Key messages

- Together with implementing partners, ECHO carries out rapid assessment of needs of those affected by natural and man-made disasters.
- Responding effectively and efficiently to the humanitarian needs of those most affected by emergencies.
- Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction measures in humanitarian assistance whenever feasible, and supporting specific DRR projects to strengthen the resilience of communities affected by natural disasters.

Humanitarian situation and needs

Background

Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. Southeast Asia is particularly susceptible to the negative effects of seasonal floods and storms, which are increasing in number and strength. The region also straddles the Pacific "ring of fire", characterised by frequent powerful earthquakes and a string of active volcanos. In 2011, Southeast Asian countries were badly hit by wide-spread flooding affecting Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The Philippines was hit by a number of powerful storms, the biggest of which killed more than 1,200 people in Mindanao just before Christmas.

In addition to natural disasters, conflicts such as the one in Kachin in northern Myanmar, has caused the internal displacement of civilians, while in Rakhine State, recent inter-communal violence has affected over 100,000 people. Thousands of refugees from Myanmar still live in camps along the...
Thai-Myanmar border, although recent cease-fire agreements on Myanmar’s eastern border have given hope to many of one day being able to return home.

**Major needs**

Major natural disasters and conflicts leave inhabitants in need of temporary shelter, food, clean water and sanitation, primary health care, basic household items and hygiene awareness. In both man-made and natural disasters, access to those in need can be difficult either because of security concerns and/or the destruction or lack of infrastructure.

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**The European Union’s Humanitarian Response**

**Funding**

In 2012, the European Commission continues to support a range of projects in response to the 2011 floods with an allocation of €36 million. In addition to funding that follows disasters, the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) also supports community based disaster preparedness activities with €16.8 million of funding. This support is channeled through two separate ‘DIPECHO’ programmes: one for the Pacific and one for Southeast Asia.

**Outreach and coordination with humanitarian partners**

ECHO has one of its six Regional Support Offices (RSO) in Bangkok. The Bangkok RSO was set up in 2004 to cover crises in East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific Region. Together with ECHO country offices in Yangon, Manila and Jakarta, it supports and monitors humanitarian aid operations funded by the European Commission in Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, East Timor, Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Vietnam, Mongolia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Japan and the Pacific region. ECHO is one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid worldwide. In addition to its headquarters in Brussels and RSO in Thailand, ECHO also has RSOS in India, Jordan, Kenya, Nicaragua and Senegal, as well as 47 country-level field offices. In terms of personnel, in crisis zones across the world, ECHO has approximately 135 international and 250 national staff, who assess humanitarian needs and monitor the implementation of ECHO funding by partner organisations.

**European Commission’s humanitarian aid for East, Southeast Asia and the Pacific 2012**

![Map showing funding distribution](image)