



GLOBAL
PROGRESSIVE
FORUM



'Working together to address the refugee crisis'

Programme

Introduction

Five years ago the PES and the GPF launched a series of events to talk about democracy and social justice in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Today, the situation has changed dramatically. What started in Syria as an uprising against the regime of Bashar Al Assad, has now become a full-fledged war involving a myriad of actors and providing fertile ground for the rise of the Islamic State (IS). Conflicts erupted in Iraq, Yemen, Libya and the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. Tunisia has endured two horrifying terrorist attacks in only a few months' time, giving an unpredicted blow to the tourism sector, where the country gets most of its revenues.

This summer an unprecedented flow of refugees has reached EU's borders, prompting a humanitarian crisis of proportions unseen in post-war Europe. This has led many of our social democratic leaders to call for unity and solidarity in order to find common answers, as the flow of refugees is unlikely to come to an end. This solidarity should start within Europe, but it should also apply to those countries in the Middle East that are carrying the heaviest burden of the refugee crisis.

Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan have taken up scores of refugees, putting their already fragile population balance at risk. A recent UN report stated that the number of people uprooted has reached nearly 60 million, an all-time high.

The causes and consequences of the current refugee crisis affect us all. Although the Middle East and North Africa is home to just 5% of the world's population, it has produced more than one-third of its refugees. In Syria alone, 11 million people have been forcibly displaced within and outside the country. We need to work together with our partners in the Middle East and North Africa to come up with structural, humane and progressive solutions addressing the current situation. In order to achieve this, we need to better understand the challenges the main host countries (Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan) are facing and how to provide adequate support. The conference in Lebanon, a country hosting already a massive refugee presence from Palestine, is part of a larger process within our social democratic family, to develop a broadly supported and comprehensive strategy to deal with the current refugee crisis.

Objective

Bring together political actors and experts from both the EU and the MENA region to discuss the current situation and develop a roadmap for the future.

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30 October

16:30 – 18:00 ASDF Women Panel discussion: 'The role of women in social democratic parties'

19:30 – 21:30 Reception with walking dinner

31 October

8:55 – 9:00 **Introduction and overview of the day**
Giacomo Filibeck, PES Deputy Secretary General

9:00 – 9:30

Opening

Speakers:

Walid Jumblatt, leader of the PSP

Gianni Pittella, President of the Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

Rachid Derbas, Minister of Social Affairs, representing Lebanon's Prime Minister Tammam Salam

9:30 - 11:00

Debate: Addressing the root causes the refugee crisis

Speakers

Sadi Ahmed Pire, member of the PUK Politburo in charge of General Relations, Iraq

Maria Arena, Member of European Parliament, Belgium

Arne Lietz, Member of European Parliament, SPD, Germany

Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar, Member of European Parliament, PSOE, Spain

Matthias Schmale, UNRWA Director, Lebanon

Tanya Chapuisat, UNICEF Representative, Lebanon

Nabeel Shaath, Commissioner for International Relations, Fatah, Palestine

Moderator:

Jan Royall, PES Vice President

11:00 – 11:20

Coffee Break

11:20 – 11:30

Speech: 'EU support to host and transit countries' by European Commissioner for Humanitarian aid and crisis management Christos Stylianides.

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- 11:30 – 13:00 **Debate: How can the EU support host countries? A roadmap for the future.**
Speakers
Diederik Samsom, Leader PvdA
Hasan Charafo, Syrian Democratic Party tbc
Enzo Amendola, Member of Parliament and chair of the PD Group in the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Italy
Gilles Pargneaux, Member of European Parliament, PS, France
Mireille Girard, UNHCR Representative, Lebanon
Yvette Cooper, Member of Parliament, Labour UK
Wahid Qarmash, JDSP, Jordan tbc
Nora Jumblatt, founder and president of the Kayany Foundation, Lebanon
- Moderator: Dorian Dragoni, Secretary General of the Global Progressive Forum
- 13:00 – 13:15 **Closing**
Sergei Stanishev, PES President
- 13:45 – 18:00 Visit to refugee camp – lunch boxes will be provided for the field visit participants