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In May 2011, the world's richest countries agreed a multibillion-dollar aid package for Tunisia and Egypt to support their transition to democracy and their economic reforms. During their summit in Deauville, the G8 members pledged to provide a combination of debt relief, aid and assistance to the two Arab countries ‘to help build their democracies’.

In the meantime the European Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, announced that on top of the EUR 5.7 billion already allocated for the period 2011-2013 from the European Neighbourhood Policy, additional funding of EUR 1.24 billion would be transferred from other existing resources in support of the ENP. In addition to that, the European Council agreed to High Representative Ashton's proposal to increase EIB (European Investment Bank) lending to the Southern Mediterranean by EUR 1 billion over the same period.

According to recent declarations by the finance ministers of Tunisia and Egypt, the two countries so far have received only a fraction of the USD 40 billion package promised by the international community. It is imperative to underline that any delay in the disbursement of international assistance could complicate fragile transitions under way following the Arab Spring, particularly in Tunisia where the government needs to create jobs for young graduates who rose against the former regime.

1. Given the urgency of the situation and the need to support the democratic ambitions in these countries, could the Commission explain the reasons for the delays in delivery of the funds allocated?

2. What measures does the Commission intend to adopt to ensure faster delivery of these funds?

Question for written answer
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Answer

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