



Managing the Refugee Crisis: Commission reports on implementation of EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan

Brussels, 10 February 2016

On 29 November 2015, at the EU-Turkey summit, Turkey and the EU activated the Joint Action Plan aimed at stepping up cooperation for the support of Syrian refugees under temporary protection and their host communities in Turkey and to strengthen cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU. The European Commission is today publishing a report on the implementation of the [EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan](#), assessing the follow-up of the respective commitments under the Action Plan

European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"I welcome the measures already taken by the Turkish authorities to stem irregular migratory flows, such as the opening of the labour market for Syrian refugees. There should be no illusions that the refugee crisis will end before its root causes – notably continued war and atrocities in Syria – are addressed in a definite manner. We will continue to work jointly with our Turkish partners to fully implement the joint action plan so we can deliver on the commitments taken to bring order into migratory flows, including fighting against smugglers and preventing irregular departures from Turkey to Europe."*

Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiation, Johannes **Hahn**, added: *"On the EU side, we have finalised the set-up of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, with €3 billion available over the next two years to deal with the refugee influx. We are working at full-speed with the Turkish authorities to assess the needs so that the funds can be disbursed as soon as possible".*

Turkey needs as a matter of urgency to make significant progress in preventing irregular departures of migrants and refugees from its territory to the EU, notably by stepping up land based operations. The number of people arriving irregularly in the EU from Turkey has decreased steadily since October, but the total number of arrivals remains high for winter. The average daily arrivals from Turkey to Greece stood at 2,186 in January, compared to 6,929 for October and 3,575 in December.

The report acknowledges several concrete measures that Turkey has already taken on the implementation of the Action Plan. The introduction on 8 January of visa obligations for arrivals of Syrians to Turkey from third countries has sharply reduced arrivals of Syrians from Lebanon and Jordan into Turkey. The measures adopted on 15 January to give access to the labour market to Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey are another important step forward.

Turkey is urged to continue its efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the Plan. Turkey should improve the implementation of its bilateral Readmission Agreement with Greece, and should be ready to implement [the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement](#) for third country nationals from 1 June 2016. In this regard, the European Commission has today adopted a proposal for a Council decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Joint Readmission Committee on the application of the provisions on readmission of third-country nationals and stateless persons in order to advance the applicability of these obligations to June 2016.

Turkey should also reinforce the interception capacity of the Turkish Coast Guard and strengthen legislation, action and cooperation with EU Member States in the fight against smuggling and smugglers.

On the EU side, assistance should be delivered as soon as possible through the recently established [Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#). The first meeting of the Facility's Steering Committee will take place on 17 February to discuss specific actions which can be financed with the €3 billion pledged from the EU and Member State budgets. Priority areas for action will include humanitarian aid, education, labour market integration, health care access, social inclusion and infrastructure projects.

Background

Its geographical position makes Turkey a major first reception and transit country for migrants. The country is currently hosting more than 2.5 million asylum seekers and refugees.

Turkey is making commendable efforts to provide massive humanitarian aid and support to an unprecedented and continuously increasing influx of people seeking refuge and has already spent more than €7 billion of its own resources on addressing this crisis.

On 15 October, the European Commission reached an *ad referendum* agreement with Turkey on a [Joint Action Plan](#) to step up their cooperation on migration management in a coordinated effort to tackle the refugee crisis.

The Joint Action Plan was activated at the EU-Turkey meeting on 29 November 2015.

The Action Plan identifies a series of collaborative actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency by the European Union and the Republic of Turkey with the aim of confronting common challenges in a concerted manner and supplementing Turkey's efforts in managing the large number of people in need of protection in Turkey. In addition, the European Union – the institutions and its Member States – also committed to increasing political engagement with Turkey, providing Turkey with significant financial support, accelerating the fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap and re-energising the accession process with Turkey.

For more information

[Communication on the State of Play of Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Annex 1: EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan](#) Implementation Report

[Annex 7: Member States' pledging to Trust Funds – State of Play table](#)

[FACTSHEET: EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan](#)

[Press release – Implementing the European Agenda on Migration: Progress on priority actions](#)

[Press release - Implementing the European Agenda on Migration: Commission reports on the state of play in Greece, Italy and the Western Balkans](#)

[Press release - Implementing the Common European Asylum System: Commission escalates 9 infringement proceedings](#)

[European Agenda on Migration](#)

[All press material on the European Agenda on Migration](#)

[Communication of 23 September 2015](#): Managing the refugee crisis: immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures under the European Agenda on Migration

[Communication of 14 October 2015](#): Managing the refugee crisis: State of Play of the Implementation of the Priority Actions under the European Agenda on Migration

[Communication of 15 December](#): A European Border and Coast Guard and effective management of Europe's external borders

IP/16/268

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