

World Humanitarian Summit
3/ HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS ROUNDTABLE
Leave No One Behind: A Commitment to address Forced
Displacement

Intervention by H.E. the Prime Minister of Greece, Mr Alexis
Tsipras

Excellencies,

Forced displacement has reached new historic records in 2016.

The war in Syria and Iraq, as well as the political situation in Afghanistan, contributed significantly to this trend.

Of course, the big burden has fallen on the countries neighbouring Syria: Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

Countries that deserve our praise and solidarity for facing the challenge of hosting millions of people in need.

For the first time, though, these flows have led to enormous pressures on Europe itself.

In this context, the migration challenge presents itself for the first time to such a great extent, not only as a regional and global issue, but also as a European one, underlining European responsibilities.

Of course, the first priority in eliminating forced displacement, is facing its root causes- war and persecution.

In this sense, we need to step up all efforts for political solutions to conflicts and respect for international humanitarian law.

We need to enhance our initiatives against terrorist networks, as well as further promote post-conflict political stability.

At the same time, we need to integrate cooperation in the migration field, in our foreign and economic policies on a national, regional and global level.

That means supporting countries of origin and transit countries, not only in terms of aid and capacity building, but also by promoting growth and social cohesion.

In Greece, while EU and UN agencies increasingly aid the competent authorities, austerity measures are at the same time straining and weakening state capacities to deal with the issue.

Crucial also, is enhancing our efforts for resettlement of refugees, to countries that can support them.

Only through establishing robust legal avenues of asylum and migration can we really undermine the criminal trafficking networks in the region and illegal migration.

Unfortunately, results have been extremely poor, including from European countries that have not endured heavy irregular flows during.

Since last year less than a thousand people have been relocated from Greece to other European countries -despite commitments for tens of thousands- while a robust mechanism for resettlement of refugees from Turkey to these countries has not yet been established.

Crucial in this respect, is also the promotion of readmission agreements with countries of transit and origin, which can contribute effectively to discouraging illegal migration, while of course safeguarding all rights to asylum.

Greek-Turkish cooperation on the basis of the EU-Turkey Agreement is very good and we hope to enhance it further.