EU support in response to the Syrian crisis

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The Syrian crisis has become the world's worst humanitarian disaster. The EU is the leading donor in the international response to the Syrian crisis, with over **€5 billion** from the EU and Member States collectively allocated in humanitarian and development assistance since the start of the conflict until this year. At the conference Supporting Syria and the Region that took place in London on 4 February, the EU and the Member States pledged for the year 2016 over €3 billion. The EU's support goes both to Syrians in their country and to refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt.

The EU's relations with Syria

In 2011, the EU responded to the unacceptable violence used by the military and security forces against peaceful protestors by suspending its cooperation with the Syrian Government under the European Neighbourhood Policy and gradually extending restrictive measures. This policy sought to pressure the Syrian Government into ending violence and to encourage a political solution to the conflict. From the very outset, the EU has condemned human rights violations in Syria in the strongest terms.

The EU's objective is to bring an end to the conflict and enable the Syrian people to live in peace in their own country. The latest EU position is stated in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of 12 October 2015. The EU is a full member and active participant in the International Syria Support Group. It fully supports the UN-led process, notably the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria.

Only a Syrian-led political process leading to a peaceful and inclusive transition, based on the principles of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions (notably 2254 (2015), will bring back stability to Syria.

European Commission funding

- **Additional funding following the pledge at the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference**

At the conference Supporting Syria and the Region, the EU and the Member States pledged for the year 2016 over €3 billion to assist the Syrian people inside Syria as well as refugees and the communities hosting them in the neighbouring countries

The pledge came on top of the €5 billion that the EU, as leading donor, has already committed in response to the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II.

The European commission pledge for the 2016 amounts to €1.115 billion. The Commission was also able to give an indicative amount for 2017 which is €1.275 billion, bringing the total pledge for the two years to €2.39 billion. These funds will mostly come from humanitarian assistance and the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

- **Overview**

Since 2011, the European Commission’s support in response to the Syrian crisis has exceeded **€2.6 billion.** The Commission provides both immediate *humanitarian* assistance, and *non-humanitarian* aid, responding to medium-term needs.

In *humanitarian assistance*, the Commission has so far provided **€1.037 billion** for life-saving emergency responses, food, water, sanitation, hygiene and shelter to millions of Syrians inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

In *non-humanitarian aid,* the Commission has mobilised €1.6 billion, including:

- €961 million through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)- of which €381 million channelled via the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis (EUTF)-to address the medium term needs of the Syrian refugees living in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan (education,

livelihoods, health, access to basic services);

- €180 million through Macro-financial Assistance (MFA) to Jordan to assist with the influx of Syrian refugees;
- €180 million through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace for assistance programmes in opposition-controlled areas in Syria, mediation efforts, transitional justice preparation and measures to reduce tensions between refugees and host communities in the region, as well as to support the destruction of Syrian chemical stockpiles and chemical threat prevention;
- €249 million through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to Turkey - of which €173 million are channelled via the EUTF;
- €26 million through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights;
- €26 million through the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI)- of which €10 million are channelled via the EUTF

Since its establishment in December 2014, most non-humanitarian aid for Syria's neighbouring countries is channelled through the **EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, the "Madad Fund" (EUTF Madad)[1].** The EUTF aims to bring a more coherent and integrated EU response to the crisis by merging various EU financial instruments and contributions from Member States into one single flexible and quick mechanism. The Trust Fund primarily addresses longer term resilience needs of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, as well as the hosting communities and their administrations. Its mandate has just been extended to be able to operate also in the Western Balkans, as far as it is concerned by the Syrian migrants flow. In future the Trust Fund may start financing resilience activities inside Syria and could become a funding tool for reconstruction, resettlement and governance support following a political settlement of the crisis. With recent pledges from 17 Member States- amounting to over €52 million- and contributions from various EU instruments, the Fund is now reaching a **total volume of €645 million**. Additional funds will be committed in 2016 and beyond.

Inside Syria

Humanitarian assistance

Inside Syria, thanks to lifesaving aid provided by the Commission, some 2 million people have gained access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene items, 850 000 people have received food, 1 million people have received non-food items and shelter, and 350 000 children have been covered by child protection programmes.

The EU's humanitarian aid is impartial and independent and goes to people in need regardless of ethnic or religious considerations. The EU's humanitarian aid is channelled through the United Nations, International Organisations, and international NGO partners.

Non-humanitarian assistance

Since the on-set of the Syrian crisis, substantial non-humanitarian assistance inside Syria has been provided by the Commission through the European Neighbourhood Instrument, targeting in particular education, livelihoods and civil society support.

Thanks to this financial support, 2.3 million children have had improved access to education at primary and secondary school level (over 4,000 schools reached). Furthermore, more than 11,367 emergency job-opportunities for Syrians have been created (including 4,000 job opportunities for women) and numerous micro-grants for small-size businesses have been provided. More than 85,000 Syrians inside Syria have benefitted from improved community-based activities thanks to the strengthening of grassroots civil society activities.

In addition, Commission funds from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights have also supported the protection of Human Rights Defenders as well as capacity-building of Syrian journalists.

Assistance to neighbouring countries

Since the beginning of the crisis, Syrians fled to neighbouring countries which are hosting an unprecedented number of refugees. The European Union is strongly supporting the Syrian refugees and their host communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq.

Jordan

In **Jordan** there are over 630 000 Syrian registered refugees, half of them children. EU leaders have met Jordan representatives and visited the country many times throughout the last five years. At the

conference Supporting Syria and the Region that took place in London on 4 February the EU reiterated the solidarity to Jordan pledging an increased support.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the European Commission has allocated more than **€583.7 million** in assistance to refugees and vulnerable communities. This includes more than €198 million from the humanitarian budget, €180 million from the Macro Financial Assistance (MFA) Instrument, over €170 million from the ENI/ European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and more than €30 million from the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace. The Commission's humanitarian aid has helped more than 350.000 Syrian refugees in Jordan. With 83% of the refugees in Jordan living in urban settings, the Commission supports the most vulnerable refugees through cash assistance as it is considered the most cost-efficient and dignified modality. Specific programmes support children's and women's needs, since approximately 53% of the refugees are children and 23.5 % women. Another priority in 2015 has been responding to the emergency needs of asylum seekers at the border between Syria and Jordan where today more than 16 000 people remain stranded, awaiting access to Jordan.

This support comes on top of the over €500 million in regular programmed bilateral cooperation for Jordan under the European Neighbourhood policy, which brings the **overall amount to €1.08 billion.**

Lebanon

The EU pays tribute to the outstanding efforts Lebanon is making since the outset of the conflict. The country hosts more than 1.1 million refugees representing 1/4 of the Lebanese population, which is the highest per-capita concentration of refugees worldwide. At the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference, the EU Commission pledge increased support investing in resilience and sustainability of Lebanon.

For **Lebanon**, since the beginning of the crisis, the European Commission has allocated **€552.1 million**. This includes more than €269 million in humanitarian aid and €283 million for development/stabilisation support, mainly financed by the ENI/European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (close to €250 million) and Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (over €30 million) to address longer term resilience needs of affected civilians, both refugees and Lebanese host communities. In Lebanon, through its partners, the EU's humanitarian aid reaches around 665.000 people.

The Commission's *non-humanitarian aid* is addressing both refugees and host communities' needs. The main part is going to the education sector but we are also dealing with health, livelihoods and local infrastructures (water, waste water, solid waste management).

This support comes on top of €219 million in regular programmed bilateral cooperation for Lebanon under the European Neighbourhood Policy, which bring the **overall support to €771 million**. This shows that the EU was able to mobilise within a short period a 200% increase of funding for Lebanon to effectively address the country's huge needs resulting from the refugee crisis.

Turkey

In Turkey there are over 2.5 million registered Syrian refugees, making Turkey the largest host of refugees in the world.

The total funding provided by the EU to Turkey in response to the Syria Crisis, including humanitarian aid as well as longer-term assistance, amounts to **€352 million**. In humanitarian aid, the European Commission has contributed €71 million since 2011 to primarily assist Syrian refugees but also Iraqi refugees and other populations of concern in Turkey. EU humanitarian aid is funding the provisions of food, non-food items (including winterization assistance), health assistance and protection through humanitarian partners. Altogether, the Commission is in Turkey currently providing food assistance to about 230,000 people and health assistance to about 130,000 people. Through the EU Children of Peace initiative, the Commission has funded emergency education, which provides Syrian children living in Turkey with access to schools.

Moreover, in November 2015, the EU announced that it is setting up a legal framework – a **Refugee Facility for Turkey** – with **€3 billion** to deliver efficient and complementary support to Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. Priority will be given to actions providing immediate humanitarian, development and other assistance to refugees and host communities, national and local authorities in managing and addressing the consequences of the inflows of refugees.

Iraq

Closely linked to the Syria crisis is the one in Iraq. The Iraq crisis is a Level 3 emergency with 10 million people in need of humanitarian aid, in a country of 36 million. This includes 3.2 million

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 250 000 refugees from Syria.

The European Commission's humanitarian budget for Iraq has substantially grown in 2015, responding to increasing needs and reaching the total of **€104.65 million**. The EU provides protection and relief to both Iraqi displaced persons and Syrian refugees, inside and outside camps in Iraq, as well as other vulnerable populations affected by the conflict. Funding ensures food assistance, basic health care, water and sanitation, protection, shelter and the distribution of essential household items.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/syria/madad/index_en.htm