



## Coronavirus global response: EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flights to the Democratic Republic of Congo

Brussels, 7 June 2020

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge is operating three flights to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), carrying on board humanitarian workers and essential supplies to help the country tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

A first flight to DRC is leaving today with Janez **Lenarčič**, European Commissioner for Crisis Management on board, together with Philippe Goffin, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Defense, and Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs. In Kinshasa, they will meet the President of the DRC, H.E. Félix Tshisekedi as well as humanitarian organisations and civil society in the capital and in Goma.

Commissioner **Lenarčič** said: *"These new EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flights to the DRC bring emergency aid to help those most in need. Defeating coronavirus in the long term means working together, in particular with African nations who are our key partners. We are delivering 40 tons of humanitarian cargo in total on board the three flights to the DRC. It is in our common interest to work in solidarity."*

Commissioner **Lenarčič** also stated that, in 2020, the EU is supporting the most vulnerable in the DRC with a total of €40.83 million in humanitarian funding.

The cargo of the three EU humanitarian air bridge flights to the DRC includes:

- water purifiers, nutrition support, and general medical supplies;
- other supplies, such as laboratory equipment, masks, gloves and personal protective equipment are also intended to support the coronavirus response in the DRC, complementing efforts by the DRC Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), and in line with the country's COVID-19 Response Plan.

The flights are fully EU funded, and are part of a joint effort between the European Union, Belgium, France, and humanitarian aid organisations, and in cooperation with the DRC authorities.

Since the beginning of May, the EU has organised four other Humanitarian Air Bridge flights - three to the Central African Republic and one to São Tomé e Príncipe. Other flights are in the pipeline, including further flights to Africa, but also to other regions with high humanitarian needs.

### Background

#### ***Team Europe support***

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operations form part of the EU's global response to the coronavirus pandemic within the Team Europe approach. Team Europe's support to the whole African continent in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic amounts to €3.25 billion, reaffirming the EU's leading partner to African countries. This funding is helping countries strengthen their health system, support their economies in these challenging times, train health staff and reinforce social support systems.

#### ***EU humanitarian and development aid support in the DRC***

Humanitarian needs in the DRC are among the highest in the world. While battling the coronavirus pandemic, the country continues to grapple with Ebola (the 11<sup>th</sup> Ebola virus disease outbreak declared on 01 June 2020, just as the 10<sup>th</sup> one was dwindling), a measles outbreak, and cholera. The EU's 2020 humanitarian funding in the DRC includes recently announced EU humanitarian assistance in reaction to the coronavirus pandemic: [€4.5 million](#) is allocated to coronavirus infection prevention and control measures, and access to quality health care, water, sanitation and hygiene. An additional €2.78 million has been channeled to the World Health Organization (WHO) to support early detection and response, and expertise on the ground.

Through its development aid, the EU is also, among other sectors, supporting the health care system in the DRC through a multi-year programme (2014-2020) with an overall budget of €222 million. It aims at improving both the accessibility and quality of health services through support to health centres and hospitals, to local health supervision authorities, and the medicines supply system.

### **For more information**

Factsheets:

[EU Humanitarian Air Bridge](#)

[EU humanitarian aid in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#)

[EU response to the Ebola epidemic in the DRC](#)

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Press contacts:

[Balazs UJVARI](#) (+32 2 295 45 78)

[Daniel PUGLISI](#) (+32 2 296 91 40)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)