

COMMISSION DECISION

of [...]

on the financing of humanitarian actions from the general budget of the European Communities in occupied Palestinian territory (ECHO/PSE/BUD/2008/01000)

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 aid¹, and in particular Article 2 and Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- Approximately 120,000 farmers in the occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the West Bank Jordan Valley, were hit by a severe frost in early 2008 that destroyed between 70 to 100% of open fields - thousands of farmers consequently lost their main source of income in the context of an already protracted economic and financial crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory.
- Furthermore, almost the entire population of 4 million Palestinians residing in the occupied Palestinian territory have been affected by a severe drought in recent months. Especially vulnerable households have become exposed to extreme water shortages with grave implications on their personal and domestic water use. In the context of an already chronic lack of water, the drought has also had severe consequences on households dependent on rain-fed agriculture and animal herding.
- Both the frost and drought has affected in particular the Bedouin communities, farmers, animal herders and marginalized communities in Area C² of the West Bank who are struggling to meet their minimum water needs to secure their livelihoods. Many households have completely exhausted their coping mechanisms to secure minimum water and fodder for their livestock.
- An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid actions should be financed by the Community for a period of 18 months;
- It is estimated that an amount of EUR 1,500,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to approximately 100,000 vulnerable Palestinians gravely affected by the frost and drought, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors;

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

² Under the Oslo Accords of 1993, signed between the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel, the West Bank territory was divided into Areas A, B and C, of which Area C remains under full Israeli control.

- The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002³, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002⁴, and Article 15 of the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Communities⁵.

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 1,500,000 for providing assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by frost and drought in the occupied Palestinian territory by using line 23 02 01 of the 2008 general budget of the European Communities.
2. In accordance with Article 2 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:
 - To address the humanitarian needs in the water sector of the most vulnerable segments of the population hit by drought and frost in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The total amount of this Decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be for a maximum period of 18 months, starting on 1 October 2008.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 October 2008.
3. If the actions 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 3

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management with international organisations.
2. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented either by Non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 or International organisations. Taking account of the specificities of humanitarian aid, the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the specific location constraints and the level of urgency, the activities covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

³ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1.

⁴ OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, , p.1

⁵ Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

Article 4

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

Done at Brussels, [...]

For the Commission

[...]

Member of the Commission



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable populations affected by natural hazards in the occupied Palestinian territory

Location of action: occupied Palestinian territory

Amount of Decision: EUR 1,500,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/PSE/BUD/2008/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

Following the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000 and as a result of reduced access to Israeli labour markets, agriculture has become an increasingly important source of both employment and food security for Palestinian households. Consequently, access to sufficient and quality water has become increasingly important in the survival of vulnerable households, particularly for nomadic communities living in the remote areas and in Area C⁶ of the West Bank. Particularly affected are the Bedouin⁷ communities and animal herders whose livelihoods depend on animal husbandry and rain-fed agriculture. Their livelihoods have been hit by two major shocks this year: **frost and drought**.

Approximately 120,000 farmers (Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture) especially in the West Bank, were hit by a **severe frost** that lasted for several days in early 2008. According to estimates, 70 to 100% of open fields, especially in the Jordan Valley, were either lost or substantially damaged. The winter cash crop is the most profitable and as a direct result of the frost, thousands of farmers lost their main source of income for the coming months. Livestock herders were also directly affected as the frost resulted in very high lamb mortality.

⁶ Under the Oslo Accords of 1993, signed between the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel, the West Bank territory was divided into Areas A, B and C, of which Area C remains under full Israeli control (south Hebron, east Bethlehem, Jordan Valley, West Jerusalem and East Jenin).

⁷ There is no official data regarding their numbers; estimates vary between 50,000 to 120,000 depending on the source and census criteria. Bedouins are prevalently not registered refugees.

Furthermore, almost the entire population of 4 million Palestinians residing in the occupied Palestinian territory have been affected by a **severe drought** in recent months, which has been reported to have been the most serious hitting the area in the past decade - it has severely aggravated the already extreme shortage of water in the West Bank. The current drought and water shortages are caused by a number of factors with varying implications on vulnerable households:

- From November 2007 until the end of February 2008 (the critical season for growing crops and grazing land regeneration) the southern West Bank received only 55% (328 mm compared to annual average of 595 mm) of its average rainfall. The limited amount of rain water that was harvested and stored has already been exhausted.
- Palestinian towns and villages that are connected to a water network are suffering from irregular water supply throughout most of the year – the drought has forced a rationing of water for agricultural and domestic use (in marginalised areas, the water supply is disconnected for days, sometimes weeks), often to ensure sufficient supply to nearby settlements.
- Existing water and sanitation infrastructure is poorly kept and requires much-needed maintenance, with water losses estimated to be around 35-40 %. Furthermore, water tests indicate that ground water resources are polluted with excessive chloride or nitrate - pollutants caused by sewage and fertilizers⁸ - thus putting further stress on limited quality water sources.
- Road blocks, checkpoints and other restrictions on movement have further impeded and limited water reaching the most needy. The inability of water tankers to access regulated water sources or filling points has led to an increase in dependence on unprotected reservoirs and springs posing serious questions about water quality and placing the health of the population at risk.

The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) estimates this year's water shortage in the West Bank between 42 and 60 million cubic meters and has already requested an emergency supply of 8 million cubic meters from the Israeli Mekorot water company. However, even if Mekorot were to provide an emergency supply of water, access to it for the poorest and most marginalized households would be inconceivable as water costs go far beyond their meager household means. Indeed, approximately ten per cent of West Bank communities are surviving on less than ten liters per person per day - this falls well below the SPHERE standard of at least 15 liters of water per day per person for personal and domestic use.

Chronic shortages of water for the agricultural sector have further contributed to extreme food insecurity; this in a context where access to food and markets has already been seriously affected by the disruptions to the transportation network (checkpoints, blockades, the back-to-back system and destroyed roads) which have created logistical chaos and caused the almost entire breakdown of the food system in the occupied Palestinian territory. Again, it should be stressed that even if the most vulnerable and marginalized households would be able to reach food through markets, its purchase would go far beyond their financial capabilities.

⁸ Israeli Water Authority's Hydraulic Service
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1.2. - Identified needs :

The **humanitarian needs** that emerge from the frost, drought and consequent extreme water shortage are manifold. Many households, particularly in communities in remote areas of the West Bank that are not connected to a water network, are obliged to rely entirely on trucked water⁹ at prohibitive water prices. This has caused households to spend between 25-40 % of household expenditure¹⁰ on purchasing water, with coping mechanisms close to exhaustion.

The drought has left in particular the Bedouin communities struggling to meet their basic personal and domestic needs, as well as the needs to maintain their livelihoods: animal herders cannot obtain water for their livestock and available pastures on which to graze are no longer sufficient. Grazing areas have been further reduced by nearly 30% (UN OCHA) due to the ongoing construction of the Separation Barrier and the expansion of Israeli settlements and military camps in the West Bank.

In addition, the recent increase in prices (reaching 10.8%, January, 2007 - April 2008), which was largely driven by the significant increase in food prices (21%)¹¹ has had a grave affect: fodder/barley prices have nearly doubled since last year, resulting in extreme animal malnutrition and health risks including an increase in the mortality and abortion rates of the animals.

An urgent intervention is necessary in order to provide assistance to the most vulnerable communities affected by the frost and drought who have exhausted all other coping mechanisms.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

Locations will be selected according to livelihood criteria: where water costs form a substantial part of household expenditure and where water is essential to maintain a community's livelihood. Most prevalent are Bedouin communities and animal herders living in isolated areas. According to an initial assessment these communities are predominantly located in the South of Hebron, East of Bethlehem, West of Jericho, East and West of Jenin, West of Jerusalem, along Road 90 Jerusalem-Jericho and the Nablus-Jericho road.

