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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

**Towards the World Humanitarian Summit: A global partnership for principled and
effective humanitarian action**

{ COM(2015) 419 final }

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a key humanitarian actor. It offers relief assistance to people most in need affected by conflicts and natural disasters. It also prepares communities, who are victims of recurrent crises, to face future emergencies.

The Commission has strongly supported the preparations to the World Humanitarian Summit, which is the first multi-stakeholder occasion to review the humanitarian action. It presents a much-needed opportunity for a critical assessment of the current state of humanitarian affairs. The Summit should reinforce what works, but it should also generate a new understanding of how the humanitarian system should function effectively in a humanitarian landscape that is changing and becoming increasingly challenging.

The European Union is at the forefront of responding to all major crises globally. It also pays attention to "forgotten crises", i.e. situations where important humanitarian needs persist but which attract little donor attention and therefore require active humanitarian advocacy. The EU is one of the largest international aid donors providing over EUR 2.3 billion a year in partnership with NGOs, UN Agencies and Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The European Union is the only humanitarian donor with global presence. The Commission employs 140 international humanitarian experts and 320 national staff in 46 field offices located in 41 countries.

Complementary to humanitarian assistance, the Union's civil protection operations offer immediate support with expert teams, rescue equipment, and real-time monitoring.

Apart from being a donor and an important operational actor, the Commission is also a key policy-setter. The Commission has developed numerous policies and tools to make humanitarian aid more principled and effective, including but not limited to:

- Guidelines on sectoral policies, for example on food, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, gender, children, disaster risk reduction;
- Frameworks to improve decision-making for funding allocations, such as: crisis assessments and the Index for Risk Management (INFORM);
- Instruments for more efficient delivery, for instance cash and vouchers and ECHO Flight;
- Dedicated capacity building for humanitarian operators through the EU Aid Volunteers.

These are already part of the EU's contribution to an improved humanitarian action expected from the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

This Staff Working Document accompanies the Commission communication "Towards the World Humanitarian Summit: A global partnership for principled and effective humanitarian action". It identifies a sample of issues to represent:

1. Existing policies and tools that have already proven effective or have potential for success, and which could be taken up and/or scaled up outside of the European Union. These are issues the Commission will further champion in the run-up to the Summit;
2. Issues that the humanitarian system should demonstrate to contribute to improving humanitarian action; and
3. EU internal policy commitments and operational mechanisms for an effective and principled humanitarian action that could serve as an example for other regions.

1. Successful and promising policies and tools for improved humanitarian action

1.1 INFORM – Index for Risk Management

Key message:

The Index for Risk Management 'INFORM'¹ is the first global, open-source tool for assessing the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters, designed to be used by governments, development agencies, disaster risk reduction actors and others. The purpose of INFORM is to support objective, risk-based decisions to help prevent, prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises and disasters, and build resilience. It provides common evidence base so all governments and organisations can work together. As a composite index, it creates a risk profile for every country that can be used to prioritise countries by risk and its components; to decide how to prepare and reduce risk; and to monitor risk trends.

1. Context

INFORM is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), in partnership with Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UK Department for International Development (DFID), World Bank, the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), UN agencies, and many others. It builds on previously recognised vulnerability assessments, including the Commission's Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment and OCHA's Global Focus Model, and adds additional indicators to measure vulnerability and coping capacity, and extends the assessment of need for international humanitarian aid to include risk. INFORM simplifies information about risk and its components into a simple risk profile for every country. It covers natural and human hazards, people's exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. It covers 191 countries.

2. Strengths

INFORM is a global and continuously updated tool. It can help identify countries at a high risk of humanitarian crises and disasters and ranks them according to the likelihood of needed international assistance in the near future. By using a shared, transparent and reliable evidence-base provided through INFORM, humanitarian donors and partners have a common basis to work together more effectively in addressing risks and building resilience. The combination of data is adaptable to different mandates. Continuous improvement in methodology and application is built-in through the partnership and open-source approach.

3. Challenges

Beyond the technical challenges associated with the development of a new model, INFORM is neither an early warning nor a real-time assessment tool. Its primary focus on risk does not make it a needs assessment prioritisation tool.

4. Impact

INFORM is an innovative approach to analysis that involves INFORM partners working together, openly sharing data and expertise, and coming to common conclusions to guide humanitarian work. Although it is only one element of the decision-making process, INFORM partners believe that by using a shared and reliable evidence-base on risk, they will together be more effective at managing risk and building resilience.

Facts and figures

191 countries covered – 0-10 measurement scale – 3 dimensions of risk – 50 indicators used

¹ More information: <http://www.inform-index.org/>

1.2 Quality Markers

Key message:

The European Commission introduced in its humanitarian project cycle management two markers: gender and age, and resilience. They aim to improve the quality of humanitarian aid by integrating these considerations into all stages of the project cycle of Union-funded humanitarian actions. They are new tools, more ambitious than the existing markers, ensuring due consideration of these issues while allowing to reflect specificities of a given context.

1. Context

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) took important policy commitments on gender-age and resilience.² Integrating gender-age and resilience elements into humanitarian aid is crucial to improve its quality and effectiveness.

2. Strengths

The two markers build on lessons learned from existing markers but represent a new generation of quality assessment tools, taking into consideration for the first time issues such as vulnerabilities and opportunities to reduce future humanitarian needs. The two markers assess both proposals and project implementation. They focus on quality criteria (to avoid a "tick the box" cosmetic approach) and they are collaborative learning tools, engaging both partners and staff in a constructive dialogue. In addition, the gender and age marker is considered as a basis to review the current IASC gender marker.

3. Challenges

Integrating gender-age and resilience into humanitarian action requires capacity building and awareness raising efforts towards own staff and partners. A number of trainings were carried out by DG ECHO to support the implementation of the gender-age marker. DG ECHO also developed and disseminated a toolkit on the use of the markers. Based on the lessons learned of the application of the gender-age marker, DG ECHO came up with specific guidance on the implementation of the resilience marker.

4. Impact

On the basis of the marker, DG ECHO is currently collaborating with other relevant actors (advisors of the Gender Standby Capacity Project and NGOs) to develop more practical tools to enhance humanitarian staff's capacity to mainstream gender and age at both proposal and implementation phase. Two surveys of the first six months of using the resilience marker show a positive change.

Facts and figures

An internal assessment of 175 DG ECHO projects indicated that most DG ECHO staff consider the resilience marker to be a useful additional tool for quality appraisal. The VOICE network reviewed the resilience marker with 22 different NGO partners. 67% of respondents found the marker contributed to DG ECHO's resilience objectives. Only 6% disagreed. 70% thought the marker prompted positive action within their NGO.

² *Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance*, SWD(2013) 290 final; *The EU Approach to Resilience*, COM(2012) 586 final; *Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries*, SWD(2013) 227 final.

1.3 Results Framework: Linking needs, input and results

Key message:

Having the right data at hand is critical for strategic decision making, but also a powerful communication and advocacy tool. In 2014, DG ECHO introduced Key Results Indicators (KRI) to measure the results projects it funds in a coherent and comprehensive way, building on indicators on which different Clusters had already reached broad consensus. They simplify and improve project design, monitoring and reporting, thereby contributing to improved project quality. Building on this experience, DG ECHO is currently developing a Results Framework, which puts its results into the context of humanitarian needs and risks and links them up with DG ECHO internal processes and performance as well resources. Key metrics for these four dimensions are presented in a dashboard that enables a global overview as well as regional and country level summaries. Through this tool, DG ECHO has quantitative data at hand to feed into the narrative on its humanitarian work and to guide strategic decision making based on evidence.

1. Context

Globally, humanitarian needs are likely to continue to outstrip available resources. At the same time, in the context of overall budget limitation and calls for greater transparency and accountability, humanitarian actors have to be able to improve the effectiveness of their aid and to strengthen the way they communicate about their achievements and performance.

2. Strengths

The Results Framework which builds on the KRI will provide DG ECHO with a powerful tool which gives an overview of its achievements, internal processes and resources in the context of humanitarian needs and risks on global, regional and country level. This overview is useful for strategic decision making as it helps identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and bottlenecks to improve aid. It also helps to communicate on what DG ECHO does, thereby strengthening humanitarian advocacy.

