Jordan and the European Union

The European Union (EU) stands by the Jordanian people in their ongoing efforts to achieve democracy, respect for human rights, social justice, security and socio-economic development.

Political relations

Jordan is a key partner for the EU at the global, regional and bilateral levels, in particular due to its important role in promoting stability, moderation and inter-faith tolerance in the Middle East. The mission of the EU Delegation to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is to ensure the representation of the European Union to the country and to ensure the implementation and follow up of bilateral relations in the following areas: political, economic, trade, security, rule of law and external assistance and cooperation.

The EU and Jordan have a strong partnership across many sectors and have been linked through an Association Agreement since 2002. Furthermore, Jordan was the first Mediterranean partner country to conclude technical negotiations leading to an "Advanced Status" with the EU in 2010.

In line with the revised European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU and Jordan have adopted the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities and the EU-Jordan Compact. Cooperation under the Partnership Priorities is structured around three mutually reinforcing objectives: i) macro-economic stability and sustainable and knowledge-based growth; ii) strengthening democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights; and iii) regional stability and security, including counter-terrorism. Cooperation is also being pursued on cross-cutting issues such as migration and mobility as well as economic, social and political inclusion of vulnerable groups, including youth and women. The Partnership Priorities also build on the Government of Jordan's national strategies, in particular "Jordan 2025: a National Vision and Strategy", a ten-year socio-economic blueprint aimed at improving the welfare of citizens and the basic services provided to them.

The Compact aims at improving the living conditions of refugees and their host communities. Efforts to achieve this objective were reinforced at two consecutive conferences in 2017 and 2018 in Brussels on "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region". The conferences marked a strong effort on behalf of the international community and strengthened the political, financial and humanitarian commitment to support the Syrian people, refugees and hosting countries most affected by the crisis. Planning is currently underway for a third Brussels Conference.

The very good relations between the EU and Jordan are reflected in meetings at the highest-level. For instance, EU Principals (EU Presidents and Commissioners including HRVP Mogherini) visit Jordan on a regular basis.
Financial Cooperation with Jordan

Jordan has long been a key partner of the EU in the region and its crucial role has been underlined through mutual commitments. This has been reconfirmed through the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities, the EU-Jordan Compact and the Brussels Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The EU and Jordan share common values and have common interests, including the promotion of peace, stability and socio-economic development. Enhancing EU-Jordan relations further, will lead to mutual accountability and will contribute to self-reliance of the Jordanian state in the medium-term. Both Jordan and the EU are committed to deliver development results and are closely aligned with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

Since 2014, the EU's financial assistance to Jordan has mainly been provided under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the main financial mechanism on bilateral and regional basis.

Jordan benefits from the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in the priority areas of economic development, energy, education, employment, trade, private sector development, security, youth empowerment and women democracy and human rights. Economic governance, rule of law, social sectors and a stronger cooperation on security with Jordan are the political priorities reflected in the Single Support Framework (SSF), the multi-year planning document for the period 2017-2020. The EU has foreseen a support envelope of €567 to €693 million over the period 2014-2020.

In addition to bilateral allocations, Jordan is eligible to a wide range of EU thematic instruments to support civil society, human rights and democracy as well as peace and stability. Jordan also benefits from regional programmes and external actions under several EU programmes, as for example the Erasmus+ programme (higher education mobility), the EU research & innovation programme Horizon 2020 and PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area).

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Human Rights and Democracy

Through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the EU has been promoting human rights in Jordan for more than a decade.

Depending on an analysis of the current state of play, different areas were focused upon but recurrent themes have been women's rights and reform of the judiciary.

The EU has consistently supported alternative measures to administrative detention of women for their protection in cases of risk of honour killing and gender-based violence. In particular, the EU backs up the ambition to guarantee fair trials and equal treatment for women sentenced to death and those facing that risk in current court cases.

The EU also reaches to small civil society and community-based media organisations to promote human rights, with special emphasis on women's rights and freedom of expression.

Also under EIDHR, the EU has continued to support a project that advances the right to fair trial in Jordan for victims of torture and people who are at risk of torture and ill-treatment. Under the global EIDHR envelope, a project working on child labour in Jordan and Lebanon will be implemented in 2019. The total current portfolio on human rights amounts to approximately €2,6 million.
Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Gender equality and women empowerment has been a prominent feature of different EU Support Programmes. It stands by women and women organisations to strengthen their active engagement in different spheres of life.

On advancing the physical and psychological integrity of women and girls, the first government shelter for women at risk of honour killings was opened through an EU-funded project. As for the promotion of their social and economic rights and empowerment, EU-funded projects have supported communication and media campaigns that strengthen the voice of women.

