

# Supporting refugees in Greece: €180 million in emergency support

The European Commission has announced today new funding of €180 million for aid projects in Greece, including to scale up the flagship [‘Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation’ \(ESTIA\)](#) programme which helps get refugees into urban accommodation and out of camps and provides them with regular cash assistance.

The funding comes as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** met today with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Athens.

Launched in July 2017 with the UN Refugee Agency, ESTIA is the biggest EU aid operation in the country and works in line with the Greek government’s ‘out of camps’ policy. So far it has created more than 23,000 urban accommodation places and set up a cash assistance scheme serving more than 41,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

*“Our humanitarian programmes for refugees in Greece are a clear and loud signal of European solidarity. We continue to deliver on our strong commitment to help refugees in Greece live more secure, normal and dignified lives, and facilitate their integration into the local economy and society. Our ESTIA programme is achieving real results to change people’s lives for the better. I pay special tribute to the Greek citizens and mayors who have welcomed refugees in their municipalities with great empathy and care,”* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**.

Six other contracts have been signed with the Danish Refugee Council, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Médecins du Monde, the Spanish Red Cross, as well as Greek NGOs METAdrasi and Smile of the Child to address pressing humanitarian needs in Greece, including shelter, primary health care, psycho-social support, improved hygiene conditions, non-formal education, the provision of interpretation for health and protection.

Overall, the European Commission has made available over €1.5 billion of support for Greece to help manage the humanitarian situation, migration and the external borders, through various kinds of funding.

## **Background**

### **EU emergency support in Greece**

In urgent and exceptional circumstances such as the increased influx of refugees in Europe, the European Commission can fund humanitarian aid for people in need within the EU territory through the Emergency Support Instrument, activated for the first time in March 2016. Overall EU humanitarian assistance disbursed so far to Greece through this instrument amounts to €605.3 million.

## **ESTIA programme with the UNHCR**

Today's new funding for ESTIA will allow the programme to set up 27, 000 places in urban settings by the end of 2018. The bulk of the rented apartments will be in cities and towns on the Greek mainland while up to 2,000 places will be located on the Greek islands. Several municipalities in Greece are also part of this scheme.

The ESTIA cash assistance scheme aims to reach 45,000 people by mid-2018. Refugees and asylum seekers receive pre-defined monthly cash allocations through a dedicated card. This provides choice and enables them to meet their basic needs with dignity, while supporting the local economy. Making cash assistance more efficient remains a priority for the EU.

The Commission's humanitarian support complements other EU funding instruments which have already been providing significant financial resources for assistance in Greece such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund, the European Fund for the Most Deprived, and the EU Health Programme. It is also complementary to the voluntary offers for material assistance initially provided by states participating in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

### **For More Information**

[Factsheet 'Greece: Response to the Refugee Crisis'](#)