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Statement on Lebanon

Lebanon is currently going through a historical and crucial period, which will influence the future of the country and the region for years to come.

The Party of European Socialists, in response to the seriousness of the situation, reiterates its support for Lebanon's sovereignty. The peaceful demonstrations in the centre of Beirut show the demand for a free, independent and democratic state of Lebanon.

The resignation of the Lebanese government, the 28th February 2005, is a positive step toward a free and democratic Lebanon.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the Party of European Socialists, warned; ***“The upcoming legislative elections in Lebanon must be free, fair and democratic. People must have the guarantee that their democratic right to choose is heard and respected”***.

“Fifteen years after the signature of the Taef agreement, decisions on Lebanon's future must belong to its citizens and not to anyone else” stated Poul Nyrup Rasmussen.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen added: ***“Syria must stop its domination over Lebanon. It must withdraw troops and pull out of Lebanese political life”***.

The Party of European Socialists supports the struggle for the respect of freedom and a democratic regime led by Walid Jumblatt, leader of the PSP, in the opposition, and its allies. These democratic forces have united around a “Common Action Programme of the Lebanese opposition forces”.

The PES President condemns the recent use of violence against political figures, in particular the attempted murder of former Minister Marwan Hamadé and the killing of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri are unacceptable and deplorable.

The development of future democracy in Lebanon must continue and be pursued without any form of violence or bloodshed. This is our fundamental appeal to all relevant actors in Lebanon, including military and security forces.