

EU-LAC PARTNERSHIP ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

January 2026
Issue 10

Latest on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

From all of us in the MOU team – best wishes for a resilient new year. 2025 was an eventful year for both the EU and LAC regions, as we deepened our cooperation against a backdrop of geopolitical upheaval and a worsening climate crisis. 2026 is shaping up to be another busy year for the disaster risk management community. Continue reading below to discover the key events that took place during the last months of last year, as well as upcoming events coming planned for 2026.

Recent events and updates

From **22–26 September 2025**, the **EU-LAC Digital Alliance Week** took place in Antigua, Guatemala, advancing strategic dialogue on digital cooperation to strengthen disaster risk reduction and climate resilience across Latin America and the Caribbean. The week highlighted the regional value of Earth Observation and digital public goods - particularly through Copernicus - as enablers of anticipatory action, early warning, and risk-informed decision-making. Anchored in the EU-LAC Digital Alliance and aligned with elements grounded in the EU-LAC MOU, the event reinforced policy coherence, regional interoperability, and sustained cooperation to scale data-driven solutions that protect lives and safeguard development gains.

On **6–8 October 2025**, the **South American Dialogue on Inclusive Disaster Preparedness: Gender, Displacement, and Migration** took place in Quito, Ecuador, convened by IOM and funded by DG ECHO, in coordination with the South American Conference on Migration (CSM) and the Andean Community (SGCAN/CAPRADE). The Dialogue advanced a shared regional approach to disaster preparedness by integrating gender, displacement, and migration into multi-hazard preparedness systems. Building on regional diagnostic evidence, it strengthened policy coherence and collective ownership, contributed strategic inputs to the update of the Andean Strategy for Disaster Risk Management, and reinforced alignment with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Several EU LAC MOU signatories participated, providing an additional space for exchange and coordination around priority issues.

The **fourth EU-CELAC Summit** took place from **9-10 November 2025** in Santa Marta, Colombia focusing on strengthened ties between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean. The Summit discussed a wide range of topics including social cohesion, green and digital transitions and trade and investment. Read more about the outcomes of the Summit [here](#). In parallel, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, together with DG ECHO organised an event in Bogota on **6 November 2025**, entitled **“From Commitment to Action: Humanitarian Innovation in EU-LAC Cooperation”**, which highlighted the importance of EU-LAC cooperation in addressing growing humanitarian needs with limited global resources.



From **24-28 November 2025**, the [9th Meeting of the Latin America and Caribbean Forest Fires Experts Group \(GEFF LAC\)](#) was held in Mexico City, with the support of the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) and the EU. The meeting brought together specialists, institutions, and organizations from Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe with the aim of presenting progress and strengthening national and regional capacities for the prevention, response, and reduction of the impacts of wildfires. Click [here](#) for more information on GEFF-LAC.

The [CopernicusLAC Panama Centre](#) held an **in-person training course** in Quito, Ecuador in **November 2025**, which focused on remote sensing and designed to increase Earth Observation skills across Latin America and the Caribbean. The MOU signatories (CAN, Cuba) were among the 60 participants.

On **2-3 December 2025** the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) held a **Regional Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management** in Panama. The space brought together leading actors from different sectors addressing disaster risk management in the region. In addition to providing an important “touch point” moment for the [IDB’s Ready and Resilient in the Americas \(RRA\) impact programme](#), it provided a space for strengthened networks and opportunities for collaboration. Several MOU signatories participated in the event, which also provided an opportunity to explore potential synergies and new partnerships between the IDB’s RRA impact programme and the priority themes outlined in the EU LAC MOU Plan of Action.

Since **early January 2026**, [Chile has been witnessing devastating fires and in response a group of specialists from Spain arrived in Chile](#), thanks to the European Civil Protection Mechanism to provide technical assistance and collaborate with the National Forest Corporation (CONAF) in extinguishing active fires.

Status of Hurricane Melissa response and recovery efforts

Hurricane Melissa made landfall on 28 October as a Category 5 hurricane, becoming one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes on record and the most powerful to ever hit Jamaica. The hurricane caused widespread, multi-sectoral impacts across the Caribbean, particularly in Jamaica and Cuba, as well as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands to a lesser extent. It resulted in loss of life, large-scale displacement, and extensive damage to housing, health facilities, energy and water systems, transport networks and telecommunications infrastructure.

Regional coordination was rapidly activated through CDEMA, which launched its Regional Coordination Plan and established a Regional Coordination Centre to support affected states. Through CDEMA’s Regional Response Mechanism, specialised teams were deployed to assist national authorities with assessments, service restoration, disbursement of resources, and early recovery planning, with support from CARICOM mechanisms, international partners and the private sector.

National response systems also played a central role in managing the crisis. For example, in Cuba, the National Civil Defence implemented extensive anticipatory and response measures, including early warnings, large-scale evacuations, mobilisation of shelters and food production centres, and the deployment of thousands of responders. Over one million people were protected through evacuation or sheltering, supported by civil defence authorities, the armed forces and the Cuban Red Cross. Recovery efforts focused on debris removal, housing repairs and the rapid restoration of electricity and water services, with most vital systems restored within weeks.

