



Brussels, 30/10/15

*Dear colleagues,*

*Every day, we see further evidence of the challenge of the refugee crisis. We must be equal to the challenge. We must work to find new solutions. But above all, we must implement what we have said we will do.*

*At our informal meeting on 23 September 2015, we sent a strong message of action. We underlined that this is a shared task for the EU institutions and the Member States – and we believe national efforts and EU efforts should be at the same level. At our last European Council on 15 October 2015, we agreed a further set of commitments – on Turkey, on the Valletta Summit, on returns. This week-end's meeting on refugee flows along the Western Balkans route agreed on a number of operational measures.*

*In some areas, we have made good progress. For instance, thanks to European contributions the World Food Programme has been able to increase its assistance to refugees in the area. Considering contributions made by Member States before 23 September, we have reached the target of an additional € 1 billion to respond to the humanitarian urgent needs of refugees.*

*In other areas, however, we are still falling short of what we committed to in September and confirmed in October. We must act swiftly to redress this.*

*The first key area is in the contribution of national expertise and equipment to tackle the dramatic situation at our external borders. Restoring the full functioning of our border and asylum systems is not an optional extra – it is fundamental to our strategy to restore the situation. This is a common obligation, as recognised in full in September. But though the rigorous needs assessment of EASO and Frontex has identified what is required, the response has fallen far short. So far twenty countries who have responded have pledged 153 experts – less than half EASO's needs assessment of 374 experts. For Frontex, the figure is 353 border guards out of the 775 needed, from nineteen responses.*

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*To the Heads of State and Government*



*The second area where a gap remains concerns the two Trust Funds for the Syrian Crisis and the Africa, which provide a swift, flexible, focused tool well suited to today's situation.*

*On the Syrian Crisis Trust Fund, we agreed to a "substantial increase". EU funding is to provide an additional €500 million. But so far, Member States' support has not even reached €50 million.*

*As for the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, the EU funding will reach €1.8 billion. So the contrast with Member States' pledges of below €30 million is stark. In the run-up to the Valletta Summit, it is indispensable that the national effort comes closer to the EU funding.*

*The test of our commitment to address the big questions facing our society today will be in delivering on what we have promised. We believe that matching our actions to our commitments is the greatest test we face today, and it is a test we cannot afford to fail.*

*Yours faithfully,*



*Donald TUSK*



*Xavier BETTEL*



*Jean-Claude JUNCKER*

*Annex: Expertise pledges by Member States*