



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels  
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**COMMISSION DECISION**

**of**

**on the financing of humanitarian Actions from the general budget of the European  
Communities in Cuba**

(ECHO/CUB/BUD/2009/01000)

## COMMISSION DECISION

of

### on the financing of humanitarian Actions from the general budget of the European Communities in Cuba

(ECHO/CUB/BUD/2009/01000)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid <sup>1</sup>, and in particular Article 2 and Article 15(2) thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) The hurricane season 2008 was the worst in decades for Cuba, with three hurricanes of category 3 and 4 made making landfall on the island between the 30 August and 8 November 2008.
- (2) Although major loss of life was largely avoided because of the country's forte in terms of preparedness, the cumulated damage caused by the hurricanes exceeds national response capacity.
- (3) The hurricanes affected in particular housing and agriculture, damaging more than 500,000 houses and over 169,000 hectares of cropland, thus seriously impacting the population's livelihood.
- (4) Through a first European Commission decision in October 2008, emergency assistance has been provided to 56,000 victims of the first two hurricanes.
- (5) However, substantial continued emergency needs, in particular in terms of shelter, were identified during a DG ECHO mission in November 2008, including also the areas affected by the third hurricane.
- (6) To reach populations in need, aid should be channelled through Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). Therefore, the European Commission should implement the budget by direct centralized management.
- (7) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid Actions should be financed by the Community for a period of eight months.
- (8) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 2,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to the population most affected by the hurricanes, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. Therefore, the activities

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

covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

- (9) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning 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 on the implementation of the general budget of the European Communities<sup>4</sup>.

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 2,000,000 for humanitarian aid Actions in favour of the victims of hurricanes in Cuba by using line 23 02 01 of the 2009 general budget of the European Communities.
2. In accordance with Article 2 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian Actions under this Decision shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
  - To improve the humanitarian situation of the population affected by hurricanes Gustav, Ike and Paloma
3. The total amount of the Decision has been allocated to this specific objective.

#### *Article 2*

1. The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be for a maximum period of 8 months, starting on 20 January 2009.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 20 January 2009.
3. If the Actions 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 implementation of this Decision.

#### *Article 3*

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management.
2. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented by:
  - Non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96.

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<sup>2</sup> 2- OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> 3- OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, , p.1.

<sup>4</sup> 4- Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

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.

*Article 4*

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

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission  
Member of the Commission*



**Humanitarian Aid Decision**  
**23 02 01**

Title: Humanitarian assistance for the victims of hurricanes in Cuba

Location of Action: Cuba

Amount of Decision: EUR 2,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/CUB/BUD/2009/01000

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**Supporting Document**

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

1.1. - Rationale:

Cuba is prone to hurricanes. However, the hurricane season 2008 was particularly difficult for the country, with three hurricanes making landfall in less than three months. In addition, in August 2008, tropical storms Fay and Hanna caused flooding on the island. On 30 August 2008, hurricane Gustav made landfall on the Isle of Youth as a category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale, causing several kilometres of flooding inland. It then hit the province of Pinar del Rio in the West, with record winds of 340 km per hour<sup>1</sup>. On 8 September 2008, hurricane Ike made landfall as category 3 in the East and then crossed all of Cuba, also bringing heavy rainfall to those areas not directly in its path. On 8 November 2008, hurricane Paloma made landfall in the Southeast as category 3, with winds reaching 215 km per hour and waves reaching 1.5 kms inland<sup>2</sup>.

Loss of life was largely avoided thanks to the renowned preparedness capacity of Cuba. Ahead of hurricanes Gustav and Ike more than 3 million people were evacuated<sup>3</sup> and another 1,200,000 people<sup>4</sup> ahead of hurricane Paloma. In addition, measures were taken to protect agriculture, livestock and fishing sectors. However, despite all preparedness efforts undertaken, the three hurricanes caused major damage to houses, agriculture, infrastructure,

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Plan of Action Post Hurricanes, October 2008

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Situation Report No.1 "Hurricane Paloma", 10 November 2008

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Plan of Action Post Hurricanes, October 2008

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Situation Report No.1 "Hurricane Paloma", 10 November 2008

education and health care institutions. The hurricanes damaged more than 500,000 houses, thus affecting some 18 per cent of the total population<sup>5</sup>. In five of the most affected areas (Pinar del Rio, Holguin, Camagüey, Las Tunas, Isla de la Juventud) alone, over 55,000 houses have been totally destroyed<sup>6</sup>. In the mentioned areas, in November 2008 over 100,000 people were subsequently living in temporary facilities or with neighbours and relatives<sup>7</sup>.

