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EU Children of Peace initiative: President Barroso announces Nobel Peace Prize projects to help 23,000 children affected by war and conflicts

The European Union's Nobel Peace prize money will fund four projects under the EU Children of Peace initiative and details of the projects were announced today by Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission.

The attribution of the award money to children affected by conflict was an unanimous decision of the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso, the European Parliament Martin Schulz and of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy.

President Barroso said: *"It was obvious for us that the Nobel Peace Prize money should be allocated to the most vulnerable who are often the hardest hit by wars: the children of this world. We want all children to enjoy the constant protection of their rights. Each and every girl and boy in the world should have the opportunity to develop their talents. Promoting education is also giving peace a chance to be a lasting peace. We want 'children of war' to become 'children of peace'."*

President Van Rompuy said: *"In situations of conflict children are often the most vulnerable, so it is only right that this award should benefit young victims of armed conflicts. I am glad that this initiative will continue beyond this first year, and hope that 'EU Children of Peace projects' can become a symbol of the European Union's commitment to those in need around the world."*

President Schulz said: *"Children are the most vulnerable victims of conflict. They are our future and it is their personal future which is at stake. Anything we can contribute to help to make them overcome the traumas and suffering endured during conflict is welcome"*.

Together the projects will benefit from €2 million (which includes additional EU funding). They will reach out to over 23,000 conflict-affected children worldwide and will provide access to basic education and child-friendly spaces:

Contacts :

[Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen](#), spokeswoman of the European Commission (+32 2 295 30 70)

[Preben Aamann](#), deputy spokesman of the President of the European Council (+32 476 850 543)

[Armin Machmer](#), spokesman of the President of the European Parliament (+32 479 97 11 98)

[David Sharrock](#), spokesman of Commissioner Georgieva (+32 2 296 89 09)

[Irina Novakova](#), press officer (+32 2 295 75 17)

- Around 4,000 Syrian refugee children in camps at the border between Iraq and Syria;
- More than 5,000 Colombian children, most of them refugees in Ecuador;
- 11,000 Congolese children displaced in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and refugees in Ethiopia;
- And 3,000 Pakistani children in the conflicted-affected north of the country.

UNICEF will implement the project in Pakistan, Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council will work with children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia, UNHCR will deliver assistance in Colombia and Ecuador, and ACTED from France is going to work in the Domiz Refugee camp in Northern Iraq with Syrian children. All these organisations are among the best renowned humanitarian partners of the European Commission.

The projects to be supported through the Children for Peace Initiative fall in the scope of responsibility of the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva. Today she said: *"In conflict, humanitarian aid is often the only way for children to be able to continue their education, which not only improves their future prospects, but can also protect them from abuse and exploitation. This important cause is worthy of the EU's Nobel Peace Prize contribution. On the Syrian and Colombian borders, in Pakistan, Ethiopia and Congo, we will make a big difference for kids that might otherwise become a lost generation – giving them instead a chance for a childhood, a chance for recovery, a chance for a better future".*

The EU Children of Peace Initiative will not be a one-off action: new funding will be made available next year for more projects in support of children in conflict.

Background

On 10 December, the EU was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize for its over six decades' contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. The European Commission has formally accepted the prize money on behalf of the European Union and decided to top up the approximate €930,000 to €2 million to be allocated to children that are most in need. The Nobel Peace Prize consists of an amount of SEK 8 million, a medal and a diploma. The medal and the diploma will be kept by the European Union institutions on behalf of the European Union. The amount of money and the medal constitute a donation within the meaning of Article 19 of Regulation No 1605/2002.

The Nobel Peace Prize stands for reconciliation throughout the world. The Prize money should benefit the first hope for the future, but also the first victims of conflicts: children who are deprived of growing up in peace to reach their full potential.

Today, 90% of the victims of conflicts are civilians. Half of them are children. 7 million children are refugees and 12.4 million children are displaced within their own country due to conflict.

One of the best ways to help and protect children when they suffer from violent conflict is to give them the opportunity to learn again and get education – otherwise their future will be even more difficult. Of the approximately 75 million children who are out of school worldwide, more than half live in conflict areas.

The EU's humanitarian work is addressing the specific needs of children affected by conflict. More than half of the Commission's humanitarian funding goes to conflict-affected areas and 12% of its humanitarian budget goes to child-focused relief organisations, much more than the global average. The Commission allocates

humanitarian aid to child protection activities, psychological support, mine risk education, and actions against the recruitment of child soldiers.

This commitment is in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which states that "in responding to humanitarian needs, particular vulnerabilities must be taken into account. In this context, the EU will pay special attention to women, children, the elderly, sick and disabled people".

The EU Commission Staff Working Document on Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008) addresses, in particular, the issue of children associated with armed forces and groups. The EU also adopted EU Guidelines on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts, which provide a common basis for action by EU Member States and the European Commission.

For more information:

Commission website on the EU's assistance for children in conflict:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/EU4children/index_en.htm

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/index_en.htm

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm