



South America

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

€ 182.8 million
in humanitarian
assistance
in South America
(except Colombia)
since 1994

€67.1 million
for disaster preparedness
from 1994 to 2014

Total EU humanitarian aid
to South America 2013-
2014:

€ 20 million (except
Colombia)

ECHO is the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department and comes under the direct responsibility of Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

Through ECHO funding, nearly 150 million people are helped each year in more than 80 countries outside the EU through approximately 200 partners (International non-governmental organisations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, and UN agencies).

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Beneficiaries of European humanitarian aid after floods hit a remote region in Peru. EU/ECHO/Isabel Coello

Key messages

- The Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department, ECHO, has supported South America for the last two decades, providing funds to assist the population most affected by the major events that have impacted the region: earthquakes, floods, landslides, droughts, cold waves, volcanic eruptions and epidemics.
- In South America, ECHO's assistance has put a strong focus not only on emergency aid, but also on disaster preparedness. Approximately one third of all funds have gone to projects to strengthen the response capacity of vulnerable communities and of local and national disaster management entities to cope with and respond to emergencies.

Humanitarian situation and needs

South America is one of the regions in the world most exposed to disasters linked to natural events such as landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis. Floods and droughts continue to be the most significant causes of losses and the most recurring disasters. In addition, the frequency, intensity and unpredictability of events are increasing year after year related to climate change. Those have a tremendous economic impact causing significant losses of subsistence crops, livestock and forestry, affecting the livelihoods of the affected population. Moreover, inequality and the massive exodus to cities increase South America's vulnerability. Extremely poor populations are found in remote rural areas as well as overpopulated urban suburbs, often living in fragile homes in areas extremely exposed to natural hazards.

Major needs and related problems

When a disaster strikes, the affected populations' most pressing needs are shelter, food and relief items such as jerry cans, mattresses, cooking utensils and hygiene products, access to safe water and proper sanitation, as well as primary health care. Also key is assistance aimed at helping affected populations recover from agricultural or livestock losses, which have an enormous impact on their livelihoods.

Activities to strengthen local capacities to face and respond to natural hazards are also essential. This is done through ECHO's Disaster Preparedness programme (DIPECHO), which focuses on strengthening the capacities of local communities in disaster prone areas and on institutions involved in disaster risk reduction/disaster management. Main elements include support for local disaster response committees, drafting of emergency plans, installation of early warning systems, information and education campaigns, reinforcing vital infrastructure such as shelters, schools and hospitals, helping populations to protect their livelihoods as well as promoting coordination among those entities responsible for anticipating or reacting to extreme hazards, among others. These simple and inexpensive preparatory measures, implemented by communities themselves, enable them to save their own lives and livelihoods when a disaster strikes.

The European Union's Humanitarian Response

Since 1994, ECHO has allocated more than **€182.8 million** in humanitarian aid to South America (not including Colombia, which has received over €200 million). These funds have been used to respond to different emergencies -floods, droughts, cold waves and earthquakes- and to fund disaster preparedness activities. Here are the main operations funded in the last years:

In **2007**, ECHO allocated **€8 million** to cover the immediate needs of more than 250 000 people affected by the Pisco earthquake in **Peru** –the most devastating in the country's recent history– which left more than 500 people dead and 150 000 homeless. In **2010**, an 8.8 degree earthquake followed by a tsunami caused widespread damage in **Chile**: 500 people died and 370 000 houses were damaged or destroyed. ECHO reacted swiftly with **€3 million** of emergency funding for temporary shelter, mobile hospitals and telecommunications.

In **2011**, hydro-meteorological phenomena as well as epidemics hit the region. ECHO allocated **€3.5 million** to assist the population affected by the worst flooding in the last 18 years that hit **Peru's** department of Ucayali, and those affected by a dengue outbreak in Loreto department. **Bolivia** was affected by floods, a cold wave and a dengue outbreak, and **Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay** suffered the effects of a volcanic eruption, heavy rainfall, hail storm and a cold wave. All of them also benefited from ECHO support.



The **2012** rainy season caused the worst flooding in decades in the Amazon, affecting more than 1.2 million people in five South American countries. **€5.6 million** was allocated by ECHO to provide food, safe water and relief items in **Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Colombia and Brazil**. Actions to recover livelihoods, to prevent or respond to epidemic outbreaks and to carry out small rehabilitation work on vital infrastructure were also part of the response.

Due to the severe damages caused by the **floods of 2013** in Bolivia, Argentina and Peru, ECHO swiftly released **€1.2 million** to help to bring relief to the victims. Assistance included safe water, food, seeds, and tools for crops rehabilitation, and animals and farmyard materials to reactivate the breeding capacity for people regain their livelihoods. Additionally, funding was used to improve access to health services for those affected by a severe winter in Peru.

Throughout 2013-2014, the EU has also helped with relief efforts needed for people who suffered different crisis in the region: over 50 000 people have been assisted by the extreme weather in Peru (€65.041); by a drought in Ecuador (€102 098); a wildfire in Chile (€119 549); and civil unrest in Venezuela (€23 267). Following the floods in Bolivia and Paraguay **in 2014**, the EU released almost **€ 1 million** to help the most affected communities with shelters, safe water, and seeds and plants to farmers can regain their livelihoods.

Finally, ECHO has invested €65.5 million, more than one third of all funds allocated in South America, to disaster preparedness activities across the region. In **2013-2014 ECHO** allocated **€14.55 million** to disaster risk reduction and preparedness in 10 countries -**Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela**- as well as to drought resilience activities in the Paraguayan and Bolivian Chaco region.

