



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Relief for the victims of the train disaster in Ryongchon

Location of operation: Democratic People's Republic of KOREA

Amount of decision: 1,250,000 euro

Decision reference number: ECHO/PRK/BUD/2004/03000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

On 22 April 2004 an explosion occurred in the railway station of Ryongchon, in the North-West of DPR Korea near to the border with China. According to government reports, the detonations were caused by trains with Ammonium Nitrate and fuel which were not properly handled by the personnel working on the railway station. The blast destroyed all structures in a radius of 500metres and destroyed many buildings in a range of 1200 metres around the explosion. A primary school, a poly-clinic and some other public buildings were entirely destroyed. Many more public facilities were seriously damaged, including the County Hospital, which has to be rebuilt. The water supply and electric power supply network were badly affected. The 1820 destroyed houses rendered their families homeless. 1370 of these families are accommodated with relatives and friends, while 450 families are living in tents.

This accident caused more than 160 deaths, including 76 children, and some 1300 people were injured. On 19 May more than 300 people were still hospitalized in the nearby hospital Sinuiju. The DPR Korean authorities launched an appeal for international aid on Friday 23rd April at 17:00 local time. ECHO took a primary emergency decision and supported the victims since 23rd April through the Danish Red Cross together with the DPR Korean Red Cross by distributing 1000 First aid kits, 28 supplementary medical kits (equipment for hospitals), 2000 kitchen sets, 10000 blankets, 720 000 water purification tablets (3 month supply), 2000 tarpaulins, plastic sheeting and 2000 water containers.

This disaster must be seen in the context of the general situation in DPRK. The vulnerability of the population to such disasters is very high. The reason is that DPRK has never recovered from the loss of its economic strength, which let the country grow massively in the sixties and seventies. With the breakdown of economic relations to its major partners Soviet Union and China in the 1990s, the country lost its ability to maintain its public services. This structural crisis was aggravated by

floods and droughts, which hit DPRK in 1995 and the following years. Agricultural production suffered and indeed the population is chronically malnourished (40% in the 2002/2003 UNICEF/WFP assessment). DPRK became largely dependant on international food aid, although food aid receded since the nuclear standoff and the issue with Japanese abductees in the autumn of 2002. These political standoffs prevent development programs from starting and keep ECHO as the single largest donor facing unmet humanitarian needs. In 2004 ECHO partners are providing treatment for 25 000 life threatened acutely/severely malnourished children. The unsafe water and sanitation provision aggravates the situation further in so far as the population suffers from diarrhoea contributing to a loss of vital nutrients. In order to cope with these challenges, patients would need to be treated, but the public health system is often dysfunctional because there is hardly any supply of drugs, the equipment is old and doctors lack training up to international standards.

As demonstrated before, the victims of the train disaster were already vulnerable before the disaster, but the situation was aggravated further. On the positive side it should be mentioned that self help capacities are better than expected. Thousands of workers have been mobilised from around the country. During the field visit of the assessment mission¹ on 19 May the progress of the works was clearly visible as the whole site was cleared from rubble. However much needed building materials and tools are not available on site. Besides food supplies and items such as windows and roof tiles are not on hand.

This threatens to delay the repair and rehabilitation beyond the rainy season, which would bring further damage to the damaged buildings. Also the situation for the homeless would be aggravated.

A master plan from the government which was expected to be issued by mid May and which has yet to be published has been overtaken by the realities on site. The population, which tries to rehabilitate sufficient shelter before the rainy season sets in, has been more active than ever experienced previously, but clearly will not be able to accomplish this task without external help.

For the above reasons it is proposed to launch a decision for the victims of the train disaster. The decision includes relief and small scale rehabilitation in health, education and some food. The preparation of this decision required intensive coordination with the authorities and other donors, which will be refined in the upcoming weeks.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Health care

Since the Ryongchon county hospital is entirely destroyed, seriously injured patients are treated in Sinuiju some 20km away while Ryongchon County Hospital is closed at present. The authorities have now decided to rebuild the County Hospital and have agreed that an NGO manages the project.

¹ The delegation consisted of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, the NGO German Agro Action and ECHO. The director for DPRK's relation to Europe in the MFA Mr. Kim Chun Guk participated personally.

Early after the disaster, the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC/DEZA) has committed 100 000 CHF equivalent to some Euro 62 000 to ADRA for the reconstruction. The Norwegian Government has made available US\$75 000 to WHO for equipping the new hospital. DPRK authorities have pledged some building materials and labour to the project. Furthermore the government has initiated the reconstruction of the polyclinic, which will allow an emergency health service. However such a polyclinic is not ensuring sufficiently a health service for the county. The project of WHO, SDC, and the Norwegian Government still lacks funding for the physical rehabilitation of the hospital. With WHO as the lead agency for the health sector in the Ryonchon disaster a coherent rehabilitation effort will be achieved.

Food/Food for work

Beyond the destruction of private accommodation, the explosion destroyed and damaged some 10 essential health and education facilities. In order to cope, many thousand people are working on the rehabilitation. However food and tools are in short supply. The tools are particularly important as the majority of the works (for example removing rubble, digging for foundations and mixing of concrete) is done by hand!

Ryongchon is located in the province North Pyongan. This province has been assessed by UNICEF and WFP in autumn 2002, whereby 42,4% of the children were found to be chronically malnourished. Therefore the accident hits an already vulnerable area in terms of food needs. During times of hard work in order to finish the rehabilitation of shelter for the roughly 7500 people rendered homeless, food is particularly needed.

The patients in hospitals are particularly disadvantaged. The desk's field mission in May 2004 confirmed that generally medical facilities do not provide food for their patients. This is the reason why the families have to be cared for by their relatives. The problem is often that the increased nutrition needs of patients are hardly met, while the distance prevents families from delivering food. This is even more valid in this particular case, as many of the relatives of patients are left homeless themselves.

Education

8 educational facilities have been affected; a primary school, the agricultural school, one kindergarten and two nurseries have been entirely destroyed. The Up kindergarten and the secondary and Yangsi School have been seriously damaged, which makes it impossible for children in Ryongchon to attend school and kindergarten. It should be mentioned that in the Up Kindergarten many children were injured when after the first smaller explosion victims were turning instinctively towards the windows. When the second bigger explosion occurred, many children suffered severe facial injuries. The blast stripped the roof tiles, broke the windows and some internal walls collapsed. Meanwhile rain water has further deteriorated the damages. The danger is that the imminent rainy season will further damage walls and interior equipment, if nothing is done. The same applies to the educational equipment inside the schools. Teaching material has been lost. Libraries, bathrooms and kitchens are in a very poor condition and need rehabilitation.

The gymnasium of the school complex was particularly damaged, as the ceiling broke down. This needs to be seen in the context of its poor state even before the accident. The educational sector is coordinated by UNICEF.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

The survivors of the train disaster are in particular need, be it as patients in the hospitals or as homeless. The homeless people qualify for assistance in shelter, food and medical care. As the government is already involved in the shelter sector, ECHO will focus on the rehabilitation of health and child care facilities as well as some food aid.

The county hospital in Ryongchon will be rebuilt in order to re-establish the necessary health services at the earliest point in time. This 150 bed hospital, will serve the 27.000 inhabitants of Ryongchon town as well as the 110,000 people living in the surrounding county.

For the 1930 pupils and children it is of utmost importance to resume a normal life as soon as possible. In order to achieve this, the most effective way is to start school again. The enormous psychological effect of the disaster on the certainly traumatised children will be eased by offering at least in school a normal daily life.

The targeted schools and kindergartens in the town of Ryongchon will be rehabilitated as appropriate.

Finally it is planned to distribute food to the homeless and patients as well as people who participate in food for work projects. Some 10,760 people will require such aid.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

Working in DPRK involves operational difficulties and constraints to basic humanitarian standards in terms of access to the population, possibility of carrying out proper needs assessments and random monitoring and evaluation of the aid delivered. Although improving, in the past the DPRK authorities have often created administrative difficulties for humanitarian agencies operating in the country. It is always possible that this type of obstacle will re-occur, but during this crisis the attitude of the authorities has been very constructive so far.