Around 5 per cent of the total partnership budget with the Government of Jordan 2017-2020 is allocated to supporting gender equality and women rights.

Support to Civil Society

The EU recognizes civil society organizations as development actors and believes they can contribute to effective policies and play a significant role in promoting human rights and a sustainable development process in Jordan.

As part of the "EU Support to Civil Society in Jordan" programme, a policy dialogue and consultations between the civil society and the government of Jordan were implemented. The dialogue covered two thematic priorities to promote the engagement of civil society organisations: the external legal environment for civil society and the internal governance issues of CSOs.

The EU support to civil society has been increasing and focusing on effective engagement in the public life in Jordan. Through different funding windows, the EU support reached more than €20 million in recent years.

Democracy

In 2017, the EU successfully launched EU-JDID which stands for EU support to Jordanian Democratic Institutions and Development. A €12 million contribution by the European Union was complemented by an additional budget of €2 million by the Spanish Cooperation Office, who is also in charge of implementing the component on civil society. In 2018, the programme has delivered on the engagement with democratic institutions in Jordan (the House of Representatives, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, and the Independent Election Commission) and ensured parliamentary support activities, electoral assistance and support to the political party system.

In the House of Representatives, a video conferencing, audio and e-Voting system has been implemented to ensure for more transparency of voting. In addition, the staff of the House of Representatives benefits from training activities including on parliamentary oversight, legislative drafting and human resource management. The activities at the Independent Election Commission (IEC) are closely aligned with the follow up of the 2016 EU Electoral Observation Mission recommendations and the EU-JDID and the preparation of the Parliamentary Election of 2020. The IEC is supported in the preparation and implementation of the election administration, is involved in a certification process and benefits from capacity building at management and technical levels.

Other activities include support to political parties in terms of formulating programmes and capacity building of young political and civic actors to engage in the political process. The programme also focuses on inclusion and gender, fostering active women participation. Finally, it delivers civic education and public awareness activities to civil society organisations and will increase their capacities to conduct domestic election observation and parliamentary monitoring.
Rule of Law

The EU support to the Justice sector in Jordan started over ten years ago, contributing to strengthening the ongoing reform process to foster institutional and operational independence, capacity building for judges and prosecutors, infrastructures and access to justice.

It also contributed to enhancing the institutional capacities of the Ministry of Justice and Judicial Council which acquired a stronger ownership on the national strategies and reform processes.

Through a new €50 million programme, the cooperation will extend to reinforce key areas such as alternative methods to detention, community sanctions and legal aid, all priorities set in the recent legislative reform process. It will also cooperate more closely with the Public Security Department (PSD) to enhance information sharing and operating procedures during the investigation phase as well as develop reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for prisoners.

Security

In a context of external pressures, border security is a key priority. The EU and Jordan identified border management as a key area of cooperation. Support is given to the Borders and Residence Department at the Public Security Department (PSD) to enhance its human resources management.

A broader technical assistance programme will contribute to the enhancement of integration among border management agencies, trade facilitation and fighting organised crime. This links to the continuous support to the eastern border where the EU is funding the creation of a logistic hub in Rewashed and the enhancement of the border crossing point with Iraq, aiming also at strengthening trade and growth in the country.

The EU is also engaged in providing capacity building to the Jordanian Civil Defense in order to strengthen its capacities and readiness in reacting to crises and natural disasters.

Migration

The EU supports the Mobility Partnership with Jordan through a €2.5 million project built around two thematic components: engagement with Jordanian expatriates abroad and addressing trafficking of human beings.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Education

The EU continues to support the Government's commitment to providing quality education for every child in Jordan, regardless of their nationality. The EU is the largest donor to address the Syria crisis in this field. The adoption of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) in 2018 is a milestone in the sector. It provides a comprehensive situation analysis, identifies priority domains and outlines both financial and development partners' support needed to implement the plan.

Education has been a main focus of the EU's multi-year planning. For the period 2012-2018, the EU has committed over €380 million to strengthen the education sector as a whole - the Ministry of Education, the
Ministry of Labour (Vocational Training Centres) and the Ministry of Higher Education (Erasmus+) - and other actors to support Jordan in handling the Syria crisis. This support included school construction, monitoring of the performance and accountability of the education system monitoring quality education and supporting the institutions involved in implementing education policy and programmes.

Social Protection

The EU support to Social Protection in Jordan has gained momentum during the past five years. It is fully aligned with the country's national policies and strategies (the vision 2020-2025, the Human Resources Development Strategy 2016-2025 and the Ministry of Social Development Strategy 2017-2021). It focuses on the improvement of the governance system, in line with international standards of access for vulnerable persons and persons with disability.

