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**On the mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan:
Assessing progress and priorities in the EU's implementation of humanitarian action**

Accompanying document to the

**Communication on the mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian
Aid Action Plan – implementing effective, principled EU humanitarian action**

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 18 December 2007, the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid¹ was signed by the Presidents of the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Since its endorsement, the European Consensus has provided the European Union (EU) with a common vision and approach to guide its action in the provision of humanitarian assistance in third countries.

Among other things, the European Consensus commits the EU to working closely together and in partnership with other humanitarian stakeholders to provide needs-based emergency response aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering, and maintaining human dignity wherever the need arises if governments and local actors are overwhelmed, unable or unwilling to act. The European Consensus confirms the EU's commitment to upholding and promoting the fundamental principles of humanitarian aid and to enhancing commitments to the application of good donor practice. It also underlines the EU's support for a plurality of implementing partners (the United Nations, Red Cross/Crescent Movement and non-governmental organisations) and sets out the standards and principles for the use of civil protection resources and military assets in the EU's response to humanitarian crises.

In 2008, the European Commission presented an action plan², with a series of practical measures to implement the Consensus. The Action Plan encompasses a five-year time period and is composed of 49 actions grouped into six 'action areas':

- Area 1: Advocacy, promotion of humanitarian principles and international law;
- Area 2: Implementing quality aid approaches;
- Area 3: Reinforcing capacities to respond;
- Area 4: Strengthening partnership;
- Area 5: Enhancing coherence and coordination;
- Area 6: The aid continuum.

The Mid-Term Review aims to assess overall progress on the Action Plan thus far and identify areas of further priority. More specifically, it looks at measures undertaken by the EU as a whole, i.e. the 27 EU Member States and the European Commission, to implement the actions defined in the Action Plan and provides suggestions for areas where there is scope for further effort.

The Mid-Term Review is comprised of the Communication on 'the mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan – implementing effective principled EU humanitarian action' and this accompanying Staff Working Paper. The review process has involved consultation with stakeholders and liaison with the European Parliament, through the standing rapporteur on humanitarian aid.

¹ OJ C 25, 30.1.2008

² SEC (2008) 1991, 29.5.2008

This Staff Working Paper is structured in two main sections:

- (1) General appraisal of the implementation of the Action Plan since its adoption in 2008;
- (2) In-depth assessments of each Action Area, including areas of progress and of further priority.

In the Action Plan, references are made to the European Community and the European Union. Of the 49 actions in the Action Plan, 37 were for the EU Member States and the European Commission working together and 12 were to be taken forward specifically by the Commission. For the sake of clarity, in relation to the original Action Plan, the European Union is taken in this Staff Working Paper as referring to combined efforts of the Commission and EU Member States. Where actions foreseen refer to the European Community, the Staff Working Paper refers now to the European Commission and its humanitarian aid and civil protection Directorate-General.

2. OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

At the halfway point in the implementation of the Action Plan, the EU has made substantive progress in all of the six action areas. At the same time, there are a number of priorities where there is scope for further effort in its continued implementation over the next two years. While Section 3 provides detailed assessments of each action area, this section summarises overall progress and priorities.

The EU has conducted systematic **advocacy and promotion of key humanitarian principles and guidelines**. The fundamental humanitarian principles and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Principles guide EU donors in their provision of humanitarian assistance and have been integrated in many national frameworks. The EU has also worked hard to promote humanitarian space and compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which are necessary to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers and to preserve access to affected populations. The EU should continue to uphold its strong commitment to protecting humanitarian space and promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles and International Law. It is of particular importance to focus on advocacy efforts with an aim to enhance awareness of key guidelines and principles among relevant actors, in particular the fundamental humanitarian principles, the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in complex emergencies³ and the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in International Disaster Relief.⁴

Considerable progress has been made among EU donors in the area of **sectoral policy development** on a number of key issues including humanitarian food assistance, malnutrition in emergencies, the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian crises, HIV/AIDS, gender, protection, and disaster risk reduction. These policies in turn serve to clarify and guide EU humanitarian funding to ensure that humanitarian aid is more effective and takes into account the particular needs of vulnerable population groups. With comprehensive policy development already well-underway, the EU must now work to implement policies and

³ Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies (March 2003)

⁴ Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in International Disaster Relief – "Oslo Guidelines" (re-launched by UN OCHA in November 2006)

guidelines in operational contexts. There are also a number of key issues which require continued particular attention, especially in the promotion of disaster risk reduction and ensuring appropriate and strong links between humanitarian and development actors, especially in transitional contexts.

The EU is strongly committed to **allocating humanitarian aid funding based on assessed needs**. Together, EU Member States and the European Commission provided around 45-50 percent of overall official humanitarian aid over the past three years. The European Commission works to promote the exchange of best practices through the sharing of its sectoral policies and dissemination of its Global Needs Assessment and Forgotten Crisis Assessment tools. With increasing global levels of humanitarian needs, the EU must ensure that humanitarian aid funding levels are able to effectively meet and address these needs. Continued EU support for the development of common needs assessment, as well as for specific vulnerability and needs assessment tools in the area of food assistance, will also serve to enhance donor ability to ensure greater consistency in needs-based allocation of funding.

The EU has supported **capacity-building** projects, particularly at the global level, and has commissioned and funded studies which have helped to identify progress and gaps in global capacities. The EU should work together with other donors and partners to ensure that critical capacity gaps are clearly identified and begin to be addressed. In addition, while continuing to encourage the strengthening and consolidation of global capacities, the EU could also explore ways to support local capacities. Finally, further discussions within the EU aimed at exploring how to appropriately and effectively support EU-12 donor capacity represents another useful measure in this area.

Coordination among EU donors has improved, notably through the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). Dialogue between EU humanitarian and civil protection actors has also increased. Coordination with other humanitarian donors has been strengthened through bilateral dialogue and participation in international fora, especially the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative. Continued efforts to improve coordination and coherence at both headquarters and field level, on both operational and on policy issues, would help to enhance the effectiveness of EU humanitarian action. This includes supporting diversity in partnerships (including advocacy for the 'Principles of Partnership') as well as facilitating dialogue among humanitarian, civilian and military actors. Coordination among EU donors could be further enhanced through exploring opportunities for division of labour and information sharing. There is also scope for further efforts in enhancing dialogue and links with other donors, including to promote increased awareness and ownership of the fundamental humanitarian principles.

3. ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION BY ACTION AREA: PROGRESS AND FURTHER PRIORITIES

3.1. Advocacy, promotion of humanitarian principles and international law

3.1.1. Background

The EU is firmly committed to upholding and promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence...The EU will advocate strongly and consistently for the respect of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law and Refugee Law.

Action Area One of the Action Plan proposes a series of measures related to advocacy and promotion of the fundamental humanitarian principles and International Law. The overall expected result of this area is EU strengthened commitment to ensuring neutral and independent humanitarian action and to protecting humanitarian space. It is composed of five actions, including: general and case-specific advocacy for the respect of International Law through EU policy channels, promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles through EU coordinated positions in relevant international bodies, and organising a high-level international conference on current issues related to IHL.

3.1.2. Areas of Progress

General and case-specific advocacy for International Law, the fundamental humanitarian principles and the protection of humanitarian space

Relevant action(s): 2, 4

Respect for the fundamental humanitarian principles and International Law as well as the preservation of humanitarian space lie at the heart of EU humanitarian action. They are essential elements for ensuring that humanitarian assistance is delivered to those who need it most, autonomously and independently of other objectives. They also help to ensure humanitarian access to populations in need as well as the safety and security of humanitarian workers who often risk their lives in the course of duty (with the number of humanitarian workers killed having tripled over the past decade)⁵. Since the adoption of the Action Plan, the EU has made **strong and consistent efforts to advocate for these important issues**.

Collectively, the EU has advocated for these issues most notably through the Council. In 2009, coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the Council adopted conclusions reaffirming its strong support for the promotion and protection of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).⁶ An updated version of the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL⁷ was adopted at that occasion. In its conclusions, the Council furthermore reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the implementation of these guidelines and the importance of continuing to improve the mainstreaming of IHL throughout the external action of the EU. Since the adoption of the Consensus and of its Action Plan, the Council has also adopted conclusions emphasising the Council's support for the promotion and the respect for IHL for specific humanitarian crises such as the Great Lakes Region, the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), Sri Lanka, Sudan and Yemen.

International fora offer further opportunities for EU advocacy in this field. Through EU statements and positions in relation to international humanitarian events and relevant United Nations (UN) resolutions, the EU has systematically expressed its support for the humanitarian principles and humanitarian space. The EU also facilitates the annual UN General Assembly Resolutions "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel"⁸ and "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency

⁵ See OCHA (2010) "World Humanitarian Day: Security Trends". http://ochaonline.un.org/whd/docs/SecuritySheet/whd_2010_security_sheet_en.pdf

⁶ Conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union at the 2985th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, 8.12.2009

⁷ OJ C 303/12, 15.12.2009

⁸ Annual resolution, first adopted during the 52nd session of the General Assembly (A/RES/52/167)

humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".⁹ In conjunction with World Humanitarian Day, the European Commission this year launched the "Don't shoot! I'm a Humanitarian Worker" campaign aimed at raising awareness of the need to promote safety and security of humanitarian workers.

As well as collective EU actions, EU donors have also undertaken individual efforts to promote the fundamental humanitarian principles, humanitarian space and International Law. The European Commission has conducted such advocacy through general and case-specific public statements. Member States have also conducted similar advocacy efforts in their national capacities. Bilateral dialogue with specific countries has offered further opportunities in this field.

UN bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) represent key partners in the area of advocacy. With promotion and strengthening of International Law as a key part of its mandate, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) represents an important actor in this regard. In support of this action area, a number of EU donors have supported the ICRC and national Red Cross Societies as well as other organisations, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), for IHL dissemination and promotion activities. EU donors represent 13 out of the 19 members of the ICRC Donor Support Group (DSG) and together provided 46% of total DSG financial contributions to ICRC in 2009.¹⁰

Advocacy for the fundamental humanitarian principles and humanitarian access in complex emergencies

In Sri Lanka, the European Union, has advocated strongly for the respect of humanitarian principles on the part of the Government of Sri Lanka, and continuously supported its humanitarian partners in their efforts to persevere in operating with a principled approach. In 2009, a major breakthrough was achieved through persistent awareness-raising on the part of the international community over the violation of norms in the treatment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who for several months were held in closed IDP camps. In response to these advocacy efforts by the EU and other international actors, the Government of Sri Lanka modified its treatment of the displaced and initiated a rapid IDP resettlement programme.

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Security is a key question in Afghanistan where humanitarian workers, especially from Western countries, are seen as potential targets by insurgents. This issue is compounded by the blurring of lines between military and civilian activities, in particular linked to the role of military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which raise concern, not only in terms of quality of the interventions but also in terms of increased security risks for NGOs and their beneficiaries as the perception of NGOs' neutrality may be compromised. This is why the European Commission has been advocating for the promotion and respect of humanitarian space and principles in Afghanistan in all possible fora. The Commission also obliges its partners to abide by the humanitarian mandate and base their work solely on humanitarian principles, notably neutrality, thereby promoting the humanitarian space in

⁹ Annual resolution, first adopted during the 46th session of the General Assembly (A/RES/46/182)

¹⁰ International Committee of the Red Cross (2010) "Annual Report 2009" Available from: http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/section_annual_report_2009

Afghanistan.

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*The European Union also continues to persistently advocate for the respect of humanitarian principles and humanitarian space in **Sudan**. Alongside other international actors, the EU has advocated for the Sudanese government to facilitate humanitarian access to conflict-affected populations, the most recent example being Jebel Marra, and to respect humanitarian principles by allowing humanitarian partners to respond to the crisis without conditionality or bureaucratic impediments. Through the Council Working Group on Humanitarian Action and Food Assistance, the EU has developed strong common messages which have been passed to the relevant actors at every opportunity.*

High-level international conference (16 September 2008)

Relevant action(s): 1

A high-level international conference organised by the European Commission and European Parliament was held on 16 September 2008. The conference was attended by a wide range of stakeholders including representatives from EU Member States, United Nations, the Red Cross/Crescent Movement, and NGOs. Entitled "Respect for International Humanitarian Law: a major challenge, a global responsibility", the Conference highlighted the current situation for IHL and identified recommendations for the EU to enhance its promotion of respect for IHL. The conference further reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting IHL and paved the way for a number of subsequent concrete measures, including general Council conclusions on IHL (see above).

Since the adoption of the Action Plan, a number of EU Member States have also organised conferences and seminars on IHL at the national level.

3.1.3. Further priorities

Strong and coherent EU advocacy efforts for IHL

Relevant action(s): 2, 3, 4

Despite advocacy efforts, disregard or even blatant violations of IHL provisions continue to occur in the context of many complex emergencies. Case-specific promotion of compliance with IHL, including reaction to its infringement, is a highly sensitive matter that often is dealt with through discrete advocacy and political channels. Such infringements have a profound impact on the humanitarian space to operate and on protection, making this an area requiring **continuous efforts for implementation**. EU humanitarian experts need to reflect carefully upon additional ways to work together with others, including the future European External Action Service (EEAS) to advocate both in general and, where appropriate, on specific situations, for the protection of humanitarian space and the respect of humanitarian principles and International Law.

Efforts to support awareness and understanding of humanitarian principles among all relevant actors

Relevant action(s): 3, 5

Over recent years, the context surrounding humanitarian aid has continued to evolve considerably. One such notable and welcome development is the increasing involvement of

new and emerging donors in the provision of humanitarian assistance and particularly in international humanitarian affairs. As such, the EU should continue to support their growing engagement, including through promoting awareness of the principles that guide the delivery of humanitarian aid, such as the fundamental humanitarian principles. The EU should further discuss and explore ways to reach out to emerging donors, including through international fora (such as the GHD and the UN Economic and Social Council), to promote **increased understanding and ownership of the humanitarian mandate**.

There is scope for further work within the EU as well, especially in ensuring that **humanitarian dimensions are duly considered throughout EU external action**. Particular focus should be placed on promoting awareness of the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in complex emergencies and the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in International Disaster Relief.

Training on the fundamental humanitarian principles and IHL is important for enhancing this awareness among relevant professionals, especially those working in contexts where IHL is frequently violated. While Member States and the Commission have undertaken individual efforts to ensure appropriate and effective training provisions, there is scope to enhance coherence in these efforts, notably through the further development of an EU training directory/pack on humanitarian principles and IHL implications for humanitarian assistance. It would be particularly timely to pursue this further in relation to the establishment of the new European External Action Service.

3.2. Implementing Quality Aid Approaches

3.2.1. Background

EU humanitarian donors will endeavour to ensure good donor practice through sharing understanding on need and appropriate responses and through concerted efforts to avoid overlap and to ensure that humanitarian needs are adequately assessed and met...As donors, we have the responsibility to ensure that aid delivered represents the best available option and is suitable for the purpose it is intended.

European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Action Area Two deals specifically with the importance of implementing quality aid approaches and has the following overall expected results: humanitarian needs identified and met more effectively, with increased focus on neglected crises and specific vulnerabilities and results-oriented approaches; and aid delivered to the best possible quality standards and with good levels of accountability. It is composed of 12 actions, with focus on e.g.: operational guidelines and recommendations for thematic areas such as HIV/AIDS and protection; supporting common needs assessments; and ensuring the efficiency and adequacy of humanitarian aid.

3.2.2. Areas of progress

Efficiency of Humanitarian Aid Funding Procedures

Relevant action(s): 11, 15

Collectively, EU Member States and the European Commission provide a substantial share of official international humanitarian aid. There are a number of channels through which the EU

can provide humanitarian aid, including: direct bilateral allocation of funding to partner organisations for the implementation of specific humanitarian operations; provision of unearmarked funding to partner organisations; and contributions to pooled funding mechanisms and emergency response funds, such as the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). EU donors contribute variously through all of these different funding channels, and as such, the EU is well-placed to make sure they are used effectively and with good complementarity.

The European Commission (which accounted for 34% percent of the overall EU humanitarian aid contribution in 2009) has a number of different kinds of funding decisions in order to allocate funding to partners for the implementation of specific humanitarian aid operations. This means that rapid funding allocations (up to certain thresholds) can be made under 'primary emergency' or emergency decisions, which can be adopted in very short timeframes to fund the immediate response through implementing partners. For example, in 2010, these rapid procedures allowed for contributions for the initial response to meeting humanitarian needs of people affected by earthquakes in Haiti and Chile; floods in Pakistan and Bangladesh; and displacement in Kyrgyzstan. The European Commission recently streamlined procedures for the adoption of these decisions, which represents an important measure to enhance the **efficiency and speed with which the Commission can respond to crises while at the same time ensuring appropriate and adequate financial management and control.**

Other recent changes that aim to increase the efficiency of the Commission's financing decisions and modalities include changes that allow the Commission to now also be able to implement humanitarian actions with a larger number of Member States' Specialised Agencies. These Specialised Agencies in the field of humanitarian aid can offer valuable capabilities and expertise in responding to emergencies and so far three such Agencies have already implemented EU-funded projects, with two others having demonstrated interest in applying for recognition. By updating the recognition procedure for organisations wishing to implement EU-funded humanitarian actions, such as Member States' Specialised Agencies, the European Commission has sought to reinforce its commitment to maintain a diversity of quality partners, in line with the Good Humanitarian Donorship approach.

