



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

### European Union joins the effort to assist survivors of earthquake in Turkey

Brussels, 27 October 2011 - Brussels, 27 October 2011 - The European Union has responded immediately to requests for assistance from Turkey with six Member States offering hundreds of tents to the region struck by an earthquake.

The European Commission is coordinating the provision of European assistance to Turkey after the Turkish authorities requested the activation of the European Civil Protection Mechanism last night. Turkey has called on Europe to join the relief effort by providing family tents to help shelter the survivors of the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck eastern Turkey on Sunday.

"The Turkish authorities, the Red Crescent and the numerous volunteers have faced a huge task and have saved and helped thousands in these days of heartbreaking loss and substantial damage. Now they have asked us to join their effort to care for the survivors and Europe is ready to contribute," said Kristalina Georgieva, the European Commissioner for crisis response.

"Turkey has shown great solidarity to others when they were struggling with disasters. Now they need our solidarity as well," Commissioner Georgieva added.

The Commission is also looking at further ways to support the relief effort through the Instrument for Preaccession Assistance (IPA). "We are currently looking into all options to make IPA funds available to follow up beyond the short term assistance needs," Stefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy said.

Austria, Belgium, Slovenia, France, United Kingdom and Sweden offered over 2300 winterised tents within the first three hours of Turkey's request. Several other countries which participate in the European Civil Protection Mechanism said they are ready to help. A team of European experts in civil protection is being deployed to facilitate the delivery of the emergency assistance on the ground.

The Commission will also take a further decision of support concerning pre-fabricated houses in the coming days.

#### Background

On Sunday, 23 October, an earthquake of magnitude 7.2 struck Turkey's eastern province 17 Km North of the city of Van. A series of powerful aftershocks followed. The quake was among the strongest in Turkish history.

As of 26 October, 461 people were reported dead, 1,352 injured. More than 2,200 buildings have been damaged.

The European Civil Protection Mechanism facilitates cooperation in disaster response among 31 European states (the 27 members of the European Union plus Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Participating countries pool the resources that can be made available to disaster-stricken countries all over the world. When activated, the Mechanism coordinates the provision of assistance inside and outside the European Union. The European Commission manages the Mechanism through its crisis response centre (the Monitoring and Information Centre).

Since its creation in 2001, the Mechanism has been activated for disasters in Europe (like the forest fires in Portugal, floods in the Balkans in 2010 and explosion at a naval base in Cyprus in 2011) but also worldwide, including after the earthquake and tsunami disaster in Japan.

### **For more information**

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/georgieva/index\\_en.htm](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](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm)

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