HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN *(HIP)* 2023
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

AMOUNT: EUR 116 000 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared based on financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2023/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes[1] is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO[2]'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

First modification – 10/02/2023 – Venezuela regional crisis

The social and economic situation inside Venezuela continues to worsen for the most vulnerable population. The country's small economic growth in 2022 is not enough to produce tangible changes in the short term and in the meantime, inequality continues to increase, forcing the poorest to rely massively on negative coping mechanisms for survival (such as reducing the number and quality of meals, school drop-outs, survival sex, joining gangs and armed groups and displacement). The economy is 75% smaller now than in 2013, and in 2023 the economic growth is expected to be smaller than in 2022.

A dramatic reduction in already scarce social Governmental programmes, the continued decline in basic public services (water, electricity, health care, gas and fuel), combined with lack of formal income-generating activities for 85% of Venezuelans, have been impacting severely on the most vulnerable: to date 19.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance[3] out of a population of 28.7 million. The presence of armed groups benefitting from illegal activities in a number of areas poses major protection threats. 6.4 million people are reported to have suffered from violence or abuse.

This situation is triggering the largest exodus in LAC countries recent history. More than 7.1 million Venezuelans live outside their country of origin and close to 6 million reside in the region. Throughout 2022, refugees and migrants from Venezuela continued to move through irregular routes, facing extreme threats, in search of protection and dignified living conditions. The impact of the war in Ukraine has been particularly hard for these displaced populations, by causing spiralling levels of inflation and costs of living which have worsened their already dire situation. The region's

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[1] Technical annex and thematic policies annex.
[2] Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).
3 Source: HumVenezuela

economic growth forecast for this year will not be sufficient to ensure a stabilisation. The impact of the war in Ukraine has deteriorated living conditions in countries such as Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, making social integration more difficult and exacerbating xenophobia. Many migrants and refugees have therefore decided to head north, following extremely dangerous routes in terms of violence exposure, human trafficking, extortion and health threats.

According to the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), 5 million people are in need of assistance in 2023, which represents 73.5% of refugees and migrants in-destination. The RMRP 2023 financial requirement is USD 1.72 billion.

Particular strong impacts on food security are expected for the vulnerable people affected by the Venezuela crisis. Indeed, the existing food insecurity and livelihood crisis affecting vulnerable Venezuelans and groups of migrants, refugees and indigenous groups living in the informality throughout the whole of LAC is further aggravated by the war in Ukraine, with food shortage, sharp cost increase for food and agricultural inputs. Inside Venezuela, 75% of the food is imported, while the number of people who exhausted their livelihoods or have not enough to eat increased to a record 18.7 million people (compared to 9.3 million Venezuelans reported by WFP in 2019). Regionally, there are some 6.9 million food insecure people that are heavily impacted and substantially rely on humanitarian aid for securing basic needs & short term livelihoods

Against this background, the mobilisation of additional funding is urgently needed for life-saving assistance to the populations affected by the Venezuelan crisis. To this end, EUR 35 million is added to the present HIP, of which EUR 21 million from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve. The funds will allow addressing the most urgent needs, both inside and outside Venezuela (in particular, but not exclusively, in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) through multi-sectoral assistance, mainly health, protection, food and WASH. Cash interventions will be considered where possible.

1. **CONTEXT**

The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region presents several overlapping complex emergencies, including the internal and regional impact of the crisis in Venezuela, the humanitarian consequences of the non-international armed conflicts in Colombia as well as pervasive violence in Haiti, and Central America and Mexico, compounded by a high exposure to natural hazards, whose number and intensity have increased in the last years due to the impact of climate change. The region is prone to climatic hazards such as hurricanes and storms, floods and flash floods, droughts, heat and cold spells, and geological events such as earthquakes and volcano eruptions. LAC countries and territories rank among the most natural hazard-prone in the world. Nearly 75% of the 654 million LAC inhabitants live in at-risk areas, which exacerbates their vulnerability. Moreover, the region witnesses a substantial transit of people on the move with different legal statuses and nationalities, mainly attempting to reach the United States and Canada or countries in the South such as Chile, or voluntarily/forcibly returning to their countries of origin, in what can be defined as an increasingly visible trend of transcontinental mixed migration. People on the move are often obliged to cross borders through specific hotspots where conditions are dramatic, and vulnerabilities are exacerbated. 2021 saw a sharp increase in mixed migration flows towards the United States, and even more so in 2022, with more than 200 000 people, mostly Haitians and Venezuelans according to official sources, transiting via the perilous Darien gap at the Colombia-Panamá border.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath took a heavy toll on the vulnerable population in the region, leading to fragile health and education systems, and severely affecting several states' finances due to the budgetary efforts made to extend the social protection systems. The war in Ukraine has led to unprecedented levels of inflation, making many basic items unaffordable for the most vulnerable groups such as people on the move and ethnic minorities. Consequently, food insecurity and instability are reaching unprecedented levels, and are aggravating every aspect of the on-going humanitarian crises in the region.

The huge loss of livelihoods and recent inflation have fuelled xenophobia and further deteriorated the already precarious conditions of the millions of migrants and refugees coming from Venezuela, but also people on the move from Haiti, Cuba and other regions who had previously migrated to Brazil and the southern cone, provoking secondary flows of people towards North America or wandering irregularly between countries in a desperate search of income and access to services. This instability has brought on an increase of violence, civil unrest and organised crime in different parts of the continent. Pervasive violence and armed conflicts are a major threat to populations in Colombia, Venezuela, Central America, Mexico and Haiti, where the situation is out of control and cholera has come back. According to the International Crisis Group, more than 100,000 people were violently killed in the LAC region in 2021 alone.

DG ECHO has identified high humanitarian needs in South America (notably in Colombia and Venezuela), Haiti, Central America, and the Caribbean, as well as amongst people on the move and displaced people from Venezuela in 16 countries across the region[4].

	Colombia	Venezuela	South America[5]	Caribbean[6]	Haiti	Central America & Mexico (CAM)[7]
INFORM Risk Index[8]	5.4/10	4.5/10	4.7/10	4.3 / 10	6.3/10	4.6 / 10
Vulnerability Index	6.1/10	3.4/10	3.8/10	3.7 / 10	5.8/10	4.5 / 10
Hazard and Exposure	6.9/10	6.0/10	5.310	4.5 / 10	5.8/10	4.9 / 10
Lack of Coping Capacity	3.7/10	4.6/10	4.3/10	5.2 / 10	7.3/10	4.5 / 10
Projected conflict risk	8.1/10	8.4/10	-	0.7/10	8.2/10	3.9 / 10
Uprooted People Index	10/10	5/10	-	-1.66	1.6/10	6.1/10-
Natural Disaster Index	6.7/10	6.1/10	6.1	-4.60	7.0/10	6.4/10-
HDI Ranking[9] (Value)	83 - (0,761)	96 - (0.726)	-	-	170 - (0.51)	0.71
Total Population[10]	51.6 M	28.5 M	343.2 M	33.0 M	11.3 M	172.2 M
	Colombia internal conflict	**Venezuela internal**	**Venezuela regional**	**Caribbean (excl. Haiti)**	**Haiti**	**CAM**
Global Crisis Severity Index[11]	3.9/5	4.2/5	3.8/5	-	4.2/5	3-4/5

[4] Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago (TT), Aruba, Curaçao, Costa Rica, Argentina, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay, Mexico.

[5] Includes the following countries: Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Brazil.

[6] Excluding Haiti.

[7] Includes the following countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama.

[8] INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters:
https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Results-and-data/moduleId/1782/id/433/controller/Admin/action/Results.

[9] UNDP, Humanitarian Development Index (HDI).

[10] World Data Atlas.

Humanitarian Conditions	4/5	4/5	4/5	-	4/5	2.5/5

Venezuela

The humanitarian crisis in Venezuela remains unabated, with deepening needs in all the key sectors. The political, social and economic crisis is profound and living conditions are unlikely to improve in the short term despite modest signals of economic improvement (in terms of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) - the economy is 75% smaller now than in 2013, and with a 5% annual growth it would take 15 years to be half of what it was in 2013). According to local data[12], 19.7 million people need humanitarian assistance (of a population of 28.7 million). National Household Survey[13] indicated for 2021 an extreme poverty rate of 76.6%, and a total poverty rate of 95.4%.

In this context of continued decline of basic services such as water, electricity and health care provision, gas and fuel shortages, combined with lack of formal income generating activities (85% of Venezuelans earning through informal activities), the most vulnerable populations are increasingly resorting to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the number and quality of meals, school drop-outs, survival sex, joining gangs and armed groups .These negative solutions are increasing the impact of the crisis on health, nutrition, education and protection matters.

Migration and internal displacement have been the main response of vulnerable people to look for better life opportunities and flee protection risks, to increase their family's income and to access basic services.

Colombia

Humanitarian needs in Colombia are underpinned by four drivers: a) internal conflict and armed violence with the territorial expansion of armed non state actors (ANSAs) in some parts of the country, despite the 2016 Peace Agreement; b) climate-related shocks, such as floods and droughts, c) mixed migration movements (transcontinental mixed population movements, continued movements of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, with 2.5 million of them having moved to Colombia, and Colombian and binational returnees), and d) the economic and food security-related effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Humanitarian impacts in Colombia further deepen structural inequalities, with ethnic minorities - both indigenous and Afro-Colombian – and underserved rural communities disproportionately affected. These challenges have pushed the number of people in need according to the Humanitarian Response Plan from 6.7 million people in 2021 to 7.7 million people in 2022. Despite increasing needs, growing access barriers and restrictions will continue to adversely affect the work of humanitarian partners.

In that context, the election in June 2022 of the first-ever leftist Government in Colombia´s history has raised significant hopes in the country with regard to peace negotiations and socio-economic investments in the neglected parts of the country. It also brings about risks and challenges if the Government's initiatives encounter difficulties. The impact of the war in Ukraine along with rising inflation will translate, according to WFP, into more than 1 million people in Colombia living in severe food insecurity. Humanitarian needs are expected to continue.

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[11] http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta.
[12] HumVenezuela, March 2022 (platform of Humanitarian Venezuelan Civil Society Organisations).
[13] ENCOVI, September 2021

South America

The recent large scale loss of livelihoods and global inflation has led to an unprecedented critical situation, with more than five million people becoming severely food insecure in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia alone[14].

In the Amazonia[15], indigenous and afro-descendant communities have become victims of a massive increase in the degradation of their natural and social environment. Fostered by instability and a favourable political conjuncture, organised crime allied with local elites and extractive companies/ groups, have become a main threat for these populations. The destruction of their habitat and livelihoods is often accompanied by indiscriminate violence, murders, sexual exploitation of women and girls and other forms of violence, in addition to alarming percentages of malnutrition, malaria infection and the discontinuation of health services. In the indigenous region of the Gran Chaco, between Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, the pandemic has added to the protracted droughts and the precarious situation of indigenous populations.

Central America and Mexico (CAM)

CAM combine a high exposure to natural hazards from climatic and geological origin and epidemics, with social unrest, pervasive violence, chronic poverty and inequality. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, natural hazards, the war in Ukraine and inflation, in a context of climate change and protracted drought, is augmenting the socio-economic vulnerability, eroding coping capacities and deepening structural inequalities, resulting in more displacement, food insecurity and protection risks. Unplanned urbanisation and institutional weaknesses create volatile urban contexts in which violence exerted by armed groups and State response cause high death tolls[16], internal displacement[17] and generate humanitarian consequences identical, in nature and scale, to those identified in armed conflicts. The sub-region is also increasingly a transit and destination area for people on the move, crossing into Panama via the dangerous Darien gap, on their way to the US border, while Costa Rica and Mexico become the fourth and third countries with the world's largest new individual asylum applications[18]. Nicaragua, marked since 2018 by intensified repression, human rights violations and a continuous decrease of the humanitarian space, is generating more asylum seekers and refugees[19].

In the Dry Corridor, underserved rural communities, often inhabited by ethnic minorities, bear the humanitarian consequences of successive climate shocks, causing severe droughts. In 2022, 8 410 000 people endured food insecurity (IPC[20] 3 or above).

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[14] WFP figures June 2022.

[15] The Amazonia occupies the Amazonas River shed, including territories in Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela among others.

[16] Insight Crime, 2021 Homicide Round-up, 2022.

[17] IDMC (internal-displacement.org)

[18] UNHCR Global Trends, Mexico received 132 700 new asylum claims and Costa Rica 108 500.
https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93791

[19] UNHCR, Number of displaced Nicaraguans in Costa Rica doubles in less than a year, March 2022:
https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/3/623d894c4/number-displaced-nicaraguans-costa-rica-doubles-year.html
and UNHCR, Global Trends: https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93791

[20] FAO's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

Haiti and the Caribbean

Haiti is an extremely fragile state, highly vulnerable to man-made disasters and those caused by natural hazards. The general degradation of the security situation in urban areas continues. Gangs have transformed into well-organised and heavily armed organisations that now control over 40% of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area. It is also the poorest country in Latin America and the Caribbean, with almost 77% of its citizens living with less than EUR 2 a day and at least 60% of them being unemployed or under-employed. Natural hazards and disasters regularly impact the country in a context of socio-political instability, worsened by ill-adapted infrastructure. People living in gang-controlled areas are subject to kidnappings, murders, sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse and their access to basic services such as health, drinking water and education is increasingly hampered. Expansion of gangs' territorial control and confrontations are also generating internal displacement. The situation has been compounded by the dramatic increase in the cost of living, in particular the soaring fuel prices since the interruption of the subsidies by the government in September, and the political stalemate that have led to massive and sometimes violent demonstrations and paralysed economic activities and public services. From mid-September to early November 2022, the blockage of access to the main oil terminal of the country in the metropolitan area of Port au Prince has plunged the country into chaos. Hospitals have reduced or even closed certain services and the distribution of drinking water was interrupted at the same time a cholera outbreak was confirmed by the national authorities on 1 October 2022.

Finally, the mixed migration dynamics of Haitians has accelerated following the 2021 earthquake in the South, the acute and exacerbated level of violence and the dire socio-economic situation. While many leave the country in hazardous conditions, forced repatriation figures are very high (20 500 between January and September 2022).

In the **Caribbean** the entire population of 45 million people is highly exposed to weather-related hazards, including stronger tropical storms, hurricanes, and longer lasting droughts, all these now aggravated by the effects of climate change, as well as geological hazards such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The coastal areas, where over 70% the population and most of the critical infrastructure are located are particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, socioeconomic inequality and poverty, high population density, rapid urbanization, mixed migration flows, mostly from Venezuela Haiti and Cuba, and statelessness (the Dominican Republic hosts the biggest caseload in the Americas) are exacerbating vulnerabilities, protection and humanitarian needs.

Due to their structure heavily relying on tourism, remittances and export, the Caribbean economies have been hard hit by the pandemic, notably in terms of unemployment, poverty and a dramatic increase in food insecurity: 10 million people are moderately food insecure and 1 million are severely food insecure, namely in the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

2.1 People in need of humanitarian assistance

The sub-sections below do not entirely correspond to the figures included in the table, but rather complement it.

	Venezuela	Colombia	South America[21]	Caribbean[22]	Haiti	Central America & Mexico (CAM)
Total People in Need	**19,700,000**[23] Trend: ⬀	**12,530,000** (7,700,000 as per the HRP 2022 and 4,830,000 as per the RMRP 2022) Trend ⬀	**3,650,000** (RMRP 2022) Trend: ⬀	**1,364,000** Trend: ⬀	**4,900,000** Trend: ⬀	**8,300,000**[24] (HNO 2021) Trend: ⬀
Food insecure people	18,700,000 (HumVenezuela[25]) Trend: ⬀	Severely food insecure: 1,031,358 Moderately food insecure: 19,841,359 (WFP, May 2022) Trend: ⬀	Severely food insecure: 5 036 113 Moderately food insecure: 23 409 428 (WFP, May 2022)[26] Trend: ⬀	10 000 000 people moderately food insecure from which 980 000 are severely food insecurity (WFP/CARICOM) Trend: ⬀	19 000 in IPC 5 1,800,000 in IPC 4 and 2 900,000 in IPC 3 (October 2022) Trend: ⬀	8,410,000[27] (HNO, FSN) Trend: ⬀
People affected by natural hazards	> 2,000,000 people potentially affected	914,000 (HRP 2022)	> 2,000,000 people potentially affected	> 2,000,000 people potentially affected	> 2,000,000 people potentially affected	> 2,000,000 people potentially affected
Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers	150,000 returnees in 2021; 39,855 Refugees, Asylum seekers and people of concern (UNHCR) Trend: ➔	4,830,000 people in need (2,480,000 settled in Colombia, 1,120,000 pendular migrants; 645,000 Colombian returnees, 179,000 in transit and 876,000 host communities) (RMRP 2022) Trend: ⬀	3,650,000 people in need (RMRP 2022) 2,773,000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees (R4V June 2022) 112,846 Colombians in Ecuador Trend: ⬀	22,500 Venezuelan 135,000 stateless and 1 million Haitian migrants Trend: ⬀	20 000 migrated deported from January to July 2022 Trend: ⬀	925,576 asylum seekers and refugees worldwide from CAM and 410,296 asylum seekers and refugees hosted in CAM (UNHCR)[28] 214,457 from Northern Central America[29]. Trend: ⬀
IDPs	Recurrent displacements to border and mining areas. Trend: ⬀	454,000 (HRP 2022) Trend: ⬀	Unknown	N/A	36,000 IDPs (July 2022) Trend: ⬀	1,046,490[30] (IDMC) Trend: ⬀

2.1.1 People on the move and confined populations

According to UNHCR, there are more than 18.5 million[31] forcibly displaced people in the region including populations fleeing from pervasive violence, armed conflicts, socio-economic crises and impacts of climate change. COVID-19 has fuelled these crises, with the closure of borders having also fostered the irregularity of people on the move. The current complex international context with

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[21] Excluding Colombia and Venezuela.
[22] Excluding Haiti.
[23] Source: HumVenezuela. 2020 HNO refers to 7,000,000 people.
[24] El Salvador, Guatemala & Honduras HNO 2021:
https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/el-salvador-guatemala-honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-summary-humanitarian
[25] 9,300,000 people according to WFP 2019.
[26] To this we have to add the last Oxfam estimation on food insecurity in Brazil: According to Oxfam, in Brazil there are 33.1 million people severely food insecure and 32.5 million moderately food insecure.
[27] UN OCHA, https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/el-salvador-guatemala-honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-summary-humanitarian.
[28] https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=8EI9xe
[29] NTMI | Norte de Centroamérica Dashboard (iom.int)
[30] IDMC, Displacement data per country: https://www.internal-displacement.org/
(175 000 in El Salvador, 379 000 in Mexico, 243 000 in Guatemala, 247 000 in Honduras, 290 in Costa Rica, 0 in Nicaragua and 2 200 in Panama).
[31] UNHCR 2022.

the critical worsening of living conditions in most Latin-American countries, is triggering a massive increase of mixed migration all along the region. The main refugee and migrant flows are those of Venezuelans. The latest figures (September 2022)[32] indicate that more than 7.1 million Venezuelans have left the country. The overall figures illustrate a continued moderate growth of approximately 1 million in LAC (from 4.99 to 5.96 million) since November 2021.

In **Colombia,** according to UN OCHA**,** over 7.7 million people remain in dire need of protection and other types of humanitarian assistance. IDPs, forcibly confined communities and vulnerable migrants and refugees are particularly exposed to protection risks stemming from the conflict. Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations continue to be disproportionately affected, with a growing and concerning humanitarian impact on people on the move and severe effects on children and women. **Venezuela's exodus** affects all South American countries with Colombia being the most affected, with 2.3 million Venezuelans registered as living in Colombia, and millions more crossing the border every month to access life-saving services, commuting and/or in transit throughout the country. In the **rest of South America**, the humanitarian needs of people on the move are similarly acute, with 3.6 million people in need in Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil and the Southern Cone. These countries are also host and transit countries for a significant number of Venezuelans and people from other nationalities, with around half of them in an irregular situation. Many of them are nowadays obliged to flee due to the current deterioration of the living conditions and increased xenophobia. In many cases they try to take the perilous route towards North America through the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama. All this forced displacement has left behind and alone in **Venezuela** significant numbers of children, people with disabilities and elderly, exacerbating their vulnerabilities and hindering their capacities to cope, and other population seeking alternative livelihoods through pendular movements to Colombia, with increased protection risks.

The humanitarian situation in **CAM** causes spirals of forced displacement. In 2021, UNHCR reported 925,576 asylum seekers and refugees from CAM worldwide[33]. IDMC documents more than one million IDPs[34]. Costa Rica and Mexico host large numbers of asylum seekers, even if in the sub-region it becomes increasingly difficult to obtain international protection, due to restrictive asylum policies, lack of access to the procedures and misinformation. Apprehensions at the US Southern border have augmented, with 920,781 encounters from CAM from October 2021 to May 2022[35]. The number of returnees has increased, and they struggle to re-integrate in their communities, as they often face violence, retaliation, discrimination, debts and exclusion.

In the **Caribbean**, nearly half a million stateless and asylum-seeking people, as well as one million displaced Haitians, live in extremely vulnerable conditions, the majority in the Dominican Republic. Humanitarian crises in Haiti and Cuba are leading to a drastic increase of migration flows. The R4V platform reports that 222,500 Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers are living in the region, including in the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana[36]. Venezuelans

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[32] Home | R4V

[33] UNHCR: https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/
[34] IDMC, https://www.internal-displacement.org/database
[35] CBP: https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters
[36] This figure represents the number of Venezuelan asylum seekers, refugees and migrants reported by host governments with serious estimations as government sources do not account for people without a regular status. The total number of people in need of humanitarian and protection assistance is much higher.

are facing serious integration and regularization barriers, lack access to social services and are often exposed to human rights violations, trafficking, exploitation and abuse.

In **Haiti**, the deteriorating overall socio-economic crisis coupled with increasing levels of violence has resulted in forced displacement. As of 31 August 2022 in the metropolitan area of Port Au Prince, nearly 88 000 individuals have been displaced by gang violence, including 22 000 in 36 spontaneous sites and 66 000 in host communities/neighbourhoods. OCHA estimates that at least 1 to 1.5 million people are directly affected by the high levels of violence in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, due to exacerbated exposure to protection risks, the lack of access to basic services, including health and education, and the deterioration of hygiene, sanitation, and access to drinking water. Children, the elderly, women and single-headed households are particularly exposed to abuse, exploitation, and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.

2.1.2   *Children and Youth*

In **Venezuela**, up to 70% of school-aged children, i.e. 2.7 million children, are not attending school on a regular basis, which exposes them to further risks of exploitation, abuse and forced recruitment. Adolescents leaving home early to generate income through survival sex and continued migration in the most dangerous conditions controlled by illegal armed groups. In **Colombia**, children have specific protection needs in relation to their exposure to all types of risks linked to conflict contexts, particularly due to a sharp increase in child recruitment (+113% in 2020 compared to 2019). In the **rest of South America**, the challenges faced by displaced children are multiple: six out of ten are currently out of school and over 1.2 million of them are in urgent need of education in emergency assistance. In violent neighbourhoods in **Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and in some states of Mexico**, the risks for youth include infiltration of gangs in schools, forced recruitment, displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, extortion, threats and exploitation. 40% to 50% of the children living in these neighbourhoods do not have access to education[37]. Ruptures in education are also due to forced displacement and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. 30% of the asylum seekers and migrants in **CAM** are children, of whom 15% are unaccompanied[38].

In **Haiti**, the ongoing urban violence is having a huge impact on the education sector. Since April 2022 half a million children no longer have access to education in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, where some 1 700 schools are closed, according to the Ministry of National Education and Professional Training (MENFP). In the Caribbean, the education system is heavily affected by mixed flows of population, diseases outbreaks and natural hazards, exposing children and adolescents to a wide range of threats.

According to UNICEF, the number of children affected by mixed movements in Latin America and the Caribbean is due to hit the 3.5-million-mark in 2022. For the first time, all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are affected by this new large flow of migrant children. Children, especially unaccompanied children and teenage girls are a particularly vulnerable group to experience traumatic events and stressful situations – such as abuse, trafficking, exploitation,

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[37]   NRC, *Una generación fuera de la escuela*, 2019, https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/violence-has-pushed-thousands-of-children-in-honduras-and-el-salvador-out-of-school/

[38]   2022-HAC-Mexico-Central-America.pdf (unicef.org)

kidnapping, violence - that can have longer-lasting impacts on their mental health and well-being - and even death. Teenagers, especially, face great exposure to abuse and to sexual and gender-based violence with consequences on their health and mental health and sometimes on their life such as increased suicide rate or teen pregnancies at risk of higher maternal and infant mortality.

2.1.3   Vulnerable indigenous people and ethnic minorities

Inequality and discrimination foster the vulnerability of more than 58 million people belonging to these groups, with the risks of being trapped in a humanitarian situation being higher for them. At the same time, living in remote locations also exposes them to specific threats. Apart from the critical impact of climate change on these communities intimately linked to nature for their daily living, these areas are often scenarios for illegal activities as smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal extraction of natural resources due to absence of the State and rule of law. As a result, these communities often suffer from confinement, gender-based violence, forced displacement, psychosocial impact, deprivation of basic services, loss of livelihoods, contamination of water sources, increase of water and vector borne diseases and assassination of leaders.

In many cases, indigenous people are forced to move, inside or outside their home countries, often to urban areas where they usually settle in slums highly exposed to violence and natural hazards in an environment that is hostile for them. This is the specific case of the 27,000 indigenous people belonging to 15 ethnic groups who fled Venezuela to other countries in South America and the Caribbean and found themselves in a situation of ill-adaptation and critical humanitarian needs, including death by undernutrition.

As for CAM, nearly half of the Guatemalan population of 17 million people self-identify as being indigenous. This includes a diverse array of different ethnic groups, including the 22 Maya groups, as well as Creole afro-descendant peoples. Indigenous people in Guatemala are victims of a deep and long-lasting social inequality and discrimination, leading to unequal access to healthcare, education, land, food, and livelihoods. Indigenous people are affected by poverty (75%) and chronic malnutrition (58%). In Nicaragua, indigenous groups such as the Miskitos endure different forms of violence as well as displacement and deprivation from their lands and resources. These same communities were particularly affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020, of which they are still recuperating. Several other indigenous groups experience deep humanitarian needs, such as in Honduras (Chorti, Lenca, Miskito, Nahua, among others), El Salvador (Nahua-Pipil), Panamá (Ngäbe, Buglé, Guna, Emberá, Wounaan, among others), and Mexico with 15% of the total population (17 million people) identified as indigenous.

2.2   Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Over the past few years, the humanitarian landscape in LAC has undergone a critical transformation, with rising complex crises and forced displacement, resulting in greater humanitarian needs both quantitatively and qualitatively. The recent global crises have further aggravated the overall situation.

2.2.1   Protection

The vulnerability of children, women and men affected by crises in the LAC region remains critical. Their exposure to risks has significantly increased. The sharp rise in violence and insecurity, combined with rising social and political tensions, has led to unprecedented levels of forced

displacement and mixed migration movements, which has further reduced access to basic services (including to civil documentation), exacerbated stigmatization and exclusion, and multiplied the threats. The mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of all population groups have been severely affected. Humanitarian crises are not gender/age neutral and have a different impact on women, girls, boys and men, including exposure to gender-based violence and trafficking. Children are increasingly exposed to family separation, violence, exploitation and abuse, including an increased threat of forced recruitment and use of children for perpetuated by armed groups and gangs. The regional and national protection information management systems throughout the humanitarian responses remain to be reinforced.

In mixed migration and forced displacement transit routes, refugees and vulnerable migrants are mostly using irregular channels, as legal migration pathways do not exist or are not known to them, and are often within the willpower of traffickers. Along these routes, they face administrative and bureaucratic barriers, suffer from accidents and injuries, are being extorted and become victims of (sexual) violence. The humanitarian consequences are particularly serious for the most vulnerable people in places like the Darien Gap, a hotspot on the transcontinental mixed migration route, along which people are daily being exposed to extremely high protection risks. Here, many people, including children and adolescents, become victims of violence, including sexual violence.

In **Venezuela,** 2.8 million people need protection assistance, according to the conservative estimates from the latest Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Protection risks linked to internal forced displacement associated with rural and urban violence, such as sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse, trafficking, and forced recruitment of children, have worsened and are now even more challenging to respond to. Protection is a priority sector for the humanitarian response, including prevention and response to violence, access to rights and essential services, and the protection of displaced populations. Qualitative and inclusive protective services as well as psychosocial support and case management for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation remain a priority, especially for children and gender-based violence survivors.

In **Colombia**, there is growing evidence of protection risks, especially in rural and ethnic communities and with a particular impact on women, children and people with disabilities. Comprehensive case management, mental health and psychosocial support, legal assistance, family tracing and reunification, as well as prevention of violence, including gender-based violence, and child recruitment in armed groups are the main priorities.

In the rest of **South America**, the predominance of irregular displacement makes legal assistance, registration, and protection against violence a priority amongst displaced populations. Otherwise, remote communities living under the threat of armed groups linked with organised crime and illegal activities are also in need of protection. Displacement of indigenous communities in the Amazonia because of the occupation of their territories is still little known and undocumented.

In **CAM**, victims of violence and forced displacement require protection with comprehensive case management, including effective referrals to health services, to meet their immediate needs. Returnees also have specific protection needs as they often cannot re-integrate in the communities of origin. Prevention of violence and community-based protection mechanisms remain also key.

In **Haiti**, gang-related violence has increased, causing more human rights violations, exploitation, abuse, family separations and gender-based violence. Sexual violence is used to terrorize the population in gang-controlled areas and children are recruited as soldiers by the gangs. Many Haitian migrants forcibly repatriated are also in need of protection. Mental health and psychosocial

support, safe spaces, case management and prevention of violence are among the most urgent needs. In the **Caribbean**, the exacerbated risks of populations affected by mixed migration flows increase the need for psychosocial support, legal assistance, comprehensive case management, including of sexual and gender-based violence survivors, victims of trafficking, and children victims of exploitation and abuse. In the Dominican Republic, where anti-Haitian xenophobia has been on the rise, access to civil documentation as well as to basic services, and mitigation of statelessness risks for Haitians are particularly needed.

2.2.2 Health

In many of the countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, the already weak healthcare systems have been exhausted and made even weaker by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the conflict situation and the pandemic have interrupted prevention services. As an example, there has been a decline in childhood vaccination in the LAC region for the last 15 years, leading to the fact that there are 2.4 million children who have not received the complete vaccination schedule against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough: 400,000 more than in 2019 and 1.7 million more than in 2005[39]; exposing the population to preventable infectious diseases. According to UNFPA, sexual and reproductive health services in Latin America and the Caribbean regressed by some 30 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is particularly concerning considering the increase of population exposed to gender-based violence and sexual abuse such as people on the move and communities with presence of armed groups or organized crime. Mental health is also a growing concern for those populations, with an incidence on trends in causes of mortality amongst the teenagers after the pandemic.

Given the inequality inherent to many societies in the region, indigenous and afro-descendant communities disproportionately suffer from poor health and lack access to quality health care services, including mother and child healthcare, life-saving interventions, and family planning. They also lack a proper immunization coverage, which leads to a higher prevalence of diseases associated with higher mortality among their children[40].

The collapse of the health system in **Venezuela** has led to a critical situation in terms of access to medical services and public health. Prior to the pandemic, the health system was already under heavy strain. According to *HumVenezuela* 7.9 million people were suffering from acute health issues prior to COVID-19. Diphteria, malaria and yellow fever outbreaks are recurrent. Recent independent studies have shown a 5% increase in maternal mortality between 2019 and 2021, and infant deaths were 63.6% higher in 2016 than 2012. Vaccination coverage is well below the regional average, with a resurgence of many vaccine-preventable diseases, most notably measles, and more than 70% of public hospitals lack regular access to water or electricity.

In departments affected by the conflict in **Colombia,** the absence of State institutions has led to a deterioration of health indicators, among other aspects. The most frequent health needs of people living in rural areas relate to infectious (41%) and chronic diseases (22%), mainly because people have no access to health services. In **CAM**, sexual and gender-based violence is widespread. Violence and displacement cause mental health needs, while making the often-limited access to

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[39] https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/more-than-24-million-children-have-not-been-vaccinated-in-latin-america-and-caribbean

[40] https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/every-child-survives-and-thrives

health care impossible.

Haiti has the worst health indicators of the LAC region (e.g. the highest infant and maternal mortality rates, and the highest number of persons living with HIV/AIDS) and one of the most fragile health systems, extremely dependent on international assistance. The health sector estimates that almost 3 million people needed humanitarian health assistance in Haiti in 2021. A new cholera outbreak appeared on 2 October after three years without a case in the country. The latest estimates show that there have been 106 deaths, 523 confirmed cases and 4 655 suspected cases across four departments (Ouest, Centre, Artibonite and Grand'Anse)[41]. Those most affected are children under the age of nine, who represent over 35 % of the suspected cases and 33 % of confirmed cases. However, these figures are most likely under-estimated.

2.2.3 Food security, livelihoods and nutrition

According to WFP, the number of severely food insecure population, as the combined effect of the COVID-19 restrictions, climate shock and the impact of the Ukraine crisis, has grown from approximately 4.3 million in March 2020 to 9.8 million people in June 2022[42].

In Venezuela at the end of 2019, WFP reported 9.3 million people in need of food assistance inside the country. Other sources estimate that this number may be more than 18 million as of mid-2022. According to the latest figures available, 92.7% of the population reported failures in food access and 77.9% indicated having no savings or income. The number of people who exhausted their livelihoods or have not enough to eat increased to 18.7 million people, while 10.6% of children under 5 years old suffer from global acute malnutrition and the proportion with chronic malnutrition increased from 30% to 34.8% between March 2020 and March 2022. Data collected during the pandemic are still partial, but all humanitarian partners expect a deterioration of the conditions due to the shortages, limited mobility and lack of income. To face those, the most common negative coping strategies are decreasing the number of meals and the diversity of food consumed, school drop-out due to the inability to pay for materials (and lack of incentives when schools do not offer meals to students).

In **Colombia**, according to the SOFI Report 2022, there are 4.2 million acutely food insecure people, and 55.3% of the 1.37 million Venezuelan migrant and refugees in need was severely food insecure in 2022. In the **rest of South America,** the situation tends to be equally dramatic, with approximately 5 million people severely food insecure in the Andean region[43], out of which half a million are refugees and migrants. In Brazil, 33.1 million people are reported[44] to be severely food insecure, the Amazonia being the hardest affected, with a fourth of its population being affected by hunger.

CAM, and in particular Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, has a total of 8.4 million food insecure people. In Guatemala, 45% of the children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition[45]. This situation is aggravating, mainly due to an accumulation of impacts and simultaneous shocks, including El Niño, consecutive droughts, hurricanes Eta and Iota, coffee rust,

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[41] UNICEF Humanitarian situation report 4 November 2022

[42] These figures correspond only to the countries where WFP has access to data, which is not the case is countries severely affected by food insecurity as Venezuela and Cuba.

[43] WFP June 2022: Ecuador (2.4 Million), Peru (1 Million) and Bolivia (1.6 Million).

[44] Oxfam and Action Aid.

[45] WFP Food Crises Global Report 2022: https://www.wfp.org/publications/global-report-food-crises-2022

socio-economic impact of COVID-19, ongoing inflation, violence and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

In **Haiti**, the last updated Integrated Food Security Phase classification published in October 2022 confirms the critical food insecurity situation with 4.7 million people (nearly half of the total population of the country) being acutely food insecure, including 1.8 million people in an emergency situation (IPC phase 4) and 19 000 persons in a famine/catastrophe situation (IPC 5). This alarming situation is expected to further deteriorate in the months to come, as the overall socio-economic and political/security situation is extremely worrying. There are concerns regarding pockets of acute malnutrition among children under five in some areas of the capital.

In the Caribbean, the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the Ukraine crisis had dramatic impacts on livelihood, food security and resilience. In Cuba, this has resulted in the aggravation of a compromised food and nutrition security already affected by blockades, floods and drought leading to the most severe crisis since the early nineties. In the Eastern Caribbean, the CARICOM surveys show that 2.7 million people are food insecure. In the Dominican Republic, a WFP and UNICEF (November 2021) study indicates that 38.3% of the Dominican population (4.14 million people) are food insecure, among which 2.7% (close to 300 000 people) are severely food insecure.

Throughout the LAC region, this new increase in food insecurity combined with poor infant feeding practices, infectious diseases, and lack of access to healthcare, will therefore impact the level of acute undernutrition, as it is already found in several areas of Venezuela and Haiti. Moreover, in Haiti the surge of violence and insecurity hampers access to vulnerable children in need of healthcare or malnutrition treatment, with cholera affecting particularly children under the age of 14. Several other countries or situations merit close monitoring such as Guatemala, Colombia, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in situation of displacement or confinement.

2.2.4   WASH

Access to safe water is a main concern in some areas affected by climate change and specifically by drought (e.g. Central America, Cuba, Gran Chaco), but also in cities where water systems are collapsing due to lack of maintenance as is the case of **Venezuela**, where the situation is dramatic with 74.6% of the country population reporting irregular access to water. In **Haiti**, access to water hygiene and sanitation is very poor. 60% of households have no water or soap to wash their hands, 66% do not treat the water before drinking and 26% do not have access to a pure water source. WASH is all in all largely uncovered and epidemics remain a serious threat for the most vulnerable, with cholera now back in the country. Access to safe water and proper sanitation remains also a challenge in migration hotspots in times of accumulation of people linked to sudden border closures or civil unrest episodes. Indigenous communities are usually discriminated with lower safe water coverage than national average. The case of **Amazonia** is particularly critical, where illegal mining has contaminated with heavy metals the main water sources of the ancestral communities, causing a significant increase in water borne diseases.

2.2.5   Education in emergencies

In the LAC region, girls and boys have lost an average of 225 school days since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and according to UNICEF estimations, nearly two out of every five students were still out of school at the end of 2021. The impacts of the school closures for almost two full school years were not limited to education, but also affected the safety, physical and mental health and general well-being of a large part of students who also have lost access to meals and health services provided in educational facilities. Furthermore, an estimated 2.1 million students are at risk

of dropping out of school, often facing the actual risk of being recruited for gangs or being forcibly displaced. Girls in particular risk being forced to marry or be subjected to gender-based violence. Prolonged school closures, poor mitigation measures, violence and household-income shocks had the biggest impact on learning poverty in LAC, with a predicted 80% of children at the end-of-primary-school-age now unable to understand a simple written text, up from around 50% pre-pandemic[46].

In **Venezuela,** up to 70% of school-aged children, i.e. 2.7 million children, are not attending school on a regular basis, which exposes them to further risks of exploitation, abuse and forced recruitment. Existing obstacles to access education are inter alia unaffordable costs, insufficient daily food/nutrition intake, lack of water, teachers, materials, transportation. **South American** countries hosting Venezuelans and other mixed migration populations also face challenges, with lack of capacities to absorb the demand, but also lack of documentation, xenophobia and discrimination, lack of economic resources and other obstacles. In **Colombia**, the conflict has a severe impact on the education system, which lacks the capacities to respond to children's needs. Attacks on schools and against students and teachers have surged in 2020-2021, with at least 35 recorded, mostly involving the presence of IEDs or armed confrontations in the vicinity of schools.

In **CAM**, UNICEF estimates that 905 000 children need educational support[47]. In violent neighbourhoods in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and in some states of Mexico, 40% to 50% of the children living in violent and gang-controlled neighbourhoods do not have access to education due to violence, forced displacement and socio-economic barriers

The education system in **Haiti** is extremely fragmented, lacks technical qualitative expertise, highlights major socio-economic barriers, and displays high vulnerability to external shocks, such as the August 2021 earthquake to hit the south of the country[48]. The confrontations among gangs have a huge impact on the education sector: since April 2022, half a million children no longer have access to education in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area and the beginning of the school year at national level has been postponed *sine die*.

Access to inclusive, safe and quality education systems remains a main challenge also in the **Caribbean**, in particular for displaced children. The education system is heavily affected by both mixed flows of population and natural hazards, exposing children and adolescents to severe protection risks and school drop-outs.

2.2.6   *Vulnerability to natural hazards and Disaster Preparedness*

The overall context is characterized by increased meteorological and epidemiological risks and hazards including the impact of climate change, intensification of the La Niña and/or El Niño phenomena, desertification, irregular rainfall and an increase in the intensity and frequency of floods, tropical storms and hurricanes. The region accounts for more than 53% of global economic losses and 46% of global disaster losses from climate-related disasters over the last two decades.

Humanitarian needs in the LAC region are related to exposure to multiple, often combined, hazards,

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[46] https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/state-of-global-learning-poverty
[47] UNICEF: https://www.unicef.org/media/111906/file/2022-HAC-Mexico-Central-America.pdf
[48] Reports from the three most affected departments cite the total destruction or severe damage to 308 school infrastructures, affecting an estimated 100 000 children and teachers.

and limited response capacity. Support is needed for vulnerable communities (such as people on the move and ethnic and indigenous groups) and institutions, to enhance their preparedness and to turn national and regional strategies into actions. The strong intensification of population movements is not sufficiently integrated into the existing social protection, emergency preparedness and response mechanisms. This is particularly relevant considering that many of the areas hosting migrants and refugees are urban slums exposed to both natural hazards and violence. The underlying risk factors including poverty and socio-economic disparity, inappropriate land use and tenure and unplanned rapid urbanisation, further contribute to increase disaster risks. Health and epidemiological hazards, as shown by COVID-19, are also to be taken into account in preparedness projects. Finally, urban settings are vulnerable due to their dependency on complex and interconnected systems of infrastructure, services, communications and social interactions.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

3.1 National / local response and involvement

Local and national capacities for disaster management and emergency response in the LAC region have developed over the past decades, inter alia with the support of ECHO's DP funds, but have been generally affected by a decade of economic decline and specifically by the consequences of COVID-19 and current inflation levels.

In **Venezuela**, the capacities of the authorities to provide assistance continued to decrease in 2022,. The major national safety net providing food to millions of people (CLAP)[49] further declined in 2022, with less frequent distributions and smaller quantities (mainly rice, corn flour and pasta), with 71% of the population receiving it every two months or less. Several **countries hosting Venezuelan diaspora** have set up a technical group (the 'Quito Process') aiming at coordinating their migration policies, working on joint initiatives and raising international funding to support the integration of Venezuelan migrants. Furthermore, several host governments have set up regularization programmes for Venezuelans, such as the Temporary Protection Status in Colombia, and other smaller scale similar initiatives from other countries in the region such as Peru and Ecuador with the aim of supporting Venezuelans to integrate host communities, gain access to social protection systems and earn an income[50]. However, public services in host countries are often overwhelmed by the increased demand of migrants and refugees.

