



## EU welcomes end of Ebola transmissions and will continue to support affected countries

Brussels, 14 January 2016

**The World Health Organisation has declared that the Ebola transmissions in West Africa have come to an end for the moment, as Liberia marks today 42 days without new Ebola cases - an important landmark that neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone crossed last November and December**

The largest Ebola epidemic on record has taken a tragic toll on life, with 11 300 deaths out of 28 600 cases since its declaration in March 2014, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

On the occasion, EU Ebola Coordinator and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** made the following statement:

"This day one year ago, the end of the Ebola epidemic may have seemed unimaginable. But thanks to the effort of health workers, ordinary people, and governments in the three affected countries, combined with an unprecedented international response, the fight against the disease has been won. I want to pay tribute to all those involved for months to bring the cases to Zero, an achievement to celebrate.

From the outset the European Union has been at the forefront of the international response to the Ebola epidemic. We have sent medical supplies, laboratories and epidemiologists. We put in place an EU medical evacuation facility for all international health workers in the region. We provided funding for the great work done by non-governmental organisations and the United Nations to treat the victims of Ebola and deal with its consequences.

Overall, together with its Member States, the EU has mobilised close to €2 billion in humanitarian aid, technical expertise, longer-term development assistance, and research into vaccines and treatments. We are now shifting our response from emergency to development, keeping a particular focus on the needs of survivors.

Despite today's declaration that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa is over, there must be no place for complacency. The risk of re-infection is much greater than we thought, as Liberia's various relapses since May 2015 have shown.

There are also lessons to be learnt. The international system needs to fix the failures which became all too apparent in the inadequacy of the response to the disease in the early months of 2014. In this regard, the European Union is setting up a European Medical Corps through which medical teams and equipment from our Member States can be deployed swiftly to deal with future health emergencies. There will be more crises like this one. We need to be better prepared.

It is also more important than ever to help the three countries rebuild and strengthen their health systems and to invest in effective and resilient alert and response mechanisms. These are essential requirements to prevent any future outbreak from spreading. The EU's commitment to support the affected countries remains firm. We will stand by Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea for as long as it takes.

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