

**COMMISSION DECISION**  
**of**  
**on the financing of emergency humanitarian operations from the general budget of the**  
**European Communities in**  
**Colombia**

**THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,  
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) This year's rainy season has led to heavy floods and landslides, covering 28 of Colombia's 32 departments. In total, more than 580,000 Colombians have been negatively affected.
- (2) The most severely hit part of the country is the Northwest: the department of Cordoba and the "La Mojana" region (covering parts of the departments of Bolivar and Sucre).
- (3) The floods have caused major damage to the harvest and to fish stocks, water and sanitation systems, houses, communications infrastructure as well as to health and education infrastructure. The lack of preparedness of the population aggravated the situation in many cases.
- (4) Humanitarian aid operations financed by this Decision should be of a maximum duration of 6 months;
- (5) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance for up to 45,000 people taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors;
- (6) The present Decision constitutes a financing decision in the sense of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>2</sup> Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002<sup>3</sup> and Article 15 of the Internal Rules of the Implementation of the general budget of the European Communities<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p.1-6

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1, legislation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom)

No 1995/2006, OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p.1

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p.1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom)

No 478/2007, OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p.13

<sup>4</sup> Commission Decision of 21.2.2007, C/2007/513

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 1,000,000 for emergency humanitarian aid operations to provide the humanitarian assistance to up to 45,000 victims of the floods in Colombia by using line 23 02 01 of the 2007 general budget of the European Communities.
2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
  - To assist the victims of floods in the Northwest of Colombia with integrated relief and immediate recovery support

The total amount of this Decision is allocated to this objective.

*Article 2*

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid operations funded by this Decision shall have a maximum duration of 6 months from their starting date.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 11 July 2007
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to force majeure or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

*Article 3*

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management with international organisations.
2. The actions supported by this decision will be implemented by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the EC/UN Financial Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).
3. Taking account of the specificities of humanitarian aid, the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the specific location constraints and the level of urgency, the activities covered by this decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. This means that in case of co-financing, the possible rate of co-financing can go up to 99% if needed.

*Article 4*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission



**Emergency Humanitarian Aid Decision**

**23 02 01**

Title: Emergency humanitarian assistance in favour of the population of Colombia affected by floods

Location of operation: Colombia

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-SM/BUD/2007/02000

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**Explanatory Memorandum**

**1 - Rationale, needs and target population.**

1.1. - Rationale :

The rainy season has affected Colombia severely this year. Since its beginning in March, 58 people have died due to the floods and landslides caused by the heavy rainfall, 14 people are missing and a total of 580,227 people have been affected<sup>5</sup>. A total of 529 houses have been destroyed and over 12,000 heavily damaged. According to OCHA<sup>6</sup>, almost 25 per cent of all Colombian municipalities have reported damage because of the heavy rainfalls<sup>7</sup>. This translates into a total of 276 affected municipalities in 28 of Colombia's 32 departments<sup>8</sup> affected. The most severely hit departments are in the Northwest: Cordoba, Bolivar and Sucre.

In Cordoba, a state of public calamity was declared on 11 July 2007 by the Directorate for Disaster Preparedness and Management for 13 of the 28 municipalities in the department. The situation in Cordoba deteriorated when in the wake of heavy continued rainfall the Urra dam had to be shut down and was only reopened on 23 July 2007. Thus, for almost two weeks it could not be used to control the water level as usual, resulting in flooding in various parts of the department. Consequently, three further municipalities were affected when the

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<sup>5</sup> Official figures by the Directorate-General for Disaster Preparedness and Management (DGPAD in its Spanish acronym), dated 24 July 2007

