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JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE EU APPROACH TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS

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INTRODUCTION

The pace of the deterioration of the Syria conflict in recent months is such that a humanitarian catastrophe is spreading throughout the whole region. In addition to the human suffering inflicted, this conflict is not only destroying the traditional fabric of Syrian society but also seriously endangering the stability of the neighbouring countries, Lebanon and Jordan in particular, with no immediate prospect of an end in sight.

This Joint Communication proposes a comprehensive European Union (EU) approach in response to the conflict and its consequences both in Syria and its neighbouring countries.

Since the beginning of the conflict, we have witnessed a dramatic decline in human security, with over 93,000 deaths and 1.6 million refugees as of June 2013. Conservative estimates indicate that 6.8 million people are in need of aid, 4.25 million are internally displaced (IDPs), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) foresees the possibility of 3.45 million refugees by the end of this year. The human rights situation in Syria has also deteriorated dramatically. In its June 2013 report, the UN independent international Commission of Inquiry on Syria (CoI) denounces the new levels of brutality of the conflict, and documents, for the first time, the systematic imposition of sieges, the use of chemical agents and forcible displacements. The CoI recalls that Government forces and affiliated militia have committed crimes against humanity, war crimes and gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. There is also evidence that anti-Government armed groups have committed war crimes and other serious abuses, although not of the same intensity and scale of those committed by the Syrian authorities. The UN Secretary General reported to the Security Council in June 2013 that both the Free Syrian Army (that is allegedly recruiting child soldiers) and the government forces, including Syrian Armed Forces, intelligence services and regime militia have engaged in grave violations against children.

The first priority of the EU is to promote a political settlement aimed at ending the violence. As Syria enters its third year of crisis, and in spite of some progress made on the ground by the Government of Syria' forces, there is a strong possibility of a drawn-out conflict, with neither side able to assert conclusive military superiority. Thus far, there has been little progress in reaching consensus in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, the recent agreement between US Secretary of State Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov to relaunch negotiations based on the June 2012 Geneva Communiqué and organise an international peace conference on Syria ("Geneva II") have given a new impetus to the political process.

In parallel to efforts on the political front, the EU has mobilised all of its instruments in order to contribute to a wider international response. The EU is therefore the biggest donor of humanitarian aid. To date, EUR 678 million in humanitarian assistance has been committed by Member States and from the EU budget. In addition, the EU has mobilised EUR 175

million from other non-humanitarian budget instruments. In sum, the total response to the crisis has already reached over EUR 850 million. However, even this substantial sum is insufficient to cope with the massive, and increasing, humanitarian needs.

The major challenge facing the EU in delivering aid is the complex, dangerous environment where international humanitarian law is all too often ignored. In accordance with humanitarian principles, the EU works with all sides in the conflict, building closer links with local communities and their local councils to help meet basic needs such as medical assistance, food security, electricity, water and other services. This assistance should be provided through all possible channels to ensure efficient access.

The consequences of the increasingly unpredictable and destabilising Syrian conflict are being felt beyond Syria's borders. Lebanon and Jordan, who were already facing substantial challenges before the outbreak of the crisis, are now faced with an unprecedented situation that threatens their internal stability. Turkey and Iraq also face potential political problems directly related to the ethnic, religious and political affiliation of refugees, although their relative socio-economic absorption capacity is higher than that of Lebanon and Jordan.

The dramatic developments and fast-increasing needs call for an urgent and comprehensive response package commensurate to the challenges. This response package should bring together the EU and its Member States' policies and instruments in order to address the immediate humanitarian needs in a coordinated, comprehensive manner, to contain and resolve the Syrian crisis, to promote access to justice and accountability, to preserve the stability of neighbouring countries and to lead longer term international reconstruction efforts once a lasting peace has been found.

The EU is well placed to make a decisive contribution as it can build i) on the strength of its political relationships and traction with the various stakeholders, many of whom expect a strong EU role; ii) its ability to facilitate coordination and; iii) its experience not only in the delivery of humanitarian assistance but in dealing with security issues as well as post conflict and reconstruction phases.

This Joint Communication proposes the main elements of a comprehensive EU response to the crisis, while highlighting actions and initiatives already taken thus far by the High Representative and the European Commission.

1. A COMPREHENSIVE EU RESPONSE

The comprehensive EU response should aim to a) support a political solution that brings a sustainable solution to the crisis, b) prevent regional destabilisation from the spill-over of the conflict to neighbouring countries; c) address the dramatic humanitarian situation and assist the affected populations; d) address the consequences of the conflict on and in the EU.

What we intend to do:

- Support a political settlement through a robust EU position at the up-coming 'Geneva II' international conference.
- Engage with the opposition so it takes part in the 'Geneva II' conference and is represented by legitimate interlocutors that can make commitments.
- Further work to ensure the access of humanitarian assistance to all conflict-affected areas.
- Develop further exemptions to the sanctions regime to provide support to the Syrian population.
- Increase EU budget financial assistance by EUR 400 million in 2013 to cover priority needs of affected population in Syria and the region.
- Increase support for hosting communities in the countries neighbouring Syria, in order to support and enhance their capacity to deal with the refugees.
- Continue urging the United Nations to deal with claims of violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and fundamental freedoms.
- Encourage solidarity with particularly vulnerable persons who may be in need of resettlement.
- Prevent the radicalisation of EU citizens and deal with EU 'foreign fighters' that have travelled to the conflict zone.
- Prepare for the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation phase.

