



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Lebanon: European Commission provides €30m more to deal with refugee crisis

The European Commission will provide an additional €30 million to Lebanon to alleviate the impact of the high influx of refugees from Syria, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle announced during his visit to Beirut. *"Lebanon receives the highest number of people fleeing the horrible bloodshed in Syria and we know that it puts this country under enormous strain. The hospitality and generosity displayed by the Lebanese towards their neighbours is admirable and commendable. The EU remains committed to assisting the Lebanese Government in its response to the refugee crisis,"* Commissioner Füle said after informing President Michel Sleiman and Prime Minister Najib Miqati about the new financial allocation. At the same time he welcomed Lebanon's comprehensive response plan to deal with the refugee crisis and conveyed the EU's appreciation of the fact that Lebanon keeps its borders open to people fleeing the violence in the neighbouring country.

Today's announcement of the additional €30m constitutes a significant increase and brings the total amount of financial assistance offered by the European Commission to Lebanon in relation to the Syrian crisis to almost €75 million in humanitarian and non-humanitarian aid. The objective of this special measure is to reinforce the national capacity to deal with the unprecedented number of refugees and provide financial support for the Government's plan to mitigate the consequences this has for the country.

The European assistance will be allocated in line with the priorities of the Lebanese Government and will focus on strengthening of Lebanese institutions in particular in the areas of education and child services for the refugees as well as supporting the Lebanese communities that have hosted refugees from Syria, often in their own homes.

Background

While being the smallest of Syria's neighbouring countries, Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees. By the end of February it received more than 325,000 Syrian nationals in addition to a similar number already present in country previously (e.g. seasonal workers in agriculture and construction). There are also estimated 31,500 arrivals of Palestinian refugees from Syria.

Out of the €30 million announced today to help Lebanon to cope with the refugee crisis, €5 million would be designated for Palestinian refugees from Syria. The support of the EU is managed through UN agencies in the country and goes both to emergency humanitarian response and to support the secondary needs of refugees (education, health care) as well as to support the Lebanese host communities which are predominantly in the poorest and most neglected regions of the country. The EU, with Member States, is the biggest donor of assistance to Syrian refugees both in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

The EU has from the outset stressed the importance of addressing the needs of the Lebanese host communities bearing in mind now that the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis has consequences for the country as such.

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