



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

*H.E. Ms. Pia Kjærsgaard,
Speaker of the Danish Parliament,
Denmark,*

Your Excellency,

June 22nd, 2017

Allow me to start by extending our sincere gratitude for the European Union's continued support to Jordan over the many years and in particular to the additional assistance received over the past few years to ease the burden of hosting Syrian refugees in the Kingdom and negative economic spillover from the unprecedented surrounding conflicts and instability that surrounds Jordan. We greatly value our strategic and longstanding relations with the EU and the European Parliament and to the common understanding and commitment we both share towards the promotion of regional security, peace and stability.

I would also like to reiterate our appreciation for the support extended to Jordan at the London Conference in 2016 and at the recent Brussels Conference. The adopted Joint Decision on the simplification of rules of origin represents an opportunity that would help in attracting new investments and in providing job opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian refugees.

For many decades, Jordan in spite of its limited resources, has consistently served as a forerunner when it comes to embracing the vulnerable and sharing its scarce resources with those fleeing conflict and seeking its borders for refuge. Jordan has been playing a pivotal role in interfaith dialogue and in the fight against violent terrorism and extremist ideology. Today, the country has the highest historic record of hosted registered refugees (2.8 million refugees registered with UNRWA and UNHCR), making Jordan highest host country of registered refugees in the world in both absolute number and as a percentage of our Jordanian population.

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Over the past years, Jordan has been setting a model for the world and a paradigm shift by carrying out a global public good in terms of hosting 1.3 million Syrians (of which less than 50 percent are registered refugees and only 10 percent are in refugee camps), providing the needed services and also in turning the refugee challenge into an economic opportunity. Our external environment continues to be challenging, where spillover from conflicts in the region continues to pressure Jordan's resilience, security and stability.

The protracted nature of the Syrian crisis now in its seventh year has pushed the country's absorptive capacity to its limits. Spillover from the regional crisis has resulted in growing needs, regressed hard-earned development gains, impacted economic growth and increased public debt. We are in a situation that has exacerbated poverty (increased by 30 percent) and unemployment (increased by 50 percent) in many host communities nationwide posing serious risks to social cohesion and national security.

The existing economic situation is increasingly undermining social peace and creating discontent that extremists may take advantage of to widen their support base. In spite all that, the Government of Jordan has issued about 54,000 work permits to Syrian refugees in camps and host communities; absorbed about 90 percent of Syrian refugee children in public schools to addition to providing training and skills building opportunities to refugees.

Jordan has also reached its maximum carrying capacity whether in terms of available resources, fiscal space, existing physical and social infrastructure, or capacities in providing basic services. Without the continued support of our key partners this will negatively impact our overstretched ability to continue providing necessary services to Syrians whilst maintaining service levels without adversely effecting Jordanian citizens or risking our hard-earned development gains.

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Going forward, we continue to count on the support and understanding of the European Parliament and the EU to extend additional grants to the Jordan Response Plan in support of refugees and host communities; increased budget support grants; and additional macro financial assistance loans; as well as support to benefit from simplified rules of origin decision and to attract more investments into the designated development zones covered by the decision.

This support would greatly assist Jordan in meeting part of Jordan's financing needs, and in sustaining Jordan's resilience and macroeconomic stability in spite of the protracted and worsening surrounding regional environment. This will also help contribute to Jordan's stability and resilience and to continuing with our reform process on the political, social, judicial and economic fronts in addition to continuing our pivotal regional and global roles in the fight against extremism and terrorism.

In this context, we greatly count on your personal support. Your knowledge of the dynamics of the Syrian conflict and your appreciation of the burdens Jordan carries on behalf of the international community will be instrumental in supporting our case.

Once again, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for your continued support and I look forward to the opportunity of meeting you in the near future.

Please accept my high esteem and consideration.

Faisal Akef El-Fayez

Sincerely Yours,
Faisal Akef El-Fayez
President of the Jordanian Senate