



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Brussels, 22 June 2026

**DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE
TO THE PUBLIC (23.07.2026)**

WK 8384/2026 INIT

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WORKING DOCUMENT

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
N° prev. doc.:	INIT 6902/2026 INIT;
Subject:	Action file on Syria

In view of the COREPER meeting of 26 June 2026 delegations will find attached the Action file on Syria.

Introduction / objectives

The fall of the Assad regime at the end of 2024 and the engagement of Syria in a political transition and socio-economic recovery process have created new openings for support on the ground in Syria and for EU coordinated efforts on all type of returns.

The EU supports a **peaceful and inclusive, Syrian-led transition, as well as socio-economic recovery and reconstruction efforts** to enable Syrians to rebuild their lives. At the same time, the escalation of conflict in the Middle East end of February 2026, in addition to some negative consequences on the economy, is leading to a significant number of people crossing into Syria (Syrian nationals and Lebanese crossing from Lebanon) which is increasing pressure on the capacities of the Syrian transitional authorities and the conditions in the country.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] To this end, the Syrian Transitional Authorities have announced a “*Syria without camps*” policy, aiming to facilitate the return of displaced people from IDP camps to rehabilitated areas across the country.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] To this end, coordinated engagement from Member States is necessary. Most people going back to Syria are doing so voluntarily. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

According to UNHCR, between 8 December 2024 and 27 February 2026 (before the escalation of conflict in the Middle East), a total of 1 470 609 persons had gone back to Syria, mainly from neighbouring countries: including from Türkiye (around 710 000, as of 25 February 2026), Lebanon (around 521 000), Jordan (over 184 000), Egypt (asylum closure requests submitted for around 34 000), and Iraq (around 7 212). Between December 2024 and 11 June 2026, 1 958 968 internally displaced persons are estimated to have returned to their areas of origin/selected destinations and an estimated 1 682 041 Syrians returned to Syria from other countries.

Actions

Action	Specific Objectives	Lead actor(s) and Timeframe	Actions completed, Results	Next Steps / Comments
1. Coordinating an EU framework on migration, including different types of returns to Syria	Coordinate efforts to improve conditions for all types of returns of Syrian nationals. Improve the conditions in Syria to achieve safe, dignified and sustainable returns to the country and address barriers to return, as well as strengthening readmission and reintegration capacity inside Syria, ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ Strengthen the work between different Council configurations to ensure coherence and work together on improving the conditions for all types of returns (Justice and Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Development).	Commission/EEAS: coordination and outreach ongoing.	- A technical visit to Damascus took place in June 2025 for exploratory talks with the Syrian transitional authorities on returns. - A visit by the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council followed in January 2026. - On 11 May 2026, the Council adopted the decision to fully resume the 1978 Cooperation Agreement with Syria. - On 11 May 2026, the first EU-Syria High Level Political Dialogue was held in which a number of bilateral issues were discussed, including strengthening coordination on migration issues.	- Keep discussing with the Syrian transitional authorities migration follow up of the EU-Syria High-Level Political Dialogue to ensure progress on all types of returns and to secure continued political commitment. ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ - Continue strengthening the EU's engagement with Syria, including support for institutional capacity-building and governance reform, in line with Syrian priorities and EU interests. ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████ ████████████████████

[illegible]

				setting up reliable communication channels on irregular migration routes and border security challenges.
2. Supporting on the ground internally displaced persons and Syrians having gone back to Syria	<i>Prioritise support for stability and socio-economic recovery in Syria, working with the Syrian transitional authorities, UNHCR and other partners towards enabling conditions conducive to internally displaced persons going back as well as safe, dignified, voluntary (when applicable) and sustainable returns.</i>	• Commission/EEAS/Member States: ongoing support.	• The EU is <u>supporting local governance</u> in selected locations with high number of returns or great potential for return providing support directly to municipal councils through the Nexus Response Mechanism (NRM) -EUR 31.5 million implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) from January 2026 to December 2028. • The EU is providing <u>support to housing, land and property rights (HLP)</u> and <u>civil documentation</u> with a programme implemented by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNHCR, IOM, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). This programme started in January 2023 and will run until the end of 2026 (EUR 12.5 million contract with UN-Habitat). • The EU is <u>supporting vulnerable Syrian refugees</u> under the Special Measure 2024/2025 through the EU Support for Safe Returns and a	• Accelerate implementation of the Special Measure 2025 for Syria (EUR 139 million), including: ○ Continue support to housing, land and property rights (HLP) through an allocation of EUR 10 million. ○ Team Europe Initiative Technical Assistance Hub (EUR 14 million) ○ Support to the health sector / rehabilitation of Homs Al-Rustan Hospital (EUR 15 million). • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED]

