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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Relations with Jordan - European Union's position for the Association Council's 15th meeting (Brussels, 15 July 2024)

Delegations will find in Annex the European Union's position for the 15th EU-Jordan Association Council.

15TH MEETING OF THE EU-JORDAN ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

(BRUSSELS, 15 JULY 2024)

Statement by the European Union

1. On the occasion of the **fifteenth meeting of the EU-Jordan Association Council**, the EU reconfirms its commitment to further developing its strong partnership with Jordan in line with strategic priorities for a democratic, more stable, greener and more prosperous Southern Neighbourhood¹. The EU looks forward to **further reinforcing its partnership with Jordan**, in view of shared strategic interests, in addressing global challenges based on principles of international law, and of the Kingdom's instrumental role for peace and stability in the Middle East.

2. The EU and Jordan adopted **new Partnership Priorities** (2021-2027) at their 14th Association Council, held on 2 June 2022 in Amman, committing to enhance their dialogue and cooperation around three mutually reinforcing objectives: 1) Strengthening cooperation on regional stability, security including counter-terrorism; 2) promoting sustainable economic stability, a green, digital, inclusive and knowledge-based growth, quality of education and decent job creation; and 3) strengthening good governance, the rule of law, democratic reform and respect for human rights. Cooperation is also pursued on a number of cross-cutting priorities such as migration and mobility, also building on the framework of EU-Jordan Mobility Partnership. The mutual benefit of our engagement is underpinned by the frequent bilateral visits and meetings, including at the highest level, and senior-level dialogues in multilateral and regional fora.

¹ Outlined in the Revised European Neighbourhood Policy, the European Council conclusions of 10-11 December 2020, the Agenda for the Mediterranean on a renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood of 9 February 2021 and its Economic and Investment Plan and related Council Conclusions of 19 April 2021.

3. The EU stands ready to continue supporting the implementation of **Jordan's triple modernisation process (political/administrative/economic)** and to accompany Jordan in successfully tackling the multiple challenges – both domestic and regional – it faces. The EU welcomes, in particular, measures focused on women's economic empowerment and on tackling youth unemployment. The EU's announcement of a package of financial cooperation during HM King Abdullah II's visit to Brussels on 7 November 2023, amounting to EUR 902 million (EUR 402 million in grants and EUR 500 million in loans from the EIB), and the European Commission's proposal for a new Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) operation worth up to EUR 500 million, are important elements to demonstrate the EU's partnership and solidarity with Jordan, once adopted.

4. More than two years since the start of Russia's **full-scale, illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine**, grossly violating international law and the principles of the UN Charter undermining global security and stability and inflicting unspeakable suffering on the Ukrainian population, the EU stands firmly and unwaveringly by Ukraine and its people. The EU welcomes Jordan's principled position against territorial annexation, in line with Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principles of the UN Charter and international law, and its support for the United Nations General Assembly resolutions of 2 March 2022², 24 March 2022³ and 23 February 2023⁴. It encourages Jordan to continue lending its support in multilateral fora in support of a global rules-based order. The EU welcomes the participation of Jordan in the Summit on Peace in Ukraine convened in Switzerland on 15-16 June 2024 and encourages all States, including Jordan, to support its Joint Communiqué. It underlines the importance of jointly supporting President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula, and that international law including the UN Charter is the only foundation of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

² United Nations General Assembly Resolution GA/12407 of 02/03/2022

³ United Nations General Assembly Resolution GA/12411 of 24/03/2022

⁴ United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-11/6 of 23/02/2023

5. The EU is concerned by Russian state-sponsored disinformation and massive information manipulation, used to justify and support its military aggression against Ukraine, as well as to fuel existing unrest in the EU and third countries, to undermine the EU's position and bilateral relations with third countries, gravely distorting and manipulating the facts. It is of major concern that false pro-Kremlin narratives are being spread intensively in the media and social networks in Arabic language across the MENA region, including Jordan. The EU stands ready to share with Jordan and all partners its best practices and expertise in countering such disinformation while ensuring respect of the freedom of expression and opinion.

6. The EU highly values **Jordan's instrumental role for the stability of the region**, as a voice of moderation and peace, as highlighted by its long-lasting commitment to the Middle East Peace Process, and its efforts to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the crises in Gaza and Syria. The EU welcomes the vision presented by Arab partners, including Jordan, to EU Foreign Ministers in May 2024 and stands ready to reinforce cooperation, on this basis, with a view to implementing the two-State solution.

7. The EU commends the constructive role that Jordan has played as co-President of the **Union for the Mediterranean** since 2012, and the commitment shown to its reform process. The EU and Jordan will continue to work constructively together to foster a strong partnership across the Mediterranean, in view of a more peaceful, secure, green, prosperous and inclusive region and to strengthen the Organisation's role, functioning, and visibility.

8. Condemning the Hamas terrorist attacks of 7 October 2023 against Israel, the EU reiterates its commitment to work with Jordan and other partners to end the crisis in **Gaza** without delay and its support to the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, supporting the new US ceasefire proposal announced on 31 May 2024. The EU calls for the full implementation of resolutions 2712, 2720, 2728, and 2735 of the United Nations Security Council, including through reaching an immediate, full and complete ceasefire and the unconditional release of all hostages, as well as the provision of full, rapid, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian aid to scale for Palestinians in need, recalling the European Council's conclusions of March and April 2024 in all their elements.

The EU remains firm in its commitment to a negotiated and viable two-state solution built upon the internationally agreed parameters and international law, in which both Israelis and Palestinians can live in security side by side. The EU underlines the urgent need for engagement with key partners, including Jordan, to restore a political horizon and open the path towards the implementation of the two-state solution. The European Union stands ready to work with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and regional and international parties to contribute to reviving a political process, including through the Peace Day initiative and a Peace Conference to be convened as soon as possible. The EU and its Member States will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem embodied in the relevant UNSC resolutions, including the UNSC Resolution 478, until the final status of Jerusalem is resolved. The EU recalls the specific significance of the Holy Sites and underlines the importance of upholding the status quo put in place in 1967 for the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount in line with previous understandings and with respect to Jordan's special role, acknowledged also in the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

9. The EU commends **Jordan's humanitarian efforts** led by HM King Abdullah II to address the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, including air drops and the establishment of a land corridor from Jordan to Gaza for humanitarian assistance. The EU welcomes Jordan's organisation, together with Egypt and the UN, of the "Call for action: Urgent Humanitarian Response for Gaza" Conference and stands ready to contribute. The EU is fully prepared to leverage its instruments, including the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), to support the Jordanian corridor. EU Member states confirm their willingness to donate in-kind material on the basis of lists of items identified by OCHA, WFP, Palestinian Red Crescent (PRCS), and also by the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO). The Commission is committed to facilitating donations, streamlining transportation, and subsidising EU transport. The EU fully supports coordination by the UN including on the basis of Security Council resolution 2720 and the mechanism under the leadership of UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator Kaag.

10. The EU recognizes Jordan's essential role as a host of more than 2.3 million registered Palestine refugees as well as efforts by Jordan to de-escalate the crisis. It reiterates its continued support for the vital services to millions of people **the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees** (UNRWA) provides in Gaza and across the region, including in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, which are essential. In this regard, the EU condemns any attempts to label a UN agency as a terrorist organisation. The EU reiterates its strong support to the Agency, and remains, with its Member States, its biggest donor. The EU welcomes the action plan presented by UNRWA and will closely monitor its implementation.

