



EU-TURKEY STATEMENT

ONE YEAR ON

On 18 March 2016, EU Heads of State or Government and Turkey agreed on the **EU-Turkey Statement** to end the flow of irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and replace it with organised, safe and legal channels to Europe. In the midst of the refugee crisis and with thousands of migrants and refugees arriving in Greece every day, this seemed to many like a plan almost impossible to implement. Yet, one year on, the Statement continues to deliver proof of its effectiveness on a daily basis. Irregular arrivals have dropped by 97%, while the number of lives lost at sea has decreased equally substantially. The EU has delivered on its financial commitment to support Turkey in its efforts in hosting refugees and providing support on the ground and in resettling Syrian refugees directly from Turkey to EU Member States. Turkey has followed up on its commitment to step up measures against people smuggling and has been cooperating closely on resettlement and return. Despite challenging circumstances, the first year of the EU-Turkey Statement has confirmed a steady delivery of tangible results. While continuous efforts need to be made by all sides and all EU Member States, the EU-Turkey Statement has become an important element of the EU's comprehensive approach on migration.

THE REFUGEE CRISIS – AN UNPRECEDENTED MIGRATORY CHALLENGE

In 2015 alone, more than one million people arrived in the EU, around 885,000 of them through Greece. The Greek asylum and reception system lacked the capacity to register and provide shelter to these migrants. Only a few of the thousands of persons arriving daily to Greece were effectively registered and the vast majority of migrants and asylum seekers moved on towards central Europe, along the Western Balkans route.

The EU's immediate response was aimed at better managing the migration flows and ensuring **shelter and assistance** for those in need. The EU supported Greece in the establishment of **hotspots**, and a **relocation scheme** to transfer persons in need of international protection to other EU Member States.

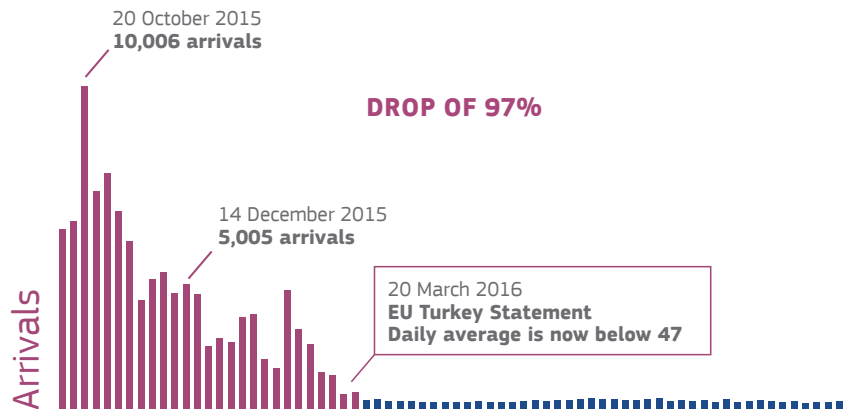


However, as a consequence of the migration flows, a number of Member States **introduced temporary internal border controls** to limit the number of migrants entering their territory. This put into question the proper functioning of the Schengen area of free movement. In Spring 2016, countries in the Western Balkans began to gradually apply entry conditions for migrants at their borders, but **arrivals from Turkey to Greece continued** resulting in an increasing number of migrants and refugees in Greece.

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A GAME CHANGER

The effects of the EU-Turkey Statement were immediate. Thanks notably to the cooperation with the Turkish authorities, arrivals decreased dramatically – showing clearly that the business model of smugglers exploiting migrants and refugees can be broken. From **10,000** in a single day in October 2015, daily crossings have gone down to an average of around **43** today, while the number of deaths in the Aegean decreased from 1,145 in the year before the statement to 80 in the year which followed. One year later, that's around one million people who have not taken dangerous routes to get to the European Union, and more than 1,000 who have not lost their lives trying.



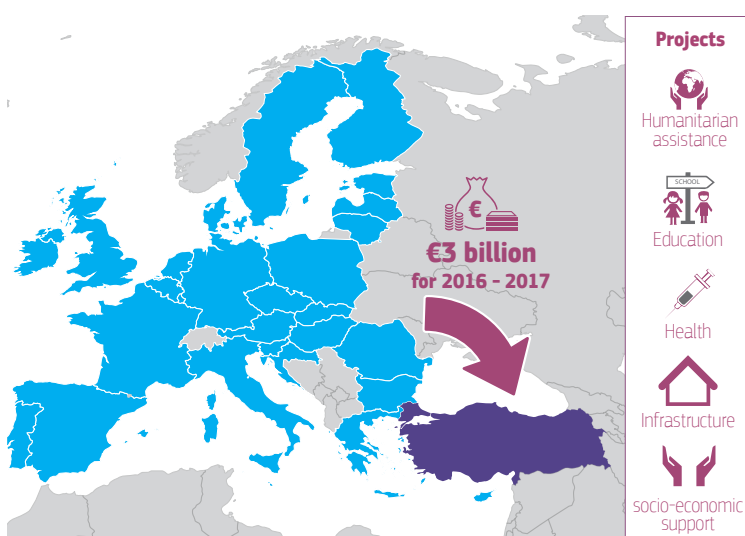
Core principle of the EU-Turkey Statement

All new irregular migrants or asylum seekers crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands will be returned to Turkey, after an individual assessment of their asylum claims in line with EU and international law. For every Syrian being returned to Turkey, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU from Turkey directly (1:1 mechanism). So far, 916 irregular migrants have been returned from Greece to Turkey and more than 4,000 Syrian refugees resettled from Turkey to EU Member States. In parallel, the EU will make available significant resources under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey to support refugees in Turkey.

Full respect of EU and international law

Everyone who applies for asylum in Greece has their applications treated on a case-by-case basis, in line with EU and international law requirements and the principle of *non-refoulement*. In each case there are individual interviews, individual assessments and rights of appeal. There are no blanket or automatic returns of migrants or asylum seekers.

EU support to Syrian refugees in Turkey



The EU is supporting Syrian refugees in Turkey with €3 billion for 2016 and 2017 through its Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The money goes directly to projects on the ground to address the needs of refugees and host communities with a focus on humanitarian assistance, education, health, municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support. In its first year, €2.2 billion has already been allocated from the Facility and 39 projects worth €1.5 billion have been signed.

Projects will notably ensure that 500,000 Syrian children have access to formal education, 70 new schools are built; 2,081 teachers and other education personnel have received training and two million refugees will get access to primary healthcare services.



For nine-year-old Nahed, the Child and Family Support Centre in Ankara is a haven, a safe place where she can laugh, play and draw her favourite cartoon characters. It's a far cry from the devastated streets of Aleppo, from where Nahed and her family were forced to flee after her brother Adnan suffered serious shrapnel injuries from a bomb which exploded in their neighbourhood. Both siblings now benefit from the psychosocial and educational support which the Centre provides, while its social workers also helped the family access the necessary medical care for Adnan to learn to walk again.

The Centre is run by the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants and receives financial support from the EU's Facility for Refugees in Turkey and UNICEF.

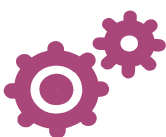
EU support to Greece

The Commission and the EU Member States are providing significant support to the Greek authorities in the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, to improve migration management and reception conditions in Greece. EU actions focus in particular on helping to alleviate the situation on the Greek islands.

	The year before the EU Turkey Statement	One year after the EU Turkey Statement
Registration rate at hotspots	8% in October 2015	100%
Reception capacity in Greece (on the islands)	2000 in October 2015	74.389 (of which 13.982 on the islands)
Capacity of Greek asylum service staff on the islands	16	120
First Instance decisions on asylum applications on the islands	0	12.254
Returns of irregular migrants to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement and the Greece-Turkey bilateral protocol	627	1504
Relocations	569	9383
Arrivals	988.703	27.711
Loss of lives	1145	80
EU agency support for Greece		EASO experts: 243 European Border and Coast Guard officers: 797



Over €1 billion in EU funding has been allocated to Greece to support migration management since the start of 2015, including more than €500 million in emergency assistance and almost €200 million for projects under the EU Emergency Support Instrument.



To secure the progress achieved through the EU-Turkey Statement and to ensure full implementation of the EU actions to alleviate the pressure on the Greek islands, EU Coordinator for the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement Maarten Verwey elaborated a Joint Action Plan with the Greek authorities to further accelerate asylum processes, increase the number of migrants returning from the Greek islands to Turkey, establish appropriate security measures in the hotspots and to accelerate relocation.

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A BUILDING BLOCK IN THE EU'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH ON MIGRATION

One year on, the EU-Turkey Statement is delivering on its main objectives of reducing both the number of persons arriving irregularly to the EU and the loss of life in the Aegean whilst providing safe and legal routes to the EU for those in need. The Statement has become an important element in the EU's comprehensive approach to better manage migration as set out in the European Agenda on Migration from May 2015, whose objectives it helps to implement:



Saving lives at sea and granting protection to those in need through resettlement.



Tackling the root causes of irregular migration and helping the most vulnerable with funding and direct support on the ground.



Ensuring that the EU's external borders are protected and that irregular migration can be stemmed, and that those not in need of protection are returned in full respect of international and human rights.