

EU-TURKEY JOINT ACTION PLAN¹

Introduction

The international community faces an unprecedented crisis which requires solidarity, togetherness and efficiency. Challenges are common and responses need to be coordinated. Negotiating candidate country Turkey and the EU are determined to confront and surmount the existing challenges in a concerted manner. This joint action will render the message of Europe stronger and more visible. Human dignity is at the core of our common endeavour.

This Action Plan reflects the understanding between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Turkey to step up their cooperation on support of Syrians under temporary protection and migration management in a coordinated effort to address the crisis created by the situation in Syria. It follows from the EU-Turkey working dinner on 17 May and the informal meeting of the EU Heads of State or Government on 23 September 2015 where EU leaders called for a reinforced dialogue with Turkey at all levels. The Action Plan identifies a series of collaborative actions to be implemented as a matter of urgency by the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Turkey with the objective to supplement Turkey's efforts in managing the situation of massive influx of persons in need of temporary protection.

The Action Plan, tries to address the current crisis situation in three ways: (a) by addressing the root causes leading to the massive influx of Syrians, (b) by supporting Syrians under temporary protection and their host communities in Turkey (Part I) and (c) by strengthening cooperation to prevent irregular migration flows to the EU (Part II). The EU and Turkey will address this crisis together in a spirit of burden sharing. The Plan builds on and is consistent with commitments taken by Turkey and the EU in other contexts notably the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue. In both parts it identifies the actions that are to be implemented simultaneously by Turkey and the EU.

The implementation of the Action Plan will be jointly steered and overseen by the European Commission and the High Representative / Vice President and the Turkish government through the establishment of the EU-Turkey high-level working group on migration.

Part I: Supporting the Syrians under temporary protection and their Turkish hosting communities

Turkey is making commendable efforts to provide massive humanitarian aid and support to an unprecedented and continuously increasing influx of people seeking refuge from Syria which has exceeded 2.2 million to date. Turkey has already spent more than €7 billion of its own resources on addressing this crisis.

Under this part of the Action Plan, the two parties will undertake the following actions:

¹ Agreed ad referenda.

The EU side intends to:

1. Mobilise in a sustained manner, appropriate to the emerging needs, substantial and concrete new funds outside the IPA funds allocated or foreseen for Turkey to support Turkey in coping with the challenge represented by the presence of Syrians under temporary protection. The funds will be mobilised in the most flexible and rapid way possible, notably through the EU Trust Fund for the Syrian crisis. The identification of the priorities and the areas where they should be allocated will be decided jointly with the Turkish authorities. Priority will be given to actions providing immediate humanitarian assistance; provision of legal, administrative and psychological support; support for community centres; the enhancement of self-sufficiency and participation in economy and their social inclusion during their stay in Turkey; improved access to education at all levels; but also actions supporting host communities in areas such as infrastructures and services.
2. In addition to the funds that would be mobilised under paragraph 1, continue, by way of close cooperation with the Turkish authorities, to provide immediate and principled humanitarian assistance via relevant humanitarian organisations in Turkey to address the most urgent humanitarian needs on the basis on their vulnerability in parallel and complementary to bilateral cooperation programmes aimed at addressing the needs created by the protracted refugee crisis.
3. To ensure an efficient use of the funding set forth under paragraphs 1 and 2, the EU institutions and Turkey will proceed with a comprehensive joint needs assessment as a basis for programming. The assessment would allow designing adequate actions to address the basic needs of the Syrians under temporary protection and the communities and provinces hosting them, in order to help cope with the inflow of people, notably in terms of infrastructures.
4. Continue providing assistance, over and beyond the 4.2 EUR billion already mobilised by the EU, to Syrian refugees hosted in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, as well as to Syrians displaced within Syria with the aim to contribute, *inter alia*, to the weakening of push factors forcing them to move towards Turkey.
5. Support existing Member State and EU resettlement schemes and programmes.

Turkey intends to:

1. Continue and further enhance the effective implementation of the law on foreigners and international protection by adopting the necessary secondary legislation and raise awareness of its content among all parties concerned.
2. Continue to ensure that migrants are registered and provided with appropriate documents on a compulsory basis to enable to build a stronger migration management strategy and system.
3. Continue efforts to adopt and implement policies, legislation and programmes facilitating for Syrians under temporary protection to have access, for the duration of their stay in Turkey, to public services including education for pupils, to health services and participation in economy.
4. Ensure that vulnerable people continue to be identified and taken care of.

Part II: Strengthening cooperation to prevent irregular migration

Under this part of the Action Plan, measures will build on the visa liberalisation dialogue, the visa roadmap and the provisions of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement. To this end, the two parties intend to undertake the following actions:

The EU side intends to:

1. Better inform, in a mutually agreed manner, people seeking refuge in Turkey about the risks linked to irregular departures as well as the possibilities available to them to enter in an orderly manner into the European Union or in other countries, and the relevant procedures to be implemented.
2. Further support Turkey to strengthen its capacity to combat migrant smuggling, notably by reinforcing the Turkish Coast Guard patrolling and surveillance capacity as well as other relevant Turkish authorities.
3. Support cooperation between EU Member States and Turkey in organising joint return operations, including reintegration measures, towards countries of origin of irregular migrants.
4. Support within the framework of the implementation of the "Silk Routes' Partnership for migration" the development of dialogue and cooperation with the authorities of the countries concerned on preventing irregular migration, fighting against migrant smuggling and on improving the management of migration.
5. Enhance the EU capacity to exchange information with Turkey on combating smuggling networks by deploying a FRONTEX liaison officer to Turkey, by cooperating with the liaison officers already deployed by Turkey in the EU, and welcoming the appointment of a Turkish liaison officer to FRONTEX.
6. Increase the financial assistance offered to support Turkey in meeting the requirement of the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue and notably by enhancing the capacities and developing a well-functioning asylum, migration, visa and integrated border management system in line with the EU-Turkey visa dialogue.

Turkey intends to:

1. Further strengthen the interception capacity of the Turkish Coast Guard, notably by upgrading its surveillance equipment, increasing its patrolling activity and search and rescue capacity, including through stepping up cooperation with EU Member States.
2. Step up cooperation with Bulgarian and Greek authorities to prevent irregular migration across the common land borders by effectively implementing the tri-partite agreement signed in May 2015 establishing a common centre in Capitan Andreevo.
3. Step up cooperation and accelerate procedures in order to smoothly readmit irregular migrants who are not in need of international protection and were intercepted coming from the Turkish territory in line with the established bilateral readmission provisions.
4. Ensure that the asylum procedures² that have been initiated are completed, so that the status of refugee is granted without delay to those whose asylum requests are positively assessed.

² Turkey is a party to the 1951 Geneva Convention related to the Status of Refugees with geographical limitation

5. In line with the Visa Roadmap requirements, pursue the progressive alignment of Turkish visa policy, legislation and administrative capacities notably vis-à-vis the countries representing an important source of illegal migration for Turkey and the EU.
6. Continue and further enhance the fight against and dismantling of criminal networks involved in the smuggling of migrants, notably by increasing operational cooperation between and among Turkish law enforcement authorities and their counterparts of the EU Member States and EU Agencies. This would include strengthening the necessary rules required to facilitate the sharing of information on persons.
7. Intensify the exchange of information and cooperation with the EU and its Member States. In particular, it will work closely with Member States' immigration liaison officers located in Turkey in view of intensifying the fight against migrants smuggling networks, and of accelerating the identification of fraudulent travel documents and real identities of migrants.
8. Further intensify cooperation with FRONTEX notably on exchange of information by implementing the working arrangement.
9. Deploy a liaison officer to Europol.