



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **The European Union supports access to healthcare for four million people in Tunisia**

The European Commission has adopted a new project worth EUR 12 million to reduce inequalities in access to healthcare in the 13 most disadvantaged regions in southern and western Tunisia; these regions account for 40% of Tunisia's population.

The project will directly benefit four million people by significantly increasing access to basic healthcare, improving its quality and creating better conditions in healthcare centres. The project's main actions will cover purchasing equipment for out-patient services, acquiring new medical transport vehicles and building capacity for the Health Ministry.

Support for health is one of the priorities of EU-Tunisian cooperation. This aid takes on particular importance in the context of the country's current democratic transition: supporting basic services is a key factor in promoting regional development and helping the poorest sections of the population with the most acute needs.

Specifically, the services offered, such as examinations and specialised services, will be expanded and the quality of healthcare at basic and intermediate health centres will be improved. For example, early screening for chronic diseases associated with an aging population will be made generally available.

Another objective is better allocation of funding among basic health centres, in particular as regards technical facilities for laboratories, imaging and dental services. Particular attention will also be devoted to providing emergency services in the most remote regions through appropriate emergency transport services. Lastly, funding will be allocated to better planning and programming of medical services through a review of the healthcare map and adequate training for medical and paramedical staff.

### **Background**

The aim is to take on the challenges thrown up by the demographic and epidemiological transition resulting from the aging of the population and the greater costs of an appropriate healthcare response.

This new, EUR 12 million project complements other actions supported by the EU such as the WHO-EU initiative launched in 2011, which included a health-centre rehabilitation component.

Civil society is also involved in the new project through care providers' representatives, the Medical Council and regional and local associations for combating certain chronic diseases.

## **For more information**

Website of EuropeAid – Development and Cooperation DG:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)

EU-Tunisia:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/tunisia/tunisia\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/tunisia/tunisia_en.htm)

European Neighbourhood Policy:

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm)

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