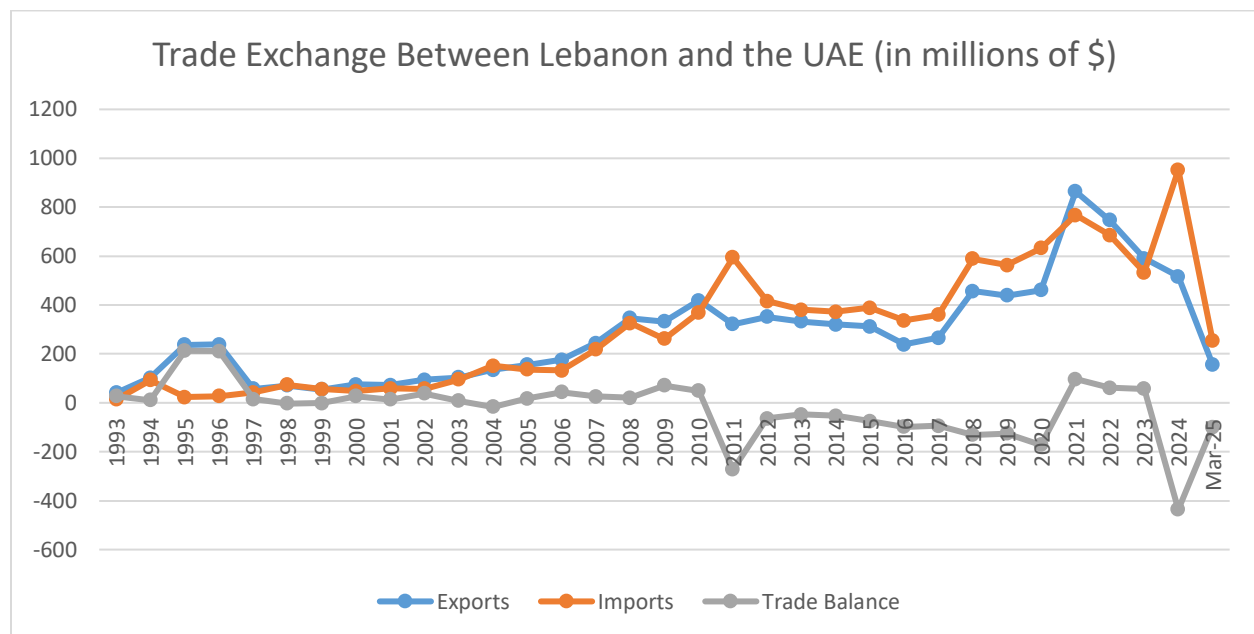




Economic Relations Between Lebanon and the UAE

Trade Exchange

The UAE ranked first among Lebanon's top export markets in 2024, accounting for approximately 19% of total Lebanese exports, which reached around \$2.71 billion. On the import side, the UAE was Lebanon's sixth-largest source, making up 6% of total imports valued at \$16.9 billion.



Trade Balance

The trade balance between Lebanon and the UAE has fluctuated between surplus and deficit from 1993 to 2024. Surpluses ranged from a low of \$8.2 million in 2003 to a peak of \$212.7 million in 1995.

As for trade deficits, they ranged from a minimum of \$1.7 million in 1999 to a maximum of \$436.4 million in 2024.

Trade Exchange Between Lebanon and the UAE (in millions of \$)					
Year	Exports	Share (%)	Imports	Share (%)2	Trade Balance
1993	40.8	9%	13.5	0%	27.3
1994	102.8	18%	92.4	2%	10.4
1995	236.6	29%	23.9	0%	212.7
1996	238.3	23%	27.6	0%	210.7
1997	57.7	9%	42	1%	15.7
1998	71	10%	73.7	1%	-2.7
1999	53.9	8%	55.6	1%	-1.7
2000	74.9	10%	47.8	1%	27.1
2001	72.9	8%	59.1	1%	13.8
2002	94.7	9%	57	1%	37.7
2003	104.3	7%	96.1	1%	8.2
2004	135.2	8%	151.1	2%	-15.9
2005	155	8%	136.8	1%	18.2
2006	176.2	8%	132.1	1%	44.1
2007	243.8	9%	218.3	2%	25.5
2008	346.3	10%	326.4	2%	19.9
2009	332.8	10%	261.2	2%	71.6
2010	418.4	10%	369.6	2%	48.8
2011	322.3	8%	594.2	3%	-271.9
2012	352	8%	416.3	2%	-64.3
2013	332	8%	380	2%	-48
2014	320	10%	372.6	2%	-52.6
2015	312.8	11%	388	2%	-75.2
2016	238.7	8%	337.3	2%	-98.6
2017	265.7	9%	359.7	2%	-94
2018	457.2	15%	588.5	3%	-131.3
2019	438.6	12%	563.5	3%	-124.9
2020	460.3	13%	632.4	6%	-172.1
2021	864.2	22%	766.9	6%	97.3
2022	747.1	21%	685.7	4%	61.5
2023	590.7	20%	533.4	3%	57.2
2024	516	19%	952.5	6%	-436.4
Mar-25	156.6	16%	255.6	6%	-99.1

Source: Lebanese Customs

Traded Goods Between the Two Countries

HS Chapter	Lebanese Exports to the UAE in 2024	Value (\$1000s)	Net Tons	Share (%)
71	Jewelry	334,301	7	65%
33	Cosmetics	22,671	1,319	4%
84	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances	18,410	783	4%
8	Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruit or melons	17,591	27,982	3%
30	Pharmaceutical products	15,113	123	3%
20	Preparations of vegetables, fruit, nuts or other parts of plants	8,616	3,352	2%
85	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof	8,332	1,055	2%
94	Furniture; bedding, mattresses, mattress supports, cushions and similar stuffed furnishings	7,248	1,084	1%
9	Coffee, tea, maté and spices	5,786	671	1%
22	Beverages, spirits and vinegar	5,373	8,024	1%
21	Miscellaneous edible preparations	5,366	1,449	1%
49	Printed books, newspapers, pictures and other products of the printing industry	5,280	1,787	1%
32	Tanning or dyeing extracts; tannins and their derivatives; dyes, pigments and other colouring matter	5,184	1,536	1%
73	Articles of iron or steel	4,913	1,113	1%
48	Paper and paperboard; articles of paper pulp, of paper or of paperboard	4,535	1,346	1%
19	Preparations of cereals, flour, starch or milk; pastrycooks' products	4,264	1,038	1%
15	Animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products	4,205	1,428	1%
7	Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers	4,168	9,050	1%
39	Plastics and articles thereof	3,609	1,106	1%
62	Articles of apparel and clothing accessories, not knitted or crocheted	3,329	91	1%
96	Miscellaneous manufactured articles	3,207	546	1%
18	Cocoa and cocoa preparations	2,935	425	1%
—	Other commodities	21,599	4,375	4%
Total		516,035	69,690	100%

HS Chapter	Lebanese Imports from the UAE in 2024	Value (\$1000s)	Net Tons	Share (%)
71	Jewelry	782,622	10	82%
39	Plastics and articles thereof	22,241	13,542	2%
21	Miscellaneous edible preparations	22,213	6,417	2%
27	Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation	20,102	10,342	2%
30	Pharmaceutical products	18,059	772	2%
19	Preparations of cereals, flour, starch or milk; pastrycooks' products	15,866	3,237	2%
76	Aluminium and articles thereof	10,089	2,759	1%
33	Cosmetics	9,601	1,331	1%
74	Copper and articles thereof	6,071	662	1%
—	Other commodities	45,602	51,796	5%
Total		952,466	90,868	100%

Remarks on Bilateral Trade

Lebanese exports to the UAE reached a record high in 2021, totaling \$766.9 million, which accounted for 22% of Lebanon's total exports. On the import side, Lebanon recorded a peak in imports from the UAE in 2024, amounting to \$952.5 million. This represented 6% of Lebanon's total imports, while the 2021 figure represented 22% of Lebanon's total exports.

Trade between the two countries remains highly concentrated. Between 2019 and 2024, jewelry consistently accounted for 57% to 70% of Lebanon's total exports to the UAE. Similarly, Lebanese imports from the UAE were also dominated by jewelry, which made up between 53% and 82% of total imports from the UAE during the same period.

