

Evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Final Report June 2014

Volume 1 – Main Report

**This evaluation was commissioned by the Evaluation Sector of the
Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection – ECHO
(European Commission)**

*The opinions expressed in this document represent the authors' point of view which are not
necessarily shared by the European Commission or by the authorities of the concerned countries.*

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Acronym list

ACAPS	Assistance Capacities Project of HelpAge International
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
AP	Action Plan
CAP	Common Appeals Process
CAR	Central African Republic
CERF	UN OCHA Common Emergency Response Fund
COHAFA	Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
DG	Directorate General
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Cooperation
EEAS	European External Action Service
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EU MS	EU Member State
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFDRR	World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HA	Humanitarian Aid
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HQ	Headquarter
HRI	Humanitarian Response Index

IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDRL	International disaster response laws
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ISDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
IL	Intervention Logic
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
JC	Judgement Criteria
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
MN	Meeting Note
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIRA	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MS	Member State
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PPT	PowerPoint
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

Executive Summary

1. Nature, purpose and context of the European Consensus

After an extensive consultation process, the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (the European Consensus)** was signed in late 2007, cementing the commitment of EU Institutions and Member States to provide a principled EU response to humanitarian crises.

The **European Consensus brings together and consolidates commitments to established humanitarian principles and good practices that underpin EU humanitarian aid.** This includes, among other things, the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence; the international humanitarian law, the human rights and refugee laws; as well as the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles on donor best practice. The European Consensus also confirms the distinction between EU humanitarian aid and the EU's crisis management tools.

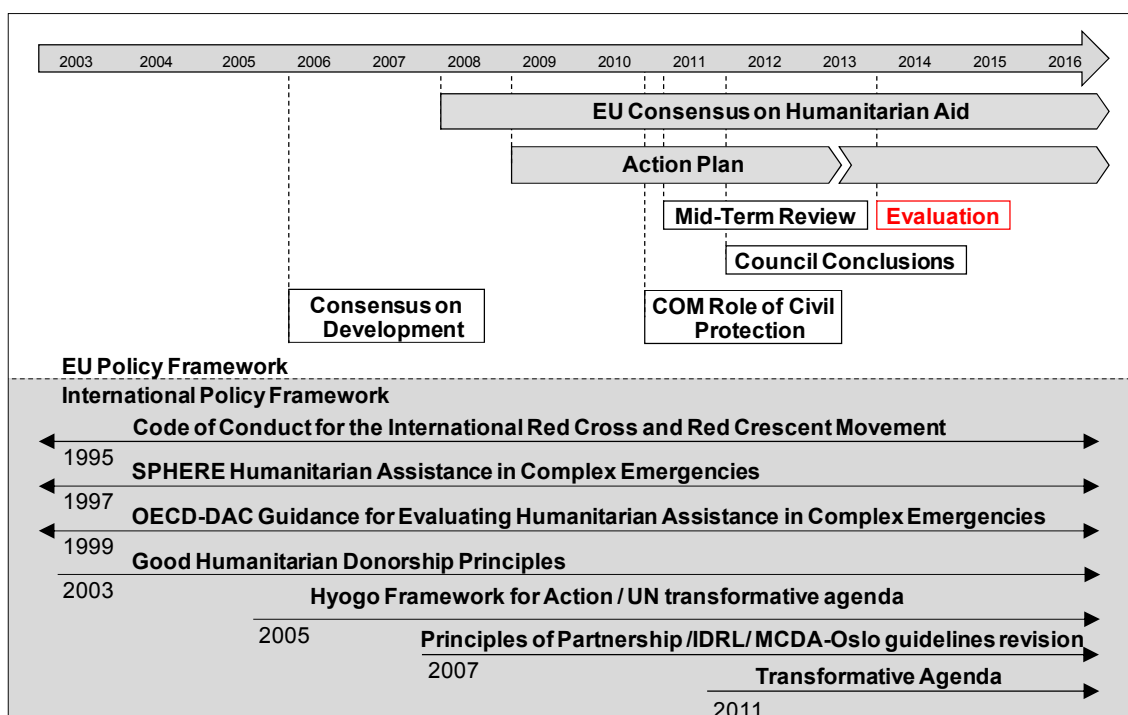
The **European Consensus further establishes a common framework to deliver humanitarian aid based on coordination, coherence and complementarity within the EU** as well as with other humanitarian actors. Furthermore it clarifies the scope of humanitarian aid and strives for greater coherence with other external instruments.

The **signature of the European Consensus was one of several concurrent changes in the European humanitarian aid landscape.** The EU has been actively engaged in supporting humanitarian aid since the 1960's. It established the Office of Humanitarian Aid in 1992, then it became the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid in 2004. The Civil Protection Mechanism was added to this Directorate in 2010. The European Consensus signature in 2007 was followed by the elevation of humanitarian aid as a policy with a legal base in the EU treaty in its own right with the passing of the Treaty of Lisbon (article 214).

Following the adoption of the European Consensus, the European Commission presented a five-year Action Plan in 2008 outlining practical measures to implement the provisions of the European Consensus. The Action Plan was developed in collaboration with the Member States, and was endorsed by both Member States and the European Commission. A mid-term review of the Action Plan was completed in 2010.

The Figure below illustrates the timeline surrounding the adoption of the European Consensus, the Action Plan, the Mid-Term Review, and the related policies. It also highlights the progress within the wider humanitarian system, which has both influenced and been influenced by EU policy.

Chronological Overview



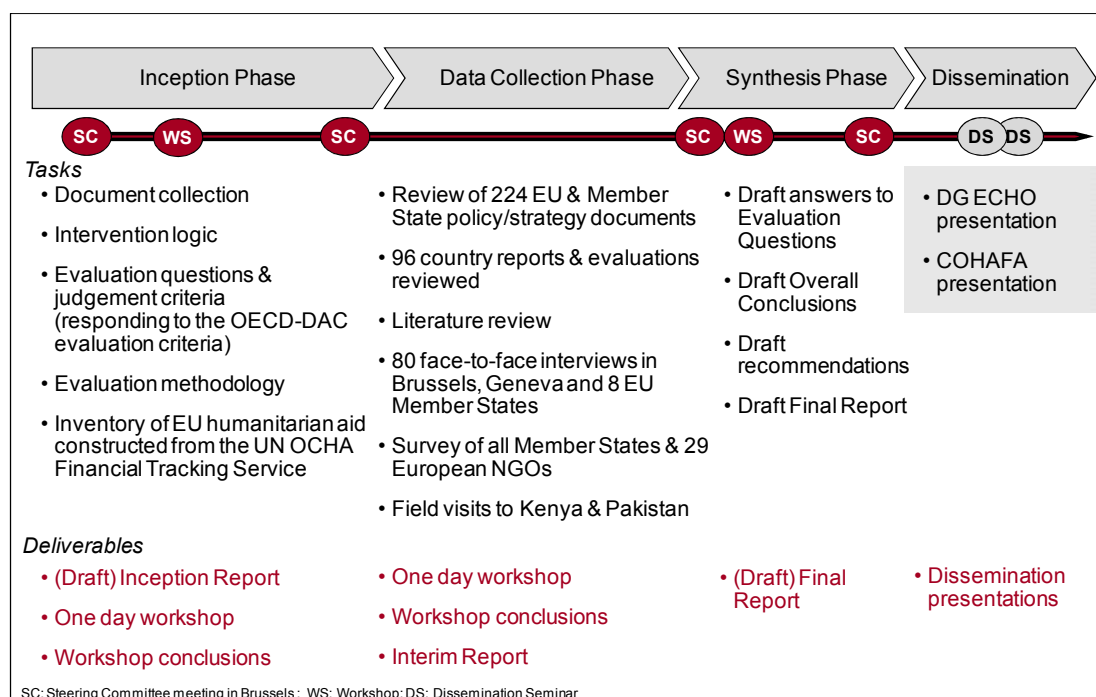
2. Evaluation purpose, scope and methodology

This evaluation provides an independent assessment of the implementation of the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid** over the period **2008-2012**. It aims to contribute to EU reflection on the future implementation of its humanitarian policy and to identify key lessons learnt from the first five years of the European Consensus's implementation. It also seeks to investigate the extent to which the European Consensus contributed to better coordination and coherence between the humanitarian policies of the European Commission and Member States.

The evaluation scope includes the design and implementation of the European Consensus Action Plan (SEC (2008)1991) as well as any implementation measures taken by the European Commission, the European Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) and the individual EU Member States.

The evaluation applied a rigorous methodology with a view to reaching useful conclusions and recommendations based on sound analyses. It used a four-phase approach consisting of inception, data collection, synthesis and dissemination phases. Each deliverable was reviewed, discussed and approved by the evaluation steering group. The evaluation phases are outlined in the figure below:

Evaluation phases



The steering group included representatives of DG ECHO and Member States. The evaluation also included two workshops, one during the inception phase and one at the end of the data collection phase. The workshops allowed the key evaluation stakeholders to provide inputs to the design of the evaluation methodology and to discuss evaluation findings prior to the drafting of this report. Participants included key stakeholders from Member State humanitarian agencies, European humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and EU Institutions.

The first phase was dedicated to the definition of the analytical framework and data collection methodology and the collection of documentary sources. The data collection phase began after the approval of the analytical framework. The evaluators used a combination of data collection tools in order to allow triangulation and cross-checking of the evaluation findings.

3. Conclusions

The conclusions are structured in four clusters and aim to provide an overall picture of the progress made by EU Institutions and Members States with respect to the objectives of the European Consensus. The first cluster of conclusions concerns the extent to which the European Consensus and the Action Plan were known by these instances, as well as their impact in triggering changes. Such awareness is indeed a pre-condition for impacting changes. The other clusters then examine more in detail the evolution of EU Institutions and Members States policies and practices with regard to the substance of the European Consensus. They concern objectives that can be grouped under three headings:

- Harmonisation, complementarities and the role of ECHO
- Quality of aid
- Coherence with other forms of aid

3.1 Awareness and implementation of the European Consensus

C1: The European Consensus was well-known at the headquarter level by those stakeholders responsible for humanitarian aid policy, but less well-known beyond that. Ministerial awareness in the Member States did not extend far beyond humanitarian policy specialists, with very limited awareness observed among political, military, or development actors. In the field, most interlocutors interviewed for the evaluation had little or no knowledge of the European Consensus, although awareness was greater among staff working in conflict situations where the humanitarian principles are most often invoked. Those stakeholders who were aware of the European Consensus broadly agreed on the usefulness of having a European-level commitment that consolidates previous commitments and defines humanitarian aid as a civilian business, implemented mostly by non-state actors and reflecting humanitarian values. EU Institutions and Member States also argued that the European Consensus helped them to agree and communicate their objectives; whilst NGOs and other stakeholder conversely used the European Consensus to hold EU Institutions and Member States to account. It was not, however, highly valued as an operational tool. **The Action Plan was not very well-known across all stakeholder groups.** This was problematic in that a significant number of those ultimately responsible for implementing the Plan (including senior decision makers) appeared to have been unaware of its existence.

C2: The European Consensus was one among many factors that triggered changes to the humanitarian aid approaches taken by European donors since 2008. There were a number of established initiatives aiming to improve the quality of humanitarian aid that predate the European Consensus. On the whole, interlocutors saw the European Consensus as one part of a wider push for reform and, in some cases, an accelerator of change. Beyond this, there were two instances in which the European Consensus was viewed as a primary driver of change in its own right:

- firstly, as a key reference in shaping the humanitarian policy and approach of new European donors;

- and secondly, as a driver towards the establishment of the Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA).

Whilst the Action Plan was effective in triggering actions within DG ECHO, it was harder to discern its impact among Member States. As noted under Conclusion 1, the evaluation found that the Action Plan was not well-known or influential in shaping humanitarian aid policies or actions among Member States. The Action Plan's structure and contents – including the high number of actions listed, limited prioritisation and a lack of tailoring to individual Member States – did not help foster ownership and accountability among EU Member States.

3.2 Harmonisation, complementarities and the role of ECHO

- C3: Overall there was a trend towards improved consistency between formal humanitarian aid policies** of the European Commission and Member States. Several EU Member States developed new or revised humanitarian policies which were broadly consistent with the European Consensus. Document analysis also shows that EU Member State policies regularly refer to the European Consensus, and revealed no elements suggesting strongly divergent approaches. For others, including the European Commission and some EU Member States, the European Consensus is taken as the *de facto* governing policy.
- C4: The European Commission and Member States improved information sharing at headquarter level but operational coordination and synergies remained weak at field level.** Furthermore, the boundaries between EU and UN led operational coordination functions were not always clear.
- C5: The core added-value of DG ECHO to promoting the European Consensus objectives lied in promoting humanitarian principles and good practice** among the Commission and Member States. Beyond this, DG ECHO demonstrated a number of areas of added-value linked to its structural characteristics, including: its global presence and its capacity to draw on a network of EU Delegations and DG ECHO Field Offices; the technical expertise of its staff in the field; its critical mass of funding; insulation from strategic (political, economic, military) goals. The EU Delegations also had a potential for value-added in achieving the European Consensus objectives, but this was mostly not concretized.
- C6: The European Commission, Delegations and the Member States have not been visible as a common EU entity.** Stakeholders frequently questioned fundamentally the appropriateness of visibility objectives within humanitarian interventions, arguing instead that the priority should be effectiveness of support; that visibility objectives often run counter to safety considerations; and that often too much emphasis is placed on “banners and stickers”. Moreover, when they did recognise the importance of visibility, individual EU Member States tended to favour their own national visibility rather than a common EU identity.

3.3 Quality of aid

The evaluation looked at the quantity and quality of European humanitarian aid over the reference period, including promotion of the fundamental humanitarian principles and contributions to the international humanitarian system.

- C7: Regarding contributions to the international humanitarian system, the Commission and Member States developed common strategic positions and increasingly aligned their support to a range of “good practice” initiatives, including innovations to improve the allocation of humanitarian aid on the basis of assessed needs. However, the degree of active engagement varied between actors and questions were raised on the level of commitment.**
- C8: Collectively, the EU’s humanitarian aid has remained stable over the reference period, despite a growing gap in global humanitarian needs.** Over the period considered the shortfall in global funding through the Consolidated Appeals Process continuously increased from 28% in 2007 to 37% in 2012. During the same period the overall combined level of humanitarian aid provided by the European Commission and EU Member States has not increased, remaining at roughly US\$4.9 billion per year (although behind this picture highly volatile aid flows from the individual Member States and European Commission were seen).
- C9: EU Institutions and Member States are committed at policy level to upholding and promoting fundamental humanitarian principles, but different approaches and positions have appeared in applying these principles in specific situations.** This was most notable when there was a tension between certain the humanitarian principles, e.g. between neutrality and responding to needs.

3.4 Coherence with other forms of aid

- C10: Promotion of international humanitarian law, and interaction with military actors were not the highest priorities for EU Institutions and Member States, although initiatives have been taken and progress has been made. But EU Institutions and Member States did evolve towards a better understanding of the division of labour between civil protection and humanitarian instruments.**
- C11: EU Institutions and Member States have put coherence between humanitarian and development aid high on their agendas and have taken several initiatives in this respect.** One of the key elements hampering improved coherence and coordination was that humanitarian aid strives to remain independent, while development aid seeks to align with recipient governments.

4. Recommendations

The evaluation makes a total of **nine recommendations** (R1-9) for the future implementation of the European Consensus. Each of the nine recommendations are directed towards both DG ECHO and the EU Member State humanitarian agencies, via their representations on COHAFA. The recommendations are intended to point the way towards further implementation of the European Consensus, building upon previous successes outlined in section 3 above, and overcoming areas of weakness where they occurred.

The first recommendation concerns the processes and means through which EU Institutions and Member States take the European Consensus forward. An important part of this process is that the Institutions and Member States collectively decide on specific priorities for action. However, the evaluation itself has also identified a number of emerging issues that are identified as priority themes. The subsequent eight recommendations concern the individual priorities identified.

R1: Replace the Action Plan with a strategic implementation plan that promotes greater Member State involvement, flexible implementation mechanisms and rolling objectives. It is proposed that the European Commission and Member States, working within COHAFA, jointly develop a new implementation vehicle for the European Consensus. This would incorporate elements of related models of operation used by the EU in other sectors in order to increase Member State engagement, improve monitoring and accountability, and ensure flexibility in the implementation approaches between the different Member States.

The EU Institutions and Member States are advised to utilize relevant aspects of the Open Method of Coordination as used under the Lisbon Strategy (2000).¹ A similar approach would need to be adjusted for the shared competence of humanitarian aid between the Commission and the Member States. Nevertheless, such an approach would allow COHAFA to identify a limited set of objectives for joint action, instead of individual activities as per the original Action Plan. Member States and the Commission would then be free to define and implement their own programmes of activities to contribute towards achieving the common objectives/outcomes, thereby taking into account the specificities of each Member States' strengths and weaknesses. Progress could be monitored against a jointly defined monitoring framework, with the goal of measuring results achieved rather than monitoring activities conducted (as per the original Action Plan monitoring mechanisms). Finally, Member States and DG ECHO could monitor their progress through self-assessment and periodic reviews, using the agreed monitoring framework. For OECD-DAC members, this could be integrated with the OECD-DAC peer reviews.

¹ In the case of the Lisbon Strategy, the Open Method provided a framework for cooperation between the Member States on an area falling under Member State competence (in this case, employment policy). Common objectives and monitoring mechanisms were defined by Member States, who were evaluated by peer review, with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance.

- R2: Design and implement a communication strategy for the European Consensus, targeting audiences both within the realm of humanitarian aid and audiences outside that circle that are in close interaction with humanitarian aid.** The key objective should be to promote an understanding of, and agreement with, the commitment to principled humanitarian action. The European Consensus adds value through reaffirming a “whole of government” commitment to the humanitarian principles. Therefore the communication strategy should be specifically aligned with the dissemination of this message.
- R3: Maintain the organisational and procedural independence of humanitarian aid in the EU Institutions.** The Commission should continue to recognize the importance and value of an independent Humanitarian Directorate and Humanitarian Commissioner. Maintaining this degree of independence is viewed as critical in driving forward the European Consensus. Any potential reorganization of responsibilities of EU Directorates should favour this independence.
- R4: Advocate for all EU Member States to establish a minimum bilateral humanitarian aid budget,** to underpin their active participation in implementing the European Consensus and to improve overall coverage of humanitarian needs. Specifically, agreement on a minimum target, even if modest, for humanitarian aid applicable to all EU Member States is recommended (as a part of overall official development assistance contributions). The nature and level of these targets will need to be discussed and agreed by the EU Member States and EU Institutions. One option is a standard EU-wide percentage target, with benchmarks for progressive attainment of this target over a specified period of time. A second is banded targets to allow for different national circumstances. Thirdly, targets may be self-determined by the EU Member States.
- R5: Clarify the objectives of coordination and complementarities, the role of DG ECHO, and the relationship with the role of the UN.** One outcome may be the identification of different groupings of EU Member States and EU institutions, seeking differing levels of coordination. Further, the evaluation recommends that a formal Council on Humanitarian affairs should be constituted and, as a basis for coordinated response to specific crises, a common EU strategic response plan should be developed for each major crisis. Finally, based on the agreed coordination goals, measures to improve operational coordination at country level may be piloted.
- R6: Devise approaches to ensure that EU Institutions and EU Member States have a more consistent approach to upholding humanitarian principles in specific contexts and crises.** A number of actions may be initiated to reduce the scope for divergent interpretations of the principles in specific crises, including elaborating a typology of the situations in which the upholding of humanitarian principles has been challenged. Sharing of best practice, based on documented cases is also recommended, as well as elaboration of criteria to help guiding decision-making in new crises and piloting country-level EU humanitarian strategies for major crises (referenced above in Recommendation 5). Such strategies would clarify a common EU approach to the application of principles in a specific crisis.

- R7: Clarify the objectives of EU Institutions and Member States in terms of common visibility** when delivering humanitarian aid. This could lead to complementing the European Consensus with a common position on visibility objectives and practices. Such a position should aim to clarify the extent to which they wish to pursue common visibility when delivering humanitarian aid. The target audience(s), the relevance and effectiveness of communication methods used, the impact on humanitarian access and security of communications protocols and the balance between EU and EU Member State visibility.
- R8: Improve resource allocation on the basis of need, notably by standardising methods used by EU donors at a global level and harmonising implementing partner approaches at field level.** EU Member States and the European Commission should agree a common tool to rank the comparative severity of needs between humanitarian crises. This methodology should be based on harmonising the existing national and European Commission approaches to resource allocation and need assessments. This common analysis would provide a transparent and common basis to determining the allocation of humanitarian aid, which would be combined with other relevant criteria at the national level. Further, at field level, EU Member States and the European Commission should develop innovative approaches to encourage implementing partners to adopt harmonised needs assessment approaches at country - or crisis - level. This should contribute to an improved comparison of sectoral needs during a crisis. Donors may need to use their influence to incentivise the adoption of the common methodological approaches which have already been developed.
- R9: Pursue and enhance coherence between humanitarian and development assistance, whilst recognising the fundamental differences in approach between these two fields.** This should not be taken to imply that exclusive or primary responsibility for coherence rests with humanitarians. Indeed, it can only be achieved if humanitarian and development actors work together to build coherence between their respective activities. Inclusive agendas for collective action should therefore be pursued, including through other established joint forums and processes.

1. Introduction

This report is the final deliverable of the Evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (hereafter, the European Consensus), commissioned by the Evaluation Sector of the Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

This introduction is divided in two parts:

- a brief reminder on the scope and purpose of the evaluation ;
- a presentation of the report.

1.1 The scope and purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation covers the implementation of the European Consensus since its signature in late 2007. This includes, but is not limited to, the Action Plan published in 2008 and covering the period 2008-2013. It aims at contributing to advance EU reflection on the future implementation of its humanitarian policy, including practical considerations to be reflected in a follow-up to the current Consensus Action Plan.

Figure 1 below describes the purpose, subject and scope of the evaluation, as expressed in the evaluation Terms of Reference.

Figure 1 – Evaluation purpose, subject and scope:



1.2 The final report

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the work carried out, the evaluation findings per evaluation question, the conclusions drawn from these findings and the recommendations for the future.

The report is structured in six sections. Sections 2 and 3 provide key contextual information and information on the methodology used. Section 4 provides the detailed answers per evaluation question (EQ), which form the basis from which conclusions and recommendations have been derived in section 5 and 6 respectively.

More specifically, the structure is hence as follows:

- **Introduction:** outlines the evaluation purpose, scope and the structure of the final report.
- **Context and funding overview:** outlines the background context of the evaluation and provides an overview of humanitarian aid contributions made by ECHO and the EU Member States over the evaluation period.
- **Methodological approach:** presents the evaluation phases, evaluation questions, the data collection tools designed and used during the evaluation, and the problems encountered and solutions found.
- **Findings per evaluation question:** presents findings per evaluation question developed from the evaluation data collection phase. Findings related to the activities of the Member States are set against the EU Member State typology, outlined in Annex 3.
- **Conclusions:** presents the conclusion drawn from the evaluation questions.
- **Recommendations:** presents the recommendations for the future drawn from the conclusions.

The final report also includes 9 annexes:

- **Annex 1 – Evaluation terms of reference**
- **Annex 2 – Methodological approach:** providing a complete version of the methodology followed all through the evaluation process.
- **Annex 3 – EU Member State typology:** providing a typology of EU Member States according to the size of their humanitarian aid commitments made over 2008-2012 and the humanitarian structures they have in place.
- **Annex 4 – Evaluation surveys :** surveys used for collecting aggregate data from EU Member States and European NGOs.
- **Annex 5 – Intervention logic:** analysis of activities, outputs, result and impacts of the European Consensus.
- **Annex 6 – Evaluation questions:** full set of structured evaluation questions, including judgement criteria and indicators.
- **Annex 7 – Literature review on the future of humanitarian aid**
- **Annex 8 – Field mission debriefings :** PowerPoint presentations provided to ECHO field offices and to some representatives of EU Member States at the end of each field mission.
- **Annex 9 – Bibliography**

2. Context & funding overview

The following section provides a summary of the background of the humanitarian context, as well as the context of the development and implementation of the European Consensus, and an overview of EU donor commitments to humanitarian aid over the evaluation period.

2.1 The evolving humanitarian context²

The scale and range of 'humanitarian' activities has grown enormously in recent decades, leading to a complex, anarchic, and often fragmented range of actors in crises around the world. Further, the types, origins, and intersections of crises continue to change and in many contexts severely challenge the models upon which the traditional humanitarian sector has been designed.

Though it has diverse intellectual and moral roots (and despite the growing awareness of the scale, capacity and influence of other 'non-traditional' actors) what is now broadly regarded as 'the international humanitarian system' remains dominated by the Western-led institutions (primarily the Red Cross Movement, United Nations agencies, and International Non-Governmental Organisations) from which it emerged, and largely funded by Western donor nations. More recently however, changes in global geopolitics, economy and society, as well as the very nature of crises and the humanitarian system itself have brought substantial change to the sector.

Humanitarian action now typically encapsulates – or is at least intricately entwined with – activities spanning from relief through recovery and resilience. Along with a series of devastating crises in the early 21st century, this growth spurred efforts from the diverse – though still predominately Western-led – humanitarian body to move towards a coherent structure with codified policies and professional practice.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and international NGOs (INGOs) created their own code of conduct, and the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 46/182, which reinforced the centrality of humanitarian principles and aimed to solidify the role of the UN at the centre of the international humanitarian system through the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Sphere Guidelines, the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, the Hyogo Framework for Action, as well as the growing prominence of pooled funding mechanisms and other initiatives have all contributed to the development of the sector. The impact of such measures has been limited by the diverse objectives of the organizations involved, competition and discord amongst key actors, and the complex and often politicised nature of the crisis contexts in which they operate.

Despite the growing reach of the international humanitarian system and the progress towards coherence and accountability, the sector endures streams of criticism from many

² See Annex 7: Literature Review for a more detailed examination of the evolving humanitarian context.

sources, the most pointed of which often come from within. Such critiques notwithstanding, today's international humanitarian system has far greater capacity than at any time in history. The value of humanitarian assistance has more than doubled since the mid-1990's, though it remains relatively miniscule when compared to other financial flows into crisis-prone countries³ and still does not meet the system's financial needs.⁴ Funding from the traditional large Western donors has also broadly stagnated in the wake of the global financial crisis.

At the same time the capacity of the international humanitarian system has been supplemented in more recent years with the rise in assumption of humanitarian responsibilities of the 'non-traditional' actors, such as the private sector, military and emerging donor organisations, i.e. those who do not readily fit within the structures of the dominant 'traditional' actors.

Concurrently, crises have become more complex and more resilient themselves, with not only the increasing number of actors engaged generating mixed and often conflicting approaches over what needs to be done and why, but also as a result of the nature of humanitarian crises becoming more dynamic in a context of rapid global change. Climate change, geopolitical reorientations, demographic shifts and migration, the evolving nature of conflict, and diminishing 'humanitarian space' are among the most-cited issues facing the humanitarian sector now and going forward.

These alone are not the only issues that pose challenging new questions to the traditional 20th century humanitarian system. Many of the inherent tensions within humanitarianism, such as balancing the need to provide immediate life-saving assistance with the inescapable desire to address the underlying causes are unlikely to ever be resolved and continue to challenge crisis-affected populations, traditional and non-traditional actors alike.

2.2 Development of the European Consensus

A consultation on EU humanitarian aid policy was initiated by ECHO in 2006. This canvassed the views of EU Member States and around 220 DG ECHO partner organisations (NGOs, Red Cross/ Red Crescent movement and UN). This consultation identified key threats to the quality and impact of humanitarian aid. These included a perception that the humanitarian space - writ large - was fragile and under threat; that an increasing number and variety of actors were becoming involved in humanitarian affairs who were not adequately coordinated or familiar with the principles underpinning humanitarian aid; and that financing of humanitarian aid appeared to be insufficient to meet all the needs⁵.

³ GHA Report 2013 notes that while USD \$5.6 billion in international humanitarian assistance went to 15 of the 20 top recipients in 2011, this pales in comparison to USD \$15.1 billion in development assistance, USD \$25.6 billion in foreign direct investment, USD \$40.8 billion in remittances, and USD \$390.5 billion in government expenditure

⁴ GHA 2013 reports that 37.3% of the UN CAP Appeal needs were unmet in 2012, and between approximately one-quarter and over one-third of needs unmet in each year of the preceding decade; GHA 2013 pp. 14

⁵ Staff Working Paper. Report on the results of the consultation on a consensus on European Humanitarian Aid Policy. SEC(2007) 78.