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

<sup>7</sup> OCHA Update on Colombia Floods, 26 July 2007

<sup>8</sup> IFRC Information Bulletin Colombia: Floods No 1/2007 of 3 August 2007

rivers San Jorge and Sinu overflowed. To illustrate how the hydric capacity of rivers was stretched: the river Sinu usually moves 700 m<sup>3</sup> of water per second while during the floods it received up to 1200 m<sup>3</sup> per second. A presidential decree was issued on 3 August 2007 declaring a state of disaster in 16 municipalities of the department. In total, 66,164 people have been affected<sup>9</sup>, with most of the affected 13,367 families living on the banks of the rivers San Jorge and Sinu. The population located in the area of the lower Sinu has been especially hit. There, for instance, 3,556 ha of agricultural land have been completely flooded<sup>10</sup>, which does not only imply that over 1,000 agricultural establishments have been directly affected but also that up to 2,000 day laborers have lost their principal source of income. In total, it is estimated that some 5,000 families of small-scale farmers have been affected throughout the department and so face a food crisis in the medium term. In total, almost 10,000 hectares of land used for crops and cattle farming has been destroyed in Cordoba.<sup>11</sup>

An increase in infectious and skin diseases and diarrhea has been reported. Health services are operating at limited capacity. The Education Secretariat of the Department has suspended classes because of the floods. In many cases, schools are being used as temporary shelter for the affected population although an estimated 15,000 people are resisting evacuation from their homes in order to protect their belongings. A total of 42 temporary refuges have been set up, accommodating some 2,000 people.

In La Mojana (a region covering part of the departments of Sucre and Bolivar), 136,101 people have been affected<sup>12</sup>, with the most heavily hit being those living on the banks of the rivers Cauca and San Jorge. A total of 28,593 families<sup>13</sup> are victims of the floods. More than 24,000 hectares of farm land have been affected. Traditionally, La Mojana experiences small floods twice a year: the first in May, the second between October and December. Farmers plant their crops accordingly. However, since this year's floods did not follow the usual pattern, they not only had a negative impact on the first crops planted this year but also prevented the second round of planting because some land was still flooded. Consequently, the price of foodstuffs has increased (up to 80 per cent for the basic food basket<sup>14</sup>), which has direct adverse implications for the already vulnerable population.

The major damage caused in both Cordoba and La Mojana concerns the loss of the harvest and fish stocks, damage to the water and sanitation systems, houses, communications infrastructure and health and education infrastructure. The lack of preparedness of the population has aggravated the situation in many cases. It is noteworthy that Cordoba has not experienced floods on this scale for 11 years, La Mojana even for 40 years.

The national response to the immediate emergency needs was satisfactory, especially in urban areas. The institutions, united under the umbrella of the National System for Disaster Preparedness and Management, have provided food and health assistance, temporary refuges and assistance in terms of water and sanitation. The Ministry of Social Protection has activated emergency plans in the local hospitals so as to ensure that the local population will be attended to. Health brigades have been sent to the rural areas. Epidemiological and

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<sup>9</sup> Directorate General for Disaster Preparedness and Management, 25 July 2007

<sup>10</sup> Oxfam Exploratory Mission Report, July 2007

<sup>11</sup> OCHA Update on Colombia Floods, 26 July 2007

<sup>12</sup> Data provided by the National System of Disaster Preparedness and Management (SNAPD in its Spanish acronym)

<sup>13</sup> OCHA Update on Colombia Floods, 26 July 2007

<sup>14</sup> ACH/WFP Preliminary Rapid Needs Assessment in La Mojana, 30 July to 3 August 2007

environmental surveillance is being carried out. However, due to the scale of the floods, the national response capacity was exceeded and international organizations have started to provide assistance in an integrated approach. UNETE<sup>15</sup> Colombia dispatched a joint field mission and, subsequently, initiated a coordinated request for a rapid response grant from CERF<sup>16</sup>, for which WFP<sup>17</sup>, UNICEF<sup>18</sup> and IOM<sup>19</sup> have prepared proposals.

Relief was concentrated first on urban areas and subsequently spread to rural areas. With the rural population having been more vulnerable from the start, the floods entail their further impoverishment and clearly exceed the very limited coping capacity they had.