			Stable Future for Syrian Refugees. The programme is implemented by UNHCR, ILO and IOM since November 2025 and until October 2029 (EUR 40 million in Syria and EUR 40 million for similar needs in Lebanon -see below). It aims at <u>strengthening governance and institutional capacity, expanding livelihood opportunities and delivering targeted assistance to both internally displaced persons and refugees going back to Syria.</u>	
3. Supporting Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries	Work with the authorities in partner countries in the region (and in coordination with Syrian transitional authorities and UN partners) to support safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable returns of Syrian refugees who make a well-informed decision to return to the country. At the same time, the EU keeps supporting host countries and communities. Continue to advocate for maintaining the protection space for Syrian refugees and	• Commission/EEAS/Member States: ongoing support.	<u>In Türkiye:</u> • Project ‘Supporting Voluntary, Safe and Dignified Return of Syrians to Safe Zones in Syria (Family Based Voluntary Return)’ on <u>voluntary returns</u> with the objective of increasing the effectiveness of the Turkish authorities in facilitating voluntary, safe, dignified and orderly returns to Syria in line with international standards. The project is implemented by UNHCR, it started in 2025 and is running until December 2028 (EUR 95 million). • Programme ‘Supporting International Protection Decision/Temporary Protection Processes of Türkiye’ to <u>strengthen protection and refugee registration processes</u>. It is being implemented	<u>In Türkiye:</u> • [REDACTED] • These actions are being funded from the EUR 2 billion allocated in February 2024 in assistance to Türkiye. EUR 195 million from the 2027 budget still needs to be programmed and

	<i>supporting host countries in the region in the delivery of basic services for refugees and vulnerable host communities.</i> <i>Exploring other durable solutions to the protracted displacement of Syrian refugees, including resettlement, labour mobility and complementary pathways, notably for refugees who may not be able to return even in case of a relative improvement of the conditions in Syria.</i>		<i>by UNHCR and directly linked to the voluntary returns project (above). It started in 2025 and is running until December 2028 (EUR 60 million).</i> <u>In Lebanon:</u> • <i>The EU is <u>fostering durable solutions for Syrian refugees</u> under the Special Measure 2024/2025 through the EU Support for Safe Returns and a Stable Future for Syrian Refugees. The programme is implemented by UNHCR, ILO and IOM since November 2025 and until October 2029 (EUR 40 million in Syria -see above- and EUR 40 million in Lebanon). Regarding voluntary returns, the support in Lebanon focuses on <u>ensuring that the decision-making of refugees is well-informed</u> and removing obstacles to voluntary returns, <u>facilitating pre-departure orientation and safe and dignified transportation</u> for those who decide to return. The relevant Lebanese institutions, including border authorities, receive support in <u>strengthening their capacities</u> to manage displacement.</i> <u>In Jordan:</u> • <i>The EU is contributing to social assistance and services to Syrian refugees in Jordan (EUR 80 million</i>	<i>discussions with the Turkish authorities are ongoing.</i> <u>In Lebanon:</u> • <i>The EUR 500 million package for the period 2024-2025 adopted in August 2024 to support Lebanon's stability, security and reforms includes EUR 368 million for basic services (education, health, water and sanitation, social assistance) and protection of refugees from Syria and vulnerable Lebanese, as well as durable solutions for refugees, including voluntary returns to Syria.</i> • [REDACTED]
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			currently covered by the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration programme (MPRR-NA). This programme is implemented by IOM.	• [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
4. Coordinating return actions concerning Syrian nationals in EU Member States	Address barriers to return, as well as strengthening readmission and reintegration capacity in Syria. Coordinate Member States' engagement, including on the operationalisation of voluntary 'go-and-see visits'. Make a distinction between the situation and framework applicable to beneficiaries of international protection and/or those legally	• Commission/EEAS/Member States/Frontex: engagement ongoing.	• In October 2025, the Commission published informal guidance through 'questions and answers on voluntary go-and-see visits'¹. In some Member States, Syrian beneficiaries of international protection can visit Syria to determine the viability of a possible permanent and voluntary repatriation, whilst maintaining their international protection status in the EU. Syrians with a valid residence permit in the EU but without international protection status could also undertake such visits. • The Commission and the EEAS have been holding strategic discussions with Member States on	• The EU will continue to work on the socio-economic recovery and reconstruction of Syria, especially in areas where returns are taking place, addressing barriers to return and supporting community stabilisation. • The EU will keep contributing to the Syrian administrative capacity to absorb and handle returns. The recently established EU Technical Assistance Hub in Damascus can mobilise demand driven expertise to support institutional capacity on this regard.

