

LEBANON

DR. MALTE GAIER
TUBA AZIMI
FELIX BLUMENTHAL

29.01.2018

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Germany and Lebanon

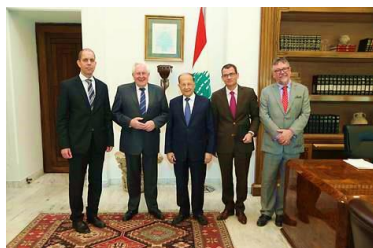
A REVIEW OF BILATERAL TIES, SHARED INTERESTS AND COMMON VALUES

Today's three-day visit of German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to the Lebanese Republic marks the first state visit of a German head of state to the country.

It was only German Emperor Wilhelm II., who visited Beirut - the so called "Paris of the Middle East" and "Pearl of the Orient" - and Baalbek during his second journey to the Orient in 1898. As Lebanon was also called the Switzerland of the Middle East, many German businessmen and tourists came to the country and left their marks behind. As an example, hotels managed by German families - as early as around the end of the 19th century - welcomed many Europeans to Lebanon and helped promoting cultural exchange and tourism. Moreover, German and Lebanese archaeologists worked together on the preservation of cultural and historical heritage of the ancient sites of Baalbek, Anjar, Tell el-Burak and Kamid el-Loz. Politically and economically, Lebanon and Germany were interlinked for centuries. A positive and friendly relationship between Lebanese and Germans shaped the diplomatic relationship between both states to this day.



After the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), Germany supported Lebanon with the reconstruction in the



sectors of education and agriculture, and – later on – water, environment and peace education. In 1997, a bilateral investment trade agreement was signed between Lebanon and Germany to strengthen economic ties. As a result, Lebanon imported German goods – such as motor vehicles and parts, machinery, pharmaceuticals, chemical products and data processing equipment - worth 872 million Euro in 2016 while exporting Lebanese goods - mainly raw materials (processed gems), measuring and control technology, iron and steel, textiles, food and animal feed - to Germany worth 45.4 million Euro.

Since 2006, Germany supports the security and stability of Lebanon through the UNIFIL Mission in accordance to UN Resolution 1701. The German and Lebanese Navy protect together the Lebanese coast from arms smugglers and Lebanese Navy soldiers receive trainings and workshops from German officers. In addition, Germany is a member of the International Support Group (ISG) launched in September 2013 by the UN Secretary-General to help mobilize support and assistance for Lebanon's stability, sovereignty and state institutions and to specifically encourage assistance for the Lebanese Army as well as for the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, the host communities and government programs and public services impacted by the Syrian crisis. Furthermore, both nations joined the Global Coalition against ISIL and the international community has acknowledged Lebanon's sacrifices and losses in the war against radical extremism and terror.



Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

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Another milestone for a close relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Lebanese Republic is the bilateral cultural agreement enacted in 2010. Since then, many German organizations and specifically 13 cultural institutions are based in Lebanon to strengthen the cultural, economic and political dialogue. One of these organizations is the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAS) as one of six German political foundations (POS) out of which five have set up their offices in Beirut.

Lebanon, a country with a population of around 4.5 million people, hosts more than one million Syrian refugees. Lebanese have borne direct and indirect costs of nearly 20 billion USD as a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, while the country's annual GDP counts for 48 billion USD. Being an important partner for solving the Syrian crisis politically and for rebuilding Syria, Lebanon plays also an important role in strengthening the security of Germany, Europe and the West. Since the outbreak of the Syrian Crisis, Lebanon is facing many problems which exceed the capabilities of the Lebanese state. In order to meet them, the German government has offered extensive financial and humanitarian support. Since 2012, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has contributed 740 million Euro to Lebanon. With new promises of 386 million Euro in 2016 Germany was the second biggest donor. In the course of 2018 it will support the Middle Eastern countries who are facing hardship through the refugee crisis, such as Lebanon and Jordan, with a total of 1.9 billion Euro.



At the Brussels I Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region on April 2017, Germany announced that it would continue to provide extensive assistance for Lebanon. The German-Lebanese cooperation focuses on humanitarian assistance, the education and water sectors as well as economic and security policy. In light of this commitment, Germany continues its support with respect to the upcoming international donor conferences that will be held this

year in Rome (February), Paris (March) and Brussels (April).

The aim of KAS with its activities and projects is to support and to contribute to the German mission in Lebanon by providing information and analysis about political, economic and social developments in both countries thus fostering bilateral exchange and dialogue. Promoting knowledge and expertise on political institutions and processes, and ensuring support for the political forces of moderation and progress are further key components that aim to deepen bilateral relations between the two nations in the years to come.