

Question for written answer E-012807/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Adam Szejnfeld (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - EU cooperation with Gulf countries on assistance for Syrian refugees

The unprecedented wave of refugees from the Middle East is a challenge that must be addressed not just by Europe but also by the countries of that region. The armed conflict in Syria alone has resulted in neighbouring countries - Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, Iraq and Egypt in particular - having to take in millions of people, despite the strain this is placing on their socio-economic and political stability.

However, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar) cannot be said to have done as much as they can to open their borders to the Syrian refugees currently crammed into camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, even though Syria is much closer to them than it is to European countries, not only geographically but also in cultural and religious terms.

What is more, the financial contributions made by the Gulf countries to the UNHCR in 2014 covered only 7% of the agency's budget. This means that EU countries, the USA, Japan and Turkey are bearing the majority of the costs relating to the Syrian refugees staying in camps in the Middle East.

What steps have been taken to involve the Gulf countries more closely in efforts to deal with the current migrant crisis?