

# THE FEDERATION

Published by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2012

Beirut, 18 February 2013

Agricultural exports increased 14 percent in 2012 compared to the previous year, the head of the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon Nabil Itani announced.

Citrus fruits represented the biggest export produce, as they did last year, at 102 thousand tons, roughly 22 percent of the 454 thousand tons of produce Lebanon exported in 2012.

IDAL's 18-month old Agri Plus program had contributed to this boost in exports, Itani said. The program offers producers and packaging centers incentives to obtain international quality certificates.

So far, 80 centers have signed up to the program. Five centers have so far obtained international certificates, and 10 farmers have so far achieved the certification for production quality of GLOBAL G.A.P.

Lebanon's main export market is regional, with 73 percent of exports heading to Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq and Iran. A further 26 percent of exports reach Jordan and Syria.

The program also includes new products, including olive oil, honey, cutting and rootstocks. Itani noted that olive oil has had encouraging export figures to new markets in North and South America and Australia, at 1,132 tons.

"The new program will be further developed during the year 2013 in cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, both in terms of: continuing to work to improve the quality of packaging, storage, refrigeration, transportation, moving incentives, raising the standards for packaging centers, and developing the inspection

continued on p 06 ►



### Mohamed Choucair

Chairman of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon



## LEBANESE FOOD: AMBASSADOR OF CULTURE

Nothing represents the Lebanese people's creativity, joie de vivre and impeccable good taste as food does. Lebanese cuisine has put a small country like Lebanon on the regional and global stages. Lebanese restaurants, spread around cities and hamlets all over the world, are veritable ambassadors of culture. Paris, for example, has over 250 Lebanese restaurants, whose customers are 95 percent French.

Additionally, every Lebanese home kitchen in the Diaspora is a beacon, spreading our cultural values, such as generosity and creativity, among diverse communities.

Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that global culinary developments are very favorable to Mediterranean and Lebanese foods. Health Magazine, for example,

listed the Mediterranean Diet as one of their "Top 10 Healthy Eating Stories" in a recent survey.

Consequently, the Federation of Lebanese Chambers has embarked on several initiatives to promote Lebanese cuisine and authentic "food culture" and to encourage innovation in our national dishes. The goals of the Federation are to enhance the position of Lebanese food among the top Mediterranean cuisines and to encourage exports of Lebanese food products.

More and more, "Made in Lebanon" means quality and value. Product packaging is modern and marketing techniques are sophisticated. We have the recipe for success!

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## Happening Now

### PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY – UNION FOR MEDITERRANEAN MEETING



The Chairman of the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mohammad Choucair attended the meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly – Union for Mediterranean, on January 25 at the Italian Parliament in Rome.

The meeting was concerned with the conversion of the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP) to a Development Bank of the Mediterranean, with the participation of deputies from different Mediterranean countries, and a representative of the European Union Parliament.

Speaking at the opening session on behalf of the Association of Mediterranean Chambers, Choucair spoke in support of the project, which he said was in the interests of all Mediterranean countries since future ventures in the region require proper coordination and the allocation of capital.

There is an opportunity, he added, to benefit from Gulf funds willing to offer their support when

faced with a responsible body that will constitute sufficient guarantee for the financing and development operations.

It is also important to provide small and medium enterprises with the opportunities to participate in infrastructure projects, Choucair said, which requires a development bank to carry out funding and coordinating procedures with all stakeholders. These institutions are vital to economic development and labor absorption, and therefore to reducing unemployment in Mediterranean countries especially in the countries of the South, he said.

Choucair also held several business meetings with a number of European officials, focused on discussing future steps and projects that will support economic cooperation and promote growth in the Mediterranean, especially for the countries of the South. ■

### LEBANESE-RUSSIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL AT THE CHAMBER OF BEIRUT

The importance of maintaining Russian-Lebanese business relations were discussed during a meeting between the vice president-treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, Dr. Nabil Fahed and the Russian Chairman of the Lebanese-Russian Business Council Ivan Sergeyev.

Sergeyev was accompanied by the vice-president of the Council, Ambassador Oleg Peresyphkin, the deputy director of the Russian-Arab Business Council and manager of the exhibition Expo Arabia 2013, Vladislav Lutsenko, and the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Lebanon Rodion Tsybulin along with several Russian businessmen.

Also present were the Lebanese Chairman of the council Jacques Sarraf, Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce Lebanon Wajih Bizri, members of the Lebanese-Russian Business Council, Robert Jreissati, Fayez Jabado, Nabil Zantout and the director general of the Chamber of Beirut and Mount Lebanon Rabih Sabra.