It entails a large involvement of civil society and private sector and aims at improving the quality of service delivery to citizens through the modernisation of Social Protection services and refurbishment of social centres.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training - TVET

The Employment, Technical and Vocational Education Training (E-TVET) sector is a key driver of employment, prosperity and social inclusion. Through the "Skills for Employment and Social Inclusion" programme (€52 million) the EU supports improving the quality and attractiveness of the TVET sector for youth and families.

The EU is strongly supporting the governance system to gradually shift from a supply to demand-driven approach, by fully involving social partners and civil society in developing plans and policies for the E-TVET sector at all levels. This should include Public Private Partnership initiatives and facilitation of apprenticeships and internships for the young trainees.

The social inclusion dimension is fully taken into account through an effective involvement of the National Aid Fund. At least 9,000 people from disadvantaged segments of the society, in particular those referred by this institution, have been trained since 2016.

Culture

An increasingly large and broad range of EU cultural activities promote cultural diversity, youth, creativity, freedom of expression, exchange, fusion and multi-culturalism.

Most initiatives are implemented by the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC). The EU in Jordan follows a fivefold approach:

- Supports local organizations or initiatives, contributing with European elements to a crossover dimension.
- Promotes better knowledge of the EU culture & the EU in general through free-of charge initiatives.
- Supports creative industries in the country.
- Promotes cultural exchanges and mobility of artists between EU Member States and Jordan.
- Provides support to EU regional cultural programmes.

2018 was the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The EU in Jordan implemented many actions through the new long-lasting initiative "Heritage Days Jordan".
Solid Waste Management

With over €120 million investment in the sector, the EU is working with Jordan to improve the Solid Waste Management (SWM) system in the entire country. After an initial support that focused on mitigating the impact of Syria Crisis, currently the EU is the Government's main partner for the implementation of the National SWM Strategy. The Strategy aims at shifting from an old, inefficient, costly and environmentally unstable municipal solid waste management system towards a modern and integrated one that will be based on the Three R's approach (Reduce - Reuse - Recycle). In particular, it seeks to reduce 75% of the amount of bio-waste landfilled by 2024. The EU support focuses on the construction of new facilities and rehabilitation of old ones in order to ensure the safe and sanitary disposal of municipal solid waste.

Environment

Achieving the objectives set in the Paris Climate Agreement is very important for Jordan's sustainable development. The EU is a key partner to Jordan in mainstreaming environment and climate change action and enhances green economy development as well as the switch to sustainable consumption and production themes, with circular economy opportunities. Regional initiatives including CLIMA-MED and previously CES-MED, SUDEP, CLIMA South as well as Switch-MED assist partner countries in achieving their 2030 commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals: 7 - Affordable and clean energy; 8 - Decent work and Economic Growth; 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production; 13 - Climate Action; 15 - Life on Land. As co-chairs for the Union for the Mediterranean, EU and Jordan are also striving to enhance more of the environment/climate cooperation across the region.

Water

Recognising the importance of the water sector in Jordan, the EU continues its effort to promote access to water and an equitable distribution for all. In line with the Government of Jordan holistic approach, the EU continues to support an increased water supply, the rehabilitation of existing pipelines to reduce water losses and improved governance in the sector. Moreover, the EU also supports Jordan with the construction and rehabilitation of Waste Water Treatment plants and upgrading of the sewage network. Water is a sector where the EU cooperates closely with European Financial Institutions to ensure that infrastructure programmes are being implemented without bearing too much burden on national finances.

Energy

Since 2011, the EU has been assisting Jordan with the implementation of its energy reform strategy, with a focus on green energy that will assist Jordan to meet the Sustainable Development Goals: 7 - Affordable and clean energy; 13 - Climate Action. With €90 million ongoing bilateral support to the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme in Jordan (REEE II), the EU works hand-in-hand with the Government of Jordan for the development and implementation of effective policies that will help Jordan reach its renewable energy and energy efficiency (REEE) targets for 2020 and beyond.

Total contribution to the sector exceeds €160 million, including a special support to the Green Corridor project which allows for more green energy interconnections in the national electricity grid.
The EU Technical support under the REEE II programme is currently supporting the Ministry of Energy to update the sector strategy up to 2030, with a vision towards 2050, and introducing new green energy solutions notably the pumped storage that is set to allow better storage for renewable energy solutions, which will further enhance green energy development and deployment in the country.

