



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Humanitarian Aid for victims of the Afghanistan crisis and natural hazard in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

Location of operation: ASIA

Amount of decision: EUR 9,209,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/05000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

The fall of the Taliban regime in November 2001 brought about political, economic and developmental processes which are, slowly, yielding results. However, the consequences of 23 years of conflict and five years of drought take time to address. Despite the relative improvement, the absolute level of needs remains high and requires a continued humanitarian engagement. This is well illustrated through ECHO's global needs assessment index (GNA), which ranked Afghanistan third highest for needs in 2004. For 2005 Afghanistan is eighth highest out of 139 countries, an improvement, but still some of the highest needs globally.

Increasing post-humanitarian assistance has enabled a reduction in the extent of humanitarian support. However, the extent to which needs can be addressed by post-humanitarian assistance is linked to the political and security context. While there continues to be significant progress, most notably with the success of the Presidential elections, this process remains fragile. Further, to continue this progress in 2005 means overcoming several significant and inter-related problems, notably disarmament and demobilisation, addressing poppy production and opium trafficking, ensuring successful Parliamentary elections (now scheduled for September).

While this fragile progress continues, and post-humanitarian assistance is having a significant impact on the overall population, humanitarian assistance remains necessary for the most vulnerable, especially returning refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and their host communities within Afghanistan. The absence or low level of state structures and services across wide areas of Afghanistan, compounded by 5 years of drought, means that many communities in Afghanistan have exhausted their traditional coping mechanisms and are consequently very vulnerable to external shock factors. Under some circumstances it will be

necessary to assist such communities' recovery now in order to avoid them slipping into a situation of humanitarian crisis. This decision also foresees the probability of some response to the needs of Afghan refugees and host communities in areas of high refugee density in Pakistan and Iran, where this goes beyond the mandate of UNHCR and the ECHO support afforded to them under the first decision of 2005.

In addition, the low coping capacity of much of the population in the face of frequently occurring natural disasters remains a further aspect of vulnerability. Such assistance in response to natural disaster would also apply in the event of a natural disaster in Pakistan or Iran where ECHO partners are present - and thus have an emergency humanitarian aid capacity in situ.

Consequently, the extent of remaining humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and amongst refugee populations in Iran and Pakistan, and the insufficient capacity of post-humanitarian instruments to face these needs, requires that a humanitarian engagement is maintained for the most vulnerable.

The ongoing 2004 Global Plan for EUR 35.16 million, which ends on 30/9/05, continues to address such humanitarian needs; however, where projects funded under this Global Plan have now finished but needs remain, additional resources are required to ensure a continued coverage of basic needs. To some extent, these have been addressed through Decision ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/01000 for EUR 10,791,000 million from 1/1/05 – 30/6/06 in the more basic recurrent aspects of humanitarian assistance and support (as for example registration of refugees, logistic support). As far as more specific needs are concerned, the present Decision has taken stock of progress so far, in a still fluid situation, to identify where continued interventions remain justified, and where new interventions are needed. It also includes a capacity to respond to natural disasters, for example the floods and landslides resulting from the extreme 2004-2005 winter.

The funding for the technical assistance field offices is required to allow for the continued monitoring of the ongoing 2004 Global Plan, as well as the two new Decisions in 2005.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Many of the most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan are recently returned and returning refugees/displaced, and their host communities. The population of Afghanistan is estimated at 22 million (source UNDP, 2003¹). Since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, an estimated 3.5 million Afghans, or over 15 % of the population, have returned to their homeland. In spite of these returns, there is still a large caseload of Afghans in Iran and Pakistan, resulting from several waves of exile, which is estimated by UNHCR to be approximately 4 million. In 2004, 746,000 people have returned assisted by UNHCR, 376,000 from Pakistan and 370,000 from Iran. In 2005, UNHCR expect a further 700,000 to return, 300,000 from Pakistan and 400,000 from Iran.

In addition to the refugee return, IOM/UNHCR data estimates that there are still 167,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the country, with the major concentrations in the southern regions. Many of these people are Pashtuns, displaced from homes in the north in the aftermath of the military campaign against the Taliban government in 2001 and 2002, who still fear to return because of their real or perceived links to the Taliban by the majority populations of other ethnic groups which dominate in the areas of origin. The other significant group are

¹ UNDP, Human Development Report, 2003.

Kuchi nomads displaced by drought, for some of whom a return to pastoralism seems increasingly infeasible.

The basic needs of returnees – whether refugees or IDPs – are for somewhere to live, and a livelihood to support this. So the large return flows into a country already struggling to accommodate a high rate of demographic growth, and following 5 years of drought, are putting enormous pressure on dwindling resources of land and water. In many rural communities a combination of increased population and traditional inheritance customs have led to the subdivision of landholdings into smaller and smaller areas, to the point at which even subsistence agriculture is no longer sufficient on its own to assure family survival. This has encouraged seasonal migration and swelled the ranks of those living on the margins of the major cities, principally Kabul, and is one of the reasons why so many returnees choose to stay in the cities, despite the prevailing poor living conditions.

To an increasing extent, the needs of returnees and their host resident populations are addressed by the many actors, civil and military, involved in ensuring the increasing progress in the transition to rehabilitation and development. However, due to the constraints of the difficult security and logistics environment, the extent to which this is achieved varies in different areas, as is the extent to which vulnerable populations benefit. Further, where access improves, or where natural disaster strikes, new needs for humanitarian response arise. For example, following the most severe winter in decades, isolated communities are only now becoming accessible and it is becoming evident that with the melting of the winter snows, floods and landslides are creating urgent humanitarian needs.

In reducing and rationalising the humanitarian response in Afghanistan in line with needs and the extent to which these are met by other actors, the main areas of unaddressed needs that arise are as follows:

Potable water, sanitation and hygiene education. In both urban and rural areas, in addition to the impact of five successive years of drought on the resident populations, the shortage of potable water is a major problem, particularly where the populations using these resources continue to increase rapidly with the arrival of returnees. Increasing populations are requiring water from sources where yields are diminishing. Further, increasing populations, and population density, is increasing sanitation problems. As a result, rapid humanitarian interventions are needed to ensure a minimum level of potable water and sanitation. High incidence of mortality and morbidity are directly linked to lack of potable water, sanitation and hygiene education. For example, in Pul-e-Khumri, in areas with as much as 60 % or more recent returnees, the prevalence of diarrhoeal morbidity for under 5 year olds can be as high as 36 % in unassisted areas, and reduced to below 10 % through basic water and sanitation assistance; while under 5 year old mortality in unassisted areas can be as high as 0.95 deaths/10,000/day², this can be more or less eliminated through water and sanitation assistance.

Equally, the provision of shelter remains a priority need for the most vulnerable amongst the returnees. This would be provided on a self-help basis (distribution of shelter kits), with the promotion of anti-seismic construction techniques and materials, which are affordable and embedded in the local culture.

Following the years of war, compounded in many areas by the years of drought, the capacity to cope with the impact of localised natural disasters such as flooding and landslides is often very poor. In many areas, such as Kabul, the populations have been hit hard by winter, and reports

² Aga Khan Development Network Afghanistan

of localised flooding which began in February 2005 continue to come in from across the country. Relief for the most vulnerable is still needed and this should be accompanied by disaster preparedness support to improve the coping capacities.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

Those with highest vulnerability throughout Afghanistan, notably recently returned and returning refugees/displaced, and their host communities, with over 1,000,000 identified as needing emergency relief or basic livelihood support. In addition, some specific actions are foreseen for most vulnerable refugees in Pakistan and Iran, such as protection, or in cases of the forced displacement of refugees.

Those with unaddressed acute emergency needs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, notably as a result of natural disasters such as flooding, landslides, drought or earthquake.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

Security is the major constraint affecting all humanitarian projects in Afghanistan. Key factors to be considered in this analysis are: the nature and development of local electioneering for the parliamentary elections due to take place in September; the development of the poppy eradication campaign which is to be a major focus in 2005; and the progress of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR). The degree of insecurity varies between different regions: large parts of the South and the South-East are, currently, "off limits". According to IRC/ANSO, the ECHO funded security advice service for humanitarian aid agencies, while 13 aid workers were assassinated in 2003, this rose to 24 in 2004. Already in 2005, 4 aid workers have been assassinated.

There are several factors of insecurity in Afghanistan which affect the implementation of humanitarian operations. Some, like common criminality, general unlawfulness and (armed) competition between local commanders or warlords, and violence related to narcotic production and trafficking, indirectly affect humanitarian aid operations and can cause delays and interruptions in the operations. Another significant threat comes from anti-Western and anti-government armed groups who consider aid workers as the West's and the Government's extended arm and as "enemies of Islam". Specific threats by such groups against aid agencies and their staff are commonplace, and in the past violent attacks have occurred causing deliberate death and injury.

In Afghanistan, the "insecurity frontier" is a moving one. In areas that had previously been considered secure, for example Badghis Province in the west, the aid community witnessed the deplorable murder of 5 Medecins Sans Frontieres workers in June 2004. In addition, western military funded 'hearts and minds' interventions may lead humanitarian agencies to reorient their activities in order to safeguard their neutrality and impartiality. This is particularly the case where soldiers providing such aid are not clearly identified as military (for example through wearing uniforms, or clearly marked vehicles).

In Pakistan, the main risk is insecurity in the Western part of Pakistan (so-called tribal areas), bordering Afghanistan, where there are regular anti-Taliban and anti-Al-Qaeda raids by various units of Pakistan security forces. In addition there has recently been a major upsurge in violence in Baluchistan.

In Iran, the main risk is an increase in pressure by the host government to repatriate Afghans to their home country, to the extent that concerns have been raised about the prospects for the continuation of the tri-partite agreement.

Further, natural disasters such as earthquakes, droughts, landslides and flooding may both constrain some interventions through factors such as access limitations, while requiring rapid reorientation of other interventions to meet new priority needs.

Finally, ECHO's international NGO partners have raised grave concerns at the substance and process of the proposed new NGO law in Afghanistan. Depending on how this law is implemented, ECHO's NGO partners consider that this could become a constraint for them to function effectively in Afghanistan. Equally, EC and EU representations have been made to the Afghan government, at the highest levels, to avoid this new law having such negative consequences for the provision of humanitarian aid in Afghanistan.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. – Objectives:

Principal objective :

Address humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran of victims of the Afghanistan crisis and natural hazard.

Specific objectives :

- Emergency relief and basic livelihood support to most vulnerable victims of Afghan crisis/natural hazard.
- Support services for humanitarian agencies.
- To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.

2.2. - Components:

As the criteria is need, and given the range of other actors that can become involved at short notice in addressing areas where there is high vulnerability, the response will be applied in those pockets of high need unaddressed by other actors. This will require flexibility in implementation over and above the logistic and security constraints. The response will focus on pockets of high vulnerability in both rural and urban areas and include the following main elements : provision of drinking water and sanitation, together with hygiene education; shelter and emergency response. In addition, and in view of the volatile security context, security advice will be provided.

The major component remains the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene education in both urban and rural areas across the country. Shelter support remains a significant need amongst returning refugees and IDPs leaving camps to return home. ECHO would assist only the most vulnerable. Another target group are the nomadic Kuchi, displaced to IDP camps by years of drought, who will be unlikely to be able to return to a traditional lifestyle, and for whom resettlement may be the only option. An emergency response capacity is also envisaged in order to be able to respond to relatively small-scale, localised crises such as the floods and landslides which are now occurring as a result of snow-melt and higher than average spring rainfall. This situation has also highlighted the need for greater mainstreaming of disaster preparedness where possible in emergency response. In addition to providing much needed direct assistance in these sectors, such interventions also ensure a humanitarian presence to

continue to assess the humanitarian situation, often in remote areas with few other actors, and to ensure an emergency response capacity in other humanitarian sectors when and where required. Through the presence and activity of ECHO's partners in these sectors and a geographical coverage of the areas of greatest vulnerability, ECHO will be in a position to monitor a range of humanitarian indicators; such as health, nutrition and food security; so that a timely supplementary response can be developed should the need arise.

An important part of such a humanitarian monitoring and response capacity is access. This requires accurate security information. ECHO proposes to continue its support for the provision of a service to provide security information, analysis and advice for humanitarian aid agencies through IRC/ANSO. As noted in the Risks and Assumptions section, more aid workers were assassinated in 2004 than in 2003. With the situation in Afghanistan remaining potentially highly volatile, notably in relation to the poppy eradication, disarmament and demobilisation and the Parliamentary elections, such security advice remains as essential as ever.

In Afghanistan, gender is the major cross-cutting issue. The design of ECHO funded projects has to ensure that women benefit fully from the assistance provided, and in some cases projects will be specifically targeted at ensuring the livelihood of the women amongst the most vulnerable, including protection for women and their children.

In areas of Pakistan and Iran where refugees have been present for many years, this decision foresees the possible need for some assistance above and beyond that already offered by UNHCR. This could take the form of the provision of basic services, such as drinking water, and/or some activities aimed at protection and support to return, possibly including skills training where appropriate for the most vulnerable.

In order to maximize the impact of the humanitarian aid for the victims, the Commission will maintain ECHO support offices located at Kabul and Islamabad. These offices will appraise project proposals, co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of humanitarian operations financed by the Commission. These offices will provide technical assistance capacity and the necessary logistics for the achievement of their tasks.

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

The duration for the implementation of this decision will be 18 months.

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

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01/05/2005. This will facilitate both the continuation of some ongoing assistance ending its present phase in April, and responses to the floods and landslides which are starting as the snows melt.

Start Date: 01/05/2005.

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 Conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

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

List of previous ECHO operations in AFGHANISTAN/IRAN/PAKISTAN				
Decision number	Decision type	2003 EUR	2004 EUR	2005 EUR
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/04000	Non Emergency	36,200,000		
ECHO/PAK/210/2003/01000	Non Emergency	1,000,000		
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/13000	Non Emergency	11,530,000		
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/18000	Non Emergency	6,270,000		
ECHO/IRN/210/2003/01000	Prim. Emergency	2,300,000		
ECHO/-AS/BUD/2004/01000	Global Plan		35.160.000	
ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/01000	Non Emergency			10,791,000
	Subtotal	57,300,000	35,160,000	10,791,000
	Total (y-2)+(y-1)+(y)		35,160,000	10,791,000

Dated : 24/04/2005
Source : HOPE

The present decision will complement Decision ECHO/-AS/BUD/2004/01000, and Decision ECHO/-AS/BUD/2005/01000 (for which all funds have been committed/earmarked).

As background: ECHO's involvement reached a peak in 2002 due to: the drought; high numbers of refugees/returnees; and the greater access afforded after the removal of the Taliban. As humanitarian needs have lessened and as greater rehabilitation, reconstruction and development funds have come on line ECHO has implemented a policy of gradual withdrawal. In 2002 ECHO disbursed EUR 73 million, followed by EUR 55 million in 2003 (excluding the Bam earthquake response of EUR 2.3) and EUR 35.16 million in 2004 (excluding the Bam earthquake response of EUR 6.2 M). For 2005 the initial prospective budget was EUR 20 million, foreseen to be distributed in two equal installments of which this decision is the second installment. Two decisions rather than one are due to: reduced security; potential political instability; and less articulation of needs by partners at the beginning of the year with access restricted by the extent of the winter. The first decision which was adopted on 12/04/05 focused on the more predictable essential core services and needs, such as UNHCRs ongoing support to refugees in Iran and Pakistan, and to returnees in Afghanistan, which had been supported under the Global Plan in 2004. This second decision follows analysis with partners of the extent of needs and access in 2005 and into 2006.

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

Donors in AFGHANISTAN/IRAN/PAKISTAN the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	0	ECHO	46,593,857		
Belgium	1,450,000	Other services	206,000,000		
Denmark	6,263,495				

Finland	1,000,000				
France	0				
Germany	19,214,720				
Greece	100,000				
Ireland	250,000				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	6,998,345				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	1,190,000				
United Kingdom	0				
Subtotal	36,721,560	Subtotal	252,593,857	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	289,315,417		

Dated : 24/04/2005

(*) Source : ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>

Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

Within the EU, in order to ensure effective LRRD, regular meetings are held at both field and Brussels levels with the services of DG RELEX and AIDCO, to ensure that all EU interventions are coordinated. With deconcentration³, the focus of operational co-ordination of the intervention is increasingly shifting to the field level and regular co-ordination meetings between ECHO and the Delegation are taking place, as there are LRRD potentials in a number of sectors. For this reason, personnel from the EC delegation were invited to have input into the proposal appraisal process for this decision, and in several sectors of activity which are better suited to long-term funding, agreement in principle has been reached regarding a transition to the Delegation's portfolio.

In addition to the interface between humanitarian aid and development assistance, ECHO is also involved in co-ordination between the civilian/humanitarian community and the military. In Afghanistan, the international military forces are involved in providing assistance (through the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and outside that framework) and are a key interlocutor on security issues. ECHO attends the meetings organised by United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) in this regard, advocates the respect of a number of ground rules by the military, notably the non engagement in "humanitarian" forms of assistance and the clear identification of the military as soldiers (constant use of uniforms, use of clearly marked vehicles, etc.), and, when appropriate, raises concerns regarding possible blurring in the attitudes or activities of the military through the appropriate channels.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 9,209,000

³ Deconcentration refers to the devolution of project management from Commission headquarters to Commission Delegations in recipient countries. This "deconcentration" affects development assistance and not humanitarian aid.

