

Question for written answer E-002999/2023

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon: how does the EU plan to support Lebanon and what international action will it take?

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, between 1.5 and 2 million Syrians have left their country to settle in Lebanon.

While some are political refugees, many of them are economic migrants.

With a population of around 5 million, this massive influx is a huge cost for Lebanon in terms of the impact on health infrastructure, the increase in demand for electricity, water and gas, the school system and food requirements.

Given the fact that Lebanon has been experiencing a severe economic crisis since 2019, which has in turn led to massive currency devaluation, migrants in Lebanon are increasingly becoming a financial burden.

While the international community rightly got involved from the very beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the decisions they made deeply divide Lebanese society today and are causing a rift between Syrian and Lebanese people. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees now grants Syrian migrants an allowance of up to 10 times the average pay of Lebanese people.

1. How does the EU envisage supporting Lebanon in the face of this migration crisis which is severely affecting its economy?
2. Does the EU intend to take international action to initiate the return of Syrian migrants who are not threatened by the Damascus regime?

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