



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic



Remarks at the Syrian Refugee Conference in Berlin

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Remarks by Minister Zaorálek at the Syrian Refugee Conference at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin on October 28, 2014.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank Minister Steinmeier and the German Federal Foreign Office for organizing this important conference.

The Czech Republic is deeply concerned by the unprecedented scale and still growing consequences of the humanitarian crisis in Syria. We are appalled by the growing number of civilians suffering under this conflict, millions of them without reach of the basic humanitarian assistance.

In this respect we really appreciate the generosity displayed by all countries in the region which are hosting refugees from Syria since the early stages of the conflict.

We also highly praise the work done by the UN and its agencies, in particular the UNHCR, both in the mobilisation of humanitarian funds, coordination of humanitarian action, advocacy for it, and further efforts reaching beyond the aid.

We appreciate the Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework 2014-2016 issued by the UN in spring 2014. This framework indicated a comprehensive humanitarian, resilience/development and macro-fiscal contribution to resilient local communities and systems, national ownership and regional stability as its over-arching goal.

Half a year later, we are discussing the same priorities and challenges:

- a need for integrating humanitarian and development resources and activities,
- a call for increasing the refugee and host communities resilience,
- as well as coping with the structural and economic impacts on host countries.

These are of utmost importance. But the essential and still missing prerequisite for a successful fulfilment of the Strategic Framework is the political solution of the protracted conflict in Syria. We call with a great urgency on all sides of the conflict in Syria to stop violent actions and to cooperate with the new UN Special Envoy in finding a lasting solution.

We have to continue our efforts in this respect, while we in the same time have to find alternative ways of support for the current refugees and their hosts. One of the daunting challenges lies in preventing the Syrian youth to become a "lost generation" by providing it with educational opportunities at the higher level in both the host countries and abroad through scholarships, traineeships and exchange programmes.

The Czech Republic has contributed to the international humanitarian efforts from the very beginning of the Syrian conflict. We are focusing partly on the basic cross-border aid reaching people inside Syria, partly on the more comprehensive assistance for long term refugees in local communities and refugee camps, in particular in Jordan and Lebanon.

We pay a special attention to the medical care of children. For a second consecutive year, top Czech doctors will operate in Jordan and the most complicated cases will be treated in the Czech Republic.

In our efforts, we follow the basic points highlighted at this conference and in the conference document. We are aware of the special needs of women and girls in the refugee situation, and we support their education and sustainable livelihood choices.

I would also like to ensure you that the Czech Republic is ready to continue working together with the host countries, to cooperate with UNHCR and coordinate its assistance with the international donor community. We are ready to help.

Thank you for your attention.