Both Member States and implementing partner organisations encouraged the European Commission (EC) to develop an European consensus on humanitarian aid, to address these and other concerns. Specifically implementing partners encouraged the EU and its Member States to be forceful in the advocacy, defence and dissemination of International Humanitarian Law and the principles of humanitarian aid, where "*humanitarian aid is a civilian business, implemented mostly by non-state actors or international organisations with a humanitarian mandate, reflecting the values of humanity and solidarity and not a crisis management tool at the service of foreign policy objectives* (ibid)".

Following a process of extensive consultation, **the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (the European Consensus) was signed in late 2007, cementing the commitment of all EU Institutions⁶ and Member States to provide a principled EU response to humanitarian crises.** The common objective is to '*provide a 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.*'⁷

The European Consensus brings together and consolidates commitments to established humanitarian principles and good practice, as an underpinning to EU humanitarian aid. This includes the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence; the international humanitarian law, the human rights, and the refugee law; as well as the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles on donor best practice. The European Consensus also confirms the distinction between EU humanitarian aid and the EU's crisis management tools.

The European Consensus establishes a common framework to deliver humanitarian aid based on coordination, coherence and complementarity within the EU as well as with other humanitarian actors. Furthermore it clarifies the scope of humanitarian aid and strives for greater coherence with other external instruments.

The signature of the European Consensus was one of several concurrent changes in the European humanitarian aid landscape. The EU has been actively engaged in supporting humanitarian aid since the 1960's. It established the Office of Humanitarian Aid in 1992, then it became the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid in 2004. The Civil Protection Mechanism was added to this Directorate in 2010. The European Consensus signature in 2007 was followed by the elevation of humanitarian aid as a policy with a legal base in the EU treaty in its own right with the passing of the Treaty of Lisbon.⁸

Following the adoption of the European Consensus, the European Commission presented a five-year Action Plan in 2008 outlining practical measures to implement the provisions of the European Consensus. The Action Plan was developed in collaboration with the Member States, and the plan was endorsed by both Member States and the European Commission. The majority of actions identified in the Action Plan are to be pursued by the Commission and the Member States acting together. In a more limited number of cases,

⁶ The European Consensus commits the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, and the European Commission.

¹³ European Consensus, art. 8.

⁸ The Treaty for the European Union, art. 214.

the Commission has indicated specific actions applicable primarily or solely to the European Community's humanitarian aid contribution or operations.

The Action Plan contains actions divided into the following six 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.

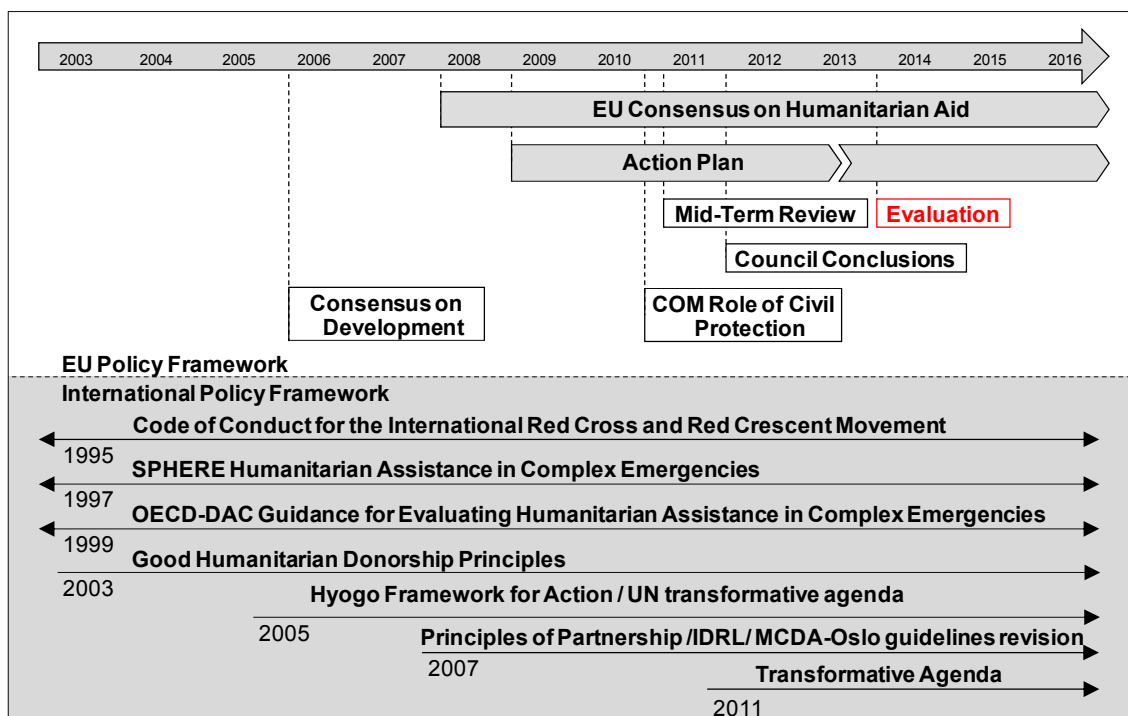
A mid-term review of the European Consensus Action Plan was completed in 2010. The review cited “good overall progress in the implementation of the European Consensus Action Plan across the board”.⁹ The mid-term review (MTR) reaffirmed the relevance of the European Consensus “*in the face of increased vulnerability in the poorest parts of the world, continued growth in humanitarian needs and tight public spending in a period of economic downturn, the drive for the European Union to use its collective capacities and resources efficiently to ensure the best possible impact in aiding people confronted by humanitarian crisis is greater than ever*”. It also highlighted a range of emerging challenges to be tackled going forward, including: strategies for humanitarian advocacy and outreach, adequate planning for and maintenance of funding in certain contexts, clarity of global needs, critical capacity gaps at the global level, the commitment to strengthening the role of local actors, progress on DRR and environmental mainstreaming, and coherence between all aspects of interventions and at all stages of the response.

These findings were endorsed by the Council. Conclusions also included a provision for the annual monitoring and reporting of progress made on Consensus implementation. Subsequently, annual reports have been prepared to provide an overview of actions undertaken by the EU as a whole, both EU Member States and DG ECHO, to implement the European Consensus in the six 'action areas', covering activities in 2011 and 2012.

The Figure below illustrates the timeline surrounding the adoption of the European Consensus, the Action Plan, and Mid-Term Review, and the related policies, as well as the progress within the wider humanitarian system which has both influenced and been influenced by EU policy.

⁹ MTR, pp. 3.

Figure 2 – Chronological Overview



Of particular note is the timing of the **Communication on the Role of Civil Protection and Humanitarian Assistance in 2010**. This document was published as the Civil Protection Mechanism was brought together with humanitarian aid in one DG, DG ECHO. The occurrence of these institutional changes three years after the European Consensus was published has particular implications for the assessment since the European Consensus facilitated complementarities between humanitarian aid and civil protection.

2.3 Funding overview

The analysis presented in this section is derived from a data extraction from the **UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service on 26 June 2013**. As with all data sources, the UN OCHA data is fallible and relies on the consistency of information provided by individual donors. Consequently, care should be taken when using the funding overview to assess absolute amounts given and received by countries over the period. Such use is however not the purpose. The evaluation instead seeks to use the data to understand the funding trends and their overall magnitude over the period and, to help, together with other than financial criteria, selecting the beneficiary and donor countries to be visited.

For each intervention, the following information was recorded:

- Donor
- Appealing agency
- Emergency title
- Appeal title
- Project code

- Emergency year
- USD contributed
- USD committed
- USD paid
- USD pledged
- Description of the project
- Decision date
- IASC Standard Sector
- Destination country

This includes the following categories of intervention:

- **Commitments:** contractually obliged but as yet unpaid funds or in-kind goods between the donor and appealing agency ;
- **Paid amounts:** the payment or transfer of funds or in-kind goods from the donor towards the appealing agency.

Furthermore, the extraction includes two types of intervention: those with specific recipient countries and those without (hereafter, “country-specific” and “country non-specific” interventions). The funding overview presented below uses both the country-specific and country non-specific interventions. The analysis of amounts received by recipient countries (Figures 4 and 5) is restricted to country-specific interventions only.

The data extraction helps to place the evaluation findings in the context of the evolving EU contributions to humanitarian aid over the evaluation period. This is of particular relevance when assessing the extent to which EU humanitarian aid has responded to needs over 2008-2012 (for further analysis of this issue, see section 3, EQ7 – On Needs Based Responses).

The key findings of the funding overview are presented in Box 1, below. The remainder of this section provides further analysis and explanation.

Box 1: Key findings of the funding overview

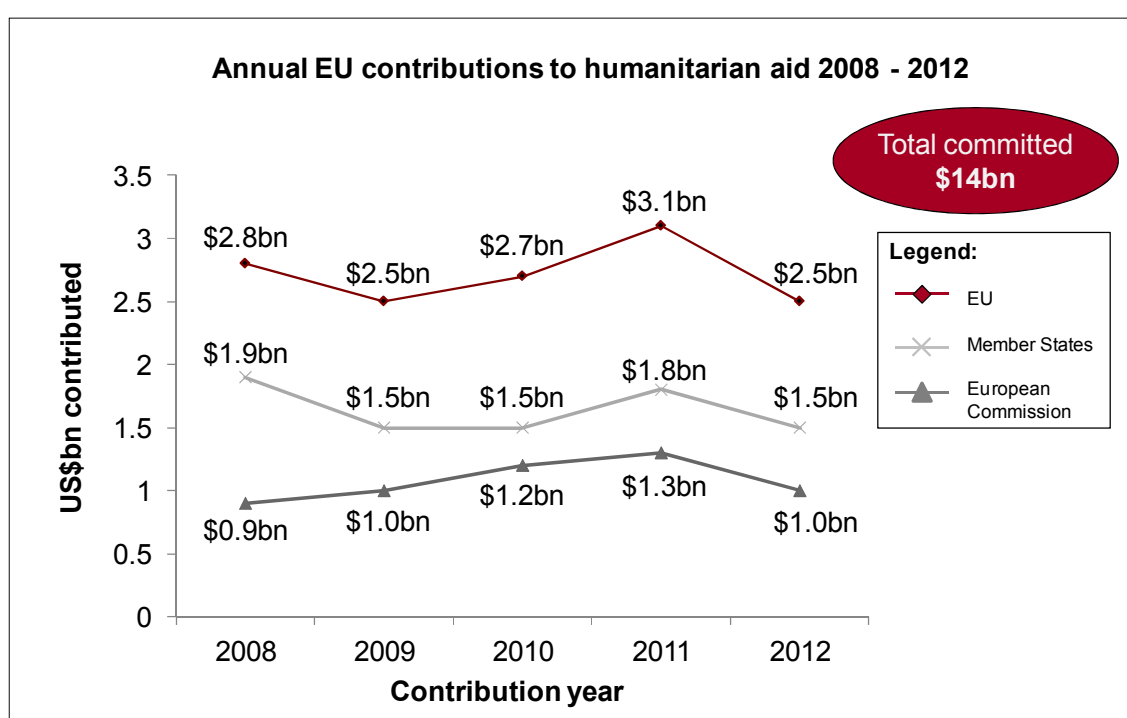
- **Overall EU contributions remained stable over 2008-2012, despite variances year-on-year.** Within this overall stability, ECHO contributions rose over the period, whilst overall Member State contributions reduced slightly, although for some Member States it increased over this period (see Figure 3 below).
- **Individual EU donor contributions varied considerably between donors,** with the top five EU donors contributing 79.5% of total commitments (see Table 1 below).
- **EU humanitarian aid was provided to 139 different countries.** Over half of this aid was concentrated on the same 10 countries (see Figure 4 below).

The total combined EU commitments to humanitarian aid over the period 2008-2012 amounted to \$14bn, of which a total of \$11bn have been registered as paid (as of 26th June 2013). This includes commitments by all Member States and the European Commission over the period 2008-2012. It also includes both country-specific and non country-specific commitments:

- **Country-specific commitments:** commitments made to a specific country in crisis.
- **Non country-specific commitments:** commitments made to multilateral organisations without specifying which country or crisis they are to be used for.

As shown in the figure below, the evolution of ECHO and EU Member State commitments varied from year to year, ranging from \$2.5bn to \$3.1bn over the evaluation period. Whilst overall EU Member State (EU MS) contributions reduced in the period after the 2008 economic crisis, the European Commission's contributions rose from 2008-2011 to keep overall contributions steady:

Figure 3 – Total EU contributions to humanitarian aid over the evaluation period

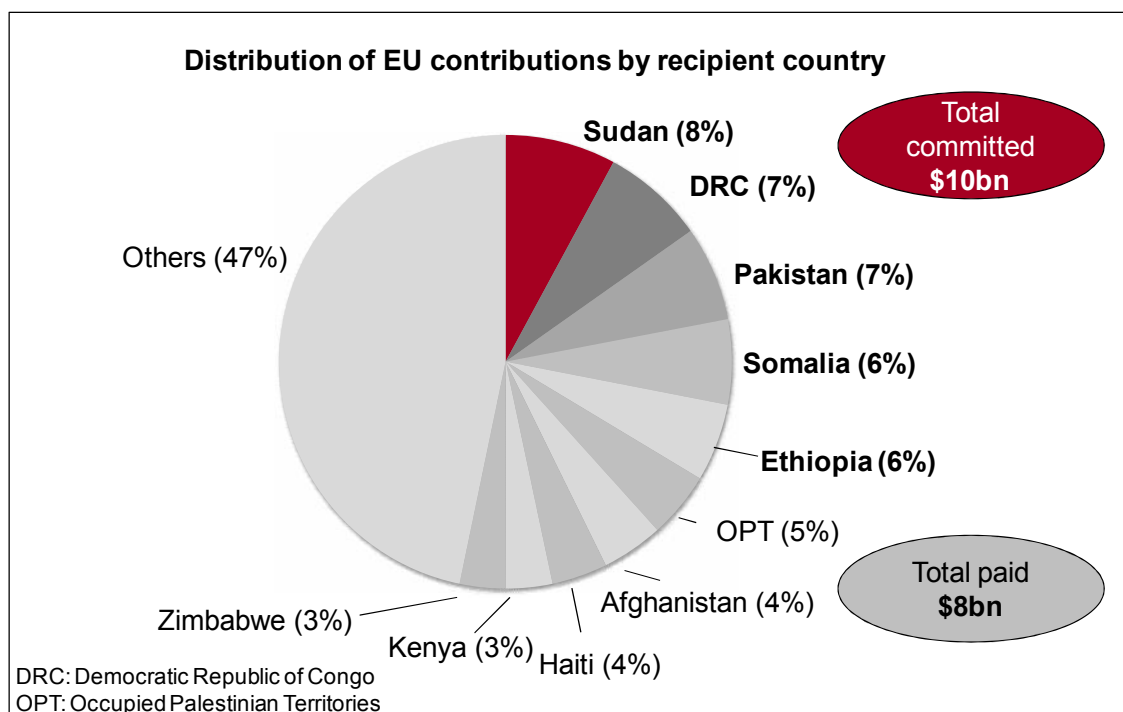


Source: ADE analysis from UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service data.

Within the total \$14 billion of commitments made, the EU made \$10 billion (71%) in country-specific commitments. These commitments were allocated across a wide range of countries. The figure below presents the breakdown of destination countries for country-specific commitments made by EU donors over the evaluation period:¹⁰

¹⁰ As described in section 2.2.1 above, the total country-specific commitment (€10bn) is less than the total commitments over the period (€14bn). This explains the difference in total commitments presented in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4 – Distribution of EU commitments by recipient country over the evaluation period (2008-2012)



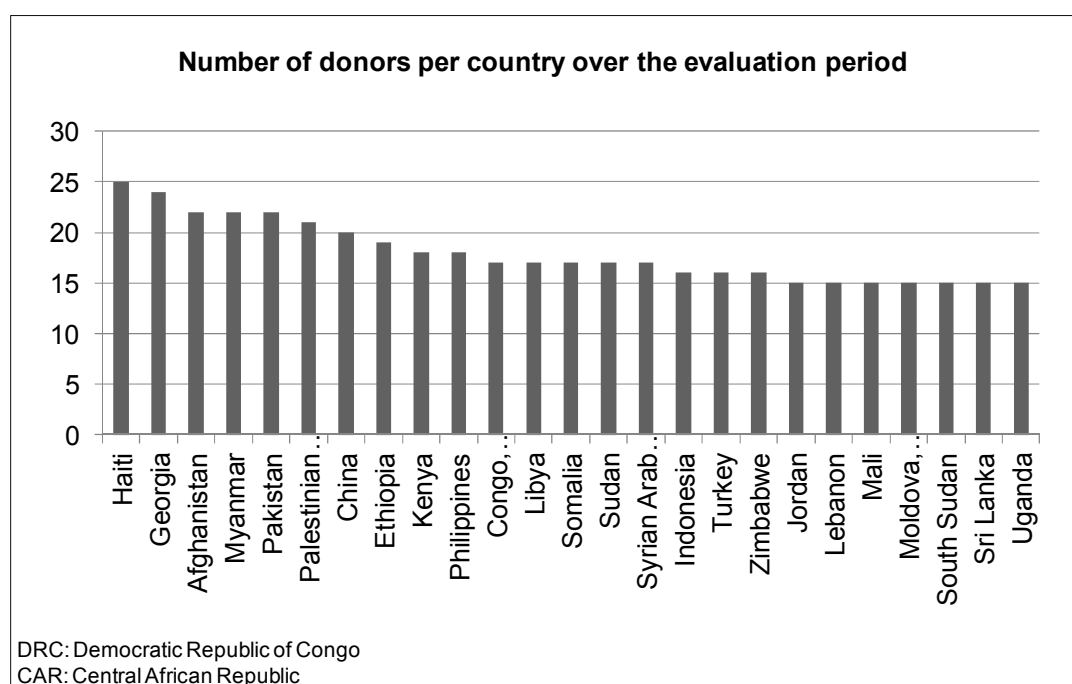
Source: ADE analysis from UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service data.

The Figure shows that the ten largest recipients of aid received 53% of the EU's total country-specific commitments to humanitarian aid. The remaining 129 countries made up 47% of the commitments, with each receiving less than 3% of the total. In total, 139 countries received humanitarian aid from EU donors.¹¹

Moreover, EU donors have worked in many of the same countries over the evaluation period. Indeed 25 out of the 139 recipient countries over the evaluation period have received commitments from more than 15 EU donors over the evaluation period, with Haiti, Georgia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan the most populated by EU donors:

¹¹ Source: ADE analysis from UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service data.

Figure 5 – Countries receiving aid from more than 15 EU donors over 2008-2012



Finally, individual EU donor contributions varied considerably between donors, with the top five donors contributing 79.5% of the total commitments. The following table presents the total commitments recorded in the FTS for each donor over the evaluation period:

Table 1 – Individual EU donor commitments 2008-2012¹²

	Total commitments (US\$m)	Commitments per capita (US\$)	% EU total
European Commission	5,464.34	-	40
Sweden	2,265.04	243.6	16.6
Germany	1,398.47	17.1	10.2
Denmark	868.20	157.3	6.4
United Kingdom	858.26	13.9	6.3
Netherlands	582.26	35.2	4.3
Belgium	437.46	40.4	3.2
France	406.41	6.3	3
Italy	341.83	5.7	2.5
Ireland	312.48	69.9	2.3

¹² The figures included in Table 2 includes donor commitments to specified and non-specified recipient countries (i.e. those contributions listed as “regional” or “none” under recipient country in the UN OHCA Financial Tracking Service, as well as those registering a specific recipient country). For this reason, the total EU commitment over the period is €14bn not €11bn, as specified in section 2.2.1. above. Moreover, it should be noted that these figures were extracted from the FTS database on 26 June 2013. Many Member States have since updated their inputs to the FTS database for the period 2008-2012.

	Total commitments (US\$m)	Commitments per capita (US\$)	% EU total
Spain	289.10	6.3	2.1
Finland	250.44	46.9	1.8
Luxembourg	76.57	153.8	0.6
Austria	52.16	6.2	0.4
Czech Republic	16.80	1.6	0.1
Greece	13.74	1.2	0.1
Poland	10.43	0.3	0.1
Hungary	3.74	0.4	0.0
Slovakia	3.23	0.6	0.0
Estonia	2.98	2.2	0.0
Slovenia	2.59	1.3	0.0
Romania	2.44	0.1	0.0
Malta	1.74	4.2	0.0
Portugal	1.09	0.1	0.0
Lithuania	0.91	0.3	0.0
Bulgaria	0.77	0.1	0.0
Latvia	0.52	0.2	0.0
Cyprus	0.27	0.3	0.0
TOTAL	13.664.40	-	100

3. Methodological approach

This section presents the overall methodological approach for this evaluation. This includes the following elements, addressed in separate subsections below:

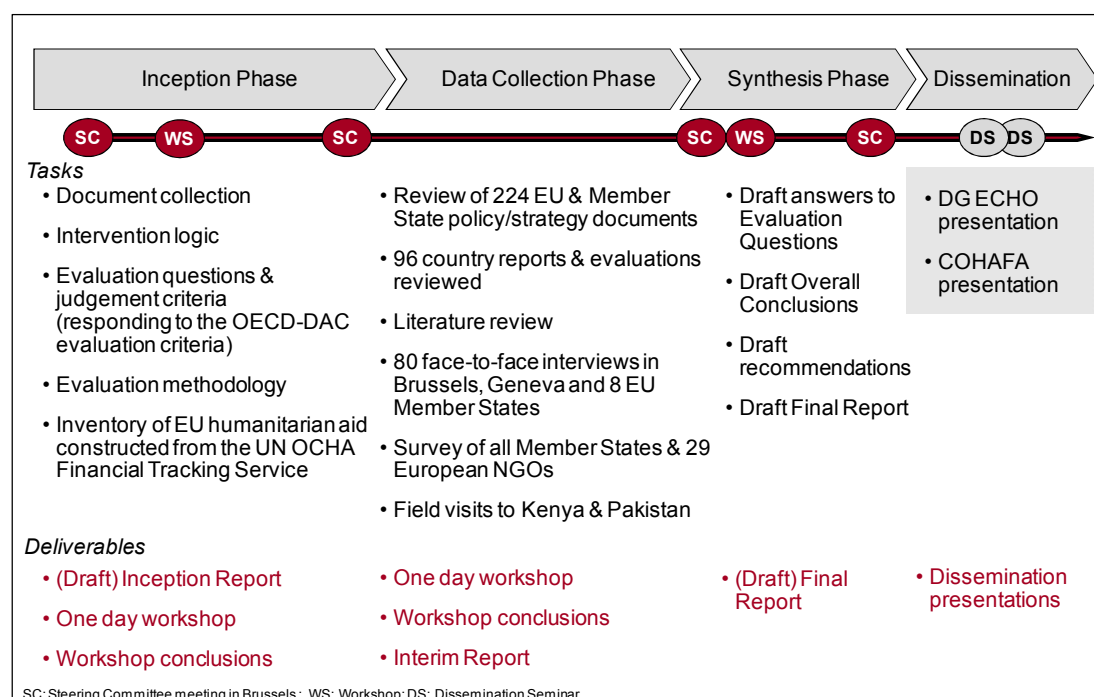
- Evaluation phases
- Evaluation questions
- Data collection tools

3.1 Evaluation phases

As foreseen by the ToR, the evaluation was conducted in *three main phases* (inception, data collection and synthesis). Each phase had its own activities and deliverables. In addition, the evaluation includes a dissemination phase for the evaluation.

The following Figure summarizes the activities carried out in each phase, the deliverables produced and the interaction with the Steering Committee and Reference Group.

Figure 6 – Evaluation Phases



3.2 Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions (EQs) for this evaluation were approved by the evaluation Steering Committee.¹³

The set of questions is constituted as follows:

- The first two questions are overarching questions: one on the overall implementation and influence of the European Consensus and the other one on the usefulness of the Action Plan in this respect;
- Four questions relate to issues of “coordination”, “complementarities” or “coherence” in the context of the European Consensus:
 - EQ 3 tackles the issue of coordination and complementarities at the level of humanitarian aid *strategies and operations* of the different EU institutions and MS;
 - EQ 4 concerns the issue of coherence in the sense of the consistency between EU institutions’ and MS’s *humanitarian aid policies*. In addition it examines issues of EU visibility and value added;
 - EQ 8 also concerns coherence, but in the sense of the consistency between EU institutions’ and MS’s *humanitarian aid policies* on the one hand *and their other external policies* on the other hand;
 - EQ 9 focuses on the improved complementarities between *EU humanitarian and civil protection resources*.
- The three remaining questions focus on other priorities of the European Consensus :
 - EQ 5 concerns the EU contributions to international good practices initiatives;
 - EQ 6 focuses on the contributions of the European Consensus to upholding and promoting humanitarian principles and IHL;
 - EQ 7 aims at verifying to what extent to what extent the European Consensus enhanced need based responses.

Table 2 below lists the nine questions.

¹³ The full set of evaluation questions including judgment criteria and indicators are included in Annex 6.

Table 2 – Proposed evaluation questions

#	Evaluation Question
EQ 1	On making the Consensus concrete <i>To what extent has the Consensus been implemented by EU Institutions and MS and has it influenced and supported them in developing their humanitarian aid policies, structures and procedures?</i>
EQ 2	On the usefulness of the Action Plan <i>To what extent has the Consensus Action Plan assisted EU Institutions and MS in translating the Consensus into operational practice?</i>
EQ 3	On coordination and complementarities for responses to crises <i>To what extent has the EU Consensus improved the coordination between EU Institutions and MS and enhanced the complementarities between their humanitarian aid strategies and operations?</i>
EQ 4	On coherence and visibility <i>To what extent has the Consensus led to a more coherent and visible EU response to humanitarian crises, with a clear EU added value?</i>
EQ 5	On EU contributions to the international humanitarian system <i>To what extent did the implementation of the Consensus strengthen the international humanitarian system by fostering a common EU position and approach to international good practice initiatives?</i>
EQ 6	On upholding and promoting humanitarian principles and IHL <i>To what extent has the implementation of the Consensus contributed to promoting and upholding the fundamental humanitarian principles, promoting IHL and respecting the distinct nature of humanitarian aid?</i>
EQ 7	On needs-based responses <i>To what extent has the implementation of the Consensus contributed to ensuring that EU responses to humanitarian crises were based on humanitarian needs and not on other concerns?</i>
EQ 8	On coherence with other external policies <i>To what extent has the implementation of the Consensus contributed to targeting improved coherence between EU Institutions and MS' humanitarian policies and other external policies, and better coordination and division of roles between the corresponding actors? with a view to guarantee independance of humanitarian idea</i>
EQ 9	On civil protection <i>To what extent has the Consensus contributed to improve complementarities between EU humanitarian and civil protection resources in third countries ?</i>

3.3 Data collection tools and approaches

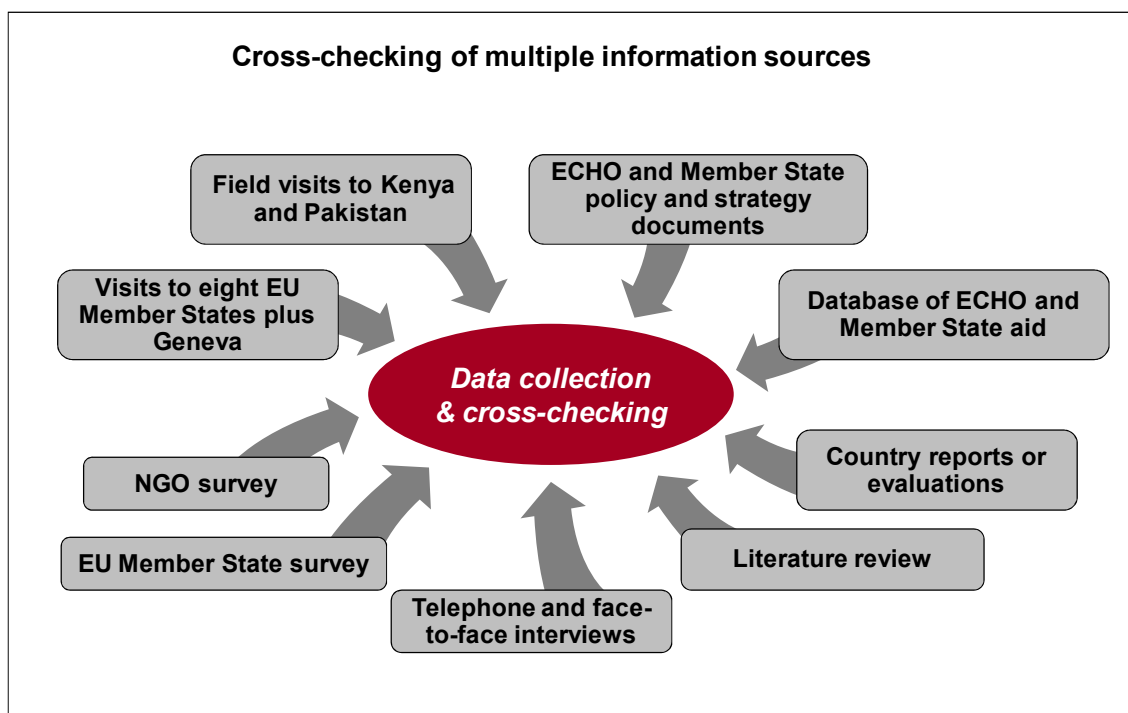
This section outlines the data collection tools and approaches used during the data collection phase. It contains three subsections:

- **The overall methodological approach** : a description of the overall methodological design
- **Data collection work done** : a brief description of the work completed to date and the tasks that remain to be completed
- **Problems encountered and solutions found** : a short overview of problems encountered during the data collection phase and the solutions found by the evaluation team.

