



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Additional €30 million to boost aid for victims of Syria crisis

Just as winter weather has hit Syria and the region, the European Commission has mobilised an additional €30 million aimed at providing urgently needed assistance to the conflict-affected population inside Syria, as well as to Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring Jordan and Lebanon. This follows just few days after the European Commission signed major contracts with United Nations agencies totalling €147 million to deliver vitally needed aid to people affected by the Syrian crisis.

The extra €30 million come from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and are in addition to €960 million already provided by the European Commission since the start of the crisis, including the [€400 million comprehensive assistance package](#) launched with the Joint EU Syria Communication of 24 June 2013.

Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, stated: *"Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, the EU has stood by the millions of people directly affected by this atrocious conflict in Syria and in the region. We have provided a quick response to the challenges arising from the continuous and increasing influx of refugees to the neighbouring countries. This new additional support will be instrumental in improving the living conditions both of host communities and Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as supporting Palestinian refugees inside Syria, which are among the most vulnerable. Our support will focus on providing education and protection to refugee children. In addition, we will upgrade basic services for refugees and host communities in Jordan and Lebanon, in particular water and sanitation. With winter hitting the region exceptionally hard and temperatures dropping; our new support comes timely and will help refugees – in particular children – and host communities under threat from harsh winter conditions."*

Out of this additional €30 million allocation, a total of €16 million will go to UNRWA¹ to provide urgent cash assistance to Palestinian refugees from Syria and to help meeting the increased costs associated with the ten-fold increase in the number of Palestinian refugees now facing severe poverty as a result of the Syria crisis. An estimated 235,000 Palestinian refugees – around half of the total Palestinian refugee population – are displaced within Syria, having effectively become refugees a second time, and 80% of the total 540,000 registered Palestinian refugees in Syria are now in need of critical assistance.

¹ UNRWA = United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees.

The remaining €14 million will support host communities in Jordan and Lebanon particularly affected by the influx of refugees. These two countries are now hosting over 60% of the 2.3 million Syrian refugees. In Lebanon alone, Syrian refugees now constitute almost one fifth of the population, which would be equal to Germany having to host 14 million refugees, or the EU as a whole 90 million. The extra aid will help upgrading basic-services such as water and sanitation, in order to reduce health risks caused by inadequately treated wastewater and to improve water supply. Furthermore, in order to avoid a lost generation, this funding will support UNICEF to protect refugee children and to promote access to learning for about 400,000 refugee children of school age.

Overall, European Commission and EU Member States together mobilised over €2 billion development and humanitarian aid so far, making the EU the biggest donor. In 2013 alone, the Commission has provided €280 million in development assistance under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), €350 million in humanitarian relief, and €65 million under other aid instruments, which brings the amount of aid this year to almost €700 million.

Background

On 24 June¹, the European Commission and the High Representative announced an increase in EU aid of €400 million - €250 million to support humanitarian relief and €150 million development assistance. As of today, almost 90% of the € 150 million in in recovery and development assistance have already been contracted by DG DEVCO and rapidly turned into concrete projects. Implementation has begun on the ground.

The total number of people affected by the civil war in Syria and in need of assistance is over 9 million, around half of the entire population. This makes the Syria crisis the largest humanitarian emergency in decades. Within Syria, more than 6.5 million are internally displaced. In addition, the number of refugees who have fled from the war in Syria into neighbouring countries has now reached over 2.3 million. More than half of all those refugees are children. According to UNHCR estimates, the refugee population in the region could reach over 4 million by the end of 2014.

EU support to UNRWA

The Syria crisis is affecting the Palestinian refugee community and the situation of Palestinian refugees in Syria is becoming increasingly difficult. In 2013 alone, EU support to UNRWA for activities in Syria and Lebanon has reached a total of €35.2 million. This funding is used to provide emergency education, cash transfers and shelter assistance to Palestinian refugee children in Syria itself as well as those who have fled to Lebanon.

The EU is the biggest donor to UNRWA, with €153.5 million allocated in 2013 alone, which represents a further increased contribution in comparison to 2012. The European Commission has however indicated that it is essential that the Agency diversify its sources of funding, particularly by activating the Arab League countries' commitments to pay 7.8% of the General Fund requirements.

For more information

Website of the DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Website of EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/index_en.htm

Website of the European External Action Service on Syria:

<http://eeas.europa.eu/syria/>

On the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI):

www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/

[IP/13/1284](#): Syria crisis: EU and U.N. partners to reach millions of Syrians in desperate need of humanitarian assistance

[MEMO/13/1173](#): Joint statement by Aid Principals calling for decisive action to increase humanitarian access and funding for Syria crisis

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ⁱ See the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy "Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian Crisis", adopted on 24 June 2013.