

Brussels, 15 September 2006

## Humanitarian aid: new €10 million decision for Sahrawi refugees in Algeria

*The European Commission has adopted a new decision of €10 million to provide basic assistance for the Sahrawi refugees living in camps in south-west Algeria. The funds, channelled through the Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), under the responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel, will cover the provision of food, water and other essential services.*

For more than 30 years, the refugees from Western Sahara have been living in camps near Tindouf in Algeria. They depend entirely on international aid for their survival. The Commission is the largest donor assisting the victims of this long-running crisis. Under the decision announced today, projects will be funded in the following areas:

### **Food**

60% of the funds will cover food supplies. Basic food aid is managed by Non Governmental Organisations and the World Food Programme (WFP), one of ECHO's main operational partners in the region. The UN agency provides a food package ensuring a daily intake of 2100 kcal per refugee. The decision contributes to the WFP programme with financing for the purchase of basic food and for the maintenance of a buffer stock designed to maintain regular food deliveries to the refugees. The funding also covers fresh food (fruit and vegetables throughout the year, and meat and other products during Ramadan) to ensure that the refugees, women and children in particular, receive a nutritionally balanced diet.

### **Water and sanitation, health and education**

The remainder of the funding targets basic services. In the desert area where the refugees are located, meeting water needs is a major challenge that will continue to be addressed. Health and hygiene are also priorities with general support for the health system including the purchase of medicines, actions for handicapped people and the distribution of hygiene products – especially for women. In long-term refugee situations such as this, education is also a basic need that will be covered.

Complementing the emergency aid of €900,000 provided in February 2006 in response to the flash floods that brought devastation to the refugees camps, further shelter activities will be also funded.

The new support represents the continuing expression of European solidarity with the victims of this 'forgotten crisis'. Including the amount under the present decision, the Commission has, since 1993, provided aid worth more than €128 million to the Sahrawi refugees.

More details on: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/field/algeria/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/field/algeria/index_en.htm)