

Commissioner Stylianides in Colombia: over €31 million in humanitarian aid announced for Latin America and the Caribbean

“The European Union’s commitment to support Latin America is stronger than ever. Here in Colombia, our new EU funding will help on two fronts: addressing the humanitarian consequences of the decades-long conflict in the country and helping reinforce the region’s preparedness and response to natural disasters. We have also announced new funding for those affected by the crisis in Venezuela: supporting those in need is a priority for the EU.” said Commissioner **Stylianides**.

The Commissioner met with Colombian President Santos in Bogota where he reiterated the EU’s commitment to stand side by side in the country’s path to peace and prosperity. Over recent days, he also visited Quibdo, in the Choco department, an area greatly affected by conflict as well as the border town of Cucuta where there has been an upsurge in those fleeing Venezuela.

The funding announced today is part of an overall humanitarian aid package for the region, with €6 million going for Colombia. A further €2 million will go to those people affected by the crisis in Venezuela.

This comes on top of the EU’s other aid programmes and support to the region such as the EU Trust Fund for Colombia. Since 1994, the Commission has provided over €1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on the populations most affected by natural disasters and violence, and preparing communities to withstand future hazards.

Background

The overall humanitarian aid package announced today supports a range of concrete projects in the region, in addition to the funding for Colombia and Venezuela.

The funding includes €6.9 million for food assistance, disaster risk reduction and support to those affected by violence in Central America (particularly Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua) and Mexico. €3 million will support disaster risk reduction activities in the South American region (notably Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru). €5 million is for emergency food assistance in Haiti, with a further €6.3 million going for disaster risk reduction in the country. €2 million will support disaster risk reduction and resilience interventions in the Caribbean.

The Latin America and Caribbean region is one of the world’s most disaster-prone areas. Natural hazards affect thousands every year – particularly the most vulnerable populations living in poverty, in remote areas with limited

access to basic services, such as indigenous peoples. Conflict and violence also plague several Latin American and Caribbean countries. Despite the ongoing peace negotiations, Colombia's long-standing internal conflict has caused the internal displacement of 7.3 million people, with spill-over effects in the whole region.

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