

Tuesday 18 January 2011

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Implementation of the European Consensus on humanitarian aid: the mid-term review of its Action Plan and the way forward

P7_TA(2011)0005

European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2011 on implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: the mid-term review of its action plan and the way forward (2010/2101(INI))

(2012/C 136 E/01)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid signed on 18 December 2007 by the Presidents of the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Commission,
- having regard to the Commission working document of 29 May 2008 establishing an action plan with concrete measures to implement the Consensus (SEC(2008)1991),
- having regard to Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which deals with humanitarian aid,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the European Union Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law, of 23 December 2005, as updated in December 2009, and to the Council conclusions of 8 December 2009,
- having regard to Council Decision 2007/162/EC, Euratom, of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Council Decision 2007/779/EC of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of December 2007 inviting the Commission to make the best use of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism and to strengthen cooperation between Member States,
- having regard to the joint document by Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Kristalina Georgieva, Member of the Commission, on the lessons to be learned from the EU response to the disaster in Haiti,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.⁽²⁾ OJ L 71, 10.3.2007, p. 9.⁽³⁾ OJ L 314, 1.12.2007, p. 9.

Tuesday 18 January 2011

- having regard to the Commission communication to the Council and Parliament of 10 September 2003 entitled 'The EU and the UN: the choice of multilateralism' (COM(2003)0526), which calls for EU-UN relations generally to be strengthened and incorporated into a framework of systematic political dialogue, closer cooperation, better crisis management and crisis prevention, and strategic partnerships between the Commission and certain UN bodies,
- having regard to the Commission communication to Parliament and to the Council of 5 March 2008 on 'Reinforcing the Union's Disaster Response Capacity' (COM(2008)0130) and to Parliament's resolution of 19 June 2008 on 'stepping up the Union's disaster response capacity' ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication to the Council and to Parliament of 23 February 2009 on 'European Union strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries' (COM(2009)0084),
- having regard to the Commission communication to the Council and to Parliament of 31 March 2010 entitled 'Humanitarian Food Assistance' (COM(2010)0126),
- having regard to the Commission working document on DG ECHO's 2010 operational strategy,
- having regard to the report by Michel Barnier entitled 'For a European civil protection force: Europe Aid', published in May 2006,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948,
- having regard to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977,
- having regard to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted in July 1951,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the optional protocol thereto on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989,
- having regard to the Food Aid Convention, signed in London on 13 April 1999, establishing a Community commitment to respond to emergency food situations and other food needs of developing countries ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes, adopted in 1994,
- having regard to the principles and practices of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), approved in Stockholm on 17 June 2003,
- having regard to the Principles of Partnership endorsed in 2007 by the Global Humanitarian Platform linking UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations,
- having regard to the UN Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines) as revised on 27 November 2006,
- having regard to the March 2003 Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (MCDA Guidelines),

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 286 E, 27.11.2009, p. 15.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 163, 4.7.2000, p. 37.

Tuesday 18 January 2011

- having regard to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 18-22 January 2005,
 - having regard to the Humanitarian Response Review commissioned by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs in August 2005,
 - having regard to the Humanitarian Response Index 2010 compiled by Development Assistance Research Associates (DARA), which analyses and classifies the main donor countries' responses to the needs of people affected by disasters, conflicts and emergency situations,
 - having regard to the programme of International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles (IDRL Guidelines) adopted at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2007 in Geneva and the EU Member States' joint undertaking to support them,
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2007 on a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2010 on the earthquake in Haiti ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its recommendation to the Council of 14 December 2010 on Setting up an EU Rapid Response Capability ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on the Israeli military operation against the humanitarian flotilla and the Gaza blockade ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution on the humanitarian crisis in Somalia tabled by Mr Oreste Rossi under Rule 120 of its Rules of Procedure (B7-0489/2010),
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the delivery of humanitarian aid in third countries,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A7-0375/2010),
- A. whereas, in the common vision of humanitarian aid enshrined in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, emphasis is placed on the Union's will to cooperate closely in this field in order to optimise its effectiveness, to defend and promote the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and actively to advocate the observance of international humanitarian law,
- B. whereas the commitments derived from the Consensus apply both to the Member States and to the Commission, and whereas the actions listed in the action plan must, in most cases, be implemented by the Commission and Member States acting in concert,
- C. whereas there has been a dramatic increase in the number and severity of natural disasters caused, in particular, by the impact of man-made climate change actions and whereas industrialised countries bear a historical responsibility; whereas the incidence of complex crises is rising which is linked to a number of factors including the changing nature of conflicts, poor governance and situations of fragility; violations of international humanitarian law are worsening; and the 'humanitarian space' is shrinking,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 282 E, 6.11.2008, p. 273.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 341 E, 16.12.2010, p. 5.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0465.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0235.

