



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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COMMISSION DECISION

of

**on the financing of humanitarian Actions in Syrian Arab Republic from the general
budget of the European Union**

(ECHO/-FA/BUD/2009/09000)

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid¹, and in particular Article 2 and Article 15(2) thereof;

Whereas:

- (1) Syria is experiencing a drought which is by far the worst over the last forty years and it is the third year in a row that Syria is hit by a drought of regional dimension. Around 800,000 persons are considered as severely affected;
- (2) The drought has affected the whole country but more severely the Eastern and Northern governorates which are considered the country's food basket. The inhabitants of these areas, predominantly herders and subsistence farmers, have exhausted their coping mechanisms and are put at risk of rapid loss of livelihood and increased malnutrition.
- (3) Given the scale of the disaster, the United Nations agencies launched, with the support of the national authorities, a "Syria Drought Response Plan" in August 2009. The total request is USD 52,938,616².
- (4) To reach populations in need, humanitarian aid should be channelled through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and International Organisations including United Nations (UN) agencies. Therefore the European Commission should implement the budget by direct centralized management or by joint management;
- (5) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid Actions should be financed by the Union for a period of 12 months;
- (6) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 2,000,000 from budget article 23 02 02 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 70,000 rural dwellers, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. The activities covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation;

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

² EUR 35,339,650.

- (7) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002³, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002⁴, and Article 15 of the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union⁵;

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION :

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 2,000,000 for the financing of humanitarian Actions in Food aid from budget article 23 02 02 of the 2009 general budget of the European Union.
2. In accordance with Article 2 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the principal objective of this Decision is to provide humanitarian food assistance to the most vulnerable population affected by the drought in Syria.. The humanitarian Actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
 - To address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population hit by drought in Syria.

The full amount of this Decision is allocated to this specific objective.

Article 2

1. The period for the implementation of the Actions financed under this Decision shall start on 1 January 2010 and shall run for 12 months. Eligible expenditure shall be committed during the implementing period of the Decision.
2. If the implementation of individual actions is suspended owing to force majeure or other exceptional circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account in the implementing period of the Decision in respect of the Action suspended.
3. In accordance with the contractual provisions ruling the Agreements financed under this Decision, the Commission may consider eligible those costs arising and incurred after the end of the implementing period of the Action which are necessary for its winding-up.
4. The Authorising Officer may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, extend the duration of the Decision for a maximum of 6 months provided that the total duration of the Decision does not exceed 18 months, in accordance with Article 90.4 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

³ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1.

⁴ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, , p.1.

⁵ Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

Article 3

1. In accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules and having regard to the urgency of the Action, the availability of other donors and other relevant operational circumstances, funds under this Decision may finance humanitarian Actions in full.
2. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented either by non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility suitability criteria established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 or by International organisations.
3. The Commission shall implement the budget:
 - * either by direct centralised management, with Non-governmental Organisations;
 - * or by joint management with international organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the EC/UN Financial Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) and which were subject to the four pillar assessment in line with Article 53d of the Financial Regulation

Article 4

This Decision will take effect on the date of its adoption.

Article 5

This Decision is addressed to the delegated authorising officer.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission
Peter Zangl, Director-General



Food Aid Decision
23 02 02

Title: Commission Decision on the financing of humanitarian Actions in Syrian Arab Republic from the general budget of the European union

Description: Food assistance to the victims of the drought in Syria

Location of Action: Syrian Arab Republic

Amount of Decision: EUR 2,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-FA/BUD/2009/09000

Supporting Document

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

For the last three years, the Middle East has been facing sizeable deficits of precipitation. In December 2008, it prompted the United States Department of Agriculture to state that "*the Middle East suffered one of the worst agricultural droughts in recent decades.*" In Syria, livestock herders and small-scale farmers of rain-fed fields are severely affected by these repeated shortfalls of precipitation.

For these communities, selling animals is a traditional coping strategy, especially at time of crisis. But in 2008 drought was particular as it occurred simultaneously to the soaring of food prices on world markets. With the access to free feeding on rangelands disrupted, livestock herders rely heavily on purchased animal feedstuffs and are forced to sell massively their animals, pushing prices downwards. Owners of small to medium size flocks are the most affected and are no more able to get loans from fodder merchants. Unfortunately, not only precipitations received last winter were again far below annual averages but the rains occurred too late to enable the vegetation to start its growth properly. Livestock herders cannot get out this destocking spiral. Many have already sold out their entire flocks.

The drought has affected the whole country but especially the governorates of *Homs*, *Al Hassake*, *Al Raqqa*, and *Dair Al Zzor* in the East and North. These 3 latter governorates are considered as the country's food basket. The Eastern governorates are home to the so called Badia natural region, the largest and most arid region of Syria. Consisting of rangelands and desert areas, it concentrates most of the country's livestock. According to the UN assessment missions⁶ some 1.3 million persons in eastern Syria have been affected, out of which some 800,000 (75,641 households) have almost lost all their livelihoods and face extreme hardship. Out of the severely affected population, 160,000 persons are considered as highly vulnerable. This group consists of women headed households, pregnant women, the sick and handicapped, children (0-14 years), elderly persons, and families with large numbers of children.

In 2009, an additional phenomenon of permanent migration has been observed from the drought affected areas. Seasonal migration of the able bodied men in order to work in the informal agricultural sector in other places in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, has been a common coping mechanism over the years. However, the assessment missions suggest that in 2009 the migration has become permanent, including the entire family, resulting in settlements being abandoned. According to government's estimations, 40 to 60,000 families have migrated.

