



European  
Commission



## FACTS & FIGURES

More than **46%** of all EU humanitarian projects include disaster preparedness activities

In 2020, **35 million** people worldwide directly benefitted from EU-funded humanitarian initiatives to strengthen preparedness capacity

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Last updated 24/03/2021

# European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

## Disaster preparedness

### What is it?

Disaster preparedness consists of a set of measures undertaken by governments, organisations, communities or individuals to better respond and cope with the immediate aftermath of a disaster, whether it be human-made or caused by natural hazards. The objective is to reduce loss of life and livelihoods. Simple initiatives can go a long way, for instance in training for search and rescue, establishing early warning systems, developing contingency plans, or stockpiling equipment and supplies. Disaster preparedness plays an important role in building the [resilience](#) of communities.

### Why is this important?

With increasing population growth, rapid and unplanned urbanisation, climate change, environmental degradation and widespread poverty, a growing number of people and assets are exposed to disasters. Moreover, many of these events occur in fragile and conflict-affected states, thus increasing the complexity of crises and overburdening countries experiencing violent conflict or fragile governance.

However, improved practice and response mechanisms save lives and strengthen the countries and communities ability to reduce the impact of disasters. Understanding the occurrence and frequency of natural hazards, as well as the risks, vulnerabilities and potential impact on people and assets, helps to improve preparedness. Instead of providing emergency response only, international efforts should help governments and communities invest in understanding risks and building preparedness capacities for pre-emptive and early action. Disaster preparedness is cost-effective and saves aid money.

These concepts are agreed upon and firmly embedded into international commitments, including the 2015 [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), the [Paris Agreement](#) (2015), the [Agenda 2030](#), the [New Urban Agenda](#), and the [Grand Bargain](#) commitments.

## How are we helping?

The European Commission is at the forefront of promoting risk reduction and anticipatory actions. Signatory to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), the European Commission supports the adoption of a risk-informed approach into all EU policies and programmes.

The European Commission contributes to [Sendai Priority 4](#) by ensuring that disaster preparedness is systematically embedded across all sectors into humanitarian aid programmes and projects. Over the past 5 years, an average of 56% of all the EU-funded humanitarian projects included a disaster preparedness component.

To support this work, the EU allocates on average €50 million of its annual humanitarian funding to targeted preparedness actions. This funding strengthens the ability of national and local preparedness systems to respond earlier and better, so emergency response is "as local as possible, as international as necessary."

The EU invests in early warning systems, in monitoring and building national and local capacities for response - as exemplified by the EU response to El Niño in the years 2015 and 2016. The EU supports partners in developing cost-effective methods to mitigate risk and in collecting the evidence to justify preparedness for early action.

Some examples of disaster preparedness in EU-funded humanitarian aid interventions include:

- strengthening the response capacities of first responders at the regional, national and local levels after [hurricanes swept through the Caribbean](#) in 2017, and developing resilience-building strategies
- developing mechanisms and targeting for shock-responsive social safety nets which can deliver an early response to the needs of several countries (for instance, Niger, Somalia, Burkina Faso, and Malawi), jointly with development partners
- cholera preparedness in Yemen
- developing systems for an early response based on weather and risk forecasts in Vietnam.

More examples of DG ECHO's action in disaster preparedness are available in the [Compendium of experiences](#) published in 2020.

Each disaster preparedness strategy and funding allocation include a defined exit strategy, where local capacities are deemed adequate or where local governments or development partners can take over.

Additionally, the EU engages and supports local and national government structures in all countries worldwide through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), notably within the areas of prevention and preparedness.

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