1.1 Working on a political settlement of the conflict

The EU's first priority should be to support a political settlement to the conflict leading to a transition to a democratic process, while addressing the dire humanitarian situation. The EU should support all efforts to ensure that such a process is not dominated by actors seeking to pursue sectarian ends.

The EU should continue to **actively support the US/Russia efforts to revive political negotiations** on the basis of the June 2012 Geneva Communiqué.tThe High Representative has already indicated her strong support for these efforts. The EU should also stand ready to provide any support to the UN-League of Arab States Joint Special Representative and to the UN in this regard. In view of a possible "Geneva II" conference, the EU should prepare a substantial contribution and **ensure a robust EU position**.

Within the framework of the preparation for the future conference, the EU should work closely with the US and Russia towards conditions conducive to a Syrian-led political settlement. This would first require seeking a common approach on the representatives of the two sides, which need to be legitimate interlocutors that can make commitments. The EU should encourage both parties, through the available channels, to take part in the negotiations in the peace conference. The EU stands ready to assist the different components of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC) to prepare for the conference.

The EU should continue its engagement with the SOC, whilst remaining open to cooperation with other moderate groups, and assist them so they can constitute themselves as credible interlocutors. In its support for the SOC, the EU should encourage more inclusiveness and ensure that human rights are respected.

Within the framework of the peace conference on Syria, the EU should develop confidence building measures to be implemented progressively with a view to promoting: access to humanitarian aid and unimpeded access for humanitarian workers; respect for international humanitarian law; release of political prisoners; the return of UN observers and the gradual implementation of a ceasefire.

In coordination with the US and Russia, the EU should continue its diplomatic engagement with both UNSC members and other key countries on both sides of the conflict, notably with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Iran.

1.2 Engaging third countries and non-state organisations

Principal interlocutors include the US, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League. The role of Iran as part of the political and military equation will have to be acknowledged and addressed.

Lebanese leaders committed to a policy of dissociation in June 2012 in the Baabda Declaration, which was accepted by all of the main political forces. However, the increased involvement of Hezbollah inside Syria, allegedly to defend Lebanese people and shrines, as well as weapons supplies and fighters supporting the Syrian opposition from Lebanon violate the official policy of dissociation. Some Syrian opposition groups and Hezbollah have sharpened their rhetoric amidst an increasing number of cross-border incidents. The EU has denounced violations of Lebanese territory in the Syrian conflict and will reinforce the message that all in Lebanon must remain committed to the dissociation policy and fully abide by it. Moreover, the EU will explore possibilities of strengthening the capabilities of Lebanese state security structures as a way to improve the stability of Lebanon and the stability of the region as a whole.

The Gulf countries and Turkey are important partners in helping find a lasting solution. The EU will continue to engage actively with these partners, stressing the need for the careful assessment of any involvement in the conflict and its consequences, including with regard to those who are the final recipients of their military and political support. The EU will also stress the urgency of supporting the current efforts towards the revival of the Geneva process and exploiting available channels for the delivery of non-military aid.

With all partners and interlocutors, the EU will continue to emphasise the urgent need for political process and negotiations with the objective of ending the conflict swiftly and limiting any further regional contagion.

1.3 Justice and accountability

Since the beginning of the crisis, the EU has engaged in multilateral fora in order to ensure that the on-going and systematic violations of human rights, international humanitarian law and fundamental freedoms are addressed. The EU took a leading role, working closely with the States of the region, in the United Nations Human Rights Council to convene three Special Sessions on Syria and to establish a UN Independent Commission of Inquiry.

The EU should ensure that its concerns regarding the widespread violations of human rights are addressed as an integral part of the process to bring an end to the conflict. In promoting the most important elements of the Geneva Communiqué, the commitment to accountability and national reconciliation should be emphasised, especially the need for a comprehensive package for transitional justice, including compensation or rehabilitation for victims of the conflict as well as steps towards national reconciliation. The EU should also recall the necessity to take effective steps to ensure that vulnerable groups are protected, in order to prevent further violations.

The EU position should remain that, if concerns about war crimes and crimes against humanity are not adequately addressed on a national level, the International Criminal Court should deal with the situation. As the UNSC can refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court at any time, the EU should continue to call on the UNSC to urgently address the situation in Syria in all aspects, including on this issue.

Bearing in mind the importance of documenting the violations committed on the ground, including the possible use of chemical agents and weapons and the importance of this to ensure the effective accountability of the perpetrators, the EU should continue to support the Commission of Inquiry. It should also reiterate calls to the Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry, including by granting it full, immediate and unfettered access to Syrian territory. In areas controlled by the opposition, the Commission of Inquiry should also be allowed to conduct its work unimpeded.

1.4. Sanctions

The EU has started introducing exemptions from its sanctions regime in order to support the opposition and the Syrian population. In this spirit, exemptions to be granted by Member States' national competent authorities were introduced for economic measures in the oil, gas and banking sectors. The SOC will be consulted during the authorisation process. The exemptions should help the Syrian civilian population, in particular with regard to meeting humanitarian concerns, upholding basic services, reconstruction, restoring normal economic activity or other civilian purposes. Work is on-going to ensure efficient implementation and to identify possible further exemptions for the benefit of the Syrian population. As of 1st June, the possible delivery of arms to Syria will be subject to national polices under strict conditions as defined in the Council Declaration adopted on 27 May. Any other type of assistance should respect the May FAC Council Conclusions and existing EU framework (Common Position on arms exports control).

1.5. Chemical and biological threats

There are mounting concerns over reports of the use of chemical and biological weapons in Syria. The EU will continue calling for UN inspectors to be allowed into the country to investigate all such allegations. In order to prevent, detect and respond to such devastating events with potentially deadly consequences for the population in the region, the EU is currently examining possible options for further coordination and cooperation that could be explored with EU Member States, relevant international bodies (OCHA, ICRC, WHO, INTERPOL and OPCW) and strategic partners.

Recent contacts with the US administration aimed at increasing EU/US coordination in the CBRN area (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials), notably on specific support to Jordan, are positive developments and show the benefit of enhanced cooperation in this area.

The EU will continue to urge Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to ratify the Biological Weapons Convention as a matter of urgency. The EU recalls that any use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances would be reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community. The Syrian authorities bear a particular responsibility to ensure that their chemical weapons are stored securely pending independently verified destruction and are not permitted to fall into the hands of any other State or non-state actor.

1.6. Stepping up assistance

The Commission is **mobilising an additional EUR 400 million in 2013** in humanitarian and other economic and development assistance to address pressing needs and the consequences

of the crisis in Syria and the neighbouring countries, in particular Lebanon and Jordan. For this, it will draw from existing reserves and reallocations of external assistance funds. Countries in the region require humanitarian, crisis-response and development cooperation assistance in order to assist refugees and other persons in need of protection, the host populations, and to support health and education systems that are at breaking point.

The Commission encourages UN agencies, NGOs, international organisations and other donors to prioritise relief operations, to target the most vulnerable, and to reinforce coordination in order to maximise the use of the funding available. The creation of an EU Trust Fund for Syria could be envisaged at a later stage as a vehicle for leveraging and co-ordinating contributions from all EU donors and other interested donors.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the planning and implementation of the EU response keeps abreast of events on the ground. This includes the review of all the external assistance instruments, the use of fast-track crisis procedures for economic and development assistance (non-humanitarian) in the most affected neighbouring countries as well as the possibility of macroeconomic support.

The Commission has already proposed granting EU macro-financial assistance of up to EUR 180 million to Jordan. It will also consider mobilising other EU instruments, in addition to operations that are already planned.

Over the past five years, 344 Syrian students and academic staff benefited from the EU Erasmus Mundus scheme; in addition, 21 Syrian students (including displaced students) were granted scholarships so far in 2013 and around 40 should receive new scholarships in the 2013-14 academic year. The Commission and Member States should ensure that suitable solutions are found for these students at the end of their scholarships, in particular to avoid the scenario that they are forced to return to Syria. The Commission will continue to **offer scholarships to Syrian students** originating from the refugee population, and find ways to increase their number.

The EU confirms the principle of respect and protection of world cultural heritage and expresses its deepest concern at the damage done to cultural goods, archaeological sites, and monuments of irreplaceable historical value in Syria.

The EU will also step up its public diplomacy with the countries in the region and international partners as well as with the general public to communicate adequately on the EU response to the Syrian crisis and to help ensure that other donors deliver on their commitments and funding pledges.

1.7. Taking care of people in need of international protection

From the beginning of the crisis in April 2011 until the end of 2012, some 32,000 persons claiming to be Syrian nationals applied for protection in the EU, with an estimated further 7,500 in 2013 so far. Currently, there seems to be a general consensus that Syrians present in the EU should not be returned to Syria, irrespective of their legal status. Recently, the High Commissioner for Refugees called, in a letter addressed to the Commission and the Member States, for the humanitarian admission of 10,000 Syrian refugees from countries in the Middle East and North Africa and for the resettlement of an additional 2,000 Syrian nationals, mainly particularly vulnerable refugees, including serious medical cases and disabled persons. The Commission calls on Member States **to respond positively to this call by making**

resettlement or humanitarian admission places available to these people. In addition, the Commission calls on Member States to **adopt a generous attitude towards the granting of humanitarian visas to persons displaced by the Syrian crisis** who have family members present in the EU, and also to **admit any Syrians arriving at the external borders of the Union**. Currently, eleven countries which are part of the Schengen area impose airport transit visas on Syrian nationals. In light of the current circumstances, the Commission believes that it is not appropriate to add Syria to the common list of countries subject to the airport transit visa requirement as requested by certain Member States in the framework of the on-going annual revision of the national airport transit visa requirements.

Moreover, guided by UNHCR's assessment of the situation on the ground, the Commission is ready to consider taking further steps that may be needed to relieve the burden posed by the ever-increasing numbers of refugees currently being hosted in the countries neighbouring Syria. Furthermore, the Commission is putting in place a Regional Protection Programme, to be operational by the end of 2013, aimed at strengthening the long-term capacity of the countries neighbouring Syria to help them to deal with refugees in line with international standards. The programme, with a current total budget of over EUR 13.2 million – of which EUR 10 million from the EU budget and the remaining EUR 3.2 million from the Member States that intend to participate – will include both a strong protection component, such as registration, administrative capacity building and advocacy, and actions to the direct benefit of refugees, for example enhancing access to certain socio-economic rights such as education or health-care. Its exact scope will depend on the readiness of the host countries neighbouring Syria to engage in certain actions.

Finally, the Commission intends to continue – together with the European Asylum Support Office – discussions with the Member States on the situation of Syrians in the EU, with a view to **ensuring a greater degree of convergence between Member States' approaches to the treatment of Syrian asylum seekers**, in particular as regards the assessment of their asylum claims.