The European Commission has also recently equipped itself with a number of innovative financial decisions aimed at addressing small-scale disasters, epidemics and the replenishment of the DREF. The decisions, which complement existing financial tools, have proven themselves to be effective instruments and have improved the Commission's ability to respond consistently, effectively and flexibly to humanitarian crises without increasing its administrative burden.

In addition, the European Commission is developing a new approach regarding its decision-making on humanitarian aid funding which is intended to enter into force as of 1 January 2011. The purpose of the new approach is to reduce the overall number of financing decisions, whilst fully respecting the legal bases of the EU's Financial and Humanitarian Aid Regulations, including the strategic needs-based approach of the latter. The overall goal of this approach is therefore to increase the efficiency of the working methods whilst maintaining expertise, flexibility and transparency.

Whilst these changes represent important steps to increasing the efficiency of humanitarian aid decision-making, procedures remain in place to ensure the European Commission's

continued accountability to the European Parliament and the Council. The European Commission submits an annual report to the European Parliament and the Council with a summary of the operations financed over the course of the year¹¹. Its activities are also subject to scrutiny internally by the Commission's Internal Audit Services and externally by the European Court of Auditors, which reports to the European Parliament and the Council¹².

Collectively, the EU provides a substantial share of official humanitarian assistance. In 2009, the 27 EU Member States provided approximately €3.4 billion in official humanitarian aid. A number of Member States have worked to further integrate needs-based approaches into their own national frameworks and strategies, as well as to enhance the flexibility of their funding to international organisations, notably through contributions to pooled funding mechanisms, such as CERF. EU Member States together accounted for approximately two thirds of all CERF contributions in 2009.

Sectoral policymaking

Relevant action(s): 7

In order to continue to ensure that its humanitarian aid is administered according to a principled needs-based approach while also taking into account the particular vulnerabilities and needs of certain groups, the European Commission has **developed a number of sectoral policies** since the adoption of the Action Plan. These sectoral policies have been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and humanitarian partner organisations. In order to promote the exchange of best practices and lessons learnt among EU donors, these guidelines have also been shared with EU Member States. Although action 7 is designated in the Action Plan as a Commission action, a number of EU Member States have also developed and put in place national policies and strategies on some of these same issues. The EU is able to cross-fertilise best practice in sectoral policies by working together in a coordinated way.

In accordance with Action 7, the European Commission has adopted funding guidelines outlining its position on several key thematic issues, such as:

- The use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian crises: these guidelines aim to encourage the systematic and comparative analysis of all forms of resource transfers in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to provide guidance on the handling of cash through the project cycle;
- Responding to HIV/AIDS in humanitarian action: these guidelines, among other things, clarify how HIV patients should continue to receive treatment during humanitarian crises;
- Protection activities: these guidelines provide an overview of protection strategies (including protection against sexual and gender based violence) and detail the provisions for funding them;
- School feeding: these guidelines include clear criteria for deciding whether school feeding activities should be supported from the humanitarian budget in a specific context;

¹¹ In accordance with Article 19 of Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96

¹² In accordance with Article 12 of Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96

In addition, the Commission Communication 'A Special Place for children in EU external action'¹³ and the Staff Working Paper on 'Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations'¹⁴ were adopted in 2008 and endorsed by the Council (through Council Conclusions in 2008¹⁵) and the European Parliament (through a resolution in 2009¹⁶).

As stated in the European Consensus, the EU recognises the importance of integrating **gender** considerations, protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence and women's participation in humanitarian aid. In support of this, the European Commission commissioned a review of past and current methods used by humanitarian actors to address gender, including strategies to combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which was finalised in 2009. A number of key policy documents focusing on gender and SGBV have also been adopted by the EU since the endorsement of the Consensus Action Plan. The Council adopted in December 2008 a 'Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security'¹⁷, which covers humanitarian, development, security and foreign policies for the prevention, protection, and participation of women. In July 2010, the Council also adopted indicators to measure progress and assess gaps in the implementation the Comprehensive Approach. A number of EU Member States have also adopted or are preparing national action plans on the implementation of the aforementioned UN resolutions. Finally, on 21 September 2010, the European Commission adopted its new Strategy for equality between women and men that covers various policy areas and contains a specific chapter on EC external actions including humanitarian aid.

The European Commission and several EU Member States also contributed financially and participated actively in the recent revision process of the 'Sphere Handbook' (the quality standards reference tool for the humanitarian community). This revision has updated variously the qualitative and quantitative indicators and guidance notes to take into account the latest developments in the humanitarian sector, such as the impact of climate change, disaster risk reduction, protection, the humanitarian reform process and the cluster approach. The revision went through a robust and widespread process of engagement among practitioners in each sector which will create a greater sense of ownership of the new 'Sphere Handbook' and enable it to play a bigger role within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) which brings together humanitarian organisations including UN actors, the Red Cross/Crescent Movement and some NGO representatives.

Improving approaches to humanitarian food assistance and nutrition in emergencies

Relevant action(s): 13

The European Commission has also taken steps to adjust policies regarding approaches and interventions to food assistance and livelihoods support. On 31 March 2010, the Commission adopted the 'Communication on Humanitarian Food Assistance'.¹⁸ This Communication sets out the policy framework for EU humanitarian food assistance with an aim to maximise its efficiency and effectiveness in accordance with best practices and existing frameworks. The

¹³ COM (2008) 55 – 5.2.2008

¹⁴ SEC (2008) 135 – 5.2.2008

¹⁵ Conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union at the 2870th External Relations Council meeting (26-27.5.2008)

¹⁶ OJ C 76 E/3 – 25.3.2010

¹⁷ 15671/1/08 REV 1

¹⁸ COM (2010) 126 – 31.3.2010

Council endorsed the EU's humanitarian food assistance policy framework in its conclusions of 10 May 2010¹⁹, also recognising its contribution to the fulfilment of action 13 of the Action Plan. The EU is now working on the implementation of the Communication. Close coordination was ensured with work on the 'EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges',²⁰ with their complementarity representing an important effort to ensure the linking of relief, recovery and development (LRRD).

The European Commission has also advanced its work on nutrition, both to clarify the objectives and priorities of its support to nutrition in humanitarian crises, and to give guidance on the integration of nutrition objectives into external aid more generally.

The European Commission has also supported the wider humanitarian community to improve approaches and interventions to food assistance, notably through the allocation of €5 million in 2010 from its capacity building programme to reinforce the capacity of international humanitarian organisations and stakeholders (including the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organisation and the Red Cross/Crescent Movement (IFRC and ICRC)) to deliver more varied and appropriate forms of food assistance.

Supporting needs assessment

Relevant action(s): 6, 12

Thorough and quality needs assessments are essential for donors to provide targeted needs-based assistance in humanitarian crises. Many organisations and clusters have made substantial progress in developing needs assessment capacities, methods and tools. However, it is essential to link these initiatives in order to ensure a coherent and consistent overall approach.

To this end, the EU provides substantial support to UN-OCHA's Assessment and Classification in Emergencies (ACE) project. With support from donors, ACE has undertaken significant efforts towards the development of a common methodological framework for needs assessment, notably through a mapping study of key existing assessment initiatives. EU financial support has also been provided to Assessment Capacities (ACAPS), a project aimed at strengthening needs assessment by setting up and training a global roster of needs assessment specialists to support in-country capacities to prepare for and to respond to crises through better coordinated multi-sectoral needs assessments. The EU has also strongly advocated for the common needs assessment approach in international fora, and EU representatives participate as observers on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) (an interagency forum charged with developing and promoting an overall common framework for needs assessment).

In the field of humanitarian food assistance, the EU has provided support to projects that aim to strengthen the needs assessment and response analysis capacities of main humanitarian food assistance actors. Significant support was provided by the EU to the World Food Programme (WFP) and its project on 'Strengthening of Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity' (SENAC) as well as the one on 'Enhancing Capacities in Food Security and Response Analysis (ENCAP). The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was supported

¹⁹ Conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union at the 3011th meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council (10.5.2010)

²⁰ COM (2010) 127 – 31.3.2010

for the set up of the Integrated Classification System (IPC), the Response Analysis Framework (RAF) and the Livelihoods in Livestock in Emergencies Guidelines and Standards (LEGS).

