



European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

EU Humanitarian Air Bridge

What is it?

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight operations are intended to help reinforce humanitarian or emergency responses in countries facing fragile contexts.

These flights help fill critical gaps by facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, emergency assistance, and the transport of humanitarian staff when required. The initiative was initially set up in response to the transport constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge is an ad hoc initiative operated on a needs-based approach. Its implementation brings together several actors: the European Commission, EU Member States, national authorities of the destination countries, and humanitarian and civil society organisations.

Why is this important?

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about huge logistical challenges for the humanitarian community, including the absence of commercial flights due to transport restrictions.

Against this background, the Commission set up the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge. As part of the EU's global coronavirus response, it includes the transport of aid to some most fragile countries.

The Humanitarian Air Bridge ensures the continuation of humanitarian assistance and the delivery of essential medical supplies. These supplies included material needed to support countries' COVID-19 response.

The initiative also helped with the transport of humanitarian teams on rotation and assisted in passenger repatriation flights organised by Member States.

In the current context, the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flights are helping address various constraints faced by humanitarian actors on the ground. This includes situations where supplies by far outstrip needs and humanitarian access is limited or hampered by logistical or administrative barriers.

How are we helping?

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operations were launched on 8 May 2020, with the first flight to the Central African Republic. Since then, more than 80 flights have reached critical areas in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

The EU has coordinated and financed the delivery of over 1,570 tonnes of material, consisting of humanitarian and/or medical aid.

In 2020, we carried out flights to Afghanistan, the African Union, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Peru, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Venezuela, and Yemen.

Building on the operations conducted in 2020, the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge resumed in June 2021, with over 20 flights to Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti and Mozambique. They helped deliver much-needed humanitarian aid.

In 2022, the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge continues to provide emergency assistance to people in need. So far this year, over 40 flights have taken place around the world.

Since August 2021, 20 humanitarian air bridge flights have been operated to Afghanistan. They helped ensure a continuous inflow of vital medicines and medical items for Afghans in need and alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the country.

EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operations to Madagascar assured the timely departure and arrival of EU emergency experts from France, Finland and Sweden, and EU staff. They helped authorities deal with the repercussions of the tropical storms and cyclones that hit the island in February.

In July 2022, a Humanitarian Air Bridge was launched for Somalia, aiming at delivering lifesaving supplies to hard-to-reach areas, no longer accessible by road. This operation is expected to consist of around 30 flights.

In November 2022, a Humanitarian Air Bridge was launched for Burkina Faso. It will deliver food and essential supplies to hundreds of thousands of people at risk of starvation in localities under blockade.

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge is at the service of humanitarian actors. The decision to deploy these flights is driven by needs on the ground.

Flights are coordinated with Member States and aid partners, identifying the most critical gaps. They take place in cooperation with the receiving countries.

The European Commission finances 100% of the transport costs. The users of the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operations provide the cargo and supplies transported on board.

The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge complements other humanitarian air services that the EU has in place or that it supports to help the humanitarian community continue the effective delivery of assistance.

Facts & figures

2020: **67** flights to **20** countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas delivering **1,150** tonnes of vital medical and humanitarian equipment. Nearly **1,700** medical and humanitarian staff and other passengers transported.

2021: More than **20** flights delivering **500** tonnes of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti and Mozambique.

2022: More than **40** flights delivering humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Madagascar, Somalia and Burkina Faso.