11. The EU remains committed to a **political solution to the Syrian conflict in line with UNSCR 2254** as the only path to sustainable peace for Syria. At the **Brussels VIII Conference on the Future of Syria and the Region** which it hosted on 27 May 2024, the EU expressed its concern at the lack of progress on the political process and the deteriorating humanitarian situation, largely due to obstruction by the Syrian regime. It also acknowledged once again, together with the international community, the generosity of the people and authorities of Jordan in providing refuge to more than 638 000 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees. At the meeting, the donor community pledged a total amount of EUR 7.5 billion, including EUR 5 billion of grants and EUR 2.5 billion of loans for 2024 and beyond. The total amount pledged by the EU and its Member States amounted to almost EUR 6 billion, reaffirming them as the largest donor to the Syria response. The EU recalled its position that no normalisation, lifting of sanctions or reconstruction would be possible until the Syrian regime engaged in a political solution of the conflict in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Syria, which is also key to regional stability. Recalling European Council conclusions of 17-18 April 2024, the EU reaffirms the need to achieve conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns of Syrian refugees as defined by UNHCR, which are still not in place. The Syrian regime bears the overwhelming responsibility for this situation. The EU reaffirms the need to end impunity in Syria. All parties responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights must be held accountable and the victims must obtain justice.

12. The European Union and its Member States remains the largest donors supporting people in Syria and the region since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, mobilising over EUR 33.3 billion overall in response to the Syrian crisis, including almost EUR 4 billion for Jordan.

EU support aims at enhancing the access and delivery of basic services to Syrian refugees and host communities, including in the sectors of education, social assistance and protection, health, water and sanitation. It will also further support the creation of livelihood opportunities and increased self-reliance of refugees and hosting communities in Jordan. The EU remains committed to strengthening Jordan's national service delivery schemes benefitting all vulnerable populations, including Syrian refugees and hosting communities. Support may also include communication activities (such as information and awareness campaigns) to address the information needs of Syrian refugees related to protection and access to the above mentioned services.

13. The EU and Jordan share a common interest in promoting **Iraq's** stability and prosperity. They recognise that the fight against Daesh remains a significant challenge for Iraq and its neighbours that requires systematic and coordinated strategies. The EU commends the ongoing trilateral cooperation between Jordan, Egypt and Iraq and its contribution to regional stability.

Strengthening Cooperation on Regional Stability, Security including Counter-Terrorism

14. The EU welcomes the prominent and balancing role played by Jordan in promoting peace and security in the Middle East.

15. The EU reiterates its condemnation of the Iranian drone and missile attacks against Israel on 13 April which represented an unprecedented escalation and a threat to regional security. The EU expressed its full solidarity for the challenging situation that Jordan, at the crossroads of multiple challenges, is facing, including unacceptable violation of its airspace and praises the determination of HM King Abdullah II to prevent Jordan from becoming the battleground for a regional war. The increased pressure at the border with Iraq from militia, armed groups and terrorism as well as the continued surge of drugs and weapons smuggling via its northern border with Syria, are also of concern. The EU underlines its commitment to continue supporting Jordan in effectively tackling these challenges, including through consideration of a new Assistance Measure to the Jordanian Armed Forces under the **European Peace Facility**.

16. The Hashemite Kingdom is a likeminded partner with a key role as a regional leader on counter-terrorism, including in the context of the Aqaba Process, launched by HM King Abdullah II. The EU recognises Jordan's constructive role in preventing and countering terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation in the region, including through its multilateral engagement, and in particular as co-chairs of the FTF Working Group of the Global Counter-terrorism Forum/ GCTF and their commitment to the Global Coalition against Da'esh.

17. Jordan is actively participating in several EU projects in the field of **security and CT** (including CT JUST, CT INFLOW, EUROMED Police, CT Phare and EU4Monitoring Drugs II), which are all aiming to further enhance the partners' capacities in the field of anti-terrorist intelligence and criminal justice chain. The EU recalls its invitation to Jordan to join two new regional security related programmes (Momentum and CT Travel MENA). It is also ready to continue the cooperation in the fight against **firearms trafficking**, including in the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) firearms. Referring to the Council decision from March 2021⁵, the EU emphasised its continued readiness to start negotiations for an Agreement with Jordan on judicial cooperation in criminal matters with Eurojust. The EU encourages the Jordanian authorities to conclude the negotiations with Europol concerning a Working Arrangement, in order to facilitate a structured cooperation, and invites Jordan to explore the possibility of starting negotiations with the European Commission, at an opportune moment, on an international Agreement enabling Europol and Jordan to exchange personal data.

