



EUROPEAN UNION

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AOB - EU Point of information on efforts to deal with the flows of refugees and migrants that continue to come into Europe

Mr Chair,

As promised the European Union and its Member States would like to keep participating States and partners up-to-date on our efforts to deal with the flows of refugees and migrants that continue to come into Europe.

As you may know, a conference on the eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans route took place last week on Thursday. It is obvious that the current situation needs to be dealt with in full cooperation and solidarity with Western Balkans countries. The conference has adopted a Declaration that we have circulated to all of you.

This Declaration is very substantial. Let me mention a few elements.

First, the need to respond collectively and with solidarity. We also need to increase the engagement of the broader international community. The conference was once again the opportunity to recognise that Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are at the forefront of efforts. At the same time we appreciate the assistance provided by transit countries in the Western Balkans.

Second, the firm commitment to respect international obligations and human rights. Respect for the dignity of refugees and migrants and protection of their human rights remain our priority at all times.

Third, that collective responsibility must be translated into collective action. A number of concrete steps will be put in place in five areas:

- (i) the support to Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, to mobilise increased development support to host governments and host communities, with

increased humanitarian assistance, and increased resettlement opportunities for refugees from these countries;

(ii) the support to affected transit countries, with a number of practical measures, among which the enhancement of reception facilities and of the capacity to manage borders;

(iii) there will be increased cooperation to fight organised crime groups responsible for migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings; our efforts have focused on the fight against the criminal networks, including through the naval operation that is up and running and has entered its second phase last week; in addition to providing better border management capacity, the conference recognised that there is a need to intensify cooperation on the judicial and police level on the Western Balkan route;

(iv) addressing the root causes of the forced displacement, starting with the crisis in Syria; the issue was discussed by our foreign ministers last Monday and the conclusions of that discussion have been circulated as well; and finally,

(v) further engagement with countries of origin of irregular migrants, to discuss return and re-integration of migrants not entitled to international protection, and, in parallel, discussing ways to improve security, social and economic conditions, educational opportunities for young people.

We have committed to further engaging the broader international community in an effort to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict and enhance our support to address the migration and refugee crisis. We have welcomed the offer of Norway, Germany and the United Kingdom to host early next year an international donors conference to help Syrians displaced by war.

All detail of these actions can be found in the Declaration that has been circulated. We will of course continue to keep you up-to-date of further developments.