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COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 5.1.2015

**financing humanitarian aid operational priorities from the 2015 general budget of the
European Union
ECHO/WWD/BUD/2015/01000**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid ('the Humanitarian Aid Regulation')¹, and in particular Article 2, notably 2 (c), Article 4 and Article 15(2) and (3) thereof,

Having regard to Council Decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union ('the Overseas Association Decision')², and in particular Article 79 thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 ('the Financial Regulation'), and in particular Article 84(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The global humanitarian context in 2015 will, in all likelihood, remain challenging, with similar trends to those experienced in 2014 with the intensity and range of crises surpassing the levels encountered in previous years, thus resulting in an increase in the overall total of people affected and in need of international assistance. This increase in humanitarian needs is related to protracted or recurrent humanitarian crises, such as long-term conflict or droughts, and those resulting from sudden new emergencies. In line with the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, it is important that the response to sudden new emergencies, such as earthquakes or conflicts, does not detract from addressing existing or recurrent humanitarian crises.
- (2) Constantly increasing global needs are the result of a combination of factors, notably the larger number of refugees and displaced persons resulting from man-made crises, the increasing impact of natural disasters, partly as a result of climate change, the continued impact of the economic crisis affecting particularly the most vulnerable populations, and a tightening of the humanitarian space that make the delivery of aid and access to beneficiaries more and more difficult and dangerous. In this context and for each crisis, a specific country/region evaluation of needs per sector is conducted by the European Commission in order to provide a first hand account of crisis pockets and to give an insight into the nature and the depth of needs. This is combined with a Global Needs Assessment, based on two sets of indicators (crisis and vulnerability), the Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) and the Food Insecurity Needs Assessment

¹ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

² OJ L 344/1, 19.12.2013, p.1.

(FINAT). These evaluations and tools provide the framework to determine the sectors and locations of greatest needs and to provide an appropriate allocation of funds.

- (3) Man-made humanitarian crises, resulting from wars or outbreaks of fighting (also called complex or protracted crises) account for a large proportion of, and are, the main source of humanitarian needs in the world. In man-made crises, such as Syria, Iraq, Colombia, South Sudan, Mali, Somalia, Nigeria and the Central African Republic, the Union's humanitarian intervention, which takes place alongside development, stabilisation and/or state-building interventions, addresses life-saving needs, and protects millions of vulnerable people, including refugees and returnees, internally displaced people and host communities. Where possible, it should also prepare conditions for a proper transition towards longer term interventions (Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development - LRRD) and build the resilience of the most vulnerable populations. It is in those contexts that access and security problems make the delivery of aid particularly difficult or dangerous. The needs resulting from such crises may be further exacerbated by natural disasters, such as drought or floods, as is the case in Somalia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Chad. Such natural disasters and extreme weather conditions may restrict some interventions and may also require rapid reorientation of other activities to meet new priority needs of the affected populations.
- (4) The human and economic losses caused by natural disasters are devastating. These natural disasters, be they sudden or slow onset, that entail major loss of life, physical and psychological or social suffering or material damage, are constantly increasing, and with them so is the number of victims. In this respect, vulnerable populations affected by natural disasters and climate change rely on Union humanitarian assistance, including food assistance, nutrition and protection. Recurrent acute humanitarian needs have been identified in various situations, such as the drought affected areas in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Recurrent disasters caused by specific meteorological patterns, such as monsoon and hurricane/typhoon/cyclone seasons may also be covered under this Decision.
- (5) The Union's humanitarian intervention may also cover those countries of a given region, identified in Annex II based on known vulnerabilities, for which no indicative initial allocation can be provided. The Union's humanitarian intervention may also cover Overseas Countries and Territories pursuant to the Overseas Association Decision.
- (6) Emergency humanitarian needs aggravated by the recurrence of disasters, even those of small-scale or those requiring a limited and isolated intervention, are also addressed by this Decision. This also covers epidemic outbreaks. In such cases, a flexible humanitarian intervention should be sought in order to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs and enhance at the local level the preparedness of the most vulnerable populations, in particular local communities, affected by these disasters where there are significant unmet needs.
- (7) Local communities are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. The losses these disasters cause are significant both in social and economic terms as people's lives are not only at risk, but they often lose their livelihood and land and might even be displaced. When the coping capacities of the countries concerned by the Decision are insufficient considering the impact of disasters on the population, aggravated even further by climate change, there is a need for international support for preparedness activities, including small-scale mitigation. "Disaster Preparedness ECHO" (DIPECHO), the European Commission's disaster preparedness programme in the

framework of humanitarian aid, applies to the most disaster-prone regions in the world which, due to their topography, geology and climate, are exposed to a variety of natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, landslides, earthquakes and cyclones, tidal waves/tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, flash floods, forest fires, cold spells and storms.

