



Facts & figures

27 February 2010: An earthquake followed by a tsunami hit Chile. The disaster triggered European assistance provided through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

25 November 2011: Chile and the EU sign a Letter of Intent, enabling closer and regular cooperation in disaster management.

EU-CHILE : LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A CLOSER COOPERATION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A Letter of Intent, signed on 25 November 2011 by the European Commission and the National Emergency Office (ONEMI) of Chile reinforces EU-Chile cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction.

The document will enable closer collaboration in improving disaster prevention and preparedness, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change at bilateral and regional levels that will benefit both signatories.

A strengthened cooperation in disaster risk reduction will add to the two national and three regional projects already being financed by DG ECHO in Chile. Since the earthquake, ECHO has increased and expanded its disaster risk reduction activities under its disaster preparedness programme (DIPECHO) for 2011-2012. ONEMI and other national authorities as well as local authorities are strongly supporting the projects and are highly committed to continue working and strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction nationwide.

BACKGROUND

- International cooperation in the field of civil protection aims at improving disaster management policies of all the partners involved.
- Disaster prevention, preparedness, response and disaster risk reduction are areas for closer cooperation between the EU and third parties. These third parties range from the EU candidate countries, neighbouring countries, OECD countries and EU's strategic partners, as well as the United Nations (UN) and other regional and international bodies.
- International cooperation activities take various forms. Administrative Arrangements, Letters of Intent and regional support programmes are among the most common ones.
- Cooperation, among other things, fosters an exchange of knowledge and best practices, which increases our societies' disaster resilience.

Regional cooperation and support

Candidate or potential candidate countries

- Candidate or potential candidate countries are all eligible to join the Civil Protection Mechanism as a Participating State by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. During the candidacy process they can benefit from pre-accession regional cooperation programmes (IPA) aiming to enhance their disaster management capacities.
- The European Commission is currently implementing a €4 million IPA programme focussing on training, exercises and workshops on the Mechanism.
- Croatia is a member in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

Neighbouring countries

EU neighborhood countries face natural and manmade disasters, the consequences of which can impact on the EU. Cooperation with them is thus a priority. Cooperation with neighbors focuses on the exchange of information, mutual assistance as well as joint training.

- An Administrative Arrangement with Russian civil protection authority (EMERCOM) was signed in May 2008. The agreement is planned to be revised in order to expand its scope and to cover prevention and preparedness activities as well as disaster response.
- A similar agreement has also been signed with Ukraine (2008) and another is foreseen with Moldova in the near future.
- Transferring legislative and policy related knowledge is also key. This transfer of knowledge is done through regional and multi-country cooperation, carried out under the European Neighborhood Policy Financial Instrument. Currently two such programmes are running – PPRD South (for the Mediterranean) and PPRD East (for Eastern Partnership countries).

Bilateral cooperation with third countries and organisations

In disaster management, the EU is developing enhanced cooperation with partners such as the USA, Japan and Australia.

- On 17 November 2011 an Administrative Arrangement was signed between the US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the European Commission, fostering cooperation in disaster risk reduction, resilience and response to disasters.
- Bilateral agreements in the form of Administrative Arrangements have been signed also with Australia (2008).
- An agreement for cooperation with Japan will soon be negotiated. The earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011 was a reminder that even the best-prepared and the most developed countries can be seriously affected by major disasters.
- In September 2011, Commissioner Georgieva agreed with ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan to increase contacts between ECHO and the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance.

Multilateral cooperation

The EU cooperates with international organisations and initiatives with a specific interest in disaster management (e.g. World Bank, OECD, UN-ISDR). In this context, the European Commission has committed itself to accelerate the implementation of the Disaster risk Reduction Hyogo Framework for Action.

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