EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

Brussels, 29 August 2014

Statement by Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva on 3 million refugees fleeing Syrian crisis

Today the number of refugees from the Syrian crisis has passed a record 3 million people, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Reacting to the news, Kristalina Georgieva, the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response has made the following statement:

"*The Syrian crisis has reached yet another tragic milestone - yet another reason for sadness and concern for the millions of innocent victims.*

Now in its fourth year, this conflict is both an emergency and a protracted crisis. Sadly, the three million refugees will not be able to go home soon. Sadly, the children among them - half of all refugees - will not soon have the chance to study, play and grow up in a safe and peaceful Syria. And the host communities who so generously shelter refugees, in Lebanon and Jordan, Turkey and Iraq - will continue to carry the burden of a crisis which threatens to engulf the whole region. We are already seeing the terrible spill-over in Iraq which recently joined Syria in the list of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

The victims require immediate assistance, but also longer-term support. The European Union is acting on both fronts. We have provided more than €2.8 billion in aid, focusing on three priority groups: Syrians inside Syria, the refugees and the host communities. We are making sure that our assistance targets the immediate needs but also the protracted nature of the crisis: for example, by investing in children's education through the EU Children of Peace and the No Lost Generation initiatives.

I am grateful to the countries and communities who are hosting the refugees. I also want to pay tribute to the humanitarian workers who toil relentlessly to bring relief to the long-suffering Syrians and keep their hopes alive. The bravery and dedication of these men and women is a sign of hope for humanity, even amidst such a terrible conflict.

With so many crises erupting simultaneously around us, with so much suffering, there is a risk that the victims of the Syrian crisis and their needs will slip from the public eye. On behalf of the European Commission, I pledge that we will continue to keep the focus and draw attention to the victims of the Syrian crisis - the children, the refugees, the internally displaced, the people and communities who shelter and help them. Until the senseless fighting stops, until Syria is back on its feet - we will stand by them."

Background

The Syria crisis has become the largest humanitarian and security disaster in the world. An estimated 10.8 million people inside Syria need assistance. Out of these, more than 6.4 million people are internally displaced. Around 4.7 million people reside in areas that

are hard to reach, including about 241 000 people in areas that are besieged by either government or opposition forces.

Over 190,000 people have lost their lives in the conflict and many thousands more have been wounded. An entire generation of children has been exposed to war, violence and death, and has been deprived of basic freedoms, protection and education.

The European Union - the European Commission and the Member States, has led the international response with over €2.8 billion collectively mobilised for relief and recovery assistance to Syrians. This figure includes almost 2 billion of EU humanitarian aid only. EU humanitarian assistance, channelled through UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross/Crescent family, is provided, to all people in need, in accordance with humanitarian principles and needs. The EU humanitarian aid primarily supports life-saving food and nutritional items, medical emergency responses, shelter, distribution of basic non-food items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene and protection, including against gender based violence and child protection.

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

Factsheet on Syria Crisis:

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

Contacts :
David Sharrock (+32 2 296 89 09)
Irina Novakova (+32 2 295 75 17)
For the public: **Europe Direct** by phone **00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11** or by e-mail