18. The EU welcomes progress achieved by Jordan in the fight against money laundering and financing of terrorism (**AML/CFT**), which allowed for a delisting of Jordan from the EU AML List in December 2023, also thanks to the substantial support provided to Jordan under the EU's Global AML/CFT Facility.

⁵<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7072-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

19. The EU is also ready for increased cooperation, consultations and exchange of experience in **crisis management and prevention, reinforcing cooperation on civil protection and disaster risk management**. The EU welcomes Jordan's active participation in the EU-funded Civil Protection programmes PPRD Med (2023-2026) (Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made disasters in the Mediterranean) and OSA (2023-2026) (On site technical Assistance).

20. The EU underlines its readiness to further enhance **EU-NATO cooperation on Jordan** in the field of capacity building both in Brussels and on the ground. In this regard, it welcomes Jordan's cooperation with NATO, as an important contribution to regional security.

Promoting Sustainable Economic Stability, a Green, Digital, Inclusive and Knowledge-Based Growth, Quality of Education and Decent Job Creation

21. The EU notes that Jordan has been successful in maintaining macroeconomic stability, despite considerable challenges in an uncertain environment. In particular, the EU notes that over 60% of the population is under 30 with high levels of youth unemployment.

22. The EU encourages Jordan to continue effectively implementing economic and administrative reforms, in line with its **Economic Modernisation Vision** (2022-2033), and reiterates its support to this end. It welcomes Jordanian efforts aimed at reforming the business environment, including the adoption of the public private partnerships (PPP) and Investment Laws.

23. The EU encourages Jordan to implement, with EU's continued support, most-needed structural reforms focusing on improved public service delivery and resource management, accountability and transparency and on enhancing the business and investment environment and decent job creation notably for youth and women, including in knowledge-based sectors. To this end, it welcomes the completion of the reform of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone regime, which allowed the EU to remove Jordan from Annex II of the **EU list of Non-Cooperative Tax Jurisdictions** in October 2023.

24. Trade-for-Development constitutes a key element of EU's cooperation with Jordan. The EU underlines its continued readiness to enhance cooperation on SME development, including through several programmes aiming to help strengthen entrepreneurship capabilities and increase the economic opportunities for the Jordanian private sector.

25. The EU commends and supports initiatives to increase the **participation of women** in the public sphere, including the economy and the political arena at local and national levels, notably to increase their presence in the labour force and among decision-makers. This represents an important step in promoting gender equality and is likely to increase the level of economic activity and contribute to Jordan's economic growth. The EU welcomes the National Strategy for Women in Jordan 2020-2025 and the 2022 Constitutional amendments, and encourages Jordan to advance further equality of rights, economic participation and social empowerment of women.

26. Since 2013, Jordan has benefitted from three successful EU **Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA)** programmes for an amount of EUR 1080 million. Following a Jordanian request for a follow-up MFA, a fourth MFA worth up to EUR 500 million in loans for the period 2024-2027⁶ was proposed by the European Commission on 8 April 2024. The proposed financial assistance aims to help Jordan cover part of its external financing needs, support the fiscal consolidation and structural reform efforts, so that Jordan's ambitious reform agenda can continue, promoting jobs, growth and investments.

27. The EU and Jordan have close trade relations, and the EU represents Jordan's second major trading partner. Still, to revert the current negative trend of a decrease in both imports and exports from Jordan to the EU, the EU will continue to foster the **enhancement of bilateral trade and investment relations** with Jordan, as an important vehicle for investment, growth and job creation. The EU will continue to support Jordan in its efforts to improve its export performance by boosting its general export capacity and competitiveness. To this end, the EU will continue to support Jordan, through technical assistance and capacity-building measures, allowing business operators to take fuller advantage of the preferential access to the EU market that Jordan already enjoys. Moreover, to foster investment and business opportunities in sectors such as transport, connectivity, energy and renewable hydrogen, a first “**EU-Jordan Business Forum**” took place on 11 June 2024 in Amman, back-to-back to the second meeting of the EU-Jordan Investment Platform.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_24_1829

