



**Decision to grant humanitarian aid**

Budget line 23 02 01

Title: Humanitarian aid for the Sahrawi refugees

Location of operation: ALGERIA

Amount of Decision: EUR 9,311,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/DZA/BUD/2005/01000

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**Explanatory memorandum**

**1 - Rationale, needs and target population:**

1.1. - Rationale:

For the last thirty years the majority of Sahrawi refugees have lived divided over four camps located around Tindouf in the south western part of Algeria. This refugee population is to a large extent dependent on international aid.

The most important and permanent needs addressed by this decision concern food, water, sanitation, education and protection.

In view of the frozen political situation, the main objective of this Decision is « to meet the basic needs of the Sahrawi refugees and to enable them to live in conditions that will help create an environment conducive to a peaceful settlement of the Western Sahara conflict ».

Since 1975, Morocco and the Polisario Front have been fighting over the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara.

A conflict settlement plan adopted in 1991 by the UN Security Council provided for a referendum to let voters choose between independence and integration with Morocco. The plan made very little progress until 1997, when, at the instigation of James Baker, UN special envoy for the Western Sahara, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front signed the Houston accords. These enabled MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) to resume the task of identifying voters, which had been suspended in May 1996.

Unfortunately no breakthrough was achieved in the years that followed. In the absence of any agreement on the make-up of the electorate, and faced with 130,000 appeals, the UN proposed a variety of scenarios, none of which achieved consensus among all the parties.

The latest Baker proposal<sup>1</sup> is based on the framework agreement, with a somewhat altered content. The basis of this proposal ([James Baker plan II](#)) is extensive autonomy of the Sahrawis under Moroccan authority, with a referendum on self-determination to be held after 4 or 5 years. The Polisario eventually accepted this new plan, which does not completely reflect its aspirations but gives more guarantees than the previous plan. However, Morocco refused the plan because it would not provide an absolute guarantee of Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara. Although it stated that it was willing to discuss the plan, it refuses to accept any self-determination that might compromise its sovereignty over Western Sahara. The most recent resolution of the Security Council extended the mandate of the MINURSO until 31 October 2005, in the hope that an agreement could be reached by then.

## 1.2. - Identified needs

With ECHO's long experience (1993) in the Sahrawi refugee camps, needs have been identified on the basis of discussions with the partners on the ground, notably the United Nations agencies.

### Food sector

- Need for the provision of basic food supplies in sufficient quantities and variety (cereals, vegetables, oil, sugar and salt).

The Sahrawi refugees are heavily dependent on international aid in all areas, with food aid being the most crucial component. For several years, ECHO contributes by not only providing frequent food supplies, but also through a buffer stock which guarantees the minimum provision of basic food products to the Sahrawi refugee population. The buffer stock has been drawn upon 85 times between July 2001 and May 2005, thereby averting interruptions in the food supply.

While making sure that the basic alimentary needs are covered in quantity, it is necessary to see to the variety of these products so that a satisfactory nutritional balance is achieved.

In addition to covering basic alimentary needs in quantity, it is necessary to ensure a satisfactory nutritional balance through the diversification of these products.

- Need for dietary variety and securing local sources of supplementary food

It is not possible to provide a similar buffer stock for supplementary fresh food products, such as vegetables, eggs and meat. Given the fact that these supplementary food products contribute to a nutritionally balanced diet for refugees (source nutritional report by the High Commissioner for Refugees), this need should be taken into account. Particular attention should be paid to food products related to Ramadan, in light of the importance of this event in the local culture.

Furthermore, livestock projects and/or complementary income generating projects are, if the conditions of identification and selection of beneficiaries turn out to be appropriate, likely to eventually provide a considerable contribution to the household budget of the families concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> Presented on 23.05.03 in the general report of the SG of the UN.

## Water and health

- Need to provide for minimum hygiene standards and access to water.

As well as food, the refugees need minimum hygiene standards and access to water to maintain their health. There is a major lack of toiletries (soap, hygiene kits) and cleaning products, or means of obtaining them.

The major part of the needs, in terms of medicine, should be covered until 2006, but the remaining needs should be taken into account. Moreover, the current infrastructure for drug storage can no longer guarantee that the drugs are kept in good condition. Notably, it is advisable to enhance the cold chain. Some additional medicine and medical supplies could be provided.

Also, it is necessary to reassess the equipment in hospitals, and to work towards their rehabilitation. To conclude, health education and a reform of the sanitation system should be undertaken.

A specific programme for disabled people should also be put in place.

Water has always been a priority for these populations who live in arid and desert areas. The camps Dakhla, Auserd and Ayoune are currently connected to a well, and the water is transported to the camps through pipes. However, water treatment systems on the basis of reversed osmosis are still necessary in the camps, in order to attain the required quality of the water. The camp Smara also relies on a borehole and a pipe system, but the water production is insufficient and therefore a second borehole and a second water treatment system based on purification through reversed osmosis should be constructed. This would also allow supplying the school from 27 February onwards, which continues to be supplied by tanker trucks. The latter are old and maintenance is costly. The construction of a running water system with watering points does not only enhance the living conditions of refugees, but also makes it possible to reduce pressure in terms of maintenance of the whole fleet of trucks, including for food distribution

Furthermore, setting up camps for protracted periods of time leads to increasing health problems related to the lack of a coherent plan for household waste management. In order to contribute to an improved situation, the construction of waste bins and waste disposal areas is envisaged.

## Education

- It is necessary to rehabilitate or reconstruct schools, at daira level

The Sahrawi authorities are particularly concerned about the constantly growing absenteeism and vandalism rates. On the one hand, the teachers would like to receive their salaries and on the other hand, the families do not like to send their children to Sahrawi boarding schools (schools from 9 June and 12 October), insofar as they are too far away and not able to receive their children. The improvement of living conditions at the schools is a necessary step in order to maintain a minimum level of education of the Sahrawi refugee population.

## Protection

- It is necessary to maintain trust and family relations among those separated Sahrawi families who either live in Western Sahara under Moroccan administration or in the refugee camps.

This translates into a Confidence Building Measures programme (CBM), developed by UNHCR. This programme involves establishing contact through mail, telephone and organising family visits by the airplane made available by MINURSO.

### 1.3. - Target population and regions

- Food sector -> total camp population  
Income generating projects (women in Smara)
- Water and sanitation -> total camp population
- Health -> total population (medicine, medical supplies and equipment)  
Disabled people (specific programme)  
Women (hygiene kits)  
Vulnerable families (kitchen sets and blankets)
- Education -> school aged children
- Protection -> selected families among the total population

All the projects will be implemented in the south western part of Algeria, where the Sahrawi refugees are located, with the exception of the protection programme which also concerns Western Sahara under Moroccan administration.

### 1.4. – Evaluation of risks and possible constraints

Considering the outcomes of the audit in 2003, ECHO has come to an agreement with the Sahrawi authorities which shall allow a more efficient implementation of the operations. The implementation of the agreement encountered several difficulties, although, recently, ECHO benefited from enhanced facilities in order to monitor the operations. The Sahrawi authorities should also facilitate the work of ECHO partners in the best possible manner. In the absence of a population census, it is crucial that ECHO, like everywhere else, is able to identify the beneficiaries of aid in order to assure that aid is provided on the basis of the population effectively living in the camps. Particular attention should continuously be devoted to these various aspects of the implementation process. Food aid deliveries will be spaced out in time (each delivery supplying a maximum of three months of food aid as far as basic products are concerned) notably in order to reduce the pressure on the stocks with insufficient remaining capacity, to ensure having stocks with an expiration date as far extended as possible and in order to facilitate monitoring. For the targeted operations, monitoring per geographic area (maps) is foreseen.

The level of aid required will have to be maintained, thereby preserving its neutrality and assuring that the financial interests of the European Union are protected.

In addition, in the context of this more or less forgotten crisis, it is important that as many donors as possible express their solidarity, which will allow for a more diversified provision of aid, in particular regarding food aid and supplementary food products.

## 2- Objectives and components of the proposed humanitarian intervention<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1. – Objectives:

Main objective:

The refugees' basic needs are met.

Specific objectives:

- Maintain a regular and diverse food supply
- Improve the situation of the most vulnerable refugees, including by means of protection activities
- Maintain an ECHO office in Algiers. The office is responsible for analysing project proposals, coordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations funded by the Commission. The office shall provide technical assistance and the necessary logistics for the realisation of the tasks.

### 2.2. – Components:

The proposed assistance will be provided through the usual partners of ECHO and in particular in close cooperation, and to a large extent through, the two main UN agencies concerned: the World Food Program (WFP), whose mandate is to provide basic foodstuffs, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is primarily responsible for non-food products.

#### Maintain a regular and diverse food supply

- Provision of the buffer stock: supply barley and rice (the reserve is calculated on the basis of 9 months for a monthly distribution of 2kg rice and 2kg cereals per person).
- Supply fresh products, including products for the Ramadan: 9 or 10 months of distributions of fresh foods, according to what is available during the season.
- Supply bird feed: 12 months of bird feed (3672 t) for the three existing chicken battery farms.
- Income generating activities: bakery workshop for the women in Smara refugee camp
- Stockbreeding project in Layoune camp

#### Improve the situation of the most vulnerable refugees

- Construct a second borehole and a second reverse osmosis system in Smara camp
- Connect the camp to the water system from 27 February onwards
- Install reverse osmosis systems in Aaïoun and Ausserd.

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<sup>2</sup> Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 are granted in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its implementing rules, in particular Article 168 thereof.<sup>2</sup> (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248, 16/09/2002 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357, 31/12/2002).

Rates of financing: in accordance with Article 169 of the Financial Regulation, grants awarded for the implementation of this Decision may finance actions in full.

The humanitarian aid operations financed by the Commission are carried out by NGOs and Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Contracts (in accordance with the provisions of Article 163 of the rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies on the basis of the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement. The standards and criteria laid down in the standard ECHO framework partnership contract to be met by NGOs and international organisations, and the procedures and criteria for becoming a partner may be found at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm).

- Construct waste bins and waste disposal areas
- Support the cold chains at the central pharmacy, the four regional hospitals and the health centres. Cover the remaining needs in terms of medicine.
- Education regarding health and reform of the sanitation system.
- Deliver hygiene kits for women
- Provide medical supplies for the hospitals
- Rehabilitate schools
- Protect the population by means of CBM: establish contact through mail, telephone and organising family visits by the airplane made available by MINURSO.

#### Implementation monitoring of the operations:

In order to maximise the impact of humanitarian aid for the victims, the Commission will maintain an ECHO office in Algiers. The office is responsible for analysing project proposals, coordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations funded by the Commission. The office shall provide technical assistance and the necessary logistics for the realisation of the tasks.

### **3 - Duration of the Decision:**

The period for the implementation of this Decision will be 16 months.

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

Expenses under this decision are eligible from 1/08/2005 onwards

Start date: 1/08/2005

If implementation of the operations covered by this Decision is suspended for reasons of *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension will not be taken into account when calculating the duration of the Decision.

Depending on how the situation in the field evolves, 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 relevant procedure provided for in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

**4 - Previous interventions/decisions of the Commission within the context of the crisis concerned**

<b>List of previous operations by ECHO in ALGERIA</b>
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		2003	2004	2005
Decision number	Decision type	EUR	EUR	EUR
ECHO/DZA/210/2003/01000	Non Emergency	5,142,500 (1)		
ECHO/DZA/BUD/2004/01000	Non Emergency		8,000,000 (2)	
<b>Sub-total</b>		5,142,500	8,000,000	0
<b>Total 2003/2004/2005:</b>				13.142.500

Date : 12/05/2005  
Source : HOPE

## 5 - Other donors and donor coordination mechanisms

Donors in ALGERIA in the last 12 months					
1. EU Member States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Other	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	0	ECHO	8,000,000		
Belgium	850,000	Other services			
Denmark	0				
Finland	200,000				
France	500,000				
Germany	0				
Greece	0				
Ireland	200,000				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	0				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	0				
United Kingdom	0				
Sub-total	1,750,000	Sub-total	8,000,000	Sub-total	0
		Total	9,750,000		

Date : 12/05/2005

(\*) Source: ECHO 14 Points reports. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>

Empty boxes: no information or no contribution.

## 6 -Amount of Decision and distribution by specific objective:

6.1. – Total amount of the decision: 9,311,000 EUR



## 6.2. – Budget breakdown by specific objective

**Principal objective:** *The refugees' basic needs are met*

Specific objective	Allocated amount by specific objective (EURO)	Probable geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners <sup>3</sup>
Specific objective 1 : Maintain a regular and diverse food supply	4.711.000	Camps in Tindouf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a buffer stock</li> <li>• Supply of fresh products, including products for the ramadan</li> <li>• Construct a warehouse and improve working conditions</li> <li>• Supply bird feed</li> <li>• Stockbreeding project in Layoune camp</li> <li>• Income generating activities for the women in Smara camp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CARITAS – BEL</li> <li>- CISP</li> <li>- CRIC</li> <li>- MPDL</li> <li>- SI</li> <li>- UN - UNHCR - BEL</li> <li>- UN - WFP-PAM</li> </ul>
Specific objective 2 : Improve the situation of the most vulnerable refugees, including by means of protection activities	4.350.000	Camps in Tindouf, Western Sahara under Moroccan administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borehole drilling and connection to the water system from 27 February onwards</li> <li>• Install water treatment systems in Aaioun and Ausserd</li> <li>• Manage household waste disposal</li> <li>• Support the cold chain at the pharmacy</li> <li>• Improve hospital equipment</li> <li>• Health education and reform of the sanitation system</li> <li>• Deliver hygiene kits</li> <li>• Programme for disabled people</li> <li>• Rehabilitate schools</li> <li>• Protect the population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HUNGARIAN INTERCHURCH AID</li> <li>- MDM - GRC</li> <li>- MPDL</li> <li>- TRIANGLE G.H.</li> <li>- UN - UNHCR - BEL</li> </ul>
Specific objective 3 : Maintain an ECHO office in Algiers. The office is responsible for analysing project proposals, coordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations funded by the Commission. The office shall provide technical assistance and the necessary logistics for the realisation of the tasks.	250.000	Algiers		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.311.000</b>			

<sup>3</sup> CARITAS INTERNATIONAL BELGIUM - SECOURS INTERNATIONAL DE CARITAS CATHOLICA, (BEL), CENTRO REGIONALE D INTERVENTO PER LA COOPERAZIONE (ITA), COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI (ITA), MEDECINS DU MONDE, (GRC), MOVIMIENTO POR LA PAZ, EL DESARME Y LA LIBERTAD, (E), Magyar Ökumenikus Szeretetszolgálat (HU), SOLIDARIDAD INTERNACIONAL, (E), TRIANGLE Génération Humanitaire, (FR), UNITED NATIONS - WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES - BELGIUM

## 7 – ASSESSMENT

Under Article 18 of the Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 of the Council of 20 June 1996 regarding humanitarian aid, 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 assessments are structured and organised around essential and horizontal issues which are part of ECHO's annual strategy, such as problems relating to children, the security of humanitarian staff, respect for human rights and equality of the sexes. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include assessments not initially programmed in response to particular events or changed circumstances. More information can be obtained at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm).

## 8 – Budgetary impact article 23 02 01

	EC (en EUR)
Initial allocations available for 2005	476.500.000
Supplementary budgets	
Consolidations from the emergency reserve	100.000.000
Transfers	-3.500.000
<b>Total allocations available</b>	<b>573.000.000</b>
Total implemented to date 20/05/2005	416.745.370
Allocations still available	156.254.630
<b>Total amount of the decision</b>	<b>9.311.000</b>

## COMMISSION DECISION

on

### the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in ALGERIA

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 aid,<sup>4</sup> and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

1. Sahrawi refugees have been living in the desert region of Tindouf (south-west of Algeria) for decades, disposing of only few resources and to a large extent depending on international aid.
2. This prolonged state of dependence, the fact that this is a forgotten crisis, as well as donor fatigue, have lead to an unstable humanitarian situation, characterised in particular by a lack of diversification of aid.
3. Technical assistance must continue to be given in the field in order to maximise the benefit of humanitarian aid for the victims.
4. An assessment of the humanitarian situation has concluded that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the European Union for a period of 16 months.
5. It is estimated that an amount of EUR 9,311,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to the Sahrawi refugees living in camps, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
6. In accordance with Article 17(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996, the Humanitarian Aid Committee delivered a favourable opinion on **14/07/2005**.

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<sup>4</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 9,311,000 for humanitarian aid operations for the Sahrawi refugees under budget line 23 02 01 of the 2005 general budget of the European Union.
2. In accordance with Articles 2 and 4 Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 of the Council, the humanitarian operations will be implemented in the context of the following specific objectives:
  - Maintain a regular and diverse food supply
  - Improve the situation of the most vulnerable refugees, including by means of protection activities
  - Maintain an ECHO office in Algiers. The office is responsible for analysing project proposals, coordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations funded by the Commission. The office shall provide technical assistance and the necessary logistics for the realisation of the tasks.

The amounts allocated to each of these objectives are listed in the annex to this Decision.

*Article 2*

If the humanitarian situation warrants it, the Commission may reallocate financing earmarked for one of the specific objectives listed in Article 1(2) to another such objective provided the reallocated amount represents less than 20% of the overall amount of this Decision.

*Article 3*

1. The implementation of this Decision shall run for a maximum of 16 months, starting on 1 August 2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 August 2005 onwards.
3. If the operations provided for in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension will not be taken into account in calculating the implementation period.

*Article 4*

This Decision shall take effect on

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

*Member of the Commission*

**Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives:**

<b>Main objective: The refugees' basic needs are met</b>	
<b>Specific objective</b>	<b>Amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>
Maintain a regular and diverse food supply	4,711,000
Improve the situation of the most vulnerable refugees, including by means of protection activities	4,350,000
Maintain an ECHO office in Algiers. The office is responsible for analysing project proposals, coordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations funded by the Commission. The office shall provide technical assistance and the necessary logistics for the realisation of the tasks.	250,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,311,000</b>