

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) SYRIA REGIONAL CRISIS

AMOUNT: EUR 260 000 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2018/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO's partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE HIP First modification (May 2018)

Inside Syria: EUR 140 000 000

An additional amount of EUR 35 000 000 is made available for humanitarian projects to be implemented inside Syria in 2018 in response to the emerging needs.

As of May 2018 the humanitarian situation inside Syria continues to deteriorate, with a staggering 13.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6 million children and 6 million internally displaced persons. 5.6 million people require urgent humanitarian assistance, including 2.3 million people living in UN-declared hard-to-reach and besieged areas, while vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities remain of particular concern and deserve specific attention. The Syria crisis has continued to be characterised by large-scale displacement of population, with some 2.6 million people displaced in 2017, and more than 500 000 newly displaced during the first quarter of 2018 alone.

In Syria, 8.2 million people live in communities reporting explosive hazards as a key protection concern while civilian infrastructure such as health facilities lays in ruins. 2.9 million people are living with permanent disabilities and some 30 000 new conflict-related trauma cases per month are leading to thousands of permanent disabilities. Less than half of the health facilities are operational: their destruction has deprived millions of people of access to health care. When it comes to education, in Syria 1.75 million children are out of school and a further 1.35 million at risk of dropping out.

Meanwhile, de-escalation agreements failed to deliver on their expectations. Humanitarian access remained severely constrained, civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian aid workers were victims of targeted attacks and indiscriminate shelling, and access to basic and life-saving services were denied in blatant violations of IHL and relevant UNSC resolutions. Humanitarian and protection needs remain immense while the conflict continues unabated across many parts of the country, most recently in Eastern Ghouta, Idlib and Afrin. Further escalation to

other parts of the country may be expected, including in the Northern Homs area, Yarmouk, and southern Governorate of Der'a.

In Northern Syria, the situation in Idlib is of particular concern due to the high concentration of vulnerable civilians. In December 2017, a military offensive led by the Government of Syria targeted Idlib governorate causing destruction of already overstretched civilian infrastructures and more than 300 000 new displacements in an area already hosting more than 1.1 million displaced people over a total population of 2 million. Furthermore, Northern Syria has received more than 60 000 evacuees from Eastern Ghouta, Hama, and northern Homs in the first months of 2018. Idlib governorate is also an area of frequent clashes among armed groups which negatively impact the protection of civilians and humanitarian access.

Military operations in Afrin district and Tal Refaat sub-district (Syria, Aleppo Governorate) resulted in significant civilian casualties, increased humanitarian needs and 137 000 people are estimated to have been displaced.

As of May 2018, the military offensives continue in Central Syria, alongside forced reconciliations and thousands of evacuations. In April 2018, the besieged enclave of Eastern Ghouta was retaken by the Government of Syria after an intense military operation conducted in a densely populated area, resulting in vast humanitarian needs. In May 2018, an offensive over the besieged area of Yarmouk was launched by the Syrian army.

Access to the Rukban area (the 'Berm') at the southern border of the country is still constrained, while humanitarian needs are still present in North and Eastern Governorates of the country.

The additional EU funding will allow timely, flexible and appropriate provision of humanitarian assistance to respond to the recent aggravation in the crisis and to the increasing needs, inter alia, in terms of: protection, food, health, WASH, EiE, in line with the Whole of Syria approach, and from all entry points and through all modalities. It aims to support those most in need through a targeted approach, as well as supporting humanitarian preparedness and contingency plan in anticipation of further displacement and continued access constraints. DG ECHO will support quality humanitarian interventions to respond to primary needs of the most vulnerable wherever they are in a timely, adapted, flexible and strategic manner. Particularly, the approach includes, as main components, lifesaving/first line emergency Response, life sustaining assistance and link with long term programming.

1. CONTEXT

Inside Syria:

The Syria conflict in its seventh year continues to cause massive displacement, high number of casualties and tremendous suffering of civilian population. The frequent violation or disregard of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) remains of serious concern. Relevant United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions (SCRs) are seldom or only partially implemented though

unanimously adopted¹. The continued deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructures and humanitarian workers² result in impediments to delivery of much needed life-saving humanitarian aid.

Despite repeated diplomatic efforts, there are still no immediate prospects for a political settlement of the conflict. The UN-sponsored Syria peace talks³ and the ‘confidence building measure’ track initiated in Astana achieved sustained but limited cessation of hostilities, with very limited humanitarian access. The establishment of de-escalation (DEAs) areas has contributed to a reduction in civilian casualties. Repeated statements of intent from all parties to increase humanitarian access remain without results in ensuring aid delivery and protection of civilians. The high number of displaced population and their vulnerability is alarming. Recent clashes in the area of Raqqa and along the Euphrates Corridor have caused more distress and will continue to have serious impact on the humanitarian situation in the region. The above described situation will prevail in the coming period, with repercussions contributing to volatility in the sub-region and beyond. The continuous struggle for control of territories and resources and fight against terrorist groups will result in further civilian displacement and distress. A combination of factors has conspired to undermine the humanitarian response to date. Chief among these is the heavily politicised nature of the crisis and involvement of several actors. The conflict is driven by conflicting political and security agendas with a worrying trend of undermining or ignoring its humanitarian dimension with devastating impact on civilians. All sides are engrossed by political tactics and subsequently are taking actions that undermine access and increase impediment of much needed humanitarian assistance. With humanitarian principles continuously strained the quality of the response is often sidelined in view of the humanitarian imperative of saving lives. Civilians must be protected and their needs must be met.

In neighboring countries:

The living conditions of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries continue to deteriorate due to major social, economic and legal challenges. There are around 2 992 000 Syrian refugees registered in Turkey, 1 001 000 in Lebanon, 661 000 in Jordan, 241 000 in Iraq and 122 000 in Egypt⁴. The high numbers put major strain on hosting countries' resources and infrastructures leading to increasing social tension between refugees and host communities due to the competition for access to limited services and scarce resources. Refugees continue to face obstacles to get or renew their legal stay which is essential to access services and protection. In both Lebanon and Jordan, security considerations dominate the Syrian refugee discourse. Lebanon de facto closed its border in 2015; Jordan in 2016, with over 40 000 people stranded at the north-eastern border (known as the ‘Berm’). Refugees are increasingly subject to curfews, arbitrary arrests, forced encampment as well as other movement restrictions. This situation affects their work capacity and compliance with host countries' employment legislation and often pushes most vulnerable ones to protracted displacement, socio-economic vulnerability and negative coping mechanisms. There has been a growing trend of practices by neighboring countries that pose serious risks to the safety of Syrian asylum seekers and refugees, as well as Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) that could amount to *refoulement*, is of grave concern.

¹ Such as UNSCR 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015) - UN Human Rights Council

² UN Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2017: 147 humanitarian workers were killed from the start of the crisis; 66 in 2016.

³ Geneva talks following the 2012 ‘Geneva Communiqué’

⁴ UNHCR - <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> - figures quoted are as of late April 2017

With varying degrees, the combination of closure of international borders, stricter internal controls and discriminatory security screenings, poses important protection concerns. Resettlement to third countries, despite its over 50% increase in 2016⁵, continues to fall short of refugee hosting countries call for international cooperation and burden-sharing to address this humanitarian crisis.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2017 identified moderate (Jordan), high (Egypt; Lebanon), very high (Syria) humanitarian needs⁶. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high (Jordan), very high (Egypt; Lebanon) and extreme in Syria⁷.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) People in need of humanitarian assistance:

Inside Syria:

There are over 6.6 million internally displaced people (IDP)⁸ and over 5 million refugees⁹ since 2011. The conflict affected all the 14 Syrian governorates with thousands displaced multiple times. The massive displacement continued throughout the years. The number of new displacements reached 1.3 million in 2017 alone. Carrying out accurate assessment in Syria remain a challenge, however estimates indicate that **13.5 million Syrians are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance** and protection of whom 6 million are children and 4 million live in so-called 'hard-to-reach'¹⁰ areas. Over 620 000 people are trapped in around 31 areas besieged by either government forces and/or non-state armed groups, representing a 5% increase compared to 2016. Approximately 40 000 people are stranded on the Jordanian border at the Berm. Over 438 000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) live in Syria, 254 000 of them have been internally displaced at least once¹¹. The number of Iraqi nationals displaced in Syria is not known.

In neighboring countries:

Refugees from Syria represent the world largest refugee population. Lebanon accounts for the world highest refugee per capita (169 refugees/1 000 Lebanese). Jordan displays the second highest per capita ratio (87/1 000). In Egypt, over 122 000 Syrian refugees account for approximately 60% of the registered refugee caseload in country. The impact of the Syrian refugees on these countries also affects, either directly or indirectly, other refugee populations (e.g. PRS, Iraqi, Yemeni, Sudanese, South Sudanese, Somali, Eritrean, Ethiopian, etc.), often living in already poor urban settings. Vulnerable host communities will be included in from DG ECHO's action in support of Syrian refugees as resources allow.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs:

Inside Syria:

⁵ UNHCR, 2016

⁶ The DG ECHO humanitarian response in Turkey and Iraq should be referred to the respective HIPs

⁷ INFORM Risk Index values (on a scale 1 to 10) for 2017 are: Syria: 6.9; Lebanon: 4.9; Egypt: 4.5; Jordan 4.3

⁸ IDMC - <http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/figures-analysis>

⁹ Ibid. (see footnote no. 5)

¹⁰ As of April 2017. The UN designation of hard-to-reach areas is – “An area that is not regularly accessible to humanitarian actors for the purposes of sustained humanitarian programming as a result of denial of access, including the need to negotiate access on an ad hoc basis, or due to restrictions such as an active conflict, multiple security checkpoints, or failure of the authorities to provide timely approval”.

¹¹ UNRWA

The **humanitarian situation remains dire in many areas**. International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is disregarded and at times directly violated by parties to the conflict. The use of prohibited weapons on civilian-inhabited areas, starvation and forced displacements, recruitment and use of child soldiers, rape and sexual violence, summary executions, attacks against critical civilian infrastructures and humanitarian workers are just a few examples of widespread human rights abuses and IHL violations in Syria¹².

The scale of **weapon contamination threat inside Syria remains unprecedented**. It's **causing significant civilian casualties**¹³: on average 5 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) related incidents are recorded per week since the beginning of March 2017, compared to 1 per week in the period of January-February 2017. The civilians are often the first victims of these IEDs and continue to need humanitarian assistance, as well as unhindered ways to flee conflict zones and return to their place of origin when conditions allow. Unprecedented economic contraction¹⁴ left the population deprived and destitute, with nearly **85% of Syrians living in poverty**; household's purchasing power continues to weaken, with up to **a quarter of income dedicated to access to water**¹⁵; the combination of soaring inflation, unemployment rates and subsidies affected households' food security, leaving the most deprived families fully dependent on external assistance within the overall context of limited availability of basic commodities. The destruction of key public infrastructures led to collapse of essential public services, negatively impacting every aspect of daily life¹⁶.

Provision of healthcare has been deteriorating and is of serious concern. Around **814 health workers were deliberately killed** and many health facilities targeted since the beginning of the conflict. **Over 55% of the pre-crisis health workforce is no longer active**¹⁷. Most of those living in **Syria lack access to safe water both in terms of quantity and quality**. Treated water become scantier and costlier due to fuel shortages, and poor hygiene conditions led to increased cases of disease outbreaks, especially in areas having to face higher population concentration due to IDPs presence. Destruction of housing stocks has been sustained in the major cities and throughout the country's urban and sub-urban areas. Growing proportions of **children and adolescents are out of school**, particularly in opposition-held areas, with repercussions to last for generations to come.

In neighboring countries:

The worsening economic condition after several years into the conflict coupled with households' savings depleted may result in growing risks of exploitation due to widespread use of negative coping mechanisms (notably child labor and early marriage, transactional sex) as survival strategies. The majority of refugees living in host countries require more access to public services such as education, health and livelihoods. Moreover, the border closure with Syria, stringent controls and arbitrary security screenings (based on place of origin, tribal affiliation, gender and age among others) of civilians fleeing the conflict, have raised protection concerns in

¹² Protection of civilians - ICRC statement to the UN Security Council, 2016

¹³ IMSA needs assessment - June 2017 and 2017 INSO IED accidents map.

¹⁴ Syria's GDP lost an estimated USD 226 billion from 2011 (World Bank – 2017)

¹⁵ HNO - 2017

¹⁶ As of 2015, Syria witnessed a reversal in all of its 12 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the average life expectancy for Syrians dropped from 79.5 years in 2010 to 55.7 in 2015 – SCPR/UNRWA 2015

¹⁷ The Lancet, March 2017 - [http://thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)30741-9.pdf](http://thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(17)30741-9.pdf)

Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. Humanitarian actors routinely report on cases of deportation that possibly amount to *refoulement*. Although substantial progress by regional governments in meeting the February 2016 London ‘Supporting Syria and the Region’ Conference (London Conference) objectives was advanced, more remains to be done. International actors further pledged significant support to Lebanon and Jordan governments’ social and economic development strategies at the April 2017 Brussels ‘Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region’ Conference (Brussels Conference).

In **Lebanon**, some encouraging progress has been made in protection with the revision of the “pledge not to work” and the waiver of the residency fees for segments of the Syrian refugee population. However, residency regulations for Syrians in force since January 2015 and inconsistencies in their implementation continue to exclude a large section of the refugee population and the growing number of refugees with illegal status remains of high concern¹⁸. Those in this situation experience significant limitations to their freedom of movement, due to fear of arrest, detention, and harassment. As a result, their capacity to seek employment, as well as to access assistance and services, is curtailed which leads to increased poverty and dependence on debt. As the crisis gets protracted, the impact of sustained demand is placing enormous stress on already weak public services (e.g. water and wastewater, solid waste, electricity), resulting in growing tensions between refugees and host communities.

In **Jordan**, acute protection needs remain although those cannot be assessed by tangible indicators as such. 79% of the persons of concern registered by UNHCR¹⁹ are living in hosting communities, whilst 21% in camps. Movements in and out of camps are strictly controlled, with cases of forced encampment for those caught in illegal employment increasingly reported. Whilst the results of the 2017 Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) are yet to be published, 93% (86.5% in the VAF 2016) of Syrian refugees in urban areas live below the Jordanian poverty line²⁰. Despite a progress in the Urban Verification Exercise (UVE), as of June 2017 over 24% of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR are yet to be reached; new biometric Ministry of Interior (MoI) cards, indispensable to access the user’s fee public services, are subject to the UVE. The over 129 000 estimated Syrian refugees unable or unwilling to update their government registration due to a complex set of reasons are therefore excluded both from accessing public services and humanitarian assistance. Undocumented refugees are often victims of forced relocation inside the camps or back to Syria. A review of the registration and documentation process was agreed by Jordan and humanitarian actors as part of the Brussels Conference ‘Output Paper for Jordan’.

At the Berm, approximately 40 000 people, comprising both asylum seekers and other mixed populations, have been stranded for over a year following border closure implemented by Jordan in response to a terrorist attack on its armed forces in late June 2016. Living in precarious settlements remotely located in the desert, the large majority of these asylum seekers remain in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Current restrictions posed by Jordan prevent

¹⁸ According to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VaSYR), the percentage of households where all members held valid residency permits nearly halved from 58% in 2014 to 29% in 2015 and further declined to 25% in 2016.

¹⁹ Syrian refugees represent over 90% of the caseload and concentrate in the northern governorates of the country.

²⁰ 68 JOD/month

humanitarian actors to ensure assistance being delivered with adequate modalities and at the necessary quality and quantity.

In **Egypt**, increased efforts to control the country's borders and significantly reduce irregular migration flows, resulted in the almost halt of departures to Europe since the beginning of 2017. Nevertheless, it remains a country of both destination and transit within a context of mixed migration and refugee flows. The country recorded one yearly increase (100%) of newly registered refugees (50% Syrians) in Q1 2017, inclusive of an unprecedented number of unaccompanied and separated children. Living in overcrowded and impoverished urban and semi-urban settings, their plight has been further compounded by the deepening of the economic and financial crisis in Egypt in 2016 as well as by the impact of important economic measures taken by the authorities in the framework of Egypt's economic reform programme, supported by the IMF. Over 90% of the Syrian refugees are classified as 'severely' or 'highly vulnerable'. Despite a relatively good asylum space and a lower number of registered refugees compared to other hosting countries, refugees in Egypt face increasing difficulties to meet their basic needs and access basic services. Registered Syrian and Sudanese refugees can formally access public education and health services, but they are severely constrained by multiple barriers negatively affecting their capacity to benefit from them, predominantly due to the overstretched capacity for the host population itself. Non Syrian Refugees, despite sharing similar vulnerability as Syrian, often have to share shelter with transiting and stranded migrants and do not have access to formal education.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Inside Syria:

The delivery of humanitarian aid remains hindered by deliberate restrictions posed by all parties to the conflict as well as by those exerting territorial control. The government of Syria (GoS)'s capacity to deliver public services through various line ministries continues to shrink and outside GoS' controlled areas, its line ministries are almost totally absent. The GoS facilitates the sporadic delivery of humanitarian aid mostly, but not exclusively, to government-held areas, through the Ministry of Local Affairs High Relief Committee, which issues authorisations for humanitarian organisations to work inside Syria; humanitarian response is primarily delivered through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC) with its network of branches and volunteers. In addition, as many as 217 national NGOs are partnering with the UN in delivering of the assistance across 6 hubs²¹. International NGOs operating from Damascus are subject to limitations in entering into partnerships with national NGOs or to establish new sub-offices. Syrian NGOs and CSOs, as well as local councils, play a crucial role in facilitating and delivering humanitarian assistance in opposition controlled areas.

In neighboring countries²²:

In **Lebanon**, despite lifting the 'pledge not to work' in 2016 and the waiver of the Annual residency fees through a General Security circular in 2017, the implementation of this policy

²¹ Damascus, Homs, Tartous, Aleppo, Qamishli and As-Sweida

²² Lebanon and Jordan are not parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

does not appear to be consistent. At the Brussels Conference of April 2017, both the GoL and the international community reiterated the commitments that had been pledged at the London Conference a year before. Among these, the GoL's commitment to improve certain regulatory conditions negatively affecting Syrian refugees; the EU committed to step up support to strengthen Lebanon's resilience and accelerate its development and growth. These commitments were also reflected in the EU-Lebanon Compact annexed to the EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities adopted in November 2016 whose implementation has now started.

In **Jordan**, almost seven years into the conflict, the crisis has become protracted requiring longer-term solutions going beyond the classical humanitarian aid. A robust response, with preliminary indications of a switch towards a longer term structural response well embedded in development actors, is being implemented with increased support to education, in addition to health and livelihood. The Compact Agreement which emerged as an outcome of the London Conference aimed at turning the refugee crisis into a development opportunity. Jordan and the EU additionally adopted common partnership priorities in July 2016, they agreed to simplify rules of origin requirements to boost job creation opportunities for both Jordanians and Syrian refugees. Jordan also committed to the regularization of undocumented refugees in 2017 at the Brussels Conference.

In **Egypt**, the humanitarian space is limited , with a newly introduced restrictive regulatory framework which is further constricting support provided by local NGOs and limited number of registered in the country. Non-Syrian refugees, already shadowed and mixed with a growing population of both transiting and stranded migrants, struggle to survive with insufficient assistance, which is also not organized. Registered refugees nominally benefit of access to public education and health services, which are at the same time struggling to provide for the endogenous population in first place due to both overstretched demand and capacity issues. The EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities jointly agreed in December 2016 were agreed during the Association Council in July 2017 that took place on 25 July 2017.

2) International Humanitarian Response

The EU is the leading donor in the international response to the Syria crisis. It has mobilized together with its Member States more than € 10 billion in assistance since its beginning. Out of this, €1.45 billion has allocated in humanitarian aid to Syrians in need of lifesaving assistance from the European Commission/DG ECHO.

By end-July 2017²³, donor contributions to humanitarian programmes for the Syria Crisis amounted to the following:

- The HRP has received USD 1.1 billion, or 32.3% of its funding requirements.
- The 3RP has received USD 2.2 billion, or 39.6% of its funding requirements.
- The LRCP has received USD 444.8 million, or 25.9% of its funding requirements.
- The JRP has received USD 294 million, or 24.6% of its funding requirements.
- The Egyptian chapter of the 3RP is funded at USD 26.3 million, representing 20.3% of its total budget. The UNHCR component of the same has received USD 5 million or 25%. The UNHCR appeal for non-Syrian refugees is funded at USD 5.8 million, representing 24% of its total budget.

²³ Financial Tracking System – OCHA – 2017 and 3RP Mid-year report 2017

DG ECHO alongside with other donors continues to engage with the UN and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on the preparation and focus of the 2018 HRP.

Inside Syria:

Humanitarian access inside the country remains a key constraint for humanitarian actors despite UN Security Council Resolution 2165 in force since February 2014 regarding cross line and cross border access. In areas under government control, UN agencies experience relatively better access than INGOs, despite reaching affected populations remains a paramount challenge for any humanitarian actor. Only 21 INGOs are registered to operate in Syria from Damascus, a small number relative to the scale of needs, thus putting strain on their capacity to deliver assistance. The majority of cross-border assistance to mostly opposition-controlled areas continues to be provided by INGOs working with Syrian NGOs/CSOs.

A 'Whole of Syria' (WoS) coordination architecture is led by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC) in close cooperation with the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. It encompasses operations from Damascus and cross-border hubs in Turkey, Jordan and, to a lesser extent Iraq. The aim of this system is to provide coherent, harmonized and multi-sectoral cross line and cross border response strategy.

In neighboring countries:

The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) is developed under the leadership of national authorities to ensure protection, humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the resilience of the affected population. The 3RP integrates and is aligned with existing national plans, including the JRP, LCRP and country chapters in Egypt, Turkey and Iraq. UNHCR leads the inter agency coordination for the Syrian Refugee Response whilst UNRWA is in charge of the coordination for the assistance to PRS. Sector coordination relies on multiple set ups in between hubs, these being clusters, working groups or other modalities. Despite the existence of coordination fora, the response to refugee needs remains fragmented rather than being fully integrated, harmonized and streamlined. Limited INGOs' presence in Egypt is being further constrained by regulatory framework developments in 2017. In Lebanon, despite some administrative improvements of the regulatory framework for INGOs, their involvement as valuable asset to the global response design is increasingly limited, especially at policy level.

3) Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity

Humanitarian access remains one of major impediments to smooth delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians. Parties to the conflict continue to impose restrictions or impede humanitarian access. NGOs conducting cross-border operations have been facing growing scrutiny and administrative burdens to operate from neighbouring countries. Renewed efforts should continue to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the coordination mechanisms. Operations on remote management remain a challenge. The robustness and reliability of innovative approaches to remote management developed as a direct result of the Syria crisis need to be continually monitored and improved. Similarly, support to local partnerships with Syrian CSOs and NGOs has to be more systematic, transparent, accountable and relevant. People in need participation in the designing response strategies require to be

reinforced²⁴. Limited humanitarian aid budgets need to be complemented by development programmes. Restrictive government regulatory frameworks and policies on asylum, assistance and registration will continue to have a negative impact on the humanitarian response. In Lebanon, preserving the autonomy and efficiency of the humanitarian response, whilst working closely along the GoL's guidelines, remains a key issue for humanitarian operations.

DG ECHO's response capacity is articulated around its wide network in the field, including presence in the key hubs in the region, and our substantive funding, delivering on the EU's Brussels Conference commitments. DG ECHO is accordingly uniquely placed to coordinate and liaise with different humanitarian actors both as regards the operational strategy for humanitarian delivery and humanitarian advocacy.

4) Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions:

DG ECHO response will continue to prioritize **life-saving and protection activities**. Implementing partners will be required to focus their **needs based targeted responses** to assist the most vulnerable wherever they are located. The quality programming and sound monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be pivotal. The quality of assessments, data gathering and analysis will continue to be central to ensure accurate identification of gaps, prioritization of response and coordination across actors. The HIP Technical Annex will serve to further guide partners to increase the impact and coherence of the proposed interventions.

DG ECHO will keep encouraging a non-discriminatory regional refugee approach and will aim to support humanitarian interventions targeting the most severely affected segments of the refugee population in need of protection and assistance, irrespective of their country of origin. Both refugees and host communities will be considered eligible for DG ECHO assistance based on their specific vulnerability (no status based assistance is envisaged). As the situation evolves quickly and in case of safe, **voluntary and dignified returns** when conditions allow, DG ECHO will consider providing basic support to meet returnees' urgent needs.

Integrated approaches within and between organizations that seek economies of scale, a robust and efficient **referral system**, adaptability to emerging needs and maximization of geographic coverage are encouraged. Adherence to standard operating procedures developed by the relevant sector working groups should be clearly articulated by partners. **Cost-effective** approaches, fostering links with municipal systems and the use of the appropriate technologies, arbitrating best-placed donors between DG ECHO or longer-term donors, will be promoted. Advocacy in **coordination with humanitarian mechanisms** in country will remain a key priority in 2018. As the crisis protracts and specific concerns intensify, **quality of information and data analysis** remain central to ensure **accountability** and **accurate prioritization** of quality response.

Advocacy or Humanitarian Diplomacy²⁵ (HD) should be conducted by partners at all levels, calling upon all parties to fully respect IHL and promote access and protection of civilians.

²⁴ 85% of a sample of affected population inside Syria indicate that were not consulted about the assistance they received by aid agencies - Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) research programme – “Listening to communities in insecure environments” – October 2016

²⁵ As defined by IFRC: “Persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles”.

Advocacy to **maintain a principled humanitarian response**, safeguard humanitarian space and protection of civilians must be enhanced. In spite of major operational constraints inciting a race to the bottom towards further erosion of the humanitarian space, upholding humanitarian law, obligations, principles and standards in a pragmatically principled way remains of paramount importance. Given the grave threats posed to the legitimacy of humanitarian assistance for vulnerable people affected by the protracted Syria crisis, principled humanitarian action must be reinforced despite restrictions and obstacles.

Inside Syria:

DG ECHO response will be implemented in line with the EU Strategy for Syria and operational recommendations agreed by the wider humanitarian community at the Brussels conference "Supporting the future of Syria and the region", held in April 2017. These recommendations are intended to promote compliance with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law amongst all parties to the conflict, as well as provide concrete operational recommendations to donors, governments and aid organizations²⁶. DG ECHO will maintain its focus on **multi-sectoral life-saving actions**, set within the Do-No-Harm guiding principle. Partners are expected to provide a Whole-of-Syria needs analysis in their proposals together with justification, including costing, for the choice of hub(s) and method of delivery. They are encouraged to participate in existing coordination mechanisms. The strategy additionally builds on complementary advocacy actions as part of a HD framework to sustain operational gains and improve the quality of deliverables. Specifically, DG ECHO strategy is developed along the following:

- **Protection** - the application of IHL, IHRL and IRL; protection monitoring; safe and equal access, including evidence-based advocacy, awareness and communication; humanitarian demining and mine-risk education; support to vulnerable people; prevention and response to GBV.
- **Emergency response and preparedness** - including access strategies, duly justified contingency planning, severity scales and scenario/hotspots analysis leading to timely 'triggers' identification, and rapid first line multi-sectoral emergency response capacity to allow for flexible and timely response to emerging 'crises within the crisis'.
- **Health** - focus on improving access to quality services and timely assistance to war wounded and victims of violence, including GBV and mental health.
- **Operational coordination** - gaps in assistance provision including underserved or otherwise neglected communities to be addressed; support to common, integrated and targeted approaches to address basic needs and services and, to the extent possible, the identification of transition strategies (support to livelihoods / resilience).
- **Education in Emergencies (EiE)**: DG ECHO will support education in emergencies activities that enable safe access to quality education and reduce the vulnerability of children affected by conflict.

Aside of first line emergency response, programming in under-served, contested, besieged, and areas with restrictive operational environment/prone to displacement, will be prioritized. WASH interventions will be considered with a priority on restoration of access to safe water. For the NFI/Shelter sector, DG ECHO will support activities that respond to a specific shock with duly

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/syria_conference.pdf

justified assessment and targeting. Secondary consideration will be given to the support of protracted needs of IDPs and host populations to reach basic minimum standards where gaps in life-saving assistance provision exist.

In achieving this strategy, the following must also be considered:

- An overarching emphasis on cost efficiency and effectiveness, including, but not limited to, vulnerability targeting, addressing basic needs with the most appropriate transfer modality (e.g. in kind, voucher or cash), improved inter-hub coordination and harmonization, capacity building, flexibility and responsiveness of actions responding to newly and/or quickly emerging needs.
- Partners' humanitarian acceptance/access strategies should be explained and address urgent needs. DG ECHO expects that all interventions adhere to basic protection principles of Do No Harm, safe and equal access, accountability and participation as well as appropriate considerations for context specific vulnerabilities (e.g. victims of violence, persons with disabilities). Timely and regular reporting into OCHA's FTS is also required.
- In the context of a crisis where direct implementation is not always a feasible modality, particular attention needs to be paid to the ability and capacity of partners (including that of their implementing partners) to safely and impartially deliver appropriate humanitarian assistance with adequate control mechanisms in place. Robust humanitarian project cycle management will be regarded as a cornerstone of DG ECHO-funded operations. Special attention will be paid to thorough risk analysis and management across the project cycle, including optimizing risk-transfer arrangements. Where remote modalities are considered, due diligence and compliance with DG ECHO related policy is required.
- Activities that address recurrent infrastructure costs (e.g. care and maintenance of basic service networks), although recognized as crucial, are beyond the scope of DG ECHO's resources and capability and will not be given first priority.

The strategy illustrated above will be applied to all operational hubs, including regular and cross-line operations from Damascus, and all cross-border operations from neighboring countries and methods of delivery (direct and remote management). Wherever possible, DG ECHO will plan a gradual and combined dual track approach towards more resilience-oriented activities together with other EU financial instruments (e.g. European Neighborhood Instrument - ENI).

In neighboring countries:

In **Lebanon and Jordan**, DG ECHO will cover the **timely delivery** of appropriate emergency assistance for newly-displaced populations as well as continue supporting the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers severely impacted by the protracted crisis. It is expected that these populations will be serviced through **integrated and coordinated solutions** providing a **harmonized multi-sectoral first-line response** whilst continuing to address gaps in assistance for those refugee segments with increasing recourse to negative, undignified and unsustainable coping strategies. Host governments' commitments at the Brussels Conference should complement and reinforce development opportunities made available by both other EU instruments and international assistance donors addressing medium term structural and protracted needs (e.g. access to livelihoods, education, affordable health care), which are required until conditions are favorable for refugees' voluntary, dignified and safe return to Syria.

DG ECHO's action will ensure appropriate complementarity between humanitarian assistance and development support in line with the **EU Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF)** conceived for this purpose. The overall political framework for EU engagement with both countries will be pursued along identified Partnership Priorities (and the annexed Compacts). DG ECHO will only consider supporting refugees who remain excluded from the above as a gap filling measure. In **Lebanon**, DG ECHO will continue seeking the most effective planning of resources so that quality life-saving assistance and protection is guaranteed to the most vulnerable segments of the refugee population. Assistance to non-registered refugees unable to register because of protection concerns is envisaged.

DG ECHO will continue to focus on:

- **Basic needs** – DG ECHO will continue to support the most vulnerable refugees through multi-purpose cash assistance. Priority is to be given to increased efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the delivery systems, also by exploring alternative models that could be better adapted to more predictable and longer-term funding to ideally transition the basic needs approach into a social protection-type scheme.
- **Protection** - Protection programming and evidence-based advocacy will remain a key priority for DG ECHO in responding to the growing protection threats of refugees.
- **WASH/Shelter** – DG ECHO will consider support for underserved refugee populations to reach basic minimum standards, strictly based on gaps, needs and vulnerability analysis.
- **Coordination** – support to the coordination of humanitarian action, including improved data collection, information, management and analysis, M&E, will be considered.
- Whilst DG ECHO phased out from *health* interventions, it will continue to respond to arising emergency needs.
- **Education in Emergencies (EiE)**: DG ECHO will support education in emergencies activities that enable safe access to quality education and reduce the vulnerability of children affected by conflict.

In **Jordan**, ensuring timely, adequate and appropriate provision of humanitarian assistance to undocumented and unregistered refugees, new arrivals, persons stranded in border areas and refugees living in camps or hosting communities will be DG ECHO's priorities in 2018. *Protection* will remain a cross-cutting component across all sectors. DG ECHO priorities will continue to focus on the following:

- **Life-saving humanitarian interventions** for the most vulnerable people as defined by the VAF and on protection grounds. *Basic needs* assistance is being transitioned to more predictable and longer-term assistance as the crisis in Jordan protracts.
- **Enable access to basic services** for the most vulnerable if excluded from the government's commitments and developmental assistance, with a view to ensure their mainstreaming into these.
- **Health** - In camps, support will be focused to improving access to *reproductive health* care. Outside camps, transition for the *health* sector will be explored for refugees with no access to health due to unresolved protection issues.
- **Protection** - including legal assistance and support for documentation will remain DG ECHO's focus.

- **Education in Emergencies (EiE):** DG ECHO will support education in emergencies activities that enable safe access to quality education and reduce the vulnerability of children affected by conflict.

In **Egypt**, due to the worsening conditions of the rapidly increasing refugee caseload, the limited humanitarian space in the country and the need to target the most vulnerable registered refugees, DG ECHO will continue to consolidate its small-scale response focusing on *core humanitarian needs*. The response strategy will comprise an emergency services component (*Health; EiE*) and an expanding *basic needs* approach through multipurpose cash transfer for the most vulnerable registered refugees. Given the growing incidence of separated and unaccompanied children and minors, gaps in core protection activities will be considered. Whilst the Syrian refugees remain DG ECHO's entry point, the most vulnerable among other refugee groups and their hosting communities might also be assisted.

Thematic priorities:

The thematic priorities detailed in the **Technical Annex 2018** envisage their mainstreaming into enhanced quality humanitarian interventions. Compliance of partners' proposals with thematic priorities is an assessment criterion which will be utilized by DG ECHO.

IHL/IHRL/IRL/Protection/Access: DG ECHO will continue **to encourage all efforts to influence parties to the conflict to respect IHL and improve humanitarian access**. Field based sustained dialogue and engagement with armed actors, local authorities and power brokers should be considered. DG ECHO is ready to support systemic access negotiation solutions available to all humanitarian actors and in support of timely emergency response across all operations hubs. Basic protection monitoring within Syria and across borders that act as an early warning for new population movements (including returns) is encouraged.

EiE: Despite progress achieved in preventing Syrian children from becoming a 'lost generation', combined efforts are far from achieving this goal. Within Syria, 1/3 of school age children are out of school, with 1/3 of schools out of service. In Lebanon, close to 50% of primary school age children are out of school, as well as approximately 40% in Jordan. In both Lebanon and Jordan, DG ECHO will closely co-ordinate its intervention with other EU instruments such as the ENI and Madad EU Trust Fund (Madad), which already support structural and formal education programmes. DG ECHO will advocate and complement development actors efforts, for example through non-formal education and other activities to address emergency-related barriers to education so that children affected by the Syria crisis can enter (or re-enter) formal education. Dedicated EiE actions may be considered on a case-by-case basis, where feasible in accordance with each government's policy, supporting primary and secondary levels of education.

Gender Based Violence: All humanitarian interventions funded by DG ECHO must take into consideration, together with other protection concerns, any risk of gender-based violence and develop and implement appropriate strategies to prevent such risks. Moreover, in line with its life-saving mandate, DG ECHO encourages the establishment of quality,

comprehensive and safe GBV response services since the onset of emergencies, in line with DG ECHO's 2013 Gender policy.²⁷

Coordination: Effective coordination is essential. The WoS coordination architecture has yet to be translated into a more effective coordinated response across multiple hubs. Whilst the system should be flexible enough to respond to needs efficiently and effectively, practice to date is relatively static. Effort to enhance efficiency will continue. DG ECHO supports the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda (ITA)** and expects its partners to demonstrate their engagement in implementing its objectives and to actively take part in coordination mechanisms (e.g. Humanitarian Country Team, clusters and technical working groups).

Partners are expected to ensure full compliance with **visibility** requirements and to acknowledge the funding role of the EU/DG ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements.

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

1) Other DG ECHO interventions:

The EU hosted and co-chaired the Brussels Conference in April 2017, pledging EUR 280 million for 2018 for humanitarian assistance to Lebanon, Jordan and inside Syria, while indicating its ambition to maintain a comparable level of support also in 2019. Since 2011, DG ECHO mobilized more than EUR 642 million for provision of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, nearly EUR 440 million in Lebanon, EUR 306 million in Jordan and EUR 4 million in Egypt.

2) Other concomitant EU interventions:

The EU and its Member States have been leading the international response to the Syrian regional crisis mobilizing to date more than EUR 10 billion for humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance to support Syrians inside the country and in neighboring countries (inclusive of Iraq, Turkey). A further EUR 3.7 billion for 2017 was pledged by the EU and its Member States at the Brussels Conference in April 2017, representing 67% of the pledges made.

Whilst humanitarian assistance remains pivotal and to advance further for a transition to longer-term interventions. Complementarities and synergies between actions supported by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), ENI, Madad and humanitarian funding in response to the Syrian crisis are captured and routinely reviewed in the EU JHDF, which is jointly developed by DG ECHO, Madad and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) to guide financial allocations in priority sectors on each country basis. On the basis of the JHDF, DG NEAR will have to step-up its involvement with refugees in both Lebanon and Jordan. In Egypt, despite a multitude of EU instruments at play, the development nature of most of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) limits the scope for DG ECHO's transition. DG ECHO is building upon synergies and complementarities for each funded action with other EU instruments such as the RDPP/AMIF (Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs - DG HOME) for

²⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_age_marker_toolkit.pdf;
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/gender-sensitive-aid_en

enhanced protection and the EU (DG NEAR) Trust Fund for Africa-North Africa window (EUTF NA) for mixed migration related needs.

3) Other donors availability:

At the Brussels Conference, over USD 9.7 billion were raised in pledges – USD 6 billion for 2017 and a further USD 3.7 billion for 2018 and beyond, out of which 2/3 have come from the EU and its Member States. Other key non-EU donors have been the US, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Japan and the Gulf countries, with the latter still not delivering at its full potential.

4) Exit scenarios:

While it's still too early to consider exit scenarios, the move towards increased coherence and complementarity with other financial instruments based on the JHDFs will be reinforced. In neighboring countries, where no new arrivals are recorded and the needs of refugees entered a care and maintenance phase (both in camp and outside of camps), the handover of DG ECHO to stabilization / development instruments (IcSP, ENI, IPA, DCI, Madad, EUTF NA, etc.) that are better placed to provide long-term development support will continue in line with the EU strategy framework. **DG ECHO will continue to advocate for durable solutions for refugees in neighboring countries** (including resettlement and access to livelihoods) and will call for increased funding and coordination from development donors, in particular in those situations where refugees mix with transiting and stranded migrants, as well as hosting governments to address the protracted nature of the crisis. In case of voluntary and safe return DG ECHO will call for enhancing assistance for durable solution to returnees.