Colombia has a well-established institutional and legal framework. Yet, key institutions in charge of assistance to conflict victims and disaster management have limited resources and capacity to operate, especially at local level. Despite the prevalence of multiple affectations in the country, the institutions in charge of assistance to victims of the armed conflict, victims of natural hazards and to migrants and refugees continue to work in silos and coordination remains poor or implemented in an ad-hoc manner based on non-comprehensive and partial evidence.

In **CAM**, national and local capacities to respond to natural hazards and food insecurity still require strengthening. Only Honduras and El Salvador recognise the protection needs of victims of violence and internally displaced persons, but lack capacity, resources and/or political will to react. Nicaragua systematically denies the existence of any humanitarian crisis in the country and the

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[49] Comités Locales de Abastecimiento y Producción (Local Committees for Supply and Production).

[50] https://www.r4v.info/en/document/rmna-2022-refugee-and-migrant-needs-analysis

closure of NGOs and CSOs, working at community level, compound an already dire access to people in need and limit further the provision of assistance. The Costa Rican and Mexican asylum systems cannot cope with the new arrivals and backlogs are increasing. In CAM, DG ECHO has a long history supporting CEPREDENAC - the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and the Dominican Republic, a regional intergovernmental body, belonging to the Central American Integration System SICA. The support from DG ECHO dates from 1998 (the year of Hurricane Mitch) and has been focused on improving the organization's capacities for the coordination of disaster preparedness in the sub-region.

In **Haiti,** national capacities to cope with shocks still show large gaps. In the August 2021 earthquake, national response was quite reactive on the activation of the emergency coordination centre and facilitating the coordination of humanitarian actors. Although limited in resources, there has been an improvement in terms of coordination, information sharing and better framing international support. In the **Caribbean**, institutional capacities often need to be complemented by regional and international support when disaster strikes. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)[51]'s support to National Emergency Management Organizations is essential in times of disaster. However, the insufficient integration of Cuba and the Dominican Republic in regional mechanisms remains a challenge.

In **South America**, tools, models, and policies have been adopted by National DRM systems which have reinforced their capacities. However, the recurrent hazards affecting the region regularly underscore the gaps in preparedness at local and national levels; and even more so since the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of a regional intergovernmental body for disaster risk management makes the exchange/replication of good practices between countries difficult.

3.2 International Humanitarian Response

Country/crisis	Venezuela	Colombia	Rest of South America	Central America & Mexico	Haiti	Caribbean
Appeal	HRP June 2022 USD 795 M	HRP February 2022 USD 283 M; RMRP Colombia 2022 USD 803M	RMRP 2022 USD 854.5 M	HNO / HRP 2021 USD 222 M Honduras; USD 156 M El Salvador; USD 210 M Guatemala	HRP 2022 USD 373.2 M	RMRP 2022 USD 68.4 M
Nb of people targeted	5.2 M	1.6 M HRP 2022	1.8 M	1.8 M	2.5 M	111,000 RMRP 2022
Funding level	36.1 % FTS Nov. 2022	HRP: 27% FTS Sept. 2022; RMRP: 12.8% FTS, July 2022	27.2% (Nov 2022)	Honduras: 41.5% El Salvador: 24% Guatemala:32.3% FTS Nov. 2022	42 % (Nov 2022)	No data available
Donors	US, EU/ECHO, Spain, Sweden, UNICEF, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Canada,France	US, EU/ECHO, Germany, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Japan, Switzerland, Canada, IFIs	US, EU/ECHO, Canada, Japan Spain, Germany, Sweden	US, EU/ECHO, Switzerland, Canada	US, EU/ECHO, CERF, Canada, Switzerland	No data available

There are six Humanitarian Response Plans and one Regional Plan (RMRP) for the main protracted

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[51] The regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean Community.

crises in the region. The level of funding is critically low for 2022 for most of them, but mainly for the Venezuelan regional crisis (27.2%), El Salvador (24%) or Guatemala (32.3%) (November data). While there are effective coordination mechanisms in different countries affected by protracted crises, information management and coordination of the international response to mixed migration in the region, beyond the Venezuelan migrants and refugee crisis, is fragmented and unclear. **As concerns the Venezuelan migrant and refugee crisis**, a regional coordination platform (R4V – Region for Venezuela) is co-led by UNHCR and IOM in Panama and supported by national platforms in the main host countries.

In **Venezuela,** the coordination is now well developed, with the cluster system in place, as well as regular donor meetings led by DG ECHO, and with both an international NGO forum and a national one. To enhance its support to localisation, DG ECHO has started supporting the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund in 2022. In **Colombia**, the OCHA office was transformed into a Humanitarian Advisory Team under the new Resident Coordinator office in 2021. Those changes are more symbolic as, in substance, the structure and staffing remain the same. For the first time, in 2022, the Colombia HRP has not only been endorsed by the government but also published, launched, and included in the Global appeal.

In **CAM**, a regional Humanitarian Needs Overview[52] covering El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, while omitting Nicaragua, was published by OCHA in August 2021, also covering 2022. Of a total population of 33.2 million, 13 million are affected by the humanitarian crises and 8.3 million persons need humanitarian assistance. Three HRPs aim at responding to the crisis in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador with USD 588 million.

In **Haiti,** the 2021 earthquake has reactivated the Health, Shelter, WASH, Protection, Food security and Education clusters, although sectoral working groups were already established and working for almost all sectors. In the **Caribbean**, the international community focuses on development assistance. As such, the UN Country Teams are in charge of coordination.

3.3   Operational constraints

3.3.1   Access/humanitarian space

Humanitarian access has become a real constraint in many parts of the region, where either restrictions or even repression imposed by authorities or the presence and control of armed non state actors or organized crime prevent the delivery of aid.

In **Venezuela,** the risk of instrumentalization of humanitarian operations by different political actors remains high. Moreover, the lack of a conducive administrative framework and the pressure exerted against INGOs and Venezuelan civil society have further hindered the capacity of humanitarian organisations to intervene. In this context, humanitarian diplomacy efforts remain crucial while trying to secure access and operating conditions for humanitarian organisations, notably INGOs. Moreover, security constraints and widespread violence also affect the delivery of assistance, especially in border areas and mining zones of Bolivar State. In **Colombia**, access constraints increased significantly in 2021 and 2022, linked to the fragmentation of ANSAs and subsequent disputes over territorial control, which restrict the humanitarian space in many peripheral areas (Pacific Region, Catatumbo, Guaviare, Meta and Caquetá). In 2021, OCHA recorded 69 incidents

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[52] UN OCHA: https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/el-salvador-guatemala-honduras-humanitarian-needs-overview-summary-humanitarian.

directly affecting humanitarian access by partners, a figure that has risen to 72 in the first half of 2022. In the **Amazonia**, security risks posed by organised crime are high and logistic constraints are huge due to the long distances and lack of roads. In **CAM,** violence, political instability and social unrest complicates access for humanitarian partners. Some violent urban neighbourhoods, controlled by armed groups, remain off-limits. In Nicaragua, humanitarian access is reduced as humanitarian stakeholders are under strict surveillance of national authorities and over 2000 NGOs lost their legal status. Both Nicaragua and Guatemala approved a foreign agents law, negatively affecting NGOs, while a similar draft law is submitted in the National Congress of El Salvador. In **Haiti**, constraints to humanitarian activities are mainly related to gang-related violence, civil unrest and the expanding territorial control of gangs, which are blocking access to fuel and hamper humanitarian access to displaced population in urban areas of Port-au-Prince. Roads to the south of the country have been blocked since June 2021. Extended demonstrations, looting and violence can disrupt the implementation of operations and jeopardise international presence in the country. Disrupted logistic capacities during and in the immediate aftermath of disasters can make assessments and response difficult everywhere in the country.

3.3.2   *Partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground*

In **Venezuela**, the absorption capacity has significantly improved during the last two years: both UN and international NGOs have managed to increase their technical humanitarian staff. In 2020 and 2021 the pressure and harassment against INGOs and civil society organisations continued. Over time, DG ECHO's support has contributed to build and strengthen the capacity of Venezuelan organisations. In **Colombia**, most humanitarian actors have more than 20 years of experience assisting conflict victims and a well-rooted presence on the ground, but in some cases lack international experience. The humanitarian scene has evolved since 2018, with the arrival of several new organisations, to attend the needs of Venezuelan migrants. In **the rest of South America**, the presence of humanitarian stakeholders is limited out of the main migration routes, which means that the response to low visibility crises remains significantly uncovered. The absorption and operational capacities of DG ECHO partners are considered relevant in protracted situations such as **Haiti or CAM**. In Haiti, greater flexibility is required to adapt to the volatile situation. In the **Caribbean**, the absorption capacity of international partners, and their operational capabilities remain consistently higher than the funds available. Strategic partners, including UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, and international NGOs, have a good presence overall, with national offices and adequately qualified staff.