A common needs assessment approach and a humanitarian Dashboard

*The EU plays a leading role in ensuring comparable, credible and transparent humanitarian needs assessment and it continues supporting the efforts of UN-OCHA towards the building of a consensus on a **common needs assessment approach**. It also advocates for the need for non-EU donors to provide the same support.*

*In this context, the **humanitarian Dashboard** developed by UN-OCHA in consultation with the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force will contribute significantly to informed decision-making and prioritisation by donors, by Humanitarian Coordinators and by humanitarian country teams. The humanitarian Dashboard is a tool designed to provide an easy to read overview highlighting the consolidated cross-sector needs in a sudden onset disaster.*

The purpose and the added value of the humanitarian Dashboard are:

- *To consolidate core, common and more comparable information for humanitarian decision-makers in an easily accessible format, focusing on ‘the need for international response’, on the ‘constraints on international response’, and on the ‘adequacy of response’;*
- *To provide a common platform for organizing data and for discussing essential ‘big-picture’ and cross-sectoral information among key stakeholders, fostering greater consensus and thus a more coordinated and effective humanitarian response; and*
- *To provide a ‘big picture’ monitoring tool to be used as a basis for setting common operational targets and to track progress towards those targets.*

In addition to supporting efforts towards common needs assessment, the Commission also administers the Global Needs Assessment (GNA) and Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) tools to promote and facilitate needs-based allocations among donors. The GNA classifies countries according to their relative vulnerability and the existence of a crisis situation while the FCA attempts to identify severe, protracted humanitarian crises where affected populations are receiving no or insufficient international aid. These instruments have been widely disseminated, including to EU Member States, many of which use the GNA and FCA in their operational strategies and funding decisions. In addition, the EU regularly shares analysis of humanitarian needs, particularly in light of ongoing response to protracted crises.

3.2.3. Further priorities

Continued support for common needs assessment

Relevant action(s): 6

The EU should continue to **support efforts towards common needs assessments**, in particular through supporting the work of UN-OCHA and the NATF to build consensus on a common framework for needs assessment. The EU should continue advocacy efforts for close

cooperation among agencies and partners to ensure comparable, credible and transparent needs assessment, notably through the development of the humanitarian Dashboard.

Ensuring support for key thematic / sectoral issues

Relevant action(s): 7, 10

The development of funding guidelines represents an important action and the European Commission is now focusing on their **effective implementation**, through:

- Their mainstreaming in humanitarian aid funding decisions;
- A wide dissemination strategy; and
- Evaluation exercises, such as a recent evaluation undertaken on protection activities funded in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which led to practical suggestions on ways for improving effectiveness and efficiency of protection projects.

To follow up on the gender review completed in 2009, the European Commission is currently working on the **development of a gender policy** that intends to clarify which strategies it will put in place to try to systematise gender integration in its humanitarian aid and how the Commission can better contribute to protection against sexual and gender-based violence through its humanitarian assistance. This policy will be coordinated with and complementary to broader European Commission policy on gender and should be finalised in 2011.

The Council Conclusions on the Food Security Communication call for the development of a policy on nutrition that would encompass humanitarian and development interventions. The Interim Position Paper on Nutrition is a first step in the process of developing further guidance for the European Commission's nutrition intervention and elaborating a common perspective on principles and priorities that would help mainstreaming and advocacy for sustained support to combat under-nutrition.

Ensuring adequate and effective response to increasing humanitarian needs

Relevant action(s): 8

As recently illustrated in 2010 by the earthquake in Haiti, floods in Pakistan and drought in the Sahel, as well as by the protracted crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia and Sudan, the humanitarian community is facing a growth in global levels of humanitarian needs. At the same time however, donors are facing the consequences of a severe global financial crisis which has implied constraints for many countries' national budgets. In order to ensure an adequate and effective response to growing needs in this context, it is clear that aid budgets must be used with maximum **efficiency**, which implies more coordinated planning to ensure avoidance of gaps and potential overlaps. It also requires clearly prioritised and identified needs.

In addition to enhanced planning and prioritisation, the EU should **consider identifying ways to increase funding for humanitarian action**, including through strengthening ties with other donors (especially emerging donors), in an effort to ensure that humanitarian needs are being consistently and adequately addressed. The EU must also ensure that in these times of tight public spending the level of budget allocations for humanitarian response are maintained to the extent possible.

In order to ensure that the legal base for the EU's humanitarian aid reflects the strong policy commitments of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and allows for flexible, timely and appropriate response to humanitarian crises, a revision of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation²¹ will be launched in 2011.

3.3. Reinforcing Capacities to Respond

3.3.1. Background

Local response to crisis and disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness and recovery, are essential to saving lives and enabling communities to increase their resilience to emergencies. Capacity building activities to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and to enhance humanitarian response are also part of EU humanitarian aid.

European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Action Area Three presents five measures aimed at reinforcing the humanitarian community's capacities to respond, with an overall expected result of improved rapid and appropriate response to humanitarian crisis, with international assistance reinforcing local action as first line of response. The area includes such actions as: exploring how to enhance support to capacity building; promoting and providing support to International Disaster Response Laws; and reinforcing EU training provision for humanitarian professionals and other actors linked to humanitarian response.

3.3.2. Areas of progress

Enhanced understanding and policymaking for capacity building

Relevant action(s): 18, 19

Building capacities of the humanitarian community represents an important effort for the promotion of the effective, efficient and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. At the local level, capacity-building is essential as local actors represent the first line of response in a sudden onset crisis and are increasingly at the core of the humanitarian response in complex emergencies. However, the scale and scope of humanitarian crises is often overwhelming for any one country to handle alone. Capacity-building at the regional and global levels is thus also important, including efforts to improve coordination of humanitarian assistance (such as the cluster system) and to facilitate the efficient and timely delivery of international aid (such as the International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles).

Since the endorsement of the Action Plan, the EU has taken a number of concrete steps to **review and evaluate issues related to capacity building**. The European Commission has completed a number of studies on capacity-related issues, including a mapping study on international humanitarian transport, logistics and stockpiling,²² as well as an evaluation and review on the provision of air transport in support of humanitarian operations.²³ These studies,

²¹ Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96

²² International Disaster Assistance and Relief Training (2009) "Study on International Humanitarian Transport, Logistics and Stockpiling Capacities" (study commissioned by European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection)

²³ Telford, John and Robert Thomson (2010) "Evaluation on the Provision of Air Transport in Support of Humanitarian Operations" and "Review on the Provision of Air Transport in Support of Humanitarian

which have been widely disseminated to EU Member States and humanitarian stakeholders, have served to highlight key trends and provide operational recommendations in the area of logistics.

The European Commission has also completed an evaluation of capacity building funding, which in turn provided important input to the development of its Capacity Building Funding Guidelines²⁴ following an 18-month consultation process with partners, donors and other humanitarian actors. The guidelines, adopted in 2009, include a multi-donor requirement for capacity building funding, identify gaps in the global humanitarian system, and provide criteria for European Commission funding responses in capacity-building.

The EU has also provided substantial **financial support to global capacity building efforts**. The European Commission alone contributed €25 million in 2009 and €15 million in 2010 to strengthen global humanitarian preparedness and response capacity, including the reinforcement of the Logistics, Health, and WASH clusters through support to UN-OCHA, UNHCR, FAO, UNICEF and IFRC in the roll-out of the cluster system. More specifically, in 2009-2010, capacity-building funding was allocated to support particular projects, including:

- The NGO network 'Cash Learning Partnership Discussion Forum' (CaLP) and its integrated training programmes as well as a capacity-building project implemented by IFRC in partnership with CaLP for training and advocacy efforts regarding the use of cash and vouchers;
- The strengthening of the WHO-led Health cluster to coordinate interventions in health priorities including pandemics; and
- An IDP profiling project with UNHCR aimed at improving the humanitarian community's access to and use of more consistent and reliable core information on displacement-affected populations.

The European Commission also supports efforts of the Global Nutrition Cluster to strengthen appropriate responses to nutrition crises, including countries transitioning into recovery, through better coordination and dissemination of international standards and harmonised tools.

Humanitarian Response Depots

Logistical capacity and pre-positioning of certain essential humanitarian relief items is a critical element for effective international humanitarian action.

*This is why the EU has supported the World Food Program, as cluster lead agency for logistics, to strengthen its emergency response capacity and that of the whole humanitarian community by reinforcing the **Humanitarian Response Depot (HRD)** network. EU capacity-building funding has supported the establishment and supply of four additional Humanitarian Response Depots and logistics hubs in key strategic locations around the world: Panama, Ghana, Dubai and Malaysia.*

Operations." (studies commissioned by European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection)

²⁴ Recently renamed 'Enhancing Capacity Response' guidelines

These hubs, together with the Brindisi WFP logistics base, function as a network of warehouse facilities with pre-positioned relief items for emergency response operations and provide logistic services to the wider humanitarian community (NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent organisations and UN agencies). In particular, EU funding has ensured that NGO partners are able to draw upon pre-positioned goods to support humanitarian operations. By funding HRDs, the EU has thus contributed to enhancing the capacity of the international humanitarian community to respond quickly in sudden onset disasters; for example, the pre-positioned goods in the HRD in Panama were used to help respond to the earthquake in Haiti.

International disaster response

Relevant action(s): 21

In the event of a natural disaster, it is essential that humanitarian assistance is delivered in a timely and efficient manner to those most in need. To do this, particular legal frameworks should be in place in order to avoid delays in delivery (due to e.g. long visa processing time and inspection requirements for relief goods) and unnecessary costs (due to e.g. customs duties and taxes on humanitarian aid).

Adopted by the IFRC in 2007, the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of Internal Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance (IDRL Guidelines) aim to assist governments in putting legal frameworks in place to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid in the event of natural disasters. They also underline the role and responsibilities of donors and implementing organisations to facilitate timely and appropriate delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The EU has provided substantial **support for the IDRL Guidelines**, including financial support from the European Commission and EU Member States to the IFRC to disseminate these guidelines.

In the light of recent experience and lessons learnt from major crises, the European Union has kept the issue of reinforcing international and EU capacity to respond to natural disasters high on the political agenda. The European Commission has actively sought to ensure strong complementarity and synergies between humanitarian aid response and the use of EU civil protection expertise and assets. A series of recommendations on reinforcing EU Disaster Response Capacities is being presented in autumn 2010.

In addition, the Commission supports Red Cross/Crescent national societies to use their front-line capacities for responding to small-scale disasters through contributions to the replenishment of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

Humanitarian professionalism and awareness – training provisions and sharing experience

Relevant action(s): 20, 22

The European Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) is an international association of universities working together to develop **training and education**, notably through the European Master Programme in International Humanitarian Action. At the request of the European Commission, NOHA created the 'NOHA Academy' in 2009, which offers seminars to humanitarian professionals from e.g. civil society and EU Member States, in order to heighten awareness and understanding of key humanitarian issues.

In addition, a number of EU experts from the European Commission and various EU Member States have been trained in the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system and have participated in UNDAC missions.

There has been good progress on improving **knowledge and sharing best practice** between EU donors over the past few years. Within the EU, there has been a series of short-term or ad hoc arrangements for officials from small humanitarian departments, often from the newer EU Member States, to spend time in another EU humanitarian department as well as secondment in support of EU presidencies. An awareness-raising exercise on the various possibilities for enhancing capacity for EU-12 authorities was undertaken under the leadership of the Czech Government during its Presidency of the Council of the EU (first semester 2009) and exchanges continue on this informal basis. The Erasmus Public Administration Programme has also recently been used to support job-shadowing exchange of EU officials working on humanitarian aid. It has not been felt necessary to formalise specific 'twinning' arrangements as the network between EU humanitarian departments is now well-established and regular contacts are facilitated through COHAFA and Good Humanitarian Donorship. Staff turnover means, however, that this is a continuous exercise.

3.3.3. *Further priorities*

Continued support for capacity building

Relevant action(s): 19, 20

As mentioned above, the EU actively encourages and supports capacity-building of its humanitarian partner organisations as well as of the international humanitarian system. The EU should work together with other donors and partners to ensure that critical capacity gaps are clearly identified and begin to be addressed.

Launched in 2005 by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, the humanitarian reform represents a major effort to strengthen global capacity to respond to humanitarian crises. As is stated in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the EU fully supports efforts to ensure better coherence and coordination of various actors in humanitarian crises, in particular through the **cluster approach** and the **strengthening of the Humanitarian Coordinator system**. While recognising the considerable progress that has been made in the roll-out of the cluster system, the EU should continue to encourage UN-OCHA and cluster lead organisations to further consolidate and reinforce the cluster system, including through strengthened partnerships with NGOs, enhancing donor-cluster links and ensuring the cluster system effectively supports the transition from emergency to early recovery. **Building local capacities** is an equally essential element and should be further integrated into the EU's partnership approach.

The EU should also continue to support capacity-building in nutrition-related matters. The European Commission will explore the most adequate avenue to sustain a coordinated and effective approach to the research gaps already identified and to the dissemination of the expected WHO revised guidelines on the management of severe and moderate acute under-nutrition. The EU should also stand ready to support the global food cluster that will be set up and co-led by FAO and WFP.

In the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the EU also welcomes efforts to enhance predictability and flexibility of humanitarian financing. Pooled funding mechanisms, including Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF) and the UN Central Emergency Response

Fund are important tools in this regard and provide a useful supplement to the range of available financing instruments. Between 2006 and 2009, EU Member States have provided over 1.1 billion USD (or approximately €800 million) in contributions to the CERF.²⁵ The EU should continue to encourage efforts to **enhance accountability, transparency and needs-based allocation of pooled funding**, especially of the CERF; and to ensure complementarity and close coordination between the pooled funding mechanisms and directly allocated bilateral funding.

There is also scope to enhance staff training provisions, especially those with potential to enhance capacities of newly acceded EU Member States. In particular, the EU could explore ways to further promote reciprocal or joint training opportunities.

3.4. Strengthening Partnership

3.4.1. Background

Partnership is at the core of implementation of humanitarian aid and the EU therefore would welcome a broader international partnership approach, which brings together donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders, to ensure effective humanitarian action, building on the existing body of standard and best practice.

European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Action Area Four has an expected overall result of strengthened well-coordinated partnerships for effective delivery of aid, expanded donor base, and reinforcement of local participation in humanitarian aid design and implementation. It includes seven actions such as: active EU participation in humanitarian fora; EU mainstreaming of the Good Humanitarian Donorship commitments; and providing encouragement for the application of the 'Principles of Partnership'.

3.4.2. Areas of progress

Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative

Relevant action(s): 24, 26, 28

The Good Humanitarian Donorship principles and good practices were established by 16 donors in 2003. GHD seeks to define humanitarian aid and its objectives, outlines the general principles of humanitarian aid, and promotes partnership and good donor practices in financing, management, and accountability. By firmly endorsing these principles through the European Consensus, the EU has shown its strong commitment to promoting effective, responsible and accountable humanitarian donorship. A number EU Member States have made considerable efforts in incorporating the GHD Principles into national strategies and frameworks.

With the signing of the European Consensus, eleven new members were brought in to the GHD initiative. To facilitate their integration and to allow for a deepening of shared experience and peer-learning, from 2008 the European Commission facilitated a specific

²⁵ OCHA (2010) "CERF Pledges and Contributions: 2006-2010". Available from: <http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/Donors/Donors/tabid/5370/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

series of 'newcomers' sessions, co-organised by Estonia, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. As a measure of success of these sessions, in spring 2010 they were re-named 'Sessions for Humanitarian Awareness-Raising and Exchange' (SHARE) and Estonia took over as facilitator. The invitation to participate in SHARE sessions has also been broadened to include non-GHD donors as a supplementary channel for reaching out on the GHD approach.

To underpin its commitment, the European Commission together with the Netherlands co-chaired the GHD initiative in 2008-9, followed by Ireland and Estonia in 2009-10. Under this European leadership, there has been a clear prioritisation to the operational-relevance of good Donorship and to expanding the dialogue with emerging donors and countries affected by disaster. A range of thematic issues, many of which link also to the Consensus, have been pursued through GHD, which now encompasses 37 donors - the latest to adhere being South Korea and Brazil.

The 2007 'Principles of Partnership'²⁶ agreed between the UN and non-UN humanitarian organisations under the auspices of the Global Humanitarian Platform, were a specific focus of donor attention under the European Commission/Netherlands GHD co-chair period. The annual GHD meeting in July 2009 looked at practical examples of the 'Principles of Partnership' in action.

An important aspect of GHD is self-commitment from donors to shift toward implementing the best practice and principles as consistently as possible over time. To this end, in the early years of the GHD initiative a number of donors (including Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands) presented domestic implementation plans. In the Consensus Action Plan, the European Commission committed to join this group of donors with explicit statements of how they translate GHD in practice. A European Commission GHD implementation statement and plan are now at the stage of peer-review by other donors.

The EU promoting good donor practice

With the adoption of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, all 27 EU Member States and the European Commission committed to working together to apply 'Good Humanitarian Donorship' principles and best practice.

*The strong EU commitment to ensuring a clearly prioritised and more operational focus for donor work under Good Humanitarian Donorship, was deepened during a two year phase of **chairing by EU donors**: the European Commission together with the Netherlands (2008-9), followed by Estonia and Ireland (2009-10). During this period GHD active outreach efforts have led to Japan, South Korea and Brazil also making the commitment to work with other donors under GHD.*

Some important issues taken forward in GHD in the past two years include:

- *Strengthening coordination between donors in the field*
- *Applying the Principles of Partnership*

²⁶ Principles of Partnership: equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity

- *Working with national and local authorities in disaster-affected countries*
- *Linking of humanitarian aid responses to disaster risk reduction and development approaches*
- *Assessing needs and addressing gaps, including how different funding channels complement on another.*

World Humanitarian Day

Relevant action(s): 29

EU public communication activities, particularly a range of campaigns targeting young people, have been organised with the European Commission in a number of EU Member States to help **facilitate good public awareness and support for humanitarian aid**.

In 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted the Swedish-sponsored annual Omnibus Resolution on "Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations"²⁷. The resolution designated 19 August as World Humanitarian Day and invited UN Member States, within existing resources, to observe the day annually in an appropriate manner.

The World Humanitarian Day gives a new opportunity for the EU to focus wider public attention on the importance of humanitarian aid. In support of this initiative, since 2009, the Commission and some EU Member States have undertaken a range of media and communication activities to observe World Humanitarian Day. In 2010, the Commission launched a public awareness campaign highlighting the issue of safety and security of humanitarian personnel on World Humanitarian Day.

Active participation and advocacy in humanitarian fora

Relevant action(s): 23, 24, 26

The EU continues to be well represented in various donor groups, executive and advisory boards of international organisations, as well as international and regional humanitarian fora. Through its participation in such fora, the EU works to strengthen its dialogue with Partners and other donors, promote the EU's common vision for the provision of quality humanitarian aid based on a principled and needs-based approach as is set out in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, and contribute to the international dialogue on issues of importance for the humanitarian community.

Moreover, the Commission and Member States cooperate closely and regularly exchange views on common messages, formal EU statements and shared positions to take forward in international fora in order to ensure a strong EU humanitarian voice.

3.4.3. Further priorities

Strengthened approach to supporting the participation of affected populations

Relevant action(s): 25

²⁷ A/RES/63/139

Seeking ways to encourage the participation of disaster-affected communities in humanitarian aid operations is in line with the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. Donors in GHD looked specifically at this issue based on a report commissioned by the French government in 2008.

A recent review of disaster preparedness looked among other things at existing practices regarding beneficiary participation. The review found that despite progress, notably through the Disaster Preparedness ECHO (DIPECHO) programme, the EU could play **a more significant role in encouraging the involvement of beneficiaries** throughout the project cycle and in all types of emergency response operations.

An additional review on best practice in local participation in the Consensus Action Plan was foreseen for 2010, but postponed due to unforeseen needs for additional urgent evaluations. Undertaking the postponed review is a priority for 2011, and there is scope for this to be done as a joint review on the potential role of EU donors in supporting beneficiary participation in humanitarian aid programming and on possible opportunities to develop a common EU approach in this regard.

Continued support for good donorship practice and Principles of Partnership

Relevant action(s): 26

The EU now needs to reflect on how it can further **encourage mainstreaming of GHD** in individual donor conduct and linked to operational practice; on how best to **support the integration of 'Principles of Partnership'** into humanitarian action; and on how to better **'burden-share'** on facilitating work under GHD.

3.5. Enhancing Coherence and Coordination

3.5.1. Background

The EU is committed to ensure coherence and complementarity in its response to crises, making the most effective use of the various instruments mobilised. Therefore, the EU should enhance efforts to raise awareness of and take into account humanitarian principles and considerations more systematically in its work throughout its Institutions.

European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Action Area Five aims to promote coherence, coordination and complementarity in the EU's response to crises. Its overall expected results are: better linkages between EU donors and others to improve efficiency of overall EU aid contribution; strengthened liaison between actors present in the field in response to crisis; and humanitarian considerations fully taken into account in other related EU policy areas. The area encompasses 13 actions, including: priorities and discussion in the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid; exchange among EU donors on funding strategies; and dialogue between humanitarian aid actors and civil protection / military actors.

3.5.2. Areas of progress

Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)

Relevant action(s): 31, 37, 39

The newly mandated Council working group entitled the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) began its work in January 2009. From its inception, COHAFA has represented an **important forum for regular strategic EU discussions** on humanitarian and food assistance policy and operational issues. COHAFA meetings are held regularly (approximately once a month). COHAFA has facilitated discussions on a number of key topics in the humanitarian field including specific responses to humanitarian crises, strategic and sectoral policy issues, and donor coordination.

Through COHAFA, a readily established network of EU contacts is now in place that is also drawn upon to facilitate expert discussion on specific sectoral policy issues. In addition, the European Commission established a baseline matrix of specialist donor humanitarian presence in the field, through a study²⁸ it commissioned in 2008 on behalf of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative. This has been a reference point for seeking to strengthen donor coordination in the field, for example the establishment of a humanitarian donor group in the oPt.

Sharing of analysis, funding information and expertise

Relevant action(s): 32, 36, 41

The COHAFA network has also greatly facilitated increased **information exchange** among Member States and the Commission. For example, country-specific discussions in COHAFA have often provided a forum for Member States and the Commission to share analysis both on the crisis itself as well as their response strategies, including common lines for advocacy where needed. Such exchanges of information are key to ensuring coordination, coherence and complementarity in the EU's humanitarian response.

Due to its extensive field presence, the European Commission's DG for humanitarian aid and civil protection has distinct capabilities in the collection and analysis of information on humanitarian crisis situations on the ground. The Commission has enhanced its facilitation role in information sharing and situation analysis by presenting this information at COHAFA meetings as well as circulating situation reports (SitReps). These sitreps are a practitioner's tool and are not considered public communication documents due to the sensitivity of the humanitarian situations covered. Since 2008, the Commission has issued over 300 humanitarian SitReps, which have become a core reference for EU humanitarian departments (most of which are without humanitarian field presence), thereby putting the European Commission's permanent field expertise at the service of the entire EU.

An **annual EU exchange** on overall humanitarian strategies and funding levels foreseen in the Action Plan took place for 2009 and 2010, but showed limitations in terms of contributing to the overall impact of the EU response as many EU donors do not specifically define their operational response strategy in advance on a yearly basis, but rather allocate funding by a mix of provision of core-funding to certain humanitarian international organisations and ad-hoc contributions in response to specific appeals. That said, the annual exchange has already served to increase mutual understanding of the variety of funding approaches taken by the different EU donors and how these are related to needs-based decision making.

²⁸ M. Spaak & R. Otto (2009) "Revised Final Report: Study on the Mapping of Donor Coordination (Humanitarian Aid) at Field Level." Study commissioned by DG ECHO on behalf of Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative

Regular exchange of views on operational and strategic issues of main institutional partners active in humanitarian food assistance, in particular the WFP, strengthen the EU's leverage and impact on WFP's policies and operations and its position within the WFP's Executive Board.

The EU's '**14 points application**' for the immediate recording of humanitarian aid contributions by EU donors, represents another important tool for information sharing. By reporting through this centralised EU application that then links up with the UN-Financial Tracking System, EU Member States and the European Commission help to maintain an accurate picture of the EU's humanitarian response and contribute to reinforcing accountability, including towards EU citizens. The web-based application is open for public consultation at any time. In close consultation with EU Member States and other stakeholders, the European Commission is revising the application in order to further improve its functioning, with expected completion in early 2011. The issue of integration of information on in-kind contributions reported through the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) is also being examined.

Civil protection dialogue

Relevant action(s): 35

Since the adoption of the Action Plan, the European Commission has helped to strengthen dialogue and coordination between humanitarian aid and civil protection actors. In February 2010, the European Parliament approved the new European Commission, including the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, thus bringing humanitarian aid and civil protection into the portfolio of one Commissioner.²⁹ This, along with other processes, has allowed for a **more coordinated approach in EU humanitarian aid and civil protection action in operations outside the EU**. It has created new opportunities on the ground for joint analyses and information gathering, as well as allowed for improved intra-EU coordination and simplified relations with other relevant actors, notably cluster leads and UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams.

In the 2010 Communication on 'Reinforcing EU disaster response capacities', the Commission proposes ways to strengthen the efficiency, coherence and visibility of EU disaster response capacities, building on the synergies between civil protection and humanitarian aid.

