EN
E-002560/2026
Answer given by Ms Lahbib
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.8.2026)

The Commission is actively monitoring the new El Niño phase, among others through Copernicus Climate Change Service[1], by publishing reports on plausible scenarios and its impacts[2], and stands ready to support any potentially affected country via the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU). Flexible, early and anticipatory action is a critical element of effective crisis management. To support this approach, the humanitarian funding framework includes crisis modifiers (CM) which enable humanitarian partners to rapidly reallocate resources from ongoing actions to respond to newly emerging shocks. It is designed to address immediate, life-saving needs arising from rapid-onset crises or deteriorating situations, particularly when no other response mechanisms are yet in place. The Emergency Response Coordination Centre mapped its ongoing humanitarian aid projects where CM might be activated to address new needs[3].

In response to the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires, the Commission created rescEU in 2019 and developed its aerial forest firefighting fleet. In 2023, the number of rescEU aerial firefighting assets was doubled. In addition, grants have been awarded to six Member States for the procurement of 12 medium amphibious aircraft, which will become operational from 2028 onwards, and to three Member States for the procurement of five helicopters. The Commission promotes a holistic and integrated approach to wildfire risk management, as outlined in its recent Communication[4] on the subject. In line with the latter, the Commission intends to maintain the current level of ambition for the rescEU aerial firefighting fleet, while retaining the possibility of procuring additional aircrafts if needed.

[1] https://climate.copernicus.eu/.
[2] https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC147365.
[3] Several CM have already been activated in response to El Niño, notably in Central America: The Commission allocated of EUR 2.6 million to humanitarian partners to cover the basic food needs of more than 13 200 vulnerable individuals in Guatemala and Honduras. A crisis modifier was activated for a German Red Cross project in Guatemala. Around 250 families will receive a one-off cash transfer of USD 150 per household. In Belize, the World Food Programme has activated drought anticipatory action payouts, delivering early cash assistance to 419 pre-identified rain-fed smallholder farmers for investment in drought-tolerant seeds and water storage during the pre-impact window, to reduce crop losses and safeguard livelihoods.
[4] COM(2026) 330 final.