28. The EU commends Jordan for its efforts to facilitate the access and participation of refugees into the formal labour market in an inclusive way and encourages Jordan to pursue those efforts. The EU welcomes the major progress achieved in registering 90,000 reported work permits to Syrian refugees in 2023. The EU encourages Jordan to continue the implementation of the simplified rules of origin scheme, to publicise its benefits to potential investors in the private sector, and to take forward more general initiatives to improve the investment climate, which would also have wider spill-over benefits for the economy beyond the rules of origin initiative. The EU recalls the obligation of Jordan to comply with the quarterly reporting on quality jobs, in order to allow for the adequate monitoring of active work permits. The EU remains open to explore, in close cooperation with the Jordanian authorities, other measurable means corresponding to employment in relation to the scheme, taking into account fair working conditions.

29. In 2023, the EU adopted programmes worth EUR 120 million to support Jordan in ensuring that all children and youth living in the country have equal opportunities to complete a full-cycle of quality education (from basic to tertiary education, including vocational education and higher education). This support includes programmes designed to support the implementation of the national Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2025, the reform of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector as key priorities of Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision, amid economic hardship increasing the pressure on public education infrastructures. It will help to create the right set of knowledge and skills required in the Jordanian labour market and for the green, digital and social transition. Targeted programmes will focus on refugees and the most vulnerable host communities' children and youth.

30. In the same spirit, the continuation of the very good participation of Jordan in **student and staff mobility** as well as capacity building projects through the international dimension of Erasmus+ and other programmes will be pursued. The EU commends Jordan's successful participation in the international dimension of Erasmus+ 2014-2020 as well as under the new programme 2021-2027.

31. The EU remains committed to further enhancing its cooperation in **research and innovation** (R&I) with Jordan, including in the jointly co-chaired UfM Platform on Research and Innovation. The EU aims to further strengthen the integration of R&I in education and in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes, as well as in public and private sector investment. Increased cooperation between research and innovation centres and small and medium enterprises will have a positive effect on Jordan's competitiveness. The EU acknowledges Jordan's active involvement in Horizon Europe and the appointment of a network of National Contact Points for the programme. The EU encourages Jordan to make full use of collaboration opportunities under the programme including partnerships, researchers' mobility, and collaborative research pertaining to R&I priorities in the region, namely climate change, renewable energy and health. The EU also commends Jordan for having nominated a National Contact Point (NCP) for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) for the mobility and training of researchers, which should also help enhancing the country's participation in the MSCA.

The EU recalls that Jordan would be welcome to join other European R&I partnerships, such as the co-funded Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP). Further, the EU acknowledges the role of Jordan in promoting science diplomacy in the region, particularly to the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME). The EU will continue its endeavours to support SESAME and the joint advocacy towards its existing and potential new members.

32. The EU praises Jordan to have been the first of the 5 Non-EU countries in the region (not associated to Horizon Europe) to initial the agreement to extend its participation in the **Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area** (PRIMA) for the period 2025-2027. The EU will operate jointly with Jordan towards the signature and conclusion of the agreement, which would enable Jordan to secure its participation in jointly funded research in the key areas of water management, food security and their nexus under PRIMA.

33. **Migration and mobility** are a cross-cutting issue in the cooperation between the EU and Jordan. The EU welcomes the initiatives undertaken in the context of the Mobility Partnership and encourages active exploration of the further cooperation opportunities in this framework. The EU is ready to advance in the negotiation process with a view to reaching a comprehensive agreement on **visa facilitation** and **readmission** of persons residing without authorisation, started in 2016.

34. Advancing on an ambitious **green transition** agenda is more important than ever. The EU reiterates its call for urgent and enhanced action at all levels across all sectors to achieve the transformation towards climate neutral, circular and nature positive economies in this critical decade to keep the limit of 1.5°C temperature rise within reach in line with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement and the outcomes of the Global Stocktake agreed at COP28.

