

The European Union's response to Ebola

A number of West African countries are currently experiencing the worst Ebola epidemic in history. As the situation continues to deteriorate rapidly, the European Commission has stepped up its response since March 2014 and is now pledging more than €147 million in response to the devastating human, sanitary, economic and political effects of this crisis for the region. Since the beginning of the epidemic, the European Parliament has shown its concern as regards this critical situation.

A continuous spread of Ebola in West Africa

The first identified outbreak of the Ebola virus disease took place in 1976 in Zaire and Sudan. The [current Ebola outbreak](#) is now affecting five West African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Nigeria and most recently Senegal. As of 8 September, there have been over 4 269 reported cases, including 2 288 deaths ([World Health Organisation](#), WHO). Since the beginning of the year, the situation has rapidly deteriorated. Local and international medical efforts are insufficient to control the expansion of one of the deadliest diseases (60% to 90% mortality rate) for which there is still no approved vaccine or medical treatment. The epidemic is already engendering humanitarian needs such as food, clean water and sanitation and endangers the affected countries' economic stability and public order. On 8 August, the WHO has declared it a [Public Health Emergency of International Concern](#), calling for a coordinated international response. Amongst others organisations, [Médecins sans Frontières](#) (MSF) continues to raise the alarm.

The European Union's response to the outbreak

On 15 August 2014, the [Council](#) of the European Union adopted conclusions on the Ebola crisis in West Africa, calling for a strong follow-up and a coordinated international response.

Since March 2014, the European Commission (EC) has been scaling up its response to the epidemic. Up to 9 September, it has pledged in total some €147 million to help the countries most affected by the virus. A global package of [€140.5 million](#), announced on 5 September, should be split into: €38m to bolster healthcare systems and bring humanitarian assistance to populations directly affected; €5m to provide and support mobile laboratories; €97.5m to reinforce the capacity of the Liberia and Sierra Leone governments to deliver public services and maintain economic and political stability (respectively €50.5 m and €47 m). This package builds on the [€3.9 million](#) of Humanitarian Aid committed earlier this summer and an additional [€3 million](#) to the newly created mission of the African Union "Support to Ebola Outbreak in West-Africa". The EC's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has also deployed humanitarian specialists to liaise with onsite partners (MSF, the WHO, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, etc.) and local authorities. Through its [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#), the EC is also monitoring the situation together with the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#), the EU Member States' health authorities, the WHO and other international organisations.

European Parliament

Since March 2014, MEPs have addressed 14 Ebola-related parliamentary questions to the EC. Most recently, during an [exchange of views on the Ebola crisis in West-Africa](#) (Environment Committee, 3 September), Commissioner Borg reiterated the EU's "[moral obligation](#)" to help countries affected by the disease while some MEPs stressed the need to support the funding of non-commercially viable research. The Council and Commission are expected to make statements on the EU's response to the Ebola outbreak in plenary on 17 September.