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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 19 February 2019

To: Delegations

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Subject: Special Report No 27/2018 by the European Court of Auditors:
"The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements
needed to deliver more value for money"
– Council conclusions

Delegations will find attached Council conclusions on the Special Report No 27/2018 by the Court of Auditors "The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money", as adopted by the Council (General Affairs) on 19 February 2019.

**Council conclusions on Special Report No 27/2018 by the Court of Auditors:
"The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed
to deliver more value for money"**

1. The Council recalls that the Facility for Refugees in Turkey was set up as an answer to an unprecedented refugee crisis faced by the EU and Turkey. The Council commends Turkey's significant efforts in hosting and addressing the needs of close to 4 million refugees. The EU and its Member States have committed to assisting Turkey in dealing with this challenge. The Council also recalls that EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, managing a total of 6 billion EUR in two tranches, provides for a joint coordination mechanism and is designed to ensure that the needs of refugees and host communities in Turkey are addressed accordingly.
2. The Council thanks the Court of Auditors for its Special Report and takes good note of the conclusions and recommendations therein. The Council notes that the objective of the audit, which covered the period from the establishment of the Facility until 31 March 2018, was to assess whether the Facility effectively supported the refugees in Turkey.
3. The Council notes that the focus of the audit was on the management of the first tranche of the Facility and on the results achieved so far under the humanitarian strand, monitoring whether the Facility contributed to relevant, swift and well-coordinated support and whether the sampled projects achieved their expected results.
4. The Council underlines the relevance of the findings of this audit, notably in view of the implementation of the second tranche of the Facility.
5. The Council broadly welcomes the overall conclusion of the Court that the Facility provided a swift response to the refugee crisis in a challenging context and that the humanitarian projects have provided helpful support to refugees to address their basic needs. Nevertheless, it also notes that the Facility could have been more effective, and that it could achieve more value for money.

6. The Council notes positively that the audited projects generally delivered their intended output, in particular the innovative and biggest project, the Emergency Social Safety Net, representing 76% of the allocated funding audited. However, it also notes the Court's conclusion that there is room to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian projects, that the Facility did not fully achieve its objective of coordinating the available funding effectively and that the efficiency of cash-assistance projects could be increased.
7. In this regard, the Council takes good note of the Court's six specific recommendations to the Commission, aiming at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the second tranche of the Facility, to: better address refugees' needs for municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support; improve the streamlining and complementarity of assistance; implement a strategy for the transition from humanitarian to development assistance; improve the efficiency of cash-assistance projects; address with the Turkish authorities the need to improve the operating environment for NGOs, and scale up monitoring and reporting of the Facility.
8. The Council thanks the Commission for its replies attached to the Special Report and takes positive note that the Commission has accepted all six recommendations, and has already started to address them. The Council shares the Commission's observation that over the last two years, the Facility has become a flagship EU initiative for the implementation of coordinated EU assistance in response to migration challenges on the Eastern Mediterranean route, in the context of the EU-Turkey Statement and broader EU migration policy, allowing for the swift mobilisation of 3 billion EUR in EU and Member State assistance to refugees in Turkey.

9. The Council also underlines the strategic importance of a gradual transition from humanitarian assistance towards refugees' self-reliance and more sustainable forms of assistance, with a view to achieving increased ownership and continued commitment by the Turkish authorities. Consequently, the Council encourages the Commission, building on the existing strategic concept note and programming note presented to the Steering Committee, to increase the focus on the swift and timely development, and subsequent implementation, of a sustainable transition strategy, to be agreed with Turkey.
10. The Council welcomes the Court's focus on improving the efficiency of projects. To ensure a better and more effective implementation of the Facility, the Council also underlines the need to continue working with experienced partners, for the Turkish authorities to improve the challenging operating environment for NGOs, and to find solutions with Turkey for increasing access to information, including primary data of beneficiaries of the cash-assistance projects.
11. The Council invites the Commission to regularly inform the Council and the Steering Committee of the Facility, on the issues raised by the Court of Auditors' Special Report and on the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations, and to ensure that they are addressed systematically and in full.
12. In line with its conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association process of 26 June 2018, the Council reiterates the importance of continued implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement, including the readmission commitments. In light of the above, the Council recalls its commitment that the EU, building on the results already achieved, will continue its financial support and technical assistance to strengthen cooperation in this field, including through the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey.