



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 20 June 2012

The European Commission boosts its humanitarian aid for Syria as Commissioner Georgieva visits Syrian refugees

The European Commission is increasing its humanitarian aid by EUR 10 million for those affected by the escalating violence in Syria, Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva announced today during a visit to a refugee camp in Turkey.

The Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response made the announcement at Kilis, where she met Syrians who have been forced to flee their country because of the deteriorating situation. She was accompanied by Turkey's Minister for EU affairs, Egemen Bağış.

The doubling of humanitarian aid brings to EUR 43 million the amount being spent by the European Commission in response to the Syrian crisis. EUR 23 million of it comes from the European Neighbourhood and partnership Instrument. Humanitarian activities will provide shelter, food, medical and health supplies, clean drinking, improved sanitation as well as basic household supplies. It will reach an estimated 700,000 people affected by the continuing violence both inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. The European Union's Member States have provided EUR 24.6 million in humanitarian aid.

More than a third of the estimated 87,000 people fleeing from the violence in Syria have found refuge in Turkey.

Speaking at Kilis Commissioner Georgieva said: "At this desperate time my thoughts are with all those people who are suffering grievously as a result of the indiscriminate violence taking place in Syria. A lingering civil war beckons and I expect the scale of the humanitarian challenges to rise dramatically. We will continue to stand with the innocent victims of violence and today I repeat my call to all the parties to the fighting to spare human life, respect human rights and to afford all protection and assistance to those who are trying to provide relief to the most vulnerable."

Her visit to Turkey's border with Syria is taking place on World Refugee Day. "On this day I am standing shoulder to shoulder with Syrians but I cannot forget the men, women and children around the world who, through no fault of their own, find themselves far from their homes, hungry and fearful. From Myanmar to Congo the fate of refugees is merely glimpsed by those of us fortunate to live in comfort and security. Let us reflect upon the generosity of countries such as Yemen, which hosts hundreds of thousands of African refugees yet is one of the world's poorest countries with dire humanitarian needs itself.

"It is a shining example to all of us of the indomitable human spirit of solidarity which reaches out to less fortunate souls in their hour of need."

The Commission will continue to channel its humanitarian funding through partners, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as well as the United Nations' Refugee Agency.

Background

Between 1.5 and 3 million people are affected by the violence in Syria, while the entire civilian population is suffering from shortages of both food and fuel. Over an estimated 87,000 people have already fled the country and are being hosted and protected by neighbouring countries, mainly Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan and Iraq. Host countries have been working to meet the most basic needs of refugees and to ensure minimum protection. However, none of the fleeing Syrians has been granted full refugee status, therefore depriving them of long term solutions.

The intensification of violence has hindered the capacity of humanitarian workers in Syria to provide essential relief to populations in need. Lack of information has also prevented the international community from analysing and monitoring the overall extent of the situation and thereby hampering a full and comprehensive humanitarian response.

After more than a year of unrest and in spite of the presence in the country of UN observers the situation on the ground remains critical and access as limited as ever. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent has been the main organisation involved in the assessment of needs, the identification of the most vulnerable populations and the registration and the distribution of relief items.

For more information:

[MEMO/12/456](#) - Q/A: The European Commission's work to help refugees

Commissioner Georgieva's website

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/index_en.htm

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

Contacts :

[David Sharrock](#) (+32 2 296 89 09)

[Irina Novakova](#) (+32 2 295 75 17)