

Greater Horn of Africa: Commission allocates 54 million euros to address major humanitarian needs in five countries

With five new financial decisions, the European Commission is providing a total of €54 million in humanitarian aid to vulnerable people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda. The funds are channelled through the Commission's Humanitarian Aid department under the direct responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel.

"The Greater Horn of Africa faces humanitarian threats on a lot of fronts," said Louis Michel. "In this region ravaged by extreme weather conditions, chronic conflict and deep poverty, millions of people are now on the brink of collapse. Our help is crucial in saving lives and tackling misery. The complementary decisions we have just adopted reflect our global approach in this region, which is designed to address these difficult humanitarian challenges consistently and effectively. "

Somalia: €13 million

For more than two decades, Somalia has been confronted with a devastating combination of conflict, drought, floods and disease. The delivery of humanitarian aid has also become increasingly difficult because of attacks on humanitarian workers resulting in death and injury, as well as numerous kidnappings.

As announced recently at the International Donor Conference on Somalia's Security (23rd April 2009), the Commission has adopted a humanitarian "global plan" for €13 million. The funds will be used to assist victims of continuing insecurity and climatic hazards with a focus on health and nutrition, the provision of water and sanitation, food and food security for internally displaced people (IDPs) and the chronically vulnerable communities.

Eritrea: €3 million

€3 million has been allocated to address the immediate acute needs of the most vulnerable people in Eritrea. The country has been affected by years of chronic drought, desertification, poor infrastructure and continued insecurity on the border with Ethiopia. This decision will help bring relief to 500,000 people, with a emphasis on health, nutrition, water/sanitation, protection and livelihood support.

Ethiopia: €6 million

85% of Ethiopia's people live in rural areas, with agriculture their main source of livelihood. Poor and irregular rainfall means that food production is extremely uncertain. Besides frequent droughts, Ethiopia also suffers from floods, epidemics and internal conflict – all generating considerable humanitarian needs.

The Commission is providing funds for health, food, water and sanitation actions targeting the most vulnerable people in Ethiopia, including refugees and IDPs.

Food assistance (regional decision benefiting Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda): €22 million

This decision focuses on responding to nutritional insecurity, through food aid and short-term livelihood support to badly-affected communities in the Greater Horn of Africa. It will also support early recovery measures in the aftermath of disasters, such as the provision of agricultural inputs.

Drought response (regional decision benefiting Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda): €10 million

Significant population growth has put severe pressure on the scarce natural resources of the Horn of Africa. In addition, climate change is seen in a steady reduction of rainfall in the region. Based on a disaster risk reduction strategy, this new decision will help to strengthen the resilience of pastoralist communities living in drought-prone areas by providing water, livelihood support, health services and support for animal health.

Background

All Commission-funded humanitarian projects are implemented by non-governmental relief organisations, specialised UN agencies and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement. ECHO has support offices in most of the countries concerned. Its field experts closely follow developments in the humanitarian situation and play an active role in local coordination of relief efforts. They also monitor the use of the Commission's relief funds.

For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm