



EU-UNICEF: Safer learning for more than 2 million children caught in Syrian conflict

Brussels, 1 October 2015

The grants worth €62 million (\$69 million) will scale up UNICEF and the EU's joint response in providing boys and girls with access to education in protective and empowering environments in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey.

The scale of the education crisis is staggering. Inside and outside Syria, there are 2.7 million children out of school; one in four schools in Syria cannot be used; 52,500 teachers have left their posts; and the loss of school infrastructure is estimated to be worth nearly \$700 million. In neighbouring countries, half of school aged children are out of school especially in Turkey and Lebanon, and schools are over-crowded and under-resourced.

"The needs are enormous. The EU has been at the forefront of the international response to the Syrian crisis, specifically in the education sector in partnership with UNICEF and host governments in the region," said Johannes Hahn, European Union Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

UNICEF and the EU warned that with 7.6 million Syrian children in need of humanitarian assistance, the country risks losing an entire generation of children. The commitment to investing in education will help lift children out of despair and vulnerability to exploitation. Initiatives like "[No Lost Generation](#)" (to which the EU has been one of the major partners), boost learning opportunities – including virtual and self-learning – for millions of extremely vulnerable children.

"This funding will help Syrian children live a more normal life and give them prospects for a better future. However, despite these efforts, far too many children remain out of school in the region. All partners have to join forces to alleviate the obstacles that deprive these pupils to their right to education. The EU remains fully committed to contribute to this effort, notably through its strong partnership with UNICEF," Hahn said.

Part of this support will be provided from the EU's newly created Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis which is the EU's first funding instrument with a regional scope.

"Our partnership with the European Union will enable large scale support for the children of Syria. It is absolutely critical that these children are able to continue their education. It is not just their lives that are at stake, but the future of their country and region," said Geeta Rao Gupta, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director.

Background

Inside **Syria**, the second phase of 'Creating a path to Early Recovery for Education in Syria' (€12 million / \$13.9 million) has been launched to improve access to pre-school, primary and alternative education for most affected children and adolescents. An additional €8 million contribution to the same programme has just been decided to expand the coverage of the programme and respond to an urgent UNICEF request for school year 2015-2016. This will bring the overall EU contribution to this programme to more than €35 million.

In **Lebanon**, €37.9 million (\$42.4 million) will provide children and adolescents with access to learning opportunities, health care and child protection, helping 460 000 children, women and caregivers.

In **Turkey**, €12.5 million (\$13.9 million) from the EU Regional Trust Fund will contribute towards increased access to inclusive, quality education, a protective environment and positive youth engagement opportunities for 200,000 Syrian and Turkish children and youth.

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action,

focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

For more information, visit www.unicef.org and for information about UNICEF's relationship with the EU visit <http://www.unicef.org/eu/>

About the EU's response to the Syrian crisis

The EU is a leading donor in the response to the Syrian crisis with more than €4 billion mobilised by the European Commission and Member States collectively in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance to Syrians in their country and to refugees and their host communities in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt.

In the education sector, more than €335 million has notably been mobilised through the EU budget to increase access to Education for Syrian children, in support of partners such as UNICEF or directly through supporting host countries government Education budget, like in Jordan.

More about the [EU Regional Trust Fund set up in response to the crisis in Syria](#)

More about [recent additional efforts from the EU to help manage the refugee crisis, including through additional support in the region](#)

IP/15/5743

Press contacts:

[Maja KOCIJANCIC](#) (+32 2 298 65 70)

[Anca PADURARU](#) (+ 32 2 299 12 69)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)