Bilateral Trade for HS Chapter 71: Jewelry				
Year	Lebanese Exports	Share of Total Exports (%)	Lebanese Imports	Share of Total Imports (%)
2019	269	61%	299	53%
2020	314	68%	477	75%
2021	491	57%	596	78%
2022	522	70%	465	68%
2023	367	62%	346	65%
2024	334	65%	783	82%

In 2024, Lebanese food exports to the UAE (HS Chapters 1-24) amounted to \$63.7 million, representing 12% of Lebanon's total exports to the UAE, and 26% of its global food exports. On the import side, Lebanon imported \$55.5 million worth of food products from the UAE, accounting for 6% of its total imports from the UAE, and 19% of Lebanon's global food imports.

Between 2020 and 2024, the value of Lebanese exports to the UAE rose by 12%, accompanied by a 13% rise in export volume. Consequently, the average value per ton declined slightly from \$7,432 in 2020 to \$7,404 in 2024.

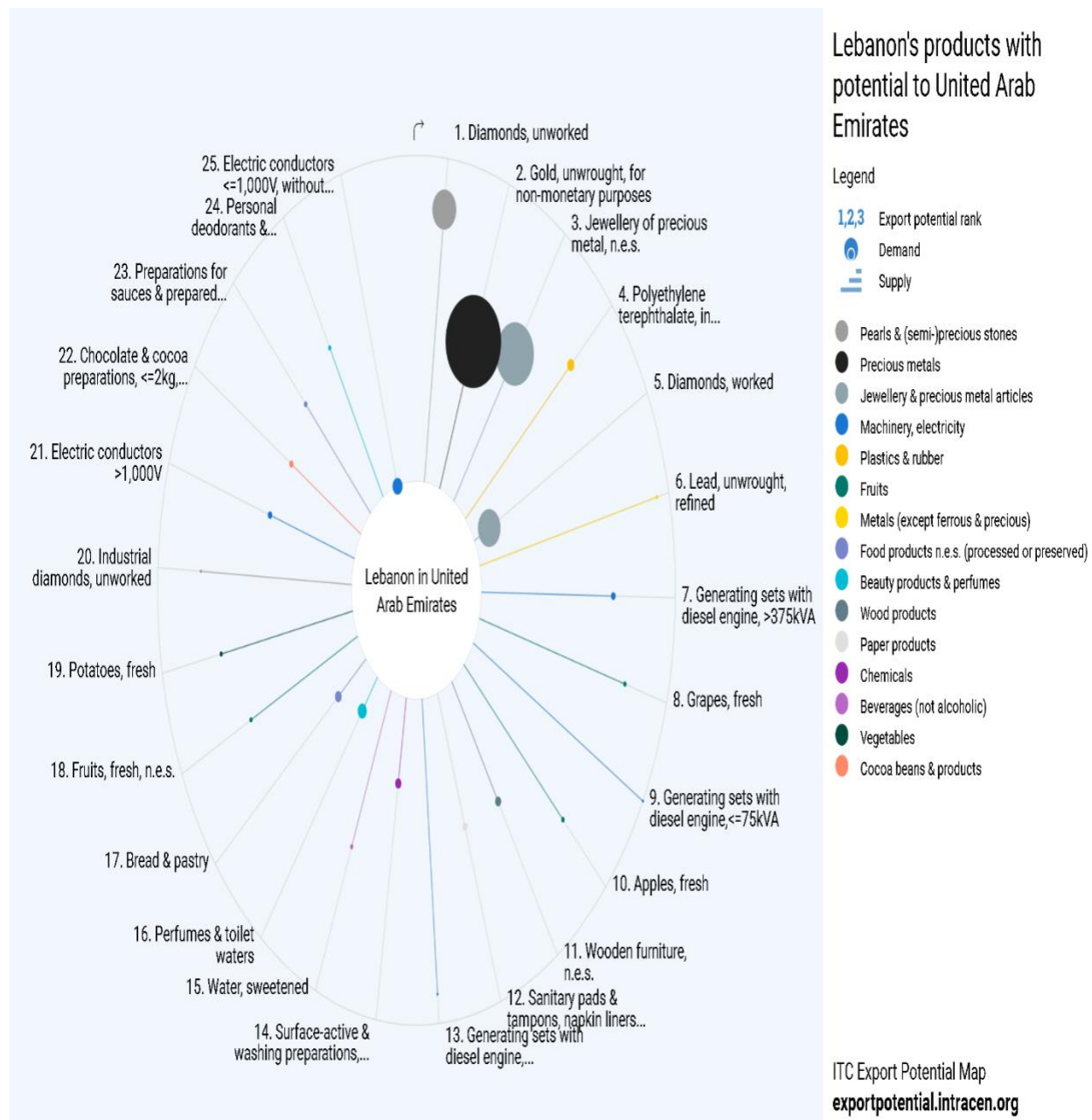
As for imports, the value of Lebanese imports from the UAE grew by 51% over the same period, while the imported volume dropped by 11%. Consequently, the average price per ton rose significantly—from \$6,213 in 2020 to \$10,482 in 2024.

