



EU approves close to €240 million to strengthen resilience in neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees in light of the coronavirus pandemic

Brussels, 31 March 2020

The European Union is strengthening its support for refugees from Syria and vulnerable persons in Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon through a new package of almost €240 million, raising the total assistance via the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis to more than €2 billion. The new support is particularly relevant in the context of the current coronavirus pandemic and will provide additional help for the most vulnerable persons in the region and assist hosting countries to better face public health challenges, amongst others.

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Josep **Borrell** said: *"In the tenth year of the Syrian crisis which has displaced half of the country's population, the European Union continues to stand by the Syrian refugees and neighbouring countries hosting them. Not only to face the most immediate challenges, including the coronavirus pandemic, but also to build up their future. The EU will continue to support UN efforts for a comprehensive political solution to the Syrian conflict, mobilise necessary financial support for Syria and neighbouring countries, as well as provide a unique platform for dialogue with civil society. In this context, the EU will this year host its fourth Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region."*

Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér **Várhelyi** commented: *"The European Union is stepping up its assistance to countries hosting Syrian refugees, in particular Jordan and Lebanon but also others, as a signal of solidarity with the most vulnerable populations in difficult circumstances, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The package of close to €240 million puts a particular emphasis on critical sectors for vulnerable populations such as social assistance, health, education and child protection. This will help strengthen the resilience of those already facing difficult situations to better face the multiple challenges linked to the coronavirus."*

The newly adopted assistance package consists of the following actions:

- **€100 million** to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable local households and Syrian refugees, as well as to contribute to the establishment of sustainable social safety nets in Lebanon;
- **€57.5 million** to strengthen the public education system in Lebanon to deliver inclusive and quality education for vulnerable local and Syrian refugee children in Lebanon;
- **€27.5 million** to provide inclusive, equitable and quality education for Syrians in refugee camps in Jordan;
- **€22 million** to improve the public health system in Jordan, including prevention and management of diseases, in particular through primary health care;
- **€11 million** to empower local and refugee women and improve their access to livelihood opportunities in Jordan;
- **€10.5 million** in support to quality and sustainable child protection systems, policy and services for boys, girls and women in Lebanon;
- **€10 million** to improve the living and housing conditions of vulnerable returnees and support peacebuilding in western Ninewa in Iraq.

The assistance package was adopted by the Operational Board of the Trust Fund, which brings together the European Commission, EU Member States, the United Kingdom and Turkey. Observers of the Operational Board include Members of the European Parliament, representatives from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the World Bank, and the Syria Recovery Trust Fund. With this newly adopted package, the Trust Fund has committed over €2 billion in concrete actions in the region since 2015, helping refugees and host countries alike, doubling the target originally set.

This approved assistance package is part of already ongoing efforts to support Syrian refugees and Syria's neighbouring countries, pledged and provided through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis since 2014.

Background

Since its establishment in December 2014, a significant share of the EU's support to help Syrian refugees and Syria's neighbouring countries has been provided through the [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#). The Trust Fund reinforces an integrated EU aid response to the crisis and primarily addresses longer-term resilience and needs to enhance the self-reliance of Syrian refugees and, at the same time, contributes to ease the pressure on host communities and the administrations in neighbouring countries such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The Fund has also underpinned the EU Compacts agreed with Jordan and Lebanon to better assist them in coping with the protracted refugee crisis. With the newly adopted package, the Fund has mobilised over €900 million for Lebanon, over €500 million for both Jordan and Turkey and more than €160 million for Iraq. Overall, more than €2 billion has been mobilised from the EU budget and contributions from 21 EU Member States, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

The Trust Fund's programmes support basic education and child protection services for refugees, training and higher education, better access to healthcare, improved access to water and wastewater infrastructure, support to resilience, women empowerment and fighting gender based violence, as well as economic opportunities and social stability. The Fund can also support internally displaced persons in Iraq and actions in the Western Balkans.

For More Information

[EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#)

[Factsheet: EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#)

IP/20/549

Press contacts:

[Ana PISONERO-HERNANDEZ](#) (+32 2 295 43 20)

[Alceo SMERILLI](#) (+ 32 2 296 48 87)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)