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PRESIDENT MACRON WELCOMES THE PRESIDENT OF LEABANON MICHEL AOUN

& INAGURATE ORIENT CHRISTIANS EXHIBIT

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USPA NEWS - President Macron received on 25 September, President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun, for an offensive visit, to the Elysee followed by an inauguration of the exhibition of the Christians of the East. Two thousand years of history "at the Institute of the Arab world. An official ceremony followed at the Palais de l'Elysee, after a guided tour of the exhibition.
The two heads of State recalled the strong ties between their countries reverting to their historical stages, as well as the sharing of French culture and language. They also discussed the problem of the fight against terrorism in the region, and Syrian refugees, exiled en masse to Lebanon in flight from their country at war. Lebanon is indeed hard hit by the repercussions of the war in Syria, including the arrival of 1.2 million refugees, who find themselves "stateless" and camped in situations of human distress. President Macron stressed the remarkable work of the armed forces in Lebanon and the efforts of security and stabilization of the region. He then proposed to organize an international conference in Lebanon to mobilize the partners to scale.

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President Francis Macron stressed the remarkable work of the armed forces in Lebanon and the efforts of security and stabilization of the region. He then proposed to organize an international conference in Lebanon to mobilize the partners to scale.The President of Lebanon welcomed his official visit to Paris since his recent election and returned the invitation to the couple Macron for the next spring 2018. PRESIDENT MACRON MAKES A STATEMENT AT ELYSEE DURING THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT AOUN “I would first like to thank the President of the Lebanese Republic, General Michel Aoun, for his presence here in Paris. We had seen each other a few months ago - I had visited you during the French presidential campaign, you had made me the friendship to receive me - we had made an appointment; the appointment is held. As a sign of the strength of friendship between our two countries, I am delighted that this State visit, your State visit at the beginning of the mandate, is the first one I have welcomed.----------
We have just had a dense and fruitful interview following this first meeting in Beirut last January, which only reinforced our mutual conviction on the need to work together, both on bilateral issues and on regional challenges. We both believe that Lebanon must be able to continue to serve as a model of tolerance, pluralism and democracy in a troubled Middle East. In this regard, I would like to mention the progress that has been made by Lebanon since your election last October. I remember my visit to Lebanon where an election law was expected, and then it was passed. Thanks to your commitment and your efforts, progress has continued to be led. And next year, the Lebanese parliament will be able to renew itself and the restoration of Lebanese institutions will be complete.

PM HARIRI, IS ACTIVELY WORKING TO REVITALIZE THE LEBANESE ECONOMY, MACRON SAID
“I received your Prime Minister, Mr Hariri, here a few weeks ago. He is actively working to revitalize the economy and strengthen the Lebanese state, which faces many challenges, and one of the most important of which - and I will come back to this - is the refugee crisis and the threats to security from the country. I would like to repeat here, following the meeting we have just had, France's special attachment to the sovereignty, unity and integrity of Lebanon, whose security and stability constitute a major challenge for the whole of the Middle East but also for Europe. Both Lebanon and France are severely affected by terrorism and I would like to pay tribute to the courage and self-denial shown by the Lebanese army this summer in its fight against the Daech (ISIS) jihadists on the border with Syria. The Lebanese army and the country's security forces have been paying a heavy price for their commitment to serving the population for several years and must be further assisted because this victory does not mean an end to the terrorist threat in Lebanon. It is for this reason that France has decided to strengthen its support to Lebanon and to meet the current needs of the Lebanese security forces by sharing its experience and know-how in the fields of counter-terrorism, civil defense , demining, through the dispatch

of experts or the opening in October of a regional school for humanitarian demining." President Macron stated-

FRANCE WANTS TO SCALE UP THE MOBILISING BY SETTING UP A GLOBAL CONFERENCE----------

France also wants to work on a larger scale by mobilizing all our partners around a conference in support of the Lebanese army that could be organized with Italy and the United Nations and we have just mentioned it at new. This conference is important to you. We support it and the first contacts have been made to this effect. It is also with the same commitment that our support for the security of Lebanon will continue to materialize through our high-level presence in UNIFIL, whose work in southern Lebanon has allowed for more than eleven years to preserve precious peace at the border with Israel. France's objective is to counter the threats that could compromise this peace by working to strengthen the capacities of the Lebanese army so that the government is fully able to extend its authority over the whole territory. Beyond these fundamental subjects of security and military engagement, it is a strong state in Lebanon that France needs and that France encourages. Since your election, your constant commitment to this effect has been extremely valuable to us. Indeed, the strengthening of the Lebanese state is absolutely essential for ensuring security in the country's duration and it is also necessary to enable it to face the massive and prolonged presence of about one and a half million Syrian refugees . Lebanon today bears a heavy burden for him. The lack of a credible political solution in Syria prevents the sustainable return of refugees to their country. Therefore, we want to be able to work actively with you, with the United Nations, on this issue, of course, linked to stability and regional security. The Lebanese people and the Lebanese authorities, working hand in hand with their local partners, show remarkable commitment and moral sense today, but we are determined to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis - is the French initiative of a contact group. I wish to be able to work fully with you as we have begun to do, and it is within the framework of the political solution found to this crisis that the subject of refugees today in Lebanon can be usefully and durably treated.

FRANCE VIA AFD SIGNED THIRTY FUNDING AGREEMENTS SINCE 1999 WORTH € 1Bn

France is also determined to accompany all the international efforts already undertaken to help Lebanon, the first recipient of French aid, following the London and Brussels conferences. It will be faithful to its commitment to pay 100 million euros of grants from 2016 to 2018, but we also want to do more in the coming years, notably through the long-established French Agency for Development in Liban. Since 1999, it has signed some thirty funding agreements for a cumulative amount of one billion euros (€ 1Bn) In the next few years, AFD will continue its activities for the development of the country, both through loans and grants, and in 2017, it will pay nearly € 19 million in grants to Lebanon as part of the initiative Sawa for the Middle East. I also hope that we can organize a new conference to structure this aid and to structure international aid and to do so in a framework that will help us to achieve real results. I know that you and your Government are committed to making these results concrete. It is also in the context that Lebanon lives today, which we owe you. France has always assisted Lebanon in crisis situations and will continue to do so, also by mobilizing all its international partners." President Macron explained------

"As I announced during the visit of Prime Minister Hariri, we would like to work for the organization of an investor conference for Lebanon, for the revival of the economy but with concrete results and not just announcement of numbers already existing. I know that you are attached to useful conferences, too. Lebanon has suffered too much and we are keen to spare it from the crises in the region; today, France considers that the Lebanese government's strict policy of dissociation from these conflicts is the best way to preserve the stability of Lebanon. However, in order to solve the refugee crisis and the issue of terrorism and to be able to offer a viable future and a worthy existence to the inhabitants of the region, we need a political solution, as I in the crisis, and I hope, beyond what I was able to mention last week in New York, that over the next few weeks we can together build this contact group and work effectively with all the partners of the region."He added.

A COOPERATION FRAMEWORK BASE ON FRANCOPHONIA AND FRANCOPHILIA----------

"The trials we have to go through are difficult, challenging and demanding, but we stand here side by side, France and Lebanon, and this is proof of our unfailing friendship, our determination to promote what we believe. Your State visit to France will enable us, in particular through the interviews you will be given to have with the various members of the government and the presidents of the assemblies, to study together ways to strengthen our cooperation. Our common objective is to ensure the best follow-up in the coming years. A framework cooperation agreement providing for regular points of contact between our administrations could thus be a useful tool. On the cultural front, we also have a lot to do together because we have a common past and I want to reiterate my interest in the Francophonie, the francophilia of your country and yours, Mr President, and how much I wish in the coming years, within the framework of this bilateral cooperation, we can strengthen the initiatives taken in the teaching of French for young people and adults, through the influence of French cultural action throughout our country . It is a strong commitment that I have taken generally and I hope that it is particularly strong in Lebanon, which is the melting pot of Francophonie and Francophilia in the region. This is part of your specificity, it is also part of your history, that of our country and yours, personal" President Macron stated.----------

A ROAD MAP IS ON THE PROCESS TO REINFORCE THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN THE REGION----------

We are currently working on the development of a roadmap for the French-speaking world aimed at perpetuating the privileged place occupied by French language and culture in Lebanon, in education, the arts and the press, as well as the framework cooperation agreement that I mentioned, could be signed in Beirut on my next visit in 2018.----------

In the coming months, members of the French government, parliamentarians, local elected representatives and members of civil society will also travel to Lebanon and will work in many areas to deepen the ties between our two countries.
This is Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, what I wanted to recall before we together went to the exhibition "Christians of the Orient 2000 years of history" at the Institute of the Arab World because I know your attachment to the dialogue between religions and religious diversity in the Middle East and because this fight for the Christians of the East is also one of the emblematic combats of those that France wants to lead in the region. Thank you." President macron concluded.

MICHEL AOUN, PRESIDENT OF LEBANON MAKES HIS STATEMENT ABOUT FRENCH-LEBANESE BOND:
"First of all, I would like to thank President Macron for his visit to France during his quinquennium and to establish the relationship that has existed for centuries between all the stages of his history with France. Today it is still felt, for its path and renewal. Whether political or cultural these relations between our countries, are based on common values “‹“‹of freedom and humanism in Lebanon and France." President Ayoun explains and he adds that “Lebanon's active participation in Francophone countries strengthens the ties between our countries.“ He adds that “With President Macron we analyzed all the situations in the region and the first signs of solutions appeared for Syria.“President Aoun, stated----------
The Lebanese Head of State reckons that “Concerted to the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the violation of the Palestinian territory, there is always a hope of creating a state, which is still at a standstill.“----------
Michel Aoun reminds, regarding the difficult geographic situation due to the Syrian crisis, because of the close borders and that “Under UN Resolution 1701, it is our priority to maintain peace in the region and we salute our strengths in the Finule. Regarding the problem of Syrian migrants, we talked about the organization of their return to their country because in the areas where they come from, they are deprived and in Lebanon they do not have refugee status and their situations are precarious with significant health risks. The aid of the United Nations arrives on camps of misery belongs to the maintenance.“President Ayoun concedes that “Lebanon wants to preserve itself in order to meet the 21st century challenge of "living together" and face the dictatorship of terrorism. I have asked that France support our headquarters at the United Nations because Lebanon is the cradle of Europe, as well as the revival of the Euro - Mediterranean partnership or Lebanon can provide valuable help.“----------
President Michel Aoun concludes by inviting his counterpart, President Macron for a visit in Lebanon, looking forward to welcoming him with his spouse Brigitte Macron “With President Macron we will strengthen diplomatic and cultural ties and the armed forces have liberated Lebanon from Daech. I have invited President Macron and his wife and we look forward to their next visit, which will take place next spring in 2018“

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