

10 Principles of the Lebanese Federal Model

The proposed federal constitution is based on the following 10 principles:

Principle #1 - on National Narratives: Lebanon is a multi-national country. The various populations adhere to –and are structured around- different “*national narratives*”. Cultural diversity is the social reality at the heart of Lebanon. The “Community” is the encapsulation of the individual and collective identity. Hence sect is identity not religion nor faith.

Principle #2 - on Self-Government: as in Europe, the application of *cuius region eius religio – governed and governor have to be of the same faith-* is a cornerstone for secularism, accountability and development. Enabling each “community” to freely choose its own leaders and its governance system within a uniform ensemble (canton) is not only a basic human right, but more importantly the recipe for peace, stability and development.

Principle #3 - on Subsidiarity and Localism: Bottom-up power devolution is the basis of governance. The smallest political entity is the municipality. Each municipality will be asked to choose its governance model and its cantonal belonging (resulting in cantonal delineation). Furthermore municipalities shall decide how and when to combine their resources and “scale up” in promoting “public good”.

Principle #4 - on Solidarity: With freedom comes responsibility. With rights come obligations. Therefore, development and wealth creation must be shared. Development of one municipality (or canton), must have a spillover effect to drag along surrounding municipalities as much as possible. This is especially if the municipalities belong to different cantons.

Principle #5 - of Cantonal sovereignty: Legislative elections are cantonal. No federal elections. Any federal decision that conflicts with Cantonal decision is not enforceable on the canton that doesn’t accept it. This applies on judicial, parliamentary and executive powers.

Principle #6 – on the Structure: Municipal, Cantonal and Federal are the three pre-set governance levels. Case by case cooperation models (multi-order scaling up) between municipalities form the variable leg of the model. The purpose being to achieve scale and economic optimality (bottom-up) to enable feasibility and viability of various infrastructure project.

Principle #7 - on Governance: All federal authorities (including federal government), are modelled on the basis of a governing council in which the representatives of each canton has a seat. Presidency rotates, *pro rata pari pari passu*, among the seated parties. All decisions require unanimous vote.

Principles #8 – on Direct Democracy (Checks and Balances): To keep elected representatives in check and to control project by project, communities (municipal, cantonal or federal as the case may be) will periodically express their approvals or rejection of decisions/choices/projects in municipal, cantonal and federal referendums initiated by the concerned public.

Principle #9 – Roadmap: Communicate and educate for an inclusive debates to sharpen the project and fine tune the details. Frame the project as an inclusive project suited for all 4 nations in Lebanon. Design a unifying strategy to achieve the objective i.e. set a federal system for Lebanon.

Principle #10 – on Implementation, first municipal vote will allow each municipality to determine to each canton it wants to belong to. The number of canton and semi-canton is not preset. It will be determined by the first municipal elections.

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