trade unions, yet the progress report does not focus on this.</p>
<p>3. Participation in decision making processes (including EU delegations)</p>	<p>Practices and policies to consult with civil society are weak and inconsistent despite the 2012 request from the Council of Ministers for all ministries to publish proposed policies and regulations by public consultation prior to endorsement. Civil society organisations were consulted by the EU on the new Action Plan</p>	<p>The lack of a comprehensive, participatory, inclusive and transparent national dialogue in Lebanon is a core challenge to be tackled. Thus the spontaneous consultations with civil society remain weak and insufficient. ANND contributed to the consultations on the EU action plan. Yet, given that all these consultations allow contributions from civil society but are launched in English, they can indeed bring about limited results, as they hinder the possibility of all</p>



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	<p>2013-2015 and the Single Support Framework in the context of the Structured Dialogue in December 2012 as well as on the consequences of the Syrian crisis. More than twenty meetings with mid- and high-level EU officials took place.</p>	<p>organizations interested in the partnership process, to effectively involve and voice their opinion. Moreover, an effective participation of civil society requires the empowerment of civil society through ensuring their independence. Accordingly the partnership and the structured dialogue should contribute to creating the enabling environment to building the institutional capacities; ensuring access to information, to resources with all kind and creating channels for permanent and free consultation.</p>
	<p>The parliament decided to extend its mandate by 17 months until 20 November 2014. Appeals against this extension were launched on behalf of the President of the Republic and the Free Patriotic Movement parliamentary bloc, but the Constitutional Council failed to find a quorum to rule on the appeals. Civil society organisations (CSOs) were involved only to a limited extent in the discussion on a new electoral law and appealed for wider representation of Lebanese society, including via an interim women’s quota in the parliament.</p>	
Decent work and Social Protection:		
4. Setup of social protection floors	<p>There was no progress with regard to social protection reforms and despite the government’s commitment to reactivate the Social and Economic Council, this did not happen. A significant part of the population</p>	<p>The progress report reveals the continuous violations of right to social security in Lebanon. It should be noted that social spending in Lebanon is not based on a comprehensive national policy, and does not provide the basis for the gradual realization of universal social security for all citizens. Indeed, the biggest portion of social spending is devoted to social</p>



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	<p>continued to be largely unprotected through life risks (old age, disability, unemployment); private sector employees continued to receive, after 40 years of service, a pension equal to just over three years of income while losing their health insurance. More than half the population was left without a pension or family allowances: informal workers (agriculture, construction, domestic services, seasonal and occasional labour; i.e. 25 % of the labour force) and the self-employed (28 %), in addition to the unemployed and retirees.</p>	<p>safety-net programs targeting the poorest but remain inadequate and limited. This requires developing a comprehensive national strategy for social development, including an approach integrating comprehensive social security, development, and human rights. Indeed, Lebanon should create a system to ensure Elderly Protection Rights and an unemployment compensation system and eliminate any discrimination based on gender or disability in the social protection laws. Increasing the scope of coverage to include the most vulnerable groups , and the action in the informal sector , and foreign workers and immigrants in general economically active , regardless of the economic and job</p> <p>The ‘National Poverty Targeting Programme’ implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs, is also mentioned in the report, as the first national programme dealing specifically with poverty in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the challenges related to the programme are not tackled. First of all, although the NPTP can be considered beneficial, to a certain extent, with regard to mapping out the poverty and establishing a database of information on poverty, Lebanon still needs to enable accessibility and availability of data on living conditions. In this regard, Lebanon should adjust official demographic statistics to ensure the access and availability of accurate and disaggregated information on individual resources and at the household level. In addition, as stated in the National Report to UN Sustainable Development Conference Rio+20, “poverty cannot be addressed by targeting only specific segments of the society and improving the income of the poorest families will not stop the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Instead, poverty can best be addressed by reducing socio-economic burdens through the provision of affordable and high quality basic services including clean water, energy, public</p>
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		<p>transportation and housing as well as health and education including free schooling.” This requires the state to meet its obligations in ensuring economic and social rights and shifting its approach. At current poverty-related programmes the approach of government remains limited, based on a narrow definition of poverty, limiting the poor to a particular class, and seeking to help them directly through in-kind donations and financial services without addressing the root causes of poverty.</p> <p>Since several years, the progress reports recognize the lack of reactivation of the Social and Economic Council. Yet, apart from the Social and Economic Council other national councils and commissions (for Human rights, health, education, gender, youth etc.) should be focused on. They must be inclusive for ensuring a systemic and institutionalised process of consultation in Lebanon.</p>
<p>5. Growing informal economy and indecent work</p>	<p>Unemployment is expected to remain widespread as, according to World Bank estimates, unemployment reached 20 %. In addition, a drop in wages of the low-skilled and an increasing informal economy were observed due to the additional supply of Syrian labour force. A number of illegal micro businesses were closed by the government in September.</p>	<p>The EU acknowledges the widespread unemployment in Lebanon, and shed light on related problems (wages, informal economy, gender discrimination at work place...etc) in several progress reports up to date. Nevertheless, the core problem has not been tackled: the failure of economic and social policies adopted by successive governments in addressing national developmental challenges.</p> <p>In fact, the economic policies implemented in Lebanon although generated growth did not contribute necessarily job creation, indicating the problematic of the sectors supported in the rentier-economy model. With the Syrian crisis, the situation got worse, both for Lebanese work force and Syrian refugees. Unregistered refugees’ labor rights face further challenges as their rights are not respected and protected; lacking regular</p>



