



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION - ECHO  
 ECHO A - Strategy, Policy and International Co-operation  
**The Director**

Brussels, 29 August 2014

Dear colleagues,

Since the first edition of DG ECHO's [biannual policy newsletter](#), the humanitarian and civil protection communities have been called to respond to numerous severe natural disasters - such as Haiyan/Yolanda in the Philippines, as well as to globally growing conflicts and related displacements - culminating in the current simultaneous Level 3 emergencies in Syria, CAR, South Sudan and Iraq and the multidimensional Ebola crisis in West Africa.

Against this background it is becoming ever more relevant to underpin operational action and funding decisions by evidence and to ensure coherence and complementarity of our approaches. It is in this spirit that I like to continue informing you of ECHO's most recent policy initiatives:

*Initiatives to enhance the efficiency of the humanitarian system*



*Commission's ODSG Chairmanship July 2013  
 – June 2014*

ECHO had set out **two main objectives** during its [Chairmanship of the OCHA Donor Support Group](#) (ODSG): (1) to strengthen OCHA's field performance and (2) to enhance partnerships and outreach. Regarding OCHA's **field performance**, a field mission to the DRC was conducted highlighting i.a. the importance of a genuine civil-military dialogue and the need to foster more synergies between humanitarian and development aid. We also introduced a first ODSG OCHA field performance survey which was conducted with the support of ECHO field offices. On **partnership and outreach**, an outreach mission to Mauritania was organised. ODSG members' outreach and partnership activities were mapped and together with a Partnership event delivered immediate results: the expansion of ODSG's

membership to 27 members, with **Estonia and Turkey** joining at the ODSG High Level event on 30 June – 1 July 2014, which marked the end of the Commission's chairmanship.

### *World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) preparations*

The 2016 WHS will set the agenda for a more effective and efficient global humanitarian action in a fast-changing world. I see it as our common task to identify and share solutions to the most pressing humanitarian challenges.

ECHO has thus established an internal **WHS Task Force**, consisting of HQ and field experts, to develop positions on each of the four WHS focus areas.

We see the WHS as a chance to gather momentum, both in terms of innovative approaches and in terms of new partnerships, for facing the growing challenges of humanitarian action in the years to come. The Commission will deepen discussions with Member States and partners (during ECHO Partners Conference on 25-26 November 2014 in Brussels) with the aim of providing future-oriented policy papers for the European consultations, which will take place on 3-4 February 2015 in Budapest.

You are most welcome to contribute to our debate by sending comments, contributions or questions at: [ECHO-WHS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-WHS@ec.europa.eu).

### *Transformation through Innovation*

Innovation has been identified as one of the four focus areas of the WHS. As a global donor, ECHO seeks means to redefine and boost the global humanitarian response through new and innovative approaches to sectors such as food, sanitation, shelter, education, communication, to name a few. But we are also developing [innovative solutions for disaster monitoring and preparedness](#). On 15 January 2014, we held a **Roundtable on innovation in humanitarian aid and disaster management**, bringing together expertise from NGOs, EU Member States, the private sector, UN, academia and the Commission services. The Roundtable aimed to be a first step towards looking systematically at how we could serve better people facing disasters and crises. As a follow up we are currently reflecting on how to develop a better science and policy interface in disaster risk management notably by advancing the uptake of research and operational results as well as by improving science based services and analyses across all relevant Commissions departments. I hope to be able to report in more detail in our next policy letter.

### *Civil-military coordination*

ECHO views effective **civil-military coordination as essential to promote respect for the humanitarian principles** and has over the last months

stepped up substantially coordination with the EU Military Staff. For example, when the EU CSDP mission aiming at enhancing the overall security in Bangui (EUFOR CAR) was launched in February 2014, ECHO had been in systematic contact with our EEAS counterparts since the first steps in the planning process. We have ensured that military actors would have a clear understanding of the humanitarian issues and respect for the ["In but Out" modus operandi of humanitarian aid](#) in accordance with the EU's comprehensive approach to conflict and crisis. We have gathered positive [experience in civil military coordination](#) which has become a normal activity for DG ECHO where on a case by case basis we can provide information to help preventing further aggravation of conflicts and avoid a potential negative spill over on our implementing partners, while ensuring that EU humanitarian aid is not used for foreign policy or security objectives, thus safeguarding the humanitarian principles and access to all in need.

#### *Improving the evidence-base of humanitarian assistance and civil protection*

**Evaluations** provide ECHO with valuable feedback on how well we exercise and can further develop our role as a reference donor and on how policies on disaster risk reduction are being implemented in operations. To this end, we have put in place a **rolling five-year evaluation programme**. You can consult our [evaluation](#) results by [country](#) or by [theme](#) on our website. This year, an independent [evaluation of the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and its Action Plan](#) has been completed covering both the European Commission and the Member States.

#### *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*

The conclusions are that the awareness about the Consensus is high at headquarters in the Commission and MS among staff dealing with humanitarian aid. On **coordination**, the Consensus has led to better information sharing between the Commission and MS and has helped them develop common strategic positions at international level, despite varying level of engagement among MS. In **the field**, however, the Consensus is known only by ECHO field offices. Operational coordination in the field still needs improvement. Both the Commission and MS expressed commitment to the **humanitarian principles** at policy level, while difficulties in applying them in specific situations exist. The Consensus has led to increasing **coherence** between humanitarian aid and other EU policies, for example on **civil-military relations** or cooperation with **development** actors.

## *EU Aid Volunteers roll-out*



The [EU Aid Volunteers Regulation](#) was adopted on 3 April 2014, followed by a first annual work programme for 2014. Now the focus is on preparing the **implementing rules** for the initiative: standards (safety, volunteer management, working conditions, etc.), combined with a certification mechanism for future sending and hosting organisations, and a **common training programme** for [all future EU Aid Volunteers](#). ECHO also held an expert conference looking into methods and tools to ensure that EU Aid volunteers meet the needs of the field. Following wide-ranging consultations, including of Member States and the European Parliament, formal adoption of the implementing rules is planned for late autumn. Only then will we be able to launch the first activities such as calls for proposals for capacity building actions and certification of organisations. Training and deployment of volunteers shall start in the second half of 2015.

## *Further developing and consolidating thematic policies*



### *Resilience Forum*

[The first EU Resilience Forum](#), jointly organised by ECHO and DEVCO on 28 April with the participation of Commissioners Georgieva and Piebalgs attracted over 160 participants representing a diversity of organisations and contexts. It demonstrated strong **international commitment** to resilience, and has re-affirmed the validity of [our thematic policy approach](#), as well as providing useful guidance on how we can further optimise it.

### *Health Guidelines*

Over the past decade ECHO has allocated an average of around € 200 million on health per year, which accounts for 20% – 30% of ECHO's global humanitarian health funding. As part of our series of **thematic policy documents**, in February 2014 we published new [Consolidated Humanitarian Health Guidelines](#) that cover the objectives and principles of ECHO-funded health interventions, entry and exit criteria, key determinants for the interventions and dedicated sections on coordination and advocacy on humanitarian health. The policy document is accompanied

by an indicative decision tree, technical guidelines covering all scenarios and main disease types as well as a checklist for health facilities.

### *Education in emergencies*

The challenge on how to allocate limited funding to competing priorities/needs in emergencies remains an imperative. Despite children being among the most vulnerable in humanitarian crises, **child protection and education in emergencies are among the least funded humanitarian sectors**. Education needs a longer-term perspective, which humanitarian aid alone is not able to give. ECHO and DEVCO are therefore also in 2014 continuing their close cooperation on [education in emergencies](#) at policy level. Coordination at the EU level already takes place and complementarity and synergies of the EU Children of Peace Initiative with other EU funding instruments, in particular the development and crisis management ones, are actively encouraged including with the funding provided by the Global Partnership for Education. Through the EU Children of Peace Initiative, so far approximately 108.000 children have benefited from 13 projects amounting to a total of 6 MEUR (2012-13). In 2014, an additional 6.5 MEUR will be awarded in projects.

### *Protracted displacement*

In April 2014 ECHO and DEVCO presented a joint [Issues paper](#) on development and protracted displacement (refugees, IDPs and returnees), including situations of camp and urban displacements as well as displacement within host communities, to the relevant Council Working groups. It put forward a number of questions to launch a consultation process. The objective is to **explore possibilities for early engagement of development actors in displacement crises** with the aim to (1) prevent protracted displacement; or (2) find durable solutions in existing protracted situations. A stock-taking exercise will take place in the second half of 2014 to map out policy initiatives and action to date at EU and global levels and identify best practices and success stories as well as gaps and failures in the response. Informal consultations with stakeholders (Member States, development actors, international organisations and NGOs) are ongoing.

## *Strengthening the EU Civil Protection Mechanism*



Following the adoption of the new [Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#) (CPM) legislation at the end of last year, the first half of 2014 was marked by a strong momentum for the implementation of the new legislation. Member States have already provisionally agreed on all the necessary implementing provisions. These include the rules for the functioning of the new **voluntary pool of disaster response assets** for which a first start-up configuration with more than 50 civil protection modules and teams as well as other response capacities has been agreed and will be implemented in 2014 and 2015. Among those are urban search and rescue teams, as well as certain camp and shelter facilities, advanced medical posts, field hospitals and other capacities.

**Prevention and preparedness missions** are a new tool that the EU can use to help countries requesting this assistance. How this will happen is currently being discussed within ECHO. The new prevention aspects of the CPM legislation will also be implemented in the second half of 2014. For example, there will be **new Commission guidelines on risk management** capacity and a new **European peer review programme**.

### *Global outreach and international cooperation in the field of civil protection*

DG ECHO has also started a more consistent **global outreach to strategic partners**, including China, Japan and ASEAN. ECHO and Japan are engaging in closer cooperation on the revision of Hyogo Framework for Action (post 2015 HFA) on Disaster Risk Reduction, and exchanged information on operational activities in the aftermath of the typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Cooperation and policy exchange is on-going with the ASEAN Secretariat and operational contacts are being strengthened with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre). All assistance under the Mechanism, also the assistance from the voluntary pool can be requested by affected countries as well as via UNOCHA and a few other international organisations, such as the IOM.

In ECHO, we are at the forefront of testing out new **synergies between civil protection and humanitarian aid**, which is a priority issue of the Italian Presidency of the EU. We intend to actively promote this issue, not the least based on our unique position as highlighted in the recent [activation of the Union CPM for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Iraq](#).

## *Boosting EU solidarity in the face of disasters*

On 24 June, [the Council adopted a decision](#) on the rules and procedures for the **implementation of the so-called Solidarity Clause**. According to the Treaty, if a Member State is the object of a natural or man-made disaster or the victim of a terrorist attack, the Union and other Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity to assist the affected Member State. The Clause imposes a legal obligation on the Member States to help and specifies that the Union 'shall mobilise all the instruments at its disposal' to support the affected Member State. According to the implementation rules, the Union Civil Protection Mechanism is one of the key instruments that are likely to be mobilised in most invocations of the Clause.

The Commission's [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) is accorded a key role in this context, as it will serve as the central 24/7 contact point at the Union level for the Member States and other stakeholders in all crises triggering the Clause. It will also facilitate the production of integrated situational awareness and analysis (ISAA) reports that shall support the political decision-making in the Council in the context of Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements that are triggered automatically by the invocation of the Solidarity Clause or in cases of 'stand-alone' activations of the IPCR.

## *Disaster Risk Reduction and Management*



*Shaping up an ambitious EU position for the revision of the UN Hyogo Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*

In the last few months we have been working intensively with other Commission services to prepare an EU position and play a leading role in **shaping the post 2015 Hyogo Framework for Action in the build-up to the Sendai Summit** (March 2015). Our ideas have been presented in a Commission Communication on the [post 2015 Hyogo Framework for Action – Managing risks to achieve Resilience](#), while [Council conclusions](#) building on the Communication were adopted on 5 June. The Member States have endorsed the main issues we have put forward in the Communication: promoting peer reviews to help improve **accountability** and **greater transparency** via data collection and open data sharing policy; pushing for **targets** backed up by a monitoring system and indicators, disaster risk assessment and scenario-based capability analyses; **disaster proofing** for infrastructure and financial decisions; reinforcing the **science - policy** base and foresight; joint approach with **climate adaptation** including eco-system solutions; **broadening the**

**scope beyond natural disasters** to technological risks and taking account of conflict and fragility; coherence with SDG and climate processes in 2015.

### *Reaching out, information sharing and awareness-raising*



Finally, ECHO's actions and policy priorities have been supported by a **proactive information and communication strategy**. Up-to-date information on ECHO's initiatives and actions is available on our [website](#). The website provides a repository of regularly updated [fact sheets](#) outlining both operational actions on ongoing crises and thematic approaches that ECHO prioritises. Other regular updates, such as our [news headlines](#), [blog](#), [photo stories](#), [videos](#), and [press releases](#), may also be followed via our RSS feeds.

To keep the profile of humanitarian aid and disaster response up also in the run up to **the European elections** that took place in May, we prepared a [dedicated inter-active web page](#) that provides a swift and factual overview of the portfolio through a series of products such as info-graphics, videos, fact-sheets and maps. These products continue to be available for further use and outreach by our sister institutions and any other interested stakeholder, especially our humanitarian partner organisations.

In the domain of **awareness-raising**, ECHO also regularly either takes the lead or joins forces with humanitarian partners to alert of pressing needs and of actions taken to meet them. Among many other, we championed for the [children of Syria](#) not to become a lost generation and we focused on highlighting the [3rd anniversary of the Syria conflict](#) and the plight of the millions forced to flee their homes in March, including [jointly with the World Food Programme](#). We also launched a global awareness raising campaign with UNICEF on the needs of [children in emergencies](#) in May and teamed up with UNHCR to promote [World Refugee Day](#) in June.

Last but not least, we launched a joint campaign with IMC to highlight the role of [humanitarian first responders](#) and prepared a new audio-visual production series on refugees that can be found in [ECHO's AV repository](#). We have marked the World Humanitarian Day 2014 with a comprehensive and integrated communication campaign.

To spread the message further, I invite you to join our 59 000 followers on [Facebook](#) and 13 000 on [Twitter](#). A vast and constantly growing repository of free to use photos from crisis areas is available for your use at [Flickr](#).

I trust that you found the above overview informative and invite you to consult the hyperlinked related documents should you be interested in more detail or to contact us in the Strategy, Policy & International Co-operation directorate of DG ECHO for further information.

Kind regards,

*(Signed)*

Florika FINK-HOOIJER