- (8) Strengthening global humanitarian preparedness and the response capacity of humanitarian organisations is key in addressing the global increase in humanitarian needs. Following extensive consultations with fellow donors, Commission partners and other humanitarian actors in 2008 and 2009, the main 'gaps' and weaknesses in the global humanitarian system were identified, and presented in the Commission 2009 "Guidelines for Enhanced Capacity Building". Based on these Guidelines, Enhanced Response Capacity building of international organisations and non-governmental organisations provides for longer term efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of humanitarian aid operations.
- (9) Access constraints (security and logistical) are often an obstacle to reaching beneficiaries. These can be partially overcome by supporting humanitarian transport, notably through ECHO-Flight in parts of Africa, or through other humanitarian transport providers.
- (10) Public awareness, information and communication actions complement and highlight the humanitarian assistance provided by the European Union. The Commission's communication approach for humanitarian aid has been developed to take into account the specificity of humanitarian aid, with a view to preserving a distinct identity for impartial, needs-based humanitarian action. It aims at enhancing knowledge and understanding, in the Union and globally, of Union-funded humanitarian aid through awareness, information and communication actions on humanitarian aid operations implemented in the framework of the partnership between the Commission and humanitarian actors. Communication actions in 2015 will also contribute, where appropriate, to the corporate communication of the Commission, and in particular to the corporate theme dealing with the EU's role in the world (currently "EU as a global player"). The European Year for Development will be a main action within this theme for 2015.
- (11) According to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid³, the promotion of training activities should be part of an overall approach to reinforce global humanitarian aid. The provision of high quality European education and professional qualifications in humanitarian action impacts policy and practice and can lead to improving the quality and efficiency of aid, and ultimately may result in saving lives while ensuring that people live in dignity. The "Network on Humanitarian Action" (NOHA) provides quality European education in the humanitarian field, combining elements of teaching, training and research designed to promote greater professionalism among humanitarian workers and involves several participating universities. The NOHA's Master's Programme in Humanitarian Action also provides an academic platform and educational resources for facilitating access to training in donors' best practices and for awareness raising activities, and to promote research on key humanitarian issues.
- (12) Children affected by conflict are a particularly vulnerable group. Therefore, this Decision also provides support for children affected by conflict, in the context of the "EU Children of Peace Initiative". Humanitarian assistance can reduce the

³ OJ C 2008/025/01 of 30.1.2008.

vulnerability of children in conflict areas, namely through education in emergencies and crisis situations.

- (13) The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and its action plan⁴ call for actions which promote humanitarian principles and law, and implement quality aid approaches which strengthen partnership, coherence and coordination. The financing of expertise and networks to contribute to the quality and coherence of policy initiatives in a number of focused humanitarian sectors should contribute to improving the effectiveness and overall impact of humanitarian aid. Reinforced networking among humanitarian organisations should allow the Commission to have access to informed views on the on-going best practices in terms of humanitarian aid delivery, while allowing for broader policy dissemination with a view to improving operational implementation. To that effect, VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is unique in combining a broad network of European NGOs which work in a significant range of humanitarian areas pertinent to the Commission's work in the field of humanitarian aid.
- (14) The humanitarian and food assistance funded under this Decision should also cover essential activities and support services to humanitarian organisations as referred to in Articles 2(c) and 4 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, including notably the protection of humanitarian goods and personnel.
- (15) The European Union became party to the Food Assistance Convention on 28 November 2012; the Convention entered into force on 1 January 2013. In accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, an amount of EUR 350 000 000, to be spent as food and nutrition assistance funded under this Decision, is to be counted towards the minimum annual commitment for the year 2015 of the European Union under the Food Assistance Convention.
- (16) Humanitarian aid should be implemented by non-governmental organisations, Member States' Specialised Agencies, international organisations, including United Nations (UN) agencies, and, where appropriate, the Commission itself, including through Union Trust Funds. Therefore, the Commission should implement the budget to finance these Actions by direct management or by indirect management.
- (17) Actions in the field of Enhanced Response Capacity building should be implemented by non-governmental organisations that are signatories of the Framework Partnership Agreement and by international organisations including United Nations agencies. Therefore, the Commission should implement the budget to finance these actions by direct management or by indirect management.
- (18) Actions in the field of transport of humanitarian goods and personnel should be implemented either by non-governmental organisations, by international organisations, including UN agencies or directly by the Commission. Therefore, the Commission should implement the budget to finance these actions by direct management or by indirect management.
- (19) Actions in the field of academic education and research on humanitarian action should be implemented by key research institutes and European universities which are members of the NOHA Network. Therefore, the Commission should implement the budget with respect to these actions by direct management.