Fahed began by noting the pleasant Lebanese-Russian relations and discussed the importance of enhancing economic cooperation between the two countries. He noted the importance of the visit by the Russian delegation in the development of bilateral

economic relations, especially with so many business opportunities ready to be grasped to the benefit of both parties.

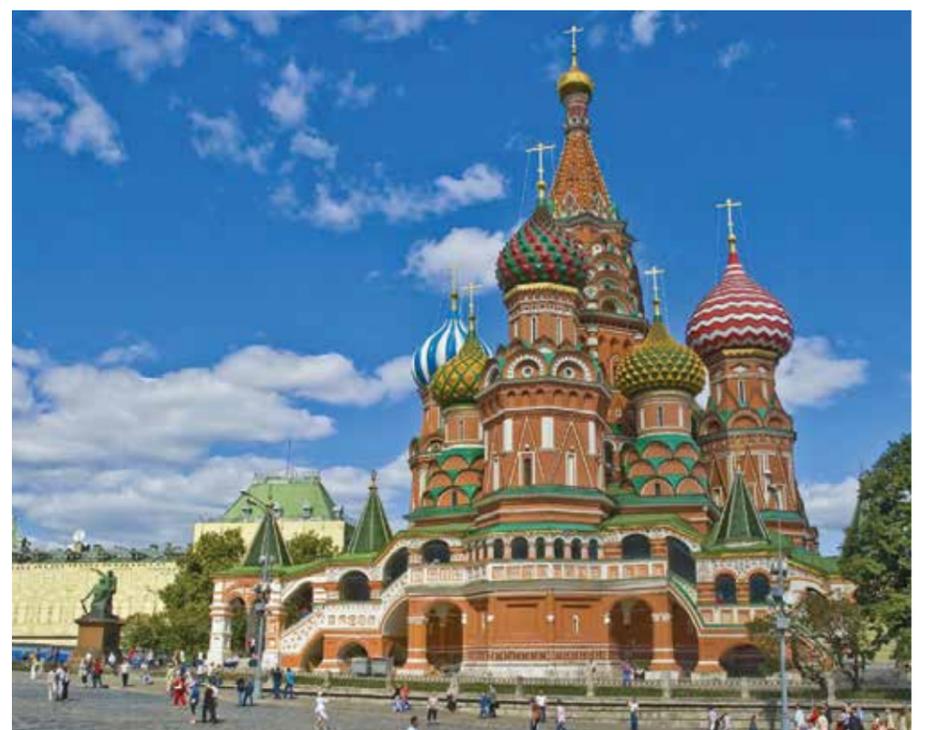
The Lebanese-Russian Business Council has an important role to play in this, he said, as it is an effective tool for the development of trade and strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries.

The Chamber of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, he noted, has established a committee to monitor and activate the Lebanese joint business councils, a move which would further develop foreign economic and trade relations.

Sergeyev also spoke of the importance of the economic role played by Lebanon in the region, and the importance of bilateral cooperation, especially between the private sectors, to achieve economic cooperation and common interests between the countries.

He invited the Chamber to take part in the Expo Arabia 2013 organized by the Arab-Russian Business Council in the International Exhibition Center in the city of St. Petersburg from May 30 to June 1, 2013. This exhibition will facilitate direct contacts between Arab companies and Russian regions.

The invitation was welcomed by Fahed, who said the Chamber would make every effort of cooperation and coordination with the relevant authorities for Lebanon to take part in the exhibition. ■



**Op-Ed**

By ZIAD KAMEL

# A GOOD PLACE TO OPEN A RESTAURANT



ZIAD KAMEL

## LEBANON IS A GREAT PLACE TO OPEN A RESTAURANT.

**W**ell, that's not entirely true but it sure can be if done right! I was walking through the Mar Mikhael neighborhood in the evening recently and found it to be a totally different experience than it was a few years back. The neighborhood once filled only with old Grease Lease – car mechanics, tire repair shops, industrial parts shops – is now also filled with new Culture Lease - bars, cafes, restaurants, bookshops, design studios. The transformation of Mar Mikhael is random and unplanned,

yet impressive. It is this process of generic urban transformation that turns once sleepy neighborhoods into cultural destinations with vibrant people at their epicenter; shopping, eating, drinking, socializing and living. Neighborhoods like Hamra, Monot, Gemmayze and Antelias have also experienced the phenomena at some point in their development cycle. It is the same type of neighborhood transformation that takes place in developed cities, where previously unattractive, low-rent neighborhoods are invaded by struggling artists and entrepreneurs making it the new (old) place to be.