3.3.1 Overall methodological approach

The evaluation was designed around multiple evaluation tools in order to allow cross-checking between sources. The following diagram presents the full set of data collection tools used:

Figure 7 – Data collection tools



3.3.2 Data collection work done

The following figure presents the data collection activities undertaken by the evaluation team:

Figure 8 – Data collection work done

Policy/strategy document	5	224 policy/strategy documents reviewed and integrated in findings per evaluation question. Documents included national policies and strategies, system-wide reviews, ECHO questionnaire, mapping and fit for purpose responses.
EU aid inventory	5	Inventory of EU humanitarian aid 2008-2012 completed and integrated in findings per evaluation question.
Country reports / evaluations	5	96 country reports and/or evaluations collected from EU Member States and integrated in findings per evaluation question.
Literature review	5	Literature review conducted covering a forward-looking assessment of challenges expected to affect to the humanitarian landscape in the coming decade.
Interviews	5	184 stakeholders met across 80 interviews, conducted in Brussels (DG ECHO, EEAS, DG DEVCO, UN Agencies, NGOs), Geneva, in 8 EU MS (cf. below), in Kenya and in Pakistan. Interview results collated and integrated into findings per evaluation question.
Member State survey	5	Survey sent to 28 Member States; 26 responses received and results integrated into findings per evaluation questions.
NGO survey	5	Survey sent to the members of the VOICE Consensus TaskForce, 16 responses received, representing 29 NGO members of the VOICE network, plus two non-members.
Member State and Geneva	5	Field missions conducted to eight Member States (Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Poland, UK) and Geneva. Interviews conducted with Member State agency staff, NGO and implementing partners.
Field visits (Kenya and Pakistan)	5	Field visits conducted to two recipient countries: Kenya and Pakistan. Interviews conducted included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nairobi : 6 EU Member States, 2 other donors, 3 Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement bodies, 6 UN agencies, 7 NGOs ▪ Islamabad : 8 EU Member States, 7 other donors, 3 Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement bodies, 5 UN Agencies, 12 NGOs Interview results integrated into findings per evaluation question.
Telephone interviews	5	Telephone interviews conducted with EU Delegations and ECHO offices in four countries not visited during the field mission (Democratic Republic of Congo, the Occupied Territories of Palestine, Jordan and Ethiopia).

The EU Member State and field visits were selected in order to present a range of different contexts across several criteria. The full set of criteria are presented in Annex 2.

3.3.3 Limitations of the analysis

As in each evaluation, it is important to bear in mind that there are a number of limits inherent to the tools used for data collection when taken individually. This can largely be overcome by triangulating information obtained through different sources and tools, as done in this evaluation and by using each information source with the limits it has. More specifically, the following elements can be underlined:

- **Reliance on stakeholder opinion:** the evaluation methodology utilised interviews conducted in HQ and field offices of EU and other donor organisations, NGOs and implementing partners. As such, the evaluation findings are to a certain extent derived from the opinions and views of the main stakeholders of the European Consensus. Moreover, the team could only rely on individuals in place at the time of the evaluation. Due to some staff turnover, the people met sometimes lacked institutional memory. In order to overcome the potential for bias by any stakeholder group or organisation, the evaluation team has triangulated and cross-checked findings between ranges of information sources (types of interviewees, documents, etc.).
- **Number of field missions:** the evaluation includes visits to two recipient countries and eight Member States. In order to overcome the risk of generalisation from specific cases, the evaluators have taken three steps: i) clear and transparent selection criteria were used for the selection of Member States and recipient countries to visit; ii) survey and complementary telephone interviews with EUDs and ECHO field offices were used to cross-check findings from individual visits against responses from other countries not visited; iii) the results of recipient country visits are used only as illustrations of evaluation findings rather than basing generalised findings upon two field visits.
- **Survey bias:** EU Member State surveys often presented a more positive picture than interviews with the same Member State agencies during the visits to Member State capitals. Respondents are often representatives of the humanitarian agencies or departments, which may introduce a bias. To overcome this effect, survey results have been cross-checked with interview findings in the analysis presented below.

4. Findings per evaluation question

This section presents, for each evaluation question, the findings at the level of the judgment criteria.

These findings are made on the basis of the data collection activities outlined in section 3 above. They form the basis of the conclusions presented in section 5.

Findings related to the activities of the Member States are set, where possible and relevant, against the context of differing capacities and needs within the EU Member States. In this regard, **the Member State typology outlined in Annex 3 is used to distinguish between Member States that qualify as “large”, “established” and “fledgling” humanitarian donors**, on the basis of both the size and shape of their humanitarian aid (see Annex 3 for the definition of each category).

EQ 1 – On making the European Consensus concrete

To what extent has the European Consensus been implemented by EU Institutions and MS and has it influenced and supported them in developing their humanitarian aid policies, structures and procedures?

This overarching question covers two dimensions closely related to each other. It first aims at assessing the extent to which the European Consensus has been actively implemented by the Commission and the EU Member States (MS), in the sense that they have taken tangible action to reflect the European Consensus. Second, it aims at understanding the extent to which the European Consensus has helped the EU MS shape their humanitarian aid policies, as well as the structures and procedures for implementing those policies.

Accordingly, the JCs used to answer this question aim to examine whether:

- *the European Commission and the EU MS embarked on initiatives to ensure that the European Consensus would be taken on board, and if so what they were;*
- *the European Consensus has played a role in helping EU MS develop their aid policies and related structures and procedures.*

EQ1 on making the European Consensus concrete - Answer Summary Box

EU Institutions and EU MS took a number of initiatives to implement the European Consensus, favouring some objectives over others. However overall linkages with the European Consensus remained rather indirect.

The European Consensus was fairly well-known among those working directly on humanitarian aid policy at headquarters level, whether within DG ECHO, EU MS or other organisations including NGOs and other agencies. In the field it was much less well-known: EU MS and other actors were mostly unaware or only vaguely aware of it, and even within DG ECHO awareness levels were mixed. Outside the world of humanitarian aid, awareness of the European Consensus was mostly non-existent.

Among those who knew of the European Consensus, or came to know of it during the evaluation, there was broad agreement on the usefulness of having such a document and of its being at EU level. Non-EU stakeholders also used it as an advocacy tool for holding EU institutions and MS accountable for the commitment they made.

Several mechanisms were developed at EU level to ensure that the European Consensus was implemented: the set-up of the COHAFA, the creation and annual monitoring of an Action Plan, and the coordination role played by a specific Unit (A1) in DG ECHO. EU institutions and MS undertook specific action relating to different Consensus objectives, with stronger emphasis on some of them such as needs-based approaches or humanitarian principles, which are also widely considered as priorities for the future. This concerned a wide range of activities, from establishing a national committee to applying IHL to training of junior diplomats and embassy staff in humanitarian activities, and so forth.

More generally the European Consensus has served as a reference document for the humanitarian aid policies of a majority of the EU MS, whether as a key reference for shaping their humanitarian approach or as one source among many. Results are more uneven when it comes to effective changes reported over the period 2008-2012: changes in policy are mentioned in two-thirds of cases, changes in structures and procedures in around 50% of cases.

Finally, the linkages between the above-mentioned initiatives and the European Consensus remained broadly indirect: the European Consensus was mostly one factor among many influencing changes and only exceptionally was a key triggering factor.

JC 1.1 Knowledge of the European Consensus and initiatives taken to ensure implementation

Awareness, usefulness and use of the European Consensus

The European Consensus was fairly well-known among those working directly on humanitarian aid policy at HQ level within DG ECHO, EU MS or other organizations (NGOs, other agencies):

- Interviewees at this level were mostly familiar with the European Consensus. However they also explained that they had specific involvement with the EU and the European Consensus (which was also the reason why they were interviewed) and that the European Consensus was probably not well-known throughout their organization.
- The majority of MS survey respondents (20 on 26) stated they had a good idea of the content of the European Consensus, six stating that they had *“some idea”*. In all cases this concerned what we called “fledgling donors”.
- Other interlocutors at HQ level also knew of the European Consensus. This was notably the case with interviewees from implementing agencies, but the majority (10 out of 16) of NGO survey respondents also indicated that they knew the European Consensus well, while four indicated they had *“some idea ”* and two that they were *“aware of its existence but had no clear idea of its content.”*

In the field, the European Consensus was much less known:

- The country visits suggested there was mixed knowledge within DG ECHO and EUDs in the field: some representatives had quite an in-depth knowledge of the European Consensus, others were much less acquainted with it. This was confirmed by complementary telephone interviews conducted with DG ECHO field offices and EUDs DG.
- EU MS and other actors (NGOs, other donors and agencies) met in the field were mostly not at all, or only vaguely, aware of the European Consensus.

Stakeholders generally stated that in their opinion knowledge of the European Consensus was very basic or mostly non-existent outside the world of humanitarian aid. EU MS representatives - and also other interlocutors - often explained for instance that departments in charge of development aid, of foreign affairs, and similar fields, were unacquainted with the European Consensus. This also applied to EU institutions.

Among stakeholders who knew the European Consensus, there was however a broad agreement on its usefulness. Even when they discovered the European Consensus only through this evaluation – as was often the case – stakeholders generally highlighted the importance of having such a Consensus and of its being at EU level. They also underlined that the document was overall still complete (even if some also state that some elements could be updated) and that they would not favour a revision of the document. More specifically, the agreement on the usefulness of having such a commitment at EU level can be summarized as follows:

- ***Stakeholders consistently identified the core message*** of the European Consensus as defining humanitarian aid as a civilian business, implemented mostly by non-state actors, reflecting the values of humanity and solidarity and not as a crisis management tool at the service of foreign policy objectives.
- The European Consensus draws on a wide range of established humanitarian commitments. ***Whilst the contents of the European Consensus are not necessarily unique there was a widely perceived added value in consolidating these in one place***, re-affirming the alignment of European states and institutions behind these commitments and furthermore consolidating a 'whole of Government' commitment to principled humanitarian aid.
- The European Consensus ***enabled the EU Institutions and the MS themselves to agree on the objectives they pursued and to enunciate this clearly to all stakeholders***.
- NGOs and other EU stakeholders explained they ***used the European Consensus mainly to hold EU Institutions and MS accountable*** to the commitments they made. NGOs noted, for example, the usefulness of the European Consensus when lobbying their governments for increased humanitarian budgets. It was also used by humanitarian departments to hold other arms of government to account.
- The European Consensus ***was of less value as an operational tool*** and needed to be complemented by other means to make sure its messages were taken on board (e.g. an action plan).

Initiatives undertaken by DG ECHO and EU MS to ensure the European Consensus was implemented

Results from the surveys are mixed in terms of evolution of the importance given to a list of European Consensus objectives by the EU MS (see below the type of actions undertaken):¹⁴

- The objectives for which both MS and NGO survey respondents most often mentioned an increased importance (in both surveys mentioned in about two-thirds of cases) are:
 - strengthening DRR: it is striking that this objective is the most mentioned in both surveys: by 20 of 26 MS respondents and by 14 of 16 NGO respondents, even if it was much less mentioned when participants were asked on which objectives the EU as a whole had made most progress;
 - needs-based approaches;
 - fundamental humanitarian principles;
 - speed of response to humanitarian crises;
 - specific vulnerabilities (women, children, elderly, sick and disabled people).

¹⁴ One should be careful when using or interpreting these results; first, because the question posed concerned a trend. Thus when a respondent answers that the situation remained unchanged for a specific objective, this does not necessarily imply that no importance has been given to that objective; it just means the situation has not changed. .

- For some objectives some survey respondents also indicated that there had been little change in the importance attached to them. There are however differences between the MS and NGO surveys, *viz.*:
 - MS respondents most often mentioned:
 - division of roles between humanitarian and, respectively, political actors, civil protection interventions, and military assets;
 - International Humanitarian Law;
 - reinforcement of local capacities as a first line of response.
 - NGO respondents highlighted the use of local capacities as a first line of response, accountability, and speed of response to humanitarian crises, which MS respondents cited as issues that had already received increased attention.

MS survey respondents, but also more generally interviewees, underline that such evolutions in the importance given to specific European Consensus objectives, were at best indirectly linked to the European Consensus:

- A minority of MS respondents (four or fewer) saw the European Consensus as the key factor triggering those evolutions. Needs-based approaches, accountability, strengthening of DRR, and interaction between humanitarian and development aid, were mentioned by four respondents.
- Most often (in between 10 and 17 cases depending on the specific objective), MS respondents state that *“the European Consensus has played a role in triggering those changes, but [that] other factors have been at least as important”*.
- A non-negligible number of respondents (between 3 and 8, i.e. up to one-third) state that the *“European Consensus has played little or no role in triggering those changes”* with no clear pattern on which kind of countries provide that answer.
- This indirect linkage was also broadly confirmed by interviewees.
- Finally, NGO respondents more often mention a link to the European Consensus, but the question was phrased differently, no distinction being made between a direct and a more indirect link. Nearly all of them (15 out of 16) mention a link in terms of increased importance accorded to fundamental humanitarian principles.

The importance given to the European Consensus has been translated into action taken at both DG ECHO and EU MS levels.

Three key mechanisms were developed at EU level to ensure that the European Consensus was taken on board:

- the setting-up of the COHAFA¹⁵, which allowed to ensure monitoring of implementation of the European Consensus by EU MS;
- the creation of an Action Plan, monitored on a yearly basis;
- the specific role played by Unit A1 of DG ECHO (Strategy, Co-ordination and Inter-Institutional Relations).

The action plan was closely monitored by DG ECHO.

¹⁵ More precisely, the scope of the existing working group on food aid was revised to cover humanitarian aid.

Over the period considered, DG ECHO took a number of initiatives to implement the European Consensus. These activities were in line with the different Action areas proposed in the Action Plan and are extensively described in the mid-term review and the annual reports. This concerns a wide range of initiatives, going from the adoption to specific Commission Communications or Council conclusions¹⁶, to the organisation of high-level international conferences¹⁷, the development of specific guidelines¹⁸, conducting specific studies or evaluations¹⁹, etc.

Also EU MS took specific initiatives:

- The table below lists the objectives and the number of MS survey respondents reporting action relating to these objectives. Quite logically, it shows levels of priority similar to the foregoing.

Table 3 – EUMS Survey results: reported actions undertaken for European Consensus objectives

Answer	Count	Percentage
Needs based approach	20	76,92%
Particular vulnerabilities (women, children, elderly, sick and disabled people)	16	61,54%
Fundamental humanitarian principles	16	61,54%
Speed of response to humanitarian crises	16	61,54%
Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction activities	16	61,54%
Interaction between humanitarian aid and development aid	16	61,54%
Accountability (monitoring & evaluation)	15	57,69%
Transforming aid pledges into disbursements in a timely way	13	50,00%
Neglected crises	12	46,15%
International Humanitarian Law	11	42,31%
Reinforcing local capacities as first line of response	9	34,62%
Division of roles between humanitarian aid and civil protection interventions	9	34,62%
Division of roles between humanitarian and political actors	7	26,92%
Division of roles between humanitarian aid and military assets	7	26,92%

¹⁶ For instance in 2009 the European Commission adopted the “EU Strategy for Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing countries” (COM (2009) 84 – 23.2.2009). Another example are the Conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union at the 2985th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, 8.12.2009 to reaffirm its support for the promotion and protection of IHL.

¹⁷ In September 2009, for instance, the European Commission and the European Parliament organized a conference on “Respect for International Humanitarian Law: a major challenge, a global responsibility”.

¹⁸ Such as the EU Guidelines on promoting compliance with IHL (OJ C 303/12, 15.12.2009);

¹⁹ In 2009, for instance, DG ECHO commissioned a “Study on International Humanitarian Transport, Logistics and Stockpiling Capacities”.

- Here again, this concerns a wide range of activities that also relate to the key areas of the Action Plan (see also EQ2). It may include recognizing the “*do no harm*” principle in a countries’ humanitarian aid policy, establishment of a national committee to apply IHL, training of junior diplomats and embassy staff in humanitarian activities, and so forth.
- When asked for their views on the progress made by the EU as a whole (not just their own country), the majority of MS survey respondents mentioned progress in relation to most of the above-listed objectives. Less-mentioned (i.e. mentioned by between one-third and one-half of them) issues include:
 - transforming aid pledges into disbursements in a timely way;
 - reinforcing local capacities as first line of response;
 - division of roles between humanitarian and military;
 - division of roles between humanitarian and political actors.

There appears to be a broad agreement among interlocutors that the themes that the EU should consider as key priorities for the future are needs-based approaches and fundamental humanitarian principles, along with some other themes.

- These are indeed the objectives mentioned by more than 50% of MS and NGO survey respondents. For the MS they are closely followed by “*the interaction between humanitarian aid and development aid*” and by “*Reinforcing local capacities as first line of response*”, and “*Accountability (monitoring & evaluation)*”. Respondents to the NGO survey put reinforcement of local capacities in first place while many (7 or more out of 16), also highlight strengthening of DRR, attention to neglected humanitarian crises, and transformation of aid pledges into disbursements.
- The stakeholders met - whether from the European Commission, EU MS, other donors and agencies, or NGOs - generally cited similar priorities. As shown notably in EQs 6, 7 and 8, some differences are evident as regards action relating to the manner in which these principles are interpreted.
- Some objectives were mentioned by at most one-fifth of MS survey respondents: they included transforming aid pledges into disbursements in a timely way, interaction between humanitarian aid and political actors, military assets, and civil protection, the two last-mentioned also being selected by less than one-fifth of NGO respondents who, moreover, rarely ticked the box on speed of response.

JC 1.2 Influence on EU Institutions’ and MS’ humanitarian aid policies, structures and procedures

About half of the MS humanitarian policy documents analysed contain an explicit reference to the European Consensus.

On the basis of the survey it appears that the European Consensus has served as a reference document for the humanitarian aid policies of a large majority of EU MS. This is evident from the survey results below. They contrast with the results mentioned above which show a rather indirect link between the importance given to certain Consensus objectives and the document itself. It is also interesting to note that the 11 respondents that indicated that the European Consensus was a “key reference to shape their humanitarian approach” include 4 of the 6 donors that we categorised as “well established donors” and 4 of the 6 that we described as “aspiring donors”.

Table 4 – EUMS survey results: use of European Consensus as a reference document

To what extent has the EU Consensus served as a reference document for your organisation's (Ministry, Government Agency or similar) humanitarian aid policy and strategy over the period 2008-2012?		
Answer	Count	Percentage
It was a key reference to shape our humanitarian approach	11	42,31%
It was one reference among many other sources	9	34,62%
It was not used (which can be for many reasons)	0	0,00%
Our humanitarian policy was developed prior to the EU Consensus	2	7,69%
It was de facto our humanitarian policy/strategy	1	3,85%
We do not have a specific humanitarian policy	3	11,54%
I do not know	0	0,00%
No answer	0	0,00%

Results are mixed when it comes to reported changes in countries' humanitarian aid policies over the period 2008-2012, the European Consensus appearing to have been at best (with one exception) one influencing factor among others in this regard.

- The table below summarizes the answers of MS survey respondents and shows that changes in **structures** and **procedures** - and quasi-absences thereof - featured in roughly one-half of the cases; whereas in respect of **policies**, about two-thirds reported changes.

Table 5 – EUMS survey results: changes in policies, structures and procedures

Over the period 2008-2012, were there substantial changes introduced regarding humanitarian aid in your country's policies, structures and procedures?	Policies		Structures		Procedures	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Answer						
Yes	17	65,38%	12	46,15%	15	57,69%
No, marginal changes at best	9	34,62%	14	53,85%	11	42,31%
I do not know	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
No answer	0	0,00%	0	0,00%	0	0,00%

- These changes are of different types:
 - as regards **policies**, they variously concern separation between security and aid policies; endorsement of a law on development cooperation and humanitarian aid; establishment translated into a new Royal Decree; an increase in contributions to common pooled funds; the introduction of annual or multi-annual aid strategies or an overall strategy on humanitarian aid, etc.;
 - examples of **structures** include for instance creation of a post for a desk officer in charge of humanitarian aid; the establishment of a separate department to deal with budgetary and legal elements of development and humanitarian aid projects
 - in terms of **procedures**, there were examples of the introduction of a regular monitoring system for bilateral humanitarian aid, the set-up of a specific results-based management system for project monitoring, etc.
- Only one survey respondent indicated that the European Consensus was the main factor triggering those changes, others mentioning it as one factor amongst others or stating that it has played little or no role.

EQ 2 – On the usefulness of the Action Plan

To what extent has the European Consensus Action Plan assisted EU Institutions and MS in translating the European Consensus into operational practice?

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid tasked the European Commission with presenting an Action Plan for practical measures to implement the European Consensus. This Action Plan was actually released on 29 August 2008 and covers six action areas: advocacy, promotion of humanitarian principles and international law; implementing quality aid approaches; reinforcing capacities to respond; strengthening partnership; enhancing coherence and coordination; the aid continuum.

The majority of actions identified in the Action Plan were to be pursued by the Commission and the EU Member States acting together. In a limited number of cases implementation lay primarily or solely on the European Commission.

EQ 2 on the usefulness of the Action Plan – Answer Summary Box

The Action Plan was of only limited use as a tool for implementing the European Consensus. Awareness and use of the Plan varied between actors, with larger EU Member States reporting significantly less use of the Action Plan than newer Member States and DG ECHO. But there was a broad-based consensus that a revised Action Plan – with improvements to the process, content and flexibility – could be useful in the future.

The Action Plan translated almost all of the European Consensus principles and objectives into individual actions to be undertaken. But its appropriateness as an implementation tool was nevertheless limited by the number, breadth and variance of the planned actions, and the lack of attribution of responsibility for specific activities to specific actors.

Moreover, awareness and use of the Action Plan outside DG ECHO headquarters remained limited. Among Member States, the larger and more well-established humanitarian donors reported markedly less use of the Action Plan than the newer donors.

This was linked to questions about the usefulness of the Action Plan in its current form, notably for Member States. Many stakeholders presented potential improvements to its usability including changes to the **process** of developing and implementing any future Action Plan, updates to the **content** of the Plan itself, and an increased **flexibility** in approaches to implementing the Plan, accommodating the different capacities and needs among the Member States.

Whilst evidence suggests that, in its current form, the Action Plan was of only limited use over the evaluation period, the existence of *an* Action Plan – in an amended form and supplemented by other measures – did receive support from Member States, most notably among the fledgling donors.

JC2.1 & 2.2 The Action Plan as a reflection of the European Consensus objectives and principles

The adequacy of the Action Plan as a reflection of the European Consensus principles and objectives was not challenged by EU humanitarian aid stakeholders. But overall awareness of the Action Plan among the key stakeholders outside of ECHO was very low.

- The Action Plan was designed through a consultative process involving the Council Working Group in 2008. Member States were invited to provide suggestions and amendments to the proposed activities and the resulting collection of actions was structured around the six areas of the European Consensus. No stakeholders approached by the evaluation questioned the extent to which the Action Plan adequately reflects the European Consensus objectives. This includes stakeholders questioned by interview and survey in ECHO, DEVCO, EEAS, EU Member State humanitarian agencies and European NGOs.
- However, this finding needs to be understood in the context of generally low stakeholder awareness of the Action Plan and its contents as witnessed in the Member State visits. Several Member State humanitarian agency staff stated that they were unaware of the Action Plan and/or did not use it in their work.²⁰

Prima facie review of the Action Plan suggests that almost all of the European Consensus principles and objectives are translated into actions.

- The Action Plan is divided into six action areas, each one grouping together activities and expected outcomes linked to the main areas of the European Consensus. Taken together, the activities outlined in the six areas allow for comprehensive coverage of each of the key areas of the European Consensus.
- The only Consensus objectives left out of the Action Plan are those that the Plan defines as “directly-applicable commitments”, namely: commitments relating to the humanitarian principles, the “Responsibility to Protect”, the use of civil protection resources and military assets in response to humanitarian situations.
- Nevertheless, many 15/28 (58%) Member States surveyed still feel that one of these “directly-applicable commitments” (humanitarian principles) remain a key priority for the future, which suggests that inclusion of these areas in the Action Plan could have been considered.

But the appropriateness of the Action Plan was limited by the number, breadth and variance of the planned actions, whilst attribution of responsibility for specific activities to specific actors has become confused among key stakeholder:

- The number of activities (49), and their variability, reduced the clarity of focus:
 - Stakeholders interviewed in both the Member States and the EU Institutions concurred that the number of activities had a negative impact on the clarity of the Action Plan²¹;

²⁰ As noted in several interviews with Member State humanitarian agencies conducted the data collection phase (e.g., inter alia, MN424, MN409, MN601).

²¹ Though it should be noted that the EU Member States were themselves involved in the design of the Action Plan through the Council Working Group in 2008, as noted under JC2.1 and 2.2 above.

- ECHO's Mid-Term Review of the European Consensus stated that the *“range and variability of actions has meant that a large number of priorities have been taken forward in parallel over a short period of time. During the review process, it was felt that a greater degree of prioritisation could be beneficial, focussing on a number of strategic challenges...a balance needs to be struck between strategic goals that will enhance overall effectiveness of the aid response and advancing specific practical measures that take forward collective efforts in particular areas of humanitarian aid”*.²²
- The granularity of the activities in the Action Plan was also regarded as too high. This point was echoed by stakeholders within ECHO, Member States and NGOs alike. Stakeholder criticisms centred around three main issues:
 - The inclusion of so many small individual activities represented an unnecessary level of micro-management;
 - The one-size fits all approach to all Member States ignored the divergence in their respective capacities;
 - The preference for a result-based approach, in which the Action Plan would outline expected results and the different Member States would be free to decide their own activities to achieve them.
- A lack of clarity over who the Action Plan targeted was cited by Member States and NGO stakeholders, visible through comparison of the evaluation interviews and surveys with the text of the Action Plan itself:
 - Member State representatives often viewed the Action Plan as intended for ECHO rather than for their organisations;
 - NGO stakeholders argued that the Action Plan focused primarily on activities for ECHO to conduct;
 - But the text of the Action Plan – agreed in consultation with the Council working group in 2008 – states that the majority of its actions are targeted towards the Commission and the Member States together, with only a limited number of actions targeted towards the Commission alone.²³
- Some Member States noted that significant disparities exist between the capacity levels of the Member State agencies and that these were not reflected in the Action Plan. Instead, Member State stakeholders argued that a tailored Action Plan for each Member State would have been more effective.

JC 2.3 Usage of the Action Plan by the EU Institutions and Member States to translate the European Consensus into operational practice

The Action Plan was known and used by some actors in DG ECHO, but not all:

- ECHO Unit A1 (Strategy, Co-ordination and Inter-Institutional Relations) produced implementation reports on an annual basis from 2010 onwards. These reports provided an internal monitoring mechanism to track all activities conducted by ECHO and Member States to implement the European Consensus over the review period. The reports were also reviewed as part of the Mid-Term Review conducted in 2010.

²² European Commission (2010) Consensus Mid-Term Review (SEC(2010)1505, p.6.

²³ European Union (2008), Consensus Action Plan, SEC(2008)1991.

- Several ECHO stakeholders cited the importance of other strategic plans to their work, such as ECHO's own annual strategy papers.

Member States used the Action Plan to a lesser extent than ECHO, with the larger humanitarian donors using it markedly less than smaller ones:

- Member State stakeholders interviewed during visits to EU capitals argued that their agencies did not really use the Action Plan to implement the European Consensus.
- This was supported by the review of Member State humanitarian strategy papers published after the European Consensus, none of which referred to the Action Plan.
- The evaluation survey revealed clear differences between Member States on the usage of the Action Plan:²⁴
 - None of the large donors²⁵ surveyed (0/4) stated that they had used the Action Plan as a tool to implement the European Consensus;
 - Half of the established donors (3/6) stated that they had used the Action Plan;
 - 60% (9/15) fledgling donors stated that they had used the Action Plan.

The usefulness of the Action Plan was questioned by some stakeholders:

- Member State stakeholders interviewed during the visits and some of those responding to the survey stated that the Action Plan's usefulness was limited by the following factors :
 - The high number of actions in the Action Plan.
 - The lack of relevance to Member States as opposed to ECHO.
 - The lack of tailoring to specific Member States, or groups of Member States, in order to take account of their varying capacities and engagement in humanitarian aid.
- Nevertheless, a majority of the survey respondents stated that they thought the Action Plan was useful for the future (69% or 18/26 respondents) and in the past (54% or 14/26 respondents). The main reasons cited for its usefulness were the following:
 - Some cited the Action Plan as a useful ex-post check of their strategic implementation of the European Consensus.
 - One Member State argued that the design process for the Action Plan helped Member States to reflect on their humanitarian aid strategies.
 - Some stakeholders noted that the annual monitoring of Consensus implementation in response to the Action Plan provided a useful accountability mechanism.

²⁴ The finding that smaller and newer Member State donors used the Action Plan more than the large Member State donors is particularly interesting. As noted under JC2.2 above, several Member States argued that the Action Plan lacks sufficient tailoring to the capacity levels of all Member States. Yet the survey results suggest that those with the lowest capacity levels were using it more than those that the most resources. This apparent paradox may suggest that the Member States were rating its usefulness as a "guiding norm" for their approach to humanitarian aid rather than discussing implementation of the actions themselves. Either way, what remains clear is that (i) some, but not all, Member States found the Action Plan useful and (ii) many Member States felt that the actions were insufficiently tailored to individual Member States.

²⁵ For the delineation between large, established and fledgling EU donors, see Annex 3.

Several stakeholders suggested areas of improvement in the future, including improvements to the *process*, *content* and *flexibility* of the plan:

- Improvements in the *process* :
 - Creating Member State-specific Action Plans to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach;
 - Disseminating the Action Plan more broadly, to ensure all EU Institutions and all Member State agencies, at HQ and field level, are aware of the Action Plan.
 - Design any replacement vehicle to the Action Plan within COHAFA in order to increase Member State buy-in and engagement. Although it should be borne in mind that the original Action Plan was also designed in collaboration with the Council Working Group in 2008. Thus, whilst COHAFA engagement may be a necessary condition for future processes in light of the engagement issues observed, it should not be thought sufficient to overcome to problems seen in the evaluation period.
 - Decrease the implementation period for the Action Plan, to allow for more frequent updating of the activities and objectives.
 - Focus monitoring of Action Plan implementation at the level of results achieved rather than activities conducted.
- Improvements in the *content* of the Action Plan itself :
 - Increasing the focus of the Action Plan by reducing the number and range of activities.
 - Updating the Action Plan to allow more strategic focus on emerging issues, such as resilience, the UN Transformative Agenda, the GHD initiative, cash and vouchers, food aid, forgotten crises.²⁶
- To some extent these changes would require a greater degree of *flexibility* to add evolving themes that are not included in the European Consensus itself. Indeed, some respondents to the Member State survey expressed a preference for rolling objectives, to be adjusted on a regular basis in order to match the evolving needs of the European humanitarian community.

JC 2.4 The Action Plan as a tool to make sure that the objectives of the European Consensus were reached

Whilst evidence suggests that *the* Action Plan was of only limited use over the evaluation period – particularly among Member States – the existence of *an* Action Plan, in an amended form and supplemented by other measures, did receive some support from Member States, most notably from the fledgling donors:

- As noted under JC2.3, Member State stakeholders argued that the Action Plan was felt to be more targeted towards ECHO than Member States.
- Moreover, some Member States noted that other games in town were more important (e.g. UN Transformative Agenda; DARA reports; EU IHL Guidelines). In larger

²⁶ It should be noted that each of these points are mentioned, explicitly or implicitly, in the European Consensus. However, some concepts, such as resilience, have been developed since the publication of the European Consensus; whilst others, such as cash and vouchers, are mentioned in the European Consensus but do not form a strategic area of focus as such. The purpose of updating the Action Plan would therefore be to open the door to new and emerging issues, updates, and potential focal issues.

Member States in particular, home-grown strategies and implementation plans took precedence over the Action Plan.

- This was supported by the evaluation survey of EU Member States, which revealed that the larger humanitarian donors did not feel that having an Action Plan was useful, whilst the smaller donors did:²⁷
 - 80% (12/15) fledgling donors stated that having an Action Plan was a useful complement to the European Consensus over the period 2008-2012;
 - Only one out of ten large and established donors stated that an Action Plan was useful.
- Indeed, some Member State stakeholders interviewed felt that, in order to increase Member State engagement it remains necessary to i) better identify the added-value of an Action Plan over and above national strategies and ii) to clarify the linkages between the Action Plan activities and other global initiatives in this area.
- Finally, Member State and NGO stakeholders noted that having an Action Plan will never be sufficient on its own. Instead, supplementary activities will be required in order to improve implementation, e.g.
 - Annual monitoring of Member State implementation;
 - Specific dissemination activities;
 - Targeting of wider community engagement (including of NGOs).

²⁷ or the delineation between large, established and fledgling EU donors, see Annex 3.

EQ 3 – On Coordination and Complementarities in response to Crises

To what extent has the European Consensus improved the coordination between EU Institutions and EU MS and enhanced the complementarities between their humanitarian aid strategies and operations?

The Evaluation Question (EQ) assesses to what extent the adoption of the European Consensus led to stronger operational coordination²⁸ at EU level. The European Consensus includes a commitment to enhanced operational coordination between the EU MS and the EC. The European Consensus states that the EU will focus on real-time sharing of information on situation assessments and response intentions for specific crises (at headquarters level and in the field) and enhancing policy-level exchange on aid and intervention strategies. At the same time the European Consensus situates EU level coordination under the overarching umbrella of the UN led coordination system

Two Judgement Criteria (JC) are given under this EQ. The first JC aims at assessing the extent to which operational coordination of humanitarian aid (i.e. sharing of situation assessments, strategic response plans and specific funding intentions) has improved - and to what extent any change is attributed the adoption and implementation of the European Consensus. The second JC assesses the extent to which improved complementarities in the crisis response provided by EC institutions and Member States (MS) were realized.

EQ 3 on Coordination and Complementarities in response to Crises – Answer Summary Box

Overall, the European Consensus has directly encouraged improved information share at the Capital level - but not at field level. There is little evidence of the EU MS and institutions directly coordinating to exploit complementarities and synergies in humanitarian response.

There is a wide agreement that the sharing of information between EU MS and EU Institutions at the capitals level on specific humanitarian crises (including both situation analyses and response intentions) has improved significantly since the introduction of the European Consensus. Dedicated structures and processes have been instituted to support improved HQ level information sharing, principally regular meetings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA).

The perception of the quality and value of the information sharing function of the COHAFA meetings varied widely between events and participants. Smaller humanitarian donors appear to value this function more highly than the larger EU MS who see themselves as 'providers' of information. Information sharing appears to be most active in the case of high profile disasters.

This improvement in information share at the capitals level is widely attributed directly to the European Consensus, as the establishment of the COHAFA in 2009 was a direct consequence of the European Consensus. Some informants view improved information share as the single most visible consequence of the European Consensus.

Despite a commitment to improve field level intra-EU coordination in the European Consensus, there have been limited opportunities for improvement in the extent of information sharing at the

²⁸ Other coordination functions are discussed in complementary EQs including humanitarian policy coordination (in EQ4), coordinated engagement with the humanitarian reforms (in EQ5), and coordination and coherence with development, political, military and civil protection instruments (EQ 8 & 9).

field or crisis level, given low levels of specialist representation of EU MS.

The gadded value of intra-EU humanitarian information sharing at the field level was not clearly apparent. In practice field level donor coordination usually involves the most active and 'like-minded' humanitarian donors and there are strong justifications for maintaining an inclusive donor coordination bodies at field level.

There are mixed opinions on whether operational coordination between EU institutions and EU MS has improved over the reference period, and the influence of Consensus on building complementarities is judged to be limited.

Efforts were reported to utilize existing platforms, including COHAFA, to coordinate EU responses. ECHO's new Emergency Response Coordination Centre is a further effort to strengthen operational coordination. However, concrete examples of operational humanitarian coordination remain ad hoc. The findings show that structural factors and national interests inhibit greater coordination of humanitarian operations. Uncoordinated planning cycles, different partnership arrangements, and pre-allocated budgets all restrict the space to coordinate.

The boundaries and inter-relationships between EU and UN led operational coordination functions are not consistently interpreted. This has become a point of contention between DG ECHO and several EU MS. EU MS respondents were often at pains to affirm that the primary responsibility for operational coordination should lie with the UN and are actively seeking to further reinforce this. In practice, DG ECHO has been more likely to assume a proactive leadership role to compensate for gaps in UN capacity.

JC 3.1 Extent to which the adoption of the European Consensus led to better EU coordination

There is a wide agreement that the sharing of information between EU MS and EU Institutions at the capitals level on specific humanitarian crises (including situation analyses and response intentions) has improved significantly since the introduction of the European Consensus.

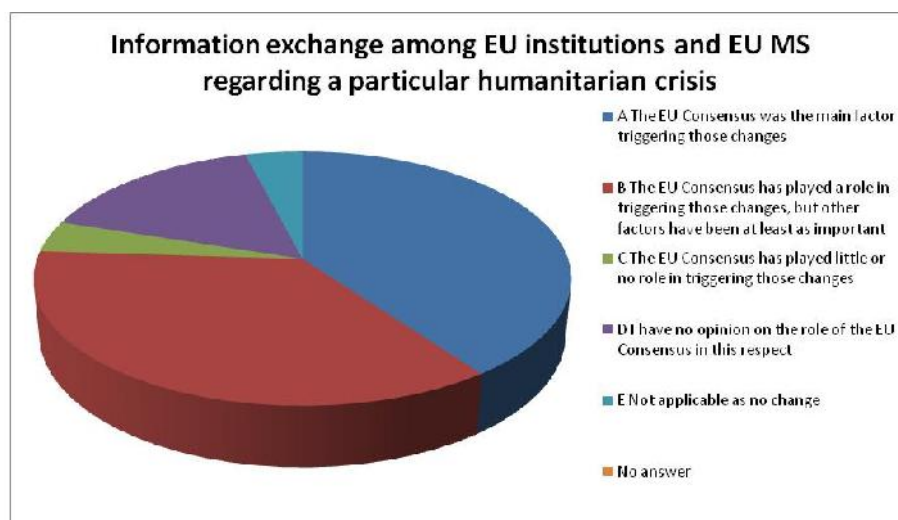
- EU Member States were almost unanimous in the opinion that information exchange amongst EU institutions and MSs regarding particular crises had improved over the reference period (24 out of 25 reporting that this had increased over the reference period).
- Dedicated structures and processes have been instituted as a mechanism to support improved HQ level information sharing. This principally occurs through regular meetings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). Regular dissemination of information, including the ECHO crisis sitreps, the 'daily flash' and other information from EU MS on response plans is facilitated by the COHAFA secretariat.
- Several respondents noted that information sharing worked best for big mega-disasters such as the Philippines, Syria and Haiti, where there was a high level of common interest. Underfunded emergencies, including the crisis in the Central African Republic, have also been placed on the COHAFA agenda and this seen by some respondents to have successfully increased the subsequent level of funding. COHAFA is also used to share information on the annual humanitarian response plans and strategies of EU MS and ECHO.

- The perception of the quality and value of the information sharing function of the COHAFA meetings varied widely between participants. The information sharing function is most positively valued by the smaller humanitarian donors - reflecting limited access to alternative 'independent' sources of humanitarian information. Larger EU MS and the EU institutions tend to view themselves as 'providers' of information, rather than 'consumers', at COHAFA meetings.

This improvement in information share at the capitals level is widely attributed directly to the European Consensus.

- The clear majority of member states (18 of 24) perceive that this improved information share is either mainly, or partly, attributable to the European Consensus.

Figure 9 – EU information exchange



- This finding was corroborated through interviews with EU MS and EC humanitarian advisors. The point was repeatedly made that the establishment of the COHAFA²⁹ in 2009 was a direct consequence of the European Consensus. Some informants viewed improved information share as the single most visible consequence of the European Consensus.

Despite a specific commitment to improve field level intra-EU coordination in the European Consensus, there has been little improvement in the extent of information sharing at the field or crisis level, between EU institutions and MS. This contrasts markedly with the earlier finding on improvements in information sharing at capital level.

- In the three crisis field studies (Kenya, Somalia and Pakistan) a variety of humanitarian donor coordination forums were observed to exist. However, there is no standardized

²⁹ More precisely the redefinition of the mandate of the Council Working Group on Food Aid. The mandate for COHAFA extension was adopted in May 2008, with the first meetings in the new format held from January 2009

format and structure for these donor groupings. While donors participate in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings there are also donor only meetings. the scope and membership of these meetings is adapted to the needs and interests in the specific context. This reinforces the findings of - and suggests no evolution from - the findings of a 2009 study on donor field coordination mechanisms³⁰.

- Field level donor coordination usually involved the most active and 'like-minded' humanitarian donors. Typically this included ECHO, USAID and other EU and non-EU donors. It was noted that 'non-traditional' (i.e. non OECD-DAC) but substantial donors - for example Turkey in Somalia - did not participate in these structures.
- No regular EU specific humanitarian donor coordination meetings are held in Kenya, Somalia or Pakistan. Nor was any reference was found elsewhere to any regular EU level humanitarian donor forums at field level.
- *Ad hoc* EU level humanitarian discussions were reported in Kenya when humanitarian agenda items are included within the EU development councillor meetings or the EU political councillor³¹ meetings. DG ECHO represented the EU humanitarian community in these meetings with the objective of promoting coherence with other instruments, rather than to coordinate humanitarian aid *per se*.

The ambition of the European Consensus to establish intra-EU humanitarian information sharing at the field level had limited support. There are strong practical reasons which mitigate against instituting an EU level donor field coordination mechanism.

- There was limited interest amongst EU MS field representatives in establishing EU specific field coordination mechanisms. This was based on very practical considerations.
 - Firstly, especially outside of major crises, few EU MS have humanitarian representation at the country level, and fewer still substantive technical humanitarian expertise. Often the humanitarian portfolio is handled by embassy staff with other primary responsibilities. Consequently meetings are likely to lack a quorum of well informed participants.
 - Secondly, few EU MS have bilateral humanitarian aid programmes. In smaller programmes funding decisions and management is typically managed at HQ level. Consequently, there are wide disparities in the level of information and analyses required by MSs at field level.

Given heavy workloads, there is little appetite to proliferate donor coordination structures. Where there is a need for donor level meetings this is best met through inclusive donor meetings. There appears to be little value added in a series of EU level meetings which would undoubtedly prove additional to established donor coordination forums.

³⁰ Marie Spaak and Ralf Otto, 2009, Study on the Mapping of Donor Coordination (Humanitarian Aid) at the Field Level, DG ECHO/ GHD

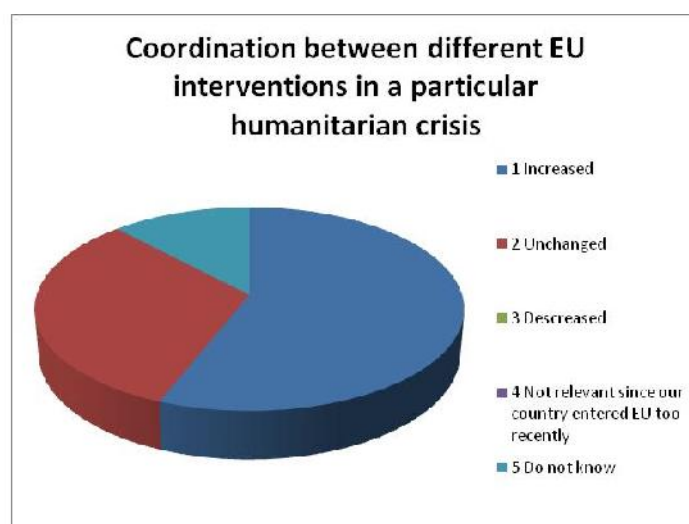
³¹ This was observed in Kenya with reference to both the Somalia and Kenya crises.

JC 3.2 Extent to which complementarities between EU Institutions and MS' humanitarian aid improved at strategy and operational level

There are mixed opinions on whether operational coordination between EU institutions and EU MS has improved over the reference period. The influence of Consensus on building complementarities is judged to be limited.

- Opinion is divided on the extent to which EU MS and EU institutions have increased operational coordination of response interventions over the reference period. Only 14 of the 24 EU MS agreed that operational coordination had improved. Interestingly, of those expressing an opinion, the large and established EU donors³² are more likely to judge an improvement (7 improved, 3 unchanged) compared to fledgling donors (6 improved, 5 unchanged).
- This suggests that although improved information share is widely improving, this in itself is insufficient to prompt coordinated action.

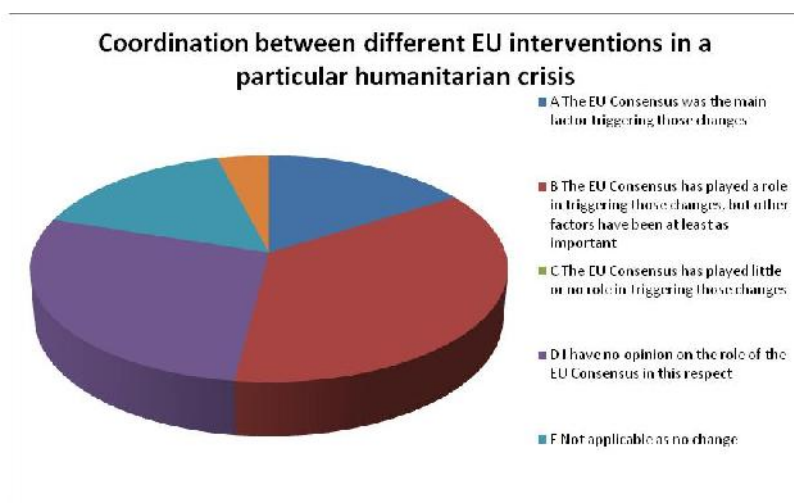
Figure 10 – Evolution of EU coordination



- A minority of respondents to the EU MS survey reported that the European Consensus had contributed to enhancing operational coordination. Only 3 out of 24 respondents saw the European Consensus as the main factor triggering a change, whilst another 9 thought it played some role. Interviews indicated that improved operational coordination was a largely a practical response to the coordination failures witnessed in crises such as Haiti, rather than being driven by the European Consensus.

³² See Annex 3 for details of which EU MS are classified as large, established and emerging humanitarian donors.

Figure 11 – Contributory role of the European Consensus



- Implementing agencies interviewed during the field visits (NGOs, RCM and UN agencies) often observed that there was no 'common EU identity' in operational terms and tended to see decision making by EU donors as essentially independent. The survey of European NGOs portrays a slightly more positive picture with seven respondents discerning a positive trend of increasing EU operational coordination, four seeing no change, but two seeing a worsening situation.

Efforts were reported to establish, or utilize existing platforms to coordinate EU responses. However, concrete examples of operational humanitarian coordination remain ad hoc and limited.

- The COHAFA is used to discuss the coordination of EU humanitarian response - with the Syria crisis mentioned as a specific example. However, this was understood to principally involve coordination between humanitarian and political processes, rather than operational coordination *per se*. One member state expressed the opinion that "EU MS express the will to *coordinate*, but are far less interested in actually being *coordinated*".
- One respondent felt that the loss of regular Humanitarian Aid Committee meetings, where EU MS reviewed DG ECHO operational plans in detail, was a retrograde step. It was felt that the opportunity to discuss concrete response plans, with the opportunity to see where EU MS might fit in, has replaced by a more abstract policy dialogue.
- The establishment of ECHO's Emergency Response Coordination Centre in 2013 is cited as an effort to further strengthen both real time information share on response plans and operational coordination. For example, the ERCC regularly updated and circulated details of each Member State and institutions' contributions to the relief effort in response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, and frequent coordination meetings were organized after the Typhoon made landfall.
- Several examples of exploiting specific complementarities and synergies were noted. Several EU MS report drawing on ECHO's comparative advantage of a strong expert field network to guide and advise on humanitarian programming. Coordinated EU

pledging to major appeals was referred to, for example joint pledging by some EU MS to specific appeals. The UK noted participating in a donor consortium in Afghanistan at the request of the EU. However, these collaboration processes remain largely *ad hoc*.

- No EU humanitarian pooled funding mechanisms are used for collective, coordinated humanitarian response. The new Financial regulation is understood to offer the option of EU MS contributing additional humanitarian funds to DG ECHO, however this funding channel has not yet been utilized. However, EU MS did report contributing funds to resilience programming (e.g. Malta has contributed to the EU SHARE and AGIR initiatives in the Horn and West Africa respectively).

Evidence suggested that the lack of progress is in part rooted in structural factors and national interests that inhibit greater coordination of humanitarian operations.

- Significant barriers to greater operational coordination are evident. Planning cycles within EU institutions and EU MS are uncoordinated, with decisions made at different points in the year. EU MS are often committed to working - at least in part - through their own national NGOs or Red Cross societies. This inevitably constrains opportunities for strategic coordination. Most EU MS target a subset of predetermined countries for development aid, and effectively also for humanitarian assistance. Many EU MS also report relatively little budget flexibility with the majority of humanitarian funds committed to predetermined partners at global level.
- Many EU MS were clear on the requirement for maintaining independent humanitarian decision making at the national level - partly to accommodate national strategic considerations. EU MS appear unwilling to subscribe to the principle of a fully coordinated operational response. Several of the larger EU MS representatives expressed specific reservations on delegating responsibility to the EU institutions for leading EU operational response.
- The poorly coordinated EU humanitarian response is a strong contrast with progress witnessed in EU level in coordination of development contributions. A strong and effective coordination mechanism for EU development donors exists in Kenya, where a strategy for development aid has been agreed between the EU MS and the EC, to guide sectoral aid contributions. The reason for the disparate approaches across these two domains was partly explained by stakeholders as reflecting the higher premium attached to ensuring national visibility in supporting humanitarian operations.

The boundaries and inter-relationships between EU and UN led operational coordination functions are not consistently interpreted. This has become a point of contention between DG ECHO and several MS.

- EU MS respondents were often at pains to affirm that the primary responsibility for operational coordination should lie with the UN³³. Coordination at the UN level was argued to have increasing relevance given the multiplication of response agencies in the field. Country level pooled funds in particular were singled out as a tangible basis for

³³ Given humanitarian principles, the UN plays a leading role in many crises, especially complex emergencies. In other contexts, such as natural disasters, the coordination function of national authorities is less contentious.

donor operational coordination. Most large donors reported coordinating directly with the UN and see EU level coordination as a parallel structure.

- Several EU MS argued strongly that EU donor coordination should be careful to complement, not replicate, the established UN responsibilities and mandate. It was observed during the field missions that ECHO can take a pro-active role in operational coordination with their implementing partners. For some EU MS and for OCHA this is seen as encroaching on the UN mandate. ECHO and the EEAS acknowledged this risk, but argue it is necessary on occasion to compensate for gaps in UN capacity.
- Some EU MS expressed interest in developing a common EU humanitarian response strategy in response to major crises. This could clarify the scope of EU support within an over-arching UN led response plan. This strategy development process could draw inspiration from similar processes such as the EU country human rights strategies.

EQ 4 – On coherence, visibility and value added

To what extent has the European Consensus led to a more coherent and visible EU response to humanitarian crises, with a clear EU added value?

The Evaluation Question aims to assess the extent to which EU institutions have taken initiatives, in the light of the European Consensus, to increase coherence³⁴ or consistency between their respective humanitarian aid policies. It also aims at assessing the extent to which the European Consensus helped increase the visibility of EU institutions and the MS's responses to crises as specifically "EU" responses. Finally, it verifies whether the EU provided specific value-added in humanitarian crises. The JCs accordingly break the question down into three key elements: coherence and consistency of EU responses; visibility; and EU value-added.

EQ 4 – On coherence, visibility and value added – Answer Summary Box

There are several signs that the coherence of EU institutions' and MSs' humanitarian aid policies has improved, even if the EU had little visibility as an entity. DG ECHO has provided different types of added value.

Several elements suggest that the **consistency between the humanitarian policies** of the EU institutions and EU MS has improved at HQ level, even if there are diverging views in this respect, notably among non-EU stakeholders such as NGO representatives. Consistency at policy level has also been challenged on the ground; for example some stakeholders explained that the practices of the EU MS, and also of DG ECHO, were not always consistent in different countries, or else they raised questions on the extent to which humanitarian aid was sufficiently isolated from broader political, economic or other interests.

Although many EU MS representatives underlined the importance of joint EU **visibility**, most sources indicate that individual MS, when they deemed visibility important, favoured their own contributions. Sources concur also that there has been little increase in a common EU visibility over the evaluation period.³⁵ In any case doubts have been expressed on the issue of visibility *per se*, stakeholders questioning for instance whether it should be an objective at all or whether the focus should instead be on effectiveness. They also underlined that in some situations visibility jeopardised safety and that the issue was not one of "stickers and banners" but rather of how to promote leverage of EU taxpayers and national governments.

Sources converge in underlining different types of **DG ECHO value-added**, several of which concern the objectives of the European Consensus. Over the period covered this mostly concerned its global presence and capacity for drawing on a network of EUDs and DG ECHO field offices; its field-level specialist humanitarian expertise; and its key role in promoting good humanitarian practices. Stakeholders also saw potential value-added for EUDs, notably insofar as the latter could deploy the leverage that an Ambassador can bring to bear. Finally, the evaluation found little evidence of specific value-added that the EU as an entity (i.e. the EU Institutions and MS) has had or could have when providing humanitarian aid.

³⁴ The term coherence is understood here as (cf. ALNAP guide, p. 33) "the extent to which policies of different actors were complementary or contradictory". The evaluation focuses on the European Consensus between the various EU institutions and MS. Hence the aforementioned "policies of different actors" can refer to two components of the coherence question: (i) the humanitarian policies of different EU actors; (ii) the different policies (humanitarian, development, military) of different actors, whether EU or not. The present question refers to the first components, while Question 8 tackles the second component. To avoid confusion with the second dimension, we suggest using the term "consistency". Furthermore, this question focuses on the policy level, while Question 3 targets the strategy and operational levels.

³⁵ But it should be noted that in 2013, ECHO developed its policy on communication. See, for example, the ECHO Annual Report Policy Fiche of 16th May 2013, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2012/AR2013_policy_fiche_Communications.pdf

JC 4.1 Extent to which EU institutions and EU MS bought into the objective of increasing consistency in their humanitarian aid policies

Some formal elements suggest that EU institutions and EU MS were dedicated to ensuring that their humanitarian aid policies increasingly converged around the objectives of the European Consensus:

- the creation of the COHAFA as a consequence of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid can be considered as a first step towards convergence in humanitarian aid policies;
- reference was made in a number of EU MS documents to the objectives of the European Consensus and their commitment to complying with these objectives.

There are mixed indications regarding the extent to which such formal elements also reflected a genuine commitment:

- interlocutors met rarely questioned the willingness of the EU institutions and MS to work on such convergence;
- but some highlighted differences between EU MS in this respect, notably questioning the extent to which humanitarian aid is sufficiently independent in the different EU MS to allow such operational convergence (cf. EQ6).

JC 4.2 Improving consistency between the humanitarian policies of EU institutions and EU MS

Several elements suggest that consistency between the humanitarian policies of EU institutions and the EU MS has improved at HQ level, although there are diverging views in this regard:

- MS survey results point to an increase in consistency; indeed the majority of MS survey respondents (respectively 24 and 23) agree or strongly agree that today:
 - “EU institutions and MS share a common view on humanitarian aid” (two disagreed on this point);
 - “implementation of humanitarian aid by EU institutions and MS is closely in line with the European Consensus” (one disagreed; two expressed no opinion);
- many stakeholders state that EU donors are following the same line in their humanitarian aid policies, notably in comparison with other donors;
- however the NGO survey reveals much more divergent views:
 - on the “common view on humanitarian aid” half (8) of the respondents strongly or somewhat agree, but the other half somewhat or strongly disagree;
 - on the issue of alignment with the European Consensus the results are the same;
- moreover several stakeholders stated that EU MS were still not always on the same line on specific issues, or they even stated that there is a move away from European Consensus objectives, as illustrated by the following interviewee statements:
 - “not all EU MS understand that it [humanitarian aid] is not a crisis management tool”;
 - “some blur the lines between humanitarian aid and development”;

- “some [are] not clear enough on [the] linkage humanitarian and military actors”.

It is difficult to build further on those statements as the interlocutors themselves did not really do so, but they do reveal divergent opinions, but these different elements point to a gap between formal policy positions and differences in how policy is implemented.

Specific situations on the ground have revealed or raised questions on the extent to which the EU institutions’ and MS’s policies were increasingly consistent:

- several interlocutors met in Pakistan and Kenya underlined that the practices not only of EU MS but also of DG ECHO were not always consistent in different countries;
- more generally some stakeholders (including from EU MS) questioned the extent to which EU MS, in their humanitarian aid, were isolated in practice from broader political, economic or other interests (see also EQ 8 on this issue).

