

EU-LAC PARTNERSHIP ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

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Issue 5

Latest on the Memorandum of Understanding

Following the signature of the EU-LAC MoU on Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Management in Barbados on 15 May 2024, the signatories have proposed to establish a Secretariat that will facilitate an effective and efficient implementation of the MoU. The Secretariat is composed by two permanent representatives: the European Union and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). There will also be two rotating representatives, one selected among the intergovernmental organisations and another among the individual country representatives. In alphabetical order, the first two proposed rotating representatives will be CDEMA and Chile for a period of twelve months.

Response to disasters

This year's hurricane season began with unprecedented force, with hurricane Beryl causing widespread damage and loss of life across the Caribbean and the broader region and resulting in severe flooding in Venezuela. In response, the EU released an additional €850,000 in humanitarian aid to address the most urgent needs of populations in Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Barbados and Venezuela and is closely following further developments. Upon the request of CDEMA, the EU also activated its [Copernicus](#) satellite rapid mapping mode which produced 15 maps in coordination with Microsoft and MapActions that were used to assess infrastructural damage and to provide a more detailed overview of the situation. In addition, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) has deployed environmental and debris management experts to the Caribbean. You can check the [ERCC portal](#) and [reliefweb](#) to find the latest reports and assessments.

In response to the devastating wildfires that hit Guatemala in June, the EU, through its UCPM, deployed Spanish experts from its Forest Fire Assessment and Advisory Team to support local authorities in Guatemala. [Here](#) you can read more about the mission, the excellent collaboration between the EU experts and Guatemalan local authorities, as well as the impact of the fires on the wildlife-rich tropical rainforest in the Maya Biosphere Reserve.

Recent and Upcoming Events

From 21-24 May, the sixth meeting of the expert group on forest fires in Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Lima and Cusco, Peru. The event brought together fire management experts from across the region together with representatives from the EU and international organisations, including the UN. The experts discussed the progress made on the ongoing related projects since the last expert group meeting and saw presentations on a variety of topics, ranging

from information systems to cultural heritage and ecosystem restoration. Click [here](#) to read more about the projects, including proposed activities and the various stakeholders involved.

On 4-5 June, the EU Civil Protection Forum took place in Brussels, bringing together more than 1,500 stakeholders, including governments, civil protection authorities, first responders, the scientific community and the private sector. LAC representatives were among the speakers during the event, with panelist discussions from the Chilean National Disaster Prevention and Response Service (SENAPRED), on *wildfire risk awareness and communication as a pillar of disaster risk reduction* and CEPREDENAC on governance for disaster risk management: involvement of civil protection national authorities. For more information on the event, including recordings, click [here](#).

On 8 July, the EU, together with UNDRR, hosted an online training to provide an overview of the Copernicus programme, including the various services that it offers. Speakers included staff from across the EU: the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, the European Space Agency, the Joint Research Centre and the Directorate-General responsible for Defence Industry and Space. The training saw technical-level participants from all across the LAC region and was an important step to mark the beginning of the MoU implementation.

Relevant publications

On wildfires:

In May 2024, the European Commission released a new publication on *Wildfire Risk Awareness and Communication: Analysis of good practices*. This document provides an in-depth analysis of good practices collected across the Member and Participating States of the UCPM¹, as well as other initiatives. It is available [here](#).

[Here](#) you can also check out the excellent overview of how Copernicus has been providing emergency on-demand mapping services to monitor and assess the wildfires that have struck Mexico and Central America, through an interactive “story map” tool developed by the Joint Research Centre.

On resilient infrastructure:

Here you can read in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#) the important work that UNESCO is doing on capacity building for DRR in the LAC region, which includes projects on infrastructure resilience to floods and earthquakes.

¹ This includes 27 EU Member States, as well as 10 Participating States: (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine).