

Memorandum of Understanding

on cooperation in the area of integrated disaster risk management

between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean regions

1. Introduction

Where did the idea of this MoU originate?

The MoU negotiation was initiated during a side event of the EU-CELAC summit in Brussels in July 2023. The Declaration of this Summit highlighted the importance of international cooperation in disaster risk preparedness and risk management, and the subsequent EU-CELAC roadmap (2023-2025) referred to an EU-LAC Dialogue on disaster preparedness and disaster risk management, which took place back-to-back with the MoU signing ceremony in May 2024 and was the first of its kind.

Where was the MoU signed?

The MoU was signed in Barbados on 15 May 2024 at an event co-hosted by CDEMA and by the EU, in the presence of 2 witnesses of honour: the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

How is the implementation of the MoU coordinated?

Since the signing of the MoU in May 2024, a Secretariat has been established to govern the implementation of the MoU. The Secretariat comprises two permanent members, being the EU and UNDRR, as well as two rotating members, one among the intergovernmental organisations and the other among the individual country signatories. The first two rotating members,

in alphabetical order, are CDEMA and Chile. The Secretariat has also coordinated the development of the annual implementation plan, outlining activities in support of the MoU in the short-, medium- and long-term.

2. Text of the MoU itself:

What is the objective of the MoU?

The MoU is a general framework to promote policy dialogue and collaboration to strengthen comprehensive disaster risk management. It aims at promoting policy dialogue and collaboration to strengthen comprehensive disaster risk management, addressing risks of both natural origin, exacerbated by climate change, as well as those with anthropogenic origin. The MoU promotes the development of joint and international cooperation activities to strengthen the following areas:

- disaster risk prevention,
- vulnerability reduction,
- preparedness for a timely and appropriate response,
- early post-disaster recovery,
- resilience building,
- and climate change adaptation.

It contributes to fulfilling the targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 -2030 in the America and the Caribbean, which are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Who are the participants to the MoU?

The participants to the MoU are:

- The European Union
 - 4 intergovernmental organisations: the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Disasters in Central America and Dominican Republic (CEPREDNAC), and the General Secretariat of Andean Community (SGCAN), MERCOSUR*
 - 3 countries who are not members of any of the above IGOs: Cuba, Chile, and Mexico.
- * for technical reasons, MERCOSUR was not in a position to sign the MoU during the signature event of 15 May 2024.

What are the main areas of cooperation? The 3 main areas of cooperation include:

1) Strengthening response capacities by promoting:

- Technical capacities in the civil protection sphere and comprehensive disaster risk management authorities;
- Subregional and regional coordination in emergencies and/or disaster response;
- Identification and definition of actions oriented to achieve resilience and disaster risk reduction through public institutions and national and international public-private financing mechanisms; and
- Processes aimed at identifying and developing inter-institutional synergies and complementarities.

2) Strengthening prevention, preparedness, response and early recovery capacities by promoting:

- National, subregional and regional capacities for forecasting, detection, identification and monitoring of threats and risks;
- Emergency response through the development and use of existing systems for early detection of disaster risk;
- Sharing of knowledge, experience and data;
- Capacity and tools for elaboration of maps, protocols and contingency plans on disaster risk; and
- Technology and innovation transfer and joint research on technical capabilities.

3) Exchanging knowledge, experiences and good practices by:

- Jointly organising conferences, seminars, workshops and symposia;
- Exchanging information and training opportunities for access to different funds, resources with public and private institutions;
- Promoting the creation of communication channels to facilitate the exchanges and cooperation.

What is its legal status?

The MoU does not create any legally binding obligations or commitments for any participant under national or international law.

Does the MoU contain financial commitments?

No, each participant is expected to bear its own expenses related to its cooperation in support of the MoU. Some of the Actions of the MoU may be financed through EU Programmes and initiatives.

What is the duration of the MoU?

The MoU is open-ended. The MoU remains in force until the participants agree continuing working in partnership to achieve the agreed objectives.

How is the work of the MoU be coordinated?

The participants meet periodically, at least once a year, to review and update the work programmes and activities that implement the MOU, and to identify new actions.

Who will carry out the MoU's activities?

The Participants can seek support from other relevant international and governmental organizations in the area of disaster risk management. In particular, UNDRR and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee of OCHA, may be informed by the Participants in order to follow the process and the development of activities linked to the MoU.