Tuesday 18 January 2011

- D. whereas the provision of aid is becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous, whereas the insecurity of humanitarian aid staff is increasing and whereas, in 2008, 122 humanitarian aid workers were killed,
- E. whereas more specific attention ought to be directed at the most vulnerable groups of people, such as women, children and forcibly displaced persons, and whereas the worsening incidence of gender-related violence and sexual violence is a major problem in humanitarian contexts, with systematic rape being used in some cases as a weapon of war,
- F. whereas the increasing involvement of non-humanitarian bodies in responding to humanitarian crises carries with it a major risk of confusion between the military and humanitarian roles and blurs the boundaries of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian aid,
- G. whereas the recent tragedies in Haiti and Pakistan demonstrated once again that the tools available to the EU for responding to disasters (humanitarian aid and the Community Civil Protection Mechanism) need to be improved in terms of effectiveness, speed, coordination and visibility and whereas these disasters have highlighted once again the need to create a European rapid reaction capacity,
- H. whereas the humanitarian context worldwide has deteriorated, the scale of the challenges and the humanitarian need is huge and it is essential to work on strengthening implementation of the European Consensus and the associated action plan, as well as worldwide coordination and burden sharing taking into account the regional responsibilities of the countries who have the capacity to be major contributors of humanitarian aid,
- I. whereas the Commission's budget for humanitarian disasters, and specifically that of DG ECHO, has not merely been frozen, but has fallen slightly in real terms over the last five years,

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the associated action plan

1. Considers it regrettable that, outside the humanitarian partners, there is insufficient awareness of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and calls for the introduction of specific training about the Consensus, particularly for the European External Action Service (EEAS), for diplomats from the Member States and for military bodies;
2. Considers it regrettable that the Member States are not more involved in implementing the Consensus and considers that the role of the Council's Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) should be reinforced with a view to better monitoring of how the Consensus is implemented – for example by organising specific sessions on integrating the Consensus into national humanitarian strategies or submitting an annual activity report – and more active pursuit of the remit to argue the case for humanitarian aid with other Council Working Groups and with the Political and Security Committee (PSC), while continuing to focus on effective and speedy coordination;
3. Encourages active promotion by EU delegations in third countries of the dissemination and implementation of the Consensus and of its Action Plan among the representations of the Member States;
4. Calls on the Commission to explore the possibility of a yearly exchange of best practices with EU national Parliaments about their implementation of the Consensus commitments;
5. Advocates increased funding for humanitarian aid to reflect the growing number of humanitarian interventions, and calls on the budgetary authority to transfer all or part of the emergency reserve allocation to DG ECHO's initial budget; underlines the importance of achieving the OECD/DAC target of 0,7 % of GNI by 2015;
6. Calls also for realistic budgets to be drawn up, allocating appropriations for natural disasters or humanitarian action on the basis of repeated experience with spending in previous years;

Tuesday 18 January 2011

7. Urges that additional efforts be made to speed up the funding of operations following natural and other disasters and the simplification of the decision-making and authorisation procedures for budgetary implementation; stresses the need for the Commission's services to work in close collaboration with the EEAS, so as to make rapid initial funding of the operations possible;
8. Recalls the importance of maintaining a balanced overall response while devoting particular attention to 'forgotten crises';
9. Calls for an increase in funding and the development of capabilities and resources in order to ensure that humanitarian aid and civil protection remain purely civilian tasks;
10. Supports the essential role played by NOHA (the first network of universities offering humanitarian aid training at European level) in promoting greater awareness of the world humanitarian context and particularly European policy in response to the needs of the most vulnerable groups by means of education and training of young Europeans;

Humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law and protecting the 'humanitarian space'

