

Speech by President Michel at the international conference on assistance and support to Beirut



This time yesterday **I was in the port of Beirut**, witnessing the immensity of the tragedy that hit the country. A tragedy that is beyond words, the images of which will remain in my memory forever.

I met **rescuers** from Lebanon, from Europe and from other countries, working around the clock in the devastated remains of the port. And I was impressed. Impressed by their courage and by their determination.

I met **survivors** of this catastrophe, some wounded, all in shock. And I was touched. Touched by their resilience.

I saw the **people**, most of them young, gathering in the streets, calling for a better future.

I had the opportunity to convey in person the **condolences** of Europe to the victims and their families and to express our **solidarity** with the people in Lebanon.

These difficult times call for urgent action. We have indeed to **focus in the first place on the immediate needs** of the people in Lebanon.

This is why the **EU has activated its emergency mechanisms**. It has already mobilised **33 million euros** and is offering **30 millions** more for the most urgent needs. More than **250 rescuers** from European Member States are on the ground. **Tons of emergency supplies** have been made available and more will follow. Commissioner Lenarcic will provide more details.

Together with the President of the European Commission, we called on all leaders of **Member States to intensify the support to Lebanon**. I was personally in contact with many of them. I can assure you, they all stand ready to help and to provide assistance to those who need it.

Secondly, we have to look to the future.

What struck me most yesterday was the need for confidence, the need for trust and the need to know the truth:

The people in Lebanon want to know the truth, they deserve transparency and justice. An **independent and credible inquiry** into the cause of this tragedy is therefore crucial. The European Union and its Member States stand ready to assist.

Confidence is also needed to create a political and economic environment based on accountability and transparency. It's high time to implement a

credible **reform agenda**, including in the financial sector, the energy sector and in terms of anti-corruption measures.

An **agreement with the International Monetary Fund** is urgently needed. This will help put Lebanon on a solid path towards a brighter economic future.

I called on the **Lebanese political authorities to work together**, overcome their differences and drive these reforms **for the good of the people**.

Confidence is key: **confidence of the people in their authorities** and **confidence of the international community in the real implementation of reforms in Lebanon**. We will be by the side of the people in Lebanon in the longer-term **reconstruction efforts** too, for the benefit of the country, for the benefit of the people.

With full solidarity and real political will, something good will follow from this tragedy.

I reiterate the promise I made yesterday to the people in Beirut:

You are not alone.

Europe is ready to act.

And you can count on us.

Check against delivery.