In response, the EU secured a total of EUR 6.45 million in emergency funding to support the most affected communities in Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Additionally, the EU offered support via its Union Civil Protection Mechanism, with offers sent from six different EU Member (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Spain) for Jamaica and Cuba. The EU also provided much-needed logistical support in the form of eight humanitarian aid flights, including six to Cuba, one to Jamaica and one to Haiti. Additionally, Copernicus was activated in Rapid Mapping Mode, through which over 145 maps

were produced to support the affected countries. For more detail on the EU response, [click here](#). As DG ECHO and CDEMA leadership and teams [met on the ground in Jamaica](#), they positively valued the impact of the EU-LAC cooperation on disaster risk management. This cooperation ranged from a pre-hurricane season preparedness workshop in Dominican Republic in May 2025, to the real-time analysis of meteorological data and hurricane trajectories, as well as the prepositioned EU stocks in both Barbados and in Panama.

Events timeline for 2026 and beyond

Copernicus trainings will continue in 2026, starting with a training in Santiago de Chile from 12-16 January on remote sensing for forest fires. Other tentative trainings will take place in Guyana, Panama, Costa Rica and Uruguay throughout the year. To keep an eye on planned events and trainings, visit their website [here](#).

CEPREDENAC will hold the [VIII Consultative Forum of the Central American Policy for Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management \(PCGIR\)](#) between 17-19 March 2026 in Panama. The Forum is the main regional platform for dialogue and coordination on disaster risk management in Central America and the Dominican Republic. It will bring together national authorities, regional organizations, international cooperation partners, and humanitarian actors to assess progress, define strategic priorities, and strengthen the implementation of the PCGIR and its Regional Plan 2024–2030 through ministerial dialogues, technical working groups, and thematic events. The PCGIR Forum will drive concrete advances in early warning systems, anticipatory action, risk financing, and humanitarian coordination, among other areas, facilitating agreements, shared priorities, and regional roadmaps. It will also serve as a space for exchange among the signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Union and Latin America, both within the planned thematic sessions and in a segment dedicated to the initiative.

Other upcoming events to keep an eye on later in the year, include:

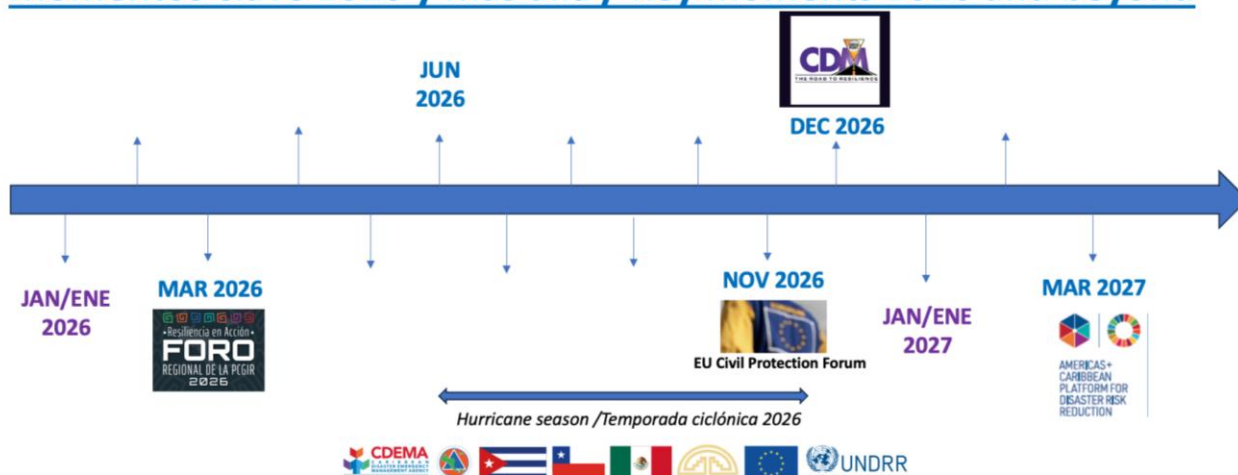
- The EU Civil Protection Forum, taking place in Brussels, Belgium on 3-4 November. Look out for the announcement [here](#).
- The [14th Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management \(CDM\), hosted by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency \(CDEMA\)](#) that will be held in Georgetown, Guyana from December 7–12, 2026.
- The [IX Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean \(RP27\) in 2027](#), that will be hosted by the government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas together with UNDRR in early 2027.

Memorando de Entendimiento

sobre cooperación en el ámbito de la gestión integral del riesgo de desastres

entre la Unión Europea y las regiones de América Latina y el Caribe

Momentos clave 2026 y más allá / Key moments 2026 and beyond



Relevant publications

UNDRR RAR27 Call for Submissions! UNDRR invites submissions for the 2027 Regional Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction for the Americas and the Caribbean (RAR27), the UN's flagship regional publication assessing progress and trends in disaster risk reduction. Building on the 2021 and 2024 RARs, which showed declining disaster mortality alongside steadily rising economic losses, RAR27 will focus on quantifying the cost of inaction and the urgency of investing in risk-informed sustainable development.

Despite relatively stable disaster occurrence rates, impacts in the region have intensified due to hydro-meteorological hazards, persistent exposure to geological risks, rapid urbanization, and insufficient DRR investment, highlighting the need for robust, quantitative evidence to inform policy and financing decisions. Through partnerships with governments, academia, the private sector, and scientific institutions, RAR27 will compile retrospective and prospective analyses and case studies across scales to assess avoided losses, beneficiaries of inaction, and the consequences of delayed or absent risk-reduction decisions. Researchers are invited to submit abstracts of no more than 500 words, in Spanish or English, aligned with the report's thematic chapters, using the official submission template (available at: <https://bit.ly/44Po1Ru.%0D>), by **30 January 2026**. Abstracts should be submitted to mario.salgadogalvez@un.org. Selected authors will be invited to develop full papers following peer review, with accepted background papers published online ahead of the release of RAR27 in 2027.