"Assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey”
Conference document

The present document was prepared for the Brussels II Conference.
It was drafted by the European Union in close co-ordination with the Turkish Government and the United Nations.

Overview

Turkey is home to the largest refugee population in the world. Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government and people of Turkey have demonstrated unparalleled generosity in supporting refugees and integrating them into national services, including health, education, employment and other municipal and social services. Significant progress has been made since the respective donor conferences in Kuwait (2013, 2014 and 2015), London (2016) and Brussels (2017). The Government of Turkey has also led in global best practices and agreed principles including the New Way of Working and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), while not being an official CRRF country.

As of March 2018, there are just over 3.5 million registered Syrians refugees, almost half of whom are children. Around 6% of Syrians under temporary protection live in 21 official Temporary Protection Centres (TPCs) in provinces along the Syrian border, while the remaining 94% reside among host communities in urban, peri-urban or rural areas. The majority of refugees remain in the South East of Turkey. Over 555,000 refugees are living in Istanbul, making it the largest refugee-hosting city in Turkey. Substantial populations are also found in Şanlıurfa, Hatay and in other cities, as well as in rural areas. Kilis finds itself in an extraordinary situation in this regard, with a population of nearly 130,000 inhabitants hosting 130,000 Syrians.

With the crisis in Syria continuing and the refugee situation remaining protracted, there is a need for ongoing efforts to support the Government of Turkey and the Turkish public in sharing the responsibility and burden of hosting and integrating refugees into their systems and services.¹

Support to Turkish authorities by international institutions and organisations

The Directorate-General of Migration Management of Turkey (DGMM), under the Ministry of Interior, has assumed responsibility for TPCs as of 16 March 2018 from AFAD. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with AFAD provides co-ordination and facilitation between United Nations (UN) partners, International Financial Institutions (IFI), International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and

¹ A key principle of the international refugee protection regime, as reflected in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016.
governmental institutions. Line ministries, namely the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Family and Social Policy have been central counterparts during the implementation of the first tranche of €3 billion under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The Prime Minister’s Office has recently established a new co-ordination team to take over on this matter. UN agencies and partners cooperate with national authorities at municipal, district, provincial and central levels. The Ministry of Development has contributed to the development of resilience priorities and ensured the linkage with Turkey’s national development agenda. In addition to the important role of line ministries, local authorities such as municipalities, which are also very active in the field in delivering social services and providing social assistance to refugees, face challenges in terms of planning and budgeting.

In Turkey, UN agencies support the Government’s response to the Syria crisis through a Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan co-led by UNHCR and UNDP. INGOs work in partnership with Turkish Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and associations to support the delivery of services through national systems, help link refugees and asylum seekers with governmental services. These organisations support the delivery of international assistance

**Key results in the provision of assistance to Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey**

**Protection:** The Government of Turkey provides protection and assistance to Syrians since 2011 under temporary protection – effective since October 2014 – and to non-Syrians under international protection. In addition to the ongoing registration and verification of Syrians, the following protection services have been provided:

- 595,280 individuals reached through information campaigns, participatory assessments, activities to raise public awareness on rights, entitlements, services and assistance;
- 205,899 children with protection needs were identified and referred to services;
- 115,225 children participated in structured, sustained child protection or psychosocial support programmes;
- 145,433 youth and adolescents have attended empowerment programmes enhancing their participation, communication, peer-to-peer interaction and self-confidence;
- 18,793 Individuals, including children, have reached through community-based initiatives for prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence;
- as of the first days of April 2018, the total number of foreign nationals residing in women’s shelters was 370, 148 of whom are Syrian.

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2 Figures mentioned in this document come from three different sources: Turkish national authorities, UN 3RP Report of 20 March 2018 and EU.

3 The Law on Foreigners and International Protection and the Temporary Protection Regulation provide the legal basis of refugee status giving temporary protection to Syrians and international protection to applicants and refugees of other nationalities in Turkey. This provides the basis of assistance to refugees, including access to health and education services, as well as access to legal employment.
The Ministry of Family and Social Policy continues to provide psychosocial support services for Syrians under temporary protection in TPCs and for Syrians living in cities through its Provincial Directorates and Social Service Centres.

Provision of resettlement opportunities and other safe legal pathways to asylum remain an important element of the collective international response on protection.

**Basic needs:** The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), the EU's largest ever humanitarian programme run in partnership with the Government of Turkey, the World Food Programme and the Turkish Red Crescent, was launched at the end of 2016. It is a multi-purpose cash assistance programme which has reached over one million of the most vulnerable refugees. It is built upon existing national social assistance systems and helps to meet essential needs such as food, rent and utilities.

In addition to the ESSN, additional basic needs support has been provided by the UN and non-governmental partners with co-ordination and facilitation of the relevant Turkish authorities.

In particular:

- 593,616 individuals have received hygiene kits, dignity kits or sanitary items;
- 87,198 individuals have benefitted from assistance in accessing adequate shelter solutions;
- more than 470,000 Syrians and host community members have benefitted from improved municipal services, focusing among others on waste and waste water management.

In TACs, Syrians under temporary protection have access to services and assistance provided by the Government of Turkey.

**Education:** As of March 2018, more than 600,000 Syrian children of school age are now enrolled in primary and secondary education. Enrolment rates are highest for children in primary schools but decrease for those in high schools due to the fact that compulsory education is nine years in Syria. Besides, the necessity to support the family income leads to that decrease in enrolment rates. About 40% of Syrian school-aged children under temporary protection remain out of school.

The Government of Turkey has been mobilising all its efforts to ensure that all refugee children can access a form of learning and be fully integrated into the formal education system. The EU has supported this effort substantially, including through a €300 million direct grant to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE.). Initiatives to support education integration include:

- MoNE has developed an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) targeting 10 to 18-year-old out-of-school adolescents.
- The extension of the national Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) Programme to refugee children was launched in 2017 and has reached over 300,000 Syrian children under temporary protection. It encourages enrolment and improves school attendance, as well as the identification and referral of children at risk to child protection services when needed. The ESSN and CCTE are complementary programmes, which use a single payment platform.
- 45,580 Syrian children enrolled in early childhood and pre-primary education, 612,603 Syrian children enrolled in formal education (Grades 1-12) and 20,806 Syrian children enrolled in informal non-accredited education.
- The €300 million direct grant to MoNE provided by the EU (PICTES) was launched in 2016 to support primary and secondary education. 390,000 Syrian students will be provided Turkish language training by 5,600 Turkish-language teachers; 10,000 Syrian students will be provided
Arabic language training by 100 Arabic-language teachers; and 10,085 Syrian students received catch-up training provided by 576 teachers. In addition, 43,413 Syrian students are receiving back-up training. Within the scope of the training, 1,415 students are being transported to the schools where they receive training.

- The Government of Turkey has supported higher education access through waiving tuition fees in State universities for Syrian students. 19,332 students enrolled in tertiary education.
- 1,657,775 Turkish language learning textbooks and materials were distributed.
- As of March 2018, 128,843 teachers and education personnel were trained and 12,965 Syrian volunteer trainers and education personnel were provided with financial compensation.
- MoNE has noted that over 26,000 additional classrooms were needed to effectively accommodate all learners requiring access to school. The EU is already supporting the construction of 215 concrete and prefabricated schools, meeting 21% of the total needs.
- In scope of providing school transfer for Syrian students, 62,171 students were transferred to the schools or temporary education centres.
- About 500,000 Syrian students received stationery and clothing aid.

While expanding access to school will remain a shared priority for Turkey and the international community, this will be matched with a stronger focus on the quality of education and particularly the learning outcomes of all students, including Syrians.

**Health:** Syrians under temporary protection are eligible to receive the same health care as Turkish nationals in their province of registration, with insurance premiums paid by DGMM, under the control of the Ministry of Health (MoH). The MoH also provides Syrians residing in TACs with free on-site health services. Non-registered Syrians are provided emergency care and essential public health services free-of-charge. The MoH, supported by the EU notably through a €300 million direct grant (SIHHAT), has established Migrant Health Centres (MHCs), where Syrian doctors and nurses provide services to Syrians under temporary protection under the supervision of Turkish doctors. Initiatives supporting health care services include:

- In 2017, 764,000 health care consultations have been provided in active MHCs.
- 413,000 Syrian refugee children under 5 have received routine vaccinations.
- More than 2,200 Syrian doctors and nurses have been trained and certified, with more than 780 of them now working in MHCs all over the country.
- To provide health services across Turkey, more than 1,600 Syrian doctors and nurses will be employed and 178 MHCs will be supported by the EU.
- 10 community mental health centres were established to address the gaps in mental health support.
- In active MHCs in 2017, 124,482 Syrians were provided with sexual health and reproductive health services.
- Two hospitals – in Kilis and Hatay – will also be built with EU funding.

The integration of Syrian healthcare providers into the Turkish healthcare system requires a long-term strategic plan that focuses on the vision, target population and services for both the Syrian and Turkish
populations. Special psychological support and physical rehabilitation continue to be an important subject in responding to the needs of those injured during the conflict in Syria.

**Livelihood opportunities for Syrian refugees:** In January 2016, the Regulation on work permits of refugees under temporary protection (hereafter Work Permit Regulation) was adopted, granting all beneficiaries of temporary protection the right to apply for a work permit and access formal employment and thereby enabling Syrian refugees to become more self-reliant and resilient. Since its introduction and as of 31 March 2018, 19,925 work permits have been granted to Syrians under temporary protection and 20,993 to Syrians with residence permits. In this period, 13,776 work permits were granted to Syrians who set up their own business.

According to the regulation, Syrians under temporary protection have the right to benefit from vocational training, participation in active labour market programs and consultancy services supplied by the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market.

Additionally, Syrians under temporary protection are exempted from work permits for seasonal agriculture or animal husbandry works. They can individually apply for the work permit exemption to provincial Turkish Employment Agencies.

Many Syrians remain, however, engaged in the informal sector due to practical reasons, including language barriers. Initiatives supporting livelihoods include the following:

- Work permit fee for employers, who apply for Syrians under temporary protection, has been decreased from TL 615.20 to TL 228.90.
- 28,352 refugees and affected host community members participated in skills training.
- 18,303 refugees and host community members completed technical and vocational trainings.
- 9,431 affected community members have benefited from entrepreneurship and business start-up support.
- 1,487 refugees and affected host community members were placed in jobs.

There is a continued need to support job creation and entrepreneurship, job placement and matching and institutional support to the relevant partners of the Government of Turkey, as well as private sector organisations such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other networks. While efforts on all sides should be intensified to boost the access of refugees to the formal labour market, the majority of them will continue to require assistance to cover their basic needs for the foreseeable future.

**Future perspectives and areas of further cooperation**

Based on Turkey’s legal framework, international support needs to continue with a view to support the progressive inclusion of refugees within national services including education, health care, social services and support to access formal employment. Assistance has been committed, with joint frameworks established under programmes such as the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey and those programmes included in the UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2017-2018, in the areas of education, migration management, health, municipal infrastructure, socio-economic support, livelihoods, social cohesion, employment and other social services for refugees living in Turkey.

To make best use of the assistance provided, the following points are encouraged:
• to reiterate the commitment of the international community to work in **full transparency and co-ordination with national authorities**, including to support the national strategy of integrating refugees into national services;

• to support **humanitarian access to refugee communities** and facilitate permission for activities, in accordance with the relevant regulatory framework;

• to enable **information exchange** between the Government of Turkey and its partners, in line with national and international privacy and data protection rules and principles;

• to **expand access of services to refugees, and strengthen referral mechanisms**;

• to **complete the DGMM-led refugee verification exercise**, to provide more detailed data on the profile and distribution of refugees to allow a better planning and adapted programming to refugee needs;

• to maintain and build up the capacity of **the registration process of refugees within Turkey**, including facilitating refugees to update residency and civil status information;

• to support the **comprehensive national education sector plan**, including formal, non-formal and informal education, vocational training, higher education and Turkish and Arabic language courses, with a focus on quality learning outcomes for all students;

• to continue to expand opportunities for resettlement and other safe and legal pathways to international protection for the most vulnerable;

• to strengthen collaboration with the private sector for increased labour market access, while working with public employment services and other actors on active labour market actions to seek for the appropriate linkages;

• to support the Government of Turkey and the Turkish public in sharing the responsibility and burden of hosting and integrating refugees into their systems and services;

• to maintain the commitment to the **principle of non-refoulement**;

• to maintain the commitment to the **right of voluntary return** in safety and dignity to one’s place of origin.