



## South America

ECHO FACTSHEET

### Facts & Figures

European Commission  
**assistance to South  
America since 1994:  
€414 million in  
humanitarian aid**  
– including €204.7  
million to address  
consequences of the  
Colombian conflict

**€50.3 million in  
humanitarian aid**  
to South America  
for the period  
**2013-2017**

**€89.1 million for  
disaster  
preparedness**  
from 1995 to 2017

€ 6.35 million in 2017  
(including DRR  
initiatives and  
response to natural  
disasters)

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*Through ECHO funding, over  
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countries outside the EU  
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partners (International non-  
governmental organisations,  
the Red Cross/Red Crescent  
movement, and UN  
agencies).*

*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*



The EU deployed close to 200 experts in February 2017, to help Chile fight its worst wildfires in 50 years, which destroyed over 600,000 hectares and several towns. © EU/ECHO/V. Rodas 2017

### Key messages

- South America is one of the world's most vulnerable regions to natural disasters. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela are highly exposed to **earthquakes, floods, landslides, droughts, cold waves and volcanic eruptions**. Local capacity to cope with such disasters is limited.
- Following the **devastating floods of April 2017 in Peru, which affected over a million people**, the European Commission immediately provided coordinated European support to the relief efforts and released €1 million in emergency humanitarian relief to the victims. Support was also provided through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, to improve access to safe water and coordinate the national response.
- The European Commission's assistance to South America also focuses on **responding to the humanitarian needs caused by the Colombian conflict**, providing **emergency response to natural hazards** and preparing communities for future disasters by **increasing the resilience and preparedness** of the most affected populations and local disaster management institutions.
- Since 1994 the Commission has supported South America with **€414 million in humanitarian aid, of which €204.7 million** has been dedicated to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the Colombian armed conflict in **Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador**.

### Humanitarian situation and needs

#### Background

South America is **highly exposed to natural hazards**. Floods and droughts continue to be the most significant and recurring disasters. Additionally, **climate change-related events** increase the frequency, intensity and unpredictability of impacts. Phenomena like El Niño (unusually warm temperatures in the



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equatorial Pacific) or La Niña (unusually cool temperatures) continue to cause extreme weather patterns and substantial economic impact, including significant loss of subsistence crops and livestock, affecting the food security and livelihoods of many. Located in a very dynamic geological region, South America is also affected by earthquakes and active volcanoes. Both rural and urban populations living in extreme poverty often reside in fragile settlements, highly exposed to natural hazards.

In addition, the **50-year old armed conflict in Colombia** continues to have **major humanitarian consequences**, despite the signature of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the guerrilla group FARC. **With approximately 7.3 million IDPs, Colombia has the world's largest caseload of forced internal displacements** (according to government figures). Murders, threats, extortion, the forced recruitment of minors by armed groups, sexual violence, landmines, forced displacement (**in 2015 and 2016 345 271 new IDPs were registered**), confinement and lack of access to basic goods and services affect many, particularly in remote, rural areas. Thousands flee the violence in the countryside and migrate to cities where they can face protection, development and security challenges. In addition, **more than 360 000 Colombian refugees have fled to neighbouring Ecuador and Venezuela** (UNHCR, 2016), where they are vulnerable and need protection.

### Major needs and related problems

When a disaster strikes, the most pressing needs are **shelter, food and relief items** (water cans, mattresses, cooking utensils and hygiene products), access to **safe water and proper sanitation**, as well as **primary health care**. Helping affected populations recover their **livelihoods** is also essential.

The main needs for the populations affected by the Colombian conflict are **protection, access to healthcare, education and safe water**, as well as **food assistance**. Refugees and IDPs often need temporary **housing and basic household items** (hygiene kits, kitchen utensils), as well as **psychological support, legal protection**, and assistance to register or apply for refugee status.

## The European Union's Humanitarian Response

### Funding

Since 1994, the EU has allocated **€414 million** in humanitarian aid to South America.

### Humanitarian aid to Colombia

**Colombia** is the largest recipient of the Commission's humanitarian aid in Latin America. The **needs of Colombians affected by the conflict**, including IDPs, refugees and People in Need of International Protection (PNIP) in neighboring countries (mainly Ecuador and Venezuela) account for almost 50% of EU funds for this sub-region (**€204.7 million**). The aid focuses on providing **protection, food assistance, health care, water, sanitation and education** to vulnerable groups.

### Disaster Risk Reduction

**The European Commission's Disaster Preparedness programme (DIPECHO)** supports local disaster response committees, drafting emergency plans, setting up early warning systems, information and education campaigns, reinforcing vital infrastructure (shelters, schools and hospitals), protecting livelihoods, as well as promoting coordination among those responsible for anticipating or reacting to disasters.

For **2015-2017**, the Commission has allocated **€22.6 million** to **Disaster Risk Reduction** (DRR) in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela, and to reinforce DRR strategies in South America in terms of education and inter-governmental structures such as UNASUR. This EU funding includes, for instance, €3 million to support resilience activities in the departments of Beni and La Paz in Bolivia, hard-hit by severe floods in 2014. Important efforts are also being undertaken in some countries to integrate DRR and risk management into humanitarian and development cooperation through ECHO/**DEVCO** (the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development) joint programming.

### Response to emergencies

The Commission has assisted the region after all major disasters. Recently, it deployed 14 experts and 177 firefighters (from France, Portugal and Spain) under the **European Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCP)**, to help **Chile fight the worst forest fires ever recorded on the continent**, which destroyed over 600,000 hectares.

The Commission also provided immediate support to **Ecuador following the deadly earthquake of 16 April 2016**, which claimed over 650 lives, with €1 million in initial aid to victims, and by coordinating European support to the relief efforts through the EUCP. An additional € 4 million in emergency response was later released.

From **2013 to 2017**, the Commission assisted Argentina (€415 000), Bolivia (€1.2 million), Colombia (€2.1 million), Paraguay (€652 098) and Peru (€1.8 million) **following extreme weather and floods**; addressed the **drought and a volcanic eruption** in Ecuador (€389 206), **wildfires** in Chile (€119 549) and the crisis in Venezuela (€323 267).

