



Emergency support within the EU

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

In 2015 and 2016, close to 1.4 million refugees and migrants arrived in the European Union by sea.

To ensure dignified living conditions while asylum requests are being processed, an amount of up to €700 million in emergency support is available from 2016 to 2019.

So far, the Commission has contracted over €440 million in emergency support for refugees in Greece.

Emergency support is complementary to the actions by Member



EU emergency support enables the installation of temporary housing as well as wash, sanitation and hygiene facilities at refugee sites in Greece. © UNHCR

Key messages

- The Emergency Support Instrument has been activated to enable EU assistance in Member States heavily affected by the influx of refugees and migrants.
- The first projects, which are being carried out in Greece through the EU's partners, were signed in April 2016. A total of over €440 million had been contracted by December 2017.
- Until 2019, up to €700 million of EU funding is made available via partner organisations such as UN agencies, the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations.
- When other instruments are insufficient, EU emergency support can be provided in response to exceptional disasters that result in severe and wide-ranging humanitarian consequences in one or more EU Member State.
- Through emergency support, the EU can fund aid projects that preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and maintain human dignity.

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Humanitarian situation and needs

Regulation 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the European Union was adopted by the Council on 15 March 2016. The Regulation empowers the EU to take needs-based emergency response measures when an exceptional disaster occurs within its territory. The regulation aims at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity. According to the regulation emergency support shall be:

- Granted and implemented according to the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;
- Activated in exceptional circumstances where no other instrument available to the European Union and its Member States is sufficient;
- Activated by the Council on the basis of a proposal made by the Commission; and,
- Implemented in close cooperation and consultation with the affected Member State, so that it supports and complements the measures already put in place at national level.

EU emergency support is implemented through the Commission's humanitarian partner organisations such as UN agencies, the Red Cross family, and non-governmental organisations in the field of humanitarian aid, as well as by specialised services of EU Member States other than the one where the support is to be provided. Where necessary, the Commission can also directly fund assistance, relief and protection operations to save and preserve life in disasters or in their immediate aftermath.

The European Union's humanitarian response

Close to 1.4 million refugees and migrants arrived in the European Union between 2015 and 2016 by sea. This stretches the response capacity of single Member States to their limits. That is why the Council of the European Union has activated the Emergency Support Instrument to help respond to the current influx of refugees and migrants into the European Union.

By December 2017, the European Commission granted funding of more than €440 million to Greece, implemented by three UN agencies (UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF), by a pan-European consortium of Red Cross societies, and by ten international non-governmental organisations, namely the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, CARE Germany, the Danish Refugee Council, the International Rescue Committee, Médecins du Monde, the Mercy Corps, the Norwegian Refugee Council, OXFAM, Save the Children and Terre des Hommes.

The funding enabled the delivery of primary health care, better hygiene conditions and the construction of temporary housing for people in need. EU-funded projects also ensured the provision of food and other essentials such as sleeping bags, blankets and personal hygiene items. Since 2017, with the situation in Greece increasingly being managed by the Greek authorities, the EU's emergency support funding has shifted towards more permanent and dignified solutions for refugees. The flagship of this transition has been the 'Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation' (ESTIA) programme, which helps refugees and their families rent urban accommodation and provides them with regular cash assistance.