The unique mix of old and new, grease and art, food and drink, is called 'soul'. This soul brings

new people together in an old neighborhood, injecting it with a dose of long-lasting cultural adrenaline while kick-starting real estate renovation and development. After soul is injected into a crumbling neighborhood, real estate begins to thrive following decades of inactivity. New tenants pay new rents and often are the ones who pay the settlement (khlou) to old tenants with old rents to vacate. Decaying premises are then transformed from Grease Lease into Culture Lease and all of a sudden the dirty tire shop in the crumbling, yet beautiful, old building becomes a new restaurant. This is how unique food and beverage concepts are born in Lebanon and the successful

but many restaurant success stories began exactly that way. The success of a restaurant is somewhat tied to the success of the neighborhood transformation but not dependent on it. A new restaurant must be designed well and fit its surroundings, but more importantly it must offer delicious meals prepared using high quality ingredients, excellent service and great value, consistently year after year. Lebanese are a well traveled bunch and big food lovers, who demand excellence from restaurants and won't settle for anything less. This means in order to succeed, restaurants have to continuously strive to achieve excellence, with global standards as the benchmark, thus raising the bar of the entire local industry. Lebanon's restaurants have placed the country on the global culinary map and have become a source of pride for Lebanese everywhere.

Organized Chaos is how Lebanon is often described and the process of generic urban transformation falls within that description. Opening a new restaurant concept in Lebanon's organized chaos is not everyone's cup of tea but it's the way success stories are built here. With the byproduct to society being an injection of soul through creativity

**"IT TAKES A LOT OF IMAGINATION, GUTS, CREATIVITY, PATIENCE AND SHEER BUSINESS SKILL TO LAUNCH A RESTAURANT THAT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE LONG RUN"**

ones export their homegrown talent to the Middle East and all over the world!

It takes a lot of imagination, guts, creativity, patience and sheer business skill to launch a restaurant that will be successful in the long run. Operating a food and drink concept with international standards in a charming new (old) neighborhood in Lebanon is definitely a challenge,

and entrepreneurship, starting a new restaurant in Lebanon is good for the country and may even end up being great for you too!

Ziad Kamel is the co-founder and CEO of The Alleyway Group and the treasurer of the Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Nightclubs and Pastries in Lebanon. Follow him on Twitter @ziadkamel. ■



# Happening Now

## SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION FOR THE NEAR EAST REGION

January 21, Beirut

CODEX<sup>50</sup> ALIMENTARIUS

codex  
brings  
countries  
together



Lebanon hosted the seventh session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the Near East Region, to discuss the latest issues in food quality of the joint Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization program, related to the United Nations as a regional coordinator.

The session took place under the auspices of the Minister of Public Health Ali Hassan Khalil, Minister of Agriculture Dr. Hussein Hajj Hassan and the Minister of Industry Vrej Sabounjian at the Hilton Hotel, with the participation of representatives from the countries of the Near East region, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and experts.

Ministry of Industry representative Elias Hanna stressed that commitment to quality is not simply about obtaining a certificate, but extends to education and continuous testing.

The biggest proof of the success of the industry is their competitive edge; ranking first in the list of exporting industries abroad, Hanna said.

Moreover, he added, free trade should be regarded as an opportunity to strengthen presence in international markets and be a part of world trade. This can be made possible by understanding and meeting the health and well-being needs of consumers.

The Ministry of Health has made the issue of proper nutrition one of the key facets of primary health care, Minister Khalil noted, in terms of providing guidance, monitoring and control. This is vital because of the connection between human behavior, specifically consumption habits, and food-related illnesses, he said. During the past year a new law on food safety was created to meet the questions and challenges this creates.

Minister Hajj Hassan highlighted the synergies among governments and between governments and the private sectors, as well as the development of research and science, the development of the role of international bodies and the independent evaluation and identification of risks in order to determine specifications and codes of international practices related to food safety.

The committee discussed the items on its agenda and adopted many of them, with some amendments made.

They agreed to establish the in-session working groups on a proposed draft regional standard for both dough and date paste.

They also discussed matters arising from the CODEX Alimentarius Commission and other CODEX Committees, including the proposed draft standard on processed cheese; the proposal for the establishment of a subsidiary body of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission; the proposed draft regional code of practice for street vended foods (Near East) and the committee of analysis and sampling. The draft strategic plan of the Commission (2014-2019) was covered, and FAO/WHO activities complementary to the work of the Commission were also discussed. ■

## FRUIT LOGISTICA



Lebanese agricultural producers gathered with their international counterparts at the Logistica exhibition in Berlin, Germany from February 6 to 8 2013.

For the third time, the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon (FCCIAL) organized the Lebanese pavilion at the exhibition to help support and develop the producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables.

Under the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture's endeavors to develop the agricultural sector, and supported by IDAL, the FCCIAL supported the pavilion to give Lebanese producers and exporters the opportunity to get an overview of the latest trends in the field of fresh agricultural products, including new varieties and up-to-date packaging.

The pavilion provided participants with an excellent platform to meet with their counterparts from all over the world, to develop their exports and to access new markets.

The Lebanese pavilion at the exhibition this year spanned 119 square meters, and was comprised of 55 individuals. Among them were representatives from 21 companies exporting vegetables and fresh fruit, four agricultural cooperatives, seven farmers, and representatives from five companies which provide agricultural supplies and equipments to farmers.

The official delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture included the director general of agriculture and the minister's counselor, while FCCIAL was represented by

the chairman of the Agricultural Committee and delegates from Lebanese chambers.

This year, participation was characterized by visits from official delegations to the Lebanese Pavilion, notably the Palestinian delegation headed by the Minister of Agriculture and the Palestinian Ambassador to Germany.

Ambassadors and delegations from the Arab Gulf states, and more than 700 exporters and importers of fruits and vegetables, also visited the Lebanese pavilion, contributing to around 200 bilateral meetings.

The Fruit Logistica exhibition is the most important exhibition of its kind for the promotion of fresh fruit and vegetables and half-manufactured, bringing business professionals together in the promotion of fresh products. It constitutes an outstanding opportunity to display and promote companies and their products to the world. It also brings together more than 2,000 international companies, as well as exporters, suppliers and owners of small and medium enterprises.

The exhibition is located in the German capital: Berlin and covers more than 90,000 square meters. About 2,300 companies from 80 countries participated in the exhibition, with more than 55,000 visitors from around 125 countries, while more than a thousand journalists and media crew flew in from around 50 countries.

Participants index available at website :

[www.virtualmarket.fruitlogistica.de](http://www.virtualmarket.fruitlogistica.de)

■



## News bits

provided by businessnews.com.lb

### AUDI IN DEAL TO FINANCE SMES

#### SANAD OFFERS BANK LONG-TERM LOAN



Bank Audi has signed a loan agreement of \$20 million with the SANAD Fund for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Through this partnership with the Luxembourg-based fund, Bank Audi will expand its lending activities to small and medium enterprises who would receive loans, refinanced through SANAD.

"This facility will help create economic opportunities for Lebanese SMEs and the Lebanese economy as a whole," said Marc Audi, general manager at Bank Audi.

The loan's long-term tenor is a key element in addressing the need to support medium to longer-term funding for SMEs. SANAD provides medium and long-term debt, guarantees, and equity financing to commercial banks and other financial institutions in the MENA region that serve MSMEs.

Wolfgang Reuss, chairman of SANAD, said: "Supporting SMEs is crucial in Lebanon, where a vibrant private sector remains critical to future economic growth and greater employment opportunities." SANAD and Bank Audi are also looking for partnerships in other countries in the region. ■

### CMC CANCER CENTER IN 2015

#### FACILITY WILL CATER TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL PATIENTS



Clemenceau Medical Center (CMC) will inaugurate a cancer treatment center in 2015. Construction of the new building which will host the center has already begun, adjacent to the CMC premises. The building will comprise 10 floors, with 35 rooms. Investment in the project will reach up to \$35 million.

The CMC cancer center will work in affiliation with Johns Hopkins International, providing different kinds of intervention, including chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery, and stem-cell technology. Dr. Mounes Kalaawi, chief executive officer at CMC, said: "The center will be equipped with the latest technological developments and treatment methods."

CMC plans to attract both local and regional patients. Kalaawi said: "Our aim is to reinstate Lebanon as a hub for healthcare." According to him, there is a shortage of cancer centers in Lebanon and the region.

The cancer center will be accredited by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and will partner with insurance companies which already deal with the CMC. The center is expected to create around 150 jobs, including 35 physicians' positions. ■

### MARGHERITA EXPANDS TO KUWAIT AND UAE

#### ITALIAN CHAIN OPENS ITS FIFTH BRANCH IN DBAYEH



Margherita, the Italian pizzeria chain specialized in Neapolitan food, will soon be opening its fifth branch in Blueberry Square, Dbayeh.

Investment in the Dbayeh branch reached up to \$500,000. The maximum space of the restaurant is 250 square meters, accommodating up to 100 seats.

"We owe our success to the simplicity of the ingredients we use, and the quality we always make sure to offer to our clientele," said Roberta Casa, marketing and communication developer at Casa Giovanni Management, the company managing the restaurant chain.

Margherita opened its first outlet in 2008 in Gemmayzeh. Since then, it has opened three more in Sin El Fil, Jounieh, and ABC - Ashrafieh. "Other openings will be coming soon," said Casa.

The chain has franchises in Kuwait, the UAE, and the KSA, where it opened its first outlet in Jeddah in 2011. A second outlet is planned in Riyadh by mid-2013, along with a first branch in each of Kuwait and the UAE. "More outlets are planned in the KSA, along with five additional outlets in Dubai in coming years," said Casa.

The Margherita chain is owned by chef Giovanni Casa, the owner and director of Margherita pizzeria del quartiere dal 1959 brand.

"Despite the current stagnant market and increased competition, Margherita pizzeria del quartiere dal 1959 continues its expansions by opening new branches not only in Lebanon but also in the MENA area," Casa said. She said Margherita posted good profit in 2012: "We think there are still slices of the market we will be soon able to conquer." ■

### FERRY LINE TO JORDAN

#### MARITIME ROUTE COULD HELP SOLVE EXPORTS CRISIS

A ferry route was launched between the Port of Tripoli and Jordan's Aqaba Port.

Mohamad Saleh, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Saida and South Lebanon said a ferry carrying 60 truckloads of fruits and vegetables has arrived in the Aqaba port. The RO-RO ferry transports containers on trucks.

Another ferry will set sail across the same route on Wednesday (March 27). "We have tested the time and cost of the ferry route as a possible solution to export industrial equipment and agricultural products," said Saleh. The ferry charges \$2,000 per truck. One

truck can carry up to 30 tons of products.

"Coordination will be held with the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation in order to organize more trips to Aqaba," Saleh said.

The first ferry was launched from Tripoli because trucks that were denied entry to Syria had been staying there, but ferries can go from any local port to Aqaba, according to Saleh.

The heightened risks of driving through Syria have forced exporters to seek alternative routes. Dozens of trucks carrying goods to Jordan were stuck at the closed Syrian-Jordanian borders last week. A ferry line between Tripoli and Turkey's port of Mersin was launched late last year.

# Chamber's News

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## A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS OF AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2012

procedure to export the quality certified products and to finance the cost on quality certificates for packaging centers and farmers," Itani said.

Despite their market share, it was revealed that citrus exports actually declined on last year, which Agriculture Minister Hussein Hajj Hassan, speaking at the conference, said was due to the high competition in the export destination markets, especially from Egyptian produce.

He stressed that the ministry will take steps to maintain the export of citrus as well as other products such as apples and olive oil.

As for potatoes and onions, the minister explained that the reason for their decline in export was due to the restrictions imposed by the ministry on the imports of these items, thereby raising domestic demand and reducing exports. He stressed that potatoes are sold at a good price in local markets.

Exports of apples and bananas rose significantly in 2012, with apple exports growing to 88 thousand tons compared to 61.5 thousand tons in 2011 and bananas to 60.6 thousand tons in 2012 compared to 43 thousand tons in 2011. Exports of grapes, cherries, apricots, peaches, tomatoes, cucumbers and olive oil, also rose in 2012.

Hajj Hassan concluded by discussing the importance of maintaining the quality of Lebanese products and applying post-harvest practices so as to maintain the export markets and also access new ones. He finally congratulated all those involved in the agricultural sector on the results achieved in 2012. ■



## LACTIMED: FIRST FIELD MISSION FOR THE PROMOTION OF DAIRY PRODUCTS TYPICAL TO THE BEKAA



From February 18 to 22 2013, the Bekaa region hosted the first field mission of the LACTIMED project, designed to foster the production and distribution of typical and innovative dairy products in the Mediterranean by organizing local value chains, supporting producers in their development projects and creating new markets for their products.

A delegation of experts from the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Zahle and Bekaa (CCIAZ) and the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier (CIHEAM-IAMM), accompanied by ANIMA (project coordinator), travelled across the region to meet the local stakeholders of the dairy industry.

A meeting to launch the initiative was held at the Chamber of Zahle with stakeholders from every step of the dairy industry. A number of workshops and meetings were organized during the week to build the inventory, which will serve as basis for the development of a local strategy for the promotion of dairy products typical to the Bekaa in Lebanon and abroad.

LACTIMED: an EU-funded project for the promotion of Mediterranean dairy products

LACTIMED is implemented under the ENPI CBC MED Programme, and is financed, for 4.35 million euros, by the European Union through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. From November 2012 to May 2015, ANIMA and its 11 partners will organize a hundred operations targeting the various stakeholders of the dairy industries in Alexandria (Egypt), the Bekaa (Lebanon), Bizerte (Tunisia), Sicily (Italy) and Thessaly (Greece).

100 operations organized around five main areas of intervention:

- Diagnosis of the various elements in the dairy industry and adoption of local strategies for promoting typical dairy products in national and international markets;
- Integration of local dairy value chains and creation of producers' clusters for networking stakeholders, pooling resources and skills, and developing

collective ways of accessing markets;

- Enhancement of production and innovation capacities based on local resources and traditional know-how, by supporting local producers in their development projects;
- Increased visibility and distribution of Mediterranean-typical dairy products in local and international markets through the involvement of the media and the retail, tourism and catering sectors;
- Activation of the Mediterranean dairy clusters' network, dissemination of the project results and contribution to the policies in support of the dairy sector.

