

Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the leaders' summit on the global refugee crisis

First of all, allow me also to join others in expressing appreciation for President's Obama initiative to call this meeting.

In Europe, we are in no doubt, that today, one of the most urgent actions the international community must undertake, is the strengthening of the common response to the refugee crisis.

In comparison to other states who are present here today, the European Union stood out in 2015 as unable to effectively protect its external borders. This time of uncontrolled migration is coming to an end, and it won't repeat itself. The final goal we are aiming at, is that the refugees will get asylum in EU member states through resettlement, and not by embarking on a risky often tragic journey organised by smugglers.

Our determination to protect the EU's external border does not change the fact that Europe will remain the most open continent in the world. And the EU countries together with the United States will continue to make up the backbone of world humanitarian efforts.

Let me highlight the most significant actions the European Union is currently undertaking. Our humanitarian assistance to refugees worldwide has increased, from 1.35 billion euros in 2015 to 1.7 billion euros in 2016. And here I am only talking about the EU budget and not the national budgets of our 28 member states. Part of this funding is helping children to go to school in emergency settings. We provide significant financial and technical support to those countries who host most of the Syrian refugees, notably Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Our Compacts with those countries will help both refugees and people living in host communities to access education and to find a job. With regard to the Syrian crisis specifically, the EU has provided over 6.2 billion euros, which includes 3 billion euros pledged from the Union's budget at the "Supporting Syria" conference in London last February.

And finally, we are determined to strengthen the economic resilience of the countries affected by the refugee crisis, and the European Investment Bank will play its role in this respect.

Let me invite all international partners and stakeholders to step up their contributions. Only working hand in hand can we succeed in handling the refugee crisis. Thank you.

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