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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Relations with Jordan
- European Union's position for the Association Council's twelfth meeting
(Brussels, 10 July 2017)

Delegations will find attached the European Union's position for the twelfth EU-Jordan Association Council.

**TWELFTH MEETING OF THE EU-JORDAN ASSOCIATION COUNCIL
(BRUSSELS, 10 JULY 2017)**

Statement by the European Union

1. On the occasion of the **twelfth meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Council** and seven months into the agreement of 19 December 2016 on Partnership Priorities (and Compact) between the EU and Jordan, the EU reiterates its commitment to further strengthening the strong partnership between the EU and Jordan. In line with the EU Global Strategy, the EU has a strategic interest in Jordan's stability, resilience and prosperity, both internally and with a regional context. The EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities symbolise a steady strengthening of the political and operational engagement since the entry into force of the EU-Jordan Association Agreement in 2002. The EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities were the first to be concluded under the revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is itself clear evidence of our strong relationship.
2. The EU attaches great importance to its bilateral relationship with **Jordan as a key partner**, as demonstrated by the meetings between His Majesty King Abdullah II and the Presidents of the European Institutions in 2015 and 2016 and the visits to Jordan during this and the previous years of High Representative Mogherini, Commissioner Hahn and several other Members of the European Commission. Official missions by Delegations from the European Parliament and frequent senior-level dialogues in the context of multilateral and regional fora, the co-chaired Union for the Mediterranean as well as the EU-Jordan Association Committee and Subcommittees, have demonstrated the mutual benefit to Jordan and the EU to sustain our engagement.
3. The EU commends the **excellent working relations** in Amman between the EU Delegation and the authorities of Jordan. The EU is grateful to Jordan for temporarily hosting the EU Delegation to Yemen in Amman. The EU is appreciative of Jordan's logistical support, which is essential in facilitating the work of the EU in Yemen.

4. The EU commits to further deepening dialogue and cooperation with Jordan, setting a **strategic agenda** around the three mutually reinforcing objectives reflected in the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities: macro-economic stability and sustainable and knowledge-based growth; strengthening democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights; regional stability and security, including addressing counter-terrorism. Cooperation will also be pursued on a number of cross-cutting priorities such as migration and mobility, including the further implementation of the Mobility Partnership. The EU will prioritise the economic, social and political inclusion of vulnerable groups, including youth and women across the different areas of engagement with Jordan.
5. Jordan has been heavily impacted by the crisis in Syria, which has further aggravated existing challenges. The EU is committed to support Jordan in pursuing an ambitious economic and political reform agenda, on the basis of a long-term strategy, as it provides the best guarantee for upholding stability and prosperity. The EU welcomes Jordan's **comprehensive approach** as outlined in its development strategy 'Jordan 2025: a National Vision and Strategy' as well as HM King Abdullah II's discussion papers.
6. At the Brussels Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region, hosted by the EU on 5th April 2017, the Conference co-chairs commended once again on behalf of the international community the continuous efforts of the people and authorities of Jordan in accommodating Syrian refugees. The EU will continue supporting Jordan in its **holistic approach** to the refugee crisis and in maximising impact, including in terms of the mutual commitments set out in the Brussels Conference output document on 'Supporting Resilience of Host Countries and Refugees in the context of the Syrian crisis', as well as the EU-Jordan Compact. The EU recalls the shared commitment that measures taken in support of Syrian refugees will not be at the detriment of other people residing and seeking protection in Jordan.

7. Since the start of the Syria crisis, the EU has allocated close to **EUR 1.63 billion to Jordan**, of which EUR 1 billion as a response to the Syrian crisis including humanitarian assistance and support to vulnerable host communities and refugees from Syria via the EU regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, the 'Madad' Fund. It also includes EUR 380 million allocated in macro-financial assistance (MFA). At the Brussels Conference, the EU confirmed its willingness to maintain the level of support allocated for 2016-17 in 2018 and committed to a similar level for 2019.
8. While applying the different components of its **operational tool box**, from bilateral aid to stability support, humanitarian assistance, human rights and democracy support, concessional financing and MFA, the EU will ensure full complementarity and coherence.

