



The Caribbean

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

European Commission assistance to the Caribbean since 1994: **€509.7 million** (**€353.7 million for Haiti and 156 for the rest of the Caribbean**) including **€53 million for disaster preparedness**.

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Meeting between the European Commission, partners and beneficiaries of humanitarian aid affected by *El Niño* impact in the Dominican Republic. PHOTO: European Union / ECHO / Johnny Joaquin

Key messages

- The Caribbean is **prone to disasters caused by extreme natural hazards**, such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and volcanic eruptions. The hurricane season (June to November) affects thousands of people every year.
- The **European Commission assists affected populations in the aftermath of a disaster**, but also by **strengthening the resilience** of vulnerable communities to future hazards.
- Since 1994, the European Commission has granted **€509.7 million in humanitarian aid to the Caribbean**, of which €53 million has been allocated to help communities prepare and strengthen their resilience through Disaster Risk Reduction programmes.
- The Commission has provided **humanitarian assistance for all major disasters** impacting the region in the past years: hurricanes *Ike* and *Gustav* in 2008, *Thomas* in 2010, *Irene* in 2011, *Ernesto*, *Isaac* and *Sandy* in 2012, *Erika* in 2015, as well as Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake and cholera outbreak. Most recently, the Commission has supported the emergency response to different droughts episodes such as the one caused by *El Niño* phenomena.

Humanitarian situation and needs

Background

Located in the "hurricane belt" and surrounded by several tectonic plates, the Caribbean often experiences extreme natural phenomena. The yearly hurricane season occurs from June to November, with severe storms affecting thousands of people. The Caribbean is also prone to volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, flash floods, landslides, mudslides and earthquakes like the one which devastated Haiti in 2010. The region is also affected by epidemics such as cholera and dengue and more recently, zika. Socioeconomic challenges such as high population density, migration fluxes, fast demographic growth, isolation, high inequality, poverty rates and a general lack of resources exacerbate the Caribbean's vulnerability and test coping capacities in the event of a disaster.

Major needs and related problems

Humanitarian assistance in the Caribbean often focuses on access to **safe water, food, relief items, medical assistance, shelter and sanitation and hygiene promotion**. In some cases, the **protection of displaced and migrant populations** is also necessary.

Enhancing local capacities to respond to natural hazards is essential. The European Commission provides this support in several ways, such as **by integrating disaster risk reduction in all projects** to the extent possible, or through specific targeted actions. The European Commission's **Disaster Preparedness programme DIPECHO** supports simple and cost-effective pre-emptive measures which are implemented by the communities themselves, enabling them to protect their lives and livelihoods when a disaster strikes.

The European Union's Humanitarian Response

Funding

Since 1994, the European Commission's **total financial aid to the Caribbean amounts to €509.7 million. Of this, €353.7 million has been dedicated to Haiti**, notably to support the response to the devastating earthquake of 12 January 2010, the cholera epidemic and food insecurity, and to provide the population of Haiti with shelter, safe drinking water, healthcare, food assistance, protection, livelihood activities, access to water and sanitation. The remaining **€156 million was allocated to the rest of the Caribbean** to support the response to emergencies and strengthen the population's resilience. Of the total funding since 1994, **€53 million** have been dedicated to disaster-preparedness activities through DIPECHO. The EU aims at properly linking emergency relief and longer term development interventions, helping to build the resilience of the most vulnerable.

Response to emergencies

The European Commission is funding response interventions to face the **drought** currently affecting over 6.2 million people in the Caribbean, as a direct consequence of El Niño phenomena. These interventions, which amount to **€17.4 million for 2016-2017**, will help decrease the impact of drought on livelihoods, food security, the nutrition as well as health sectors in Haiti (€15.2 million), Dominican Republic (€1.6 million) and Cuba (€600 000).

Following the €297 000 allocated in 2015 to Haiti, the Commission granted another €400 000 in 2016 to provide **assistance and protection to highly vulnerable displaced people coming from the Dominican Republic**. The implementing partner UNICEF focuses on non-accompanied minors, facilitating family reunification and providing primary assistance to highly vulnerable groups.

In response to the serious damage caused by the **tropical storm Erika in Dominica** in August 2015, leaving 12 people dead and 20 missing, the EU released **€300 000** to help bring relief to the victims, including access to water and sanitation, hygiene promotion to minimise the risk of diseases and the reconstruction of health services.

In December 2013, the Commission released more than **€300 000** to help bring relief to the victims of floods in **Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines following** severe rains and high winds.

In addition, the EU allocated **€11.7 million** to provide humanitarian aid to respond to the humanitarian needs after **hurricane Sandy** of October 2012. These funds helped provide shelter and access to safe water, supported activities to reduce water-related diseases (dengue fever, cholera and leptospirosis) and helped the most vulnerable recover their livelihoods. Disaster preparedness projects proved successful in helping communities and authorities react faster.

Response to the cholera outbreak

Since 2010, the Commission has provided **assistance to help control cholera outbreaks in the region**. In Haiti, over 9 100 people have died due to cholera and more than 770 000 potential cases have been registered since the beginning of the epidemic. At the beginning of April 2016, there were over 11 000 new cases already registered since the beginning of the year, including 128 deaths. The Commission has mobilised **€47.8 million to date to fight the cholera outbreak in Haiti** including €200 000 for cholera preparedness.

In the Dominican Republic the disease has claimed 544 lives to date. In the first ten weeks of 2016, 218 cases were registered, including 11 deaths. Since 2010, **€1.25 million funding has supported over 215 000 people in local communities**.

Preparing communities for future disasters

In 2015, the Commission allocated **€9.33 million for disaster preparedness in the Caribbean region for the period of 2015-2016 through the DIPECHO programme**. Projects funded include promoting early warning systems, strengthening health infrastructure, retro-fitting shelters and school facilities to withstand disasters and improving awareness of the risks linked to earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes. By 2016, 400 000 people will be more resilient to natural hazards in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Jamaica, Dominica, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Guyana, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago.

Complementing the emergency response to the drought, the Commission also allocated **€2.8 million to Haiti** (€1.500,000), **Cuba** (€600,000) and **Dominican Republic** (€700,000) for 2016-2017 to **strengthen the resilience to future drought**, improving knowledge about the hazard, implementing good practices and institutionalising them.