1.8. Preventing radicalisation and dealing with 'foreign fighters'

The EU must remain vigilant as regards the possible threat that EU citizens travelling to Syria as foreign fighters may cause to EU security. The Commission will continue to support actions aimed at discouraging people from radicalising and leaving the EU to go to Syria as foreign fighters by increasing counter-narrative initiatives and by offering assistance to Member States on the possible threat that returnees may pose. This will be done in connection with the work initiated by the Commission within the framework of the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network, working on actions aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism. The Commission encourages Member States to make better use of the Second Generation Schengen Information System to better monitor the movement of foreign fighters. The Commission will also continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the proposal for an EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) Directive, as the processing of PNR data provides a tool to detect the movement of foreign fighters who leave or return to the EU by air travel. In addition, there could be more use of EU-instruments as well as tools available under international agreements such as the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) – to track payments related to terrorist movements. Finally, the Commission will continue to facilitate a risk analysis exercise aimed at identifying the major security risks for the EU derived from the growing foreign fighters' phenomenon and

supporting the identification of possible mitigation measures. This would be done in association with the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (IntCen), Europol and Frontex.

The Justice and Home Affairs Council held on 7 June 2013, on the basis of a report by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, agreed to take joined-up action to help address this threat. This could include sharing information and best practices; undertaking deeper analysis of foreign fighters' motivation; engaging with third countries more strongly; enhanced use and coordination of existing instruments, networks and agencies.

1.9. Planning for the future and improving coordination

The EU has started planning for the post-conflict era including, but not limited to, engagement in the areas of peace and security, reconstruction and rehabilitation, elections, justice and rule of law and humanitarian affairs.

Needs will either be based on UN estimates or possibly on a Post Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA). Using satellite imagery, the Commission is already undertaking a damage assessment to estimate potential reconstruction costs, and preliminary indications are that there are extensive damages in the most conflict-affected areas, notably in Aleppo. The exercise is taking place in the context of the core donors group for Syria and is being undertaken jointly with the US and Japan. Moreover in 2014 and beyond, the EU stands ready to mobilise more assistance (both humanitarian and non-humanitarian) whether a transition takes place in 2013 or whether the crisis continues.

In order to best coordinate the assistance effort throughout the crisis and to allow the EU to play a more prominent and active role, the Commission and the High Representative propose that the follow up is guided and monitored by a Commission services-EEAS Group which will oversee and coordinate EU activities. Simultaneously, the EU also intends to enhance its donor coordination role on economic and development assistance for Syria but also for Lebanon and Jordan in particular as the two countries most economically impacted by the Syrian crisis, and to act as a bridge between the main donors, the UN and the international financial institutions for transition planning, as all have specific comparative advantages in this regard. The EU will continue to actively participate in the Working Group on Economic Recovery under the Friends of the Syria People group.

2. EU SUPPORT IN SYRIA AND THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

The conflict has left at least 6.8 million people in need of aid and 4.25 million internally displaced. Insecurity and access remains the main impediment to aid delivery. Since the end of 2011 and in direct response to the crisis, the EU budget has financed actions inside and outside Syria amounting to EUR 440 million (humanitarian aid: EUR 265 million and non-humanitarian aid: EUR 175 million). An additional EUR 413 million has also been provided by EU Member States.

2.1. In Syria

Humanitarian assistance

On 7 June 2013, the UN issued revised appeals for inside Syria and neighbouring countries, estimating that 10 million Syrians, half of the country's population, would need help before the end of the year and made a new call for funds of USD4.4 billion (EUR 3.3 billion).

While the increasingly difficult access situation might render the delivery of humanitarian aid more and more difficult, it will also drive more and more Syrians to seek shelter in

neighbouring countries. In short, if access inside Syria becomes impossible, EU and international humanitarian assistance will have to be spent on people who become displaced as a consequence. In addition, the EU is in the process of testing alternative delivery channels inside Syria. It is expected that these will expand as neighbouring countries become increasingly focused on humanitarian aid facilitated inside Syria.

What have we done so far:

- Provided EUR 124 million for humanitarian assistance from the EU budget.
- In Syria EU humanitarian funding supports medical emergency relief, protection, food-nutritional assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and logistics services. Beyond the Syrian border, the funding ensures that people fleeing the country will receive life-saving assistance such as health, food, shelter, hygiene kits, water and sanitation services, and protection.
- EU humanitarian funding is channelled through the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, various International Non-Governmental Organisations and UN humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR and those whose mandate focuses on the protection and assistance of children, such as, for example, UNICEF and Save the Children.
- In-kind assistance has also been provided to Turkey and Jordan through the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which led to the delivery of ambulances, blankets, heaters and other items for a total value EUR 1 million.
- The EU Emergency Response Centre deployed teams of experts to Jordan and Lebanon to assess the assistance needs for Syrian refugees. This was done in close cooperation with humanitarian experts and the local authorities.

What we intend to do:

- Increase humanitarian assistance by EUR 250 million to reach a total of EUR 515 million both inside Syria and its neighbouring countries for the remainder of 2013.
- Provide further in-kind assistance and expertise through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the EU Emergency Response.

Economic and development assistance

The current assistance provided from the EU budget focuses mainly on providing support and capacity building to human rights defenders and young activists and on ensuring access to some non-humanitarian services, such as education, psycho-social or livelihood support. The Commission has identified further actions in these non-humanitarian sectors that could be funded. These include vocational training, health, support for independent and free media, cultural heritage preservation, dialogue promotion, transition preparation and capacity building of Syrian civil society organisations (CSOs). In addition, new funding (EUR 10 million from the Instrument for Stability) has recently been approved for the Northern regions of Syria by the Commission for Pilot Work, together with Member State agencies.

In the future, the level of economic and development assistance that could be provided inside Syria will directly depend on the political and military evolution of the conflict. While it is imperative to consolidate and expand delivery channels in order to provide more assistance to

the civilian population as quickly as possible, donor efforts may be significantly hampered or even halted by hostilities between the conflicting parties. Under the present circumstances, implementing modalities remain the major challenge as it is crucial to carefully monitor who receives assistance, as such assistance could be misused to fuel the conflict.

Different options for channelling more non-humanitarian economic and development assistance that could address the needs of the population are being assessed. Following the European Council conclusions of 13/14 December 2012[1], other channels of support for the Syrian population are being explored through the recently created Local Administration Councils in opposition-held areas in northern Syria.

What have we done so far:

- Provided EUR 53 million for economic and development assistance from the EU budget, including the examples below.
- Launched two projects implemented by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency that are underway inside Syria (EUR 10 million) principally targeting Palestine refugees but also supporting the Syrian population. The first (EUR 7.3 million), aims to provide skills to young people and to ensure their participation in their local communities by offering them the chance to start local development initiatives that help mitigate the impact of the crisis. The second (EUR 2.7 million) provides social assistance to the most vulnerable households which have been affected by increases in prices of food and other basic services as a consequence of the crisis.
- Worked with UNICEF (EUR 5.7 million) to assist vulnerable and displaced children to access education in Syria.
- Implemented other projects through Non-Governmental Organisations aimed at building the capacities of Syrian civil society actors to implement small scale projects inside Syria. Support for human rights (support for human rights defenders, monitoring human rights violations), and for the media sector is also being provided by the Commission.

What we intend to do:

- Scale up the support already provided to address the growing needs inside Syria, in addition to the humanitarian assistance delivered, and through all potential channels.
- Provide additional support to NGOs for the provision of basic services including health, education, and support for independent media.
- Provide additional support to UN for basic services including health, education and cultural heritage protection.
- Provide support to opposition entities to coordinate assistance to the civilian population more effectively. Assist local councils to restore and maintain essential basic services such as, for example, health, electricity, garbage collection or agricultural inputs.

[1] Calling "to work on all options to support and help the opposition and to enable greater support for the protection of civilians".

2.2. Lebanon

In no other country are the risks of Syria's conflict leaking across its border higher than in Lebanon. Lebanon's border has remained fully open for all refugees, who now number over 513,000. The country is facing a dramatic refugee crisis, now at over 10% of the Lebanese population and set to increase to 25% by the end of the year. 70% of the refugees are women and children. The authorities alone are unable to cope with a crisis that is having wide-ranging humanitarian as well as political, security and socio-economic consequences.

What have we done so far:

- Provided a total of EUR 113 million for assistance (both humanitarian and non-humanitarian) from the EU budget.
- Humanitarian assistance focuses on the registration of refugees, health activities (including emergency health care for people with injuries), food assistance, the distribution of non-food items (tents, mattresses, blankets, heaters, etc.), the provision of shelter, water and sanitation activities, legal assistance and logistics.
- Launched various projects supporting UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWRA, CSOs and the Government of Lebanon - EUR 45 million to address the medium and longer term needs – including educational support and reconstruction and rehabilitation – of Syrian refugees.

What we intend to do:

- Further increase humanitarian assistance out of the additional EUR 250 million. A tranche of EUR 20 million will be implemented by the end of July.
- Launch a EUR 40 million initiative with a view to continuing support for activities in the fields of education, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and to support the government's coordination efforts.
- Deploy a EU Military Expert at the EU Delegation to advise on security issues and give support to the Lebanese Armed Forces.
- Reorient on-going programmes (for a total of up to EUR 75 million) in the fields of education, reconstruction and rehabilitation as well as livelihood creation, in order to take into account the consequences of the Syrian crisis.

The situation poses an increased risk to an already vulnerable political and macroeconomic situation. In January 2013, the government of Lebanon and the UNHCR estimated the total annual cost of hosting refugees at more than USD700 million. While the impact of the Syrian crisis on overall economic activity has been mixed, it is clear that the Lebanese budget will suffer. The current proposal for a 2013 draft budget foresees a deficit of USD3.5 billion.

Furthermore, the on-going political uncertainty coupled with growing polarisation has put Lebanon's official policy of dissociation at risk. Sectarian violence in Northern Lebanon, heavy cross-border clashes and repeated violations of Lebanon's territorial integrity move the country in a dangerous direction.

Since the beginning of the crisis, EU support for Lebanon totals EUR 113 million. However, the increasing deterioration of the situation calls for an additional exceptional EU response encompassing short-term and long-term measures to stabilise Lebanon. It is imperative to shield the country from the efforts of some of the local and regional actors to wage the Syrian

struggle on Lebanese soil. Conflict mitigation must be at the core of the EU response. The efforts to form a government and get down to real business including the management of the refugee flow must be supported in order to avoid a dangerous political vacuum. The postponement of the elections and the extension of the Parliament's mandate by 17 months risk exposing Lebanon's democratic deficit and widening sectarian polarisation.

Strengthening the capacity of the Lebanese authorities to deal with the crisis, including by supporting social infrastructure, and strengthening inter-ministerial as well as donor coordination must also be pursued in the context of the comprehensive assistance package we are implementing. At the same time, humanitarian assistance will need to be stepped up to address the growing needs of the refugee population. EU assistance is being readjusted to focus on education and health as well as on the vulnerable groups, including Palestinian refugees from Syria. The possibility of building refugee camps recently aired by the Lebanese authorities must also be taken into account, including the inevitable security risks it poses. It is important to explore all the options when addressing Lebanon's problems, including the involvement of the international financial institutions.

