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Colombia: European Commission approves humanitarian aid worth euro 6.5 million

The European Commission has approved humanitarian aid worth Euro 6.5 million for people displaced by violence in Colombia. The aid, managed by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), will enable European humanitarian organisations to carry out projects over the next nine months.

Internal conflict has escalated recently, leading more and more people to flee their homes. An estimated million Colombians have been displaced in conflict involving guerrillas, the paramilitary, armed forces and drug traffickers. Targeted killings, torture, kidnapping and extortion are more frequent than open conflict, and displacement is often the objective of paramilitary groups which force smallholders to abandon land that can potentially provide support for guerrillas.

Projects will be carried out by experienced ECHO partners, covering the following priorities: food aid to prevent malnutrition in those displaced, particularly in infants and pregnant women; shelter; basic primary health care, clean water and sanitation; and psycho-social support for those who arrive at reception centres traumatised by the conflict.

The presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross is seen as an important feature of the current Global Plan, in helping to reinforce international humanitarian law as a contribution to the peace process.