



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 24 September 2014

Syria crisis: an extra €112 million to prevent a lost generation of children

The European Commission is giving €112 million to support children affected by the crisis in Syria. The amount is part of the overall funding of €215 million announced yesterday in support of the response to the Syria crisis. As part of the 'No Lost Generation' campaign, this money will fund education and child protection activities in Syria and neighbouring countries and support the vital work of national governments to strengthen their own national education systems.

"More than six and a half million children have been affected by this brutal civil war, including more than one and half million now living as refugees outside their country," said Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

"What is at stake here is the future of an entire generation of Syrian children whose lives have been turned upside down, who have been traumatised by the horrors they have seen and who have had to flee their homes in search of safety. The war has destroyed entire cities and the lives of ordinary families living in them. It has made it all but impossible for children to be able to go to school and to do the ordinary things all children deserve.

"We must invest in the children of today because they will be the peacemakers and lawmakers of tomorrow. These young people will be the ones on whom everyone will rely upon to rebuild and shape a more stable and secure future for their country when this horrific conflict eventually ends. We must support them."

The EU supports the No Lost Generation Initiative in partnership with UNICEF, which calls on governments, aid agencies and members of the public to become champions for the children of Syria. The "No Lost Generation" strategy focuses on providing children with more assistance to protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation, through education to nurture their minds and build resilience and psychosocial support.

Background

According to UNICEF, 6.58 million children have been affected by this crisis, 5 million children in need inside Syria and 1.58 million refugee children. There are 3 million children displaced inside Syria, living in dire conditions. Of that number, up to 1 million are estimated to live in hard-to-reach areas. Neighbouring nations and host communities are struggling to absorb the influx of refugees, with a direct impact on their own youngest citizens.

In terms of education, inside Syria, the Ministry of Education indicates that 4 million children were enrolled in schools in Syria and 1 million were out of school during the 2013/2014 year.

Concerning protection, far too many children have witnessed or experienced horrific violence. Child labour, early marriage and recruitment of children by armed groups all have become more common. Children living under such circumstances are tremendously vulnerable – at risk of greater violence, abuse, and exploitation. Adolescents and youth lacking education, skills, and opportunity are especially vulnerable to recruitment and aggressive behaviour. Girls are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence.

Projects related to education and child protection have been funded by the Commission's development budget, with a total of €174 million. In 2014, the Commission allocated €14 million in humanitarian funding to UN agencies and NGOs which have a specific focus on children. The money goes to projects that feature child protection and psychosocial support. In addition, the Commission has launched a dedicated funding mechanism – EU Children of Peace – to assist conflict-affected children through education. This initiative is a lasting legacy of the Noble Peace Prize awarded to the EU in 2012. To date, over €12 million has supported 25 humanitarian projects in conflict-affected countries across the globe to assist children through education.

For more information

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection:

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

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

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

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