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		payment and decent working conditions. This requires the Lebanese government to adopt a comprehensive employment and wage strategy that ensures the integration of the Syrian refugees in the economic cycle, particularly through regularizing the status of those refugees who entered illegally through enhancing registration process and issuing work permits.
6. Respect for migrant workers' rights	Lebanon maintained a system of informal sponsorship by families, which makes migrants heavily dependent on employers and exposes migrant workers to abuses, particularly domestic migrant workers. A new draft labour law aiming at addressing this issue was submitted by the government to the parliament but has not yet been adopted. A draft law was submitted by the Ministry of Labour to the government in March, taking into account some of the articles of the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers. As this legislation was not adopted, and owing to a lack of proper regulatory measures to monitor private recruitment agencies, vulnerability of migrant domestic workers remained high.	Whereas lack of legislation is a crucial concern with regard to migrant workers' rights---as noted by the progress report related draft laws are pending adoption---it should be as well noted that there are several structural problems that should be tackled including: a unified employment contract that does guarantee or grant minimum rights for migrant domestic workers; a lack of legal redress and protection for migrant domestic workers; illegal recruitment practices and lack of monitoring of private agencies that replaced the National Institute for employment which is legally the only institute which can recruit migrant domestic workers; restrictive immigration regulations and practices (i.e., the sponsorship system) that tie a worker to a single employer for the duration of her stay in Lebanon), and which increase the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers to abuse and even trafficking. With regard to the latter, whereas the progress report simply notes that it makes migrant workers "dependent" and "exposed" to abuses, it remains limited to show that more than 200.000 migrant domestic workers do not enjoy their rights including right to be paid on time, right to quit job, right to keep her/his passport among others.
	Detention conditions for migrant workers, asylum-seekers and refugees with irregular migrant status remained deplorable. Official plans to counter the practice of arbitrary arrest	



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	of migrants and long detention periods in sub-standard conditions have not yet been implemented.	
Other comments or analysis	Please add feedback on issues not indicated in the above mentioned bench marks	<p>Lebanon is facing significant and alarming challenges as a result of the regional situation following people's uprisings in various countries but particularly due to escalation of the armed conflict in Syria. The latter created drastic challenges for Lebanon including deteriorating humanitarian situation for Syrian refugees and socio-economic pressure on Lebanese citizens together with political instability and insecurity. In this context, the revision of the ENP Action Plan and new priority areas' adoption in 2013 was a positive step but we believe that their focus could have integrated these challenges principally to ensure that partnership ensures Lebanon's prosperity and security.</p> <p>Likewise, the EU should revisit its adherence to Paris III conference outcomes. The progress report refers to the Paris III Conference and notes "there was almost no progress in key structural reforms devised as part of the 2006 Paris III ('Rebuild Lebanon') international conference". Nevertheless, national priorities and policy directives within this major reform agenda does not reflect a transparent, participatory, inclusive, and representative process, as it was prepared during a period when most government authorities were inactive.</p>



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