From 7 to 10 August 2007 a DG ECHO<sup>20</sup> mission took place in Cordoba and La Mojana to assess the humanitarian situation on the ground. Based on the findings of this mission, the present Decision has been finalized.

## 1.2. - Identified needs :

The identification of the needs was initially hampered by the lack of accessibility to certain affected zones, particularly in the rural areas.

Food and food security: In the affected areas, agriculture and fishing are the principal sources of income and employment. The floods have hence endangered the food security of small farmer families, whose livelihood depends on crops such as rice, corn, fruits and vegetables. They have also had a negative impact on the livelihood of up to 2,000 day labourers and their families gaining a living in the area. Thus, both groups' already existing vulnerability has been further accentuated.

Water and sanitation: Both in urban and rural areas, traditional water sources (wells and tanks for rain water storage) have been destroyed by the floods, which has resulted in people taking water from the rivers<sup>21</sup>. There is hardly any water treatment in rural areas, although even in urban zones waste and wastewaters are typically deposited directly into the rivers. Furthermore, both in rural and urban areas the floods have led to the overflow of septic tanks and the subsequent breakdown of latrines.

Shelter: In Cordoba 42 temporary refuges have been set up, hosting some 3 per cent of the affected population.<sup>22</sup> According to reports most of these shelters do not comply with Sphere standards. In view of the damage the floods have caused to houses, the population is in need of construction materials to rebuild their homes.

Non-food items: The people whose houses were flooded need basic household items, kitchen sets, bedding material, mosquito nets and similar items.

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<sup>15</sup> United Nations Emergency Team

<sup>16</sup> Central Emergency Response Fund, a stand-by fund created by the UN to provide humanitarian assistance

<sup>17</sup> World Food Programme

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Children Fund

<sup>19</sup> International Organisation for Migration

<sup>20</sup> Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid

<sup>21</sup> ACH/WFP Rapid Needs Assessment

<sup>22</sup> OCHA Update on Colombia Floods, 26 July 2007

Health: There has been an increase in infectious and skin diseases as well as diarrhoea. In addition, the number of snake bites has increased, especially among children. Many health care centres have been damaged and require emergency repairs, the provision of basic medicine and basic medical inputs needs to be guaranteed. The population may also be in need of psycho-social support.

Child Protection: Formal education has been suspended because of the floods. Children have suffered from the traumatic experience of having had to leave their homes or seeing them and their family's few belongings damaged by the floods. Psycho-social support and specific recreational activities are needed to help them overcome this experience. Assistance is also necessary to ensure the prompt resumption of classes as this will help children get back to their normal life as quickly as possible.

Disaster preparedness: In order to enhance the population's level of preparedness, and therefore, avoid disproportionate losses in the case of natural disasters, awareness-raising and training activities need to be undertaken. These should involve the local communities, community-based organizations and authorities so as to achieve a maximum impact in terms of collective risk reduction. Improvements in disaster preparedness are particularly important since this year's second rainy season is still to come.

The above-mentioned needs cannot be covered by national capacities alone, particularly those of the population in rural areas or in zones controlled by the guerillas or paramilitary.

### 1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

The Decision will target a population of up to 45,000 people, living in the most severely affected departments of Colombia, i.e. the department of Cordoba and the La Mojana region in the Northwest of the country. This estimation of targeted beneficiaries is made on the basis of field assessments.

Priority will be given to

- ▶ communities living in rural areas, particularly those living in remote zones and not having access to the emergency assistance provided by the government
- ▶ particularly vulnerable groups, including children, women and indigenous populations.

Since the population targeted by this Decision is likely to continue to stay in areas at risk of floods, priority will be given to operations which mainstream disaster risk reduction in their relief activities.

### 1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

Access to isolated rural areas is one of the main constraints for the delivery of humanitarian aid in response to the floods.

Further rainfall outside the second rainy season, which is normally starts in October, may hamper the affected population's resumption of basic activities and recovery of their livelihoods. Their food security and sanitary situations might worsen and, consequently, create the need for further intervention.

Furthermore, the volatility of the Colombian conflict might have an impact on aid operations though at present the affected zones are facing no major displacements related to the internal armed conflict. Furthermore, the presence of illegal armed groups could impede the delivery of assistance or create a security problem for humanitarian actors and the affected population.

## **2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:**

### 2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: To preserve the lives and alleviate the adverse living conditions of the population of Colombia affected by floods

Specific objective:

- To assist the victims of floods in the Northwest of Colombia with integrated relief and immediate recovery support

### 2.2. - Components :

#### *Food and food security*

- Provision of emergency food aid
- Provision of agricultural inputs to support the recovery of livelihoods
- Training in production techniques

#### *Water and sanitation*

- Access to safe drinking water for the affected population
- Emergency rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities
- Provision of emergency sanitation facilities
- Distribution of hygiene kits

#### *Shelter*

- Distribution of shelter materials
- Collective rehabilitation of shelters

#### *Non-food items*

- Distribution of non-food items such as kitchen sets, bedding, hygiene items, mosquito nets

#### *Health*

- Emergency health care, including the provision of medical inputs
- Support for the reinforcement of an epidemiological surveillance system
- Emergency rehabilitation of health care centres
- Psycho-social support for especially vulnerable groups, including young people and women
- Dissemination of health messages

#### *Child Protection*

- Psycho-social support for children, including recreational activities
- Provision of educational kits
- Creation of child-friendly spaces
- Support for the timely resumption of classes

### *Disaster Preparedness*

- Awareness-raising and training for local communities, community-based organizations and authorities
- Small-scale mitigation works

### **3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:**

The duration of humanitarian aid operations shall be a maximum of 6 months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 11 July 2007.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.



## 5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in Colombia the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR	CERF	USD
					2,300,000
Austria		DG ECHO	12,000,000		
Belgium	400,000	Other services: RELEX	5,000,000		
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark					
Estonia					
Finland	500,000				
France					
Germany	2,655,093				
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland					
Italy	8,877				
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands	3,000,240				
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenie					
Spain					
Sweden	505,982				
United kingdom					
Subtotal	7,070,192	Subtotal	17,000,000	Subtotal	2,300,000
		Grand total	24,070,192€ plus 2,300,000 USD		

Dated : 10 August 2007

(\*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.ec.europa.eu>

Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

On 9 August 2007, a CERF allocation was adopted, providing 2.3 million USD of emergency assistance to the floods in Northern Colombia. This follows a proposal prepared by the UN Emergency Response Team in Colombia.

As CERF grants are restricted to emergency actions of maximum 3 months, DG ECHO support will focus on complementing those emergency actions through immediate recovery actions that cannot be covered through other actions.

To the extent possible, aid operations funded under this Decision will be coordinated with other humanitarian actors as well as both local and national authorities .

### 6 - Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 1,000,000

## 6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>To preserve the lives and alleviate the adverse living conditions of the population of Colombia affected by floods</i>			
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>25</sup></b>
Specific objective 1: To assist the victims of floods in the Northwest of Colombia with integrated relief and immediate recovery support	1,000,000	Department of Cordoba, La Mojana region	- ACH - DIAKONIE - OXFAM GB - SC(UK)
TOTAL: 1,000,000			

<sup>25</sup> ACCION CONTRA EL HAMBRE, (ESP), DIAKONISCHES WERK der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (DEU) , OXFAM (GB), THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (GBR)

## 7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm).

## 8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

-	CE (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2007	485,000,000.00
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers Commission	
<b>Total Available appropriations</b>	<b>485,000,000,00</b>
Total executed to date ( 9 August 2007)	394,145,694.95
Available remaining	90,854,305.05
<b>Total amount of the Decision</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

## 9. Management Issues

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index_en.htm).

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.