A local action plan will be implemented to meet the specific needs of the dairy sector of the Bekaa.

Local players will be involved in its development during workshops and meetings. Concrete opportunities for investment and partnership will be highlighted to promote the modernization of production and distribution systems.

Organizations supporting the sector and local producers will be trained on effective and sustainable agricultural techniques, flexible and innovative production processes, and marketing methods.

A competition will reward the best projects of typical dairy product development.

Finally, business meetings, trade fairs and farmers' markets will help promote the typical dairy products of the region to the media, consumers, as well as to economic and tourism operators from both sides of the Mediterranean. The CCIAZ will implement these activities in Lebanon, in association with the Ministry of Agriculture and other Lebanese, European and Mediterranean actors.

For more details, please contact the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Zahle-Bekaa:

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NORTH LEBANON LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY IS A NON-PROFIT, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED IN LEBANON IN MARCH 2011 UNDER THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION NUMBER 611/2011.

North LEDA founders include the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli and North Lebanon (CCIAT), Federation of Municipalities, Cooperatives and Federation of Cooperatives as well as NGOs from the North.

It was established with the support of the United Nations Development Programme – UNDP ART GOLD Lebanon, and it is a part of an international network operation in 16 countries worldwide and linked through ILS LEDA (International Links & Services for Local Economic Development Agencies).

The agency is a model partnership between public sector, private sector and civil society that is entitled to ownership, sale and acquisition, mortgage, acceptance of donation and contribution, partnership and implementation of development projects in North Lebanon from Batroun to Akkar.

North LEDA's main strategic objectives include improving the capacities of local actors, enhancing human resource capabilities by supporting economic activities, the creation of job opportunities and the promotion of the territorial image of North Lebanon region.

Our main interventions include support to MSMEs (Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises), municipalities and cooperatives including the creation of internal and external strategies, coaching, training and capacity building, promotion and support for brand policies, database and information on market trends, assessment of market opportunities, facilitation of research and innovation and all kinds of related business and technical assistance.

North LEDA operates from a technical office, located within the CCIAT building in Tripoli and consists of a technical director, business development officers and an administrative assistant.

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## Chamber's News

### IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE CREATION OF AN INDUSTRIAL ZONE IN THE SOUTH OF LEBANON

A STUDY CARRIED OUT BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE IN SAIDA AND SOUTH LEBANON.

The industrial sector in Lebanon has experienced significant development since the end of the war. However, inadequate reforms have contributed to undermine the industrial sector and its ability to expand domestically and develop an export capability. This is in addition to a weak infrastructure and low levels of investment constraining growth.

Currently, industry accounts for around 16 percent of Lebanon's GDP, an input level smaller than the services sector, which represents almost 80 percent of the national economy.

Locally grown businesses in the south of Lebanon seeking to locate or expand in the region have difficulty finding a suitable place to build their facilities and are forced to move to another region or to build their facilities with unenforceable pollution control regulations.

Recognizing the need to support the industrial sector in the south of Lebanon and the necessity for improving its infrastructure, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Saida and South Lebanon has worked to identify appropriate land, change regulations to allow for the hosting of industrial activities, identify investors to buy the land and build the appropriate infrastructure to better serve the industrialists and relieve some of the burden on the environment.

In this context, the Chamber has collaborated with the WTO Project to provide assistance in analyzing the impact of changing the classification of the selected land and drafting the first iteration of the regulatory impact assessment report.

The identification of individual sites in the south suitable for industrial park development was carried out using a logical matrix appraising: site topography; general environmental condition; clear land tenure;

proximity to functioning port and road network; access to power; water; telecoms and labor.

The selection of industrial activities was based on the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) code, adopted by the Ministry of Industry in 2001.

The socio-economic impact assessment of the development revealed that the proposed land rezoning will have a positive impact at the local and national levels. Social benefits result from protecting property values, reducing health hazards, and reaching a more balanced distribution of production and employment by spreading out industrial districts to rural areas and maximizing land use efficiency.

The economic analysis of this investment and regulatory change shows an overall benefit to the Lebanese economy. The new investment initiated by the private sector to develop a new industrial zone is projected to increase regional output, employment, and corporate and personal income tax revenue for the Lebanese government.

Given substantial return in the form of output, employment and government tax revenue, the chamber will reach out to government stakeholders for support and request financial assistance in the form of low interest loans in order to help reduce the risk and make this investment more attractive to private sector participants. With public sector regulatory and financial support for this investment, the Chamber will have a better case for attracting private sector investors to take on the risk of purchasing, constructing and maintaining the new industrial zone, while reducing the environmental footprint of the industrial base in South Lebanon.

