



Press Release

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The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: swift response in challenging circumstances, but improvements needed to deliver better value for money, say EU Auditors

The Facility for Refugees in Turkey, which supports refugees and their Turkish hosting communities, has provided a swift response to the crisis in challenging circumstances, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. The humanitarian projects have helped refugees to address their basic needs but have not always delivered the expected value for money, say the auditors.

Because of increased migratory flows, mainly due to the Syrian conflict, Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world: nearly 4 million people. This includes about 3.5 million Syrians, of whom about 94% are living outside refugee camps. The Facility supports humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance, with total financing of €6 billion from the EU and the Member States.

The auditors focused on the management of the first tranche of financing from the Facility (€3 billion) and on the results so far under its humanitarian strand. They found that, in a challenging context, the Facility had rapidly mobilised funds to provide a swift response. Nevertheless, it did not fully achieve its objective of coordinating this response effectively.

All the humanitarian projects audited provided helpful support to the refugees, mainly through cash-based assistance, and most of them achieved their intended outputs. However, half of them have not yet achieved the outcomes expected, and nine out of ten had to be extended. The challenging operating environment hindered timely implementation by NGOs.

“The Facility achieved its objective of mobilising three billion euros in two years,” said Bettina Jakobsen, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the report. “But there is room to increase the efficiency of humanitarian projects and in particular cash-assistance projects. The Facility could still achieve greater value for money.”

The European Commission used a comprehensive assessment to identify refugees’ priority needs, say the auditors. However, disagreements with Turkey on how to address needs in municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support meant these areas were insufficiently covered.

The Facility supported similar type of activities in health and education through different instruments. This made coordination more complex and resulted in the parallel use of different management structures to

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors’ special report. The full report is available at www.eca.europa.eu.

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fund similar projects. In the health sector, there were good examples where the Commission supported the transition from humanitarian to longer-term development assistance, but this was not systematic.

The auditors also found room for improvement in the efficiency of the humanitarian projects: the Commission did not consistently and comprehensively assess the reasonableness of the budgeted costs; indirect costs paid to partners implementing large cash-assistance projects were high, and advance payments were not aligned with actual cash outflows.

The Commission put in place appropriate measures to monitor humanitarian projects. The main limitation was the Turkish authorities' refusal to grant access to beneficiary data for the two cash-assistance projects. Neither the Commission nor the ECA was able to track project beneficiaries from registration to payment.

The auditors recommend that, in future, the European Commission should:

- 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;
- together with the Turkish authorities, address the need to improve the operating environment for NGOs
- scale up monitoring and reporting of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

Notes to Editors

Due to its location, Turkey is both a reception and transit country for many refugees. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, it has provided significant and continued support to refugees.

Turkey and the EU have been linked by an Association Agreement since 1963. The European Council granted the status of candidate country to become a member of the EU to Turkey in December 1999, and accession negotiations were opened in 2005. Turkey is by far the largest beneficiary of the EU Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, which the EU uses to prepare candidate countries for membership of the EU, with an allocation of more than €9 billion for 2007-2020.

The ECA presents its special reports to the European Parliament and Council of the EU, as well as to other interested parties such as national parliaments, industry stakeholders and representatives of civil society. The vast majority of the recommendations we make in our reports are put into practice. This high level of take-up underlines the benefit of our work to EU citizens.

Special report 27 /2018 "The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money" is available on the ECA website (eca.europa.eu) in 23 EU languages.