

Proposal for a

Revised EU-Turkey Statement 2.0

16 March 2021

Today the Members of the European Council met with their Turkish counterpart to address the continuing migration and refugee challenges they face.

Turkey and the European Union confirmed all specific commitments to the implementation of all the goals in the Statement of 18 March 2016, including those concerning the development of the Customs Union, the visa liberalisation process and EU-Turkey relations.

Some progress has been achieved in recent years. Turkey and the European Union recognise that further, swift and determined efforts are needed.

Turkey will accept the rapid return of all migrants not in need of international protection crossing from Turkey into Greece and to take back all irregular migrants intercepted in Turkish waters. Turkey and the EU agreed to continue stepping up measures against migrant smugglers.

In order to break the business model of smugglers and to offer migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk, the European Union and Turkey agreed on the following action points:

1) Migrants arriving in Greece will be duly registered and any application for asylum will be processed individually by the Greek authorities in accordance with the Asylum Procedures Directive and the UN refugee convention. All migrants will be protected in accordance with the relevant international standards and in respect of the principle of non-refoulement. Migrants not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive and who cross from Turkey into Greece after [NEW DATE] will be returned to Turkey. This will take place in full accordance with EU and international law, thus excluding any kind of collective expulsion. The costs of the return operations of irregular migrants will be covered by the European Union.

Turkey and the European Union will jointly [ENTRUST UNHCR or NOMINATE TWO EMINENT PERSONALITIES] with the task to monitor that standards defined in the European Convention on Human Rights and in ECtHR judgements are respected in implementing these commitments by all sides.

Turkey and the European Union will ask UNHCR in Turkey to process asylum requests of all those who are returned from Greece and who do not automatically qualify for temporary protection in Turkey.

2) Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for illegal migration opening from Turkey to the EU and will cooperate with neighbouring states as well as the European Union to this effect.

3) From the moment of conclusion of this Statement a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme is established, to resettle a total number of [TO BE INSERTED] in need of protection from Turkey to European Union member states over the next four years. The number of irregular arrivals across the Aegean during this period who cannot be returned to Turkey will be subtracted from the number to be resettled.

4) The European Union, in close cooperation with Turkey, will mobilise and then disburse another [NUMBER] billion euros under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey in the coming five years to ensure funding of further projects for refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey with swift input from Turkey. These projects will be determined before the end of March. A first list of specific projects for refugees, in particular projects in the areas of health, education, infrastructure, food supply and other costs of living that can be quickly funded from the facility, will be jointly determined within two weeks. Concrete projects for refugees might also benefit vulnerable Turkish citizens in the communities which are hosting a large number of refugees.

5) The European Union and its Member States will work with Turkey to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria, in close cooperation with all relevant international organisations. Turkey, the European Commission and interested EU member states will set up a permanent working group on the humanitarian crisis of IDPs in Syria to identify lasting solutions. They will also organise a global summit in 2021 to discuss the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis.

6) The fulfilment of Turkey's visa liberalisation roadmap remains a common objective. Turkey will take the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements to allow the Commission to make, following the required assessment of compliance with the benchmarks, an appropriate proposal on the basis of which the European Parliament and the Council can make a final decision.

7) In parallel to the successful implementation of this statement in 2021 the European Union will prepare to launch negotiations on a modernisation of the Customs Union before the end of this year, depending on finding a functioning conflict resolution mechanism for disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Background:

[The Aegean Tragedy – Key facts and key steps](#) - 24 January 2020

[The Merkel Plan – A proposal for the Syrian refugee crisis](#) - 4 October 2015

[Why people don't need to drown in the Aegean - A policy proposal](#) - 17 September 2015
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