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### LUNCH IN HONOR OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN JEDDAH



Economic relations between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and ways of developing them were the major topic of conversation between the Chairman of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon, Chairman of the Chamber of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, Mohammad Choucair and the Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jeddah Mazen Baterji, during a lunch hosted by Choucair at Le Stay restaurant.

Choucair spoke of the strength of the relationship between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and their people, praising the role that the Kingdom has always played in supporting Lebanon in good and in bad times, and embracing a large number of the Lebanese community who have in turn contributed to the rise of the Kingdom.

He also noted that the Lebanese economy depends mainly on Gulf investments for growth and prosperity. It is therefore vital, he said, to take all appropriate measures to sustain the relationship and return it to its former heights, since the Lebanese private sector, in particular, relies heavily on its Gulf counterparts, especially that of Saudi Arabia. Choucair said he would spare no efforts to achieve the desired goals.

For his part Vice President Baterji offered his assurances of the depth of relations between the two countries on all levels, thanking Choucair for his initiative, which he said shows the strength of the relationship between the private sector in the two countries and their shared interest in supporting both countries and their people.

Baterji's visit to Lebanon was the result of talks between Choucair and a large number of business leaders in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf during his participation in the Preparatory Forum of the Third Arab Summit for Economic and Social Development, held on January 12 and 13 in Riyadh. The forum was an attempt to break the ice in relations between Lebanon and these countries and to invite businessmen from the Gulf to prioritize investing in Lebanon.

Choucair pointed that he had heard only good things from all the parties he had met about their desire to reinitiate efforts and investments in Lebanon as soon as possible. ■

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### LICEX (LEBANON INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION)

City: Sin el-fil

Venue: Hilton Habtoor Grand Hotel

Date: April 24-26

LICEX2013 will be the most prestigious infrastructure conference and exhibition in the Levant region. The two day strategic conference and exhibition will provide a platform for international and regional companies to learn more about the infrastructure of Lebanon and will bring together a high level delegation of government, ministries, industry and project leaders, suppliers and contractors to discuss the investment opportunities and challenges in developing the infrastructure industry in the region, in a way that is sustainable and profitable for the Lebanese community.

#### Participant's Information:

Organizers: Planners and Partners

Address: Al Thani Bldg, 4th Floor, Badaro St., Beirut

Tel: (01) 366 407

Fax: (01) 366 408

Email: info@planners-partners.com

Website: www.planners-partners.com

### ITEX

City: Beirut

Venue: BIEL

Date: May 15-19

ITEX is a platform that brings together the IT world under one roof. It is a meeting place full of valuable information, business opportunities, and insightful activities: seminars, hearings, panel debates, roundtables, informal get-togethers and much more. Scheduled to be the annual interaction between electronics and information technology, ITEX attracts the biggest names in the IT sector, connecting major local, regional and international IT vendors with ICT professionals, providing the ideal opportunity to highlight services, products and activities.

#### Participant's Information:

Organizers: Promofair

Address: Media Center II, 5th Flr, Accaoui, Beirut

Tel: (01) 561 600/1/2/3/4

Fax: (01) 561 605

Email: info@promofair.com.lb

Website: www.promofair.com.lb

### BEIRUT BOAT

City: Beirut

Venue: The Port of Beirut, Pier I

Date: May 22-26

Beirut Boat is a unique opportunity to attain record business sales in a select and relaxed environment at one of the region's most acclaimed boat shows. This is a one-off chance to meet international boating companies and make multi-million dollar business deals.

#### Participant's Information:

Organizers: IFP

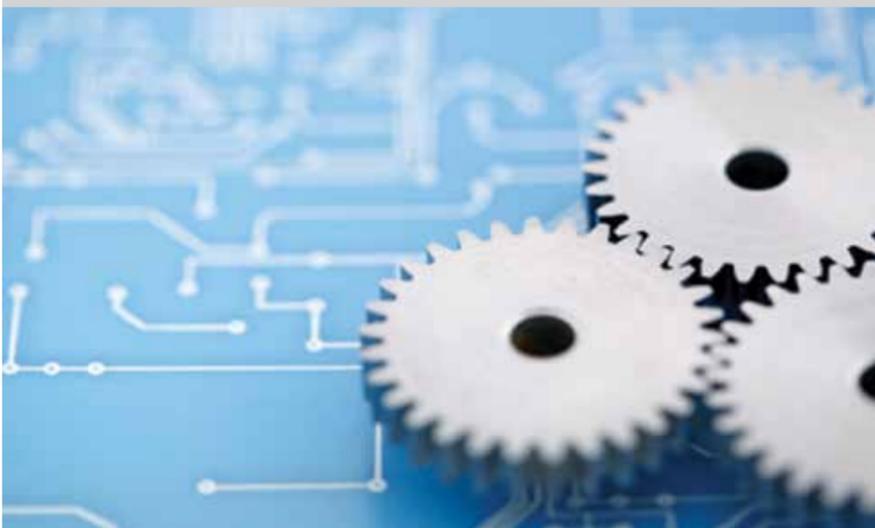
Address: IFP Bldg., SNA St., Hazmieh

Phone: (05) 959 111

Fax: (05) 959 888

Email: info@ifp.com.lb

Website: www.ifpexpo.com



## A Spanish girl in Beirut

# LEBANON'S MAGNETISM

By Belén Hernández-Mancha



LEBANON HAS ALWAYS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH COMMERCE, INTELLIGENCE AND CULTURE. ALONG ITS MEDITERRANEAN COASTLINE, TODAY ABUNDANT WITH EXCLUSIVE BEACH CLUBS AND 5 STAR HOTELS, LEBANON HAS NAVIGATED THROUGH ALL THE CIVILIZATIONS OF ANTIQUITY, LEAVING INFINITE TESTIMONIALS THAT MAKE OF "THE LAND OF THE CEDARS" A REAL MUSEUM UNDER THE OPEN SKIES.

Lebanon is a true haven for the lovers of historic destinations. Visiting Lebanon today allows you to experience at first hand many sites where the great history of humanity was recorded, from prehistoric cities such as Byblos or Baalbek, to the sacred valley of Kadisha, where a fabulous labyrinth of caves surrounds ancient Christian churches, or the Jeita Grotto, one of nature's wonders of the world containing some of the largest stalactites known to mankind. A river traverses the lower part of the grotto and spills into the sea, where shows and music festivals are held every summer along its magical Mediterranean coast.

Worth further mention is the flawless habitat the mountains of Lebanon give to its famous cedars, where a specimen of more than 3,000 years of heritage may be witnessed.

The capital is a true melting pot where you can appreciate the multicultural and ethnic diversity within a single city; people in Beirut have learned how to respond to decades of conflicts with a smile on their face. No doubt Beirut deserved the nickname of "the Paris of Middle East". This city attracts tourists not only from all over the world, but also from Lebanon's neighboring countries, who dream of spending their summers along the Mediterranean beaches of the Lebanese coast. Beirut combines oriental culture with the occidental taste for perfection, rendering it a city where different religions coexist in perfect harmony. Here it is common to see a woman in a short sundress indulging in fervent dialogue with her friend who wears the hijab over a cappuccino at a cafe.

As a foreigner in Lebanon, one of the most delightful feelings I get living here is the close familiarity of the Lebanese and their sincere



welcome, which leaves me feeling at home. The locals are warm-hearted and everyone is bilingual, if not trilingual. What's more, if you don't speak any of their official languages, namely, Arabic, French and English, they will somehow manage to speak yours.

"Whoever does not have a Lebanese friend, should look for one" are words of Adolfo Lopez Mateos, former president of Mexico (1958-1964) who, during the opening of the Lebanese Center in Mexico several decades ago, suggested with great sensitivity that the quality of friendship that emigrants of this nation invariably have given the Mexicans is a rarity.

Such a trait, inherited from Arab culture, is particularly reflected in the legendary warmth with which the Lebanese treat their guests. Their hospitality is not confined only to offer the visitor generosity and fine delicacies: they will go the extra mile to make one feel welcome and important.

In Lebanon, everything is at your fingertips; all you need to do is simply ask for it. There is an anecdote that captures this to perfection: at a restaurant in Downtown Beirut, a woman sitting beside me asked the waiter for an extra chair

to accommodate her friend who was about to arrive. The waiter told her it would not be possible as the restaurant was full. Alarmed, she replied that in her 20 years of coming to Lebanon, this was the first time someone had told her 'no'. But then, proving the unmatched service only found in Lebanon, this young waiter rushed away to return just a moment later with a seat for this lady's guest. Where else would you experience that! ■

*Belen Hernandez-Mancha is a Spanish national who studied International Corporate Communications at the American University of Paris and UC Berkeley in California. Since concluding her studies Belen has strongly experienced multicultural diversity through living in five continents. Over the past six years she has traveled the world while working on the development of business and economic reports for publication in high profile magazines and newspapers such as Fortune, Time, Business Week, The Guardian, Miami Herald or China Daily. The nature of her work over the years has given her the opportunity to meet with presidents, heads of state and government ministers, as well as the CEOs and managing directors of the most successful companies in each country.*