Civil-military liaison

Relevant action(s): 30, 38

In a number of humanitarian crises – both natural disasters and complex emergencies – military and humanitarian actors are increasingly present in the same operating environment. The military are present both to secure environments and under certain specific conditions military assets are also used to support disaster response, for example heavy airlift. As is stated in the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the EU considers civil-military coordination to be vital to protect and promote the humanitarian principles. Thus, in addition to promoting awareness and common understanding of the MCDA/Oslo guidelines that cover the use of military assets in providing assistance to third countries, the EU is committed to facilitating reinforced dialogue between humanitarian and military actors.

²⁹ In the previous Commission, humanitarian aid had been the responsibility of the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, while civil protection the responsibility of the Commissioner for Environment.

Since the adoption of the Action Plan, the European Commission has continued to maintain dialogue with EU military staff to raise awareness of humanitarian dimensions and guidelines, including for specific humanitarian crises such as Chad and Central African Republic (CAR) (see text box below). The Commission has also allocated €2 million to UN-OCHA for 2010-2011 to specifically support civil-military relations and has also provided additional funding to support the deployment of UN-OCHA civil-military experts. In addition, some EU Member State personnel and European Commission humanitarian experts have participated in UN civil-military coordination training, a number of whom have later been deployed as civil-military liaison officers in certain humanitarian crises, such as Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The recent EU intervention in Pakistan is a good example of coordination between civilian and military organisations and the implementation of the Oslo/MCDA guidelines. The European Civil Protection Mechanism (i.e. the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC)) worked well with the EU Military Staff and its EU Movement Planning Cell (EUMPC), which offered three flights (out of eleven) bringing assistance to Pakistan. Two out of the three flights were actually military-chartered, but civilian aircraft. In this effort, the rule of using military flights only as a last resort was fully respected.

Some EU Member States have also worked nationally to enhance civil-military coordination, notably through the provision of funding for the deployment of UN-OCHA civil-military experts and through the establishment of structures to facilitate dialogue between national military staff and national humanitarian actors.

Coordinating the efforts of humanitarian, civil protection and military actors in the field

*The massive earthquake which struck **Haiti** in January 2010 put the coordination between civil protection and humanitarian aid to the test. Coordination went well, facilitated by the decision to bring humanitarian aid and the civil protection mechanism under the same political and administrative leadership. The RELEX crisis platform of the Commission was rapidly activated and served for two weeks as a coordination forum for all concerned European Commission services as well as those of the Council Secretariat.*

The office of the European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection DG in Port-au-Prince immediately joined the coordination efforts. It was present in the cluster meetings and chaired the humanitarian donors' group. Experts from the European Commission's DG for humanitarian aid and civil protection, as well as the EU Civil Protection Mechanism's assessment/coordination experts, participated in coordination meetings in the field. From the beginning, they worked in support of the overall coordination role of the United Nations. A European Commission expert was also part of the UNDAC team dispatched to Haiti to carry out a first needs assessment.

The MIC experts were embedded in UN coordination structures (UNDAC, UN-OCHA, and the Joint Operations and Tasking Centre (JOTC)) and supported its overall coordination work. They ensured coordination with the UNDAC team within the on-site operations coordination centre (OSOCC), staffed the reception and departure centre at the airport and established sub-OSOCC offices in Leogane and Jacmel, together with UN-OCHA.

*

*In 2008, the EU deployed a European Union Force (EUFOR) to **Chad** and **CAR**. In the initial phase of its deployment, there was a degree of concern within the humanitarian community regarding EUFOR's mandate.*

The European Commission immediately set to work through directly liaising with EU military staff and EUFOR headquarters to promote awareness of - and respect for - the fundamental humanitarian principles and the preservation of humanitarian space. The Commission also supported civil-military coordination by providing resources for the recruitment of a UN-OCHA civil-military coordination officer and a policy advisor to the NGO Coordination Committee. These efforts contributed towards improving civil-military coordination by raising the humanitarian dimension among military actors and enhancing mutual understanding among humanitarian and military actors of their respective mandates.

3.5.3. Further priorities

Promoting humanitarian dimensions in relevant EU policy areas

Relevant action(s): 42

The establishment of COHAFA constitutes an important step in ensuring an effective role for humanitarian aid in EU policy dialogue. However, there is scope for **strengthening working methods and awareness** of the humanitarian expertise provided by the group to further consolidate COHAFA's role and interaction in relation to other EU policy areas, in particular development, climate adaptation and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The establishment of the European External Action Service represents an important opportunity in this regard, including through the development of coherent briefing arrangements for newly-posted Member States' Embassy and EU Delegation staff. The briefing arrangements which have already been put in place by some EU Member States for their national diplomatic services could provide input to this process.

Sharing of analysis and funding information

Relevant action(s): 32, 36, 41

Regular and comprehensive exchanges of information among EU Member States and the European Commission on funding and operational strategies are essential to ensure coordinated, coherent and complementary EU humanitarian action. The EU should take steps to ensure that **relevant, comprehensive and quality information is shared proactively in both directions** among Member States and the Commission in a timely impact-oriented way in order to ensure well-coordinated and consistent EU response to humanitarian crises aimed at avoiding duplications and gaps in efforts.

Early exchange of detailed funding intentions, in particular in the case of sudden-onset situations remains a challenge due to a range of factors, amongst which decentralised funding allocations in some EU Member States, differences in practice over financial planning, pledging, committing and contracting funds, and in some instances concern for confidentiality to ensure security of individual partners is not compromised. **Accurate and early exchange of detailed funding intentions** thus needs to be a particular focus of attention. There is clearly scope here for using EU coordination channels more effectively. Improved standards of reporting to the '14 points system' and ensuring better awareness of its contribution to transparent, well-coordinated aid responses would help in this regard.

The EU will strive to ensure that the '14 points system' is compliant with concepts and standards of other initiatives currently carried out to promote the aid transparency agenda and in particular the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) that was launched at the High Level Forum III in Accra, September 2008. The Commission services including the DG for humanitarian aid and civil protection are currently working on the development of a common database – called TR-AID – covering all EU external aid.

Best practice in evaluation

Relevant action(s): 14

Whilst the European Commission shares its annual indicative evaluation programme with EU Member States and has regularly presented the outcomes of policy reviews and evaluations, there is still scope for better joint planning, lessons' sharing and discussion of the wider applicability of recommendations arising from humanitarian evaluations. There have also been a few examples of jointly conducted evaluations with several EU donors. Strengthening **cooperation on evaluation** across the EU as well as with others (for example through the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)) would allow EU donors to avoid duplication of efforts and to better build on respective strengths. More joint evaluation would also reduce burden on partners and field staff and contribute to better transparency and commitment to following-up on recommendations.

Ensuring adequate and effective liaison between humanitarian and military actors

Relevant action(s): 30, 38

As mentioned above, **ensuring adequate dialogue between military and humanitarian actors** is essential for supporting mutual understanding of respective mandates and promoting humanitarian space and principles. Cooperation needs to be strengthened in order to ensure agreed standard operating procedures, which respect these mandates and principles where humanitarian and military actors are working side by side in a crisis situation. Partner organisations have expressed the need for further EU efforts in this area with an aim of promoting strengthened and formalised dialogue between EU and national military staff on the one hand and the wider humanitarian community on the other.

3.6. The Aid Continuum

3.6.1. Background

The EU is committed to promoting disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness in developing countries through coherent and coordinated action at local, national and regional level...it is important to ensure that humanitarian, development and other relevant aid instruments work better together, in particular in situations of fragility and where communities are seeking to recover from the effects of crisis.

European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Action Area Six aims to promote the provision of humanitarian aid that takes into account – and is linked with – other elements of the aid continuum, such as preparedness and transition. Its overall expected results are: humanitarian aid is focussed on emergency response in response to humanitarian needs and linked better with longer-term development and other assistance; and disaster risk reduction activities are strengthened and supported increasingly by long-term aid approaches. The seven actions include: developing an EU strategy on

support to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in developing countries; ensuring regular field and HQ coordination for LRRD; and promoting discussion with Partners on linkage between relief and recovery phase needs assessments.

3.6.2. Areas of progress

Disaster risk reduction

Relevant action(s): 43, 49

Over recent decades, natural disasters have increased in both frequency and intensity, leading to substantial increases in humanitarian needs. In addition to providing assistance to those affected by these disasters, the EU is strongly committed to promoting efforts to reduce their risk and adverse impacts, notably through disaster risk reduction (DRR). DRR encompasses preparedness, mitigation and prevention activities with an aim to reduce populations' vulnerability to disaster and increase their resilience and capacities to cope.

