

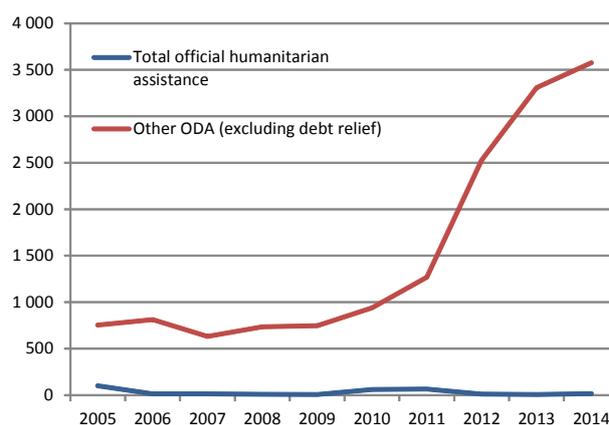
## Turkish humanitarian policy: An emerging donor

Over the last 10 years, Turkey has become a leading emerging donor. Most of Turkey's official development assistance goes to humanitarian aid, above all in support of Syrian refugees.

### A budding humanitarian policy

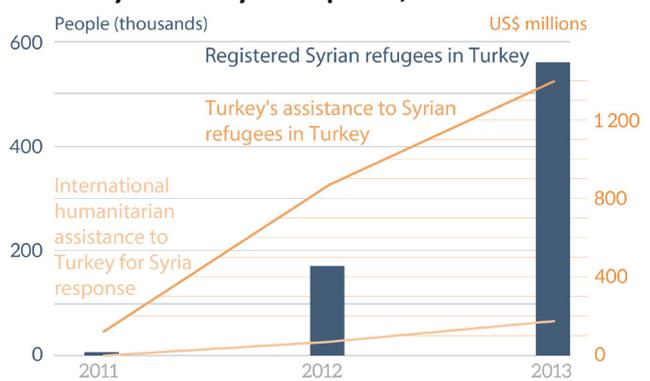
Turkey is classified as an emerging economy, but is also an emerging player in the field of humanitarian aid. In this respect, Turkey is set apart by its status as both donor and [recipient](#) of humanitarian aid (for the Syrian refugees). Data on Turkish humanitarian aid are contradictory. On the one hand, the European Commission estimates that, between 2011 and November 2015, Turkey [provided](#) Syrian refugees in Turkey with more than €6.5 billion in assistance; similarly, humanitarian aid makes up the lion's share (69%) of official development assistance (ODA) reported on a voluntary basis to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) (Figure 3). On the other hand, data from the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the NGO, Global Humanitarian Assistance put Turkey's humanitarian aid in [2014](#) at just US\$15.6 million, a mere 4% of total ODA (Figure 1). The discrepancy has to do with how humanitarian aid is calculated – whether or not assistance given to refugees living in Turkey itself is considered to be humanitarian aid. According to the [OECD](#), temporary assistance for refugees from developing countries arriving in donor countries can be reported as ODA during the first 12 months of their stay, and all costs associated with eventual repatriation to the developing country of origin can also be included. Furthermore, the OCHA figure of US\$15.6 million does not include [bilateral](#) aid, which accounted for all but [2%](#) of Turkish ODA in 2014.

**Figure 1 – Turkish humanitarian aid, 2005-2015 (US\$ million)**



Data source: Global Humanitarian Assistance, [2015](#). Here, assistance to refugees living in Turkey does not appear as humanitarian aid.

**Figure 2 – Number of registered Syrian refugees in Turkey, Turkey's assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey and international humanitarian assistance to Turkey for the Syria response, 2011-2013**



### A geopolitically driven and comprehensive policy

Most of the time, Turkish humanitarian aid [complements](#) its diplomatic and economic presence, and goes hand in hand with high-level bilateral conferences, trade agreements, visa-waivers and direct flight connections. Africa, for example, is an important [priority](#) for Turkish foreign policy in [political](#) and economic terms; bilateral trade with the continent has tripled since 2003, reaching US\$17.5 billion in 2015. Turkish involvement in Somalia shows that Ankara does not limit its assistance to former Ottoman regions: Turkey is

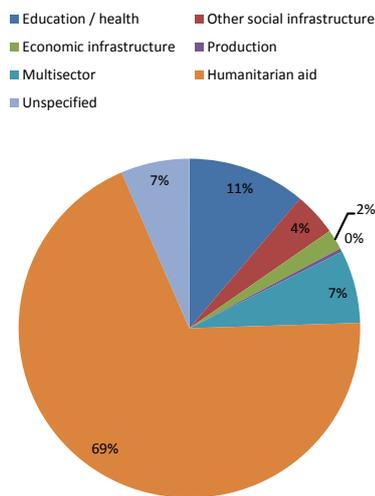


the fifth main [donor](#) in the country, ahead of Germany and Sweden. Somalia also [exemplifies](#) the way Turkey follows up its humanitarian aid with longer-term development assistance. For example, during the 2012 famine, the majority of the budget of the Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was allocated to water and sanitation (44%). As the crisis eased, the focus shifted to sustainable development, with economic infrastructure accounting for the bulk (70%) of funding in 2014.

### Response to the Syrian civil war

Turkey has been the main destination for Syrian refugees since 2011. In 2011, the Turkish authorities announced that their open-door policy for Syrians would not be able to accommodate more than 100 000 of them. Four years later, [UNHCR](#) estimated that there were almost 2.7 million Syrian refugees in Turkey. The [Law on Foreigners and International Protection](#) came into force in April 2014. While Turkey maintains its geographical limitation for asylum-seekers from non-Council of Europe countries, the law provides temporary protection without consideration of origins. In 2015, only 10% of the migrants were staying in the 25 government-run 'temporary protection centres'. Amnesty International has evaluated the situation in the camps positively, but remains concerned for the vast majority of migrants living elsewhere. For them, access to work and health facilities remains highly problematic, pushing them into undeclared and low-paid jobs. The European Parliament recently [acknowledged](#) 'Turkey's great humanitarian contribution in hosting the largest refugee population in the world' but remained critical of possible forced returns of Syrian refugees. Ankara [denies](#) that such deportations have happened in recent months.

**Figure 3 – Turkey ODA by sector, 2014**



Data source: [OECD](#), 2015.

Of the estimated €6.5 billion spent by the Turkish state on refugees, 7-8% came from international donors. In March 2016, the EU committed [€6 billion](#) up to the end of 2018 to sustain Turkish efforts as part of a migration [deal](#).

### The structure of Turkish humanitarian policies

The response to the Syrian crisis has benefited from the cohesion of Turkey's decision-making structure in the field of humanitarian and development aid. The Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (*Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı*, [AFAD](#)) is part of the Prime Minister's office and is the leading coordinating agency for humanitarian aid. AFAD is concerned mainly with internal disaster response but also coordinates external humanitarian assistance at operational level and in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was set up in 2009 in a move to streamline humanitarian aid, which had previously been the responsibility of several ministries. The funding operations are flexible. Funds allocated to humanitarian assistance operations can be transferred to any government or non-governmental organisation in accordance with the relevant legislation, and used not only in project-based operations, but also for fulfilling urgent humanitarian needs. The [Turkish Red Crescent](#) focuses on emergency assistance. The AFAD channels its aid partly through ministries such as agriculture and health and partly through the Red Crescent.

### Turkish objectives for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit

[Ankara's position](#) via-à-vis the WHS is to insist on the need to do more to prevent humanitarian catastrophes so as to prevent mass displacements of people and suffering. Turkey is also calling for creative mechanisms to kick-start a rapid but coordinated response to humanitarian crises, as well as a better link between the humanitarian and development sides of the response. In order to secure immediate funding for urgent operations, Turkey is calling for a robust global reserve fund. Also in the field of funding, Ankara is advocating the option of exploring innovative funding strategies, such as [Islamic social finance](#). The Turkish government has underlined that the various humanitarian (AFAD, Red Crescent) and development (TIKA) agencies benefit from being under a single authority, as this permits a smooth transition between immediate help and subsequent development measures. The government also insists that humanitarian access be decoupled from prevailing political considerations.