3.3.3   *Other*

In **Venezuela,** together with the hindrances in humanitarian space and the security-related constraints, humanitarian actors are affected by supply shortages and difficulties to import, which have a direct impact in the cost of operations. In **Colombia**, logistical constraints and remoteness of conflict-affected areas increase the cost of operations, mainly in regions with no road access. In **Cuba**, a number of stakeholders have been politicizing humanitarian crisis and assistance, while Government maintains a strong control over the implementation of humanitarian interventions.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

DG ECHO will continue seeking humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus opportunities with different EU funding instruments and encourage partners to also consider this aspect with other institutions, both local and international. DG ECHO has involved its counterparts in the other EU

services in the elaboration of this HIP, its priorities, and the identification of nexus opportunities. Likewise, EU Delegations in the region included DG ECHO in their identification of priorities under the new EU multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027 and in accordance with EU priorities. In this framework, sectors such as the linkages between DP actions with longer term interventions funded by INTPA or the position of vulnerable populations currently assisted by DG ECHO in longer-term interventions aiming to promote sustainable development, job creation and access to basic services will be a priority. Food security monitoring systems give a strong opportunity for nexus (joint assessment and coordinated response with development programmes) and synergies with environmental and climate change adaptation programmes in areas highly exposed to floods and droughts. Another nexus opportunity is provided by joint conflict analysis screening that serves supports development programming and aims to ensure conflict-sensitive programming and opportunities for conflict prevention/mitigation.

In **countries of the region hosting displaced populations**, EU cooperation instruments offer possibilities of complementarity with humanitarian assistance by promoting the social and economic inclusion of refugees and migrants in their host countries and communities, thus responding to the call of host governments for international cooperation to relieve their overwhelmed public services. This is envisaged along a number of axes: 1) Supporting the institutions and advocating to guarantee the rights of people on the move in terms of regularization, access to basic services and social protection; 2) Contributing to social inclusion and reduction of xenophobia 3) Facilitating the economic and social integration of vulnerable migrants and refugees (budget support and blending under the Latin America Investment Facility are expected to contribute in this sense); 4) Supporting the Quito Process.

Venezuela is a challenging context for pursuing development cooperation. With State institutions in the process of collapsing and in view of the lack of bilateral framework, it is difficult to build national capacities and to invest in rehabilitation of infrastructure. Despite these challenges, DG INTPA has identified three priority areas (Food Security, WASH and support to Human Rights defenders) which can be complementary to humanitarian funding in the Nutrition, Food Security, WASH and Protection sectors. The 2021 call for proposal on "rehabilitation of public services" emphasized the linkages with on-going or recent DG ECHO actions.

In **Colombia**, collaboration with development donors focuses on building resilience for conflict affected as well as migrant and refugee populations through durable solutions and socio-economic integration. Key Colombian institutions in charge of assistance to conflict victims, migrants and refugees and disaster management lack resources to operate. Joined-up EU efforts to strengthen their capacities can have a critical impact. The protection of conflict-affected populations, and particularly social leaders, is already a joint EU priority, and so are digitalization, peace, and the environment. Synergies will be strengthened where possible to maximise impact. Joint advocacy on IHL is also a priority.

The humanitarian context in **CAM** allows for links with EU development cooperation. Complementary actions with different EU development programs are already being promoted, notably in disaster preparedness. In migration, further synergies are being sought at country level, namely in Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama. Possibilities for further advocacy on the importance of preserving humanitarian space and independence should be explored. In **Panama**, various EU activities tie into a nexus approach, with the 2022 new EU stockpile regional hub being logically linked not only with DG ECHO's disaster preparedness work but also with that of DG INTPA supported projects such as the upcoming regional Copernicus data centre in Panama. This is a

project of strategic, political and humanitarian importance that aims to increase resilience and capacities for disaster and risk management of countries in the sub region and supports turning early warning into early action.

In Haiti, DG ECHO is working to achieve coherent and complementary planning, programming and financing with increased cooperation and coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors. With the objective of achieving tangible results and reducing the risk of scattering limited resources, DGs ECHO and INTPA focus on specific areas, materializing the joint HDP in key issues such as the geographical concentration in the Food security sector. In Education, the Team Europe Initiative addresses both immediate and structural challenges of the Haitian education system to create opportunities for youth, thereby pulling them out of gang recruitment and violence. In the **Caribbean**, during new emergencies, DG ECHO focuses on emergency health, shelter, food and water as well as protection needs. This assistance is usually enhanced gradually by development interventions, with INTPA focusing on housing reconstruction for low-income families, rehabilitation of infrastructures, livelihoods, basic services and State functions with budget support allocations and shock absorption mechanisms including Disaster Risk Insurances. Strong synergies between DG ECHO and other EU-supported actions are allowing the implementation of a comprehensive EU approach on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA).

5. ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Envisaged ECHO response

Actions supported by ECHO will be guided by the following priorities established in this HIP and its Technical Annex. In the case of sudden unforeseen emergencies or changes in the humanitarian context along the implementation year, the Emergency Toolbox can be activated (see 5.2 below), and the HIP may be amended or topped up. Otherwise, Programmatic Partnerships are also to be considered for multiannual interventions tackling a regional problematic (e.g. preparedness and/or response to mixed migration or any other hazard/crisis affecting several countries), or country interventions. In any case programmatic partnerships should be in line with the priorities established in this HIP and demonstrate the added value of a long-term strategy for the proposed interventions. Multiyear interventions can be considered in the sectors of Education in Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness (24 months).

5.1.1 *Humanitarian protection*

Prevention and response to violence remains a priority to respond to urgent and critical unmet protection needs of the most vulnerable populations. This concerns particularly holistic case management for gender-based violence survivors and victims of human rights violations. The inclusion of mental health and psychosocial support components is expected. Comprehensive protection pathways and referral systems based on data protection protocols should be reinforced, in tight coordination with other sectoral actors. Interventions are expected to support children forcibly recruited or at risk of forced recruitment, and victims of violence, exploitation, and abuse. Assistance to separated/unaccompanied minors, tracing and family reunification activities are also a priority. Legal assistance will be prioritised for the most vulnerable refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and people on the move. Specific importance is given to the promotion of and compliance with IHL, Human Rights and Refugee Law by all parties, as well as to the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, education and health personnel and infrastructures. Protection

responses will be based on a comprehensive risks analysis. Protection coordination and collaborative information management solutions will be pursued, to articulate efforts, build evidence and raise awareness. Complementarity and articulation between partners' protection actions is encouraged to provide integral analysis and comprehensive responses to victims. The active integration of specific and targeted protection in disaster preparedness actions is recommended to ensure a comprehensive all-risk approach through protection preparedness systems, anticipatory measures and early actions, and to enhance resilience and self-protection mechanisms.

5.1.2   Education in Emergencies

The primary target for EiE projects is hard-to-reach, forcibly displaced and out-of-school children. Geographic, age, and gender differentiated responses should be proposed beyond classical academic curriculum to encompass Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), all within a conflict sensitive framework. All EiE actions should be incorporated into multi-sectoral responses, which address the root causes for non-enrolment and poor retention, and child-centred integrated approaches are encouraged to respond holistically to identified needs. Child protection component, with a minimum package for the identification of children's needs, psycho-social support and case referrals, is therefore a priority.

In 2021 and 2022, distance learning and innovative non-formal education initiatives have emerged and there have been advances on accelerated education programmes developed in the frame of COVID-19 closures and attacks on schools. In 2023, DG ECHO will promote the capitalisation and upscaling of these initiatives and the piloting of new ones, as highlighted in the Humanitarian Action Communication. There is need to continue working on ensuring solid transition options from non-formal to formal education. For displaced and returned over-age students out of the system since long time, tailored accelerated and catch-up classes remain a priority, while ensuring inclusive access and methodologies to different target groups. In line with the Safe Schools initiative, the DP actions could include the operational links with EiE, where the school contingency planning and capacity building are also a tool to reinforce anticipatory actions and introduce environmental awareness and greening initiatives.