**ECONOMIC REFORMS**


**Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA)**

The EU is providing Jordan with Macro-Financial Assistance to support economic recovery and to help offset the impact of regional instability on the Jordanian economy in the form of concessional loans.

A first [Memorandum of Understanding for a Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA)](#) programme of €180 million was signed in March 2014, with funds fully disbursed in 2015. The inflow of Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016 heightened the need for further support. Following Jordan's request in March 2016, the European Commission proposed an additional [Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA-II)](#) to Jordan of €200 million. The MFA-II Memorandum of Understanding was signed between EU and Jordan on 19 September 2017. A first payment of €100 million was done in October 2017. The second tranche will be disbursed subject to successful fulfilment of the agreed conditionality.

The MFA programme complements the implementation of Jordan's agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with additional EU funds for the country's balance of payments financing needs.

**Public Financial Management (PFM)**

Through Budget Support and Technical Assistance programmes the EU has been helping the Government of Jordan to improve its performance and enhance its accountability in the field of Public Financial Management. EU programmes have assisted the Ministry of Finance and its departments to build their capacity, improve their performance and become more transparent and accountable.

EU support has also facilitated the implementation of Jordan's PFM Strategy, especially on internal control and audit, external audit, and domestic revenue mobilisation. The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment (2016) was carried out with EU support to take stock on the progress made in PFM.

**Public Administration Reform (PAR)**

The EU is supporting the Jordanian Public Administration in enhancing its transparency, accountability and performance for the benefit of Jordanian citizens, so they can enjoy effective public services.

The EU support to the Jordanian public service is delivered through several instruments:
Twinning projects bring EU Member States public sector expertise to Jordanian public institutions through peer to peer activities. During the past six years, more than 10 twinning projects with a total value of €15 million were successfully implemented, providing assistance to various governmental institutions such as the Public Security Department, Jordan Gendarmerie, Jordan Organisation for Standards and Metrology, National Electric Power Company, etc.

The EU is currently supporting two different large-scale technical assistance interventions for the government of Jordan. The first programme aims to support the implementation of public administration reforms for improved service delivery in Jordan. The second programme is setting up a sound delivery system at the centre of the government to accelerate the implementation of the reforms needed for enhanced economic growth.

TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission. TAIEX supports public administrations in facilitating the sharing of EU best practices in many fields. It is largely needs-driven and delivers appropriate tailor-made expertise to address issues at short notice. Since 2017, Jordan has received more than 40 TAIEX missions in different fields including agriculture, telecommunications, and justice and home affairs.

Private Sector Development

The private sector is at the forefront of EU support, with special focus on SMEs; they embody the Jordanian potential, they are key players for growth and employment. In the past few years the EU has invested over €150 million to support over 1,000 companies through direct grants or technical assistance in various sectors (services, agro-business, manufacturing, etc.).

The EU currently works with the Government of Jordan to improve the framework for doing business and attracting more investment to the country. Current programmes opt for a two-track approach: on one hand they will support the Government to improve the enabling environment and incentive reforms as set in the Jordan 2025; on the other hand, they will facilitate increased investment and competitiveness at the enterprise level through enterprise capacity building and through promoting quality investment – both domestic and international.

Cooperation focuses on the development of innovative sectors and markets in a green and low-carbon economy, notably education services, green technologies and creative industries, whilst also upgrading the competitiveness and sustainability of more traditional sectors.

The Shamal Start Incubator and FabLab in Irbid, assists 90 innovative start-ups and 60 MSMEs businesses in turning their vision into viable businesses and helps develop local economies in promising sectors, including the winner of the 2018 European Youth Award on sustainable Economics. The Jordanian Action for the Development of Enterprises (JADE) contributes to the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The EU through JADE offers assistance to four Jordanian Incubators/Accelerators, five Businesses Associations, a number of Business Service Providers with the aim of creating a supporting ecosystem for an initial 100 SMEs and 60 innovative start-ups to unlock their growth potential. This will eventually translate in 1200 new jobs in outward-looking sectors and help beneficiary SMEs grow their revenues, through additional sales and exports to new markets.

Microfinance and financial inclusion

The EU promotes financial inclusion for all in Jordan. With a €35 million support programme, the EU helps Jordan provide better, safer, and easier access to finance in an effort to help create more jobs. Together with national authorities, EU programmes accompany national reforms in the microfinance sector so that more people in Jordan can have better perspective to manage their household finances or to grow their micro-businesses.
Research and Innovation

The EU has been continuously supporting research and technological development in Jordan for the past decade. Today, the EU promotes initiatives that can unlock entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. One of the key plans for the future is to invest more in private sector innovation to help local companies grow, produce more and better and become more competitive on local and international markets, including support through the EU External Investment Plan.

