

EU increases its financial support in the aftermath of the earthquake in Nepal

This week

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USPA NEWS - The European Commission has approved financial support worth 16.6 million euros to assist Nepal after the devastating earthquake that hit the country just over a week ago. The assistance will be provided directly to the Government of Nepal and will be available later this week.

Following the joint EU-UN mission to Nepal, an additional 3 million euros of emergency aid has also been made available Monday, bringing the total of the European Commission's support since the earthquake struck to 22.6 million euros. This comes on top of bilateral assistance from EU Member States. EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, commented that "this support is an expression of our solidarity with the Nepalese people. It is vital for the Government of Nepal to allow relief efforts to continue, as well as to kick-start rehabilitation work after the devastating earthquake. As soon as the needs assessments are completed, we will look into how we can further assist people in Nepal." [?]

This announcement follows the full mobilisation of the Commission's humanitarian and emergency response tools to help respond to the disaster. Commissioner Christos Stylianides, responsible for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, said: "I have witnessed the magnitude of the destruction and of the support that will be needed to recover from such a devastating earthquake. I reaffirmed the EU's tangible solidarity with the government and people of Nepal and with the heroic emergency actors working around the clock on the ground. This announced assistance will allow us to efficiently link our current emergency efforts with the longer term reconstruction phase."

In the aftermath of the devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake that hit Nepal on 25 April, the European Union made available 6 million euros in its immediate response. This support comes in addition to the assistance from the Member States and the deployment of European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection experts to the crisis area. The EU's emergency aid goes towards the most urgent needs in the worst affected areas, including emergency shelter, clean water, medicine and telecommunications.

Aside from urgent financial aid and the presence of experts, the European Commission has been coordinating the joint response of Member States who have sent first-aid teams and equipment through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The financial support worth 16.6 million euros approved Monday to assist Nepal is made available from the 2007-2013 development programme for Nepal under the Development Cooperation Instrument for activities covering stability and peace building, as well as support to the education sector. Nepal has fulfilled eligibility criteria for the above mentioned programmes. Payments were foreseen to take place later this year, but given the urgency of the situation, they were made available under a fast-track procedure.

The European Commission will provide 360 million euros to Nepal from the Development Cooperation Instrument until 2020. The support focuses on sectors such as education, sustainable rural development and the strengthening of democracy. The EU's support may have to be reviewed in the context of the most urgent humanitarian needs in the aftermath of the earthquake for the very short term, as well as in the context of a needs assessment on the reconstruction phase that will be carried out by the Government of Nepal and the International Community at a later stage.

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