
EU Announces over \$750 Million in Aid to Support Latin America-Caribbean Region

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“The European Union seeks to develop a new type of cooperation that takes into account the fact that Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced very positive growth over the last decade and that development challenges are of a different nature today,” commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said on Thursday in a statement.

Therefore, the EU has set up a “Facility for International Cooperation and Partnership” that will support the consolidation of peer learning among CELAC countries, and promote joint cooperation with emerging donors in the region.

It counts on a budget of 12 million euros (roughly \$13.4 million) toward improving the design and implementation of poverty reduction policies.

Part of the new projects agreed on during Thursday’s summit address problems specific to countries such as Bolivia, which will benefit from three new programs.

The first program concerns the fight against illegal drugs (60 million euros or \$67.4 million); the second is to increase access to drinking water and sanitation facilities in suburban areas (12 million euros or \$13.4 million); while the third improves water basin management and reduces water shortages, water pollution and the risks of flooding (17 million euros or \$19 million).

A program worth almost 21 million euros (around \$23.6 million) will be allocated to Colombia to overcome the social and economic disadvantages of marginalized populations in conflict-

affected regions.

In Honduras, a program on food security, worth 30 million euros (\$33.7 million), will be signed to improve the living conditions of 15,000 rural households in one of the most vulnerable areas of the country by building sustainable farming systems that will increase food production while supporting education and nutrition.

Another program worth almost 11.6 million euros (around \$13 million) will go to promoting decent work conditions and employment opportunities for young people in Honduras.

A third project worth 10 million euros (around \$10.2 million) will focus on construction and improvements to road safety for one of the country's most travelled highways.

Other projects announced on Thursday have a more regional scope, notably the Coffee Rust program for Central America; Coffee rust is a leaf disease that has affected about 50 percent of coffee plantations in the region and is causing considerable hardship to small producers and their families.

It is anticipated that the program will contribute to improving the livelihoods of 330,000 producer families and 6000 family farms in the selected coffee producing areas throughout Central America and Dominican Republic.

The EU also announced on Thursday renewed support of 32 million euros (roughly \$35.9 million) to the EUROsociAL+ project on social cohesion for the next four years, and 10 million euros (around \$11.2 million) to support the fight against drugs.

All of these programs, amounting at 230 million euros (\$258.4 million), are in addition to those announced on Wednesday in the EU-CELAC business summit on investment and business support, totaling 118 million euros (\$132.6 million), and together with the regional package for the Caribbean of 346 million euros (\$388.8 million) also announced on Thursday, brings the overall package of the European Union to roughly 700 million euros (around \$786 million) in support of Latin America and the Caribbean.