

Youth, entrepreneurship and better living conditions spearheads of new EU record assistance to Tunisia

The European Union has recently adopted a financial assistance package worth €305 million, which is the highest amount ever allocated to Tunisia under the [European Neighbourhood Instrument](#). This record financing reflects the EU's strong ambition to create better chances for the Tunisian youth, facilitate a more flourishing and attractive business environment and enhance the capacities of local governments to improve the living conditions of local populations.

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, said: *"Our commitment to the Tunisian society and our intention to support measures that will help young Tunisians find work and create their own businesses is clear. Support to actions that will bring economic growth and provide more job opportunities is a top priority in our newly adopted assistance to Tunisia, worth €305 million, the highest amount ever for a single year. The adopted programmes will facilitate access to the job market for young Tunisians, boost entrepreneurial innovation and ensure that local communities are not left behind."*

More specifically, the newly adopted €305 million financial assistance comprises, among others, the following programmes:

- The *"Youth in Action"* programme (€60 million) will improve the **economic, political, and social inclusion of the most vulnerable among Tunisian youth**. It will (i) contribute to a better access for young people to the job market, through skills development, (ii) invest in culture and sports and (iii) improve policy participation of young people at the local level.
- The *"EU4Innovation"* programme (€15 million) will contribute to the **strengthening and structuring of the Tunisian innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem**. More specifically, it will (i) improve the services available to start-ups and entrepreneurs and (ii) support the implementation of an enabling regulatory environment for innovative entrepreneurship and start-ups.
- The *"Support to local governance"* programme (€70 million) will support Tunisia's **efforts to boost local development and reduce regional and local disparities** as part of its decentralisation process. Actions will (i) improve living conditions for local populations through a better access to basic services, (ii) support and build the stakeholders' capacities and (iii) provide analysis and dissemination of good practices.

€160 million have been allocated to various programmes and actions supporting **key economic sectors** (private sector and urban development, culture and tourism) and the modernisation and reform of the Tunisian public

administration.

Background

2018 has been an intense year for EU-Tunisia cooperation. The Strategic Priorities for the period 2018-2020 have been adopted, negotiations in view of an EU-Tunisia [Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement](#) have been revived and discussions on visa facilitation and reintegration are on track. [President Juncker visited Tunisia](#) on the 25-26 October where he reiterated the strong links between the European Union and the country and confirmed the EU constant support to the Tunisian democracy and youth. In July 2018, a visit of Commissioner Hahn marked the first joint high-level mission led by the EU in the European Neighbourhood with the participation of eight European and international financial institutions. In November the high-level international conference « [Re-Thinking the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Partnership](#)” took place at the Cité de la Culture in Tunisia.

Since 2011, the EU has more than doubled its financial contribution to cooperation with Tunisia. In the Southern Neighbourhood, the country is the principal beneficiary of the ‘umbrella’ programme, which allows for increased European financial support to partners working to strengthen democracy and human rights. The scale of the EU’s support reflects its firm commitment to supporting Tunisia’s reform process. As well as increased support, the past years have ushered in more diverse approaches and forms of assistance to address Tunisia’s needs in the wake of its historic democratic transition.

For More Information

[Strengthening the EU-Tunisia privileged partnership: the strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020](#)

[Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Strengthening EU support for Tunisia](#)

[EU – Tunisia Single Support Framework 2017-2020](#)

[EU-Tunisia Partnership for Youth](#)

[European Union Delegation to Tunisia](#)

[Cooperation between the EU and Tunisia](#)

[Annual Action Programme 2018, part 1](#)

[Annual Action Programme 2018, part 2](#)