



Brussels, 31.10.2019
C(2019) 7621 final

COMMISSION DECISION

of 31.10.2019

amending Commission Decision C(2014) 9615 of 10.12.2014 on the establishment of a European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, "the Madad Fund"

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action¹ and in particular Article 2 thereof, which foresees the adoption of this decision,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012², and in particular Articles 110 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The Commission on 10 December 2014 adopted a Decision³ for the establishment of the European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, ('the Trust Fund') for a duration of 60 months until 14 December 2019. To widen the scope of the Trust Fund, that Decision was amended on 21 December 2015.⁴
- (2) The overall objective of the Trust Fund is to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis and the massive displacement resulting from it across the region.
- (3) As of 12 September 2019, there were 5,640,126 Syrian refugees registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the region, including 924,161 in Lebanon and 657,445 in Jordan.⁵ This represents an increase of more than 2.4 million since the Trust Fund was established. Eight years into the crisis, many refugees have depleted their resources and exhausted their coping mechanisms, further increasing their vulnerability. The impact of the crisis is also increasingly affecting the already overstretched host communities, in particular in Lebanon and Jordan that host the largest numbers of registered refugees per capita in the world.

¹ OJ L 77, 15.3.2014, p. 95.

² OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1.

³ Commission Decision of 10 December 2014 on the establishment of a European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis (C(2014) 9615 final).

⁴ Commission Decision of 21 December 2015 amending Decision C(2014)9615 final on the establishment of a European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis C(2015) 9691 final.

⁵ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>.

- (4) Over the past four years⁶, the Trust Fund has mobilized more than EUR 1.8 billion, including over EUR 185 million in voluntary contributions from 22 Member States and Turkey, and EUR 1.65 billion from various instruments of the EU budget. Projects focusing on access to education, livelihoods and health care, for both refugees and local communities, covering a total of EUR 1.6 billion have already been adopted by the Trust Fund, out of which EUR 1.4 billion have been contracted to the Trust Fund's implementing partners on the ground. This impact on the ground ensures clear political visibility for the Union.
- (5) The recently conducted strategic Mid-term Evaluation⁷ came to the conclusion that the *raison d'être* for setting up the EU Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis remains. The Trust Fund, through its inclusive governance mechanism, ensures a joint response by engaging Member States actively, which has allowed the EU to operate flexibly and adapted to the overall dynamics of the region; it thus generates clear managerial advantages. By its scale and scope, the Trust Fund reaches a large group of beneficiaries, offering a comprehensive development response to a protracted displacement crisis. The Trust Fund has therefore generated added value, compared to the efforts EU Member States could have undertaken themselves. The EUTF does not duplicate other existing funding channels and its objectives are aligned with those of the instruments that fund it.
- (6) The Evaluation recommends that the Trust Fund is extended beyond December 2019 to allow stakeholders to continue to respond to beneficiaries' and host countries' needs as the protracted crisis continues, while it is unlikely that other funding instruments could adequately fill the gap if the Trust Fund ceased its operations.
- (7) The Trust Fund's Board meeting of 14 December 2018 acknowledged these achievements. It also recognised that the Syrian refugee crisis is continuing and that a tool such as the Trust Fund is required beyond its current duration. On the basis of a report presented by the Commission, the Board requested an extension of the Trust Fund for 12 months until 14 December 2020. At the meeting, Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, expressed their intention to provide additional contributions to the Trust Fund. Further contributions to this Trust Fund are to be provided through resources of the European Neighbourhood Instrument and the Development Cooperation Instrument in 2019.
- (8) Therefore, upon request of the Board of the Trust Fund and upon presentation of a report justifying the extension, as well as confirming compliance with conditions outlined in Article 234(3) of the Financial Regulation, the Commission considers that Decision C(2014)9615 should be further amended accordingly.
- (9) The European Parliament and the Council have been duly consulted on the intention of the Commission to extend the duration of the Trust Fund.
- (10) The measure provided for in this Decision does not fall within the categories of measures for which a positive opinion of the European Neighbourhood Instrument Committee established pursuant to Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument or of the Development Cooperation Instrument Committee

⁶ As of 15 September 2019.

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/sites/tfsr/files/mid-term_strategic_evaluation_eutf_in_response_to_syrian_crisis_-_final_report_en.pdf.

established pursuant to Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the period 2014-2020 is required.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole article

Commission Decision C(2014) 9615 of 10.12.2014 on the establishment of a European Union Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, “the Madad Fund”, is modified as follows:

Article 4 (1) is replaced by the following:

“1. The duration of this Union Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, which shall be fixed in the Constitutive Agreement, shall be 72 months from the signature of the Constitutive Agreement.”

Annex 1, Recital 23, first sentence, is replaced by the following:

“The Trust Fund is established for a period of 72 months from the signature by the Representative of the European Commission, in order to provide a short and medium-term response to the Syrian crisis in the region.”

Annex 1, Article 17.2.1 d), is replaced by the following:

“(d) the expiry of the duration of 72 months as of the signature of this agreement. This duration may be extended by a decision of the Commission upon request of the Operational Board.”

Done at Brussels, 31.10.2019

*For the Commission
Johannes HAHN
Member of the Commission*