



Commission provides a €3 million initial aid package and launches an EU-coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti

Following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, offered his deepest condolences to the victims and to the people of Haiti and pledged Europe's full support in the international relief effort.

Vice President of the EC and High Representative of the EU Catherine Ashton said: "We are troubled by the reports on the devastating earthquake in Haiti. We are still gathering information to understand the impact on the population. My colleagues in the Commission and I offer our full assistance to Haiti and will mobilise all available instruments to support the population of Haiti in this difficult time. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families."

This morning, VP/HR Ashton convened an EU emergency coordination meeting with Commissioners Karel De Gucht (Development and Humanitarian Aid) and Stavros Dimas (Environment, Civil Protection Mechanism) and relevant services in the Commission and the Council.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), under the responsibility of Commissioner De Gucht, and the Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), under the responsibility of Commissioner Dimas, are in the process of assessing the situation and the needs in order to ensure the best possible EU co-ordinated response to provide relief funding and assistance.

Following initial assessments of the situation on the ground, ECHO will use its fast-track relief funding to provide a €3 million initial package of humanitarian assistance. The funding will be used to meet basic needs of the stricken population including shelter and medical assistance. Funding is channelled through experienced international relief organisations.

An ECHO relief expert based in the Dominican Republic is expected to arrive in Port-au-Prince later today to carry out a first needs assessment.

The MIC is preparing the civil protection response. Assistance in the form of search and rescue teams, water purification, advanced medical posts and field hospitals is being coordinated. An assessment and coordination team is also being assembled that will travel on site as soon as possible.

The EU is coordinating its overall relief effort with the UN.

More information:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/index.htm>

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