HS Chapter	Evolution of Lebanese Exports to the UAE (\$1000s)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change (20–24)
71	Jewelry	313,603	490,623	522,003	366,856	334,301	7%
33	Cosmetics	17,505	22,455	29,003	30,425	22,671	30%
84	Machinery and Mechanical Appliances	8,226	10,981	9,929	41,816	18,410	124%
8	Edible Fruit and Nuts	7,602	212,813	35,573	14,142	17,591	131%
30	Pharmaceutical Products	12,378	11,247	14,364	14,281	15,113	22%
20	Preparations of Vegetables and Fruit	8,272	8,448	9,603	9,245	8,616	4%
85	Electrical Machinery and Equipment	9,257	6,910	11,290	10,435	8,332	–10%
94	Furniture and Surgical Furnishings	4,005	4,458	6,294	7,447	7,248	81%
9	Coffee, Tea, Mate and Spices	2,773	3,154	3,797	5,647	5,786	109%
22	Beverages and Vinegar	6,108	11,353	16,789	6,097	5,373	–12%
21	Miscellaneous Edible Preparations	3,129	3,952	4,049	5,884	5,366	71%
49	Printed Materials and Publications	1,431	2,235	4,945	4,247	5,280	269%
32	Tanning and Dyeing Extracts	4,059	3,454	4,948	4,515	5,184	28%
73	Articles of Iron or Steel	1,990	2,451	4,068	6,481	4,913	147%
48	Paper and Paperboard Articles	2,892	4,060	6,224	6,516	4,535	57%
19	Cereal Preparations	2,382	2,343	2,751	3,476	4,264	79%
15	Animal or Vegetable Fats and Oils	2,394	1,832	1,461	2,957	4,205	76%
7	Edible Vegetables and Roots	8,822	11,952	14,427	7,404	4,168	–53%
39	Plastics and Articles Thereof	1,578	2,325	3,749	4,703	3,609	129%
62	Non-Knitted Apparel	3,867	3,302	3,016	3,011	3,329	–14%
96	Miscellaneous Manufactured Articles	1,111	1,857	2,379	2,177	3,207	189%
18	Cocoa and Cocoa Preparations	1,622	3,171	3,867	3,167	2,935	81%
—	Other Commodities	35,300	38,865	32,619	29,762	21,599	–39%
Total		460,306	864,241	747,148	590,691	516,035	12%

HS Chapter	Evolution of Lebanese Imports from the UAE (\$1000s)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change (20–24)
71	Natural or Cultured Pearls, Precious Stones & Metals	476,679	595,919	464,573	346,417	782,622	64%
39	Plastics and Articles Thereof	19,799	25,007	27,517	21,717	22,241	12%
21	Miscellaneous Edible Preparations	13,402	8,243	11,203	13,406	22,213	66%
27	Mineral Fuels and Oils	16,475	51,748	73,761	54,494	20,102	22%
30	Pharmaceutical Products	25,270	9,630	12,150	11,478	18,059	–29%
19	Cereal Preparations	17,391	9,915	11,555	11,904	15,866	–9%
76	Aluminium and Articles Thereof	10,008	16,801	15,513	11,282	10,089	1%
33	Essential Oils and Cosmetics	2,771	5,157	7,464	7,239	9,601	246%
74	Copper and Articles Thereof	1	12	2,678	1,401	6,071	607000%
—	Other Commodities	50,610	44,505	59,279	54,105	45,602	–10%
Total		632,406	766,937	685,693	533,443	952,466	51%

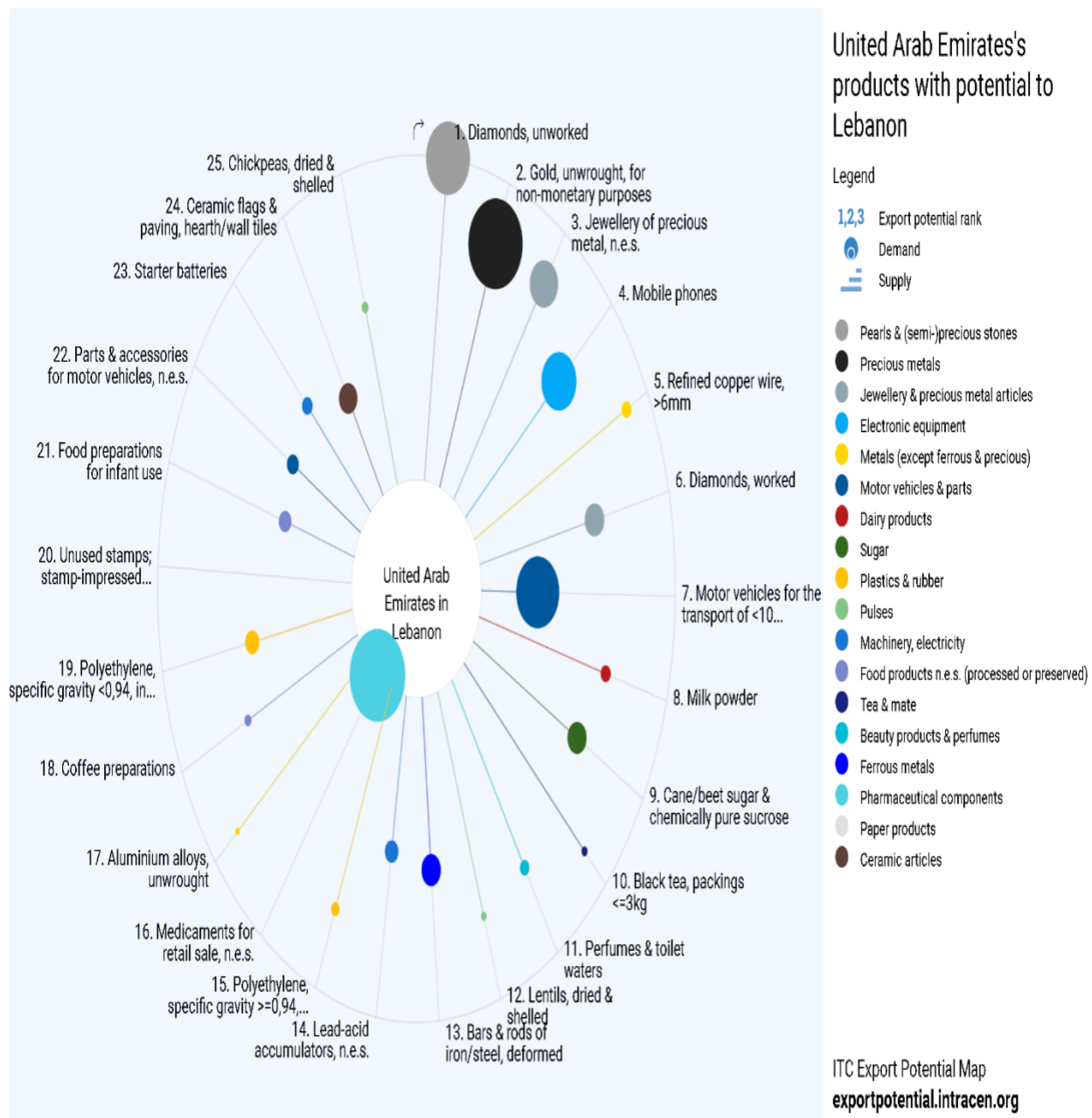
Products with Export Potential from Lebanon to the UAE

The products with the highest export potential from Lebanon to the United Arab Emirates are unworked diamonds, non-monetary unworked gold, and jewelry made of precious metals. Lebanon demonstrates its strongest supply capacity in diesel-powered generating sets (≤ 75 kVA). However, non-monetary unworked gold is the product with the highest potential demand in the UAE market.



Products with Export Potential from the UAE to Lebanon

The products with the highest export potential from the United Arab Emirates to Lebanon are unworked diamonds, non-monetary unworked gold, and jewelry made of precious metals. The UAE has the strongest supply capacity in unworked diamonds; however, pharmaceutical products for retail sale represent the product with the highest potential demand in the Lebanese market.



Bilateral Relations

Bilateral relations between Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates are close and well-established. In recent years, these ties have been reinforced through several agreements, including the Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement (2001), the Free Trade Zone Agreement (2001), the Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Mutual Investments (1999), and the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Tax Evasion on Income (1999). In addition, both countries are parties to the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) agreement, which aims to liberalize and facilitate trade among Arab states.

The strong Lebanese presence in the UAE has further deepened bilateral ties, with an estimated Lebanese community of over 65,000 individuals actively contributing to the UAE's economic life. Lebanese entrepreneurs manage around 700 businesses across various sectors. Based on the sectoral distribution of Lebanese capital invested in the UAE, the largest shares are concentrated in trade, repair services, and financial industries.

Emirati Tourists in Lebanon

On May 7, 2025, the UAE lifted its travel ban on Lebanon, allowing Emirati citizens to visit the country after nearly four years of restrictions. The decision came as part of efforts to strengthen bilateral ties, following a working visit by President Joseph Aoun to the UAE and his meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. During the meeting, both sides agreed to resume travel between the two countries and implement the necessary measures to facilitate mobility and establish mechanisms to ensure smooth travel.

In terms of tourism, the number of Emirati visitors to Lebanon reached 1,891 in 2017, representing just 0.3% of Arab tourists and 0.1% of total tourists that year. This marks a sharp decline compared to 2010, when 46,923 Emirati tourists visited Lebanon, accounting for 5.2% of Arab tourists and 2.2% of total tourist arrivals.

Year	Emirati Tourists	Arab Tourists	Share of Arab Tourists (%)	Total Tourists	Share of Total Tourists (%)
2005	17,044	451,430	3.80%	1,139,524	1.50%
2006	16,051	448,861	3.60%	1,062,635	1.50%
2007	12,273	400,082	3.10%	1,017,072	1.20%
2008	24,673	549,463	4.50%	1,332,551	1.90%
2009	42,974	785,985	5.50%	1,851,081	2.30%
2010	46,923	894,724	5.20%	2,167,989	2.20%
2011	32,058	581,597	5.50%	1,655,051	1.90%
2012	17,742	458,658	3.90%	1,365,845	1.30%
2013	12,000	402,080	3.00%	1,274,362	0.90%
2014	7,660	460,822	1.70%	1,354,647	0.60%
2017	1,891	561,273	0.30%	1,856,795	0.10%

Barriers to Trade

Several obstacles continue to hinder the activity of the private sector, primarily due to the trade barriers affecting both exports and imports between Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates. These barriers limit the potential for enhanced commercial exchange and, in turn, discourage private sector investment in this area.

Among the most prominent challenges are customs restrictions imposed by the UAE, which, along with administrative, institutional, and legislative constraints, undermine the positive impact of reduced or eliminated tariffs. Additional trade imbalances stem from discrepancies in standards and specifications, as well as transportation-related issues.

Some Lebanese industries also face competitive disadvantages due to lower domestic costs in the UAE, including reduced taxes, cheaper energy, low labor costs, and affordable raw materials. Moreover, Lebanese exporters face technical obstacles related to product registration with various regulatory bodies both within and outside the UAE. Exports to the UAE are further constrained by the absence of export insurance coverage and high shipping costs.