⁴ SEC(2008)1991 of 29.5.2008.

- (20) Communication actions should be implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations including UN agencies or directly by the Commission. The Commission should therefore implement the budget by direct management or by indirect management.
- (21) Actions in support of children affected by conflict and crisis situations should be channelled through non-governmental organisations, Member States' specialised agencies or by international organisations, including United Nations (UN) agencies and, where appropriate, Union Trust Funds. Therefore, the Commission should implement the budget to finance these Actions by direct management or by indirect management.
- (22) Policy-support actions should be implemented either by humanitarian organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreement or which otherwise fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established under Article 7 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, by European research institutes, universities, academic and policy institutions active in the area of humanitarian aid, and by VOICE. Therefore the European Commission should implement the budget to finance these actions by direct management or by indirect management as the case may be.
- (23) Pursuant to Article 130 of the Financial Regulation, and in view of the specific nature of humanitarian aid, expenditure incurred before the date of submission of a proposal may be eligible for Union funding.
- (24) It is estimated that a total amount of EUR 699 381 000 of which EUR 662 085 000 from budget article 23 02 01 and EUR 37 296 000 from budget article 23 02 02, of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to pursue the objectives set for this Decision, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. Although as a general rule actions funded by this Decision should be co-financed, the Authorising Officer, in accordance with Article 277 of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union ('the Rules of Application')⁵, may agree to the full financing of actions.
- (25) The Commission may acknowledge and accept contribution from other donors pursuant to Article 21(2)(b) of the Financial Regulation, subject to the signing of the relevant agreement, and should decide on the use of such contribution.
- (26) It is advisable to maintain a part of the Union budget for humanitarian aid unallocated in order to cover unforeseen operations, as part of an operational reserve.
- (27) Where the operational reserve is insufficient to respond to urgent humanitarian needs, the Commission may decide to request a transfer of appropriations from Titles of the general budget of the European Union to the humanitarian aid budget articles.
- (28) This Decision complies with the conditions laid down in Article 94 of the Rules of Application.
- (29) In line with the Commission Communication on streamlining financial rules and accelerating budget implementation to help economic recovery, cumulated changes to specific objectives as well as the increase of the appropriations not exceeding 20% of the maximum contribution authorised by this Decision are considered to be non-substantial, provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of

⁵ OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1.

the Decision, and may be adopted by the Authorising Officer responsible. Under Article 190 of the Rules of Application, grants may be awarded without a call for proposals for the purposes of humanitarian aid, within the meaning of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation.

- (30) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the Humanitarian Aid Committee established by Article 17(1) of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a maximum amount of EUR 699 381 000, of which EUR 662 085 000 from budget article 23 02 01 and EUR 37 296 000 from budget article 23 02 02, of the 2015 general budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Article 2, notably 2(c), and Article 4 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, the humanitarian actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objectives:

(a) Specific objective 1: To provide humanitarian and food assistance, relief and protection to vulnerable people affected by man-made crises, possibly aggravated by natural disasters, including new crises and existing crises where the scale and complexity of the humanitarian crisis is such that it seems likely to continue.

A total of EUR 477 570 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this specific objective.

(b) Specific objective 2: To provide humanitarian and food assistance, relief and protection to vulnerable people affected by natural disasters that have entailed major loss of life, physical and psychological or social suffering or material damage.

A total of EUR 138 575 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this specific objective.

(c) Specific objective 3: To provide humanitarian assistance for response and disaster preparedness to populations affected by disasters where a small scale response is adequate and to populations affected by epidemic outbreaks.

A total of EUR 9 000 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this specific objective.

(d) Specific objective 4: To support strategies and complement existing strategies that enable local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters by enhancing their capacities to cope and respond, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability in South Asia, Pacific, the Caribbean and South America.

A total of EUR 37 296 000 from budget article 23 02 02 is allocated to this specific objective.

(e) Specific objective 5: To improve the delivery of aid through complementary and thematic activities aiming at increasing the effectiveness, efficiency, quality, timeliness and visibility of humanitarian actions and transport.

A total of EUR 36 940 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this specific objective.

This specific objective shall be met through achieving the following sub-specific objectives:

(i) Sub-specific objective 5.1: To strengthen the global humanitarian preparedness and response capacity of humanitarian partners by increasing the effectiveness and reinforcing the capacity of international humanitarian organisations and non-governmental organisations to assess, analyse, prepare and respond to humanitarian crises.

