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A Europe-wide response to the Ebola epidemic

Statement by EU Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva and EU Commissioner for Health, Tonio Borg, following the High Level Event to coordinate the response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa:

*The EU is gravely concerned by the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, where **the situation continues to deteriorate**. Our thoughts are with the victims, their families and the dedicated healthcare workers who are doing their utmost to fight the spread of the virus and take care of the victims. Today, we have discussed with EU Ministers how to coordinate further steps in a Europe-wide response to the epidemic.*

We welcome the contributions made already by our EU Member States through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. We call on them to continue and strengthen their support to the region in order to respond to pressing needs such as effective treatment centres, sufficient numbers of health workers, and ensuring macro-economic stability. We will also do our utmost to align to the priorities identified and coordinated by the WHO.

The EU has increased its response on several occasions since the outbreak of the epidemic and has so far pledged almost €150 million to help the affected countries. This includes ensuring treatment for infected patients and measures to contain the epidemic, as well as strengthening health care systems and improving food security, water and sanitation. EU mobile laboratories are deployed in the region to help with the diagnostics and confirmation of cases and train laboratory technicians. Furthermore, Liberia and Sierra Leone will receive financial assistance through budget support to help them deliver health care services and bolster macro-economic stability in response to wider economic challenges arising from the crisis.

The EU is firmly committed to supporting the affected countries and their development in the immediate and longer-term.

*Today's meeting has reaffirmed our partnership and solidarity with West Africa. We also discussed **actions to facilitate transport in and out of the region.***

We welcome the participation of the UN at this meeting, laying out efforts for international coordination, notably through the establishment of operational platforms. These efforts deserve our full support, and provide the appropriate backbone to deliver the European Comprehensive response to the Ebola crisis.

We agreed on the **crucial importance of reliable systems of medical evacuation for**

humanitarian staff and medical workers in the affected countries so as to maintain an effective international response on the ground. To this end, we agreed to launch work without delay on developing a European co-ordination mechanism for medical evacuations. Participants at the meeting expressed their appreciation for a proposal from France which could form the basis of further discussion on such a mechanism.

Despite the low risk of the virus circulating within EU countries, the need to continue working on preparedness and coordination of risk management was also stressed.

SEE ALSO: [MEMO/14/520](#) The EU's response to help fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa

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