35. The EU welcomes Jordan's significant progress in implementing its National Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement and congratulates Jordan for being the first country in the region to develop a Monitoring Reporting and Verification (MRV) system to monitor progress in the NDC and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction. Building on this positive policy track record, the EU invites Jordan to consider developing carbon pricing measures and start formulating the next NDC with more ambitious goals in line with the Global Stocktake, including a climate neutrality target by mid-century. It calls on Jordan to enhance the implementation of its Green Growth action plans, which it is ready to support via its EU support to Green Economy in Jordan towards 2025. The EU stands ready to support Jordan in the implementation of its reform agenda, including the National Climate Strategy 2030 and its National Green Growth Plan, which lay the groundwork for energy transitions.

36. The EU attaches great importance in cooperation with Jordan in the **energy** sector, especially in view of common priorities such as energy security, enhanced energy efficiency and energy transition. Jordan joined the EU in supporting the Global Pledge on Renewables and Energy Efficiency at COP28. The EU reiterates the importance of the “UAE consensus”, including its provisions concerning transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, and stands ready to further reinforce the fruitful cooperation with Jordan aiming to accelerate the energy transition. The EU welcomes the ambitious goal for renewable energy sources to reach 50% of electricity generation by 2030, with Jordan positioning itself as a regional frontrunner in the production and trade of **renewable hydrogen**, and stands ready to support the implementation of its upcoming National Green Hydrogen Strategy. The EU-Jordan Business Forum held in June represented another important opportunity to foster investment and partnership opportunities in the renewable energy and clean tech sectors, furthering inter-regional and intra-regional value chain integration.

37. As Co-chair of the UfM, Jordan remains an important partner of the EU on **environmental issues** in the Southern Neighbourhood. Recognising the importance of water security in Jordan, the EU reiterates the willingness to continue supporting Jordan’s transition to a resource-efficient economy and sustainable water management, including the implementation of the National Water Strategy 2023-2040 through dedicated programmes.

38. Over the past years, the EU has provided extensive support to Jordan's efforts to further improve the efficiency and sustainability of management of water resources. It acted as a catalyst for European investments (EU, Member States and EFIs) under the Team Europe Initiative for Sustainable Water Management, with a combined pledge of over EUR 740 million (grants and loans) in support of the Government's flagship project **Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyor** (AAWDC). The EU maintains its support to this key project and encourages Jordan to move forward as soon as possible with the construction.

In this particular context, the EU encourages sound water management through several prior or concurrent sectorial reforms to ensure the project's efficiency and viability: national water grid rehabilitation, tariff reform, recycling and agricultural reform in order to reduce water waste and stands ready to support. The EU also reiterates its support to regional projects that may also benefit the Palestinian side in the spirit of fostering regional cooperation. The EU also welcomes the second meeting of the "EU-Jordan Investment Platform" in June 2024, which allowed to review the recent investment reforms and to identify opportunities for joint investments between the EU, MS and Jordan.

39. The EU welcomes the successful **transport** cooperation with Jordan, including in the context of the UfM, with the aim of supporting the implementation of the Regional Transport Action Plan 2021-2027. With dedicated projects, the EU aims to support the goals of the newly adopted Transport Sector Strategy for 2024-2028, which seeks to establish a universal, sustainable and gender-sensitive transport system, hereby supporting decarbonisation and inclusion efforts in Jordan, while fostering green growth potential and creating green jobs that benefit all of society. The EU is looking forward to organising the first Joint Committee in September 2024 in Brussels to monitor the EU-Jordan Aviation Agreement, which was signed in 2010 and entered into force in 2020.

Strengthening Good Governance, the Rule of Law, Democratic Reform and Respect for Human Rights

40. The respect of **democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms** constitutes one of the main pillars of the EU-Jordan Association Agreement and is an integral part of the new Partnership Priorities. The EU continues to value strongly the regular dialogue at political and senior official level and will continue to encourage and support efforts to advance the rule of law, enhance transparency and establish effective and accountable institutions, while upholding human rights for all and combatting all forms of discrimination. The EU has expressed specific concerns and issued recommendations on human rights issues in the framework of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democratisation and Governance in March 2023 and of the Association Committee in February 2024. The EU encourages Jordan to implement the accepted recommendations in the context of its fourth Universal Periodic Review and stands ready to support its efforts in this regard.

