



NEPAL

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

EU emergency assistance in response to the April and May 2015 earthquakes: **€16.4 million**

Total EU* humanitarian aid to Nepal since 2001:

Over €100 million

including € 24.3 million for Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

Estimated number of Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal: over 10 700
(UNHCR)

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: (+32 2) 295 44 00

Fax: (+32 2) 295 45 72

email:

echo-info@ec.europa.eu

Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/echo>



* For all latest ECHO factsheets: bit.ly/echo-fs



© EU/ECHO/Pierre Prakash

Key messages

- A **devastating earthquake** struck central Nepal in April 2015, killing over 9 000 people and flattening entire villages. To date, the **European Commission has released €16.4 million of humanitarian funding** to help address the most urgent needs: emergency shelter, emergency healthcare, water and sanitation, livelihood support, and logistics.
- In the days immediately following the earthquake, the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism** was also activated to support the delivery of EU Member States' in-kind assistance and relief teams. A specific factsheet contains more details on the [Nepal Earthquake*](#) and the EU response.
- Nepal is particularly **vulnerable to natural disasters** and every year there are significant losses of lives and property, and livelihoods are destroyed. Therefore, continued support to vulnerable communities is needed to prepare for and reduce the impact of natural disasters in order to reinforce their resilience capacities.
- More than **10 700 refugees** who came from Bhutan in the 1990s are still hosted by Nepal. These refugees are not permitted to work and rely on assistance provided by UN Agencies.

Humanitarian situation and needs

Background and Situation in Country

Nepal is prone to numerous natural disasters which regularly cause significant loss of lives and property. Every year, around 1 000 people are killed by landslides and floods during the monsoon season. There is always the potential threat of earthquakes, glacial lake outbursts, avalanches as well as cold and heat waves. According to the United Nations, Nepal is the 11th most vulnerable country to earthquakes, and Kathmandu the most at-risk city. A specific factsheet focuses on the 2015 [Nepal Earthquake](#)* and the European Commission's humanitarian response.

There are growing concerns about the impact of climate change in Nepal. Rapidly melting glaciers cause erosion, flash floods and fill up glacial lakes, which could eventually burst and flood low-lying areas in Southern Nepal, causing huge risks to lives and livelihoods. Moreover, recurring disasters in hazard-prone areas can stifle recovery and development efforts. Rapid urbanisation and non-adherence to building codes risk exacerbating the intensity of disasters in Nepal, but preparedness measures can reduce the damage when natural disasters strike.

Nepal hosts refugees from Bhutan. In the early 1990s, more than 108 000 refugees from Bhutan – approximately 20% of Bhutan's population – arrived in Nepal and started living in camps run by the United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR). Thanks to a third-country resettlement process, most of the refugees are now living in countries such as the USA, Denmark and the Netherlands. By October 2016, the remaining camp population was made up of some 12 600 refugees. They are not permitted to work outside the camps and rely almost entirely on World Food Programme's (WFP) food rations, supplemented with vegetables and basic household items supplied by the UNHCR.

Between 1996 and 2006, the civil war between government armed forces and Maoists left thousands of people dead, and many more displaced. The peace agreement signed by both parties in 2006 called for the drafting of a new constitution; despite several extensions, the Nepalese Constituent Assembly elected in 2008 failed to finalise the constitution by the 28 May 2012 deadline. The prolonged political uncertainty led to strikes and blockades, negatively affecting the livelihoods of vulnerable populations as well as often delaying the transport of relief materials to disaster-hit areas. A new Constituent Assembly was eventually elected in November 2013. A lengthy period of protests followed the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal in September 2015. As a result, relief items were blocked at the border with India and transportation of relief items were restricted due to fuel crisis which delayed the humanitarian earthquake response operations.

The European Union's Humanitarian Response

Funding

The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) has been working in Nepal for many years, implementing community-based disaster preparedness projects, helping the survivors of the conflict in remote areas and assisting the refugees from Bhutan. To date, the Commission's humanitarian aid to Nepal has exceeded €100 million, including over €24 million allocated to disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities in Nepal (€3 million for 2017). ECHO's sustained advocacy efforts in this field have led to the formulation of the "National Strategy for Disaster Management in Nepal".



During Nepal's internal conflict, and up until 2011, ECHO's humanitarian actions totalling €35 million supported thousands of conflict-affected people, especially in rural areas, by providing healthcare as well as water and sanitation facilities. ECHO has also been supporting the refugees from Bhutan for more than ten years and will continue to advocate for a political solution to this crisis. Between 2014 and 2015, the Commission provided €1.3 million to support food assistance initiatives implemented by WFP. In 2014, ECHO provided €750 000 to assist communities affected by torrential monsoon rains that triggered extensive flooding in the Mid-Western region of Nepal. This aid enabled the provision of temporary shelters and shelter repair, clothes for women and children, hygiene kits, water purification solutions, rehabilitation of schools, and supporting livelihood recovery activities for the most vulnerable.

Following the 2015 earthquake, the European Commission released €14 million to help address the most urgent needs: emergency shelter, emergency health care, water and sanitation, livelihood support and logistics. The EU-funding included €2 million specifically directed towards winterisation needs: blankets, winter clothes and insulation materials.

To ensure essential humanitarian assistance will continue to be delivered to the earthquake victims, ECHO made available a total of €2.4 million to support relief operations in 2016, focusing mostly on a "Build Back Better" approach to shelter reconstruction through the building of "model houses" that are most resilient to earthquakes. The funding also ensures masons and carpenters are trained on such building techniques, and supports access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene for most vulnerable communities. To date, the European Commission has contributed close to €150 million in humanitarian aid funding to the earthquake victims, including funds for early recovery and rehabilitation.

For more information on the response to the 2015 earthquake, please consult our [dedicated factsheet](#).

Outreach and coordination with humanitarian partners

In Nepal, ECHO is a member of the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC), a coordinating mechanism which brings together humanitarian and development actors in partnership with the government in order to reduce Nepal's vulnerability to natural disasters. The NRRC focusses on five broad themes: school and hospital safety, emergency preparedness and response, flood risk management, community based disaster risk management and policy/institutional strengthening. ECHO has been contributing to all of these fields, with a special emphasis on community-based activities designed to strengthen people's resilience.

Prior to the April 2015 earthquake, ECHO had been working with UN agencies and NGOs on an earthquake preparedness programme, designed to bolster the health emergency response capacities in the capital city, Kathmandu.

For the refugee situation, ECHO's funding for the WFP enables nutritional support for the most vulnerable groups, such as children under five, pregnant and nursing women, as well as those who are chronically ill.



Examples of EU-funded projects in Nepal



The 25 April 2015 earthquake caused extensive damage to numerous health facilities in the affected locations. In order to maintain access to health care for the affected populations, the European Commission immediately released funding to enable its partner, Médecins du Monde, to provide necessary medical assistance to residents in Sindhupalchok district, one of the most affected areas in Central Nepal. The initiative focused on delivering emergency medical response and encouraging local authorities to restore the public health care system. © EU/ECHO

With a countless number of houses reduced to rubble in the wake of the earthquake, the Nepal Earthquake Recovery Project distributed shelter kits, amongst other relief items, to affected communities. Training on disaster-resilient construction techniques was also provided to local masons and carpenters to enable them to build homes that can withstand earthquakes. The project is implemented by a consortium of four humanitarian organisations, namely DanChurchAid, ICCO Cooperation, Lutheran World Fund Nepal and Christian Aid, with the support of the European Union. © EU/ECHO



In order to enable people living in remote areas in high altitudes to cope with usually freezing winter temperatures in the Himalayan country, the Nepal Earthquake Recovery Project also included winterisation support to its emergency relief operations. Under the initiative, warm clothes, blankets, insulation materials and cash vouchers were distributed to the most vulnerable populations in order to keep them warm throughout the harsh winter. Close to 4 400 families in 14 villages across four highly-impacted districts benefited from the assistance. © DCA



*For all latest ECHO Factsheet:
bit.ly/echo-fs