

# Joint Statement - World Refugee Day 2017

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**World Refugee Day** is an occasion for us to reaffirm our continuous support for the millions of people in different parts of the world who are forced to flee and seek refuge from conflicts, violence, human rights violations, persecution and natural disasters. Each year on 20 June, the world focuses on the plight of all people forced to uproot themselves and their families from their homes.

We now face the largest displacement crisis since World War Two- **65 million** people around the world have been forced from home, as refugees, asylum seekers, migrants or internally displaced persons. Displacement is no longer a temporary phenomenon: today, protracted displacement lasts on average 20 years for refugees and more than 10 years for 90% of internally displaced persons.

In response, the European Commission continues its work on implementing its strategic vision laid out in the Communication "**Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance**", advocating for development-led solutions to displacement. In all continents, our actions support host countries in their capacity to provide for refugee and host communities. Under the EUR 2.8 billion EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, we have launched numerous actions to build the resilience of host and displaced communities. This ranges from access to education in Somalia, water in Uganda, housing in Niger and psycho-social assistance in Nigeria, to generating livelihood opportunities around Lake Chad and in the Horn of Africa. The New European Consensus on Development "**Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future**", adopted two weeks ago, reaffirms the commitments of the EU and its Member States to promote the dignity and resilience of long-term forcibly displaced persons and their inclusion in the economic and social life of host countries and host communities.

51% of the global refugee population today are children. The recently revised **EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of the rights of the child** renew the EU's commitment to promote and protect the rights of the child in its relations with third countries, including countries of origin or transit. The **Council Conclusions of 3 April 2017 on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child** highlights the need to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all refugee and migrant children and give primary consideration at all times to the best interests of the child, striving to provide refugee and migrant children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities.

The need to act has never been more acute. This is why in 2016, the European Commission gave more than €1972 million, or some 87% of its humanitarian aid budget, to projects helping the forcibly displaced and their host communities. This aid is making a difference in the lives of many: Syrian, Afghan, Somali, South Sudanese, Palestinian refugees; and internally displaced people in Syria, Iraq, Colombia, South Sudan, DRC and Yemen, to name a few.

The European Union and its Member States have collectively become the largest providers of humanitarian aid to the ***Syrian crisis***. As the conflict enters its seventh year, more than € 9.4 billion has been mobilised for humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance to support all those forced to leave their homes. A further € 3.7 billion has been pledged for 2017. In Greece, the EU is providing refugee populations with a sense of normalcy through cash-based assistance and rented accommodation. In Turkey, we provide innovative cash grants to refugees through a debit card and hope to be able to send 230 000 refugee children to school this year to help them build a better future. Similar type of assistance is being provided also to Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq.

Within the Partnership Framework under the European Agenda on Migration, launched one year ago, as the EU's comprehensive approach on migration, we have stepped up our actions along the ***Central Mediterranean route***. In April 2017, a EUR 90 million package has been adopted under the EU Trust Fund for Africa, to reinforce the protection and resilience of migrants and refugees (including in centres), and the host communities in Libya.

Providing support and protection to the forcibly displaced, and finding durable solutions for them has never been a greater challenge. The ***global action by the international community as a whole*** is needed in response, based on the principles of global responsibility-sharing and the search for collective solutions that commit also to upholding the safety, dignity and human rights. The EU continues to be fully engaged in the development of the future UN Global Compacts for Refugees and Migrants within the framework of the ***New York Declaration of September 2016 for Refugees and Migrants***.

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