



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Worsening crisis in Syria: European Commission increases its emergency aid

The European Commission is preparing to release an additional €50 million humanitarian funding to help Syrian civilians caught up in their country's crisis. This will bring the Commission's total contribution to €119 million.

The release of the funds will begin as soon as the European Parliament and the Council have approved the decision.

It would bring to €200 million the assistance from the European Commission and Member States - roughly half of all international humanitarian aid to the crisis. This puts the European Union in a clear lead in responding to the UN's call for more funding.

Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva, responsible for Humanitarian Aid, Civil Protection and Crisis Response, said: "The humanitarian situation in Syria is worsening almost daily now that the hostilities have slipped into civil war. There are already tens of thousands of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. This calls for massive and effective humanitarian aid to reach those in urgent need of medical supplies and items such as baby food. This is why we are stepping up our assistance in this desperate situation.

I also want to take this opportunity to call once more on all parties to the conflict to respect the lives of innocent civilians caught up in the fighting through no fault of their own".

The latest contribution from the EU will cover health care for the wounded or those in need of emergency treatment, basic healthcare services, shelter, food, water, sanitation and household items for both the displaced within Syria and the refugees abroad. The target beneficiaries include more than 1.5 million people in Syria and a large proportion of the almost 200,000 Syrians who have fled to Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. Assistance will also be provided to some 500,000 Palestinian refugees and another 87,000 Iraqi refugees who live in Syria.

The funding will be channelled through the European Commission's humanitarian partners including UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent family and non-governmental organisations.

Background

The conflict in Syria has been declared a "civil war" by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). An estimated 2.5 million people are affected by the on-going violence. The UN estimates that 1,200,000 have been internally displaced in Syria and this number is growing daily. There are now almost 200,000 registered refugees in the neighbouring countries. Concern is also growing for the 87,000 Iraqi and 500,000 Palestinian refugees living in Syria and whose vulnerability is increasing.

Aid agencies face significant constraints in reaching people in need. Recently, some progress had been made in terms of access, as eight international NGOs have been granted access to work in Syria. Yet, only the ICRC and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are able to operate in the areas of greatest need.

Attacks on humanitarian workers continue. So far, seven volunteers have been killed and ambulances and UN vehicles are still being attacked.

Emergency needs, especially for medical assistance, have increased. Treating and evacuating the wounded is a priority. Beyond emergency needs, shortages of all kinds are affecting the civilian population, including growing fuel shortages. Preparing for the winter will also become a priority, as well as education: with 330 public schools being used as shelter for the internally displaced, rapid solutions need to be found to allow the autumn term to start.

The Commission is in daily contact with its humanitarian partners and is coordinating its humanitarian activities with EU Member States and all other significant donors.

Funding

Prior to this new funding allocation, the European Commission had already budgeted €40 million in humanitarian assistance for Syria and neighbouring States, with an additional €6 million allocated to Iraqi refugees based in Syria. A further €23 million has been provided for Syria and Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon from the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI).

At this stage, the breakdown of EU humanitarian funding is 61% inside Syria and the rest distributed between Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon.

The assistance under the Commission's funding has so far been implemented by the International Federation of the Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross, ICRC, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme. Outside Syria, we also work with Handicap International (Jordan and Lebanon) as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council (Lebanon).

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

Syria factsheet:

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

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