Strengthening Economic Stability, Sustainable and Knowledge-Based Growth, Quality Education and Job Creation

9. The EU welcomes Jordan's strategic vision outlined in "Jordan 2025" and in its 2018-2022 plan to **stimulate the Jordanian economy**. The EU reiterates its full support to Jordan in the effective implementation of economic reform.
10. The EU will continue to provide budget support for structural reform focusing on improved public service delivery and resource management, accountability and transparency and on enhancing the environment for investment and job creation notably for youth by the **private sector**. The latter will benefit from: a more predictable and simplified legal and regulatory framework; consistent implementation of existing legislation; improved framework for access to credit by companies, notably micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and efforts to ensure that the population has skills that match the needs of the labour market. The EU's private sector development and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) budget support programmes will assist Jordan in these areas.
11. The EU will support initiatives to increase the **participation of women in the economy** as a way to increase the level of economic activity and in line with the EU Gender Action Plan.

12. The EU adopted a second programme of **macro-financial assistance** for Jordan in December 2016. The EU looks forward to a swift agreement on the implementation modalities. The EU remains committed to consider a third MFA package to Jordan, as long as this is matched with structural reform measures and provided the related requirements are met.
13. The EU will continue to foster the **enhancement of trade relations** with Jordan, as an important vehicle for investment and job creation. The EU will continue to support Jordan in its efforts to improve its export performance by boosting its general export capacity and competitiveness and achieving a closer integration into global value chains. To this end, the EU will work actively with Jordan to support Jordanian producers in meeting specific technical, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements that may at present hinder their ability to take fuller advantage of the preferential access Jordan already enjoys on the EU market. The EU stands ready to explore ideas for additional steps to facilitate trade or deepen the existing Free Trade Agreement.
14. The EU will support Jordan to ensure the full and swift implementation of the decision on the relaxed **rules of origin**, agreed on 19th July 2016, as was most recently confirmed at the joint event on “Trade and Business Opportunities in Jordan”, held in Brussels on 3rd May 2017. The first positive results under this ground-breaking initiative can now be seen in terms of Jordanian companies registering under the scheme and committing to employing additional number of Syrian refugees. However, the EU notes that the results to date in terms of additional investment, exports and employment creation have been modest and considers much more can be achieved. The EU therefore encourages Jordan to intensify efforts to implement the scheme, to publicise its benefits to potential investors in the private sector, and to take forward more general initiatives to improve the investment climate, which would also be likely to have wider spill-over benefits for the economy beyond the Rules of Origin initiative.

15. The EU commends Jordan's efforts to integrate refugees into the formal labour market, having allocated since January 2016 over 50,000 **work permits** to Syrians. The EU will support Jordan in further increasing the number of work permits, to meet the objectives set in the EU-Jordan Compact and the London Conference Compact. The EU also encourages Jordan to maintain efforts to reduce the number of undocumented refugees and facilitate their participation in the labour market.
16. The EU will work with Jordan in the implementation of Jordan's **Human Resource Development Plan**, and reform in the sectors of education and vocational education and training as outlined in HM King Abdullah II's 7th Discussion Paper of April 2017. The EU will provide support to policies and programmes designed to improve the quality of education and vocational education and training, increasing the focus on analytical thinking, entrepreneurship and new technologies, notably in view of enhancing the employment opportunities of young people.
17. Increased **student and staff mobility** as well as capacity building projects through Erasmus+ and other programmes will be pursued in the same vein. The EU would in particular welcome the participation of Jordan in the eTwinningPlus action virtually linking schools in Europe and partner countries.
18. The EU will sustain Jordan's efforts in providing education to all, as reconfirmed at the Brussels Conference in April 2017 and inspired by the objective to have '**no lost generation**'. Acknowledging the heavy impact on Jordan's resources, the EU has provided budget and other support to construct schools, allow the enrolment of 125,000 Syrian students in the formal education system and to hire and train some 5,700 teachers. The EU will work with Jordan to ensure that all children without exception have the opportunity to attend school and receive basic education.

19. The EU is committed to enhance the integration of **research and innovation** in education and TVET programmes, as well as in public and private sector investment. Increased cooperation between research and innovation centres and small and medium enterprises will have a positive effect on Jordan's competitiveness. The EU welcomes Jordan's positive approach in that regard and encourages Jordan to make full use of Horizon 2020 and of research mobility and partnership initiatives.
20. The forthcoming **Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area** (PRIMA) will provide additional opportunities for cooperation between the EU and the PRIMA Participating States, and the EU looks forward to active cooperation with Jordan soon. PRIMA is expected to mobilise joint research on two of the most urgent challenges to the Euro-Mediterranean area which are highly relevant to Jordan: the efficiency and sustainability of food production and water provision. In this context, the EU will welcome the successful finalisation of negotiations on an international agreement for Jordan's participation in PRIMA.
21. The EU welcomes the launch of the **SESAME** international research centre on 16th May 2017 following substantial EU financial support for its construction and operation. Through the universal language of science, SESAME offers unique opportunities to the research and science communities of Jordan and countries in the region. Importantly, increased cooperation among researchers from different countries in the region can create a peace dividend.
22. The EU also welcomes Jordan's interest in space cooperation including EGNOS/Galileo. In this regard, the EU will continue discussing and examine interest in EGNOS extension to the whole ENP South region.
23. The EU welcomes the ratification by Jordan of the **Paris Agreement** on climate change in November 2016. The EU seeks to intensify cooperation with Jordan to turn climate goals into climate action and will support the implementation of its Nationally Determined Contribution. This will be closely related to other areas of active engagement between the EU and Jordan such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, support for low-carbon, resource efficient growth and natural resource management. The EU will cooperate with Jordan in fostering innovative research and knowledge-based solutions.

24. The EU recognises the importance of water security in Jordan. In this context, the EU looks forward to the implementation of the **Red Sea/Dead Sea** project, subject to the positive findings of the ongoing environmental impact assessment. The EU sees the equal involvement of the Palestinian side as an important element to ensure the success of the project. The project should play a role in the adequate provision of water for the populations in the region, with an impact on current and future sources of conflict, and combating the effects of climate change on the Dead Sea. In addition, resources from the European External Investment Plan and the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis ('The Madad Fund') may be used to support reforms and finance investments in the area of water and wastewater treatment and solid waste management to provide the necessary infrastructure, notably in light of the additional pressures as a result of accommodating Syrian refugees.

Strengthening Democratic Governance, the Rule of Law and Human Rights

25. The respect of democratic principles and fundamental human rights constitutes a **key pillar of the EU-Jordan Association Agreement**. The EU values strongly the regular dialogue at political and senior official level and the commitment by Jordan to advancing on the rule of law, parliamentary government and the respect of human rights. The EU has welcomed Jordan's National Plan for Human Rights 2016-2025 and HM the King's Sixth Discussion Paper of 16th October 2016 on the Rule of Law and the Civil State. The EU commends efforts on core issues related to the rule of law such as an effective and well-functioning judicial system as well as addressing corruption. The EU has supported Jordan's Justice Reform Strategy and will support Jordan in its implementation, including by promoting the interface between rule of law and security.

26. The EU will intensify work with Jordan on **electoral reform** in support of the Independent Election Commission and the **strengthening of the parliamentary and political party system** in the country. The EU encourages Jordan to take up the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) which was deployed to Jordan to observe the parliamentary elections of 20 September 2016. As for other domains, the EU advocates that particular attention be given to the inclusion of youth and women.

27. On the human rights front, the EU has expressed concern that **freedoms of expression and association** have been challenged by the use of counter-terrorism provisions. Jordan has an active civil society and the EU takes the view that the best antidote for radicalisation is an open society where human rights and fundamental freedoms are promoted and protected. It is in that context that the EU calls for a balanced and targeted use of legislative and administrative provisions related to the regulation of civil society organisations in full compliance with international human rights law.
28. The concluding observations of the review in 2015 by the UN Committee Against **Torture**, provide a useful benchmark for engaging with Jordan in further strengthening its legal framework including the criminalisation of all forms of torture and ill-treatment. The EU calls on Jordan to continue investigating all alleged torture cases and to prosecute the perpetrators.
29. The EU welcomes the proposal of the Government of Jordan to revoke article 308 of the penal code, which allowed rapists to marry their victims to escape punishment; the EU looks forward to its early adoption. This is a positive step towards gender equality and enhancing **women's rights**, an area on which further progress could be achieved.
30. The EU commends Jordan's efforts in the area of **freedom of religion or belief** and in promoting peaceful religious co-existence. This sets a positive example for the entire region.
31. The EU regrets that the de facto moratorium on the **death penalty**, which was in place from 2006 until 2014, was interrupted with executions in December 2014 and early 2015 and was further eroded with the execution of 15 convicted persons in March 2017. The EU calls on Jordan to re-instate the de-facto moratorium, with a view to ultimately abolishing the death penalty. The EU also regrets that Jordan, State Party to the Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court** received the President of Sudan on the occasion of the 2017 Arab League Summit on 29th March, for whom an arrest warrant has been issued.

