European Commission - Speech
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Speech of Commissioner Várhelyi at the Brussels VIII Conference - Supporting the Future of Syria and the region

Brussels, 27 May 2024

I would like to start by expressing our appreciation for the valuable inputs of the Day of Dialogue, held on April 30th.

This years high level high attendance was a clear proof of the dedication by many stakeholders to help the situation on the ground and **work towards meaningful solutions to address the Syria crisis**.

While Syria is in crisis still but it is not under the media spotlight anymore. Especially in the context of increased regional instability, the toll of the conflict is undeniable.

First on the Syrian people, but also on host communities in the neighbouring countries. The challenges of this protracted conflict cannot be ignored. Remarkable resilience shown by the Syrian people and the host communities must be acknowledged and we need to continue building on this. It is clear that the **Syrian conflict has profound consequences and far-reaching impact**, starting with the Syrian people and also on the region in human, political, socioeconomic and security terms, with serious risks of instability.

The European Union commands the extraordinary efforts of Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye, and also Egypt and Iraq**.** At the same time, we are also mindful of the major difficulties these partner countries are faced with. As the leaders of the European Union stated, **Europe considers your stability and security to be a priority, a European priority**. We want to reassure you that there is a predictable and long term political and financial commitment from Europe. A clear commitment that comes with meaningful actions in close cooperation with the partner countries and the international community.

The leaders of the European Union have not only made it clear that we are ready to continue our support to the Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye, Europe has also made it very clear that now we need to double our efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling. To this end, the European Union will uphold its essential support to all those affected by the crisis. As announced earlier by High Representative Borrell, the European **Commission is pledging EUR 2.120 billion, with EUR 560 million per year for Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq in 2024 and 2025, and EUR 1 billion for Türkiye in 2024**.

We will **support basic services and invest in education, healthcare, social protection or water**. We will also look at how to make the assistance of the European Union more effective. We will explore how to **work on more structured approach to voluntary returns to Syria** in close cooperation with the UNHCR, with the objective to ensure that migrants can exert their right to return in a safe, voluntary and dignified manner. We will also need to **strengthen support from the international community for humanitarian and early recovery programmes** in Syria, with increased level of protection of those who return to make it a durable and sustainable solution.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me conclude by stressing that this is imperative for the international community to reaffirm its political and financial support in response to the Syria crisis. We have to **redouble our efforts to address instability and vulnerability** across the region in strong solidarity with the Syrian people.

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