11. Reasserts the principles and aims of humanitarian aid contained in the Consensus; emphasises that EU humanitarian aid is not a crisis-management tool and deplores the increasing politicisation of humanitarian aid and its consequences in terms of respect for the 'humanitarian space';
12. Takes the view that the external action of the European Union, provided for in the Lisbon Treaty, must respect the principles espoused and commitments given in the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and considers that the EU should, in the light of its political weight and its influence as the main international donor, promote humanitarian principles unstintingly;
13. Calls also for military and civilian personnel, and humanitarian workers involved in disaster response or humanitarian operations, to act in accordance with the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality;
14. Welcomes the December 2009 review of the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and considers that the Commission and the Member States have a major political role to play in their implementation; hopes, also, that specific training in international humanitarian law will be provided at the EEAS;
15. Asks the Commission to ensure that additional funding is earmarked for promoting IHL and raising awareness of it on the ground – among those who bear arms, among young people and among politicians and civil society;
16. Recalls that the principles and good practices in the field of humanitarian aid adopted in June 2003 emphasise the need to encourage the rendering of accounts and the regular assessment of international responses to humanitarian crises, including the performance of donors, and stresses that these assessments must be the subject of wider consultation, particularly with humanitarian actors;

A joint framework for the delivery of aid

The quality of aid

17. Points out that the provision of aid must be based solely on identified need and the degree of vulnerability, that the quality and quantity of the aid are determined primarily by an initial evaluation and that the evaluation process needs to be further improved, particularly with regard to the application of vulnerability criteria, especially regarding women, children and disabled groups;
18. Recalls that genuine and continuous involvement – and if possible participation – of beneficiaries in the management of aid is one of the essential conditions for the quality of humanitarian responses, particularly in the case of long-term crises;

Tuesday 18 January 2011

19. Insists that the EU assistance in the event of natural or man-made disaster should aim at helping the local economy as much as possible, in particular by purchasing locally or regionally produced foodstuffs and providing the necessary materials for farmers;
20. Calls for harmonisation of the methodologies used by the various parties involved and encourages the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to continue working towards the definition of a common methodological framework which prioritises effective and speedy intervention and permanently involves, as far as possible, the local stakeholders, including non-state stakeholders;
21. Actively encourages the Commission to pursue its work in specific fields such as nutrition, protection, gender and sexual violence, refugees, returnees and IDPs and calls for the issues of gender and reproductive health to be systematically integrated into the emergency healthcare aspect of humanitarian response;
22. Calls on the Council to work out details of how to act on the recommendation in the Barnier report that the EU's outermost regions should be used, on a non-exclusive basis, as support bases to facilitate the pre-positioning of vital products and logistics, which would make it easier to deploy the available European human and material resources in the event of an urgent humanitarian intervention outside the EU;
23. Encourages the Commission to continue its thinking about the potential negative impact of humanitarian aid on the areas where it is provided – particularly the possible destabilisation of economic and social structures and the impact on the natural environment – and calls on it to devise appropriate strategies to make it possible to take this impact into account from the project design stage;

Diversity and quality of partnerships

24. Calls for respect for the diversity of bodies actively involved in financing and implementing international humanitarian programmes – the UN, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs – and encourages efforts to reinforce the capacity of local players; calls for proper coordination and exchange of information between all actors involved;
25. Requests all government bodies to respect the important role of NGOs in raising funds through private donations;
26. Supports the pursuit of humanitarian reforms at UN level and calls for the system of humanitarian coordinators to be reinforced; for 'pooled funds' to be used in a more transparent, recipient-driven and flexible way; and for improvements in the 'cluster'-based approach (with regard to sectoral responsibility), based on the UN HRR recommendations and reinforcing the transparency and accountability principles, notably in terms of coordination with local structures and non-state actors, consideration of inter-sectoral aspects and coordination between 'clusters';

International and European-level coordination

27. Reaffirms the core role played by the United Nations, particularly the OCHA, in coordinating international humanitarian action;
28. Welcomes initiatives to achieve greater consistency among the various European crisis-response instruments, and the fact that humanitarian aid and civil protection have been placed under the responsibility of a single directorate-general; insists, however, that a formal separation be maintained between the respective remits, roles and resources;
29. Calls on the Council and the Commission to introduce precise and transparent rules on cooperation and coordination between the EEAS and the Commission in the management of large-scale crises outside the EU; and to work actively regarding EU's visibility of those resources and capabilities used on the field;
30. Recalls that the European Union's external strategy on children's rights should be based on the values and principles defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Articles 3, 16, 18, 23, 25, 26 and 29, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols;

Tuesday 18 January 2011

Use of military and civil protection capabilities

31. Reaffirms that a very clear distinction needs to be maintained between the remits of military and humanitarian bodies, particularly in areas affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts, and that it is essential for military resources and capabilities to be used only in a very limited number of cases and as a last resort in support of humanitarian aid operations, in accordance with UN guidelines (the MCDA and Oslo guidelines) ⁽¹⁾;

32. Reminds the Commission and the Member States that humanitarian aid and civil protection must be regarded as purely civilian tasks and implemented accordingly;

33. Calls on the Commission to undertake awareness-raising activities about the specificity of humanitarian aid as part of EU foreign policy and calls on the Member States to ensure that their armed forces observe and apply the UN guidelines; considers, further, that there is a need for dialogue between military and humanitarian bodies in order to develop mutual understanding;

34. Reaffirms that the use of civil protection resources in humanitarian crises must be needs-based and must complement and be consistent with humanitarian aid, and points out that, in the case of natural disasters, such resources can make a certain contribution to humanitarian action, if employed in line with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) principles on the subject;

35. Calls on the Commission to bring forward ambitious legislative proposals for the establishment of a European civil protection force, based on optimising the existing Community Civil Protection Mechanism and pooling existing national resources so that no major additional costs will be incurred, and drawing on systems tried and tested during preparatory initiatives; takes the view that civil protection force financing has to be additional to funding for humanitarian emergencies;

36. Considers that the European civil protection force could comprise a commitment by certain Member States to voluntarily make available predetermined essential civil protection modules, which would be ready to intervene immediately for EU operations coordinated by the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), and also considers that most of these modules, which are already available at national level, would remain under their control and that the deployment of these modules on a standby basis would form the nucleus of the EU's civil protection to respond to disasters outside and inside the EU;

Continuity of aid***Disaster risk reduction and climate change***

37. Welcomes the adoption in February 2009 of a new European strategy to support disaster risk reduction in developing countries; urges the Commission in this respect to develop disaster prevention and response management capacity programmes with national governments, local authorities and civil society organisations in beneficiary countries and calls for the strategy to be implemented swiftly;

38. Calls for a major effort to ensure that disaster risk reduction is more systematically included as an aspect of development aid and humanitarian aid policies;

39. Advocates a substantial increase in the funding allocated to this aspect of policy and stresses the importance of maintaining provision for small-scale funding in order to ensure a context-friendly approach and local ownership of projects;

40. Calls for the agenda on adaptation to climate change to be better coordinated with disaster risk reduction activities;

⁽¹⁾ MCDA Guidelines: Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies; March 2003. Oslo Guidelines: Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief; November 2007.

Tuesday 18 January 2011

Linking emergency aid, rehabilitation and development

41. Deplores the fact that there has still been little practical progress on linking emergency aid, rehabilitation and development, in spite of the numerous political undertakings given in that regard in recent years;

42. Stresses the importance of a timely transition from emergency to development, based on specific criteria and a thoroughly conducted assessment of needs;

43. Calls for more resources with the aim of assuring the continuity of aid and a focus on flexibility and complementarity among existing financial arrangements in the phases of transition from emergency to development;

44. Advocates enhanced dialogue and coordination among humanitarian organisations and development agencies both in the field and in the relevant departments of the EU and Member State institutions;

*

* *

45. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Recognition of agriculture as a strategic sector in the context of food security

P7_TA(2011)0006

European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2011 on recognition of agriculture as a strategic sector in the context of food security (2010/2112(INI))

(2012/C 136 E/02)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its resolution of 8 July 2010 on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013 ⁽¹⁾,

— having regard to its resolution of 13 January 2009 on the Common Agricultural Policy and Global Food Security ⁽²⁾,

— having regard to its resolution of 5 May 2010 on EU agriculture and climate change ⁽³⁾,

— having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2010 on fair revenues for farmers: A better functioning food supply chain in Europe ⁽⁴⁾,

— having regard to the Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories, SEC(2010)1058,

— having regard to its resolution of 22 May 2008 on rising food prices in the European Union and developing countries ⁽⁵⁾,

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0286.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 46 E, 24.2.2010, p. 10.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0131.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0302.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 279 E, 19.11.2009, p. 71.