



Humanitarian Aid

ECHO FACTSHEET

Humanitarian principles

Humanity

Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable people. The dignity of all victims must be respected and protected.

Impartiality

Humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations.

Independence

Humanitarian objectives are autonomous of political, economic, military or other objectives: the sole purpose is to relieve and prevent the suffering of crisis victims.

Neutrality

Humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute.



Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: Children are the often first to suffer from protracted crises. Pierre Prakash/ECHO

Key messages

- The European Union, together with its Member States, is the **world's leading humanitarian aid donor**. In 2015, approximately 134 million people who were affected by natural or man-made disasters or protracted crises received help. Humanitarian aid was provided to the most vulnerable people across more than 80 countries.

- Through the instruments of **humanitarian aid** and **civil protection**, the European Commission provided substantial needs-based emergency assistance in 2016, for which it committed a total of over **€2.1 billion**.

- The EU's humanitarian assistance is **purely needs-based** and goes directly to people in distress, irrespective of their nationality, religion, gender, ethnic origin or political affiliation. The EU acts on the basis of the international humanitarian principles which are enshrined in the [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#).

- Assistance to people in need is coordinated by the European Commission's **Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO)**. ECHO's aim is to save lives and relieve the suffering of people caught up in crises. This aid takes many forms, depending on the nature of each crisis. It includes goods and services such as **food, clothing, shelter, cash & vouchers, medical provisions, water supplies, sanitation, emergency repairs and protection**.

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ECHO gives particular priority to the world's **forgotten crises** and allocated 17% of its budget to alleviate suffering in those human disasters that largely escape the attention of the wider international community in 2015.

The Commission also funds **risk reduction** and **disaster preparedness** projects through the [DIPECHO Programme](#), which covers the world's most disaster-prone regions. This is becoming ever more important with the growing scale and frequency of natural disasters. ECHO prioritizes 'people-oriented' preparedness measures that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters. In 2016, EU funding for DRR activities reduced disaster risks for approximately 24 million people worldwide.

The main driver of EU assistance is solidarity – one of the core values of the European Union. EU citizens are united in their **solidarity** with victims of conflict and natural disasters. Nine out of ten citizens consider it important that the EU funds humanitarian aid outside its borders and 85% agree that the EU should continue to fund humanitarian aid in spite of the economic crisis in Europe. Over seven in ten (73%) Europeans believe that humanitarian aid provided by the EU is more efficient than when provided by each Member State separately ([2015 Special Eurobarometer](#), survey 434 on Humanitarian Aid).

Since 1992, when the initial Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) was set up in the Commission, assistance worth €25 billion has been provided to beneficiaries in over 140 countries. Christos Stylianides is the *Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management* since 2014.

ECHO Humanitarian Partners - 2016

Category	Amount €	%
UN entities	1.087.662.000	51,16
NGOs	788.108.000	37,07
International Organisations	237.474.200	11,17
Suppliers (ECHO Flight)	12.118.000	0,57
Education (Noha)	637.800	0,03
Total	2.126.000.000	100

Working with Partners

The humanitarian operations funded by the European Commission are implemented through over **200 partner organisations**: specialised United Nations agencies, international organisations including the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and non-governmental relief organisations (NGOs).

The Commission has developed close working relationships with its relief partners, both at the level of policy issues and of specific humanitarian operations. These relations are governed by framework partnership agreements between ECHO and NGOs and a financial and administrative framework agreement between the Commission and the UN bodies concerned. To receive funding for a humanitarian action, partner organisations submit funding proposal and follow strict guidelines for project evaluation and monitoring. All proposals are judged in accordance with ECHO's strategy on their technical merits in responding to a given emergency, and on the basis of the needs that have been identified. Partners must acknowledge the EU support by displaying the EU visual identity on project sites.

Strong Presence on the Ground

ECHO also has an unrivalled permanent network of some [465 international and local humanitarian field experts](#) working in crisis zones around the globe. They carry out needs assessments, liaise with partners and other actors on the ground and monitor the way EU-funded aid operations are implemented. To enhance its field presence, ECHO has regional offices in six capitals around the world: Amman (Jordan), Bangkok (Thailand), Dakar (Senegal), Managua (Nicaragua), Bogota (Colombia) and Nairobi (Kenya). Our experts can be immediately deployed to the disaster area, when sudden crises strike.

Beyond humanitarian aid

The EU's disaster response is not limited to humanitarian aid. Since 2010, the EU's response is also delivered through Member States' [civil protection](#) assets. The [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) was launched in May 2013. It collects and analyses real-time information on disasters and coordinates plans for the deployment of experts, teams and equipment in close collaboration with Member States. For communities struck by disaster, emergency relief operations deal with immediate needs. However, ECHO is also working on devising new ways to bolster resilience to future shocks by providing longer-term development benefits. The Commission subscribes to the approach of [Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development](#). LRRD consists of the following steps: (1) save lives (2) restore victims' self-sufficiency and (3) improve overall living standards (through economic development) to reduce the impact of future crises.



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