South America is one of the world’s regions most exposed to disasters caused by natural events, such as earthquakes, tsunamis (3 out of the 7 largest earthquakes ever registered were in South America), volcanic eruptions (the continent has over 204 active volcanoes), floods, drought, forest fires, hailstorms and cold waves.

Disasters strike every year, affecting millions of people over vast, sometimes isolated regions. Climate change has also increased the frequency of disasters caused by extreme hydro-meteorological hazards.

In 2017, a localized coastal “El Niño” weather phenomenon caused severe floods in northern Peru and Southern Ecuador. In 2018, the “Niña” phenomenon is expected to disrupt the Amazon Basin, which spans over 8 different countries.

These hazards strike societies affected by tremendous inequalities, which are highly urbanized (85% of South Americans live in cities) and therefore exposed to major damage and loss of life.

National governments have significantly increased their ability to provide a rapid response to emergencies, but they still need international support to enhance some of their capacities.

Supporting local and national governments in emergency situations with in-kind assistance for the affected population and technical expertise.

Increasing countries’ preparedness, thus reducing the need for external aid during emergencies.

Activating EU Civil Protection Mechanism to coordinate Civil Protection support and provide expert assistance.
EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDING

€8.21 million in ECHO funding to respond to emergencies caused by disasters, such as the effects of El Niño (drought in Colombia; floods in Paraguay and Peru), as well as the devastating earthquake in Ecuador in 2016. ECHO’s response also addresses small-scale events (severe localized floods and economic crisis impacts).

Aid funded by the European Commission is delivered in partnerships with international NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and UN Agencies.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

€9.18 million in ECHO funding for Disaster Risk Reduction / Disaster Preparedness / Resilience. ECHO supports 20 DRR projects in South America, all intended to increase preparedness and resilience from local to regional levels. DRR work after disasters allows ECHO to maximize the impact of funding and resources, as interest and willingness to reduce the effect of future disasters is very high in their aftermath.

CIVIL PROTECTION

ECHO has deployed the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism several times to South America, sending experts to Ecuador after the April 2016 earthquake, to address the Bolivia Drought (October 2016), the Chilean Forest Fires (February 2017) and the Peru floods (April 2017).

A key humanitarian donor – European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) aims to save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises.

Based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, the EU provides needs-based humanitarian assistance with particular attention to the most vulnerable victims. Aid is channeled impartially to the affected populations, regardless of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

The humanitarian strategy of ECHO in South America consists of emergency response, disaster risk reduction and resilience.

CONTACT

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South America | European Humanitarian Aid for 2017-2018: €17.38 million


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