



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Syria: EU biggest donor, leads international aid response, reaching 7 million people in need

Responding to the unprecedented humanitarian needs in and around Syria, the EU has so far mobilised almost € 1.8 billion in relief and recovery aid from both the Commission and Member States, making it the largest international contribution accounting for a significant proportion of the overall global funding.

European assistance reaches up to 80% of the population affected by the crisis and brings concrete and tangible results that make a difference for those affected by the Syria crisis and is having an immediate impact:

- **Over 7 million people affected by the crisis** have been sheltered in temporary housing and adequate shelter and receive household items, kitchen sets, blankets, stoves, fuel, etc., in particular during the upcoming cold winter period in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey.
- At least **4.6 million people** affected by the crisis in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq are receiving **emergency food assistance** through different modalities, such as food rations, food vouchers or cash assistance.
- At least **780,000 children** in Syria, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, many in refugee camps or internally displaced, are receiving school education, adapted to the Syrian curriculum so that they can continue their schooling. In 2014, an additional **1.8 million children** affected by the crisis will be able to continue accessing education.
- More than **10,000 teachers** are being trained in teaching methods or psycho-social support in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to help them teach and support the affected children more effectively. In 2014, nearly **4,000 additional teachers** will receive training.
- A special focus on people with specific vulnerabilities when exposed to conflict and violence such as women, children, the elderly, migrants or persons with disabilities is helping **300,000 children and women** with protection, specialised psycho-social and Gender-Based Violence support.
- **85 local civil society organisations** that are providing services to the displaced population both in Syria and in the neighbouring countries **are strengthened** to improve the resilience capacity of local communities. Support is provided to **400 activists, bloggers and journalists** to promote social cohesion and ensure that Syrians are able to access free and independent information regarding the crisis. Next year, an additional 700 will be supported and trained.

EU Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva said: *"The Syrian civil war has created a humanitarian catastrophe the likes of which we have not seen in decades, with children accounting for more than half of its victims. Europe is making a huge effort to help all those in dire need but even with the extraordinary sums we are raising it is not enough. I urge all donors to dig deeper. But money is not the only problem: access to those most in need is restricted and aid workers are attacked. All parties to the conflict must respect International Humanitarian Law."*

Commissioner responsible for the EU Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle, said: *"The EU stands by the Syrian people who need all the help they can get in this dramatically worsening crisis. Apart from covering the basic humanitarian needs we make great efforts to help in providing education to Syrian children and support also for neighbouring countries which come under enormous economic and social pressures by hosting ever increasing number of Syria refugees. We will continue supporting Syrian people and our partners in this difficult time."*

The total number of people affected by the civil war in Syria and in need of help is approaching the **unprecedented number of 9 million, almost half of the entire population**. This makes the Syria crisis the largest humanitarian emergency in decades.

Within Syria, more than 6.8 million people are now in need of immediate assistance including an estimated 5 million internally displaced. In addition, the number of refugees who have fled from the war in Syria into neighbouring countries has surpassed the appalling milestone of 2 million. More than half of all those refugees are children. With violence becoming ever more ferocious, brutal and inhumane, the tide of refugees is bound to continue to rise.

Background

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate as violence intensifies and fighting continues throughout the country. The situation in Damascus, Aleppo, Hassakeh, Hama and Homs is particularly dire. **An estimated 6.8 million people are affected by the on-going violence and require humanitarian assistance.** The UN estimates that more than 4.25 million people have also been displaced within Syria. Every day of violence adds to this number. **There are now over 2 million refugees** (registered and awaiting-registration) in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and North Africa. This number is rising daily as hostilities continue.

There is also a growing concern for refugees living in Syria (Palestinian, Iraqi, Afghan, Somali and Sudanese), whose vulnerability is rising. The conflict increasingly implicates groups of the population previously neutral as Kurds and Palestinians. Palestinians, in particular, are getting further drawn into the conflict and numerous fatalities have been reported. Many Palestinians are displaced inside Syria or have fled the country; UNRWA indicates that over 420 000 Palestine refugees in Syria urgently require basic assistance. Between 15 and 29 August 47,000 people of Kurdish origin fled into the Kurdish region of Iraq giving mainly the lack of basic services and challenge in getting hold of food as reason to leave Syria.

The nature and magnitude of the needs are critical in all parts of the country, be they in Government-, opposition- held or disputed areas. **The focus is on life-saving activities.** Treating and evacuating the wounded, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene, health, shelter and food assistance, are the main priorities. **Protection remains central in the conflict**, with very serious allegations of abuses reported against women and children, adding to the constant reports of indiscriminate killings and extrajudicial arrests and lately the use of chemical weapons. Food prices have risen dramatically.

Assaults on aid workers have also continued unabated (so far, 22 SARC volunteers and 11 UN staff members have been killed and ambulances and UN vehicles are still being attacked). 14 International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) have been validated by the Syrian authorities and are formally allowed to operate in the country (namely ADRA, Action Contre La Faim, Première Urgence, Danish Refugee Council, International Medical Corps, Help, Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement (IECD), Secours Islamique France, Terre des Hommes-Italy, Merlin, Mercy Corp, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam and Médecins Sans Frontières).

In neighbouring countries, the number of refugees more than doubled during the first three months of 2013 alone, and has now reached 2.1 million, registered and awaiting registration, in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and North Africa. This number is continuing to rise as hostilities grow. The High Commissioner for Refugees office projects a total of 3.45 million refugees from Syria by the end of 2013. The continuous influx of Syrians is increasing the burden on the host communities and is fuelling tensions in some areas. Countries bordering Syria are approaching a dangerous saturation point and they need urgent support to continue keeping borders open and assisting refugees. Assessment of the conditions of refugees living outside the camps is needed as well as humanitarian aid (especially shelter and water, hygiene and sanitation).

The EU – its Institutions and its Member States – is the biggest donor of assistance in response to the Syrian crisis both in Syria and in neighbouring countries. In June, the European Commission announced a substantial increase in assistance amounting to €400 million in the context of the Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian crisis" dated 24 June 2013. This assistance package is composed of €250 million for humanitarian assistance and €150 million for development assistance. Out of the €150 million funding for development needs, €40 million will deal with the Syrian crisis in Lebanon, €60 million – in Jordan and €50 million in Syria.

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