¹ [f5245470-2596-438d-b6c3-b2286850dca6_en](#).

	<i>residing in the EU on one hand; and Syrian nationals without a right to stay who have been issued a return order, on the other hand, [REDACTED]</i> [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]		<i>a joint EU-coordinated outreach to the Syrian transitional authorities on readmission, including on capacity building.</i> <i>• Discussions on returns coordination from the EU to Syria take place in the High-Level Network for Returns.</i> <i>• Frontex is supporting voluntary return operations since March 2025 and has activated the EU Reintegration Programme since June 2025.</i> [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] <i>In general, according to Eurostat, the number of Syrian nationals without a right to stay in the EU returned to Syria in 2025 increased significantly compared to 2024 (+442%, 8 265 vs 1 870).</i>	<i>• Lessons learnt and best practices in countries neighbouring Syria can inform the development of EU support and the provisions of assistance to beneficiaries of international protection (and Syrians with a valid residence permit in the EU) who wish to go back to Syria voluntarily.</i>
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ANNEX I - Member States actions

Action	Objective	Budget	Timeframe
CZ TBC: UNCHR project	Action 3 Czechia is working closely with UNHCR to prepare project of targeted assistance at stabilization of internally displaced persons and returnees in Syria, especially from Lebanon.	TBC	2026
DE Supporting on the ground internally displaced persons and Syrians having gone back to Syria	Action 2 Humanitarian Assistance: Providing life-saving assistance for IDPs, refugees, returnees and host communities in SYR via UN and NGO partners in various sectors, including food assistance, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as demining.	EUR 30,95 million in 2026 so far	2026
DE Supporting on the ground internally displaced persons and Syrians having gone back to Syria	Action 2 Special Initiative Displaced Persons and Host Countries (Development Cooperation): • Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for internally displaced persons and the local population in Syria • Promoting employment in the health sector and mental health and psychosocial support • Support rehabilitation of infrastructure in urban areas • Employment creation and social cohesion in Syria • Return and Reintegration in Syria	EUR 9 million in 2026 EUR 25 million in 2026 EUR 20 million in 2026 EUR 10 million in 2026 EUR 11 million in 2026	2026-2030 2026-2029 2026-2028 2026-2028 2026-2030
DE Supporting on the ground internally displaced persons and	Action 2 Transitional Development Assistance (Development Cooperation):	EUR 5 million in 2026	2026

Syrians having gone back to Syria	- WFP: Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2022-2026 (Topping up with focus on returnees and reintegration) - International Rescue Committee: Enabling Environment for Syrian Returnees through Evidence-Based System Strengthening Interventions in Syria and Lebanon RET Germany e.V.: Resilient Education and Livelihoods for Displacement and Return-affected Communities in Northwest Syria	EUR 7,2 million in 2026 EUR 3,8 million in 2026	2027-2029 2027-2030
DE Supporting on the ground internally displaced persons and Syrians having gone back to Syria	Action 2 Reintegration assistance: Project assisting Syrian returnees from DE who are not eligible for EURP support.	N/A	2026
DE Coordinating return actions concerning Syrian nationals in EU Member States	Action 4 Exchange with EU-MS and regional key actors on challenges for voluntary return, reintegration support and approaches for improving effectiveness.	N/A	2026
DK The Danish Migration Management Programme (CAPACITY). Country Specific Project:	To support priority countries of origin with capacity development and technical assistance within migration management, as well as their capacity on return and readmission, including the provision of sustainable reintegration. To strengthen safe and rights-based border management at the Jordanian-Syrian border.	EUR 2 million (DK funding only)	2026-2027 (24 months)

BRIDGE – Building Regional Institutional Development and Governance for Enhanced Border Management (Jordan & Syria).	To enhance the technical and managerial skills of Syrian officials and Jordanian officials (main and second beneficiaries respectively) in migration governance, through targeted and quality-assured training. To enhance the physical and institutional capacities of training infrastructure at the Jordan-Syria borders to support sustainable, rights-based migration governance.		
EE Contribution for UNICEF's humanitarian activities in closed camps and detention centres in Northeast Syria	Support UNICEF with a contribution of 50 000 EUR for humanitarian activities and rehabilitation of children in closed camps and detention centres in Northeast Syria.	EUR 50 000	Contribution made in August 2025, no specific requirements about the timeframe.
EE Contribution to NGO Mondo for project <i>Mitigating the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon</i> .	The objective of Mondo's project is to mitigate the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon through the distribution of food and hygiene kits and providing basic psychological support to internally displaced persons in Lebanon. The project will benefit a total of 500 families which is around 2,500 people who have been forced to flee from South Lebanon, Bekaa and other regions, and who have found refuge in and outside of the collective sites located in Saida city (South Lebanon) and Baaloul village (Bekaa). This includes also vulnerable groups, such as Syrian refugees.	EUR 67 000	From 01/04/2026 to 31/08/2026
EE Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for	Estonian Refugee Council (ERC) aims to support 1,100 displaced people in Lebanon by providing emergency food and basic relief assistance. This includes also vulnerable groups, such as Syrian refugees Following the recent escalation, over 1 million individuals have been displaced, including approximately	EUR 53 000	From 01/05/2026 to 30/06/2026

Displaced Population in Lebanon	134,200 people residing in more than 600 collective shelters, many of which are operating beyond capacity and facing limited access to food and essential items. The project will deliver 16,800 hot meals, 50 ready-to-eat (RTE) food parcels, and 250 core relief items (CRIs). The intervention will improve food security for 850 individuals and improve shelter conditions for 250 individuals, reducing negative coping mechanisms, and mitigate health risks associated with overcrowding, while ensuring dignity and well-being of affected populations.		
FR Supporting international projects towards Syrian refugees and internal displaced people.	Support stability, security and access to basic needs to Syrian refugees and IDPs in Syria.	EUR 5.9 million allocated to the UNHCR	2025
FR Humanitarian and recovery aid	A significant portion of this aid is aimed at facilitating the return of displaced persons in Syrian, by supporting humanitarian demining, economic recovery and access to essential services (e.g., health, education, water, hygiene and sanitation). Some examples of France-supported projects: - with SNHR: Supporting the rights to housing, land and property; - With Expertise France; Supporting Syria health recovery and reconstruction effort; With ACTED: Strengthening access to safe shelter and basic services, and supporting sustainable agricultural practices to protect and improve livelihoods in areas of significant return	EUR 57 million in 2025 – 2026 budget pending for approval.	Ongoing.

FR Advocacy to non-traditional donors	Create synergies with non-European donors and unite efforts to support the creation of conditions conducive to the return of refugees through the joint financing of projects	To be defined.	Ongoing.
FR Initiating a political dialogue with the Syrian authorities	Ministers of Domestic Affairs have initiated a dialogue to strengthen bilateral migration cooperation.		
FR Food aid (French initiative for food security and nutrition)	Bolster food security and nutrition among vulnerable displaced communities by developing the monitoring of malnutrition, integrated emergency responses and resilience activities to boost agricultural productivity in different regions of Syria (Aleppo, Idleb and Hama governorates, as well as Damascus surroundings). These projects target specifically vulnerable households composed of children under two years old and breast-feeding women and benefited to 100.000 internal displaced persons and returnees in 2025.	EUR 7,3 million in 2025 (5 projects through the French initiative for food security and nutrition)	
FR Supporting voluntary returns and reintegration to Syria	To encourage Syrian nationals to return voluntarily to their country, the decree of October 9, 2023, concerning assistance with return and reintegration, was amended to benefit Syrians residing illegally in Syria: the maximum amount of the lump-sum incentive allowance now systematically corresponds to the amount of the increased return allowance, i.e., €2,500, without any degressivity.		In December 2025, 161 Syrians (adults and children) voluntarily returned to Syria thanks to this assistance. Nearly 70 cases were being processed.
FR Facilitating temporary returns to Syria	Since January 2025, by way of derogation from standard procedures, prefectures can issue safe-conduct passes to Syrian nationals under the protection of the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) to allow them to make an "exploratory" return to Syria.		By the end of April 2026, at least 225 safe-conduct passes had been issued. As of April 22, 2026, the system was suspended given the situation in the Middle East, refugees being

