Statement by Commissioner Christos Stylianides on the 4th anniversary of the Syria crisis

Brussels, 13 March 2015

"It is with great sadness that we mark yet another tragic anniversary of the Syria crisis, which this week enters into its fifth year.

The humanitarian situation inside Syria is worsening every day. A staggering 12.2 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in the country – nearly one third more than a year ago!

Reaching these people is becoming increasingly challenging due to fighting, and parties to the conflict are failing to respect International Humanitarian Law. Despite several UN Security Council Resolutions and international appeals, accessing people in need of assistance is becoming more difficult, with devastating consequences for their lives.

The health situation is worsening because of lack of medical supplies. The tragic result is a resurgence of diseases once thought to have been eradicated such as polio and tuberculosis. In addition, there is a shortage of medical staff, who are increasingly targeted by armed groups, forcing many doctors and nurses to flee the country.

Over 3.8 million Syrian refugees have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, putting a huge strain on host communities. The enormous generosity of the host countries can only be commended. Refugees in these countries must continue to be protected, and I trust the host governments to fully respect their international commitments.

Europe cares and stands in solidarity with the people of Syria. The European Commission and its Member States are among the largest humanitarian donors for the Syria crisis, having so far contributed more than €3.35 billion. This is a strong signal of our commitment to the people of Syria and its neighbours, who have suffered so much.

The upcoming annual pledging conference for the Syria crisis at the end of the month in Kuwait will be a test of the international community's commitment. The European Union will fully live up to this responsibility, and I call upon other donors to do the same."

Factsheet on Syria Crisis:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf

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