The European Union (EU) is the world's leading humanitarian aid donor. This aid, in the form of financing, provision of goods or services, or technical assistance, aims to help prepare for and deal urgently with crises that seriously affect populations outside the EU. EU action is based on the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and comprises three elements: emergency aid, food aid, and aid for refugees and displaced persons. The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) coordinates this action and cooperates with partners on the ground, in particular the United Nations and non-governmental organisations.

See also:
External relations
Foreign and security policy
Development