5.1.3   Health

Priority will be given to activities with the highest potential to save lives, prioritizing support to health systems already in place and ensuring accessibility to quality health care services (emergency, primary healthcare, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, mental health services, maternal and infant care and GBV attention). Health activities must offer a comprehensive approach, avoiding fragmentation of services. Mobile clinics should be part of a strategy including a fix point of reference, it can only be considered as a stand-alone activity if there is no health facility to strengthen, and the visits of the mobile team should be sufficiently frequent to ensure an impact. If the integration in an existing health structure is not possible, the actions can be implemented directly or through referrals with support to the local health institution, always with direct involvement of DG ECHO partners to ensure the provision of free quality care. Given the low vaccination rate, the risk of occurrence of epidemics in the region is high. Support to preventive activities and existing Early Warning Systems (EWS) can be proposed, including Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and WASH in health facilities, with specific attention to proper medical waste management according to WHO and environmental standards.

5.1.4 Nutrition

The intervention criteria to set up a nutrition programme are established based on the emergency threshold for Global Acute Malnutrition set by WHO[53]. Priority is given to children under 5 years old, teenage girls and pregnant and lactating women. Acute undernutrition treatment must be integrated, if possible, into primary healthcare and national healthcare systems while ensuring free quality care for the beneficiaries. CMAM (Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition) is the preferred implementation strategy. If not feasible, partners are expected to develop appropriate strategies to maintain access to services and to establish a referral system that will be monitored regularly. Interventions should aim at empowering local actors in the management of acute malnutrition treatment and follow up strategies. The nutrition response can be integrated into Rapid Response Mechanisms to provide quick and short-term assistance in case of sudden onset crises involving a limited number of people. Coordination mechanisms for enhanced preparedness and response, contributing to strengthening local capacities with a clear humanitarian focus, can be considered for funding.

5.1.5 Humanitarian Food Assistance, Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL)

Timely access to safe and well-balanced food, of sufficient quantity and quality is crucial for the most vulnerable households. The response is delivered mainly in areas with highest prevalence of phase 4 of IPC and will support food assistance that will consider a sound risk analysis including protection and conflict sensitivity. Looking at responding to food security needs within a basic needs approach, FSL activities should prioritize the use of cash as a modality where local markets are functional and basic commodities' prices are stable. Effectiveness of actions targeting the most vulnerable population, Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC) and cash for food impact on energy intake and diet diversity must be documented. Given the impact of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, DG ECHO will promote advocacy and support to food security monitoring information systems for better monitoring and prioritization of targeting intervention areas. In the case of food distribution, attention should also be given to cooking energy needs to avoid contributing to deforestation.

5.1.6 Cash transfers

Looking at responding to food security needs within a basic needs approach, food security and livelihood activities should prioritize the use of cash as a modality where local markets are functional. DG ECHO maintains its commitment to providing cash, even in contexts of high inflation, provided that programming can be adequately adapted, in line with the Good Practice Review on cash in inflation/depreciation[54].

According to the new DG ECHO Cash Transfers Thematic Policy[55], DG ECHO promotes a common programming approach to reduce fragmentation, duplication and parallel ways of working.

Attention should be paid to sustainability of the interventions and, when possible, linkages to longer-term livelihood solutions.

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[53] More than 15 %, or than 10% where there are aggravating factors.
[54] Good Practice Review on Cash Assistance in Contexts of High Inflation and Depreciation - The CALP Network
[55] All cash interventions should comply with the new DG ECHO cash thematic policy, including the sector-specific considerations in Annex 3 of that document. https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/thematic_policy_document_no_3_cash_transfers_en.pdf

5.1.7 Disaster Preparedness

The focus remains on regional and national multi-hazard preparedness for response and early action, while exploring synergies with European Union Civil Protection (EUCPM) and nexus opportunities with development and Team Europe's Initiatives. The overall aim of Disaster Preparedness actions in the region is to create better-prepared and more resilient communities and institutions to face natural and man-made hazards.

The strategy and vision are to uphold the interrelations between Disaster Preparedness, emergency and resilience actions with grass-root communities, civil society organisations as well as local, national and regional authorities and institutions. In this regard, Civil and Military coordination and a Civil Protection approach to State response will be promoted, including through possible increased technical support from the EUCPM. Priority will be given to empowering the most exposed communities with highest risk indicators and lowest coping capacities. Preparedness for response and early action will be pursued through 1) Strengthening risk and forecast-based and anticipatory action frameworks, Rapid Response Mechanisms, emergency logistics preparedness, social protection shock responsiveness, and use of Crisis Modifiers to allow shifting to "emergency-type" interventions if needed. 2) Preparedness in conflict and fragile settings, implying the integration of victims of conflict in national preparedness and response protocols as well as displacement patterns, inclusiveness and protection issues. 3) Climate and environmental resilience as outbreak preparedness, innovation and green technology for effective response. 4) Urban preparedness to multiple hazards and resilience in larger cities.

To generate changes and achieve long lasting results, critical gaps must be addressed simultaneously, from supporting communities' resilience and improving local response capacities to influencing policies and legal frameworks to include disaster preparedness. Similarly, improved coordination, including civil-military, evidence generation and information management, and south – south cooperation could greatly contribute to more efficient responses to disasters.

DG ECHO contributes to the dissemination and implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Wherever possible, DG ECHO will focus on gaps identified from recent disasters, allowing to further progress on an ECHO-INTPA joint regional Disaster Risk Management strategy. Links with EU funding will be promoted, as well as with global campaigns such as Resilient Cities, Safe Schools Initiative and Comprehensive Safe Hospital Framework. The integration of the private sector and civil society-led initiatives in DP will be promoted. In the LAC region, DG ECHO will continue to implement the on-going Pilot Programmatic Partnership with the IFRC that contributes to DG ECHO's implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments, in particular in terms of localisation, flexibility and predictability and covers different hazards and sectors, in an integrated systems approach. Disaster risk management and epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response are key pillars of this partnership.

Environmental mainstreaming

Environmental considerations should include health and solid waste management, especially in contexts linked to refugee / migrant shelters, transit centres and in the temporary health posts as well as government-run clinics set up in informal settlements and along migrant routes. Other waste streams include waste linked to water distribution, distributions of packaged hygiene items, food and NFIs, distributed to people on the move along migratory routes. Coordination of waste

management efforts with local stakeholders and among humanitarian actors is fundamental to tackle the waste management issue comprehensively.

Beyond waste management, the humanitarian response is likely to have direct and indirect environmental impacts, most of which will be unexpected and could be mitigated through careful planning for example in the case of Cash Based Interventions, therefore including potential environmental and climate impacts in the Cash and Vouchers Assistance programmatic tool is key to mitigate these risks.

The environment and disasters are inherently linked, therefore integrating environmental considerations in the disaster risk reduction and preparedness frameworks and response tools, at local and regional level, should be considered to improve their efficacy with the aim to minimising hazards and increase the resilience of the local communities. Environmental degradation affects natural processes, increases vulnerability, lessens overall resilience, and challenges traditional coping strategies. The DP trainings, workshops and other tools should therefore integrate environmental screenings, risk mitigation exercises and/or environmental aspects relevant for a specific context and needs, especially the ones that directly aggravate disaster risk aspects (e.g., deforestation of slopes leading to an increased landslide hazard, removal of mangroves increasing the damage caused by storm surges, solid waste accumulation in drainage systems increasing flooding risks, etc.,).

5.1.8 Advocacy, coordination and information management

It is expected that all partners funded by ECHO participate actively and report to the established coordination mechanisms. At the same time, DG ECHO will support coordination and information management activities with the objective of improving efficiency and pertinence of the overall preparedness and response to ongoing and potential crises in the region. Supported mechanisms should be based on humanitarian principles, not differentiating between beneficiaries´ nationalities or status. Coordination activities should aim at reducing the current fragmentation and multiplication of mechanisms, being inclusive and counting on the participation of different kind of organisations provided that they respect humanitarian principles. These mechanisms are expected to be tools for joint advocacy in the defence of the currently threatened humanitarian space. DG ECHO will not support isolated information management activities or those partners developing products for their own use and benefit, but those contributing to a coordinated and joint effort.

5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions

In view of the importance of logistics for humanitarian operations, DG ECHO remains also committed to contribute to logistics operations, via funding or any other tool, such as the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), at its disposal. The European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) aims at supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission disposes of several tools that can be activated in case of sudden onset disaster, e.g. a series of Common Logistics Services (including air operations, warehousing services, last-mile ground transportation, etc.), or a stockpile of emergency WASH and shelter items, pre-positioned in regional warehouses worldwide.

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of Epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options. There is also room for enhancing the use and activation by LAC

countries of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) as well as, in support of Government institutions, to consider EU Civil Protection Advisory Missions, which have proven to be very important and useful in the region, but remained partly underutilised, as countries were not sufficiently familiar with the instruments and the services that could be provided.