



Baroness Catherine Ashton of Upholland
Vice-President/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Rue de La Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Cc. Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva and Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Mr. Štefan Füle.

Strasbourg, 18 April 2013

Honourable High Representative,

I am writing you to share my grave concerns about the situation in Lebanon following the large number of Syrian refugees that have been flowing into the country for the past two years. The Lebanese people have shown remarkable resourcefulness in providing roofs over the heads of families on the run from the war in Syria. Now the society's ability to absorb and shelter the still increasing stream of Syrians has become exhausted.

I have personally witnessed the situation in the Lebanese Bekaa-valley. Additionally I spoke with aid organisations as well as with Lebanese politicians about the challenges the refugee crisis puts on the country. At the moment 4500 Syrians reach Lebanon every day, and these numbers may well increase even more. Approximately 1 million Syrians now live in Lebanon, a country with a population of 4 million with diverse religions and ethnicities. While the country is also essential for aid and other goods to reach Syria, the risk of spill-over effects of the war risk transitioning from incidental to structural. We cannot afford additional catastrophe.

While the EU along with its partners has not succeeded in finding a solution to the war in Syria, we should at least do everything possible to prevent the broader region from further destabilizing. Therefore I am calling upon you to report to our Parliament whether all pledged funds by the EU and its Member States reach people. Reports by aid organisations state that only between 30 and 40 per cent of the total pledged money by the international community has been provided. Where do obstacles lie and how they may be broken down? Can we free up additional financial and material support to ensure the needs of Syrian refugees and the host communities are met? What accountability mechanisms are in place?

There should be no shortage of tents, sanitary facilities, food, medicines, water and education for children. We need to relieve Lebanese communities and their infrastructures, and ensure safety and stability for all. Swift elections will help putting

in place political leadership that can take responsibility and act as interlocutors with the international community.

Finally, the Foreign Affairs Council of 22 April 2013 should unequivocally conclude that the EU continues to stand by, and to do everything in its power, to assist Syria's neighbouring countries to facilitate a safe and appropriate shelter for people on the run from the brutal Al-Assad regime and the violence in Syria.

I am grateful my colleagues share these concerns and appeal.

Sincerely,

Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE)
Ana Gomes (S&D)
Hans van Baalen (ALDE)
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
Anne Delvaux (EPP)
James Elles (ECR)
Charles Goerens (ALDE)
Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE)
Fiona Hall (ALDE)
Stanimir Ilchev (ALDE)
Sophie In't Veld (ALDE)
Jelko Kacin (ALDE)
Veronique de Keyser (S&D)
Sarah Ludford (ALDE)
Alexander Lambsdorff (ALDE)
Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck (ALDE)
David Martin (S&D)
Edward McMillan-Scott MEP (ALDE)
Emilio Menéndez del Valle (S&D)
Louis Michel (ALDE)
Jan Mulder (ALDE)
María Muñoz de Urquiza (S&D)
Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE)
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
Olle Schmidt (ALDE)
Bart Staes (GREENS)
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
Rebecca Taylor (ALDE)
Rui Tavares (GREENS)
Alexandra Thein (ALDE)
Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE/NGL)
Giommaria Uggias (ALDE)
Ivo Vajgl (ALDE)
Graham Watson (ALDE)
Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)