Furthermore, hurricanes Gustav and Ike alone damaged more than 169,000 hectares of crop land, affecting over 700,000 tons of food<sup>8</sup> and, thus, severely impacting food production and food security. This is the more significant because Cuba typically has already to import some 80 per cent of the required foodstuffs<sup>9</sup>. In addition, the hurricanes caused severe damage to education and health care institutions, with hurricanes Gustav and Ike alone damaging 2,463 education facilities and 1,356 health care institutions<sup>10</sup>.

After hurricanes Gustav and Ike affected Cuba and other Caribbean countries, the European Commission took a funding decision (ECHO/-CR-BUD/2008/01000), totalling EUR 5,000,000 to respond to the emergency needs caused by the hurricanes in the region. At the same time as EU<sup>11</sup>-Cuba cooperation was officially resumed during Commissioner Michel's visit from 22 to 25 October 2008, Cuba accepted the European Commission's offer of humanitarian assistance. As a consequence, five emergency actions are currently ongoing, providing assistance to the victims of both hurricane Gustav and Ike. The actions (of a six-month duration each) focus on emergency rehabilitation of shelter, the distribution of non-food items, re-start of basic agriculture and the emergency rehabilitation of health care centres.

#### 1.2. - Identified needs:

A DG ECHO<sup>12</sup> assessment mission to Cuba took place from 16 to 26 November 2008 in connection with an inter-service mission involving different Commission services and identified continued emergency needs mainly in the following sectors:

##### Shelter:

As described above, more than 500,000 have been damaged or completely destroyed and thousands of people remain in temporary shelters. In order to re-establish basic living conditions, it is necessary to continue with the emergency rehabilitation of houses, notably roofs. During the recent DG ECHO mission to Cuba, the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and different international non-governmental organizations all identified emergency shelter rehabilitation as an ongoing priority need for early recovery.

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Plan of Action Post Hurricanes, October 2008

<sup>6</sup> Information provided by provincial governments and the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation in early December 2008

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Plan of Action Post Hurricanes, October 2008

<sup>9</sup> Information provided by the World Food Programme to DG ECHO

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> European Union

<sup>12</sup> Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid – ECHO

### Non-food items:

The vulnerable families who have lost their belongings because of the hurricanes are in need of basic non-food items such as household kits, tools and buckets to help them restart their livelihood.

### Disaster risk reduction:

Since Cuba is highly disaster prone, disaster risk reduction measures should be integrated as far as possible into all activities, enhancing local communities' preparedness so as to better face future natural disasters. In particular, the population should be shown the best way to fix their roofs so as to make them more resistant regarding hurricanes.

In principle, these needs should be covered before the beginning of the next hurricane season in July 2009 so as to enhance the population's preparedness.

Other significant needs exist, notably in terms of food assistance/agricultural recovery (the hurricanes have damaged a significant part of the farm land, which has had a direct negative impact on the population's access to a nutritionally diversified diet and on the livelihoods of the local population), education and health (with significant numbers of institutions damaged). However, these needs cannot be properly met through emergency assistance and are therefore beyond DG ECHO's mandate. More long-term aid programmes are required and the above-mentioned inter-service mission allowed discussing options in this respect which at the same time pave the way for LRRD ("linking relief, rehabilitation and development") with previous DG ECHO-funded actions.

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

Through this Decision, emergency assistance will be provided to approximately 30,000 people living in the areas most affected by the three hurricanes, in particular Holguin, Camagüey, Pinar del Rio, Las Tunas and Isla de la Juventud.

Special focus will be put on providing assistance to the most vulnerable population, for instance women and children, single heads of household, the elderly and disabled.

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

It is assumed that Cuban authorities continue to welcome European Commission humanitarian assistance.

Access to target areas may be hampered because of the damage to road infrastructure.

Further negative climatic phenomena might also render access to the affected areas difficult.

Procurement might lead to delays in the implementation of the Actions funded under this Decision.

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

### 2.1. - Objectives:

Principal objective: To provide humanitarian assistance to the population affected by the recent hurricanes in Cuba

Specific objective:

To improve the humanitarian situation of the population affected by hurricanes Gustav, Ike and Paloma

2.2. - Components:

Shelter: emergency rehabilitation of houses and community infrastructure used as temporary shelter

Non-Food Items: provision of household kits, tools etc.