JC 4.3 Extent to which EU institutions and MS’ humanitarian aid was visible as an “EU response”

As a preliminary remark it is useful to note that the European Consensus does not mention visibility; yet visibility seems to be high on the Commission agenda: stakeholders, including those in EU MS, underlined that such visibility was high on DG ECHO’s agenda, but not necessarily on their own. As one EU MS representative put it: “*Visibility is high up on the ECHO agenda, but not a priority from our view...*”

Findings on the commitment to common EU visibility are mixed: EU MS formally concur that joint visibility is important, but most sources indicate that individual EU MS, when they deem visibility important, favour their own contributions:

- the majority of MS survey respondents somewhat (14) or strongly (7) agreed that “*it is important that EU institutions and MS are jointly visible as “EU” when providing humanitarian aid*”. Some somewhat or strongly disagreed (respectively 3 and 1). Among the seven that strongly agreed, six were so-called “fledgling” donors. Two that disagreed were well-established donors. The majority of NGO respondents (10) agreed, whereas five did not;
- on the other hand document analyses and face-to-face interviews suggested little or no commitment by EU MS to a common EU visibility;
- several sources show that EU MS tend to favour their own visibility:
 - this is shown by the document analysis and by interviews with the different categories of stakeholder, including those from EU institutions and MS;
 - similarly the majority of MS survey respondents somewhat (12) or strongly (5) agreed that “*in general, EU MS have an approach to visibility that privileges the visibility of an individual EU MS over common EU visibility*”, while only five disagreed (three of which were well-established donors). Results were even clearer in the NGO survey, in which the vast majority (12) agreed with the statement and only three disagreed. As explained by one MS survey respondent “*in humanitarian situations where visibility is contextually appropriate, it is likely to continue to prove challenging to present a unified “EU” response, due for the most part to pressures within national systems to*

demonstrate what an individual country is doing in response to a crisis and to visibly demonstrate the impact of national humanitarian assistance programmes to the taxpayers of that country”;

- some interlocutors indicate that humanitarian aid is an “easier sell” to EU citizens than development aid, which may also explain why MS are reluctant to cede visibility to the EU.

Sources concur that there is little increase in a common EU visibility:

- neither the interviews nor the document analysis provided any real evidence of an increase in common EU visibility³⁶;
- MS survey results are more variable: slightly more than half (13) of the MS respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that “*EU institutions and EU MS’ support to humanitarian aid is increasingly visible as “EU” support (i.e. not as the support of an individual actors or MS).*”; while the remainder (11) somewhat disagreed. It is striking is that all but one of the “well-established” donors disagreed;
- NGO survey results question such visibility even more markedly: ten disagreed that there was an increase in common EU visibility, while only three agreed.

Overall the issue of visibility has raised many questions:

- several stakeholders, including from EU MS, underlined that the priority should be on effectiveness, not on visibility, whether specific to an EU MS or common visibility (a survey respondent stated in this respect: “*visibility should not be the main issue, but rather principled humanitarian actions*”); similar questions were also voiced by other stakeholders, notably NGO survey respondents;
- some stated that. especially in a humanitarian context. visibility is often contrary to safety considerations or even to a principled approach; it was also mentioned that visibility could be contrary to community identity;³⁷
- many underlined that visibility is not an issue of “stickers and banners” as local populations mostly do not understand to whom they refer, while in addition most often do not distinguish between humanitarian aid and other forms of aid, or between different donors;
- some underlined the potential of visibility for generating leverage on EU taxpayers and national governments, but also maintained that this should be obtained by means other than stickers and banners (“*visibility as individual MS is domestically [an] important political tool for the public support to the humanitarian response*”), one NGO survey respondent also underlining that “*visibility is part of being accountable*”;
- some underlined that ECHO funding from the MS should also be recognized.

³⁶ Although it should be noted that, in 2013, ECHO developed its communication policy, as seen in, for example, Annual Report Policy Fiche of 16th May 2013, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2012/AR2013_policy_fiche_Communications.pdf

³⁷ Hence, waivers are given to implementing agencies to dispense with EU visibility in certain politically-sensitive contexts.

JC 4.4 On EU value added

Different sources converge in underlining the different types of DG ECHO value-added, several of which concern European Consensus objectives:

- there is a broad consensus on DG ECHO's value-added over the recent period:
 - the top three activities in which DG ECHO had specific value-added, as cited most frequently by survey respondents, converged with issues also largely arising during the interviews conducted, the answers of the MS and NGO survey respondents being very similar, *viz.*:
 - its global presence and the capacity to draw on a network of EU Delegations and the DG ECHO Field Offices (23 MS and 15 NGO survey respondents), some interlocutors comparing this to the situation of the EU MS which are often concentrated in a more limited number of countries;
 - specialist field-level humanitarian expertise (23 MS and 13 NGO survey respondents);
 - promotion of good humanitarian practices among EU institutions and MS (17 MS and 12 NGO survey respondents);
 - although it was not among the possible choices in the survey, many interlocutors highlighted ECHO's critical mass in terms of funding.
- When asked what type of value-added DG ECHO should concentrate on in future:
 - the most mentioned by survey respondents was promotion of good humanitarian practice, among not only EU institutions and MS (21 MS and 13 NGO survey respondents) but also implementing partners (19) according to MS survey respondents; the latter was however less mentioned by NGOs, for whom field-level expertise was the second priority;
 - the third element most selected by MS, and the second by NGOs, was the capacity to intervene flexibly in politically sensitive situations (16 MS and 12 NGO survey respondents).

It is difficult to distinguish patterns in the responses that would coincide with a typology of donors.

Several interlocutors pointed to the potential value-added that EUDs can deliver, notably by using the leverage that an Ambassador can bring to bear. This should however be read in the light of the challenges posed by the interaction between humanitarian aid and development, as further explained under EQ 8.

Although this was discussed with stakeholders, little mention was made of any specific value-added that the EU as an entity (Institutions and MS) has delivered or could deliver. Indeed, the wider community of stakeholders rarely mentioned any specific role or assets of the EU donors as such *vis-à-vis* other actors when it comes to delivering humanitarian aid (such as, for instance, specific credibility due to the EU's history). In some cases, however (notably in Kenya), it was argued that it was important that they mobilized their collective political assets to secure access. **This contrasts with the responses to the NGO survey** in which the majority stated that the EU as an entity delivered significant added-value, whether *vis-à-vis* EU MS acting individually or other donors (USA, Japan). Nearly all the remaining respondents stated that there had been "some" added value.

EQ 5 – On EU Contributions to the International Humanitarian System

To what extent did the implementation of the European Consensus strengthen the international humanitarian system by fostering a common EU position and approach to international good practice initiatives?

Humanitarian donorship is shared responsibility that requires interaction and collaboration with diverse international stakeholders. The European Consensus seeks to enhance the collective voice of the EU in global humanitarian platforms and its influence in shaping the international humanitarian system.

The European Consensus refers at several points to the overall objective of strengthening the international humanitarian system, viz:

- *Stronger EU co-ordination would enhance the overall international humanitarian response, including concerted efforts to improve the humanitarian system, and would also reinforce the EU ambition of working closely with other humanitarian actors. (Article 25)*
- *The EU will contribute to shaping the international humanitarian agenda, and work together in international fora and on advocacy efforts for humanitarian issues. (Article 29)*

The European Consensus goes on to identify the key components of the 'international humanitarian system', as the UN agencies, with a specific focus on UN OCHA and its humanitarian reform agenda.

- *Beyond the efforts pursued within the EU on humanitarian assistance, the EU fully recognizes the need to work closely with others on issues of good donorship and effective humanitarian response and advocacy. The EU reaffirms that its efforts should be firmly anchored in broader international approaches, with the UN-OCHA in the central coordinating role. UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 remains a guiding reference in this respect. (Article 71)*

Attention is also drawn to the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative as a convening platform for international donor coordination:

- *The EU will continue to work closely with other major donors of official humanitarian assistance both in the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative and through the wide range of contacts between donors in both bilateral and multilateral contexts. The EU will also encourage joint and bilateral outreach efforts to expand the donor base beyond its traditional limits. (Article 73)*

The JCs assess the contribution of EU to the international humanitarian aid system in two ways. Firstly, the degree to which EU institutions and Member States have established common EU positions in relation to the global humanitarian system, including the UNOCHA reform agenda. Secondly, the degree to which EU actors adopted joint approaches to enhancing good practice initiatives, for example, ensuring joint contributions to the GHD initiative and other mechanisms to strengthen the performance of new humanitarian donors.

**EQ 5 On EU Contributions to the International Humanitarian System – Answer
Summary Box**

Overall, EU MS and EU institutions have been actively developing common strategic positions. However, divergent positions on the UN humanitarian reforms were evident, especially between field offices and HQ.

There is a shared agreement on the value of the EC and EU MS establishing common humanitarian strategy and policy positions, that capitalize on the cumulative weight and added-value of EU humanitarian aid contributions in order to leverage greater strategic influence. This is perceived to be particularly important by the fledgling EU MS humanitarian donors.

Meetings of EU humanitarian councillors are regularly convened in Geneva, which is the main locus of dialogue on the Transformative Agenda. COHAFA is also used to debate key strategic positions, at the request of the EU MS or EC. Numerous examples exist of common statements being developed at EU level, especially with reference to UN policies and processes.

However, EU MS do not always have the capacity to actively participate in developing EU positions. In addition, given the shared competency for humanitarian aid, space is maintained for independent MS positions. Delegating a formal leadership role to DG ECHO is contentious, especially with several of the larger EU MS donors emphasizing the importance of maintaining peer-to-peer relationships between EU donors. Actions by EU MS and EU institutions are increasingly aligned in support of these common commitments, including through a range of good practice initiatives. However, the degree of active engagement varies significantly according to the capacities of the individual EU MS.

There is an EU-wide alignment behind the GHD initiative and all EU MS are officially members of the GHD, along with DG ECHO. The GHD has provided a key donor forum for understanding challenges to the overall humanitarian system and establishing coordinated positions amongst a large set of international humanitarian donors. The GHD has also served as a platform for sharing good practices.

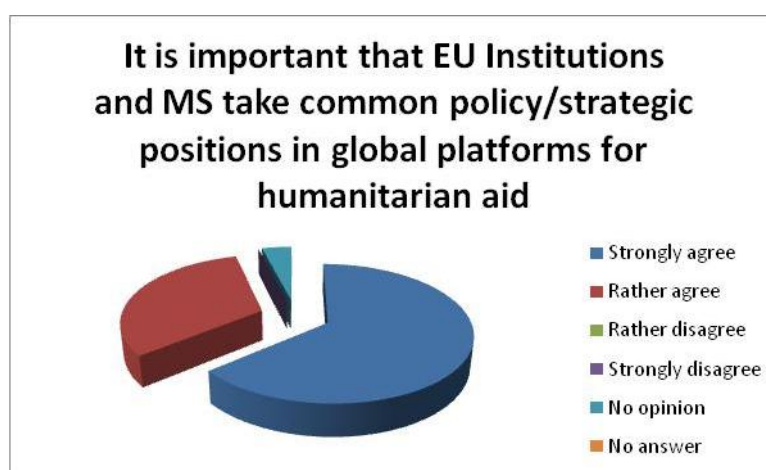
There is a broad EU strategic alignment at capitals level behind the UN transformative agenda and underlying humanitarian reforms. However, the interpretation of these policies is inconsistent, especially at field level. For example differing positions have been adopted towards the common appeals process and use of pooled funds.

JC 5.1 Extent to which EU Institutions and EU MS strengthened the international humanitarian system by taking common policy/strategic position in global platforms for humanitarian aid

There is shared agreement on the value of the EC and EU MS establishing common humanitarian strategy and policy positions. There is a perceived opportunity to capitalize on the cumulative weight and added-value of EU humanitarian aid contributions in order to leverage strategic influence.

- EU MS expressed strong and near unanimous support for the goal of establishing common policy and strategic positions within global humanitarian platforms. 16 EU MS states strongly agreed and 8 EU MS rather agreed³⁸ in taking common strategy and policy positions in global platforms for humanitarian aid. There was no apparent difference in position taken by the various categories (large, established or fledgling) of EU MS.

Figure 12 – Importance of common EU positions in global platforms



- The response of EU MS was broadly mirrored in the survey of European NGOs (6 strongly agreeing, 8 rather agreeing and 2 rather disagreeing) that EU MS should establish common positions.
- EU MS repeatedly stated that speaking with a common voice increases the perceived ability to influence the international humanitarian system, by capitalizing on the collective size and added-value of EU humanitarian contributions.³⁹ However, there was a perception in interviews that EU-level coordination is most important for smaller MS. Bigger MS and the EU institutions felt that they may not require it so much as they are seen to already have an effective voice at the global level.

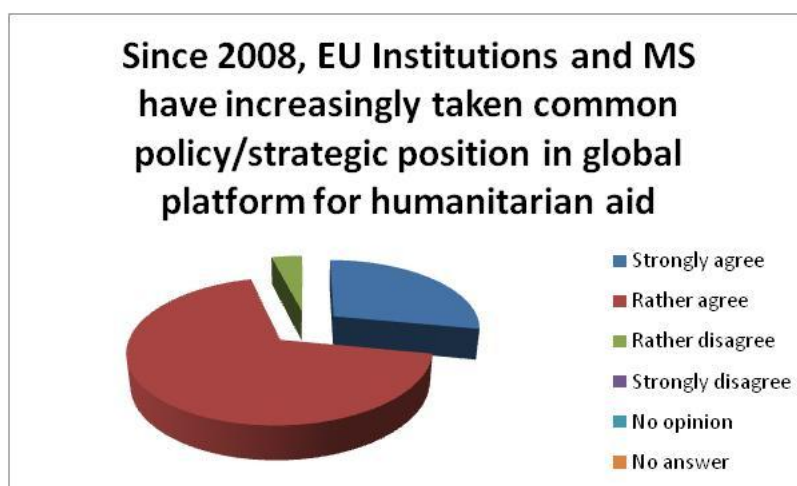
³⁸ Out of a total 25 responses in the survey of EU MS.

³⁹ See JC4.4 above for an overview of the common areas of EU added-value cited by stakeholders in this regard.

Structures have been established to develop common positions at the capitals level. These have produced numerous examples of common statements being at EU level, especially with reference to UN policies and processes.

- There is strong agreement amongst all types of EU MS and the EC have in fact been able to increasingly develop common policy positions (6 EU MS strongly agree, 17 rather agree and only one disagreed) However, no evaluation was made of the perception that extent to which this was linked to the European Consensus or Action Plan.

Figure 13 – Evolution of common EU positions on global platforms



- Strategic coordination between the EU MS and ECHO takes place in a number of forums. Meetings of EU humanitarian councillors are regularly convened in Geneva, which is the locus of dialogue on the Transformative Agenda. COHAFA is also used to debate key strategic positions at the request of the EU MS or EU.
- Other fora complement these two mechanisms. Meetings of EU MS are reported to occur in the fringes of various UN board meetings. Ad hoc meetings may also be convened by specific EU MS or ECHO to discuss and promote specific thematic issues. For example, round tables have been held to review approaches to the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian response and nutrition in emergencies.
- There is evidence of joint positions being prepared as input to a variety of strategic dialogues. Key examples include the humanitarian reform process (or Transformative Agenda as it has become known) and executive board meetings (or equivalent platforms) of key UN Agencies including UNOCHA, UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF.
- Opinions on the role of DG ECHO in this process are divided. 14 of 24 EU MS agreed that DG ECHO 'provided a common voice for the EU and Commission' over the reference period. More of the fledgling EU MS saw the EC providing added value here (9 agreed and 4 against) compared to larger and established donors (5 agreed and six disagreed).

- The role of the EC was not clear to external agencies. Confusion was widely expressed amongst implementing partners (specifically NGOs) in both Pakistan and Kenya whether DG ECHO in fact represents the views of the EU or is 'simply another donor'. Delegating a leadership role to DG ECHO is contentious with several of the larger EU MS donors emphasizing the importance of maintaining peer-to-peer relationships between agencies. Only 11 EU MS, across all donor categories, felt that this should be further developed as a future priority.

The level of consensus behind EU humanitarian statements may vary, and do not necessarily reflect a consensus across the EU MS and EU institutions.

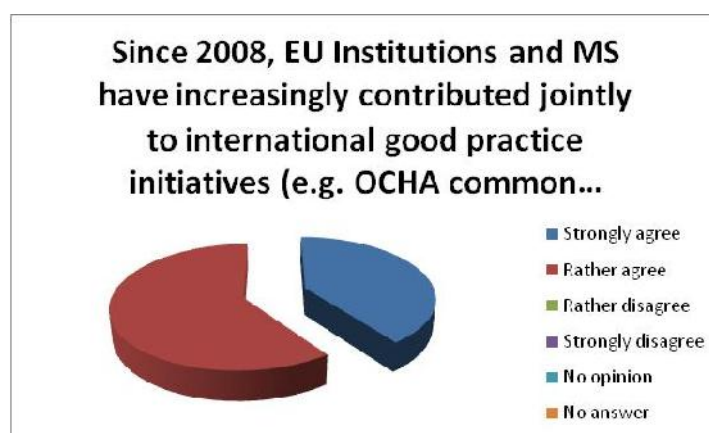
- Whilst the EU often develops joint statements the underlying degree of coordination amongst the EU institutions and EU MS is not felt to be as deep as in other fields. A comparison was made with the much more detailed negotiations underlying common EU positions in the ILO or WTO. This was attributed to the fact that humanitarian assistance is a shared competence.
- The degree of consensus achieved on specific questions also varies due to a number of factors. Firstly, the proliferation of different fora and the fact that not all Member States are members of, or represented at, each forum means that it is not always possible to negotiate an inclusive approach.
- Secondly, individual EU MS reserve the right to maintain an independent position and to speak in parallel at these events (for example Sweden typically makes a separate statement to UNWRA). There is neither delegated leadership nor a commitment to reaching unanimous and binding agreement. Consequently, differences in opinion and minority views remain and are accommodated.
- Thirdly, some large EU donors expressed a preference for primary coordination with other major international donors. For example, some interlocutors stated that effective influence on the UN system can be best achieved by coalitions of the most significant donors, rather than investing energy in developing a common EU position.

JC 5.2 Extent to which EU Institutions and EU MS have usefully contributed to international good practice initiatives through joint approaches

Actions by EU MS and EU institutions are increasingly aligned in support of these common commitments, including through a range of good practice initiatives. However, the degree of active engagement varies significantly according to the capacities of the individual MS.

- The EU MS are in agreement that the EU is increasingly aligned in its support to a range of 'good practice' initiatives (9 strongly agree and 15 rather agree).

Figure 14 – Joint contributions to international good practice initiatives



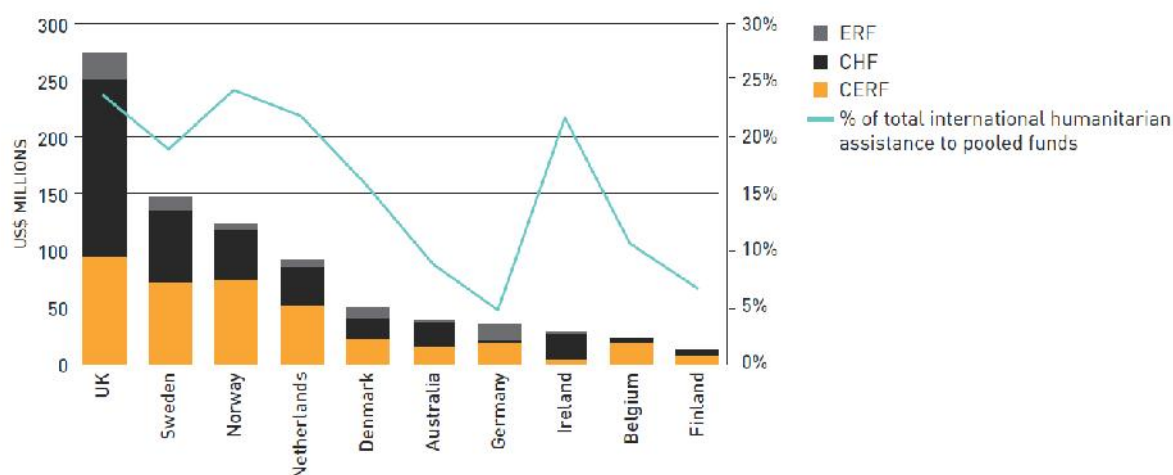
- There is an EU wide alignment behind the GHD initiative and all EU MS are officially members of the GHD, along with DG ECHO. 11 additional EU donors endorsed GHD through signature of the EU humanitarian aid consensus in December 2007 and the remaining EU MS were already GHD signatories. New comer events have been organized from 2008 onwards to integrate new EU MS.
- Several EU MS and the EC have demonstrated their commitment to the GHD by sharing leadership responsibilities. This included co-chair arrangements with shared responsibilities, allowing the active participation of EU MS with differing capacities. Recent chairs include the European Commission and Netherlands (2008/09), Estonia and Ireland (2009/10), Czech republic and Denmark (2011/12) and Finland (co-chair 2012/13).
- The GHD has provided a key donor forum for understanding challenges to the overall system and building coordinated responses amongst a more inclusive set of humanitarian donors. It has also served as a platform for sharing good donor practices. However, the GHD is perceived to have lost momentum in the last 2-3 years. Denmark and the Czech Republic led a review to inform a process of renewal amidst continuing interest in maintaining a humanitarian donor platform.
- A collaborative approach was noted between the EU and other good practice and research partners in Geneva with a view to further professionalizing humanitarian assistance and agreeing common standards - for example the various standards initiatives (SPHERE, HAP, People in Aid).

There is a clear HQ level alignment behind the transformative agenda and underlying humanitarian reforms. However, the field level actions of DG ECHO are viewed by stakeholders to be inconsistent.

- Several large donors advocated strongly in multiple fora for support to stronger pan-European alignment behind the core UN coordination structures including the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Humanitarian Country Team, the CAP process, the clusters and the pooled funds.
- Actions in support of the UN Humanitarian Reform process by EU MS and EU institutions appears inconsistent.

- DG ECHO maintains a policy of not contributing to the pooled funds. Some DG ECHO field experts expressed concerns over the poor quality and lack of monitoring of the pooled funded programs. NGOs canvassed during the field trips also expressed reservations on a close alignment with pooled funding. This is partly based on the limited access they enjoy to certain categories of pooled funds - for example only UN agencies are able to access CERF funds.
- EU MS are the foremost advocates and financial supporters of the UN pooled funds. Several EU MS argued that if ECHO actively engaged with these funds, rather than substituting for their deficiencies, they could use their capacities to improve the quality of delivery.

Figure 15 – Top 10 donor contributors to humanitarian pooled funds in 2012



Source: Development Initiatives, based on UN OCHA FTS data.

- Similar divisions are apparent in approach to the other pillars of the UN led coordination system. Several EU MS policies explicitly aligned their bilateral funding under the framework established by the Common Appeals Process (CAP)⁴⁰ and cluster coordination system - for some EU MS funding decisions may include a precondition of being part of the CAP. In contrast ECHO has no clear policy on using the CAP to prioritize funding decisions. Consequently its actions are often dependent on the judgment of the responsible expert in the field. Some field staff met during the missions made an explicit point of stating that they 'do not support the CAP'.

⁴⁰ Or their current incarnation as Strategic Response Plans

EQ 6 – On upholding and promoting humanitarian principles and IHL

To what extent has the implementation of the European Consensus contributed to promoting and upholding the fundamental humanitarian principles, promoting IHL and respecting the distinct nature of humanitarian aid?

The European Consensus commits EU humanitarian donors to uphold the fundamental humanitarian principles, promote International Humanitarian Law and respect the distinct nature of humanitarian aid. This Evaluation Question assesses the extent to which implementation of the European Consensus contributed to strengthened EU commitment to ensuring neutral and independent humanitarian action and to protecting humanitarian space, and to better recognition of the aims and objectives of EU humanitarian action. In both cases, it aims mainly at verifying to what extent the EU was able to protect respectively fundamental humanitarian principles and promotion of IHL on other stakeholders. It also looks as a first step to what extent EU institutions and MS made sure themselves they upheld them. A third dimension of the question concerns the contribution of the European Consensus to a better recognition of the specificities of humanitarian action within EU institutions and MS.

EQ 6 on upholding and promoting humanitarian principles and IHL – Answer Summary Box

Overall the EU – and DG ECHO in particular – was widely perceived as a principled humanitarian actor in compliance with IHL. The implementation of the European Consensus was cited as one factor among others that helped to encourage and increased focus on humanitarian principles among Member States. Application of the principles in the field varied between EU actors, most notably in crises that created tension between access to those in need and the principle of neutrality.

The EU as a whole, and DG ECHO in particular, supported the principled approach to humanitarian aid. The European Consensus has played a contributory role – alongside other driving factors – in raising the importance placed on the principles by Member States since 2008. But at the level of specific crises, differences in the application of the principles were seen. This was most notably the case when tensions arose between respecting humanitarian principles and gaining access to those in need.

Various initiatives to promote IHL have been taken over the evaluation period. Some Member States, but not all, increased their focus on IHL over the this period. However, some actors still highlighted the lack of support to promote IHL compliance.

Finally, the European Consensus was used by ECHO as a tool to defend the distinct nature of humanitarian aid on the ground. At HQ level, structural independence of DG ECHO helped ensure the independence of humanitarian aid in the period following the European Consensus, but Member State humanitarian agencies retained a more mixed status regarding independence from foreign policy and development aid.

JC 6.1 Extent to which implementation of the European Consensus contributed to the upholding and promoting of the fundamental humanitarian principles

Evidence suggests that the EU as a whole, and DG ECHO in particular, supported the principled approach to humanitarian aid:

- Stakeholders interviewed from Member States, NGOs and international organizations concurred that DG ECHO had a clear reputation as a one of the most principled donors in the humanitarian community.
- 81% (21/26) of the Member States surveyed stated that EU as a whole (including the EU Institutions and Member States) had made progress on humanitarian principles over the evaluation period.
- ECHO and Member State funding regulations for NGOs and implementation partners continue to include requirements for partners to demonstrate strong commitment to principles or adherence to the code of conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

Member States and European NGOs concurred that the Member States gave increasing importance to the humanitarian principles over the evaluation period – with the European Consensus playing a contributory role in this regard:

- 69% (18/26) of Member State survey respondents and 62% (10/16) of NGO participants concurred that the importance attached to humanitarian principles in the Member States has increased over the evaluation period.
- 65% (17/26) of Member State respondents and 94% (15/16) of NGO participants stated that the European Consensus played a role in triggering this change, albeit alongside other changes that were at least as important.

There is rather limited evidence to suggest that DG ECHO and the Member States took specific initiatives to promote the principles in the period since the publication of the European Consensus:

- At EU Member State level, 62% (16/26) of survey respondents said that their country took actions with respect to humanitarian principles over the evaluation period, but examples seen were very sparse. The clearest examples of actions undertaken were:
 - Two Member States stated that they actively promoted recognition of the fundamental humanitarian principles within and outside the humanitarian community in their own country, e.g., through trainings or publications for the Ministries of Foreign Affairs for development actors, diplomats and NGOs.
 - One country explicitly mentioned that a new law was designed and acted upon to ease the respect of its country's commitment to the principles.
- Beyond this, humanitarian principles have been regularly discussed at COHAFA meetings, which have, according to participants interviewed, helped to consolidate a *"broad agreement on the core principles among COHAFA members"*.
- Member State and NGO interviewees concurred that they have used the European Consensus as an advocacy tool to uphold principles. Some stated that the tool had limited influence, as it is not legally binding.

At the level of specific crises, differences in the application of the principles were seen. This was most notably the case when tensions arose between respecting humanitarian principles and gaining access to those in need:

- Some interlocutors questioned the feasibility of the principles in complex emergencies. Illustrative examples here include:
 - The IDP returns process after the 2010 floods in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. Access in this case was only acquired by channelling aid through the Pakistani government, with limited options for monitoring by EU donors. In this instance, DG ECHO decided not to provide support in order to maintain a principled approach, whilst other actors (e.g. the UN) proceeded to provide support under these conditions.
 - Provision of aid in complex emergencies such as Somalia or Syria. The concentration of aid to newly liberated zones from Al Shabaab in Somalia, or to areas of Syria controlled by President Assad, were both cited by field-based donor stakeholders as examples where humanitarian needs conflict with the principle of neutrality.
- Some stakeholders noted that reflection processes are ongoing regarding the use and relevance of the principles. Several stakeholders raised a common set of challenges to the principles in the future, namely:
 - the rise of emerging donors;⁴¹
 - the need for a comprehensive approach to crises and a joined-up response between humanitarian and development actors when acting in fragile states.

Nevertheless, both Member State and NGO stakeholders concurred that the humanitarian principles remain a top priority for the future of EU humanitarian aid:

- 58% (15/26) of Member State survey respondents argued that the humanitarian principles should remain a key priority in the future, making it the second most-cited priority (coming just behind “being needs-based”).
- 63% (10/16) of NGO respondents concurred with this view, also placing it second in the list of key priorities, again behind “being needs-based”.

JC 6.2 Extent to which implementation of the European Consensus contributed to the promotion of IHL

Evidence suggests that some Member States, but not all, increased their focus on IHL over the evaluation period:

- EU Member States were evenly divided between those who thought that the importance given to IHL in their countries had remained unchanged (50%, or 13/26) and those who thought that it had increased (42%, or 11/26). This was mirrored by the NGO survey respondents
- Among the Member States, 57% (or 8/14) of the small (“fledgling”) humanitarian donors cited an increased focus on IHL in their countries over the evaluation period; compared to only 27% (3/11) of the large and established donors.⁴²

⁴¹ See, for example, <http://www.iris-france.org/en/analysis/humanitarian-affairs-think-tank.php>

⁴² See Annex 3 for definitions of the Member State categories “large” “established” and “fledgling”.

- NGOs were equally split on this point: 44% (7/16) thought that the importance placed on IHL in their Member State had increased; whilst 38% (6/16) thought that it had remained the same.

Various initiatives to promote IHL have been taken over the evaluation period. However, some actors still highlighted the lack of support to promote IHL compliance:

- Over the evaluation period, the EU as a whole (ECHO and the Member States) was active in promoting IHL.
 - The European Consensus Annual Reports (2011 & 2012) refer to a number of events organized by the EU to promote and disseminate information on IHL as well as to some projects funded by the EU to enhance practical implementation of IHL on the ground (e.g. training in IHL to armed non-state actors).
 - 42% (11/26) Member State survey respondents stated that their country had undertaken activities to promote IHL over the evaluation period (with some citing, among other things, the establishment of special entities or committees for the promotion and implementation of IHL within the ministerial departments covering humanitarian aid).
- However, some actors highlighted that there is more work to be done to ensure IHL compliance in the field:
 - DG ECHO's 'fit for purpose' study (2010) states that "*there is no systematic reporting of IHL violation on the field, neither common EU position against states which are violating IHL*".
 - Several stakeholders interviewed in the field concurred that IHL was "*a key sector on which the EU must concentrate some effort in the future*".
 - This view was corroborated by the responses of the European NGO sector to DG ECHO's 'fit for purpose' study, in which it was argued that there is a lack of compliance to IHL due to the increasing number of armed actors (e.g. in Syria, Afghanistan, Sahel, Southern Philippines). For this reason, it was argued that more efforts will be needed on IHL compliance in the future.

JC 6.3 Extent to which the European Consensus contributed to the respect (recognised and acted upon) by EU institutions and MS of the distinct nature of humanitarian aid

The structural independence of DG ECHO is one clear instance of action taken to ensure the independence of humanitarian aid in the period following the European Consensus. Member State humanitarian agencies have a more mixed status regarding independence from foreign policy and development aid:

- In 2010, ECHO became the Directorate General for Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection under the responsibility of the newly created post of Commissioner for international co-operation, humanitarian aid and crisis response.
- Across the Member States there exist various structural settings for humanitarian aid (either housed in independent structures, within Ministries of Foreign Affairs or within the development agencies). Various Member States still have the same budget line for humanitarian and development aid.

- Yet many interlocutors raised the issue that structural independence of humanitarian aid does not implicitly mean autonomous decision-making mechanisms, and that the reverse is also true.

On the ground, the respect of the distinct nature of humanitarian aid is often challenged and the European Consensus is sometimes used as a reminder of this status:

- Several stakeholders interviewed during field missions and through telephone interviews with ECHO field offices echoed the view that adopting a comprehensive approach in some complex crises – such as Somalia – has made it harder to uphold the distinct nature of humanitarian aid.
- Some interlocutors questioned the relevance of the distinct nature of humanitarian aid in these contexts, and indeed with respect to the increasing need and willingness to link humanitarian relief with development.
- For several Member States, the respect of the distinct nature of humanitarian aid in practice is also challenged by the fact that decisions are usually taken by dedicated humanitarian units at HQ, but are implemented on the ground by individuals that often hold multiple mandates.
- However, both NGO and ECHO stakeholders cited the usefulness of the European Consensus as a means to uphold the independent status of EU humanitarian aid.

EQ 7 – On Needs Based Responses

To what extent has the implementation of the European Consensus contributed to ensuring that EU responses to humanitarian crises were based on humanitarian needs and not on other concerns?

Needs based response is a core tenet of humanitarian aid and reflects the principles of impartiality⁴³ and independence. Consequently the European Consensus contains multiple commitments to the principle of needs based humanitarian aid, with a core commitment that:

- *Humanitarian aid should be transparently allocated on the basis of identified needs and the degree of vulnerability. This means that aid recipients should be identified based on objectively verifiable criteria and that aid should be delivered in such a way that defined priority needs are matched by adequate funds. (Article 31)*

As a necessary precondition to needs based assistance the European Consensus commits to working with partners to improve needs assessments at both global and local levels:

- *In order to ensure an adequate, effective, equitable and flexible allocation of aid, a rigorous approach to needs assessments must be applied both at global and local levels. Taking into account existing initiatives, the EU will seek to promote a common understanding of needs-assessments at the EU level in order to improve current practices and their application. The EU reconfirms the importance of working closely with international partners on needs-assessment. (Article 32)*

The European Consensus also calls for an explicit increase in funding of forgotten emergencies:

- *The EU affirms its commitment to ensuring a balance of response between different crises based on need, including aid for protracted crises. Forgotten crises or crises where intervention is particularly difficult and where the overall international humanitarian response is inadequate, warrant special attention from the EU. Neglected needs in response to specific crises also deserve particular consideration. (Article 33)*

Furthermore, a logical consequence of needs based approaches is that humanitarian funding is ensuring sufficient coverage, through flexible and sufficient funding. Given shortfalls and a forecast trend of increasing need the European Consensus argues for increased humanitarian funding by EU MS and institutions:

- *In this respect, an assessment of the adequacy of the resources available to the European Community humanitarian aid would be appropriate in light of its comparative advantage. Member States should also consider increasing their bilateral humanitarian aid contributions within the increase in overall ODA. (Article 38)*

In practice ensuring needs based response is complex process, involving a range of tools to support a variety of resource allocation decisions. For donors a principal decision is the allocation of resources between 'competing' crises at the international level. This requires a methodology to compare the depth of needs between crises. A second challenge is to prioritize and allocate appropriately between sectors within priority crises.

Consequently donors may conduct a two stage allocation process. A large proportion of their resources were allocated on an annual (or semi-annual) basis to on-going or protracted crises. These country level budgets may be further assigned to projects according to detailed assessment findings. In addition further resources may be committed during the course of the year in response to sudden-onset emergencies. The different contexts and decisions require different data and analysis tools.

⁴³ This principle states that the provision of humanitarian assistance must be impartial and not based on nationality, race, religion, or political point of view and must be based on need alone.

The JCs aim at constructing an answer to the question in three steps. In a first step, the aim is to verify to what extent the EC and EU MS have contributed to improved needs assessments and analysis to support needs based response. The second step aims at checking whether provisions in the European Consensus in terms of improved coverage in response to needs were followed. Thirdly, the extent to which other (non needs based) factors contribute to decision making on the allocation of resources is assessed.

EQ 7 On Needs Based Responses – Answer Summary Box

Improving needs assessment and analysis to support needs based response has been a major donor focus for the EU over the reference period. The European Consensus has positively encouraged this progress. However, the understanding of needs remains incomplete and non needs based factors still heavily influence resource allocations. The EU has not been able to increase its aggregate humanitarian aid to close global gaps in coverage.

MS EU MS and EU institutions have taken a wide variety of initiatives over the reference period in support of this objective. Firstly, donors have pursued a mix of strategies in reinforcing needs analysis capacities. This has involved both developing internal methodologies to analyze needs, building the assessment capacities of implementing partners or a combination of strategies.

The European Consensus has helped to encourage the development of methods of comparative analysis of global needs. Coordinated EU efforts have also been made to improve partner needs assessments. These have been primarily situated in inclusive global coordination bodies, such as the GHD and the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force.

Despite the investment and progress made, there is a continuing requirement to improve the utility, accuracy and transparency of needs analyses and assessments. At the global level, comparative analytical methods used by EU donors are not standardized. At the field level assessment approaches are fragmented and there is no clear agreement on a standard method. This area is regarded by EU MS as the top priority for collective action over the next 5 years.

The aggregate level of humanitarian aid has remained static over the reference period, despite increasing needs. Within this overall figure there are significant variations amongst states and institutions. Humanitarian budgets have contracted amongst the new EU MS (EU 12) and EU MS most impacted by financial crisis. However, humanitarian aid has grown strongly at the EC level and for some large MS.

EU MS and EC have promoted other initiatives with the goal of achieving improved coverage and impact within existing humanitarian budgets. Complementary approaches include work on improved value for money, flexible and multi-year budgets and outreach to non-traditional donors.

The EU MS and institutions agree that forgotten crises are a priority. This is situated within the wider goal of a needs based approach. Several of the EU MS and institutions have developed specific methodologies to identify forgotten crises and support resource allocation decision making.

Most EU MS have clear needs based humanitarian policies. However, interviews confirmed that in practice a number of other factors continue to heavily influence resource allocation decision making, in conjunction with evidence on the level of need. This includes national strategic interests, operational considerations and sensitivity to media influence.

There is a pragmatic acceptance that these 'additional' pressures will continue to influence resource allocations. However, principled, needs based humanitarian policies were cited as a key resource used by humanitarians to advocate against the most egregious misuse of humanitarian funds in support of national political agendas. The European Consensus is seen as a critical tool to influence these on-going debates.

JC 7.1 Extent to which EU Institutions and EU MS precisely and comprehensively assessed the needs of the people facing humanitarian crisis

EU MS and EU institutions have been active proponents of improved needs analysis and have taken a wide variety of initiatives over the reference period in support of this objective. Donors have pursued a mix of strategies in reinforcing needs based responses. This has involved developing internal needs analysis methodologies, building the assessment capacities of implementing partners or a combination of strategies.

- More EU MS reported taking action to improve needs assessment following the European Consensus (18 of 24), than any other area of the European Consensus. The EU MS also strongly agree that the EU has made collective progress - with all those expressing an opinion agreeing (20 EU MS state progress has been made, with 4 EU MS offering no opinion).
- Several EU donors report developing methodologies to rank global needs which are used to inform their internal annual allocations processes to third countries. These rely primarily on secondary data. ECHO has the longest standing model (the Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment), but similar tools have been developed by other EU MS including Ireland and UK. Other EU MS make reference to capitalizing on the DG ECHO tool as an input to their own decision making in the EU MS survey.
- For most EU MS there is less interest in conducting a global comparative analysis of needs. Many EU MS have a restricted geographical coverage through their bilateral humanitarian aid programmes. Consequently they have a limited need to rank global needs. In addition they may provide unrestricted contributions to the UN, NGOs or RCM to provide some support to the most pressing global needs but does not require the donors to conduct a comparative analysis this type of analysis themselves.
- DG ECHO - due to its significant field capacity - is the only EU donor that routinely attempts detailed country level analysis of needs by sector as an input to response plans. ECHO has developed its own needs assessment methodologies, such as the Integrated Analysis Framework. EU MS reported frequently drawing on this expertise and knowledge in order to inform their own funding decisions.
- All donors rely heavily on the needs assessments conducted by partners, including for all primary data and analysis. Consequently there has been a sustained investment in capacity building across the system.
- Over the reference period ECHO and several EU MS have been extremely active in funding a variety of needs assessment capacity building initiatives. Since 2007, ECHO alone has funded over €18 million for needs assessment initiatives with implementing partners such as UNOCHA, HelpAge International (ACAPS), the World Food Programme (WFP), FAO, UNHCR, CARE-UK, ACTED, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and Save the Children (UK). The requirement for comparability and consensus on the level of needs has led to specific attention to developing joint assessment approaches, including the IASC Coordinated Needs Assessment Methodology (including the MIRA methodology and humanitarian dashboard) and the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC).

The European Consensus has helped to rally support behind improved needs assessment approaches. However, most stakeholders believe that this has not been the primary driver.

- EU MS opinions in interviews was that the European Consensus was only one factor that contributed to the focus on improving needs assessments. This agenda clearly predated the European Consensus and these efforts are seen by many as a consequence of this historical momentum.
- Donor coordination on efforts to improve needs assessment is mainly situated in more inclusive global coordination bodies. The GHD and the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) have been used as the principal convening platform for donors to discuss and harmonize needs assessment approaches. It was argued that both the GHD focus on needs (2008 work programme onwards) and the donor seats at the IASC NATF (2009 on) came about directly as a follow-up to making this a priority under the European Consensus and Consensus Action Plan. This is seen as one example of a quite clear agreed division of responsibilities to advance a particular area.

Despite the investment and progress made, there is a continuing need to improve the utility, accuracy and transparency of the analysis of needs.

- At the global level, comparative analysis methods used by EU donors are not standardized. There have been discussions between ECHO, UK and OCHA on harmonizing their different indexes. Greater comparability of severity of needs across sectors and crises is still required.
- The field missions indicated that coordinating needs assessments within countries present considerable technical challenges which are yet to be fully resolved. Approaches are fragmented and there is no clear agreement on a standard method. It was suggested in some interviews that a continuing inability to accurately and transparently compare inter-sectoral needs suits the interests of some implementing partners who are better able to argue for their own priorities.
- Consequently there is strong agreement in the EU MS survey that further attention is still required to resolve this challenge. Improved needs analysis and assessment is regarded by EU MS as the top priority for collective action over the next 5 years. NGOs also ranked it highly as the third highest priority, behind building local capacities and support to humanitarian principles.

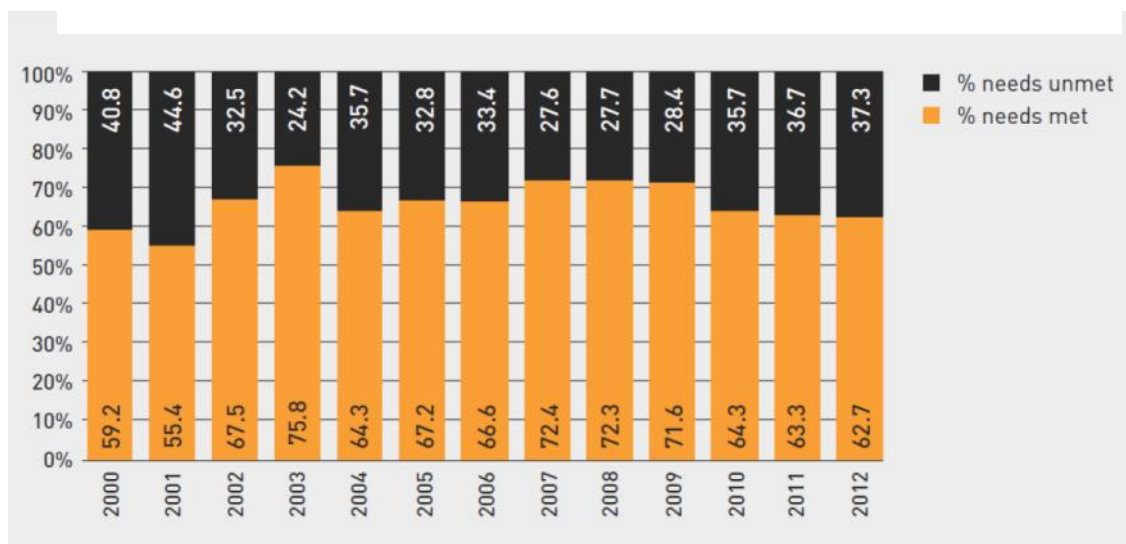
JC 7.2 Extent to which EU Institutions and EU MS take specific initiatives to enhance appropriate coverage

Overall EU humanitarian aid has been stable over the reference period, but with significant variations amongst states and institutions. Humanitarian budgets have contracted amongst the new EU MS (EU 12) and EU MS most impacted by financial crisis. Conversely humanitarian aid has grown strongly at the European Commission level and amongst some larger traditional donors.

- Evidence suggests that a gap in unmet humanitarian needs persisted at the global level over the evaluation reference period. In 2012 the shortfall in global CAP funding was

the largest in a decade (37.3%). Whilst acknowledging the limitations of the data⁴⁴ and analysis, the level of support to the CAP is one of the best available indicators of the overall adequacy of humanitarian aid.

Figure 16 – Proportion of UN CAP appeal needs met (2000-2012)



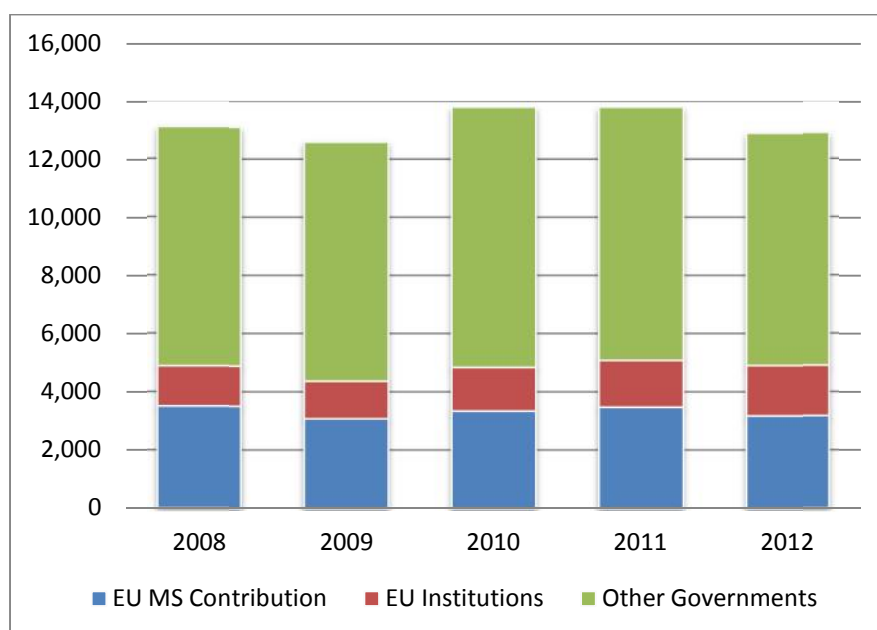
Source: Development Initiatives, based on UN OCHA FTS data.

- The overall level of humanitarian aid provided by the EU (EU MS and EC) has not increased over the reference period, remaining at roughly USD 4.9 billion in both 2008 and 2012⁴⁵. However, the overall picture masks highly volatile aid flows from the individual EU MS and EC bodies.

⁴⁴ The UN CAP is the largest annual appeal for humanitarian financing. However, it only represents part of the total global financing requirements – only crises considered high priority are included and not all financing requirements in a crisis are targeted in an appeal. In 2011 and 2012 there were the same number of UN CAP appeals (21) and equal funding requirements – US\$8.9 billion. In 2012, US\$5.6 billion of funding requirements were met and US\$3.3 billion unmet. This represents the highest proportion of unmet needs in the UN CAP for over a decade, at 37.37% (slightly less than 2011 62.7% vs. 63.3%) [Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2013 Report, Development Initiatives]

⁴⁵ All figures based on OCHA FTS data as used to compile the MS Fact Sheets unless otherwise stated.

Figure 17 – Humanitarian Aid from government sources (US\$ millions)



Source: UN OCHA FTS data

- The total EU MS humanitarian aid contributions fell by approximately 10% in this period. The financial crisis has clearly had major impacts on the aid flows of certain donors - that was not anticipated at the time of writing the European Consensus. Perhaps unsurprisingly precipitous drops (2008 compared to 2012 - based on the OCHA FTS data) were recorded by Greece (-98%), Italy (-81%), Portugal (-78%), Ireland (-56%) and Spain (-54%). Major falls in aid were also recorded in the Netherlands (-48%) and Denmark (-34%).
- The humanitarian aid contributions from the 12 new EU MS has decreased⁴⁶. These 12 EU MS had a disproportionately low base of bilateral humanitarian aid in 2008 of around 20 US cents per capita⁴⁷ - compared to an average of \$7 per capita for the EU 26 as a whole. Total annual humanitarian contributions from the 12 states fell from \$19.3m in 2008 to \$12m in 2012. This represented an average decline of 40% and reductions in 11 of these 12 states⁴⁸.
- Strong growth in humanitarian aid budgets has been registered in several MS. Over the reference period (according to OCHA FTS data) Germany increased its humanitarian aid by USD\$ 187 million (+53%), Sweden USD\$100million (+16%) Belgium USD\$86million (+90%) , and the UK US\$57million (+8%). The EU institutional budget has shown strong and consistent growth over this period⁴⁹. The EU figures⁵⁰ show that the institutions have increased the budget from EUR 939,000 to EUR

⁴⁶ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

⁴⁷ This excludes contributions via the EU institutions.

⁴⁸ Cyprus was the sole exception.

⁴⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/figures/budget_implementation/AnnexI.pdf

⁵⁰ This includes humanitarian aid, DIPECHO, food aid, civil protection and EDF.

1,344,000 (+43%⁵¹), This has included the significant reinforcement of the budget due to the exceptional needs related to the food, fuel and financial crisis.

The EU MS and institutions have widely prioritized the commitment to improve the coverage of forgotten crises. This is situated within the wider goal of a needs based approach. Several of the EU MS and institutions have developed specific methodologies to identify forgotten crises and support resource allocation decision making. However, data limitations limited the ability to determine to what extent funding patterns have changed.

- EU MS widely acknowledged the need to support forgotten crises. ECHO has developed a specific methodology for analyzing 'Forgotten Crises' to ensure an appropriate funding response. Several EU MS reported drawing on this index in their funding decisions. Contributions to the CERF, which includes an underfunded crisis window, were cited as a means of promoting more equitable funding.
- Overall 14 of 24 EU MS reported placing increased attention on forgotten crises. The role of the European Consensus in this was mixed; 2 EU MS saw it a main factor, 12 EU MS viewed it as having a minor role and 5 EU MS as no role. Looking forward only 8 EU MS viewed forgotten crises as an important area of joint action over the next five years.
- The main data sets - including the OCHA FTS - do not allow an easy disaggregation of the funding of forgotten crises. Whilst data is easily disaggregated for country level funding this typically aggregates elements of both 'forgotten' and other crises. A rigorous disaggregation of the data proved beyond the capacity of the evaluation.

EU MS and EU institutions have promoted other initiatives with the goal of achieving improved coverage and impact within existing humanitarian budgets. Complementary approaches include work on improved value for money, flexible and multi-year budgets and outreach to non-traditional donors.

- EU MS highlighted the range of initiatives that have been taken during the reference period to improve the cost efficiency of humanitarian aid, often branded as the drive for 'value for money'. Reforms were also made to improve the predictability and flexibility of funding. Multi-year humanitarian funding instruments have been adopted by some EU MS and the UN⁵² and are viewed as an important innovation, recognizing the reality that assistance often goes to the same crises, to the same people, year on year⁵³. In theory more predictable funding allows implementing partners to improve planning and rationalize costs, as well as supporting different types of activities, including those better suited to sustainable reductions in the humanitarian needs of beneficiaries.

⁵¹ For comparison with the earlier OCHA FTS figures this represents only a 24% increase in USD terms due to the depreciation of the Euro over this period.

⁵² The three-year UN CAP for Somalia (2013-2015), the first of its kind, represents a longer-term planning horizon, which is part of a major quest for more predictable funding.

⁵³ For example, Sudan has received over US\$10 billion in humanitarian assistance in the last ten years – US\$10 billion that has been planned and disbursed within short-term funding cycles.

- The effectiveness of these approaches is technically hard to quantify. Little data yet exists to evaluate how effective these approaches have proved. On-going efforts to gather additional evidence on these initiatives were cited by several MS.
- Several concrete outreach activities by EU to 'non-traditional' donors were reported - principally bi-lateral meetings with non OECD-DAC agencies. The most structured efforts to strategically encourage a wider donor base (both in amount and adherence to principles) have been through the GHD, rather than at the EU level. However, where significant new donors have emerged - for example Turkey⁵⁴ - they appear to operate outside of the established and principled structures - nor is there emergence attributable to EU efforts.

JC 7.3 Extent to which EU Institutions and MS's responses to humanitarian crises geared by considerations other than humanitarian needs

Most EU MS have clear needs based humanitarian policies. However, interviews confirmed that in practice a number of other factors continue to heavily influence decision making, in conjunction with levels of need. This includes national strategic interests, operational considerations and sensitivity to media influence.

- Interviews across stakeholder groups concur that a goal of transparent resource allocations based solely on needs is rarely achieved. Whilst the severity of needs is taken into account, it is not the only consideration and other factors influence the final decisions of all donors to varying degrees.
- Operational considerations are important. Most EU MS focus on a limited number of countries as development aid partners are far more likely to respond to humanitarian appeals in countries where they have an established aid presence, rather than purely an objective analysis of the severity of needs. Integrated missions, which combine humanitarian, developmental and security objectives, are supported by several EU MS such as the Somalia case. In such operations the principle of needs based humanitarian assistance may be subjugated to the goal of more durable solutions.
- Several EU MS reported that funding decisions were still ultimately determined by national strategic interests. At the end of the day donor staff are still part of government and are ultimately accountable to politicians. Political objectives will ultimately hold more sway than purely humanitarian objectives. For example, different criteria may apply to aid for recipient countries where there are strong historical ties with the donor.
- The emergence of several national anti-terrorism legislation has further constrained needs based response. This was cited as a major factor in delaying the response to the famine in Somalia in 2010-12 where an estimated 250,000 people are estimated to have died⁵⁵. In theory humanitarian agencies could be prosecuted for delivering aid in Al Shabaab controlled areas. Although waiver procedures are now in place these often do not apply outside of periods of the most acute crises

⁵⁴ Turkey was the fourth largest government donor of humanitarian assistance in 2012, contributing over US\$1 billion – 0.13% of its national wealth.

⁵⁵ FEWS NET

- National visibility for humanitarian aid remains an important *de facto* criterion. Humanitarian assistance is often concentrated in a few countries that receive high profile coverage. This was striking in 2010 when large volumes of assistance flowed to Haiti and Pakistan in the aftermath of disasters there, whilst at the same time assistance to other countries fell in the same year⁵⁶.
- There is a pragmatic acceptance that these 'additional' pressures will continue to influence resource allocations. However, principled, needs based humanitarian policies were cited as a key resource used by humanitarians to advocate against the most egregious misuse of humanitarian funds in support of national political agendas. The European Consensus is seen as a critical tool in these debates.

⁵⁶ GHA Report 2013

EQ 8 – On coherence with other external policies/instruments

To what extent has the implementation of the European Consensus contributed to targeting improved coherence between ECHO and MS humanitarian policies and other external policies and better coordination and division of roles between the corresponding actors?

The European Consensus commits the EU to “ensuring policy coherence, complementarities and effectiveness.” It also specifies that “In particular, humanitarian aid and development cooperation, as well as the various instruments available to implement stability measures, will be used in a coherent and complementary fashion, especially in transitional contexts and situations of fragility”.

The ALNAP guide “Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD/DAC criteria” defines coherence as “the need to assess security, developmental, trade and military as well as humanitarian policies, to ensure that there is consistency and, in particular, that all policies take into account humanitarian and human-rights considerations”. In this perspective, this questions aims at examining to what extent EU institutions and MS took initiatives to enhance such coherence. This concerns in particular the link between humanitarian aid and development aid through disaster risk reduction and LRRD. This question is different from question 4 that focuses on the coherence between the humanitarian aid policies of EU Institutions and MS.

EQ 8 on coherence with other external policies/instruments – Answer Summary Box

Coherence varied between humanitarian aid and other external policies. Links between humanitarian and development aid have remained high on the EU institutions’ and EU MS’ agenda even if common programmatic approaches have proved largely elusive. Coordination with military actors has been enhanced by greater clarity on the appropriate division of labour, whilst enhanced collaboration with political actors was not high on the agenda of Member States.

Fostering linkages and coordination between humanitarian aid and development aid was and still is high on the agendas of EU Institutions and Member States. Several concrete initiatives have been taken to enhance such linkages over the evaluation period. But significant challenges remained regarding the further development of common programmatic approaches and joint in-country resilience strategies.

Overall, progress has been made on coordination between humanitarian and military actors. Several initiatives have been taken to enhance better division of roles between these two actors, but tension remained between enhancing the coherence between humanitarian and security policies and ensuring a principled approach towards humanitarian aid.

EU donors remained willing to ensure the humanitarian space, but did not develop systematic consultation of humanitarian actors in sensitive political crises. Enhanced coherence and better collaboration between humanitarian and political actors was not high on the agenda of Member States and was not identified as a key priority for the future.