A total of EUR 15 000 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this sub-specific objective.

(ii) Sub-specific objective 5.2: To improve the conditions for delivering humanitarian aid by supporting transport services to ensure that aid is accessible to beneficiaries.

A total of EUR 6 790 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this sub-specific objective.

(iii) Sub-specific objective 5.3: To increase awareness, understanding and support on the part of Union citizens for humanitarian aid issues and the role which the European Union plays in the field, by organising high impact communication actions designed to enhance awareness, knowledge, understanding and support for humanitarian issues and to highlight the partnership between the Commission and its partners in delivering relief assistance to people affected by humanitarian crises. Communication actions in 2015 will also contribute, where appropriate, to the corporate communication of the Commission, and in particular to the corporate theme dealing with the EU's role in the world (currently "EU as a global player"). The European Year for Development will be a main action within this theme for 2015.

A total of EUR 2 000 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this sub-specific objective.

(iv) Sub-specific objective 5.4: To provide high quality European education and professional qualifications on humanitarian action that impact on humanitarian aid policy and practice.

A total of EUR 700 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this sub-specific objective.

(v) Sub-specific objective 5.5: To support children affected by conflict, specifically through education in emergencies and crisis situations.

A total of EUR 10 000 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this sub-specific objective.

(vi) Sub-specific objective 5.6: To increase the coherence, quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid, by the provision of expertise to assist policy development in support to humanitarian aid actions and by reinforcing networking between humanitarian non-governmental organisations.

A total of EUR 2 450 000 from budget article 23 02 01 is allocated to this sub-specific objective.

Annex 1 to this Decision reflects the above-mentioned allocations by specific objectives.

Annex 2 to this Decision gives an indication of the contemplated allocation by countries/regions.

3. The Authorising Officer responsible may decide on non-substantial changes in accordance with Article 94(4) of the Rules of Application. Accordingly, when required by the changing circumstances and without prejudice to the use of a contingency reserve, resources may be reallocated between the above-mentioned specific objectives up to a maximum of 20% of the total amount of the financing decision. This may include the increase of the maximum contribution authorised by this Decision up to 20%.
4. An amount of EUR 350 000 000, to be spent as food and nutrition assistance funded under this Decision, is to be counted towards the minimum annual commitment for the year 2015 of the European Union under the Food Assistance Convention.

Article 2

1. The period for the implementation of the actions financed under this Decision shall start on the date specified in the relevant Agreements financed under this Decision and may last up to 24 months.
2. Pursuant to Article 130 of the Financial Regulation, and in view of the specific nature of humanitarian aid, expenditure incurred before the date of submission of a proposal for funding may be eligible for Union funding.
3. In accordance with the contractual provisions ruling the Agreements financed under this Decision, the Commission may consider eligible those costs arising and incurred after the end of the implementing period of the action which are necessary for its winding-up.

Article 3

1. As a general rule, actions funded by this Decision should be co-financed.
The Authorising Officer, in accordance with Article 277 of the Rules of Application, may agree to the full financing of actions when this will be necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and with due consideration to the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the availability of other donors and other relevant operational circumstances.
2. Actions supported by this Decision shall be implemented:
 - * either by non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, by international organisations, by Member States' specialised agencies or directly by the Commission, for the purposes of Article 1(2), points (a) to (d) and (e)(v).
 - * or by non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, by international organisations, by key research institutes and European universities which are members of the NOHA network, by European research institutes, universities, academic and policy institutions active in the area of humanitarian aid, by VOICE, or

directly by the Commission, for the purposes of Article 1(2) points (e)(i) to (iv) and (e)(vi).

3. The Commission shall implement the budget:

* either by direct management with non-governmental organisations that are signatories of the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA), Member States' specialised agencies, the NOHA network, international organisations, non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established under Article 7 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, European research institutes, universities, academic and policy institutions active in the area of humanitarian aid, VOICE and Union Trust Funds;

* or by indirect management with international organisations which were subject to an ex-ante assessment in line with Article 61 of the Financial Regulation, including those that are signatories of an FPA or are covered by the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement concluded with the UN (FAFA), Member States' specialised agencies and Union Trust Funds set up for emergency and post-emergency action;

* or directly within its services by awarding service or procurement contracts.

Article 4

1. The implementation of this Decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2015 after the adoption of the budget for 2015 by the budgetary authority or provided for in the provisional twelfths.

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

Done at Brussels, 5.1.2015

*For the Commission
Christos STYLIANIDES
Member of the Commission*