In 2009, the European Commission adopted the '**EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries**'.³⁰ This communication was welcomed by the Council and the European Parliament, and led to the establishment of a steering group composed of representatives from the European Commission and EU Member States. On the basis of an 'ad hoc' study, the Steering Group has elaborated an Implementation Plan (Commission Staff Working Paper) that will be discussed in Council before the end of 2010. In this context, the European Commission's strategic approach to DRR focuses on strengthening advocacy and increasing coordination efforts notably through the exchange of lessons learnt and best practices with experts and partners.

In addition, some EU Member States have taken steps in their national capacity to advance work on DRR. This includes the integration of DRR into national strategies and policies, advocacy for DRR and climate-related issues in international fora, and provision of funding for DRR programming. A few EU Member States have specific DRR funding targets as a proportion of their humanitarian response.

Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)

Relevant action(s): 44, 45, 46, 47, 48

Given the increasing number of protracted humanitarian crises, and the demands from affected countries for early recovery interventions, the EU must seek to address more comprehensively these challenges at different levels. The European Commission is fully engaged with LRRD and is implementing innovative approaches enabling successful exits of humanitarian aid and sustainable transition strategies. This has translated into an increased involvement of the European Commission's DG for humanitarian aid and civil protection in early recovery interventions.

Effective coordination and consistency between humanitarian and development actors/instruments is essential, at both political and operational levels. Exchanges at HQ and field level have been intensified, in particular in the framework of common needs assessments. In situations of fragility in particular, where humanitarian operations and development interventions may coexist or follow-on from one another, complementarity, synergy and timeliness between different interventions (sectoral, local, regional and national)

³⁰ COM (2009) 84 – 23.2.2009

is crucial for durable impact in pursuit of the ultimate objective of self-reliance for people affected by crisis.

Since the adoption of the Action Plan, the EU has increased its activities to support post-conflict and post-disaster needs assessments (PCNA/PDNA). The European Commission signed a joint declaration with the United Nations Development Group and the World Bank on post-crisis assessment and recovery planning in September 2008, leading to enhanced cooperation among the three organisations both at headquarters and in the field.

The EU has also increased its involvement in PDNA missions run jointly by the EU, UNDP and the World Bank, allowing for a more clear and shared assessment of needs and a streamlined division of labour – both inside the EU and within the international system. For example, the European Commission together with some EU Member States participated in a joint PDNA mission conducted in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in early 2010. Should a PDNA exercise be organised for Pakistan, following the floods in the summer of 2010, the EU would be similarly involved. The European Commission is also actively involved in the ongoing joint (UN-WB-EC) revision of PDNA methodologies. In this framework, the possible links between first needs assessments carried-out during the relief phase and more structured tools such as the ones used for PDNA are being considered.

LRRD in the food and nutrition security sector

*The Niger 2005 food crisis was a wake-up call for better coordination between humanitarian and development aid instruments to reduce the risks and impact of the cyclical food crises that plague the **Sahel**. Action to reduce acute and chronic under-nutrition requires a combination of short, medium and long-term measures to provide a quick response to help those at immediate risk as well as to put in place the policies and action programmes needed to reduce the risks and mitigate the impact of further crises. Lessons learned from the 2005 Niger crisis include the need to treat under-nourished children pro-actively at the moderate stage before they drop into the severely under-nourished stage where survival rates are much lower and the risk of permanent damage much higher. Humanitarian aid addresses the immediate life threatening risks from acute malnutrition but only the implementation of long-term government policies backed by development assistance will ensure the sustainable action required to provide a permanent solution to under-nutrition.*

The European Commission's 'Sahel Global Plan' was designed as a strategic LRRD approach to achieve a reduction in acute under-nutrition. It is built on the 3 pillars of:

- *Improving the knowledge base;*
- *Support to pilot, innovative and replicable action to reduce under-nutrition; and*
- *Advocacy to raise awareness in government and development partners on nutrition issues.*

This latter key element in the strategy requires a constant dialogue with government authorities and development partners to encourage the inclusion of food and nutritional security as sectors of concentration in development programmes. Progress in this can be measured to the extent that food and nutrition security are included as priority sectors in the programming of development aid strategies in the Sahel.

Since 2007, the European Commission has allocated over €150 million in humanitarian aid to the fight to reduce under-nutrition in the Sahel. Over 1 million children under-five years of age, and pregnant and nursing women have been treated each year for under-nutrition as a consequence and nutrition issues have been put more firmly on the development agenda. This has helped leverage substantial development aid for Sahel food security needs.

3.6.3. Further priorities

Continued efforts to support disaster risk reduction

Relevant action(s): 43, 49

Supporting disaster risk reduction efforts is a key priority for the EU, and the 'EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries' represents an important step in this regard. Through the aforementioned Implementation Plan, the EU will bring, more strongly and systematically, DRR and its linkage to climate adaptation into the development field. It will also concentrate operations in areas where the knowledge and expertise of the EU and Member States can be of added value. In order to achieve this, **better coordination and exchange of information should be sought, and the role of the Steering Group strengthened** to improve the coordination of activities and the monitoring of its implementation.

Humanitarian actors should continue to mainstream community-based preparedness activities in their operations and exchange best practices on small-scale disaster risk reduction activities. An additional objective is to promote DRR as a priority at regional level and to make sure that authorities and stakeholders have the support needed in terms of knowledge, expertise and technical tools to integrate DRR into their strategies.

Efforts should continue to be made to improve the **integration of DRR, climate adaption and cross-cutting issues** (gender, vulnerable groups, and environment) into EU development cooperation. This will facilitate the promotion of integration of DRR into partner countries' policies and strategies. Attention should be given to multiple hazards, and the different actors in this field from the EU, the Member States and the developing countries should receive appropriate training in mainstreaming DRR/climate adaption.

Continued EU action to support linking relief, rehabilitation and development

Relevant action(s): 44, 45, 46, 47, 48

The European Consensus underlines the importance of achieving better linkage between relief, rehabilitation and development and states that "the EU will work together on advancing practical approaches to LRRD".

While progress has been made in this regard, **LRRD remains a topic high on the agenda** for the whole of the EU. Whilst politically everybody is in agreement that coherent transition strategies are of vital importance, implementation of the approach remains difficult.

Work should continue to be undertaken on several levels amongst humanitarian and development services in the European Commission with a view to better coordinating the different approaches starting from the design stage of aid through to the actual implementation of operations. An ongoing study run by EuropeAid should contribute in this regard as it aims to come up with a set of best-practices by selecting a number of target countries and analysing in detail how to improve transition strategies. In parallel, the

conceptual work on situations of fragility aims to provide a set of references to guide development and humanitarian actors in the programming and delivery of aid. One aspect requiring specific attention in the aftermath of conflict is the need to clear unexploded ordnance and landmines, which cause an immediate threat to civilians and hinder sustainable development.³¹

This should also be facilitated by reinforcing joint assessment missions (e.g. PCNA and PDNA) by the different actors, targeting particularly early recovery situations following a disaster.

In addition to strengthened emphasis on LRRD, the EU should maintain focus on setting common objectives and strategies for longer-term instruments in protracted crises. In some situations, these need to be implemented in parallel to short-term humanitarian operations to maximise the opportunities for durable impact. In the context of the Food Security Thematic Programme (FTSP), as well as the upcoming discussions on the objectives and programming of the 11th European Development Fund, the Commission's DG for humanitarian aid and civil protection remains fully engaged to ensure a successful framework that would lay the basis for a systematic common approach on shared priorities. This could, for example, translate into more integration of food security and nutrition matters into country strategy papers.

4. CONCLUSION

This Staff Working Paper, accompanying the Communication on 'the mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan – implementing effective principled EU humanitarian action', has sought to give a comprehensive overview of the considerable progress made during the first half of the implementation period of the current 'European Consensus Action Plan'. A further review is envisaged at the full-term of the Action Plan, before end 2012.

In conducting the review, a number of further priorities have emerged for improving focus under the existing Action Areas. The Action Plan is ambitious in the range and quantity of actions envisaged and a number of challenges arise in its implementation. These challenges are set out in the accompanying Communication, together with a small number of recommendations from the European Commission, which focus on how to improve implementation modalities to get the most out of the EU's potential to work together on humanitarian issues. Together, the Communication and Staff Working Paper aim to support the intended impact of EU action, i.e. to ensure the best possible contribution to the humanitarian aid response to vulnerable people facing crisis.

³¹ A recent evaluation carried out by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining on behalf of EuropeAid has conveyed strong recommendations to this effect