



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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"Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian crisis": an EU joint communication

The European Commission and the High Representative adopted on Monday 24 June a joint communication, mapping out a comprehensive EU approach in response to the conflict and its consequences both in Syria and its neighbouring countries. The EU response aims to: support a political process that brings a sustainable solution to the crisis; prevent regional destabilisation from the spill-over of the conflict in neighbouring countries; address the dramatic humanitarian situation and assist affected populations; address the consequences of the conflict on and in the EU. The communication also highlights the actions and initiatives already taken by High Representative Catherine Ashton and the European Commission.

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said: *"Today, we are proposing a comprehensive EU response to the deteriorating situation in Syria and neighbouring countries. The international community cannot stand by idly in the face of the most dramatic humanitarian situation of the last decades. Our first priority is to promote a political settlement aimed at ending the violence and the human rights abuses. In parallel, the EU is mobilising its financial instruments in order to alleviate human suffering. The European Commission has decided to allocate an additional 400 million euros to the humanitarian, economic and development needs in Syria and in the neighbouring region, bringing the EU's overall contribution to over 1.25 billion so far. At the same time, we also call on other donors to redouble their efforts. We all have a duty to act."*

High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton said: *"On my visit to the region last week, I saw first hand the consequences of the war in Syria on so many people, and the rapidly deteriorating situation. The EU is doing all it can to help. The first priority is to find a political solution, to bring about a transition leading to a united, inclusive and democratic Syria. This is something I have been engaged in since the very beginning of the crisis. We must build on the US/Russian initiative to revive political negotiations on the basis of the June 2012 Geneva communiqué and convene the Geneva II conference as soon as possible. The EU is ready to provide any support necessary. But this communication also looks at other equally important elements of the EU response to the crisis, to ensure we act in the most comprehensive and efficient way possible to help the people of Syria."*

Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle stated: *"We are very concerned by the worsening of the Syrian crisis and its negative impact on Syria's immediate neighbours. We have an interest to avoid their further destabilisation. This communication therefore also focuses on how we intend to assist the neighboring countries, and in particular the host communities that are under increased pressure to provide basic services (e.g. education, health, waste collection, etc.) to Syrians fleeing the conflict. We intend also to support Jordan and Lebanon so that their own local population, who are generously hosting refugees, can continue to benefit from basic services. This is an expression of our solidarity in the face of major and long crisis."*

The situation in Syria has been deteriorating drastically, with more than 93,000 deaths and 1.6 million refugees as of June 2013. It is the most dramatic humanitarian situation facing the world today. As the largest humanitarian donor for the crisis, the EU has so far mobilised more than 850 million euros from humanitarian and non-humanitarian budget instruments. However, the severity of the crisis and human suffering in Syria and the neighbouring countries cannot be solved with extra money alone. This is why it is crucial to rapidly find a lasting political solution, which guarantees an end to the violence and leads to an inclusive transitional government. This can only be reached through dialogue. Helping to reach this political solution lies at the heart of the EU's action and underpins the comprehensive approach presented in this joint Communication.

The Communication proposes in concrete terms:

- support for a political settlement (Geneva II Conference on Syria);
- ensure access of humanitarian assistance to all war-affected areas;
- increase EU budget financial assistance by around €400M in 2013;
- develop derogations to the sanctions regime to provide support to the population;
- support the UN in dealing with claims of human rights and international humanitarian law violations;
- promote solidarity with particularly vulnerable persons who may be proposed for resettlement on EU territory;
- prevent radicalization of EU citizens and deal with EU foreign fighters that have travelled to the conflict zone;
- prepare for the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation phase.

For more information:

- factsheet "[The European Union and Syria](#)"
- joint HR/COM communication "[Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian crisis](#)"

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