32. The EU will continue to support efforts by Jordan and the international community in ensuring life-saving protection and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to people in need. The EU acknowledges progress and calls on Jordan to continue to do its utmost to facilitate humanitarian access and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance to those stranded along the border with Syria, many of whom are living in dire conditions. With respect to Syrian refugees on its territory, the EU calls on Jordan to sustain its efforts in guaranteeing their **protection** and ensuring their registration. Return to their country of origin should only occur when the conditions allow and on a voluntary, dignified and safe basis, in accordance with applicable norms of international law and the principle of non-refoulement.

Strengthening Cooperation on Regional Stability, including Counter-Terrorism

33. The EU commends Jordan's active diplomatic role including its constructive and effective engagement within the **United Nations**, to the benefit of the global good, for instance during its membership of the Security Council and in the run up to the UN General Assembly Summit on International Migration in 2016.
34. The EU strongly values its co-Presidency with Jordan of the **Union for the Mediterranean** (UfM) since 2012. UfM cooperation has constituted a solid basis for engagement between the EU and its Southern partners on key issues ranging from natural resource management to employment creation and youth inclusion impacting on the stability of Mediterranean society which is of mutual interest to the EU and its partners. The EU values the role of Anna Lindh Foundation in support of the EuroMed dialogue.
35. Jordan's hosting of the 2017 League of Arab States Summit and of several World Economic Forum events for the MENA region are other examples of the country's active regional engagement, with positive benefits to Jordan. Improved regional stability and greater regional economic cooperation will be conducive to increased prosperity for Jordan and its neighbours, including Iraq. In light of tensions in the region, the EU strongly values Jordan's active and consensus-seeking diplomatic role.

36. The EU Strategy for Syria endorsed by the EU Council Conclusions of 3 April 2017 reconfirmed the imperative of a credible political solution to the **Syria crisis** in line with the Geneva communiqué and UNSCR 2254 and the central role played by the UN in that regard. Initiatives in view of reducing violence should be framed in support of the Geneva process. The EU is committed to intensifying its partnership with Jordan within this framework and in supporting Jordan's political and diplomatic efforts, including in the context of the International Syria Support Group and the EU's Regional Initiative for the Future of Syria.
37. The EU recognises Jordan's indispensable role and will continue to engage closely with Jordan in pursuing a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two state solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign, and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. The EU recalls the specific significance of the holy sites and makes a strong call for upholding the status quo put in place in 1967 for the Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount in line with previous understandings and with respect to Jordan's special role, and underlines the significance of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.
38. A number of security and terrorist incidents and the phenomenon of foreign fighters indicate that Jordan has been seriously affected by the threats posed by **terrorism** and violent extremism. The EU welcomes Jordan's multi-faceted approach, engaging in the Global Coalition against Da'esh on the one hand and continuing diplomatic initiatives in support of for instance inter-religious tolerance on the other. The EU has also welcomed HM King Abdullah II's initiative with the Aqaba process.
39. The EU and Jordan will continue to work together on **countering violent extremism**. On-going actions supported by the EU have included: institutional capacity building; public messaging and communication; as well as a comprehensive study on the drivers behind violent extremism in Jordan. Results are expected during summer 2017 and will guide further EU support in this field.

40. The EU-Jordan Workshop on Counter-Terrorism/Enhanced Security of 15th March 2016 has laid the basis for regular policy dialogue and increased bilateral cooperation that must be stepped up. The EU is committed to enhancing its support to Jordan, including on issues related to **integrated border management**, considering the multiple advantages from a security, protection, mobility and economic point of view. It is in Jordan's vital interest to maintain stability at its borders.
41. The EU also welcomes the initiative launched and the actions carried out with Jordan since 2016, to exchange views and best practices in the prevention and combatting of **trafficking of firearms**. The EU looks forward to strengthening its cooperation with Jordan in this regard.
42. The EU welcomes Jordan's declared interest in strengthening cooperation in the field of **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**, including through the secondment of personnel to CSDP missions and operations. The EU is ready to support further steps in this regard, notably the opening of negotiations of a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA) on the participation of Jordan in EU Crisis Management Operations in accordance with the relevant procedures.

Implementing the EU-Jordan Mobility Partnership

43. Migration and mobility are a cross-cutting issue in the cooperation between the EU and Jordan. The EU welcomes the different initiatives in the context of the Mobility Partnership, including the project addressing the trafficking of human beings and engaging with Jordanian expatriate communities abroad. The EU encourages active exploration of the opportunities provided by the Mobility Partnership conducive to other programmes of cooperation. The EU welcomes that bilateral discussions on **visa facilitation** and **readmission** of persons residing without authorisation started in November 2016, and is ready to advance in the negotiation process in view of reaching a comprehensive agreement.