3. Challenges

While the indicator data collected through the KRI and the Results Framework provides useful evidence, further, especially qualitative, information is needed to tell the full story and take strategic decisions. "Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted counts."

Data quality remains a key challenge in order to ensure reliability of the evidence. Coherence among humanitarian actors in terms of collecting and presenting data is vital for system wide aid effectiveness, collaboration and advocacy.

4. Impact

The introduction of the KRI has shown first effects in simplifying project design and reporting. Further improvements will become visible with the full roll-out of the DG ECHO Results Framework.

1.4 Cash-based assistance

Key messages:

Humanitarian assistance is still mainly delivered as in-kind assistance. But this is changing. The EU, through DG ECHO, and a number of other donors, sees the potential of cash based assistance to boost the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action

Cash-based assistance is a people-centred approach. It allows beneficiaries to prioritise their basic needs, which vary as circumstances and events change. It gives dignity and choice to those who are most vulnerable. It allows them to decide themselves how best to meet the needs of their families with flexibility. And it helps start rebuilding their lives.

The EU recognises that cash will not always be the answer and, depending on the context, the appropriate modality or combination will need to be put in place – this may be in-kind (where for example markets are weak), vouchers (where specific outcomes are important, such as nutrition) or cash, or a combination of all three.

1. Context

There is extensive evidence that cash, as distinct even from vouchers, is a highly efficient way to deliver assistance. Concerns over the impact on markets, a tendency to be more prone to corruption, or supposed negative effects on gender have all been shown as unfounded. Instead, cash-based assistance is a challenge to the ways the humanitarian assistance has been delivered so far. This may explain the limited extent to which it is being used, which costs donors money and compromises the lives of those affected by humanitarian crises. As the Summit seeks to render more efficient humanitarian assistance, the potential of cash to make donor funding go further and to give beneficiaries what they really want is enormous.

2. Strengths

Strengths of cash-based assistance are simple: dignity, flexibility and choice for beneficiaries, efficiency of delivery, so less costly for donors, and effectiveness – we know that in-kind assistance and even vouchers are exchanged by beneficiaries, at a loss, for cash to meet other needs. By providing cash from the outset, this can be avoided and boost effectiveness. It is estimated that cash-based assistance brings 20% of cost efficiencies comparing to other forms.

3. Challenges

The challenges come from the humanitarian system and the way it has grown up around the delivery and supply of in-kind commodities. This is most evident in the case of food and shelter. Cash-based assistance asks the humanitarian system and its actors to be open to using cash: to reconsider way of working, and to disassociate humanitarian assistance from the influence of the farm and shipping lobbies.

4. Impact

At a practical level, cash-based assistance made donors and implementers become more outcome-focused and develop appropriate indicators to measure the impact cash assistance is having on food security, health, under-nutrition, etc. Member States agreed in the Council conclusions of 22 June 2015 on a set of common principles on cash-based assistance in designing and implementing their responses.

Facts and figures

DG ECHO has been able to measure the amount of its assistance delivered in the form of cash and vouchers combined. The overall trend is increasing at a rapid rate, from under 7% in 2011 to a little under 30% in 2014.

1.5 The EU Aid Volunteers Initiative – Local capacity-building

Key message:

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative provides opportunities for volunteers to engage in humanitarian aid. The initiative is open to a variety of profiles, from newcomers to experienced humanitarian experts. The initiative also provides opportunities for local organisations and local communities, aiming at strengthening their capacities to deal with disasters. Standards on the management of volunteers by humanitarian organisations have been developed in the context of this initiative.

1. Context

As envisaged by Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Council and the European Parliament set up in April 2014 the EU Aid Volunteers initiative aiming to strengthen the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid while giving the European citizens an opportunity to be involved in humanitarian action in third countries showing solidarity with people in need.³

2. Strengths

The initiative will contribute to strengthening the local capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities in third countries. It will bring together volunteers and organisations from different countries to build partnership through joint projects. A training programme will ensure volunteers are well-trained and prepared before deployment. The on-line volunteer opportunity is an innovative approach which will offer additional ways for participation. The need assessments' methodology is similar to that for humanitarian aid actions taking into account the specificity of the EU Aid Volunteers and excluding ex-ante the areas with on-going armed conflict to which volunteers should not be deployed.

3. Challenges

After the adoption of the legislation in 2014, the implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative will become operational at the end of 2015/early 2016. It is important to have a critical mass of organisations to be certified in order to respond to the call for deployment.

4. Impact

The pilot action of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative (2011-2014) already proved to be effective in testing different models or methods of implementing the distinct dimensions of Aid Volunteers.⁴ 300 volunteers were deployed in 62 third countries.

The progress and the quality of volunteering will be strictly monitored on the basis of the objectives and indicators established in the legislation. A dedicated monitoring framework is developed ensuring that the impact on the different actors and stakeholders can be assessed and demonstrated.

Facts and figures

The budget for the EU Aid Volunteers initiative is EUR 147.9 million from 2015 to 2020. By 2020, 18 400 opportunities including: 4 000 deployments of EU citizens worldwide; 4 400 people from local organisations in non-EU, disaster affected countries; 10 000 'online volunteering opportunities.

³ Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of 3 April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ('EU Aid Volunteers initiative'), OJ L 122, 24.4.2014, p. 1.

⁴ Commission decisions adopting the annual work programme for Preparatory Action – European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps – 'EU Aid Volunteers' (EVHAC), C(2011) 9460 final and C(2013) 2 final.

1.6 Humanitarian-development cooperation for building resilience

Key Message:

Resilience must be a common goal for both humanitarian and development actors in order to reduce humanitarian needs as well as build inclusive and stable societies. Improved services and opportunities, mitigation of risks and protection from shocks will improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable and reduce suffering and loss. When crisis strikes, an early response should address immediate needs but also help affected populations to avoid future losses.

1. Context

Resilience requires long-term efforts that aim to reduce vulnerabilities and strategically address not only the immediate consequences but also the root causes of crises. This is crucial to avoid unaffordable and recurrent losses, accelerate recovery and protect livelihoods, and ultimately improve the lives of the most vulnerable. Resilience is about aid effectiveness: by combining humanitarian and development experiences, we can optimise resources and find durable solutions. Addressing causal reasons for vulnerability and taking pre-emptive action is more cost effective and socially responsible than dealing with the consequences of un-addressed risk and vulnerability.

2. Strengths

The Commission has put in place strong policy commitments on resilience, including the Resilience Communication and Action Plan, the Communications on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Post-Hyogo framework.⁵ The Commission factors resilience in bilateral programmes, thematic instruments and all humanitarian implementation plans. Its humanitarian and development departments increasingly support national and local strategies based on joint identification of risks and vulnerabilities. Implementation is supported by training, analytical and planning tools. In 2015, a resilience marker was introduced for all DG ECHO projects. DG ECHO disaster risk reduction programme (DIPECHO) has been contributing to disaster risk reduction and resilience building since 1996.

3. Challenges

Key challenges include: the need for flexible and predictable funding; addressing extreme poverty and vulnerability, which is often an issue of governance; improving the aid system by linking humanitarian and development fora for better linkages between the two streams.

4. Impact

Examples of concrete impact are numerous. In 2015, the EU produced a "resilience compendium" with 29 different case studies where a resilience approach led to better results. In Nepal, DG ECHO preparedness support helped the emergency healthcare facilities in Kathmandu function effectively in the aftermath of the earthquake. The resilience programmes - SHARE in the Horn of Africa and AGIR in West Africa - are also examples of the EU's successful resilience efforts. In Ethiopia, the RESET programme benefits 2.5 million people by strengthening their coping capacities in drought prone and food insecure areas.

Facts and figures

In 2014, 13% of DG ECHO's humanitarian funding went to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities, more than EUR 122 million. DG ECHO is committed to strengthening resilience worldwide. More than 48% of all DG ECHO funded projects include DRR activities.

⁵ *The EU Approach to Resilience*, COM(2012) 586 final; *Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries*, SWD(2013) 227 final; *The Post-Hyogo Framework for Action*, COM(2014) 216 final.

1.7 DG ECHO's relations with military and foreign policy stakeholders

Key message:

DG ECHO has developed strong relations with security actors to ensure appropriate, context-specific response in all situations. DG ECHO aims to ensure better coordination of the EU's foreign policy tools with humanitarian assistance measures. The use of military assets and capabilities in support of humanitarian operations should be a 'last resort', i.e. where there is no comparable civilian alternative and only when military assets can meet a critical humanitarian need.⁶ DG ECHO maintains at times a certain separation from other EU policies in line with humanitarian principles. DG ECHO therefore tailors its civil-military relations in headquarters and in the field to each specific context to ensure the highest effectiveness.

1. Context

Civil and military security actors are present in crises where DG ECHO delivers humanitarian assistance. Certain humanitarian emergencies require niche capabilities or specialised equipment that is only available from the military community, for example strategic airlifts, engineers for road and bridge repairs. Exceptionally, assistance by the military might also be required to ensure safety conditions to humanitarian workers for delivering aid. In such situations, coordination is essential to ensure that humanitarian assistance abides by the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality.

2. Strengths

In crises, DG ECHO's engagement with the European External Action Service has resulted in more clear-cut mandates for the EU's military operations and coordination arrangements. In natural disasters, standing arrangements for long-haul transport allow DG ECHO to fill gaps of strategic transportation with military assets, albeit for civilian purposes.

3. Challenges

In crises, DG ECHO partners often have different policies for their relations with military actors and might not abide by humanitarian country-team positions either. While more stringent policies on civil-military coordination may diminish effectiveness, laxer approaches may jeopardise access and security for all other actors.

4. Impact

Recent military CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) operations, such as the EU military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA)⁷ and the EU military mission to contribute to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (EUTM Mali),⁸ have contributed to better consistency with other EU assistance measures through their well-crafted mandates and coordination arrangements.

Facts and figures

The EU system of medical evacuation from Ebola-affected countries was set up as a mix of military and civilian contributions. 14 medical evacuation flights were carried out by military aircraft from Ebola affected countries. Dutch naval ship transported to Ebola affected countries coordinated in-kind assistance of twice 5000MT.

⁶ *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, para 20.

⁷ Council conclusions on Central African Republic, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/140666.pdf

⁸ Council conclusions on Mali, 3217th Foreign Affairs Council meeting http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134756.pdf

1.8 Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS)

Key message:

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS)⁹ supports planning and decision-making processes in all disaster risk management areas: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Managed by the European Commission, EMS provides timely and accurate geospatial information derived from satellite, aerial and other geospatial data. EMS is global, free and its activation requests are processed by the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

1. Context

Copernicus is an EU Programme aimed at developing European information services based on Earth Observation and in-situ data analyses to support a broad range of environmental and security applications and decisions including the efficient management of emergency situations and the improvement of the security and safety of the citizen. The programme's Emergency Management Service provides geospatial information to serve all disaster risk management work by the EU and its partners.

2. Strengths

The EMS is global in scope and operates a free and open information access policy. It is fully operational 24/7/365 since April 2012, providing fast (hours-days) and reliable information to enhance the response capability of rescue and relief operations. EMS integrates information from European and Global situational awareness systems¹⁰ to improve its timeliness. Through its Risk & Recovery Mapping component, EMS supports activities beyond the response phase. EMS serves the geospatial information needs of all actors engaged in all disaster risk management areas, helping all to be more effective in managing risks and disasters. Through its validation component, EMS strives to improve its processes and information products.

3. Challenges

Being fully operational, the EMS must continuously keep abreast of, and integrate, advances in processing and analysis methods as well as technologies to ensure it consistently delivers relevant, reliable and timely information. The EC is enhancing the promotion of the EMS Risk & Recovery Mapping component to ensure its effectiveness in serving longer term prevention and post-disaster processes beyond the emergency phase.

4. Impact

Until July 2015, 142 EMS activations globally of which 43% were triggered in response to risks, emergencies and humanitarian crises outside the EU. Its main impact has been to support civil protection, rescue and humanitarian aid operations where its information has assisted in establishing situational awareness before, during and after disasters.

Facts and figures

Since April 2012, 61 EMS activations outside the EU: 7 in support to disaster risk mitigation planning and reconstruction monitoring activities (e.g. Nepal, Haiti) and 54 in support to emergency planning (e.g. Nepal earthquake and Typhoon Haiyan).

⁹ More information: <http://emergency.copernicus.eu/>

¹⁰ GDACS, EFAS and EFFIS: <http://www.gdacs.org/>, <https://www.efas.eu>, <http://forest.jrc.ec.europa.eu/effis/>

2. Contribution from the humanitarian system

Key message:

The current Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)-based humanitarian system requires improvement. In view of changed geopolitical realities and unprecedented humanitarian challenges, it has to be more inclusive and effective by applying different *modus operandi* depending on the context and available capacities. The Transformative Agenda has to be fully rolled out and systematically implemented for a strengthened and coordinated response.

1. Context

Two main humanitarian reform initiatives, namely the 2005 humanitarian reform and the 2011 Transformative Agenda, have aimed to make the multilateral system more predictable, effective and accountable. However, the system has been challenged by too many too complex crises stretching its capacities and resources beyond limits.

2. Strengths

The system has shown progress in the recent years and it is capable of providing effective response where there is good access, adequate funding, and sufficient visibility. There are many examples of humanitarian system having a positive impact in crises in terms of addressing needs, ensuring coordination, engaging with affected populations, scaling up structures and personnel, cooperating with new actors such as the private sector, and finding durable solutions to improving resilience in the future. Recent examples include response to Haiyan and famine in Sahel. The system is still relevant as it steps in when governments do not have the capacity or are unwilling to respond to a crisis, it ensures coordination, and, ultimately, it is the only universally accepted system, backed by all UN Member States.

3. Challenges

The humanitarian system faces some criticism due to real or perceived weaknesses in leadership and technical capacity, especially in the field; avoiding direct involvement in areas with significant security and logistical issues; lack of flexibility and effectiveness in decision-making, in particular where a number of multi-mandated UN agencies have a responsibility to respond; as well as high administrative and transaction costs. There are too many drivers of change, sometimes with competing interests, while the reform agenda is one. The system has struggled to align efforts across agencies and NGOs, reconcile competing mandates and produce basic information for strategic decision-making. Numerous actors and in particular UN agencies compete for the same limited humanitarian funding, claim a lead role based on their individual mandates and prefer not to be coordinated. Rapid deployment of humanitarian coordinators (HCs) remains at times a challenge and multiple-hatted HCs struggle to ensure principled humanitarian action. The coordination model for mixed settings between OCHA and UNHCR has not been fully rolled out in a pragmatic manner depending on the context. Clusters are crucial for effective humanitarian coordination in-country but require adequate resources and better inter-cluster coordination. They should also establish a systemic linkage to development fora. Further progress also has to be made in integrating accountability to affected populations throughout the programme cycle.

4. Impact

The IASC Transformative Agenda has the potential to address main weaknesses and shortcomings of the multilateral system. Its successful full implementation is a prerequisite to ensure truly coordinated humanitarian action based on strong humanitarian leadership, effective coordination and due accountability to affected populations and donors.

3. EU internal policies and mechanisms as an example for other regions

3.1 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Key message:

Since 2007, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid has been the strategic framework guiding the actions of the EU to deliver effective and quality humanitarian assistance.¹¹ It is an expression of the highest political commitment by the Council, the European Parliament, the Commission, and the EU Member States to a common objective of providing principled and needs-based emergency response aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity in the midst of natural and man-made crises. The Consensus has been a catalyst behind policy development and increasing coordination and cooperation at the EU level. It has also supported EU engagement at the international level, including on good donorship practices, systemic improvements, and partnerships.

1. Context

As needs are outstripping resources in an increasingly challenging global context, it is more important than ever to deliver more effectively and in a more coordinated and principled manner. The Consensus sets a common and forward-looking framework for the EU, a major humanitarian donor, to pursue such a course and also inspire and engage other actors in the context of the World Humanitarian Summit to follow suit.

2. Strengths

The Consensus confirms commitment to humanitarian principles and needs-based assistance, and confirms that humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool. The respect of international law and Good Humanitarian Donorship are laid down as guiding principles for EU action. The EU pursues coordination, coherence and complementarity internally and externally, and supports quality, effectiveness and accountability of its actions while engaging with a variety of implementing partners. The Consensus recognises that civil protection and military assets and capabilities can only be used in particular circumstances and in line with relevant guidelines and complying with the humanitarian principles. The EU is committed to support the development of UN-led international humanitarian action to increase global capacity and avoid duplication of efforts.¹² The Consensus emphasises the importance of enhancing the aid continuum from preparedness all the way to transition to development.

3. Challenges

The political commitment expressed in the Consensus is strong but in order to have a tangible impact it requires implementation both in policy frameworks at EU and Member State level and, ultimately, in actions on the ground.

4. Impact

The Consensus has triggered changes to the humanitarian aid approaches of several European donors. It prompted the creation of Council's Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). It helped to develop common strategic positions at international fora. DG ECHO in particular has greatly advanced on thematic policy guidance, led on several best practice and policy initiatives, including resilience and disaster risk reduction, and stepped up its activities on civil-military coordination and engagement with civil protection actors.

¹¹ *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, op cit., p. 1.

¹² For example, the *Migrants in Countries in Crisis* initiative aims at improving the ability of States and other stakeholders to prepare for, respond to, alleviate suffering, and protect the dignity and rights of migrants caught in countries in situations of acute crisis.

3.2 Civil Protection mechanism

Key message:

Since 2001, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism ("UCPM") provides a comprehensive framework for EU civil protection cooperation.¹³ All 28 Member States and six neighbouring states participate in the UCPM to effectively prevent, protect against and respond to disasters. It covers numerous actions for disaster prevention (risk assessments, projects), preparedness (training, exercises, early warnings), and response (coordination, transport co-financing, field missions). It is supported by a 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) and a voluntary pool of pre-committed assets for better planned and predictable response.

1. Context

The role of the European Commission in UCPM is to encourage and promote cooperation between the Participating States on all issues related to disaster (risk) management, including running of the Brussels-based ERCC, the real-time Common Emergency Communication and Information System ("CECIS"), and the ERCC. The Commission manages also the EU co-financing of many prevention and preparedness actions.

2. Strengths

The UCPM combines expertise of 34 highly professional and well equipped civil protection organisations. The individual experts and teams are highly connected and used to collaborating efficiently together under stress. When responding to disasters outside Europe, the ERCC is facilitating the coordination among the UCPM countries and support the overall international relief efforts led by the UN. The voluntary pool of response capacities has the ability to provide highly specialised and certified response teams around the world at the request of an affected state, the UN or a number of international organisations. A limited UCPM capacity programme has the potential to develop highly specialised assets for extraordinary disasters, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

3. Challenges

Many experts are available mainly for the immediate response phase. New models of closer cooperation with the UN are currently being explored to improve access to disaster areas.

4. Impact

Examples are numerous. Bosnia floods: 23 countries provided assistance consisting of: 850 rescuers, 1750 people rescued/evacuated persons by helicopter or boats by the EU teams; 311 flights for rescue and aid delivery operations; 4 billion litres of water pumped; 1.3 million litres of water purified. Ebola: the Dutch vessel Karel Doorman transported from The Netherlands to West Africa a relief cargo from 11 European countries, UNICEF and WFP. It sailed twice with vehicles, ambulances, mobile hospitals, protective and medical equipment, medicines, and non-food relief items. The UCPM co-financed the transport costs.

Facts and figures

34 Participating States in the UCPM, 215 activations since 2001, 24/7 ERCC availability, provider of more than 1000 satellite maps in recent years, more than 100 flights co-financed for Ebola crisis in 2014 alone. 7500 training places since 2001, 36 full scale European exercises, EUR 34.5 million of grants for specialised cooperation projects, 800 experts in exchange programmes.

¹³ Decision of the European Parliament and the Council No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924.