			placed under the protection of France.
NL Protection for returnees and HLP support	Supporting voluntary returns from neighbouring host countries with a focus on protection activities and housing land and property rights. Netherlands MFA, with UNHCR and UNHABITAT.	EUR 10 million	01/12/2025-31/12/2026
NL Strengthening institutional capacity to support returns to Syria	Objective: Contribute to facilitating voluntary, safe and dignified returns through a robust evidence base and improved civil registry and identity management systems. Outcomes: Syrian authorities have improved capacity to make data-driven programmatic decisions utilizing DTM data products in both Arabic and English National authorities have enhanced legal identity systems to facilitate population mobility and voluntary returns of Syrian nationals. Partners: IOM, Syrian authorities, including the Ministry of Interior, relevant departments (Civil Affairs, Civil Registry, Legal Affairs, ID Card, Immigration and Passport, Immigration and Passport Administration), Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates.	EUR 5 million	01/01/2026-31/12/2027
NL Building Regional Institutional Development and Governance for Enhanced Border Management (Jordan and Syria)	Objectives: Improving the technical and management skills of Syrian and Jordanian officials in the field of migration management. Improving the physical and institutional capacities of the border management infrastructure in Syria (Nasib border crossing). Strengthening regional cooperation and peer learning in the field of border management. Partners: ICMPD, relevant Syrian and Jordanian authorities, co-donors Austria and Denmark.		

NL	Capacity building in border management, with a focus on training female border guards. Assessment of Jdeidet Yabous Border Crossing Point to identify improvements for a more accessible working environment for female officers. Partners: IOM, Syrian Ministry of Interior (Training Department), Police Academy		01/12/2025 - ongoing
SE	Action 2: Supporting on the ground internally displaced persons and Syrians having gone back to Syria	Approx. EUR 9 million	2025-2027
SE	Action 3: Supporting Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries	Approx. EUR 10 million	2025-2027

ANNEX: Common messages

- Welcome the **advancement in the EU-Syria bilateral relations**, including the reciprocal high-level visits, the holding of the EU-Syria High-Level Political Dialogue and the full resumption of the 1978 Cooperation Agreement.
- Express support for a **peaceful and inclusive transition, as well as socio-economic recovery efforts** to enable Syrians to rebuild their lives.
- Welcome the **openness of the Syrian transitional authorities to engage in discussions** on key policy areas with the EU, including migration.
- [REDACTED]
- Encourage the full use of existing EU instruments, including the **Global Gateway strategy** and the **Pact for the Mediterranean**, to support Syria's socio-economic recovery, connectivity, investment and institutional development, in line with the priorities identified by the Syrian authorities and the EU and its Member States.
- Underscore the importance of disrupting smuggling networks and reiterate the EU's readiness to support capacity building in that regard.
- Express the need to factor in **current developments in the Middle East**, especially regarding Lebanon, as the evolving situation is increasing pressure on the capacities and conditions on the ground in Syria. [REDACTED]
- Reiterate that the EU will remain committed, under a Team Europe approach, to **support stability and socio-economic recovery** inside Syria, working with the Syrian transitional authorities, UNHCR and other partners.
- Support the need to improve conditions in Syria to **achieve safe, dignified and sustainable returns to the country and address barriers to return**, as well as strengthening readmission and reintegration capacity inside Syria.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] The EU is supporting the reintegration of Syrian nationals with no right to stay in the EU through the European Reintegration Programme by Frontex, that is implemented in Syria through a local partner.
- [REDACTED]
- Share that the EU promotes a **coherent approach to voluntary returns of refugees from the neighbouring countries and durable solutions at regional level**. This approach should be coordinated with partners, starting with the Syrian transitional authorities and the authorities in host countries as well as UN organisations (especially UNHCR). Actions on the ground should be people-centred and conflict-sensitive.
- Confirm that the EU is working with the authorities in partner countries in the region (and in coordination with Syrian transitional authorities and UN partners) to support safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable returns of Syrian refugees who make a well-informed decision to return to the country. The EU also keeps **supporting host countries and communities** and continues to advocate for maintaining the protection space for Syrian refugees and the delivery of basic services for refugees and vulnerable host communities.

- **Highlight** utilising existing Member State diplomatic infrastructure and long-standing presences on the ground in Syria, leveraging these established assets as a vital bridge to facilitate, stabilise, and monitor the strengthening of EU-Syria cooperation on migration and the implementation of joint commitments.
 - Reiterate that EU also supports exploring **other durable solutions** to the protracted displacement of Syrian refugees, including resettlement, labour mobility and complementary pathways, notably for refugees who may not be able to return even in case of a relative improvement of the conditions in Syria.
-