41. The EU welcomes the objectives put forward by the Jordanian leadership as regards **political modernisation and promoting a political party system** in the country, in line with the recommendations of the Royal Committee to Modernise the Political System. It welcomes the adoption of new constitutional amendments and new Political Parties and Election laws, aiming to enhance political participation and representation of women and youth, and stands ready to continue accompanying their implementation notably through its dedicated programme “EU Support to Democratic Reform”. The EU is also looking forward to accompany the 2024 legislative elections with the deployment of an Election Observation Mission, as part of its continued efforts to support the political modernisation process, initiated by HM King Abdullah II.

42. The EU reiterates the importance of ensuring a safe and enabling space, both online and offline, for civil society, human rights defenders, media and journalists, which is key to the development and modernisation of the country, in line with the Royal Recommendations for the Modernisation of the Political System. The EU is therefore concerned about recent arrests of activists and peaceful protestors which risk to further shrink the civic space in the country. The EU encourages and stands ready to support the revision of Jordan’s relevant legal framework to bring it in line with international human rights standards. Reiterating its concern⁷ regarding the Cybercrime law adopted in August 2023, the EU is looking forward to drawing lessons from its implementation so far in order to ensure the full respect of freedom of expression online.

⁷ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/jordan-statement-spokesperson-revision-cybercrimes-law_en

The EU remains committed to supporting a thriving civil society as a contribution to building peaceful, just, inclusive and democratic societies as well as supporting service provision and raising awareness about the political modernisation effort underway. Recalling that access to resources, including funding, is an integral part of freedom of association, the EU encourages Jordan to ensure the smooth functioning of the foreign funding approval mechanism, with clear criteria and transparency leading to the approval or rejection of NGO applications. While recognising Jordan's legitimate security and counter terrorism concerns, the EU view remains that the best antidote for radicalisation and instability is an open, inclusive and resilient society where all human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, protected and fulfilled.

43. The EU places great importance on the joint promotion of gender equality and recognises Jordan's commitment to strengthen women's empowerment. It encourages Jordan to achieve further progress towards the full realisation of human rights of women and girls and their empowerment, as well as the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence. In this context, the EU encourages Jordan to eliminate discrimination of women in the personal status law, particularly as regards custodianship, marriage, divorce and inheritance, as well as to continue efforts to enhance women's participation in the labour market and stands ready to support Jordan in that endeavour.

44. The EU commends the efforts underway to promote an effective, independent and well-functioning judicial system, and continues to stand ready to support Jordan in that endeavour. The EU will continue supporting Jordan in the implementation of its Justice Sector Strategy 2022-2026, with the aim to strengthen the independence and efficiency of judicial institutions, enhance access to justice, ensure fair trial guarantees and conditions of detention in line with international standards. In this light, the EU reiterates the need of ensuring transparency and legal safeguards at all stages of criminal trials, including in State Security courts, as well as when administrative detention is applied, while noting the need to limit the use of administrative detention and to provide judicial oversight on such cases. The EU also encourages Jordan to further strengthen its legal framework to make it fully compliant with the United Nations Convention against Torture, to which Jordan is party, and to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The EU also calls on Jordan to re-instate the moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ultimately abolishing it.

45. The EU welcomes Jordan's efforts to modernise the public sector and reaffirms its continued readiness to support the implementation of the Public Sector Modernisation Plan through dedicated programmes, within the overall aim to improve public service delivery, efficient and effective public institutions and enhanced public participation.

46. The EU looks forward to further deepening the EU-Jordan partnership, including through enhancing our political and security dialogue, to foster regional peace and stability, building upon the positive momentum in bilateral relations, across policy areas, shared interests and values, and a spirit of mutual trust. The EU is also convinced that civil society, youth and the private sector have important roles to play in the full implementation of the Partnership Priorities, and stands ready to further develop EU-Jordan cooperation in this respect.
