



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Continuation of Humanitarian Air Service - ECHO Flight

Location of operation: Horn of Africa/Eastern Africa and Central Africa

Amount of Decision: EUR 2,000,000

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

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale:

Since its establishment in 1994, ECHO Flight has become a vital partner to most humanitarian NGOs operating in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, transporting humanitarian personnel and supplies to dozens of remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the outside world.

In early February 2004, the operator of the ECHO Flight service, a South African Aviaton company, filed for liquidation which led to a disruption of the flight service. Ever since the access to EU funded projects in Somalia has been compromised with NGOs having either to rely on expensive private charter or resort to dubious means of air transport, i.e. khat flights (private planes transporting drugs into Somalia and occasionally offering seats and cargo space to other passengers). In parallel, expatriate personnel in the field has been reduced, thereby compromising supervision of aid programmes.

For **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** most of the former ECHO Flight network has meanwhile been re-established, at least temporarily, by contracting the services of Aviation sans Frontières (France) and those of the World Food Programme. This temporary service is to run until the end of June but will need to be extended in the absence of a definitive solution.

For **Somalia**, the volatile security situation and the difficulty to identify implementing partners who are willing and capable of establishing an air service have, so far, prevented ECHO from re-establishing a temporary humanitarian air service.

Furthermore, whilst an international tender had been published with a view to replacing the insolvent holder of the ECHO Flight contract, the delays in the evaluation of the bids and the lead up time to the start-up of an air service makes the resumption of the ECHO Flight service into its former level of operation by 1 July 2005 very unlikely.

With a view to re-establishing an interim service in Somalia a NGO partner has now been identified. This offers the prospect of providing a humanitarian air service in both DRC and Somalia for the next couple of months, until a definitive solution can be found.

1.2. - Identified needs:

The provision of ECHO Flight services, including the choice of destinations, is based on concrete needs for humanitarian air transport. As a basic operating principle, ECHO Flight services do not duplicate similar humanitarian air services or compete with sustainable commercial airlines offering safe and reliable humanitarian air transport capacity at acceptable cost.

In both of ECHO Flight countries of operation (Somalia and DRC), where overland travel is dangerous and time consuming, or even impossible due to security constraints or absence of infrastructure, the need for ECHO Flight services remain.

In **Somalia**, notably its central and southern part, there is no alternative to ECHO Flight. Sustainable safe and reliable local services that could possibly replace ECHO Flight do not exist. The use of the Khat-Flights, known for their disregard of any air safety standards, is clearly unacceptable. The UN Co-ordinated Air Services (UNCAS) only covers a reduced route network and provides a lower priority to International NGOs, which have been the main customers of ECHO Flight.

In **DRC**, there is currently no safe and reliable linkage between main destinations such as Goma, Kisangani, Mbandaka, Boende and Kinshasa or effective servicing of destinations of key humanitarian concern. While in principle, MONUC has the capacity to serve such destinations, only a few seats are made available for humanitarian NGOs on an occasional basis. Sustainable and safe commercial alternatives do not exist. Following the significant improvement of the security situation in DRC, ECHO has, also in geographic terms, expanded its engagement in the country. This has created an additional need for air transport as many of the locations of ECHO funded projects can only be reached by air.

The use of ECHO Flight services enables humanitarian NGOs to reduce inventory stockpiles at field locations which often run the risk of confiscation or theft by armed bandits or local militia. It increases productivity of field personnel due to the ability to plan rest and recreation rotations at an appropriate frequency; and it increases the quality of humanitarian operations as supervisory visits can be conducted more frequently. In addition, an airborne stand-by evacuation capacity remains for many agencies a *sine qua non* for continuing project implementation.

Until disruption in February 2004, ECHO Flight was serving some 100 different NGOs and UN agencies implementing about 150 humanitarian and post-emergency development projects, mainly international NGOs but also members of the UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent families, with an overall project value of more than EUR 200 million, thereby making an active and considerable contribution to the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to an estimated 7 million people in need.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

Under a temporary arrangement it is envisaged to resume a humanitarian air service in Somalia through a commercial aviation company in replacement of the ECHO Flight service, and to continue the interim operation in DRC. Although the fleet of aircraft will be reduced for Somalia it is still planned to serve all projects mentioned under point 1.2, albeit at a reduced frequency.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

Despite of its fragile nature, the peace accord in **DRC** has, by and large, allowed humanitarian NGOs to work throughout the area served by the ECHO Flight network. Whilst there is much hope that the positive development continues beyond the national parliamentary elections scheduled for later this year there is, however, no guarantee that favourable conditions will prevail.

Somalia remains the major challenge for the provision of a humanitarian air service. Over the past couple of months the security situation has deteriorated further. Flying into Somalia in support of humanitarian and rehabilitation operations requires an implementing partner with good knowledge of the situation on the ground and a proven ability to operate in a volatile security environment.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed.

2.1. - Objectives:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Principal Objective: | To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity. |
| Specific Objective: | To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity. |

With a view to ensuring full implementation of this decision and achievement of its objectives, and taking into account the very short implementing period of the decision, the implementing NGOs will be authorised to award contracts under a single bid procedure after prospecting the market.

2.2. - Components:

The main task of the envisaged humanitarian flight service temporarily replacing the disrupted ECHO Flight service consists of the carriage of humanitarian personnel and cargo. In addition, the service must be available to perform emergency security and medical evacuations on an *ad-hoc* basis, and for a pouch system.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision.

The duration for the implementation of this decision will be **6** months.

Expenditure under this decision shall be eligible from 15 May 2005.

Start date: 15 May 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 humanitarian aid operations.

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. In this respect the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis.

List of previous ECHO operations in				
Decision number	Decision type	2003 EUR	2004 EUR	2005 EUR
ECHO/TPS/210/2003/02000	Non-emergency	8,400,000		
ECHO/FLI/BUD/2004/01000	Non-emergency		11,000,000	
	Subtotal	8,400,000	11,000,000	0
	Total (y-2)+(y-1)+(y)	8,400,000	11,000,000	0

Dated : 02/05/2005

Source : HOPE

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

In DRC the flight service provided by WFP is co-funded by ECHO. In Somalia the UNCAS flight service which is funded by other donors is available to all humanitarian agencies but covers only a limited number of locations in the country.

6 - Amount of Decision and distribution of funding by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 2,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity</i>			
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Potential partners¹
Specific objective 1: To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity	2,000,000	Horn of Africa, Eastern Africa and Central Africa	- ASF - ASF-BELGIUM - UN - WFP-PAM
TOTAL:2,000,000			

¹ AVIATION SANS FRONTIERES, Aviation sans Frontières Belgique/Piloten zonder Grenzen België, UNITED NATIONS - WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

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 Credits	573,000,000
Total executed to date (as at 02/05/2005)	401,036,370
Available remaining	171,963,630
Total amount of the Decision	2,000,000

COMMISSION DECISION

of

**on the financing of emergency humanitarian operations from the general budget of the
European Union in
Horn of Africa/Eastern Africa and Central Africa**

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 aid², and in particular Article 14 thereof,

Whereas:

1. In vast parts of the Horn of Africa/Eastern Africa and Central Africa access by road to humanitarian, rehabilitation and development projects is impossible because of infrastructure conditions and security risks;
2. As a consequence, there is a need for a safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective air transport capacity notably for relevant EU funded projects in the regions concerned;
3. In emergencies such air transport capacity should also be made available in other parts of the world with a view to delivering urgent humanitarian aid;
4. The ECHO Flight service which covered the needs for humanitarian air transport in the Horn of Africa/Eastern Africa and Central Africa was unexpectedly disrupted, and a solution for a temporary replacement has to be found, urgently;
5. Humanitarian aid operations financed by this Decision should be of a maximum duration of 6 months;
6. It is estimated that an amount of EUR 2,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions 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 EUR 2,000,000 for the continuation of humanitarian air services by using line 23 02 01 of the 2005 general budget of the European Union.

² OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6
ECHO/FLI/BUD/2005/01000

2. In accordance with Article 2 (c) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:

- To provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 6 months, starting on 15 May 2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 15 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 humanitarian aid operations.

Article 3

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission