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Answer given by Mr Mimica
on behalf of the Commission
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Promoting refugees' access to education at all levels, including technical, vocational and higher education, is central to the European Union's (EU) response to the issue of refugees.

Within the EU, this policy priority is stressed in the Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration¹ as well as under the Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals². Through initiatives such as the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the Commission supports and complements integration measures taken by Member States; examples include 100,000 licences through Erasmus+ for online language courses and projects for labour market insertion.

In its external action, the EU approach to forced displacement in the context of development³ similarly places great emphasis on education to promote the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and enhance the self-reliance of refugees and their hosts. The Commission increased the education share of its humanitarian aid budget from 1% in 2015 to 8% in 2018 to enhance quality primary and secondary education.

Until 2017, nearly 4.7 million children in 52 countries benefitted from EU humanitarian education projects. These are closely coordinated with EU development support. For instance, under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey⁴ and the Madad Trust Fund⁵, more than EUR 1 billion has been mobilised so that Syrian refugees have access to education in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. This comprises financial support to governments, school construction, teacher training, scholarships, catch-up classes and language training for refugees.

Finally, the EU also supports global initiatives⁶ enhancing education in numerous countries hosting refugee children.

¹ COM(2017) 211, 12.04.2017

² COM(2016) 377 final.

³ COM(2016) 234 final. "Lives in Dignity: from Aid-Dependence to Self-Reliance", welcomed in Council Conclusions from 12 May 2016.

⁴ Commission Decision C(2015) 9500 of 24.11.2015 on the coordination of the actions of the Union and of the Member States through a coordination mechanism – the Refugee Facility for Turkey, as amended by Commission Decision C(2016) 855 of 10.2.2016

⁵ 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", as amended by Commission Decision C(2015) 9691 final of 21.12.2015

⁶ Notably 'Education cannot Wait, a Global Fund for Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises' (<http://www.educationcannotwait.org/>) and the 'Global Partnership for Education' (<https://www.globalpartnership.org/>)