Disaster Risk Reduction: improvement of techniques to put on roofs in a more hurricane resistant manner, strengthening of local capacities in risk management and disaster preparedness, strengthening local emergency committees' equipment for disaster response

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

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be eight months.  
Humanitarian Actions funded by this Decision must be implemented within this period.  
They will mainly be "urgent actions", with a maximum duration of six months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 20 January 2009 to allow for a speedy emergency rehabilitation of the affected population's houses and prepare them for the next hurricane season.

Start Date: 20 January 2009

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 Actions.

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.

**4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis**

**List of previous DG ECHO operations in CUBA**

Decision Number	Decision Type	2006 EUR	2007 EUR	2008 EUR
ECHO/-CR/BUD/2008/01000 (*)	Emergency			2,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		0	0	2,000,000
<b>Grand Total</b>		0		2,000,000

Dated : 4 December 2008  
Source : HOPE

(\*) decisions with more than one country

## 5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in CUBA the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	0		
Belgium	600,000	Other services			
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark					
Estonia					
Finland					
France					
Germany	150,000				
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland	50,000				
Italy					
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenia					
Spain	150,000				
Sweden	464,329				
United Kingdom	320,700				
Subtotal	1,735,029	Subtotal	0	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	1,735,029		

Dated : 4 December 2008

(\*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac>  
Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

Because of the suspension of EU-Cuba cooperation since 2003, no European Commission aid allocations have been made to the country in the past few years.

With the official resumption of EU-Cuba cooperation in October 2008, avenues are being explored to provide new Commission assistance through different funding instruments, notably to mitigate the negative impact of the hurricanes. A joint declaration was signed by the Director General of the European Commission's Directorate General for Development and the Cuban Vice-Minister for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation in Havana on 27 November 2008 on the basic orientations of forthcoming development cooperation. Furthermore, the inter-service mission in November 2008 was a first step to identify concrete options, whereby specific importance will be attached to ensuring LRRD with DG ECHO-funded action.

On 22 October 2008, the United Nations launched a Plan of Action Post Hurricanes 2008. It foresees USD 13,821,470 for the immediate response and USD 16,192,851 for the early

recovery phase. Two CERF<sup>13</sup> allocations of USD 2.49 million and USD 4.88 million have been made.

The Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID in its Spanish acronym) has announced a support programme totalling EUR 24,000,000 over two years, with the lion's share of this amount being allocated to recovery projects starting from January 2009 onwards<sup>14</sup>. In addition, through decentralized assistance, different regions of Spain have provided funds for hurricane response. Most notably, the Council of Andalusia has allocated EUR 5,000,000 specifically for the rehabilitation of housing in the province of Pinar del Rio (implemented through provincial authorities).

## **6 - Amount of Decision and distribution by specific objectives:**

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 2,000,000

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<sup>13</sup> Central Emergency Relief Fund of the United Nations

<sup>14</sup> Information received by DG ECHO from AECID in Havana on 27 November 2008

<b>Principal objective:</b> <i>To provide humanitarian assistance to the population affected by the recent hurricanes in Cuba</i>				
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>15</sup></b>
Specific objective 1: To improve the humanitarian situation of the population affected by hurricanes Gustav, Ike and Paloma	2,000,000	Areas affected by the hurricanes, in particular Holguin, Camagüey, Pinar del Rio, Las Tunas and Isla de la Juventud	- emergency rehabilitation of shelter - distribution of non-food items - disaster preparedness	- ACSUR - MADRID - COSPE - DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE - HANDICAP (BEL) - MPDL - OIKOS - OXFAM - BEL - OXFAM - UK - PTM-mundubat (E)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	2,000,000			

<sup>15</sup> Asociación para la Cooperación con el Sur LAS SEGOVIAS , COOPERAZIONE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI PAESI EMERGENTI (ITA), DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE e.V. (DE), HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL (BEL), MOVIMIENTO POR LA PAZ, EL DESARME Y LA LIBERTAD, (E), OIKOS - COOPERAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO, OXFAM (GB), OXFAM-Solidarité, (BEL), PTM-mundubat (E)

## **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 Actions financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent Actions." 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/policies/evaluation/introduction\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/introduction_en.htm).

## **8. 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/about/actors/partners\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/actors/partners_en.htm).

For International Organisations identified as potential partners for implementing the Decision, actions will be managed under joint management.

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.