Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell, Commissioner Lenarčič and Commissioner Várhelyi on the 1st anniversary of the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria

Brussels, 6 February 2024

On the one-year anniversary of the devastating earthquakes that struck southern Türkiye and northern Syria, killing thousands of people and affecting the livelihoods of millions, the EU continues to stand in solidarity with the affected people in both countries and reaffirms its commitment to continue assisting those whose lives were torn apart by this natural disaster.

Since the first moments in the aftermath of the earthquakes, the EU provided an immediate emergency response. European rescuers were mobilised on the ground immediately after the vast devastation, delivering life-saving supplies to disaster sites, and our humanitarian partners adapted their response to provide fast emergency assistance. Only a few weeks later, on 20 March, the EU rallied the international community by organising an International Donor's Conference to raise necessary funding to support the people in Türkiye and Syria. A total of €7 billion was raised, including €1 billion by the EU.

In Türkiye, in addition to the emergency assistance coordinated via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with estimated financial value of €38 million, the EU provided €78.2 million in humanitarian aid for earthquake response in 2023, and €26 million in humanitarian aid in 2024. An additional €400 million in assistance under the EU Solidarity Fund, the highest amount granted to a country engaged in accession negotiations, will be signed shortly to support the reconstruction of critical infrastructure in the areas of health, education, water and wastewater. Another €355.6 million package is being prepared to support refugees and host communities, whose needs remain high, in the affected areas, in particular for infrastructure rehabilitation and socio-economic support. It is expected to be signed over the next few months.

In Syria, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) were activated, and, in view of the gravity of the humanitarian crisis exacerbated by the earthquake, the EU amended restrictive measures in place regarding Syria to facilitate the speedy delivery of humanitarian aid. In total, the EU mobilised €75 million for its humanitarian response to the earthquake inside Syria. The emergency response focused particularly on shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene support, the delivery of medical supplies, as well as cash assistance.

After thirteen years of conflict, the EU remains the main donor in Syria and will continue to mobilise international efforts this Spring by hosting the eighth Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region'.

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