JC 8.1 On interaction of ECHO and MS' humanitarian agencies with development actors with a view to increased coherence between humanitarian and development policies⁵⁷

More linkages and coordination between humanitarian aid and development aid was and still is high on EU Institutions' and EU MS' agenda:

- Interlocutors stated that more sustainable aid approaches linking humanitarian and development aid was and still is high on the EU institutions' and EU MS's agenda.
- Even if there remains no common definition of all the terms underpinning this (e.g. DRR, LRRD, resilience, risk preparedness). Interlocutors met agreed that there is no common definition or understanding of all these different concepts.
- Over the evaluation period, 77% of surveyed EU MS (20/26) stated that their country has given increased importance to DRR. Among all the European Consensus' objectives, DRR received the biggest attention by the surveyed EU MS. Concerning interaction between humanitarian and development aid, 62% (16/26) of EU MS respondents stated that an increased importance was given to this objective by their government.
- Finally, more interaction between humanitarian and development is the third most-cited priority for the future. It has been mentioned by 58% of the surveyed EU MS (15/26). DRR has only been mentioned by 27% (7/26) of the respondents.

Several concrete initiatives have been taken in this respect, over the evaluation period.

- Annual reports (2011 & 2012) and many individuals met for this study refer to various initiatives taken to strengthen interaction, coordination and coherence between humanitarian and development aid at the EU institution level (e.g. Joint humanitarian development framework for transition, SHARE initiative, resilience policy and action plan, new more flexible funding mechanisms, a strong political will at the commissioner level to develop coherent approach, resilience is a recurrent theme for COHAFa meetings, etc.)
- Actions to enhance coherence between development and humanitarian aid have also been taken by many Member States. These actions are from different types, it goes from more budget allocated to DRR or co-funding NGOs partners for their resilience projects or direct financial support to international systems (UN ISDR and GFDRR⁵⁸) or offering more flexible and longer term funding, to explicit reference to resilience and LRRD in their humanitarian strategy documents or systematically embedding resilience in all humanitarian and development programs, up to the establishment of a national structure directly dealing with transitional development (also called 'medium term assistance').
- There also exist some initiatives taken by both EU institutions and EU MS such as the 'joint programming process' also called the 'common programmatic approach' or also the "resilience country strategy" recently set up in Kenya.
- On the ground, only limited examples were cited of concrete initiatives to bridge humanitarian and development actions. In Kenya, projects such as the 'joint programming process' or the 'resilience country strategy' were undertaken, but with limited tangible results at this stage. In Somalia and in Pakistan, no concrete example of

⁵⁷ The initial JC 8.1 has been dropped because it tackled all the other external policies in one JC, which is not relevant since interactions between humanitarian aid and external policies are specific to the policy itself and cannot be tackled globally.

⁵⁸ UNISDR (UN office for disaster risk reduction) ; GFDRR (the Worldbank facility for disaster risk reduction).

effective collaboration between humanitarian and development actors were seen. Indeed, people made more reference to structural barriers or debated the 'blurring' the lines issues which prevent coherence and enhanced coordination between the two actors.

Yet effective and concrete coordination between humanitarian and development aid is still a challenge and considered as a weakness.

- Many interlocutors highlighted weaknesses in the concrete interaction between humanitarian and development aid. Indeed, even if there is a growing ambition in nearly all EU MS and among EU institutions to strengthen coherence between humanitarian and development assistance, there remains some lack of coordinated strategic approach among various government ministries or DGs tackling LRRD, DRR and resilience. This lack therefore undermines effective collaboration between relevant actors to achieve these goals.

Several factors are invoked to explain these weaknesses

- Humanitarian implementing partners, as well as EU stakeholders met stated that EU internal procedures and structures of the various financing instruments were not conceived to operate in a coordinated way:
 - Several stakeholders raised the lack of coherence between EU internal procedures and the EU internal rules which create barriers to effective implementation of LRRD.
 - Indeed, interlocutors agreed on the fact that humanitarian aid funding mechanisms are rapid and flexible, while for development aid it is a cumbersome, time-consuming procedure.
 - Even if some stakeholders mentioned a recent evolution in the flexibility of some EU funding mechanisms ('joint programming process in Kenya'), implementing partners do not seem to know them well since none of them talked about it during the various meetings held during the field missions.
- In addition to this funding gap, several observations converge to suggest that the division of roles is not so clear:
 - Several interviews demonstrated that even within one particular sector (humanitarian or development), people did not always share the same opinion on what role they should play to build resilience.
 - People also raised the fundamental differences between the two sectors: they have different goals and objectives, they differ in terms of mandates, basic principles, implementing modes and timeframes.
 - These inherently different logics bring to the front the debate on 'blurring the lines' which directly refers to the possibility to enhance coherence between the two types of interventions.
 - For example, humanitarian aid is based on fundamental principles and is dispensed via non-governmental or international organizations, while development runs in conjunction with the government (Paris declaration). Hence, this alignment with local government politics might run counter the ECHO principled approach.
- Some interlocutors considered that EU Institutions (namely ECHO and EUDs) were facing more problems than EU MS when engaging in concrete resilience programs, perhaps as a result of the independent mandate of ECHO as opposed to the Member State humanitarian agencies, many of which combine multiple mandates.
- Several interviewees stated that the European Consensus is not the most relevant document to work on resilience, LRRD, or DRR.

EQ 9 – On civil protection

To what extent has the European Consensus contributed to improve complementarities between EU humanitarian and civil protection resources in third countries ?

At the time that the European Consensus was published, the European Commission's Civil Protection Mechanism was not administratively linked to the management of the Commission's humanitarian aid. Nevertheless, the Mechanism was operational throughout the evaluation period and, over the period 2007-2013, the Commission allocated €189.8 million to civil protection projects (both in third countries and the EU) through its civil protection financial instrument. The Civil Protection Mechanism was integrated within DG ECHO after the publication of the European Consensus, thereby creating a joint architecture for humanitarian and civil protection response.

Nevertheless, the European Consensus itself contained explicit reference to the use of civil protection in humanitarian crises. In a paragraph devoted to Civil Protection, the European Consensus points out that "in natural disasters and technological and environmental emergencies, civil protection resources can provide an important contribution to humanitarian actions based on humanitarian needs assessments and their possible advantage in terms of speed, specialisation, efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the early phase of relief response." It further states that "where deployed in any humanitarian crisis, the use of civil protection resources should be needs-driven and complementary to and coherent with humanitarian aid. Therefore proper coordination between different European actors and instruments is essential, as is respect for the overall coordinating role of the UN." Finally, it underlines that "the use of civil protection and military assets in response to humanitarian situations must be in line with 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". It proposes that the EU promotes a common understanding of these guidelines.

EQ 9 on Civil Protection – Answer Summary Box

EU Member States and the European Commission have evolved towards a common understanding of civil protection its role in humanitarian responses. The publication of the European Consensus was in step with this evolution, but other driving factors were also present – both within the EU and outside it – which may have had more impact in this regard. Field-level coordination between humanitarian and civil protection actors remained limited.

Over the period 2008-2012, the European Commission allocated significant resources to building a shared understanding of civil protection among EU Institutions and Member States. Broadly speaking, Member States and the European Commission have evolved towards a more common understanding of civil protection and its links to the humanitarian aid community. The European Consensus was in line with this evolution, but other elements also need to be considered when assessing the driving factors (e.g., the recasting of the Commission's Civil Protection Mechanism and its housing within ECHO, the launching of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument and external policy initiatives such as the UN MCDA guidelines).

Whilst EU stakeholders agreed that the division of labour between civil protection and humanitarian instruments was now clearer, examples of field-level coordination between humanitarian and civil protection actors remained limited (notwithstanding progress in cases such as Typhoon Haiyan). Transport costs remained a limitation on the exploitation of civil protection assets in third country disasters.

JC 9.1 Extent to which the European Consensus implementation contributed to a shared understanding among EU institutions and MS of when it is appropriate to use civil protection assets in emergencies in third countries

Over the period 2008-2012, the European Commission allocated significant resources to building a shared understanding of civil protection among EU Institutions and Member States:

- The Civil Protection Financial Instrument allocated €189.8 million to civil protection projects over 2007-2013 through its civil protection financial instrument. A total of 186 missions were conducted by the Civil Protection Mechanism over this period.
- This funding allocation was used for conducting missions as well as building a shared understanding of civil protection among EU Member States via joint training and exercises and conducting studies on prevention and preparedness.
- The joint training, exercises and missions were cited by ECHO staff as a key element in building a common understanding of civil protection among Member States, many of which have different historical perspectives on the definition of civil protection and its relation to civilian and military assets.

Broadly speaking, Member States and the European Commission have evolved towards a more common understanding of civil protection and its links to the humanitarian aid community :

- 19/26 (73%) Member State survey respondents felt the EU had increasingly developed a shared understanding of when it is appropriate to use civil protection assets.
- ECHO interviewees reported progress in the development of a common language between Member States on civil protection, as well as the conduct of joint exercises between Member State agencies.
- Training courses and joint exercises conducted under the Civil Protection Mechanism were broadly perceived as having encouraged a common understanding of civil protection and fostered joint lessons learning among EU Member States.
 - The evaluation of the application of the Civil Protection Mechanism 2007-2009⁵⁹ noted that the training programme “provided an excellent platform for experience sharing and networking among civil protection experts”
 - Whilst the joint exercises were viewed as having enhanced “operational cooperation between the civil protection services of the Participating States, and sharing lessons learned.”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ COWI (2010), *Evaluation of the EC's actions in the field of civil protection*, European Commission.

⁶⁰ European Commission (2011), *Report on the evaluation of the application of the Civil Protection Mechanism and the Civil Protection Financial Instrument for the years 2007-2009 (SEC(2011) 1311)*, European Commission.

The European Consensus was in line with this evolution, but other elements also need to be considered when assessing the driving factors :

- Other relevant initiatives were taken outside of the European Union, including the UN MCDA Guidelines (2003), the revised Oslo Guidelines (2007), and Member State own guidelines on civil protection (e.g. the UK Strategy on civil protection, 2011).
- Within the European Commission, significant restructuring of the civil protection architecture has taken place since the publication of the European Consensus, which must also be considered potential contributory factors in the development of a common approach to civil protection in the EU and with third countries:
 - The recasting of the Civil Protection Mechanism and launch of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument in 2007.
 - The housing of the Civil Protection Mechanism within ECHO from 2010 onwards also built the potential for greater connections to be developed with humanitarian aid, most notably including the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and its successor, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).
 - The pilot project and preparatory action conducted by the Mechanism in 2008-2010.
 - The increasing number of assistance requests and interventions in third countries since 2007 rising from 8 in 2007 to 17 in 2013)⁶¹
 - The Mechanisms' contributions (2009-2014) under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disaster Programmes (PPRD East and South).

Finally, the progress made has been limited by factors within both the humanitarian and civil protection communities in Europe:

- ECHO stakeholders noted that, within the civil protection community in Europe, there remains no common definition of civil protection. Several countries place civil protection within the state's defence capabilities, whilst others understand it as a civilian asset.
- Member State visits and Brussels-based interviews confirmed that the understanding of civil protection mechanisms within the humanitarian community remains weak.
- Finally, ECHO stakeholders argued that more work could be done on building coordination between humanitarian and civil protection actors, including information exchange, joint needs assessment, and joint planning of operations where possible.

⁶¹ European Commission (2013), *ECHO Factsheet December 2013*, European Commission.

JC 9.2 & JC 9.3 Extent to which the European Consensus implementation helped to encourage field level coordination and ensure that civil protection assets were deployed in situations where they offered a comparative advantage over alternative humanitarian instruments

EU stakeholders agreed that the EU had made some progress on the division of labour between civil protection assets and humanitarian instruments:

- 16/26 (62%) Member State survey respondents felt that the EU had made progress on the division of labour between civil protection interventions and humanitarian aid since 2008.
- ECHO stakeholders interviewed in the data collection phase agreed that civil protection assets have added value in terms of rapidity during early phase of disaster relief and technical specializations not covered by the humanitarian community (e.g. forest fire recovery, search and rescue, oil clean-up operations).

But Member State and NGO stakeholders both argued that exploitation of these areas of added-value was limited by the high transport costs which limited the extent of Member State deployment, notably to remote disasters such as the Philippines.

Evidence of increased field-level coordination remains very limited, with only a few examples cited by stakeholders, most notably including Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

- One Member State stakeholder observed of the Haiyan case that: *“The ERCC’s role in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 provides a good example of the way in which coordination may be enhanced, with details of each Member State and institutions’ contributions to the relief effort being regularly updated and circulated and frequent coordination meetings taking place from a very early stage after the Typhoon made landfall.”*⁶²
- However, the limited number of operational examples needs to be viewed in light of the limited opportunities for coordination due to the small number of civil protection deployments across the EU over the period: the civil protection mechanism made 186 deployments over 2007-2013 both inside and outside Europe at a fraction of the budget available to ECHO and the EU Member States for humanitarian interventions over the same period.

⁶² As noted in Annex 4, Section AIV.1, question 3.1.1.

5. Conclusions

This section presents the Conclusions emerging from the evaluation findings and analysis (presented above in Section 4). They are structured in the four following clusters so as to facilitate an overall synthesis (see figure below). The conclusions aim to provide an overall picture of the progress made by EU Institutions and Members States with respect to the objectives of the European Consensus. The first cluster of conclusions concerns the extent to which the European Consensus and the Action Plan were known by these instances, as well as their impact in triggering changes. Such awareness is indeed a pre-condition for impacting changes. The other clusters then examine more in detail the evolution of EU Institutions and Members States policies and practices with regard to the substance of the European Consensus. They concern objectives that can be grouped under three headings:

- Harmonisation, complementarities and the role of ECHO
- Quality of aid
- Coherence with other forms of aid

The conclusions have been derived from the answers to the evaluation questions presented in section 4 above. Each conclusion refers where relevant to the evaluation question(s) and other sources on which it is based.

Figure 18 – Conclusions

Awareness and implementation of the Consensus	C 1: Awareness of European Consensus and Action Plan
	C 2: Impact of the European Consensus and the Action Plan
Harmonisation, complementarities and the role of ECHO	C 3: Consistency of HA policies at EU level
	C 4: Coordination and complementarities
	C 5: EU Value Added
	C 6: Visibility
Quality of aid	C 7: Contributions to the International Humanitarian System
	C 8: Needs based responses
	C 9: Fundamental Humanitarian Principles
Interactions with other actors	C 10: IHL, military, civil protection
	C 11: Linking humanitarian and development aid

5.1 On awareness and overall implementation of the European Consensus

These first conclusions are overarching insofar as they provide an overview of the extent to which the European Consensus and Action Plan were known and acted upon, and the factors that played a role in that regard.

Conclusion 1: Awareness of the European Consensus and Action Plan

The European Consensus was well-known and also used at the HQ level by stakeholders responsible for humanitarian aid policy, but less well-known beyond that. The Action Plan was not very well-known across all stakeholder groups.

Based on EQ1, EQ2

Generally the European Consensus was **fairly well-known among those working directly on humanitarian aid policy at HQ level**. This applied not only to DG ECHO representatives, but also to representatives of EU MS and of other organisations such as the UN and European NGOs. This knowledge went beyond mere awareness of the existence of the European Consensus to a robust understanding of the contents and issues. The primary audience, where a strong knowledge of the European Consensus was of most immediate relevance, included humanitarian policy makers and those engaged with advocacy. This target audience was reasonably acquainted with the European Consensus.

But **beyond this select group the European Consensus was not very well-known**. There was general agreement among the stakeholders met that knowledge of the European Consensus was very basic or, outside the world of humanitarian aid, mostly non-existent. In the field most interlocutors had little or no knowledge of it. This applied to all stakeholders, including the EU MS and, in several cases to DG ECHO field experts. Whilst many staff may have been introduced to the European Consensus, it has not had uniform relevance or use. For example, knowledge of the European Consensus was strongest amongst DG ECHO staff working in conflict situations where constant reference to humanitarian principles is invoked. Critically, the European Consensus was poorly known or understood in counterparts working in collaborating departments of Government; political, military and developmental.

Among those who knew the European Consensus, or discovered it through the evaluation process, there was **broad agreement on the usefulness of having such a commitment at EU level**:

- Stakeholders consistently identified the core message of the European Consensus as defining humanitarian aid as a civilian business, implemented mostly by non-state actors, reflecting the values of humanity and solidarity and not as a crisis management tool at the service of foreign policy objectives.
- Whilst the contents of the European Consensus are not necessarily unique there was a widely perceived added value in consolidating these in one place, re-affirming the alignment of European states and institutions behind these commitments and

furthermore consolidating a 'whole of Government' commitment to principled humanitarian aid.

- The European Consensus enabled the EU Institutions and the MS themselves to agree on the objectives they pursued and to enunciate this clearly to all stakeholders.
- NGOs and other EU stakeholders explained they used the European Consensus mainly to hold EU Institutions and MS accountable to the commitments they made. It was also used by humanitarian departments to hold other arms of government to account.
- The European Consensus was of less value as an operational tool.

The **Action Plan** was **little-known**. Some actors in DG ECHO were aware of it, but not all. It was known to a certain extent at EU MS HQ level, but many MS civil servants responsible for humanitarian aid had only very limited knowledge of it. It was almost unknown by other HQ-level stakeholders. At field level it was also almost unknown, even DG ECHO field experts having only minimal substantive knowledge.

This **lack of knowledge was problematic**. The Action Plan was designed to be incorporated within the strategies and activities of EU MS and EU Institutions. However, a significant number of those ultimately responsible for implementation (senior decision makers in particular) appeared to have remained largely unaware of its contents. A basic awareness is a logical precondition to implementation. However, outstanding questions remain on the extent to which a greater awareness would translate into enhanced implementation - or if other considerations would prove ultimately more decisive.

Conclusion 2: Impact of the European Consensus and the Action Plan

The European Consensus was generally only one factor among many that triggered changes. The Action Plan has played little or no role, except within the realm of DG ECHO, and its usefulness was regularly questioned.

Based on EQ 1, EQ 2, EQ3

The European Consensus was one contributory factor among many in the changed approaches to humanitarian aid mentioned under EQ 1.

It is widely acknowledged that the European Consensus did not add new substance to pre-existing commitments and frameworks that guide the delivery of international humanitarian aid. To a large extent the European Consensus intentionally aggregated global references and translated them into EU commitments. Furthermore, there were a number of established initiatives to improve the quality of humanitarian aid that predate the European Consensus. The Good Humanitarian Donor initiative is one important example.

It is therefore not surprising interlocutors generally did not see the European Consensus as a unique trigger, but explained that the evolving approaches took place within these wider dynamics. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the European Consensus reinforced and accelerated these on-going developments. For example, in the case of the GHD there was a conscious choice by the EU to both underpin GHD principles/practices and

significantly expand the number of donors that adhered to them by bringing in all EU MS through the European Consensus into GHD.

However, there are specific areas where changes are more directly attributed to the European Consensus itself. Firstly, several of the new EU MS explicitly stated that the European Consensus had been a key reference in shaping their humanitarian approach. The European Consensus effectively initiated an engagement in international humanitarian action for several of the EU MS, that may not have otherwise occurred. All EU MS have become members of the GHD as a consequence.

Secondly, some unique developments occurred at the European level as a direct consequence of the adoption of the Consensus. The Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) has been established through the European Consensus and has consolidated exchanges on humanitarian strategic issues and crisis response in monthly contacts among EU humanitarian representatives. Some informants saw this as the single most visible consequence of the European Consensus.

The Action Plan has been most effective at triggering actions within DG ECHO, where there was the greatest sense of ownership. For example, the European Consensus has been credited with stimulating the development of a suite of sectoral humanitarian policies. Following organisational changes, the European Commission has piloted approaches to increased complementarity and synergies between traditional humanitarian aid approaches and the use of civil protection expertise and assets⁶³.

Amongst the EU MS it is harder to discern the impact of the European Consensus. The evaluation found that it was not well-known and not as an influential tool for shaping humanitarian aid policies and actions. Reporting of progress against the Action Plan appears to be largely an *ex post* exercise where EU MS retrospectively categorized their achievements against the AP framework. However, a direct link can be made with inclusive GHD participation and a shared, common focus on needs assessments.

The Action Plan's structure and contents did not help foster ownership and accountability among EU MS. This included the high number of actions listed, limited prioritization, unclear interaction with national strategic plans, the lack of tailoring to specific EU MS circumstances and capabilities and weak accountability mechanisms. These underlying design factors help explain why it was poorly used.

⁶³ A fuller list of AP achievements is available in the Mid Term review and 2011 and 2012 monitoring reports.

5.2 On harmonisation and complementarities at EU level, and on the role of DG ECHO

The European Consensus contains different commitments to increased harmonisation of approaches between EU Institutions and MS, but also to increased collaboration with a view to enhancing complementarities on the ground. The conclusions below relate to those issues.

Conclusion 3: Consistency of humanitarian aid policies at EU level

Overall there was a trend of improved consistency between the formal humanitarian aid policies of EU institutions and EU MS.

Based on EQ1, EQ4

The evaluation found evidence of a number of processes leading to the increased coherence of humanitarian aid policies between EU Institutions and EU MS. Several EU MS developed new or revised humanitarian policies which were broadly consistent with the European Consensus. Document analysis also shows that EU MS policies regularly refer to the European Consensus, and revealed no elements suggesting strongly divergent approaches. For others, including the EC and some EU MS, the European Consensus is taken as the *de facto* governing policy.

Consequently a wide cross-section of stakeholders observed an essential similarity in the positions of MS. Consequently many considered that “EU institutions and MS share a common view on humanitarian aid” and that “the implementation of humanitarian aid by EU institutions and MS is closely in line with the European Consensus”.

Within this broad consensus there were dissonant perceptions and EU MS were not always seen to be on the same page on specific issues. Comments included “some blur the lines between humanitarian aid and development” or “not all EU MS understand that it [humanitarian aid] is not a crisis management tool”.

But overall humanitarian policies are judged to have a high degree of similarity.

Conclusion 4: Coordination and complementarities

EU Institutions and MS have improved information sharing at HQ level. However, operational coordination and synergies remained weak at field level, and the boundaries between EU- and UN-led operational coordination functions were not always clear.

Based on EQ1, EQ3, EQ7

The evaluation gathered evidence of an improvement in information sharing between EU Institutions and MS at capitals level that could be linked to the introduction of the European Consensus. This was largely conducted through regular COHAFA meetings, a direct outcome of the European Consensus and Action Plan. The perceived value of this

information-sharing varies between members and crises. It worked best for mega-disasters and was valued more by smaller humanitarian donors who benefit from the information sourced through the field networks of the larger EU MS.

However, this was not matched by improved operational level coordination and realizing complementarities in the humanitarian actions of the EU MS and the EC. Several reasons were identified to explain the lack of operational coordination. Field-level EU donor coordination was problematic given the limited field presence of many EU MS. Consequently this usually involved the most active and 'like-minded' humanitarian donors and actors. Systemic structural factors impeded heightened cooperation, including different planning cycles, different partnership agreements, and budget pre-allocated to global partners. National interests also inhibited greater coordination.

Consequently several actors questioned the feasibility and relevance of operational coordination between all EU donors. However, they also viewed increased coordination as a relevant goal to pursue on an ad hoc basis - for specific crises and/or specific sets of partners. There was also potential for coordinating common strategic positions in response to crises - as opposed to operational response.

Despite the clear statements in the European Consensus, the boundaries and inter-relationships between EU-led and UN-led coordination functions were not consistently interpreted, especially at field level. The substantial field-based expert capacity of the EC enabled quite elaborate coordination arrangements to be established with implementing partners, which can serve to replicate the established UN responsibilities and mandate. In contrast EU MS relied more consistently on UN-led coordination structures and processes, aligning funding closely to the UN humanitarian strategic plans. Substantial inconsistencies in this area were apparent to stakeholders.

Conclusion 5: EU Value Added

The core added value of DG ECHO to promoting the European Consensus objectives lied in promoting humanitarian principles and good practice among EU Institutions and MS. The EU Delegations also had a potential for value added in achieving the European Consensus objectives, but this was mostly not concretized.

Based on EQ 4, EQ 5, EQ 6, EQ 7, EQ 8

It was found that DG ECHO provided significant value-added, not only to humanitarian aid delivery in general, but also to European Consensus objectives. This added value was linked to a number of core characteristics, summarized as follows:

- its global presence and its capacity to draw on a network of EUDs and DG ECHO Field Offices, the EU MS often lacking such a global presence;
- the technical expertise of its staff in the field;
- its critical mass of funding;
- insulation from strategic (political, economic, military) goals.

There was a broad agreement that DG ECHO had a critical role in promoting humanitarian principles among EU Institutions, the EU MS and crisis response more

generally. The specific role of ECHO with respect to humanitarian principles was highlighted, with interlocutors describing ECHO as “*one of the most principled donors*” or as the “*guardian of humanitarian principles*”. This function was widely appreciated, including by EU MS and other stakeholders (for instance from implementing bodies). The role played by the the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response (responsible for ECHO) in promoting the humanitarian agenda was also underlined, notably in respect of upholding IHL, drawing attention to forgotten humanitarian crises, and contributing to securing humanitarian space.

Opinions were more divided on the role of ECHO in terms of “*providing a common voice for the EU and Commission*”. Some MS considered that this was indeed an ECHO role which should be further developed in the future; others, notably large MS, emphasized the importance of maintaining a peer-to-peer relationship between MS and EU institutions, without delegating leadership responsibilities to ECHO.

In some field contexts the potential value-added of EUDs was underlined by stakeholders. These can indeed provide important political support to protect the humanitarian space through the collective action of EU Ambassadors. The EUDs can also provide a platform for integrated humanitarian and development actions.

Conclusion 6: Visibility

When delivering humanitarian aid, EU Institutions and EU MS have not been visible as a common EU entity. Stakeholders frequently questioned fundamentally the appropriateness of visibility objectives within humanitarian interventions.

Based on EQ 4

The evaluation’s findings on the commitment of EU Institutions and EU MS to a *common* visibility of their humanitarian aid towards different stakeholders (national counterparts, final beneficiaries, the wider donor community, but also the general public) are mixed. Although EU MS formally agree that joint visibility is important, most interviews revealed that individual EU MS, when they deemed visibility important, favoured their own national visibility. Unsurprisingly the data indicate little or no increase in common visibility of EU Institutions and MS when they delivered humanitarian aid, notwithstanding some divergent views in that regard.

More generally, stakeholders questioned the relevance of visibility objectives, arguing that:

- the priority should be effectiveness of support;
- in humanitarian contexts visibility objectives often run counter to safety considerations;
- often much emphasis is placed on “banners and stickers”, whereas:
 - local populations do not know who they refer to and do not distinguish between humanitarian and other forms of aid;
 - national governments and EU taxpayers that should be targeted by visibility to leverage the aid - for instance to achieve ownership objectives - are not reached by banners and stickers.

5.3 On the quality of aid

The European Consensus not only lists objectives relating to the manner in which EU Institutions and MS need to collaborate when delivering humanitarian aid, but also describes goals to be attained in terms of improving the quality of humanitarian aid.

This section proposes three conclusions in that regard.

Conclusion 7: Contributions to the International Humanitarian System

EU Institutions and EU MS developed common strategic positions and increasingly aligned their support to a range of “good practice” initiatives, including practical innovations to improve the allocation of humanitarian aid on the basis of assessed needs. However the degree of active engagement varied and questions were raised on the level of commitment.

Based on EQ5, EQ7

EU institutions and MS considered it valuable to establish common humanitarian strategy and policy positions within global humanitarian platforms, so as to influence the international humanitarian system. Consequently structures have been developed for establishing common positions at capitals level and there are numerous examples of common statements developed at EU level, especially with reference to UN agencies and processes. This included, for instance, positions on the Transformative Agenda or executive board meetings of key UN Agencies. This effectively capitalized on the cumulative weight of EU humanitarian aid contributions to leverage strategic influence.

Within this generally positive picture the evaluation found that the level of consensus reached was uneven. This contrasts with, for example, the much-more-detailed negotiations underlying common EU positions in the ILO or WTO.

Other explanatory factors for the uneven level of commitment to 'common' positions were found to include:

- the wide variation in the humanitarian capacities of MS, arguably limiting the ability of individual MS to participate in such strategic dialogue. The proliferation of fora means that not all MS could be present;
- the fact that individual MS reserved the right to maintain an independent position and speak independently at these events, based on the shared competence in humanitarian aid;
- the fact that in some cases (notably for influencing the UN system) it appeared preferable to concentrate efforts on a common position for the most significant global donors rather than investing energy in developing a common EU position.

One of the most active areas of collaboration, which can be linked to the European Consensus, is the promotion of needs based approaches. EU institutions and MS have taken a wide range of initiatives in support of this objective. This encompassed developing internal needs analysis and decision making methodologies, building of implementing partners' assessment capacities, or a combination of strategies. EU donors have

consistently supported OCHA and IASC in moving towards coordinated needs assessment and prioritisation of needs to be built into the CAP.

Despite the investment and progress made, this task is incomplete. At global level EU donors' comparative analysis of needs is not yet standardized. Equally at field level assessment approaches remained fragmented and there is no clear agreement on a standard method.

Conclusion 8: Needs based responses

Collectively the EU's humanitarian aid has remained stable over the reference period, despite a growing gap in global humanitarian needs. There was no evidence gathered that EU donors had either increased the efficiency of their aid or encouraged the entry of non traditional donors.

Based on EQ7

Over the period considered the shortfall in global CAP funding continuously increased from 28% in 2007 to 37% in 2012. During the same period the overall level of humanitarian aid provided by the EC and MS combined has not increased, remaining at roughly US\$4.9 bn. Behind this picture are highly volatile aid flows from the individual MS and EC, *viz.*:

- total EU MS humanitarian aid contributions fell by approximately 10%, with much more substantial drops for countries strongly hit by the financial crisis, but also for some other EU MS;
- there was a strong growth in the contributions of some EU MS (between 8% and 90%) which were already large or medium donors;
- there was substantial and consistent growth - about 43% - in EC support over the period;
- collectively there was a decrease - from \$19.3m in 2008 to \$12m in 2012 - in humanitarian aid contributions from the twelve new Accession States which already had levels very much lower than those of the EU26 as a whole (in 2008, 20 US cents *per capita* compared to \$7).

Clearly the evaluation reference period has coincided with a period of intense economic uncertainty across much of Europe. This has undoubtedly been a major influence on the fluctuating levels of aid - including humanitarian aid - budgets. In this context even stabilizing overall humanitarian aid levels may be regarded as an achievement.

Over the reference period several EU donors have sought to increase the cost effectiveness of their humanitarian aid budgets. A range of initiatives were adopted in pursuit of increased value for money. However, the impact of these measures was unclear to the evaluation. Insufficient evidence was available to permit an informed judgement on the results.

The European Consensus also encouraged EU advocacy to non traditional donors to increase their humanitarian aid budgets. Whilst outreach efforts have been made these

appear to have been ad hoc and relatively ineffective. Where aid has increased this has not been within a principled humanitarian framework.

Conclusion 9: Fundamental Humanitarian Principles

EU Institutions and EU MS are committed at policy level to upholding and promoting fundamental humanitarian principles, but different approaches and positions have appeared in applying these principles in specific situations, notably when there was a tension between principles.

Based on EQ1, EQ6, EQ7

Overall there was a broad agreement among stakeholders to the effect that EU Institutions and EU MS have put the upholding and promotion of fundamental humanitarian principles high on their agendas. The evaluation also shows that over the evaluation period ECHO and EU MS have taken initiatives to uphold and promote fundamental humanitarian principles. It was for instance a recurrent theme in COHAFA meetings and several conferences were organised. Many stakeholders met or interviewed considered that the EU Institutions and MS had made significant progress in this respect.

The evaluation did not encounter any stakeholders among the humanitarian units of the EU MS and Institutions who called into question the commitment to fundamental humanitarian principles; and yet specific situations have revealed questions and (potential) differences when applying those principles on the ground. Indeed stakeholders explained that in specific situations it was not always clear how to implement the principles or what the correct interpretation of a principled approach implied. They also observed that the principles were often understood and applied in different ways, this being particularly true when different principles were in conflict or in tension.

One example is the situation in which a Government requires a donor to channel all aid through its control, whereas this same Government is part of, or perceived as, an actor in an armed conflict. Faced with the dilemma between meeting needs and maintaining political neutrality, donors have taken different positions and made different choices.

In the same vein even though EU MS had increasingly adopted needs-based policies, a number of other factors continue to influence decision-making on resource allocation, for example national strategic interests, operational considerations, and sensitivity to media influence. No donor, EU MS or DG ECHO, had a transparent resource allocation procedure that was based exclusively on assessed needs.

Another challenge was the preservation of the distinct nature of humanitarian aid; several interlocutors raised this issue, highlighting the challenge faced by humanitarian actors in upholding their distinct nature, notably in the framework of the comprehensive approach, or even in contexts of LRRD and resilience (see also conclusion 11).

5.4 On interaction with other actors

The European Consensus contains a number of objectives in terms of interaction between humanitarian aid and other types of intervention. The conclusions below relate to these issues (the first also concerns IHL).

Conclusion 10: IHL, military and civil protection⁶⁴

Promotion of IHL, and interaction with military actors were not the highest priorities for EU Institutions and EU MS, although initiatives have been taken and progress has been made. EU Institutions and MS evolved towards a better understanding of the division of labour between civil protection and humanitarian instruments.

Based on EQ1, EQ6

Several sources indicate that the undertaking of specific action to promote IHL was not one of the main agenda items of the EU Institutions and MS, even if a number of initiatives were taken in this respect, for example specific events organised by the Commission to promote and disseminate IHL, or funding of practical IHL implementation on the ground, as well as specific initiatives at EU MS level. The specific role of the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response (responsible for ECHO) was also underlined in this respect. Stakeholders saw IHL as a relatively 'mature' issue, which the ICRC has a clear mandate for promoting. The role of donors was essentially seen as a maintenance role, providing funding to ICRC and periodic advocacy in support of the IHL principles.

Progress has also been made on the coordination between humanitarian and military actors and several initiatives have been taken to enhance a better division of roles between these two actors. Again the implementation of this theme has benefited from a set of clear international agreements defining the respective roles of the military and humanitarian actors. There were evident concerns over inappropriate military encroachment into the humanitarian sphere early in the reference period. However, the evaluation found significant improvements based on reference to international agreements.

The Commission has allocated significant resources to building a shared understanding of civil protection among EU Institutions and MS. Stakeholders agree that more clarity had been created on the division of labour between civil protection and humanitarian instruments. The European Consensus contributed to this evolution, but was one contributing factor among others. The integration of humanitarian aid with civil protection in one EC Directorate has allowed DG ECHO to develop complementarity and synergies

⁶⁴ This conclusion focuses on the European Consensus's role in EU efforts to promote international humanitarian law, as well as in promoting coordination between humanitarian and military actors. It does not address the humanitarian principles, which are covered in conclusion 9, above.

between traditional humanitarian aid approaches and the use of civil protection expertise and assets, both at headquarters and in the field.

Conclusion 11: Linking humanitarian and development aid

EU institutions and MS have put coherence between humanitarian and development aid high on their agendas and have taken several initiatives in this respect. One of the key elements hampering improved coherence and coordination, was that humanitarian aid strives to remain independent, while development aid seeks to align with recipient governments.

Based on EQ1, EQ8

Official documents from both EU institutions and individual MS show that coherence between humanitarian and development aid were high on their agendas. This was also confirmed by stakeholders. This theme has emerged in the guise of policy discussion related to LRRD, DRR and more recently resilience. However, these initiatives were heavily focussed at Headquarters level and the evaluation found less evidence of programmatic initiatives taken on the ground. The European Consensus has not been a major reference point or anchor for these subsequent initiatives.

There were several obstacles to improved coherence:

- differing procedures for implementation of humanitarian and development aid;
- lack of clarity on the division of roles between humanitarian and development donors when it comes to building resilience;
- differences between the two modalities in terms of goals and objectives, mandates, implementing modes and timeframes.

Finally humanitarian and development aid both need to respond to the imperatives that anchor them in differing logic *per se* and in specific situations could constitute a fundamental obstacle to cooperation and coordination. Indeed the upholding of humanitarian principles, notably the principle of independence, is crucial to humanitarian aid. This may in specific situations imply that humanitarian aid workers need to remain completely independent of national authorities. In development aid, in contrast, alignment with government policies and hence close interaction with national authorities are crucial objectives in the light of the Paris and Busan Declarations.

These constraints were apparent at the time of writing the European Consensus and remain problematic. Consequently these factors continue to inhibit more integrated approaches, especially in the context of complex emergencies where relations with national authorities are often complex. More progress has been made in developing common approaches for addressing natural disasters with more stable governance environments.

6. Recommendations

This section presents the evaluation recommendations. These follow from, and are directly based on, the Conclusions presented in Section 5 above. The recommendations cover the following thematic areas:

Figure 19 – Recommendations

R 1: On developing an EU strategic plan
R 2: On developing a communication strategy for the Consensus
R 3: On protecting and strengthening the institutional independence of humanitarian aid
R 4: On ensuring minimum thresholds of humanitarian donorship
R 5: On strengthening coordination and complementarities
R 6: On the consistent application of principles
R 7: On clarifying the objectives of visibility
R 8: On needs based responses
R 9: On linkages with development assistance

This list of recommendations has been intentionally kept short to encourage management focus on a manageable set of high priority actions. Each recommendation is supported by a short narrative summarizing the link to the underlying conclusions. An outline is then provided of the key actions required to implement the recommendation.

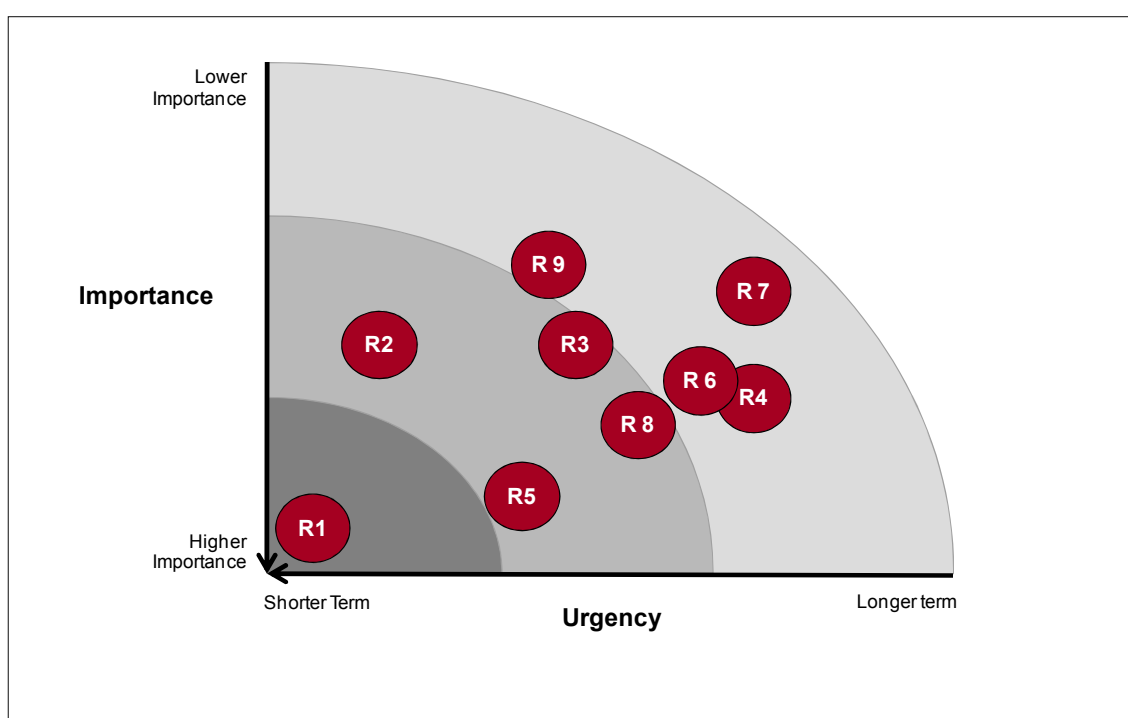
All recommendations are underpinned by the over-arching finding on the usefulness and continuing relevance of the policy commitments contained within the European Consensus. The widely shared interest in strengthening the implementation of the European Consensus provides the common departure point for these recommendations.

The recommendations can be divided into two sections. The first recommendation concerns the process and the means through which EU Institutions and MS will continue to take implementation of the European Consensus forward. An important element of this recommendation is that the EU Institutions and EU MS should collectively decide on specific priorities for action. However, the evaluation itself has also identified a number of emerging issues that are identified as priority themes. These issues constitute the remaining eight recommendations.

Recommendations 2-9 are thus limited to identifying where there is a sound basis for action. It is, however, beyond the scope of the evaluation to provide detailed information on the precise activities. These would need to be developed in a subsequent step.

Each of the nine recommendations are directed towards both DG ECHO and the EU Member State humanitarian agencies, via their representations on COHAFA. The relative priority of the recommendations is presented in the figure below:

Figure 20 – Prioritisation of recommendations



Recommendation 1: On developing an EU Strategic Plan

Replace the Action Plan with a strategic implementation plan that promotes greater Member State involvement, flexible implementation mechanisms and rolling objectives.

Based on Conclusions 1, 2

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation found that the European Consensus Action Plan was used mainly in advancing the European Consensus implementation within DG ECHO. Despite their early involvement in drafting the AP, it was poorly known and used by most Member States, particularly the larger and more established humanitarian donors. A variety of reasons explained the limited ownership by MS, including; uneven participation and commitment to the AP; an excessive number of non-prioritized activities; a one-size-fits-all approach that failed to take account of the differences between MS; poor articulation with other national agency strategic planning processes; and weak monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Despite the limited impact of the AP, there was still a general agreement amongst a wide group of stakeholders (MS and NGOs) on the need for a new tool to agree common actions, but one that addresses the shortcomings of the AP process and content. Such a tool is viewed as important in maintaining the momentum of Consensus implementation.

Suggested Actions: It is proposed that the EC and MS, working within COHAFA, should jointly develop a new implementation vehicle for the European Consensus. This would incorporate elements of related models of operation used by the EU in other sectors in order to:

- increase EU MS engagement,
- improve monitoring and accountability, and
- ensure flexibility in the implementation approaches between the different EU MS.

The EU Institutions and MS are advised to utilize relevant aspects of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) as used under the Lisbon Strategy (2000).⁶⁵ A similar approach – adjusted for the shared competence of humanitarian aid between the Commission and the Member States – could operate along the following lines:

- **Step 1:** COHAFA identifies and defines a limited set of objectives and outcomes to be jointly addressed by the EU MS and EC over an agreed timeframe. The emphasis would be on determining where there is specific added value in common, coordinated, action.
 - A comprehensive programme of simultaneous action covering the entirety of the European Consensus has been demonstrated to be counter-productive.

⁶⁵ In the case of the Lisbon Strategy, OMC provided a framework for cooperation between the Member States on an area falling under Member State competence (in this case, employment policy). Common objectives and monitoring mechanisms were defined by Member States, who were evaluated by peer review, with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm

Therefore, the agreed objectives/outcomes would focus on a subset of the policy objectives defined in the European Consensus.

- Objectives/outcomes should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Rolling objectives will help to ensure the continued relevance of the strategic plan in the light of new and emerging humanitarian challenges, as well as helping to maintain the momentum of Consensus implementation.
- **Step 2:** DG ECHO and COHAFA jointly define a monitoring framework including:
 - The goal of measuring progress at the results level (as opposed to activity level monitoring in the current AP);
 - The definition of common indicators but national and institutionally tailored targets for progress;
 - Commonly agreed monitoring approaches and reporting procedures.
- **Step 3:** Member States and DG ECHO define and implement their own programme of activities to contribute towards achieving the common objectives/outcomes, whilst taking into account the specificities of each Member States' strengths and weaknesses. These activities would preferably be integrated as part of the main national or (for the EC) institutional humanitarian strategic action plans, rather than a standalone Consensus related plan. This will ensure improved ownership of, and accountability for, the European Consensus follow-up. Some MS may wish to work together in a group in order to develop a shared plan and exploit economies of scale.
- **Step 4:** DG ECHO and EU MS should monitor progress through self assessment and periodic peer reviews, using the agreed monitoring framework. For DAC members this should be integrated with the OECD-DAC peer reviews.

The following 8 recommendations constitute areas of substance to be considered during the design of a future implementation vehicle

Recommendation 2: On developing a communication strategy for the European Consensus

Design and implement a communication strategy on the European Consensus, targeting audiences both within the realm of humanitarian aid and audiences outside that circle that are in close interaction with humanitarian aid.

Based on Conclusions 1, 2

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation has shown that awareness of the European Consensus was limited amongst humanitarian actors, and was little known or understood by other stakeholders, which did not favour its implementation.

Suggested Actions: The recommendation is that a simple communications strategy for the European Consensus and its objectives should be designed and implemented. This should be developed for both the EU Institutions and the EU Member States. The communication strategy should cover:

- Communication goals
- Audience
- Main messages
- Forms of dissemination
- Time-lines, roles and responsibilities
- Budget requirements and sources
- Monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan

A communications expert should be contracted to develop the strategy - and information products - on behalf of the EU institutions and EU MS.⁶⁶ This communication strategy would differ from the earlier dissemination efforts in two ways. Firstly, the audience would be wider, and extend beyond the humanitarian community. Secondly, it would be a common strategy to be employed by both the EU Institutions and EU MS.

The key objective should be to promote an understanding of, and agreement with, the commitment to principled humanitarian action. The European Consensus adds value through reaffirming a 'whole of government' commitment to principled action. Therefore the communications strategy should be specifically aligned with the dissemination of this key message and ensuring Government is held to account - both by Civil Society and inter-ministerially.

Therefore, the communication strategy should target selected stakeholder groups where there is the greatest need to promote understanding of the European Consensus. The audience would include both humanitarians and non humanitarians. Direct knowledge of the European Consensus is currently concentrated among a fairly select group of

⁶⁶ It is recommended that an external communications expert is contracted for this task rather than the Commission and Member States drafting a communications strategy in-house. The contractual arrangements would need to ensure that Member State and Commission needs are equally reflected in the consultant's brief. Thus, assuming that the expert would be contracted by ECHO, it is recommended that Member States are included design of the Terms of Reference and in the contractor's reference group.

humanitarian policy-makers, so there is still an opportunity to increase familiarity with the European Consensus among targeted members of the humanitarian community such as field-level advisors. One additional, important target group is non-humanitarians who regularly interact with the humanitarian sector, such as DEVCO and the equivalent development agencies across the EU MS. The European Consensus - given its explicit national endorsement - may indeed be particularly influential in protecting humanitarian principles vis-a-vis other external policy instruments.

However, the value of a wider public information campaign may also be considered within the scope of the communication strategy. The messages communicated should be adapted to different target groups. A public information strategy could be used to raise awareness about the European Consensus, within a wider context of advocacy for the principles and respect of IHL. This might incorporate concrete examples, showcasing EU funded action

Recommendation 3: On protecting and strengthening the institutional independence of humanitarian aid

Maintain the organizational and procedural independence of humanitarian aid in the EU institutions.

Based on Conclusion 3, 9

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation demonstrated differing levels of distinct and independent humanitarian action among the MS and EC Institutions. This was associated with factors including structural independence, clear policy frameworks and appropriate procedures. It was widely noted that DG ECHO acted as the foremost 'guardian' of humanitarian principles owing to its clear independent structure and procedures. This has allowed DG ECHO to consistently advocate for a principled approach to humanitarian action, that is aligned with the commitments of the European Consensus.

Suggested Actions: The Commission should continue to recognize the importance and value of an independent Humanitarian Directorate and Humanitarian Commissioner. Maintaining this degree of independence is viewed as critical in driving forward the Humanitarian Consensus. Any potential reorganization of responsibilities of EU Directorates should not undermine this independence.

Recommendation 4: On ensuring minimum thresholds of humanitarian donorship

Advocate for all EU MS to provide a minimum bi-lateral Humanitarian Aid budget, to underpin their active participation in implementing the European Consensus and to improve overall coverage of humanitarian needs.

Based on Conclusion 8

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation findings demonstrated stark disparities in the levels of humanitarian aid provided by the different EU MS. Despite the commitments of the European Consensus to increase humanitarian aid, many MS (especially among the twelve states which joined the EC in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements) have been unable to establish a meaningful humanitarian aid budget. The evaluation recognizes the inherent diversity of EU MS and EC institutional capacities and circumstances - and the fact that all EU MS do in fact support humanitarian action through contributions to the DG ECHO budget. However, a precondition for each EU MS to implement the European Consensus is logically a bi-lateral budget to support international humanitarian action.

In addition, over the evaluation reference period, the global gap in unmet humanitarian needs has not been closed. In the same period the aggregate European contributions have remained static.

Suggested Actions: A process for establishing targets for the amount of humanitarian aid from MS is proposed. Specifically, agreement on a modest, minimum target for humanitarian aid applicable to all EU MS (as a part of overall ODA contributions) is recommended. The nature and level of these targets will need to be discussed and agreed by the EU MS and EU Institutions. One option is a standard EU-wide percentage target, with benchmarks for progressive attainment of this target over a specified period of time. A second is banded targets to allow for different national circumstances. Thirdly, targets may be self-determined by the EU MS.

Recommendation 5: On strengthening coordination and complementarities

EU Institutions and EU MS should clarify the objectives of coordination and complementarities, the role of DG ECHO, and the relationship with the role of the UN.

Based on Conclusions 4, 5

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation found a degree of inconsistency in terms of how the goal of enhanced coordination and complementarities was understood. These challenges were most acute at country level. It is not always clear that there is agreement on the added value of prioritizing coordination between the EC and EU MS, as opposed to coordination between like-minded humanitarian donors.

Coordination is understood in different ways, the level ranging progressively from (i) no coordination, through (ii) information exchange, (iii) enhanced complementarities of action, (iv) delegated leadership, to (v) common programming. The roles of the EU and UN in operational coordination are not interpreted consistently, despite the clear statements contained within the European Consensus.

Suggested Actions: Firstly the EU Institutions and EU MS should clarify the common objectives of enhanced coordination. Specific questions to be reviewed include:

- The desired objective of such coordination: is it information exchange? - or should it go beyond that?

- Do EU MS wish to delegate specific responsibilities to DG ECHO for leading coordination?
- What are the respective roles and interactions of the EC and UN operational coordination mechanisms?

One outcome may be the identification of different groupings of EU MS and EU institutions, seeking differing levels of coordination.

Secondly, a formal Council on Humanitarian Affairs should be constituted. Thirdly, as a basis for coordinated response to specific crises, a common EU strategic response plan should be developed for each major crisis. This plan would build on existing UN and EC response plans, adapted through inputs from other EU MS at field and HQ level. These plans would identify complementarities and guide coordinated decision making at both HQ and field level.

Fourthly, based on the agreed coordination goals, measures to improve operational coordination at country level may be piloted, *viz.*:

- To enhance complementarities in humanitarian action the EU Institutions and EU MS could trial the co-location of humanitarian advisors in the field. For example, where the EU MS and the EC have specialist advisors in the same country/region, they may consider co-locating the staff (either on a fulltime or part-time basis) in the same office. A good example of this would be where an EU MS operates a humanitarian aid programme and advisors in a country or region with no in-country political representation, they might consider co-locating their humanitarian advisors within DG ECHO offices, building on ECHO's added-value in this regard⁶⁷. The physical proximity of these advisors would enhance information-sharing, common strategies and jointly planned responses.
- Where a greater degree of integration is desired, a format for integrated funding and programming could be piloted. Using the provisions of the new Financial Regulation, EU MS may trial funding channelled via DG ECHO to respond to specific crises. For example, an EU MS without a specialist field advisory presence could use this mechanism to participate directly as part of a coordinated, quality assured, European response.

Recommendation 6: On the consistent application of principles

Devise approaches to ensure that EU Institutions and EU MS have a more consistent approach to upholding humanitarian principles in specific contexts and crises.

Based on Conclusion 9

Basis for the recommendation: There is a consensus among stakeholders on upholding and promotion of humanitarian principles. However, in specific situations the EC and EU MS may struggle to apply these principles consistently. Beyond the overall commitment there is no guidance on how to ensure that humanitarian principles are upheld. This is

⁶⁷ As noted under JC4.4 above, there was a broad consensus among stakeholders on the added-value represented by DG ECHO's global presence and network of field offices.

problematic, since on occasion principles may conflict with each other. For example, where access to a limited part of a crisis-affected area opens up, the responsibility for providing needs-based assistance may create tension with the obligation to remain neutral.

Suggested Actions: These contextual judgements will undoubtedly remain challenging. However, a number of actions may be initiated to reduce the scope for divergent interpretation:

- elaborating a typology of the situations in which the upholding of humanitarian principles has been challenged;
- sharing of best practice, based on documented cases;
- elaboration of criteria to help guiding decision-making in new crises;
- piloting country-level EU humanitarian strategies for major crises (referenced above in Recommendation 5); such strategies would clarify a common EU approach to the application of principles in a specific crisis.

Recommendation 7: On clarifying the objectives of visibility

EU Institutions and EU MS should clarify their objectives in terms of (common) visibility when delivering humanitarian aid.

Based on Conclusion 6

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation found no real commitment to *common* visibility among the EU institutions and MS, and indeed little or no increase in such a common visibility was noted over the reference period.⁶⁸ The objective of visibility requirements was unclear and, on occasion, controversial. It was unclear to stakeholders whether the visibility was targeted on beneficiaries or European taxpayers, and whether a common visibility was to be pursued. The relevance of the methods employed was often questioned, the pursuit of visibility being judged as imperilling the delivery of principled aid in certain contexts, but also as threatening the security of aid workers.

Suggested Actions: The EU Institutions and EU MS should define to what extent they wish to pursue a common visibility when delivering humanitarian aid. This could lead to complementing the European Consensus with a common position on visibility objectives and practices, including:

- the objectives of visibility and hence communication activities;
- who is targeted, and for what purpose;
- the relevance and effectiveness of the methods used;
- the impact on humanitarian access and security;
- the balance between EU and EU MS visibility.

⁶⁸ Although ECHO's strengthened policy to communicate the EU dimension and build EU visibility, published shortly after the evaluation period, is a step forward in this regard.

Recommendation 8: On needs based response

Improve resource allocation on the basis of need, notably with a view to standardizing methods used by EU donors at global level and harmonizing implementing partner approaches at field level.

Based on Conclusions 7, 8

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation found that strengthening needs based response had been a high priority for EU MS and the EC over the reference period. At the HQ level donors have developed internal methodologies to analyze and compare needs between crises and support resource allocations decisions. Whilst there have been efforts to convergence these processes, the comparative prioritization tools used by EU donors are not yet standardized. In addition, a range of other factors, including donors' strategic interests, continue to influence decisions on the funding of humanitarian responses.

At the crisis level donors have supported the development of needs assessment capacities of implementing agencies. Considerable progress is evident on the methodological level. However, standard and joint needs assessment have yet to be fully accepted by implementing agencies.. Stakeholders identified the continuation of needs-based approaches as a key priority for the future.

Suggested Actions: Action is recommended at two levels. First, at HQ level the EU MS and EC should agree a common tool to rank the comparative severity of needs between humanitarian crises. This methodology should be based on harmonizing the existing national and EC approaches. This common analysis would provide a transparent and common basis to determining the allocation of humanitarian aid, which would be combined with other relevant criteria at the national level.

Second, the EU MS and EU Institutions should develop innovative approaches to encourage implementing partners to adopt harmonized needs assessment approaches at country - or crisis - level. This should contribute to an improved comparison of sectoral needs during a crisis. Donors may need to use their influence to incentivize the adoption of the common methodological approaches which have already been developed.

Recommendation 9: On linkages with development assistance

Pursue and enhance coherence between humanitarian and development assistance, whilst recognizing the fundamental differences in approach.

Based on Conclusion 11

Basis for the recommendation: The evaluation found that the most problematic area of coherence was the linkage between humanitarian and development aid. While challenges remain in CivMil and political relationships, the general parameters of the respective mandates are relatively well-defined. Conversely the relationship with development aid remains challenging, a number of practical issues hindering the development of appropriate linkages, including the differences between the implementing partners, their timeframes for action, and their reporting lines.

Critically the inherent fundamental differences in the basic approaches between these instruments were apparent. While development aid stresses a process of alignment with national authorities' policies, humanitarian aid is grounded in the principle of independence.

Action to improve these linkages was widely rated as a high priority. It was noted that efforts to improve them are ongoing through multiple related policy processes, including debates on Resilience, LRRD and DRR.

Suggested Actions: Given the scope of this evaluation and the immediate audience, these recommendations are directed to the humanitarian community. This is not meant to imply that the exclusive or primary responsibility rests with humanitarians. However, more inclusive agendas for collective action may be best addressed through other established joint forums and processes.

Linkages may be improved through measures including:

- standardizing the use of existing EC country level coordination machinery, including regular humanitarian agenda items during meetings of development counsellors;
- reducing the practical barriers to integrated approaches, include establishing multi-annual humanitarian funding;
- clarifying the role of humanitarian action in addressing structural causes of vulnerability; this might include advocacy to development partners on their responsibilities and piloting resilience-building and risk-reduction approaches for scaling-up by development agencies, rather than direct participation in development activities;
- clarifying contexts (e.g. complex emergencies) where the basic differences in approach necessitate maintaining a clear distinction of responsibilities rather than striving for integration.