

# &quot;We urge member states to intensify their support to Lebanon&quot; – joint letter of President Michel and President von der Leyen to the members of the European Council



Dear colleagues,

On 4 August, the city of Beirut was hit by an immense tragedy, leading to the loss of many lives, many more injured and widespread damage across the city. Our thoughts and sympathies go out to the victims, the survivors and their families, who also include European nationals. We spoke both to President Aoun and to Prime minister Diab to offer our condolences and we assured them that Lebanon can count on solidarity from the EU.

We are grateful for the immediate support expressed by many of you and the assistance that has already been provided, notably through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism activated in the immediate aftermath of the explosion. The Commission and the Member States are working hard to provide the most adequate response to the tragedy.

The dramatic incident will have major economic consequences for a country that was already facing many challenges, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. We must keep in mind the strong partnership between the EU and Lebanon, a country of strategic importance which hosts the largest number of refugees per capita. We have committed to the stability of the country through economic assistance, support to Syrian refugees and recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, programmes strengthening the health system and addressing its socio-economic consequences.

But with the dramatic humanitarian and reconstruction needs that have now arisen, our solidarity – and that of the whole international community – will be needed more than ever before. We have a common interest in acting now to limit the fall-out of this tragedy.

We therefore invite you to intensify your support to Lebanon both on the immediate needs, but also with a view to the longer-term reconstruction of the country.

In order to ensure efficiency and swift delivery, we stand ready to ensure the synergy of the aid that you and the EU as a whole will provide to Lebanon, through a coordination mechanism that the EU institutions will put in place.

Together, we as EU must contribute to the road to recovery that lies ahead.