

## Public Description

### Compliance Dialogue on Syria-Related Humanitarian Payments

Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, the humanitarian situation in the region has drastically deteriorated. Violence and conflict are the primary causes of the humanitarian crisis, while disrupted livelihoods exacerbate the plight of civilians. The population in Syria struggles to access clean water, food and basic services, which has resulted in millions of people depending on humanitarian aid and protection.

Notwithstanding the immense political, safety and security considerations, a concerted programme of humanitarian assistance prevails across the whole of Syria. International finance and humanitarian assistance mobilised to date is in the EUR billions. However, the combined effect of the conflict, the presence of financial sanctions, and compliance concerns, has eroded the ability for humanitarian actors to facilitate international payments into Syria.

Consequently, this year-long dedicated dialogue, which builds on earlier studies and consultations, is tasked with facilitating a multi-stakeholder technical compliance dialogue for Syria-related humanitarian payments with the intent to help inform the production of a risk management principles guide. Participants have been drawn together to ensure a balance of representation from the financial sector, NGOs, humanitarian actors, key donor governments and regulatory authorities. Discussions are aimed at identifying mechanisms within the existing legal framework (sanctions regimes, national legislation etc.) in order to promote safe and transparent banking and payment channels in support of permissible international humanitarian activity to, and within, Syria.

The aim is to ensure that aid can reach civilians in need of assistance within Syria in a principle-based, efficient and effective way and in a manner that is compliant with international sanctions, plus wider regulatory obligations. The group is tasked with meeting four times over the 12-month period and will offer commentary on the production of a 'Risk Management Principles Guide' for sending humanitarian funds into, and within, Syria.

The Dialogue is convened by the Graduate Institute, Geneva, and is supported and funded by the Swiss Government, through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation with additional support from the European Commission, Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. Dr Justine Walker acts as the key expert for the project and is tasked with drafting supporting documents, including the risk management principles guide.