The reconstruction of the hospital needs to be agreed by the authorities and the other donors; agreement is expected during the first week of June.

The implementation of the Ryongchon educational and health facilities could be hampered by unfavourable weather conditions.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. – Objectives:

The principal objective is:

Assist the victims in the recovery from the explosion in Ryongchon on 22 April

Specific objective:

- Support recovery from the train disaster through emergency rehabilitation and provision of the most needed commodities.

2.2. - Components:

In order to achieve the above objectives the following activities are foreseen.

- Emergency rehabilitation of medical facilities and
- Emergency Food aid to patients and Food for work
- Emergency rehabilitation and equipment of educational facilities

The rehabilitation of the hospital will be limited by the winter with conditions that probably permit reconstruction works only to resume in March 2005. It is therefore highly probable that the hospital will be finalized in 2005. The hospital will be rehabilitated in a way that the involved donors achieve an appropriately sized hospital which permits efficient health care.

Food will be given to health facilities in order to render the recovery of patients more efficient. Furthermore food will be given to the homeless and food for work workers.

Roofs of schools will be rebuilt including the tiles, rafters, purlins and laths would be replaced too. The repair of the windows will be performed with double paned glass in order to ensure good thermal insulation. Sanitary facilities and kitchens are essential for the hygiene and will be rehabilitated too. Damaged equipment will be replaced, where necessary.

3 - Duration foreseen for actions within the framework of the proposed decision:

In summer 2004 the emergency operations such as covering roofs need to be finished. During the rainy season tenders should be completed and afterwards the works can start. It is crucial to end as many of the reconstructions before the winter impedes further construction work. This is relevant for the hospital reconstruction, which requires more time than an emergency decision would offer. As soon as weather in spring 2005 permits, the rehabilitation shall continue to its finalisation.

The duration for the implementation of this decision will be 12 months.

Humanitarian operations funded by this decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 28/04/2004, because some of the measures in the emergency food aid sector have already started. Indeed WFP submitted their appeal for food aid on the 28 April.

Start Date: 28/04/2004

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the decision.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. The procedure established in the Framework Partnership Agreement in this respect will be applied.

4 –Previous interventions/decisions of the Commission within the context of the crisis concerned herewith

List of previous ECHO operations in Democratic People's Republic of KOREA

Decision number	Decision type	2002	2003	2004
		EUR	EUR	EUR
ECHO/PRK/210/2002/01000	Non Emergency	5,550,000		
ECHO/PRK/210/2002/02000	Non Emergency	4,175,000		
ECHO/PRK/210/2002/03000	Emergency	300,000		
ECHO/PRK/210/2002/04000	Non Emergency	1,500,000		
ECHO/PRK/210/2002/05000	Emergency	9,500,000		
ECHO/PRK/210/2003/01000	Non Emergency		7,500,000	
ECHO/PRK/210/2003/02000	Non Emergency		4,500,000	
ECHO/PRK/210/2003/03000	Emergency		5,000,000	
ECHO/PRK/BUD/2004/01000	Non Emergency			9,100,000
ECHO/PRK/BUD/2004/02000	Prim. Emergency			200,000
	Subtotal	21,025,000	17,000,000	9,300,000
	Total	21,025,000	17,000,000	9,300,000

Dated : 25/05/2004

Source : HOPE

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

Donors in Democratic People's Republic of KOREA the last 12 months

1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	50,000	ECHO	9,950,000		
Belgium	0	Other services			
Denmark	2,556,475				
Finland	1,150,000				
France	0				
Germany	3,861,088				
Greece	30,000				
Ireland	900,000				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	700,000				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	0				
United Kingdom	1,539,600				
Subtotal	10,787,163	Subtotal	9,950,000	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	20,737,163		

Dated : 25/05/2004

(*) Source : ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>
Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

The general level of aid by the European Member States has increased over the last year, as can be seen in the table below. Besides ECHO, AIDCO F5 is financing a food

security component. Until 2003, fertilizer has been donated worth 8Mio €, which arrived in June 2004.

According to RELEX a survey the Member States Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Czech Republic, France, Austria, Hungary and Greece have donated 829,000€. Together with ECHO which committed 200,000€ in a primary emergency decision this totals 1,029,000€.

From the non European donors, the United States, Canada and Japan donated together 274,000€ mostly for medical aid. China brought construction material worth 1,2Mio €.

The strongest donor after the Ryongchon disaster was the Republic of Korea with 6.79 Mio€, with the delivery of emergency relief supplies.

For the reconstruction of the Ryongchon county hospital the Swiss Development Cooperation SDC / DEZA has committed 100.000CHF. ECHO and SDC are coordinating over these donations.

The existing CAP has been enlarged by the elements targeting the Ryongchon disaster, which means that ECHO would finance 2004 CAP projects.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - BUDGET IMPACT article 23 02 01

	<i>CE (in Euro)</i>
<i>Initial Available Appropriations for 2004</i>	<i>472 000 000</i>
<i>Supplementary Budgets</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Transfers</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>Total Available Credits</i>	<i>472 000 000</i>
<i>Total executed to date (1/6/2004)</i>	<i>336 580 368</i>
<i>Available remaining</i>	<i>135 419 632</i>
<i>Total amount of the Decision</i>	<i>1 250 000</i>

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objective

Principal objective: <i>Assist the victims in the recovery from the explosion in Ryonchon on 22 April</i>				
Specific objective	Allocated amount by specific objective (Euro)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners²
Specific objective Support recovery from the train disaster through emergency rehabilitation and provision of the most needed supplies	1,250,000	Ryongchon County, North Pyongan province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency rehabilitation of medical facilities and • Emergency Food aid to patients and Food for work • Emergency rehabilitation and equipment of educational facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GERMAN AGRO ACTION - UN - UNICEF - BEL - UN - WFP-B - ADRA Germany
TOTAL	1,250,000			

² Adventistische Entwicklungs- und Katastrophenhilfe e.V. DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE / GERMAN AGRO ACTION, (DEU), UN - WORLD FOOD PROGRAM - LIAISON OFFICE, UNICEF, WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION - ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE

7. Evaluation

Under article 18 of the Regulation the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations."

These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender.

Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

COMMISSION DECISION

of

on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in Democratic People's Republic of KOREA

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid³, and in particular Article 14 thereof,

Whereas:

1. An explosion occurred in the railway station of Ryongchon County, North Phyongan Province April 22, 2004 killing more than 160 people and destroying more than 1800 houses and some 26 public buildings.
2. The local authorities have started the rehabilitation in their own capacity for private accommodation and some basic infrastructure. However essential facilities for health and child care are missing and no relief is foreseen.
3. A request of the DPR Korean authorities for international aid has been sent on 23 April 2004.
4. An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 12 months.
5. It is estimated that an amount of 1,250,000 euro from budget line 23 02 01 of the 2004 general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 135,000 affected people taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of 1,250,000 euro for humanitarian aid operations Relief for the victims of the train disaster in Ryongchon by using line 23 02 01 of the 2004 general budget of the European Union.

³ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

2. In accordance with Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
 - Support recovery from the train disaster through emergency rehabilitation and provision of the most needed supplies

The amount allocated to this objective is listed in the annex to this decision.

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 12 months, starting on 28/04/2004. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from that date.
2. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision “Relief for the victims of the train disaster in Ryongchan, ECHO/PRK/BUD/2004/03000 - 1,250,000 euro”.

Article 3

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives

Principal objective :Assist the victims in the recovery from the explosion in Ryongchon on 22 April	
Specific objectives	Amount per specific objective (Euro)
Support recovery from the train disaster through emergency rehabilitation and provision of the most needed supplies	1,250,000
TOTAL	1,250,000

Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Regulation No.1257/96 are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof⁴.

Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.

Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in Echo's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm

⁴ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, , OJ L248, 16/09/2002 and Commission regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 pf 31/12/2002.