Number of beneficiaries: approximately 100,000 vulnerable Palestinians gravely affected by the frost and drought.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

Closures and movement restrictions throughout the West Bank are likely to continue to increase. In particular physical obstacles as well as an elaboration of permit regulations restricting the movement of the average Palestinian is of high concern, especially for the Bedouin communities and other communities living in already marginalized areas of the occupied Palestinian territory. These reinforced movement restrictions on both persons and goods can equally hamper the implementation of humanitarian operations as well as the movement of humanitarian personnel and generate additional costs. In addition, given that the targeted areas are prevalently borderline areas and mostly classified as Area C, there is a risk of increased military operations by Israeli security forces.

⁹ CAP 2008/E WASH, coordination of the water & sanitation sector in oPts

¹⁰ E WASH, coordination of the water & sanitation sector in oPts

¹¹ PCBS prices index

In light of the above-mentioned risks, it is assumed that coordinated international advocacy on issues of general interest (such as access, entry, protection etc.) will be able to continue, inter alia, for humanitarian operators to perform their tasks without major disruptions. It is also assumed that the Civil Administration of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) will function properly and maintain the relevant liaison mechanisms allowing for the effective and timely delivery of humanitarian relief by international organizations and NGOs.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective:

To provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by frost and drought in the occupied Palestinian Territory

Specific objectives:

To address the humanitarian needs in the water sector of the most vulnerable segments of the population hit by drought and frost in the occupied Palestinian territory.

2.2. - Components :

In order to prevent the further deterioration of the already precarious livelihoods of the segment of the Palestinian population who have been most gravely affected by the recent frost and drought – with special reference to the most vulnerable and marginalized Bedouin, animal herding and rain-fed farming communities who have exhausted all other coping mechanisms – DG ECHO¹² will provide assistance to ensure that sufficient and affordable water quantities are available to cover the basic domestic and livelihood needs through:

- Emergency water distribution, distribution to vulnerable families with sufficient quantities to cover their domestic and livelihood needs.
- Enhancement of beneficiaries' water storing and water harvesting capacities through the construction of household water harvesting cisterns or provision of water storing facilities.
- Provision of water trucks to the joint services councils in order to enable them to carry out the water distributions and to enhance their response capacities.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be 18 months.

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

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 October 2008.

Start Date : 1 October 2008

¹² Directorate General For humanitarian aid - ECHO
ECHO/PSE/BUD/2008/01000

5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	63,860,000		
Belgium	4,805,090	DG AIDCO	1,027,390		
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic	115,047				
Denmark	6,585,929				
Estonia					
Finland					
France	4,320,000				
Germany	4,901,569				
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland	500,000				
Italy	4,018,000				
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg	1,154,985				
Malta					
Netherlands	8,401,249				
Poland	101,000				
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenie					
Spain	4,275,212				
Sweden	12,638,470				
United kingdom					
Subtotal	51,816,551	Subtotal	64,887,390	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	116,703,941		

Dated : 05 September 2008

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

6 - Amount of Decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the Decision: EUR 1,500,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by frost and drought in the occupied Palestinian Territory</i>					
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation		Activities	Potential partners¹³
Specific objective 1: To address the humanitarian needs in the water sector of the most vulnerable segments of the population hit by drought and frost in the occupied Palestinian territory.	1,500,000	Occupied Territory	Palestinian	Water and sanitation activities, livelihood support.	- ACH - CARE - FR - CISP - OXFAM GB - UCODEP
TOTAL:	1,500,000				

¹³ ACCION CONTRA EL HAMBRE, (ESP), CARE FRANCE - VEREIN FÜR ENTWICKLUNGSZUSAMMENARBEIT UND HUMANITÄRE HILFE, COMITATO INTERNAZIONALE PER LO SVILUPPO DEI POPOLI (ITA), OXFAM (GB), Unity and Cooperation for Development of Peoples

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 actions financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent actions." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG 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://ec.europa.eu/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8. Management issues

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index_en.htm.

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.