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PRESS RELEASE

European Commission and Caribbean discuss a platform for regional co-operation in the field of disaster management and civil protection

The European Commission, CARIFORUM member states, Overseas countries and Territories in the Caribbean, the EU Outermost Regions in the Caribbean and their related EU member states met recently to discuss closer collaboration and a structured dialogue in the field of disaster management and response, through the creation of a regional cooperation platform.

At a meeting held on 14 May 2009 around 50 representatives from Caribbean countries, Overseas Countries and Territories and Outermost Regions in the Caribbean met in Barbados for the first time to explore such possibilities. The specific issues discussed include the avoidance of duplication when implementing projects, identifying gaps and complementary issues during the process, promoting adequate communication channels so as to strengthen the exchange of information and develop mechanisms for a regional response to emergencies.

The field of civil protection was chosen as a pilot project because of the acute needs in the region. It also presents a major challenge in terms of co-ordination in view of the broad range of existing initiatives and the different actors and assets involved in the field of civil protection in the region. For this pilot project civil protection covers all of the civil actions intended to respond to emergencies by providing assistance to the population following natural disasters or disasters of human origin.

One of the expected results of the pilot project is the development of greater co-ordination between the initiatives and the different actors and assets involved in civil protection in the Caribbean. The platform is expected to build, among others, on the European Mechanism of civil protection with its regional response, resource pooling and dispatching components.

In addition, the platform will help to develop detailed knowledge of the exposure to disasters and the current response capabilities in the region; strengthen the existing measures of disaster prevention and preparation at national and local level; improve the response capacities of concerned actors; and improve awareness raising and information flow to the population.

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