A comprehensive EU response must also include support for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). LAF is a key pillar of the security apparatus of Lebanon but it operates in the absence of government/military defence strategy. LAF is well-respected and as it is cross confessional in structure, it is perceived as being impartial and neutral. Further dialogue and cooperation is needed to strengthen the capabilities of LAF as an impartial provider of security in Lebanon.

2.3. Jordan

Despite an increasingly difficult macro-economic situation, Jordan has played a vital role in providing support to the ever-growing number of refugees fleeing the atrocities (over 472,000 registered or in the process of being registered with the UNHCR by early June).

What have we done so far:

- Provided EUR 87 million for assistance (both humanitarian and non-humanitarian) from the EU budget.
- Humanitarian assistance focuses on health activities (including emergency health care for war wounded people), food assistance, the distribution of non-food items (tents, mattresses, blankets, heaters, etc.), the provision of shelter, water and sanitation activities, psychosocial and protection.
- Launched various projects supporting UNICEF and UNESCO - EUR 20.9 million to provide access to formal and informal education and other services for vulnerable Syrians, particularly children, as well as host communities.

What we intend to do:

- Further increase humanitarian assistance out of the additional EUR 250 million. A tranche of EUR 20 million will be implemented by the end of July.
- Increase support for host communities in the north of Jordan and provide leadership in the coordination of international assistance for these communities.
- Provide EUR 25 million for economic and development assistance - EUR 20.4 million in budget support to the Jordanian authorities to assist with the cost of providing education to Syrian refugee children in Jordanian towns and cities particularly affected by the refugee crisis and a further EUR 4.6 million to UNICEF. Mobilise a further tranche of EUR 25 million in a second stage.

The government has, thus far, based its cost estimates for 2013 on a total number of 660,000 refugees. Estimates are that the total cost of supporting this number of refugees for the government budget and international organisations would be USD1.4 billion.

Jordan has faced worsening economic conditions since 2011 due to the regional turmoil and the weaker regional and global economic environment. Since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, the cost of hosting Syrian refugees is estimated to have exceeded EUR 600 million (about 3% of GDP). Under the pressure of a sharp drop of international reserves in the first half of 2012, the Jordanian authorities have agreed on a USD2 billion, 36-month Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF.

Since the beginning of the crisis, EU support to Jordan totals EUR 87 million. There is a clear need for further support. Beyond the indispensable additional humanitarian aid from the EU budget estimated in the range of EUR 50-75 million, the EU response to Jordan's plea for aid should be notably provided through sectoral budget support by topping up existing programmes, especially in the field of education.

In addition, the Council and Parliament are strongly encouraged to take a decision on the Commission's proposal to grant EUR 180 million Macro-Financial Assistance to Jordan, which will also contribute to alleviating Jordan's economic problems.

2.4. Turkey

Since the beginning of the crisis, Turkey had welcomed into its 17 reception centres more than 380,000 Syrian refugees, in addition to the many others (370,000 according to some estimates) who have entered Turkish territory without being immediately registered in the camps and who are currently residing in various cities in the country. The UNHCR has suggested that up to 1 million refugees could be present in Turkey by the end of 2013. Turkey has announced the construction of 5 new camps with a total additional capacity of 60,000, one of which will host Syriacs (Christians). The Turkish authorities have offered commendably high-quality reception centres and are providing adequate humanitarian assistance.

Turkey has needed to carry a significant financial burden of approximately EUR 600 million to date, with little support from the international community. The EU has pledged an overall package of EUR 27 million, notably to support UNHCR and local organisations and communities to deal with the refugees. The authorities have had to deal with increasing pressures on and tensions within the local community (concerning *inter alia* access to health and education services). These tensions may increase following the entry into force of the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which should eventually open up the way for refugees to seek work on the open market. In addition, and notably following the bombing attack in Reyhanli in the southern Province of Hatay where over 50 people were killed, the Turkish population in general is concerned about Turkey's exposure to the Syria crisis. Further Turkish registration of and access for international NGOs could allow greater resources to reach Turkey.

2.5. Iraq

By early June, Iraq had welcomed approximately 158,000 refugees, the majority of them in the north of the country (Kurdistan Region). The emergency response to refugees' humanitarian needs is currently manageable with support being provided by the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement in collaboration with UNHCR and other UN agencies. The Iraqi border in the Anbar Governorate has been closed most of the time and a limited number of persons are allowed to cross daily. The main border point between Syria and the Kurdish Region of Iraq is closed since May 2013.

Iraq has been facing a serious political crisis. Sectarian tensions are on the increase, which is a cause for concern in a country where political life is based on a fragile ethno/sectarian balance. Iraq's post-2003 political process is at risk of being derailed.

The internal situation is aggravated by serious political and security spill-over effects from the Syrian crisis. There are confirmed links between Al Qaeda in Iraq – responsible for most of the terrorist attacks - and radical elements in Syria, notably Jabhat al-Nusra.

