



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23.02.01

Location of operation: All countries

Amount of decision: €13.500.000

Title: Commission Decision to finance technical assistance and operational support for ECHO's activities

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

1. Reminder of the context

The Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) is the Commission service responsible for the management and financing of the Community's humanitarian aid, the conditions for which are laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20.06.96.

In line with article 4 of this regulation, ECHO's mandate includes, in particular, the following activities:

- preparatory and feasibility studies for humanitarian operations and the assessment of humanitarian projects and plans;
- operations to monitor humanitarian projects and plans;
- measures to strengthen the Community's co-ordination with the Member States, other donor countries, international humanitarian organisations and institutions, non-governmental organisations and organisations representing them;
- the technical assistance necessary for the implementation of humanitarian projects.

In this context, such technical assistance in the theatre of operations and crises is of crucial importance as it covers essential tasks such as the identification and evaluation of need and also the supervision of ongoing operations. It also maximises the impact of aid to victims and helps to improve ECHO's capacity to fix priorities for the use of this aid.

To this end ECHO employs about 60 individual experts. The system of individual experts was introduced in 1998 to replace the technical assistants managed at the time by the European Association for Co-operation (AEC).

These experts are recruited through direct employment contracts with the Commission from a list of experts drawn up following a call for applications published in the Official Journal of the EC¹. They are employed to undertake technical assistance missions in various sectors including humanitarian aid and work exclusively in third countries outside the European Union.

The system is co-ordinated by EuropeAid², while the administrative and financial management of the individual experts' contracts has been undertaken since 1 January 2003 directly by ECHO. In this context ECHO undertakes, in particular, the direct payment of its individual experts (salaries) as well as other related expenditure (e.g. insurance, accommodation, security etc.).

This decision is, therefore, intended to cover the expenditure related to the contracts which will be concluded between the Commission and its individual experts as well as other contracts covering, for example, insurance policies, leases (including any deposits) and security contracts linked to the experts.

2. Identified objectives

This Commission decision is intended to meet the objective of maintaining appropriate and effective technical assistance in the field to discharge the following tasks:

- identification and evaluation of the situation, causes, consequences and humanitarian needs as well as the logistical and security constraints relating to access to groups of beneficiaries;
- participation in the selection of projects presented by NGOs and International Organisations and the formulation of recommendations to ECHO Brussels;
- facilitation of the decision-making process (programming of humanitarian aid, strategic planning and participation in the preparation of funding decisions) through the formulation of recommendations to ECHO Brussels;
- co-ordination and supervision of financed operations through field missions;
- participation in the evaluation of the intermediate and final reports submitted by NGOs and International Organisations and the formulation of recommendations to ECHO Brussels;
- gathering and making available information on humanitarian aid and the implementation of visibility actions;
- participation and/or organisation in the field of meetings relating to humanitarian aid;
- optimising collaboration with EC Delegations in order to ensure that humanitarian activities financed by ECHO are as far as possible compatible and/or complementary with other programmes financed by the Commission;

¹ C274/11 of 26.09.2000

² In the sense that ECHO uses the same database as the other Services belonging to the RELEX family

- maximising the impact of humanitarian aid operations financed by the Commission through ECHO.

The preceding Commission decision (ECHO/TPS/210/2003/10000 of 1 July 2003 - €12 million) has, up to 20 April 2004, allowed ECHO to recruit and/or to renew 27 individual experts. This decision is sufficient to cover the recruitment and/or renewal of 9 individual experts and, therefore, to cover ECHO's needs until the end of June 2004.

After this date and until 15 April 2005, it is estimated that about 28 contracts will be renewed with experts already under contract or concluded with new experts.

3. Duration foreseen for actions within the framework of the proposed decision

Given the uncertainties relating to the precise number of individual experts, the length of their contracts and the level of their salaries and allowances, the duration of this action is fixed from the date of adoption of this decision until the respective global commitment has been expended. However, in accordance with the rules relating to global commitments, the maximum duration of this action is fixed at 31 December 2005.

4. Amount of the decision

The amount of this decision has been calculated on the basis of an estimate of ECHO's need to renew existing experts' contracts and to employ new individual experts in the coming months ⁽³⁾.

4.1. – Budgetary impact on budget line 23.02.01

	EC
Initial budget 2004	472.000.000
Supplementary budgets	0
Transfers	0
Total credits available	472.000.000
Credits executed up to 26.04.2004	298.430.368
Balance	173.569.632
Total amount of the decision	13.500.000

4.2. – Budget breakdown:

- Financing the renewal of contracts and/or new recruitments: €13.500.000

⁽³⁾ This amount has been calculated on the basis of an average expenditure by existing individual experts over the year 2003 (monthly average per expert = 15.000 €).

COMMISSION DECISION

of

on the financing of technical assistance and operational support for ECHO's activities

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Communities,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid⁴, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

1. In order to maximise the impact of humanitarian aid for the victims, it is necessary to have an efficient, adequate and effective technical assistance capacity in the field;
2. In order to conform with the provisions of the new Financial Regulation, the Commission is obliged to internalise the management of its individual experts;
3. It is estimated that an amount of €13.500.000 from budget line 23.02.01 of the 2004 general budget of the European Union is required to ensure the continuity of the system of individual experts;
4. In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 27 May 2004.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a budget of €13.500.000 from budget line 23.02.01 of the 2004 general budget of the European Union in order to ensure the financing of ECHO's technical assistance capacity in third countries.
2. In accordance with Articles 2 and 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid, this initiative falls within the framework of the following objective:
 - financing of extra muros technical assistance intended to maximise the impact of aid to victims and to improve the Humanitarian Aid Office's capacity to fix priorities for the use of this aid.

⁴ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision is fixed from the date of adoption of this Decision until the respective global commitment has been expended. In accordance with the rules relating to global commitments, the associated individual commitments (with a maximum duration of three years) will be concluded before 31 December 2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from the date of adoption of this Decision.

Article 3

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission