European Commission and Swedish Presidency of the Council will organise a Donors' Conference for the people of Türkiye and Syria affected by the earthquake

Brussels, 8 February 2023

The President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, and the Prime Minister of Sweden, Ulf Kristersson, have today announced their intention to host a Donors' Conference, in coordination with the Turkish authorities, to mobilise funds from the international community in support for the people of Türkiye and Syria following this week's devastating earthquake. The event would be hosted in March in Brussels.

The Donors' Conference will help mobilise the international community to deal with the aftermath of this week's devastating earthquakes. The objective of the high-level Conference, which will be open to EU Member States, neighbouring countries, UN members, international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders, is to coordinate the donors' response and raise resources in support of the early recovery and relief in the affected areas of Türkiye and Syria. The conference will be chaired jointly by Commissioner in charge of Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Olivér **Várhelyi**, and the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Johan Forssell.

"*We are all shaken by the devastating effects of the earthquakes that have hit Türkiye and Syria this week. The priority now is to work around the clock to save as many lives as possible as many people are still trapped under the rubble, in buildings*. *For this, the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism was immediately activated and has sent by now 31 search and rescue teams and 5 medical teams from 23 countries. But we are already sending now a message to the people of Türkiye and Syria: the EU will support your communities. Because no one should be left alone when a tragedy like this hits a people",* said President **von der Leyen**, announcing the Donors' Conference following a call with Swedish Prime Minister Kristersson.

Prime Minister Kristersson said: *"The earthquake in Türkiye and northern Syria is a disaster without recent precedent. The extent of the loss of life and physical damage is becoming clearer by the day. The consequences are truly horrendous. As President of the Council of the European Union, Sweden wants to ensure that the EU's assistance is adequate to meet the need of the Turkish and Syrian people in this terrible time."*

Background

On 6 February 2023, a first earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter scale, followed by at least two other major earthquakes, hit Türkiye and Syria causing widespread destruction of public and private infrastructure, hitting thousands of households and causing thousands of casualties.

Thousands of buildings have suffered serious damage, including schools and health care facilities and other public infrastructure such as roads, airport, ports, oil terminals, electricity lines, water provision and sewage. Several severe aftershocks were registered, causing additional fatalities and damage.

The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism was activated immediately. 20 EU Member States and Albania, Montenegro and Serbia have already offered **31 search and rescue teams and 5 medical teams via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The teams consist in total of over 1,500 rescuers and 100** search and rescue dogs.

Teams of structural engineers and in-kind assistance are also being mobilised through the mechanism and also bilaterally. An EU Civil Protection Team is currently in Türkiye to coordinate the international response.

A post-disaster needs assessment (PDNA) led by the United Nations' Development Programme (UNDP) should be launched shortly to help inform the reconstruction and rehabilitation needs and an estimate of the overall costs. The Commission stands ready to contribute to this assessment.

Quotes:

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President Ursula von der Leyen

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Ulf Kristersson, Prime Minister of Sweden

Press contacts:

Eric MAMER (+32 2 299 40 73)
Dana SPINANT (+32 2 299 01 50)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email