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Press release from the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”: aid at Christmas for the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine

The first tranche of aid for the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine will be disbursed at Christmas, on behalf of the Holy Father. It consists of a sum of almost six million Euros, from the twelve million already collected, destined to assist more than two million people without discrimination on the basis of religion, confession or ethnic group, especially in the regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, Kharkiv and Dnepropetrovsk.

Following the extraordinary collection, requested by Pope Francis on 24 April 2016 in the churches of Europe to help the populations affected by the conflict, the Holy See, through the Pontifical Council “Cor Unum”, coordinated the constitution of an *in loco* technical committee, chaired by Bishop Jan Sobito, auxiliary of Kharkiv-Zaporizhia, which works in contact with the apostolic nuncio in Ukraine, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti.

From the commencement of its activity in the month of July, the Committee, based in Zaporizhia, has chosen and evaluated aid projects presented by Christian charitable organisations and international agencies. The Committee now funds twenty large scale projects (for individual amounts up to 250 thousand Euros), and 39 “solidarity initiatives” (for amounts up to 20 thousand Euros). The money will be distributed, in collaboration with the apostolic nunciature, in support of works of assistance in the sectors of food, housing, medicine and hygiene.

According to a recent report from the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (ONHCHR), the conflict, which is still underway, caused 9,758 deaths and 22,779 injuries in the period from April 2014 to 1 December 2016.