Trade

The EU-Jordan Association Agreement which entered into force on 1 May 2002 put in place a Free Trade Agreement between Jordan and the EU. Jordan has almost completely liberalised access to the EU market.

The EU is Jordan's largest trading partner, accounting for 17.4% of its trade in 2017, ahead of the United States (13.4%), Saudi Arabia (13.4%) and China (10.9%). In 2017 Jordan was the EU's 61th trading partner; this highlights the potential to grow Jordanian exports to the EU that reached €300 million in 2018.

Jordan could also benefit from better market access opportunities from increased compliance of the country's export items with EU regulatory requirements, amongst other. To facilitate regulatory approximation, the EU has launched a Twinning programme with the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO), which aims at supporting JSMO in the preparations for the negotiation of an Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA) in priority sectors. The EU will also assist Jordan in upgrading its Quality Infrastructure system, which includes JSMO and the Jordan Standardisation and Metrology Organisation to facilitate trade.

Agreement on the relaxation of the rules of origin

The Syrian Crisis disrupted Jordan's traditional trade routes while the resulting influx and protracted presence of refugees has had a compounded some of the structural challenges in the Jordanian economy.

To mitigate negative effects on employment, investment, and job creation, the EU and Jordan agreed on 19 July 2016 to use a unique value-based initiative offering Jordan a value-based trade response to a humanitarian crisis: a targeted and time-limited simplification of the rules of origin that Jordanian exporters need to satisfy in order to benefit from the generous preferential access already provided under the EU-Jordan Association Agreement.

The Agreement, which was further revised in December 2018, aims to enable Jordanian companies in the manufacturing sector to diversify their exports beyond their traditional markets and to create incentives for new and decent jobs for Jordanians and Syrians.

The simplified rules of origin regime applies until December 2030 and covers products in 52 product categories; these include both items that Jordan currently exports in small volumes to the EU and others where there is currently no trade.

For exporters to benefit from these alternative rules of origin, production lines exporting to the EU must employ minimum 15% of Syrian refugee labour under decent labour conditions monitored by the International Labour Organisation. 15 companies have applied to benefit from the Agreement, 13 have been granted authorisation to export to the EU, with 6 exporting a value of €19.26 million since July 2016.
Regional Trade - Agadir Agreement

At a regional level, Jordan is one of the four Member States of the Agadir Agreement, paving the way for stronger economic cooperation between Jordan and neighbouring countries. The EU supports the consolidation of the institutional framework set up under the Agadir Agreement for establishing a Free Trade Area, including increasing the sustainability of the Agadir Technical Unit (ATU) to serve the trade development needs of government and private sector in Member Countries.

Humanitarian Aid

The European Union provides services such as healthcare, food and basic needs assistance, support during the winter months, shelter, water and sanitation, psychosocial support and protection programmes.

The aid has benefitted refugees living in the Zaatari and Azraq refugee camps, as well as Syrians in urban settings and at the berm. The provision of basic services in villages and towns across the country also includes vulnerable Jordanian families. Specific programmes support women and children’s needs as they account for approximately 51 percent of the total refugee population.

The EU has supported the UNHCR and a consortium of partner organisations to help regularise the civil and/or legal status of refugees lacking proper registration.

EU response to the Syrian crisis

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the European Union is at the forefront in supporting Jordan to handle its impact and has channelled roughly €2.1 billion through bilateral assistance (€812 million), humanitarian aid (€360 million) and resilience assistance (€959 million).

EU Syria Trust Fund - MADAD

The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the ‘MADAD Fund’, was established in December 2014 to enable a more coherent and integrated EU response to the crisis. It primarily addresses longer term resilience and early recovery needs (economic, educational, social and psycho-social) of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, and supports overstretched host communities and their administrations.

Through the EUTF, the EU has committed so far more than €300,000,000 for Jordan only. The allocations are aligned with/to the Jordan Response Plan 2018-2020 and to the EU Joint Humanitarian Development Framework (JHDF) priorities. In Jordan, the EUTF for Syria is responding to the needs of refugees and host communities in four different areas: education - basic and higher, livelihood, water and sanitation and health and in complementarity with projects funded under ECHO as well as the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

The EU also provides support to Syrian refugees under its various portfolios, notably in education, social protection and in private sector development. As part of rights-based approach programming, the European Union ensures relevance of its programmes and real responses to the situation of the most vulnerable groups in the whole of Jordan.

Link:
See also

Jordan Compact
Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan
Global Compact on Refugees
www.eeas.europa.eu

Source URL: