**Diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Sweden**

The diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Sweden have officially excited since 1947 with a Swedish envoyé (a diplomatic envoy) appointed to Lebanon. Trade between Sweden and Lebanon has occurred since 1951-1959 and 1962-1967, when the international economic situation was good. During this period, exports to Lebanon answered for about one thousandth of the total Swedish exports. Sweden imported agricultural products such as citrus fruits and olives while exports were dominated by machinery and equipment, pulp and wood products. Relations between the Swedish and Lebanese companies and government representatives arose during this time. Levantbyrån (”Levant Office”), the organization was called, was established as early as in 1938 to provide support for Swedish companies.

In relationship to the civil war that broke out in 1958, the development of trade and tourism was damaged, while capital fled the country. But the civil war of 1958 was brief. Trade and activity in the banking and financial markets resumed the following year and new infrastructure investments were made. Workshop Companies Åtvidabergs Industries, Hugin and Answers established operations in the region. To handle problematic cases effectively claimed political representatives on the spot. Therefore UD (the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs) established a trade office at the Swedish embassy in Beirut that was first established in 1960. Lebanon established its first embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, in the year of 1971 that is responsible for Lebanese citizens and relations in all the Scandinavian countries.

Unlike in 1958 the civil war of 1975 damaged the economic and political development in the long term and profound. The Lebanese administration disorganized, infrastructure was smashed, industries and agriculture were destroyed and tourism ceased. Lebanon's position as a regional financial center ceased. Foreign companies LM Ericsson left the country, which marked the end of an era and the beginning of another. However, the diplomatic exchanges have obviously persisted and presented below is the most important events in more modern times of diplomatic relations between Sweden and Lebanon.

Timeline of more recent diplomatic relations:

1960: The first Swedish embassy to Lebanon was instituted in Beirut.

1971: The first Lebanese embassy to Sweden (and the remaining Scandinavian countries) was instituted in Stockholm.

2001: The Swedish embassy in Beirut was closed and replaced by an Honorary Consulate General that is executive until this day. The responsibility for operations in Lebanon was instead set at the embassy in Damascus.

June 15, 2001: Agreement with Lebanon on the promotion and reciprocal protection of investments with the desire to encourage economic cooperation to the mutual benefit of both states, intending to create and maintain favorable conditions for investments by investors of one contracting party in the territory of the other contracting party, recognizing that the encouragement and reciprocal protection of such investments are apt to stimulate private business initiative and to increase the prosperity of both states.

June 17, 2002: Barcelona process and the Euro-Mediterranean Agreements:

In accordance with the decision of the European Union on October 2 1995 the European Commission launched negotiations on a new agreement between the European Community (EC) and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Lebanon on the other. The new agreement would replace both the Cooperation Agreement signed between the parties in 1977, and Cooperation Agreement concluded between the members of the European Coal and Steel Community and Lebanon that same year. The process aim was to establish "a comprehensive Euro Mediterranean partnership" in three areas:

-Political / Security dialogue.

-Economical and financial cooperation (including the establishment of a free trade area).

-Cultural and social cooperation.

The goal was to establish a free trade area by 2010.

(It was decided and approved by the Swedish Parliament: April 18, 2002)

July/August, 2006: During the Israeli war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006 the Swedish Foreign Ministry played an exemplary role in the evacuation of its citizens from Lebanon (in four days, the Swedish Foreign Ministry evacuated approximately 4000 Swedes from war-torn Lebanon, in relation to, for example, those 900 of its citizens that US evacuated). Approximately 8,400 Swedes were estimated to have traveled to Sweden with the Ministry's help during the period of July 16 to August 16.

August, 2006: After the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, Sweden held a donor conference in Stockholm for Lebanon's reconstruction, which resulted in about 6.7 billion SEK. Sweden's contribution was about 145 million SEK.

February, 2010: The Swedish foreign minister, at the time, Carl Bildt visits Lebanon and meets with Lebanese prime minister, at the time, Saad Hariri and speaker of the parliament Nabih Berri.

September, 2010: Regional cooperation strategy for the Middle East and North Africa was adopted by the Swedish government whereby regional aid aimed at promoting respect for human rights, sustainable use of transboundary water resources and economic integration.

June, 2012: The Swedish foreign minister, at the time, Carl Bildt visits Lebanon and meets with among others, Lebanese president (at the time) Michel Suleiman. The talks included the Syria issue and the cooperation with the European Union.

2012: Because of the deteriorating security situation in Syria the Swedish State Department decided until further notice to cut back on activities and staff at the embassy in Damascus. The continuing difficult security situation has meant that the embassy is not continuously manned and partly carried in connection to the Honorary Consulate General in Beirut.

2013: Sweden is a major donor to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), whose activities in Lebanon is extensive. Sweden's support to UNRWA in 2013 amounted to 334 million SEK which makes Sweden UNRWA's fourth largest national contributor.

May, 2014: The Swedish Ambassador to Lebanon (at the time), Niklas Kebbon met with Lebanese Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Minister, Gebran Bassil, to express Sweden’s continued will to support Lebanon handling the swelling number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

September, 2014: Ambassador Diana Janse was appointed nonresident ambassador to Lebanon (resident in Damascus, Syria).

January, 2015: Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin travelled to Lebanon on January 20 to discuss developments in the country linked to the Syria crisis with Prime Minister Tammam Salam and with organizations. Lövin also met with Lebanese Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derbas.

January, 2015: Lebanese Telecom Minister, Boutros Harb, held a meeting with his Swedish counterpart, Minister of Housing, Urban Development and Information Technology, Mehmet Kaplan, at the latter's Ministry office in Stockholm in the company of Lebanese Ambassador to Scandinavia Dr. Ali Ajami, where they broached the prospect of the signature of a cooperation agreement between Lebanon and Sweden in the field of communication and information.

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