

Beat: Politics

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TARGETS €554 M IN 2022 AMID FOOD CRISIS

TO SUPPORT AFRICA'S SAHEL & LAKE CHAD

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USPA NEWS - In the context of the aggravation of the food security and nutrition due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Union is today reinforcing its political and financial commitment to partner countries in Africa. A total of €554 million in 2022 will be targeted at increasing food security in Sahel and Lake Chad, where millions of people already suffer an acute situation and whose situation could worsen. The EU support, announced at the high-level event on food security in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions co-organised by the EU, the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Global Network against food crises, includes both a humanitarian response and support to work on the root causes of food insecurity in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION European Commission (EU) TARGETS €554 M IN 2022 OVER FOOD CRISIS TO SUPPORT AFRICA'S SAHEL & LAKE CHAD REGIONS

The objective is to ensure that existing mechanisms are adapted to the evolving insecurity and instability of the region as well as to complex international realities. In the context of the aggravation of the food security and nutrition due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Union is today reinforcing its political and financial commitment to partner countries in Africa. A total of €554 million in 2022 will be targeted at increasing food security in Sahel and Lake Chad, where millions of people already suffer an acute situation and whose situation could worsen. The EU support, announced at the high-level event on food security in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions co-organised by the EU, the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Global Network against food crises, includes both a humanitarian response and support to work on the root causes of food insecurity in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria.

A MAJOR PARTNER OF THE REGION TO ADDRESS FOOD SECURITY The EU, as a major humanitarian and development actor in food and nutrition security, provides substantial financial support to partner countries.

- To respond to the overwhelming emergency needs in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, and in particular, to the looming food insecurity and nutrition crises, the EU has already made available €173 million in humanitarian assistance. Today, the EU announced an additional €67 million, bringing the total contribution for the affected countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions to €240 million in 2022 so far.

- To enhance the sustainability of food systems and address the underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity in a full Humanitarian-Development-Peace approach, the EU has set aside €654 million for 2021-2024 in the seven countries. These funds aim to provide a long-term development assistance response to the structural food crisis.

Out of these, the EU will make available an overall amount of €314 million before the end of 2022 for these seven countries. The EU will also support the whole and interdependent region of the Sahel and West Africa with regional programmes.

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES FOR A LONG-TERM RESILIENCE: A RENEWED POLITICAL COMMITMENT

The EU is renewing its strong political commitment in favour of structural policies and investments to address the underlying causes of food and nutrition crises, addressing the humanitarian, development and peace dimensions.

The objective is to ensure that existing mechanisms are adapted to the evolving insecurity and instability of the region as well as to complex international realities. Addressing structural vulnerabilities will include intervening in the social-political, economic and environmental dimensions: climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable agriculture with support to agro-ecological practices, empowerment of women and youth, education, social inclusion, added-value distribution. Enhancing the resilience of the populations affected in the Sahel and West Africa is critical in a long-term socio-economic perspective of the region.

MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE SAID

High-Representative/Vice-President, Josep Borrell, said: "The brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine has sparked massive food prices hikes and has worsened the risk of food shortages. Food insecurity inevitably increases instability and inequalities. To avoid it, we need to help our partners to become more self-sufficient and work together to strengthen the multilateral food system. Today, we are reinforcing our political and financial commitment to countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, where millions of people already

suffer an acute situation and who could become other victims of the war in Ukraine if we don't act fast." Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, added: "Increase of humanitarian needs in the region of Sahel and Lake Chad is unprecedented. More than 31 million of people will find themselves in need of urgent food assistance this year. Implications of the tragic events in Ukraine will only further deteriorate an already catastrophic food crisis, pushing people to the very brink of survival. The EU will not neglect other humanitarian crises around the world and will continue to provide humanitarian aid also in these African regions. However, humanitarian assistance is not enough. The renewed international political commitment is one of the crucial steps to address the root causes of the crisis as to ensure badly needed longer-term resilience of the most vulnerable communities." Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, said: "The exacerbation of the food crisis today is an immense threat to people's living in the region. It calls on all of us. As we have seen great solidarity across Europe recently, the EU's renewed political and financial support to our partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad demonstrates we continue to stand in solidarity with the people, affected by Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. We are in an unprecedented situation, which I witnessed when visiting the region last week. With the international community, in a multilateral approach, we will keep on addressing the underlying causes of food and nutrition crises and to help building the resilience of people affected."

BACKGROUNDSSahel and West Africa are currently facing an unprecedented food and nutrition crisis. If appropriate measures are not taken, hunger and malnutrition could affect more than 38 million people between June and August 2022. The border areas of the central Sahel and Lake Chad are the most affected. International and local actors supporting food security in the region are today confronted with a severely deteriorated economic, political and security context, both locally and due to consequences of the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Conflict, economic shocks (including COVID-19 and skyrocketing food and energy prices), and extreme weather events are feeding into situations of protracted food crises around the world, where at least 195 million people were in food crises or worse in 2021. This is a more than 25% increase from 2020 and the situation is projected to get worse. This new EU support to food security in Africa is in line with the latest Commission Communication on 'Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food system' adopted on 23 March 2022, which called for global action. Source: European Commission.

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