



## ECHO FACTSHEET

## Building resilience in Haiti

### Facts & Figures

**€213** million in humanitarian assistance in Haiti since 2010

**€25,9** million for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) projects from 1998 to 2013

*ECHO is the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department and comes under the responsibility of Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.*

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A volunteer marks a danger (Danjé in creol) area in a displaced camp. PHOTO: Spanish Red Cross/B.Garlaschi

### Key messages

- In a disaster-prone country with high levels of vulnerability such as Haiti, ECHO's main objective in disaster preparedness is to reinforce communities' resilience and strengthen institutional capacities in disaster preparedness and response, in close collaboration with the National System of Disaster Risk Management.
- Since 1998, the European Commission's Department of Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) has supported a number of humanitarian organisations in Haiti to implement disaster preparedness projects.
- Following the earthquake in 2010, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was mainstreamed into EU-funded humanitarian operations. ECHO's commitment to DRR in Haiti represented 6.6% of its total funding in 2010 and 8% in 2011.
- To mitigate the impact of future natural hazards, DRR must be firmly embedded in Haiti's reconstruction and development processes. ECHO will continue to advocate on the inclusion of DRR as a cross-cutting issue in all EU-funded operations.
- In 2013, €3.5 million will go to specific Disaster Preparedness projects and complement ECHO's approach to dealing with DRR.

## Background

The poorest country of the Americas is also one that is highly disaster prone, especially to tropical cyclones, floods, mudslides and earthquakes. Climate change, deforestation, topography, poverty and a lack of investment make Haiti especially vulnerable to hydro meteorological events. Due to this level of vulnerability, even small and medium size natural hazards can have a huge impact on rural and urban communities. From 2001 to 2012, more than 18 tropical cyclones and floods left more than 6,000 dead and 132,000 persons homeless and approximately 6.4 million people were affected (out of a total population of 10 million). In 2012, Tropical Storm Isaac and Hurricane Sandy have extensively damaged the agricultural sector and increased the food insecurity for 1.5 million people.

On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 degree earthquake devastated the country, killing 222,750 people and displacing 1.5 million. The earthquake was followed ten months later by the world's largest cholera epidemic. In 2012, both Tropical Storm *Isaac* and Hurricane *Sandy* have left extensive damage, and 1.5 million people affected.

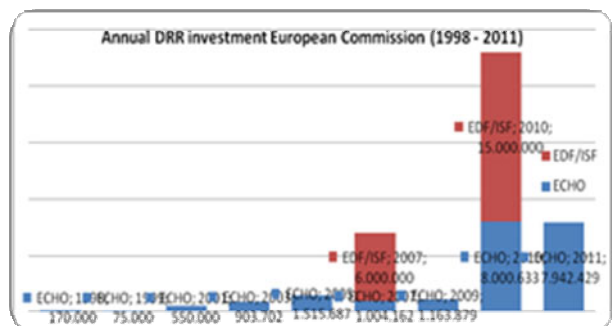
## The European Union's Humanitarian Response

ECHO's contribution to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) focuses on preparing people, communities and institutions to prevent, be prepared for and respond to disasters.

Up to the 2010 earthquake, ECHO worked to improve the preparedness of the Haitian population through the Disaster Preparedness Program (DIPECHO) with €5,4 million 1998-2009. After the earthquake ECHO built and mainstreamed DRR throughout the scope of its humanitarian response. This meant making sure disaster reduction criteria were being taken into account in all humanitarian aid projects, thus ensuring that relief actions do not end up exacerbating vulnerabilities, and the principles of 'building back better'.

ECHO has also continued to fund specific DRR actions aimed at making communities and key institutions more resilient to future disasters.

ECHO-funded projects have worked in close collaboration with the National System of Disaster Risk Management (particularly the Civil Protection Directorate and the Haitian Red Cross), providing equipment and reinforcing their capacities to respond to emergencies, at national as well as local levels. Emphasis is put on a diverse range of natural hazards (earthquake, tsunamis, floods). The projects have promoted the creation of local brigades in the rural areas, or small work on infrastructure to reduce risks such as reinforcing dikes and dams to avoid rivers from bursting their banks. Awareness raising campaigns and activities have taken place in schools. Disaster educational material for schools was not available in creole and has therefore been translated and adapted. These trainings have had a clear impact in children's preparedness to disasters.



ECHO's projects have also empowered the local authorities in charge of responding to disasters, and the *Equipes d'Intervention d'Urgence*, as they are called in French; emergency teams at community level, who now have improved the means to provide first aid, evacuations and inform about the needs of the community to other administrative levels.

In the camps of displaced people in Port-au-Prince, disaster preparedness projects have organised the communities, and volunteer committees (so called "vigilance committees") who are to take the lead in emergencies and map areas of higher risk within the camps. "I joined the committee because I wanted to help inform the camp residents how to prepare for hurricanes and how to protect their families. When we heard hurricane Tomas was coming, we used a loud speaker to inform residents right away that it might be a threat to us. People listened and we all got ready together," Pierre Redens Fritz, in camp Maïs Gaté 8, explains. He was trained by the Red Cross in disaster risk reduction and basic first aid in the framework of an ECHO-funded operation.

In 2013, ECHO's strategy will focus on the most vulnerable populations living in the areas where there are higher risks of disasters, and a higher incidence of cholera. Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction across all sectors will be a priority. For example, ECHO will ensure that training in disaster risk management is taken into consideration in all actions in the health sector so that health facilities and health staff are better prepared to face natural hazards, and that the National Disaster Management System also incorporates the health sector.