A "Syria drought response plan"⁷ was launched by the United Nations with the agreement and support of the Syrian authorities in August 2009. The total request is \$ 52,938,616. The donor response has been quite low to this date, at 11.1%⁸.

1.2. - Identified needs :

The drought of 2008/2009 follows the drought of 2007/2008 which left main crops down by over 50% and which saw the livestock sector suffer widespread damage. The drought led to drastic erosion of livelihoods and decreased food security for an estimated 1.3 million persons. The eastern governorates of Homs, Al Hassake, Al Raqqa, and Dair Al Zowr had been already severely affected by the drought, particularly the herders and small scale farmers. Many farmers have not had any crops for two consecutive years, while the medium and small scale farmers have lost between 80-100% of their flocks who died to lack of pasture and fodder.

The Syria Drought Response Plan argues that a combination of actions –food and agriculture assistance, water and health interventions, and measures aimed at increasing drought resilience- is required to allow the affected populations to remain in their villages and restart agricultural production. The assistance is planned to cover the period until the next harvest season in June 2010.

DG ECHO⁹ monitoring missions in the context of the World Food Programme (WFP) and Food Aid Organisation (FAO) operations funded under European Commission's emergency

⁶ The Syria United Nations Country team dispatched two inter-agency assessment missions in 2009 to the drought affected areas: a pre-harvest assessment mission in May 2009 and a UN joint needs assessment mission in June 2009.

⁷ <http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/webpage.asp?Page=1810>

⁸ According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Financial Tracking System (FTS), the donors' response reaches \$ 5,887,760 but Funding in the pipeline from Australia and Denmark (around \$1.5M) has not been reported yet.

⁹ Directorate-General for humanitarian aid - ECHO

humanitarian decision of 15 June 2009¹⁰ have confirmed the need to continue an urgent intervention in order to provide assistance to the most vulnerable communities affected by the drought who have exhausted all other coping mechanisms. The rains so far have not been sufficient to grow grass in the grazing areas, and the vulnerable communities are more than ever dependent on food and fodder assistance. The distributions for food and fodder seem the most effective actions for an immediate impact.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

The targeted populations will be rural dwellers, herders and farmers. Locations will be selected according to livelihood and social criteria: where food and fodder costs form a substantial part of household expenditure, and the size of the flocks. The targeted communities are located in the governorates of Homs, Al Hassake, Al Raqaa and Dair Al Zowr in the East and North, with a particular but not exclusive focus on women-headed households.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

In Syria, the current situation could result in chronic vulnerabilities among the drought affected communities if emergency assistance is not readily available before the next cropping season, so that the farmers could re-start their production. Moreover, early announcement of available assistance is very important to influence the decision of farmers and herders to continue their agricultural activities in the coming months and mitigate migration from the drought-affected areas.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: To provide humanitarian food assistance to the most vulnerable population affected by the drought in Syria.

Specific objective: To address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population hit by drought in Syria.

2.2. - Components :

In order to prevent the further deterioration of the already precarious livelihoods of the segment of the Syrian populations who have been most gravely affected by the recent drought – with special reference to the most vulnerable and marginalized Bedouin, animal herding and rain-fed farming communities who have exhausted all other coping mechanisms – DG ECHO will provide assistance to ensure that the basic domestic and livelihood needs of the targeted populations are met.

Humanitarian food assistance hereby refers to any intervention designed to tackle food insecurity, its immediate causes, and its various negative consequences. This food assistance will not cover all the activities proposed by the Syria Drought Response Plan drafted by the UN agencies but it will involve the direct provision of food and fodder, and may utilize a wide range of tools, including the transfer or provision of relevant services, inputs or commodities, cash or vouchers, skills or knowledge.

¹⁰ ECHO/-FA/BUD/2009/04000.

3 - Duration expected for Actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 12 months.

Humanitarian Actions funded by this Decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 January 2010.

Start Date : 1 January 2010.

If the implementation of the Actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid Actions.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the Agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the Action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	3,648,000		
Belgium		Other services			
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark	1,110,256				
Estonia					
Finland	400,000				
France					
Germany					
Greece	100,000				
Hungary					
Ireland					
Italy	100,000				
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenie					
Spain	1,000,000				
Sweden					
United kingdom					
Subtotal	2,710,256	Subtotal	3,648,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	6,358,256		

Dated : 23 November 2009

(*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac>
Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

6 - Amount of Decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 2,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To provide humanitarian food assistance to the most vulnerable population affected by the drought in Syria.</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners¹¹
Specific objective 1: To address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population hit by drought in Syria.	2,000,000	Syria	- Food distribution. - Fodder distribution.	<u>Joint management</u> - FAO - WFP-PAM
TOTAL:	2,000,000			

¹¹ UNITED NATIONS - FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION, WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid Actions financed by the Union in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent Actions." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/introduction_en.htm.

8 - Management issues

Humanitarian aid Actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross National Societies on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA), by Specialised Agencies of the Member States and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/actors/partners_en.htm.

For NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, Red Cross National Societies and International Organisations not complying with the requirements set up in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union for joint management, actions will be managed by direct centralised management.

For International Organisations identified as potential partners for implementing the Decision, actions will be managed under joint management.

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.