Conversely, an escalating crisis in Iraq, a country that has re-appeared as the fault line between the Shia and Sunni worlds, would have very significant regional ramifications. The EU should therefore enhance its contacts with the Iraqi authorities and representatives from all political parties in order to provide support for any local initiative conducive to more stability.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The situation in Syria is the most dramatic humanitarian situation facing the world today. The EU has a humanitarian and moral duty to assist people in need. This is why the Commission and the High Representative have made a commitment to mobilise a significant aid package. The Commission will allocate an additional EUR 400 million from this year's budget to humanitarian and economic and development needs in Syria and the neighbouring region, particularly Jordan and Lebanon, bringing the overall contribution of the EU to over EUR 1.25 billion thus far.

However, the severity of the crisis and human suffering in Syria and the neighbouring countries cannot be solved with extra money. This is why it is crucial to rapidly find a lasting political solution, which guarantees a halt to the violence and leads to an inclusive transitional government. This can only be reached through dialogue. Helping to reach this political solution lies at the heart of the EU's action and underpins the comprehensive approach presented in this joint Communication.

The EU's political and financial support is both immediate and for the long haul. This Communication underlines the EU's determination to support those who aspire to peace and democracy in the region and to alleviate the suffering and misery of those caused by the conflict. The EU is well-placed to make a decisive contribution by bringing together the instruments and policies at its disposal. At the same time, given the increasing regional instability and the growing humanitarian needs, this Communication is also a call to other donors to redouble their efforts to respond to the crisis.

Annex 1

EU total funding in response to the Syria crisis (as of 11/06/13)

Type of assistance	Assistance already provided						Total	Additional assistance	GRAND TOTAL
	Syria	Jordan	Lebanon	Turkey	Iraq	Regional			
EU Humanitarian assistance	124	63	66	6	6	0	265	400	840
EU Non humanitarian assistance (economic, development and stabilisation assistance)	53	24	48	22	7	21	175		
GRAND TOTAL EU Budget	**178**	**87**	**113**	**27**	**14**	**21**	**440**	**400**	**840**
Percentage	**40%**	**20%**	**26%**	**6%**	**3%**	**5%**			
EU Member States' contribution (humanitarian assistance)							413		413
GRAND TOTAL EU (EU budget + Member States)							**853**	**400**	**1,253**

Annex 2

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR PROPOSALS

1. FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

1.1 Title of the proposal/initiative

Joint Communication from the Commission and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy: "Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian crisis"

1.2. Policy area(s) concerned in the ABM/ABB structure[2]

External Relations

1.3. Nature of the proposal/initiative

☐ The proposal/initiative relates to **a new action**

☐ The proposal/initiative relates to **a new action following a pilot project/preparatory action**[3]

X The proposal/initiative relates to **the extension of an existing action**

☐ The proposal/initiative relates to **an action redirected towards a new action**

1.4. Objectives

1.4.1. The Commission's multiannual strategic objective(s) targeted by the proposal/initiative

Europe in the World: pulling our weight on the global stage

1.4.2. Specific objective(s) and ABM/ABB activity(ies) concerned

ABM/ABB activity (ies) concerned:

19.08 European Neighbourhood Policy and relations with Russia

23.02 Humanitarian aid

Specific objectives relating to the ABM activity – 19.08

1. Furthering the conditions for close co-operation between the EU and its neighbours and for regional and multilateral integration;

2. Supporting EU neighbours economic and sector reforms and promote further integration with the EU and among neighbouring countries themselves;

3. Promoting democracy, human rights and rule of law and contribute to conflict resolution in the EU's neighbourhood.

Specific objectives relating to the ABM activity – 23.02

1. Ensure rapid, effective and needs-based delivery of EU relief assistance and humanitarian aid to people faced with the immediate consequences of natural and man-made disasters and provide assistance to victims of protracted crises.

[2] ABM: Activity-Based Management – ABB: Activity-Based Budgeting.

[3] As referred to in Article 49(6)(a) or (b) of the Financial Regulation.

1.5. Duration and financial impact

x Proposal/initiative of **limited duration**

– x Proposal/initiative in effect in 2013

– x Financial impact in 2013

☐ Proposal/initiative of **unlimited duration**

– Implementation with a start-up period from YYYY to YYYY,

– followed by full-scale operation.

1.6. Management mode(s) planned for the 2013 budget[4]

x **Centralised direct management** by the Commission

x **Centralised indirect management** with the delegation of implementation tasks to:

– x executive agencies

– ☐ bodies set up by the Communities[5]

– x national public-sector bodies/bodies with public-service mission

– x persons entrusted with the implementation of specific actions pursuant to Title V of the Treaty on European Union and identified in the relevant basic act within the meaning of Article 49 of the Financial Regulation

☐ **Shared management** with the Member States

x **Decentralised management** with third countries

x **Joint management** with international organisations

2. MANAGEMENT MEASURES

2.1. Monitoring and reporting rules

Specify frequency and conditions.

The monitoring and reporting rules as laid down in the relevant legal bases will be applied.

2.2. Management and control system

2.2.1. Risk(s) identified

1) The lack of political and administrative stability in partner countries may lead to difficulties in designing programmes, delays in disbursing funds and loss of effectiveness; 2) The lack of circulation of information may hamper the resolution of problematic issues related to aid management.

[4] Details of management modes and references to the Financial Regulation may be found on the BudgWeb site: http://www.cc.cec/budg/man/budgmanag/budgmanag_en.html

[5] As referred to in Article 185 of the Financial Regulation.

2.2.2. Control method(s) envisaged

The control methods envisaged comply with the internal control standards of the Commission as set out in the Management Plans of the relevant services.

In the area of humanitarian aid, there is an effective control system based on the use of external experts undertaking ex-ante assesments of projects and monitoring, as well as evaluations. The humanitarian projects are subject to external audit.

2.3. Measures to prevent fraud and irregularities

Specify existing or envisaged prevention and protection measures.

The protection of the European Union's financial interests and the fight against fraud and irregularities form an integral part of the relevant legal bases. Administrative monitoring of contracts and payments will be the responsibility of the relevant Authorising Officer, whereas for humanitarian aid the responsibilty lies with the Headquarters assited by the ECHO experts in the field. Particular attention will be paid to the nature of expenditure (eligibility of expenditure), to respect for budgets (actual expenditure) and to verify supporting information and relevant documentation (evidence of expenditure).

3. ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

3.1. Heading(s) of the multiannual financial framework and expenditure budget line(s) affected

- Existing expenditure budget lines

In order of multiannual financial framework headings and budget lines.

Heading of multiannual financial framework	Budget line	Type of expenditure	Contribution			
	Number [Description……...…….]	DA/NDA (6)	from EFTA[7] countries	from candidate countries[8]	from third countries	within the meaning of Article 21(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation
23.02.01	HUMA- Humanitarian aid	DA	NO	NO	NO	NO
19.08.01	ENPI - Financial cooperation with Mediterranean countries	DA	NO	NO	NO	NO
19.04.01	EIDHR - European Instrument for Democracy and human rights	DA	NO	NO	NO	NO

6 DA= Differentiated appropriations / DNA= Non-Differentiated Appropriations

7 EFTA: European Free Trade Association.

8 Candidate countries and, where applicable, potential candidate countries from the Western Balkans.

3.2. Estimated impact on expenditure EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Summary

		Estimated Impact on Expenditure		
Heading of multiannual financial framework		**Heading 4 - External Relations**		
			2013	**2014**
Operational Appropriations				
23.02.01 - Humanitarian aid	Commitments	(1)	250,000	-
	Payments	(2)	140,000	110,000
19.08.01 - ENPI Financial cooperation with Mediterranean countries	Commitments	(3)	145,000	-
	Payments	(4)	75,400	69,600
19.04.01 - EIDHR - European Instrument for Democracy and human rights	Commitments	(5)	5,000	-
	Payments	(6)	2,600	2,400
Total Operational Appropriations	Commitments	(1+3+5)	400,000	-
	Payments	(2+4+6)	218,000	182,000
Appropriations of an administrative nature financed from the envelope of specific programmes			-	-
Total Appropriations	Commitments	(1+3+5)	400,000	-
	Payments	(2+4+6)	218,000	182,000

3.2.1. Estimated impact on appropriations of an administrative nature

3.2.1.1. Summary

– X The proposal/initiative does not require the use of additional administrative appropriations

– ☐ The proposal/initiative requires the use of administrative appropriations, as explained below:

3.2.1.2. Estimated requirements of human resources

– X The proposal/initiative does not require the use of additional human resources

– ☐ The proposal/initiative requires the use of human resources, as explained below:

3.2.3. Compatibility with the current multiannual financial framework

– X Proposal/initiative is compatible the current multiannual financial framework.

– X Proposal/initiative will entail reprogramming of the relevant heading in the multiannual financial framework.

The additional funding for the activities identified in this statement will be totally financed through redeployment and reprogramming of the envelopes of the external relations instruments which are part of Heading 4 of the Multi-annual financial framework, notably for the benefit of HUMA and ENPI in 2013.

The additional EUR 400 million will come from different external relations instruments of Heading 4 as described in the table below.

Redeployment and reprogramming of funds for the Syrian crisis from the 2013 budget

Instrument	Budget Chapter	Commitments for potential transfer to HUMA 23 02 (EUR million)	*Payments for potential transfer to HUMA 23 02 (EUR million) 2013*		Non-Humanitarian Commitments (EUR million)	Non-Humanitarian Payments (EUR million) 2013
ENPI	**19 08**	**30**	***30***		**145**	**75,4**
EIDHR	**19 04**				**5**	**2,6**
DCI	**19 10, 19 09**	**40**	***40***			
INSC	**19 06**	**25**	***15***			
IFS	**19 06**	**15**				
CFSP	**19 03**	**40**				
MFA	**01 03**	**25**	***15***			
HUMA	**23 02**	**2,3**				
Civil Protection	**23 03 06**	**2,7**	**3**			
EAR	**40 02**	**70**	***37***			
TOTAL		**250**	***140***		**150**	***78***

– ☐ Proposal/initiative requires application of the flexibility instrument[9].

3.2.4. Third-party contributions

– X The proposal/initiative does not provide for co-financing by third parties

– ☐ The proposal/initiative provides for the co-financing estimated below:

3.3. Estimated impact on revenue

– X Proposal/initiative has no financial impact on revenue.

[9] See points 19 and 24 of the Interinstitutional Agreement.

– ☐ Proposal/initiative has the following financial impact:

– ☐ on own resources

– ☐ on miscellaneous revenue

EUR million (to 3 decimal places)

Budget revenue line:	Appropriations available for the ongoing budget exercise	Impact of the proposal/initiative[10]						
		Year **N**	Year **N+1**	Year **N+2**	Year **N+3**	… insert as many columns as necessary in order to reflect the duration of the impact (see point 1.6)		
Article …….								

For miscellaneous assigned revenue, specify the budget expenditure line(s) affected.

[…]

Specify the method for calculating the impact on revenue.

[…]

[10] As regards traditional own resources (customs duties, sugar levies), the amounts indicated must be net amounts, i.e. gross amounts after deduction of 25% for collection costs.