

Brussels, 4 August 2008.

## **EU response to floods in Romania, Ukraine and Moldova**

***The widespread flooding in Moldova, Ukraine and Romania has triggered a rapid and effective response from the European Commission and the EU Member States. EU Member States have offered vital assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism involving boats, pumps, generators, water purification and emergency equipment is now well under way. The EU's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) dispatched experts to facilitate the coordination of the relief effort on the ground in Moldova and Ukraine. Furthermore, a European Commission humanitarian aid expert is currently in Ukraine to assess the needs.***

"Our heartfelt sympathies go out to the families of the victims of these floods," said Stavros Dimas, Commissioner for the Environment and Civil Protection. "Civil protection is a European concern, and I am happy to see that Member States have expressed European solidarity by responding generously to the requests for assistance made through the Monitoring and Information Centre. Any country – Member State or not – is welcome to apply for assistance in times of need".

In expressing condolences to the Presidents Yuschenko of Ukraine and Voronin of Moldova, Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, responsible for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, indicated the Commission's willingness to consider the case for possible EU reconstruction assistance should this also be necessary for these countries.

Heavy rain in the Carpathians last week has brought catastrophic consequences for several countries downstream. The EU's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) has been coordinating the European response. The MIC has received requests for specific equipment from all three countries, which have been circulated to all Member States' civil protection authorities. Their response has been quick and generous.

The MIC teams on the ground work in close cooperation with experts from the EC Delegation and DG ECHO. Last Friday 1st August, a European Commission Humanitarian Aid expert was sent to Ukraine to assess needs and to follow rescue operations during the weekend together with a mission from Belgium.

In addition, two teams of EU experts brought together by the EU's MIC arrived in Kiev and Chisinau today. Together with Commission experts, they will go to Western Ukraine and the affected areas of Moldova to assess reconstruction needs and civil protection assistance to be provided. They will also facilitate the coordination of incoming EU assistance and monitor its use.

The Commission stands ready to respond in the case of an appeal for international humanitarian aid and is ready to consider in detail the case for possible EU financial Assistance for reconstruction should this be requested.

The Commission is ready to consider assistance for humanitarian aid and reconstruction should this be requested, and according to the needs.

### **Assistance to Romania**

Although the rains have now abated in Romania, and the situation has eased along the Siret and Tisza rivers, flooding continues along the Prut, where the situation is still deteriorating.

The floods have already claimed five lives in Romania and destroyed almost 100 houses. More than 1000 kilometres of road have been affected, and 45 km of dikes have been swamped. The country launched an appeal for generators, dikes and geo-textile. Some 47 generators have already been made available by Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania and the Slovak Republic. Poland has also sent 15 000m<sup>2</sup> of stabilising geo-textile. The MIC has also facilitated a further offer of generators from Switzerland.

### **Assistance to Ukraine**

The flooding in Ukraine, which started in the northwest of the country, has now moved to the southwest. Up to 15,000 people are estimated to have been affected, and there are at least 30 dead. Six regions of the country have been hit, with the worst of the damage coming along the banks of the Dniester and Prut rivers. The EU is sending a team of three experts that will arrive in the Ukraine tonight and travel to the affected areas tomorrow to help coordinate assistance. In addition to this expert assistance, the EU response has included boats, tents and sleeping bags from the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Estonia and Spain.

### **Assistance to Moldova**

Downstream from Ukraine, Moldova has also been badly hit, with 99 houses destroyed and 882 more flooded. More than 7000 people have been evacuated from 12 regions, and the situation may still deteriorate. Many dikes along the Dniester river have been completely destroyed.

The EU has sent a six-man team of experts to the country, and boats, pumps, generators and rubber boots have now been provided by the Czech Republic and Estonia.

### **Background information:**

The Community Civil Protection Mechanism facilitates and supports the mobilisation and coordination of Member States' civil protection assistance in the event of major emergencies. The EU's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), operated by the European Commission in Brussels, is the operational heart of the Community Mechanism for Civil Protection. It is available on a 24/7 basis, and provides countries access to the community civil protection platform. Any country affected by a major disaster – inside or outside the EU – can launch a request for assistance through the MIC. During emergencies the MIC coordinates the exchange of requests and offers of assistance and provides information on civil protection preparedness and response to participating states as well as a wider audience of interested stakeholders.

**Further information:** <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/mic.htm>