6.2. – Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>Address humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran of victims of the Afghanistan crisis and natural hazard.</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁵
Specific objective 1: Emergency relief and basic livelihood support to most vulnerable victims of Afghan crisis/natural hazard.	7,799,000	Primarily Afghanistan countrywide, but also Iran and Pakistan.	Primarily Potable water; sanitation; hygiene education; shelter; emergency response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACF - FRA - ACH- ESP - AGA KHAN - CARITAS - DEU - CROIX-ROUGE - CICR- ICRC - CH - CROIX-ROUGE - FICR-IFCR-CH - GERMAN AGRO ACTION - INTERSOS - IRC - UK - MEDAIR UK - MISSION OST - DNK - OCKENDEN INTERNATIONAL (OI) - SAVE THE CHILDREN - UK - TROCAIRE - ZOA

⁵ ACCION CONTRA EL HAMBRE, (ESP), ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM, (FR), AGA KHAN FOUNDATION (United Kingdom), COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE (CICR), DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE / GERMAN AGRO ACTION, (DEU), DEUTSCHER CARITASVERBAND e.V, (DEU), FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES SOCIETES DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT ROUGE, INTERSOS , International Rescue Committee UK, MEDAIR UK (GBR), MISSION OST, OCKENDEN INTERNATIONAL (GBR), THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (GBR), Trocaire, (IRL), ZOA-Vluchtelingen zorg

Specific Objective 2 : Support services for humanitarian agencies.	850,000	Afghanistan countrywide	Security information, analysis and advice.	- IRC - UK
Specific objective 3 : To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations	560,000	Kabul, Islamabad		
TOTAL	9,209,000			

7 –Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning 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 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.

8 –Budget Impact article 23 02 01

	CE (in EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2005	476.500.000
Supplementary Budgets	
Reinforcement from Emergency aid reserve	100.000.000
Transfers Commission	- 3.500.000
Total Available Appropriations	573.000.000
Total executed to date (as at 20/5/2005)	416.745.370
Available remaining	156.254.630
Total amount of the Decision	9,209,000

COMMISSION DECISION

of

on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in ASIA

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 aid⁶, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Over 23 years of violent conflict and internal struggle in Afghanistan and five years of drought has led to millions of people losing their livelihoods and assets and widespread levels of food insecurity.
- (2) Over 3 million people have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran since the beginning of 2002, with a further 700,000 expected to return during 2005, putting immense pressure on resources and opportunities for survival for the most vulnerable.
- (3) There are still more than 160,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan, and the remaining refugees in Pakistan and Iran continue to be in need of humanitarian support.
- (4) The area including Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan suffered an unusually harsh winter after years of drought with resulting localised natural disasters such as floods and landslides among populations with very low coping capacities.
- (5) In order to maximise the impact of humanitarian aid for the victims, it is necessary to maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field.
- (6) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 18 months.
- (7) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 9,209,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over 1,000,000 vulnerable returnees and host communities in Afghanistan, vulnerable refugees in Pakistan and Iran, and victims of natural disaster in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, taking into account the available budget, other donors' interventions and other factors.
- (8) In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 1 July 2005.

⁶ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

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 EUR 9,209,000 for humanitarian aid operations for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran for victims of the Afghanistan crisis and natural hazard, by using line 23 02 01 of the 2005 general budget of the European Union.
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 objectives:
 - Emergency relief and basic livelihood support to most vulnerable victims of Afghan crisis/natural hazard.
 - Support services for humanitarian agencies.
 - To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations.

Article 2

The Commission may, where this is justified by the humanitarian situation, re-allocate the funding levels established for one of the objectives set out in Article 1(2) to another objective mentioned therein, provided that the re-allocated amount represents less than 20% of the global amount covered by this Decision and does not exceed EUR 2 million.

Article 3

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 18 months, starting on 1 May 2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 May 2005.
3. 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.

Article 4

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Annex: Breakdown of allocations by specific objectives

Principal objective : Address humanitarian needs in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran of victims of the Afghanistan crisis and natural hazard.	
Specific objectives	Amount per specific objective (EUR)
Emergency relief and basic livelihood support to most vulnerable victims of Afghan crisis/natural hazard.	7,799,000
Support services for humanitarian agencies.	850,000
To maintain a technical assistance capacity in the field, to assess needs, appraise project proposals and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of operations	560,000
TOTAL	9,209,000

Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof.⁷

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

⁷ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16/09/2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31/12/2002.