

ECHO ANNUAL REPORT 2014

ANNEX 2 – POLICY FICHES

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Humanitarian Aid – in-but-out of the EU Comprehensive Approach

1. Context

The EU Comprehensive Approach aims at delivering more coherent and more effective policies, actions and results to deal with external conflicts and crisis. The aim is to bring together all relevant domains of EU external action. The High Representative and the Commission issued a Joint Communication in December 2013, setting out concrete steps towards an increasingly comprehensive approach. The Council adopted Conclusions in May 2014, which emphasised certain elements such as early, coordinated and shared analysis, the setting of common objectives, common early warning and conflict prevention and better linking up political engagement. The Parliament adopted its Resolution in April 2014 calling inter alia for institutional and financial coherence and enhanced partnerships with third parties, including civil society and private sector.

All sides agreed on the special status of Humanitarian Aid vis-à-vis the Comprehensive Approach. For example, the Council Conclusions reaffirmed that "humanitarian aid shall be provided in accordance with the humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, solely on the basis of needs of affected populations, in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid".

2. Objective for 2014

To clearly establish Humanitarian Aid as "In-but-Out" of the EU Comprehensive Approach.

3. Deliverables

- In: Humanitarian Aid contributed to the Comprehensive Approach by assessing crisis situations, particularly through providing vulnerability analysis, as for example in the case of the Central African Republic and in Northern Nigeria. Humanitarian Aid helped formulate key messages on issues like International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and humanitarian access, such as for example in the crisis situations in Syria/Iraq and in eastern Ukraine.
- Out: EU stakeholders recognised and accepted that, in line with the European Consensus, Humanitarian Aid was not a crisis management tool and could not be instrumentalised to serve political, military or economic objectives. Reference to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence were included in various EU crisis documents and it was acknowledged that respecting the principles often constituted a precondition for reaching the victims of humanitarian emergencies in a conflict situation. EU crisis planning and management tools recognised that the allocation of EU humanitarian assistance was taken solely on the basis of identified needs.

Coordination with EU Donors in 2014

1. Context

Enhancing coherence and coordination between the EU and its Member States in reply to disasters or protracted crises is crucial for improving the efficiency of the overall EU aid contribution. Since 2009 coordination with Member States mainly takes place in the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). In 2014 COHAFA was chaired by the Hellenic and Italian Presidencies.

Throughout the year, the working group which brings together mostly representatives from EU capitals met 11 times and held two informal meetings. In addition, the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC) discussed ECHO's Annual Operational Strategy and sought Member States' opinion on specific funding decisions. On a strategic level, COHAFA has allowed the EU to increase the coherence of the Commission and Member States' humanitarian aid activities: there is a regular exchange on humanitarian aid policies/strategies and budgets; information/analysis produced by the Commission are used by Member States when planning their humanitarian interventions; individual EU donor activities in specific crises are better coordinated; EU positions on specific issues are discussed ahead of international meetings.

ECHO has increased its efforts to follow and contribute systematically to the work of the newly elected European Parliament and its main EP committees of relevance for ECHO's work, such as the Development Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee (including Security and Defence for civil-military cooperation aspect), the Environment Committee and the Budget/Budget Control Committees. In particular, ECHO worked closely with the members of the Development Committee to raise awareness and interest in humanitarian matters.

2. Objectives for 2014

- Enhance coherence and coordination with Member States including through support to the Presidency in COHAFA and improved exchange of information;
- Better link the humanitarian expertise from COHAFA with the work of other relevant Council working parties and bodies;
- Follow and contribute to the work of different EP bodies and raise awareness about EU humanitarian aid in the new EP.

3. Deliverables

- ECHO assisted the Presidency in the organisation and conduct of meetings of COHAFA, including by providing background papers and situation/crisis reports;
- ECHO presented its Annual Operational Strategy in the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC); discussions on crises and policies helped to improve the complementarity of EU donor activities;
- COHAFA contributed messages on humanitarian topics to other Council working parties, which were used for the elaboration of Council conclusions/policy documents;
- ECHO participated in relevant EP Committee and Plenary meetings, informing about EU action in humanitarian crisis and contributed to exchanges on EP legislative or own-initiative reports.

International relations

1. Context

ECHO as one of the largest international humanitarian donors maintains regular contacts with a plethora of interlocutors in the international arena. In this context, ECHO contributes to policy development and the improvement of the international humanitarian system, notably (but not only) by supporting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee 'Transformative Agenda', a UN-led process to strengthen the effectiveness of the humanitarian system. ECHO also advocates for the strengthening of the international humanitarian system and for maintaining humanitarian space through relevant UN resolutions.

In addition, ECHO contributes to policy development in numerous multilateral fora such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHDi), the Montreux Process, the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) which DG ECHO chaired in the first half of 2014, the IFRC Donor Advisory Group, the ICRC Donor Support Group, the MCDA (Military and Civil Defence Assets) Consultative Group, etc. Equally important are the bilateral exchanges with the most important and active non-EU donors, notably with the United States, Norway, Switzerland, Canada and Japan as well as the relations with non-DAC countries and regional organisations.

2. Objective for 2014

In 2014, ECHO engaged at international and bilateral level in order to further improve the accountability and effectiveness of the humanitarian system. In particular, ECHO promoted coordination and leadership, as this were seen as crucial issues at a time of severe budget constraints and an ever more challenging humanitarian landscape.

3. Deliverables

Some concrete deliverables included:

- ECHO supported the IASC Transformative Agenda process, including through high-level participation in the regular (every 6 months) meetings with the IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG) and regular consultation of ECHO field staff to monitor implementation. ECHO hosted the EDG-donor meeting in Geneva in December 2014 that focused on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the Transformative Agenda.
- ECHO actively engaged in messaging on ITA and on the need for increased effectiveness of the humanitarian system in relevant executive boards of UN agencies having humanitarian mandate (UNHCR, WFP, etc.).
- During ECHO's chairmanship of the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODGS) from July 2013 to July 2014, ECHO co-chaired regular meetings in Geneva and New York and organised the ODSG mission to DRC in April 2014. ECHO's chairmanship concluded with the annual high-level meeting in Geneva on 30 June - 1 July 2014.
- ECHO continued its active engagement in intergovernmental processes at the UN, coordinating EU positions and negotiating on behalf of the EU the UNGA and ECOSOC humanitarian resolutions. ECHO participated actively in the Humanitarian Segment of ECOSOC in June 2014 in New York.
- ECHO continued its support to the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) process, including through high-level participation in meetings such as the annual High Level GHD meeting in June 2014 in New York.
- ECHO conducted strategic Dialogues with the United States (complemented by monthly videoconferences at technical level), the ICRC, the WFP and UNICEF.
- ECHO enhanced its cooperation with Norway, Switzerland, and Japan. Relations were being also developed with non-DAC countries and organisations (e.g. the Arab countries, the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States,

Turkey, some BRIC countries and ASEAN). ECHO organised a Partnership Event in Brussels on 30 June on the role of regional and inter-governmental organisations in the humanitarian architecture.

World Humanitarian Summit

1. Context

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) will take place in Istanbul on 26-27 May 2016. It will aim to: 1) catalyse global partnership among all stakeholders; 2) reconfirm the basic humanitarian values and principles; and 3) commit to an 'agenda for change'. A report from the UN Secretary General will steer the discussions at the WHS. It will be published by early 2016, building on various consultations carried out in 2014-2015. It will propose a focused 'action plan' post-2016 with concrete recommendations for its implementation, targeting issues that would result in the most critical and desired improvements. The four WHS themes (effectiveness, vulnerabilities and risks, innovation, conflicts) are gradually replaced by emerging priorities (conflicts, protracted crises, system change, financing, affected populations and local response), and those will most likely be at the centre of the discussions at the WHS.

2. Objective for 2014

The European Commission plays an important role in humanitarian aid as a leading donor and policy-setter with vast operational experience. Therefore, it has a responsibility to shape the outcomes of the WHS, and it is expected by many stakeholders to do so. In 2014, the EU should start preparing the WHS, including by providing input to the various stakeholder consultations and related studies.

3. Deliverables

The European Commission has been actively supporting the various WHS-related work streams, in particular:

- Support to European regional consultation: throughout 2014, ECHO co-chaired (together with Hungary and Finland) preparations to the European regional consultation that took place on 3-4 February 2015 in Budapest.
- Input to regional consultations: ECHO covered all consultations in other regions, either as participant (in West and Central Africa in June, and in South and East Africa in October 2014), or as a consultant in preparations (in South-East and North Asia in July 2014).
- Mobilising EU networks in support of the WHS: For example, ECHO's Partners Conference in November 2014 was dedicated to the WHS with a key note address by Dr Jemilah Mahmood, the head of the WHS Secretariat, and a panel discussion on the four WHS themes. Internally, ECHO established a dedicated Task Force, involving both headquarter and field offices to prepare its input to the various consultations.
- Involvement in other WHS-related and OCHA-led initiatives: ECHO contributed to an OCHA-led study on humanitarian effectiveness and on innovation that will feed into the WHS and participated actively in WHS related discussions in Geneva and New York.
- Support to WHS Secretariat: ECHO funded two posts in the WHS Secretariat, one in the thematic team and the other in outreach team dealing with regional consultations.

Communication Strategy

1. Context

DG ECHO's operations and policy priorities are supported by a proactive communication strategy to ensure accountability and transparency, whilst building understanding, awareness and support among and engaging with EU citizens, decision-makers and other stakeholders. To this end, DG ECHO develops its own information and communication actions and cooperates through its extensive network of humanitarian partner organisations on joint communication and outreach activities, including media relations.

2. Objectives for 2014

As established by successive Eurobarometer surveys, the EU's humanitarian aid actions, as well as the coordinated approach to disasters response inside and outside Europe, enjoy strong support from EU citizens¹. Throughout 2014, ECHO's communication activities aimed to underpin the high levels of understanding and support through transparent, accurate and easily accessible information. Providing timely quality information for media was an important priority, as was expanding the outreach via web-based communications and social media. Further strengthening joint communication approaches and actions with partner organisations also remained high on the agenda. Throughout 2014, communication on major and sudden-onset crises took priority over other types of actions.

3. Deliverables

Media outreach

In support of the media strategy and the work of the spokesperson service, DG ECHO provided around **150 press products, in particular press release, for publishing** via the Commission's central services or outside Europe, typically in the countries/region affected by disaster, as well as media speaking points, answers to written interviews and lines to take. In addition, **over 300 new or updated versions of fact sheets²** were published, providing a comprehensive overview of crises situations and EU's response as well as horizontal policies. Country and thematic **factsheets** experienced increasing demand with more than **130 000 downloads** in 2014 (almost doubling the 2013 result). Throughout the year, DG ECHO, on its own or in cooperation with partner organisations facilitated **media visits to EU funded humanitarian projects**, including during the Commissioner's visits to the field.

Priority Communication Actions

2014 saw an important surge in the number a humanitarian crises, in turn with significant impact on the planning and implementation of DG ECHO's communication activities. DG ECHO communication actions are designed to **underpin its strategic priorities and response to major crisis**. The unprecedented four level-3 crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and Central African Republic as well as the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and the armed conflict in Ukraine were all high on the communication agenda, as was the civil protection response to catastrophes in Europe and around the world. Thematic priorities included international humanitarian law, vulnerable groups of refugees and resilience.

Alarmed by the increase in attacks against humanitarian workers worldwide, at the occasion of the **World Humanitarian Day**, DG ECHO organised a comprehensive communication campaign, including a dedicated poster campaign in major transport hubs across nine EU countries with an outreach of 54 million citizens, and an extensive digital and media package supported by engaging social media activities. DG ECHO also organised dedicated communication actions for a number of other similar occasions such as World Refugee Day

¹ A new Eurobarometer from early 2015 confirms this overall picture.

² http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/factsheets_en.htm

and secured DG ECHO's presence and visibility at relevant **outreach events, such as Salon de Solidarité (Paris) and Aidex (Brussels)**.

2014 also marked the second anniversary of the awarding of the **Nobel Peace Prize** to the EU. DG ECHO continued to lead in preparing the communication aspects. The **EU Children of Peace**³ initiative was highlighted inter alia through the production of a music video bringing together beneficiary children and celebrity musicians in a strong visual production, which generated important outreach, including via social media.

Awareness Raising Campaigns with Partner Organisations

Close cooperation with humanitarian partners has remained integral to DG ECHO's communication strategy. Apart from ad hoc actions throughout the year (media trips, joint outreach activities and similar), three large-scale campaigns with partner organisations were implemented through grant agreements.

The **"Voices of Children in Emergencies"**⁴ campaign with UNICEF raised awareness on children living through natural disasters, food crises and armed conflicts. The campaign had a special focus on children in Jordan, Chad and the Philippines. It was rolled out across Europe with six local versions for: Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and Spain. The campaign was supported by Goodwill Ambassadors in six EU Member States. The campaign reached an estimated combined audience of over 260 million people throughout Europe and globally, with a social media audience of 67 million and almost 170 million through press, TV and online media.

The **"First Responders"**⁵ campaign with IMC-UK (International Medical Corps UK) put a human face on the priority issue of resilience. First Responders are the ordinary people like local teachers, nurses or farmers who strengthen their communities through the toughest of times and take extraordinary actions that save lives. The First Responders campaign included significant media milestones, such as launch event in London, broadcast in collaboration with MTV Europe of a 45-minute documentary showcasing DG ECHO's and IMC's work in action, social media messaging and online photo competition. Via its various platforms, the campaign reached over 100 million people. The MTV documentary alone had over 3 million viewers.

The **"Disaster Resilience Journal"**⁶ campaign with IFRC and 12 European Red Cross National Societies aimed to raise awareness among European citizens of increasing vulnerability to disasters and the DG ECHO-Red Cross partnership. An interactive web-documentary produced in 11 languages reached over 9 million sessions, impressions and email recipients. In addition, a series of live campaign events across various European cities reached an estimated 14 million participants and impressions, while joint traditional and online media outreach reached a circulation of well over 75 million. Finally, the campaign was also actively and extensively promoted via social media, reaching over 26 million impressions.

Website⁷

³ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/EU4children/index_en.htm

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/voices-of-children-in-emergencies_en

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/first-responders_en

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/disaster-resilience-journal_en

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

DG ECHO revamped its website in 2014 in line with DG COMM's web rationalisation and digital transformation processes. With a modern and fresh look, high-quality up-to-date content with daily stories from the field and attractive visuals, DG ECHO's website draws a **constantly growing number of visitors**. In 2014, the total number of visits to the website exceeded **1.6 million**, representing an more than 100% increase over four years. Unique visitors grew to **close to 740 000**, a **35% increase** since 2011. The number of page views reached over 3 million (a result slightly below 2013, reflecting the significant reduction in the number of pages, which was implemented as part of the site rewamp). Showing the human face of EU humanitarian aid and featuring personal accounts from ECHO experts and partners, **blogs** (stories, photos and video) are highly visited with some **113 000 page hits** in 2014.

Social Media

DG ECHO implements a proactive social media strategy. The immediate outreach of social media makes them particularly well-suited for DG ECHO's core business, demanding rapid and targeted dissemination of information on crisis developments and the EU's response. Social media is actively deployed also to drive further traffic to the website. The following accounts are primarily used: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr (photo), YouTube (AV).

On **Facebook**⁸, the increase of followers and outreach in 2014 has been remarkable. The number of followers almost doubled in 2014 to reach 68 742 followers at the end of December (**98% increase year-on-year**) as a result of frequent posting, combined with powerful visuals in the form of photos infographics and videos on the work of DG ECHO and its partners. Additionally, Facebook was used to underpin all public awareness campaigns and consequently boosted the reputation of DG ECHO.

DG ECHO's **Twitter** account saw an **increase in followers of 258%** from 7040 to 18212 at the end of 2014. The use of Twitter chats, allowing citizens and specific target audiences to directly interact with DG ECHO, greatly enhanced the reputation and attractiveness of the account. Furthermore, by disseminating important information such as daily disaster maps and disaster information, along with providing key quotes from important humanitarian events further increased the appeal of the account to Twitter audiences. Finally, the mobilisation of the account as part of joint awareness raising campaigns with partner organisations, contributed to raising DG ECHO's visibility and profile.

As part of its outreach activities, DG ECHO maintains on **Flickr** a large archive⁹ of free-of-charge photos, mainly illustrating the EU-funded field operations. Launched in April 2012 and **reaching 7 900 197 views in 2014**, the Flickr-hosted archive had a monthly average of 500 000 views. DG ECHO's video archive hosted on **YouTube**¹⁰ recorded **72 713 views** in 2014; an increase of 64% compared to the previous year.

Publications

DG ECHO also publishes a streamlined and narrowed down selection of printed publications with a gradual shift to digital format to ensure the largest potential outreach. Almost 55 000 publications were distributed, including both printed and electronic versions.

Visitors and citizens' inquiries

DG ECHO regularly receives **visitors groups** to explain EU's action in the field of humanitarian aid and civil protection. In 2014, on average two per month of such general

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/ec.humanitarian.aid>

⁹ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/69583224@N05/>

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/user/HumanitarianAidECHO?gl=BE>

presentations, were given to different visiting groups (students, academia, journalists, stakeholders).

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

1. Context

The third United Nations Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Sendai, Japan (14-18 March 2015) reviewed the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action adopted in 2005, and adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

The EU has taken a leading role in building a robust, ambitious and enhanced framework, placing disaster risk reduction as a key element of sustainable development efforts and defining further steps to reduce risks and foster disaster resilience.

2- ECHO role during the negotiations

In 2014, ECHO coordinated the preparation of an EU position on the new framework. A Commission Communication on 'the post 2015 Hyogo Framework for Action: Managing risks to achieve resilience' was adopted in March 2014 ((COM 2014)216). Throughout the negotiations in Geneva (starting in July 2014 with open-ended negotiation meetings), the EU spoke with a common voice reflected in Council Conclusions adopted in June 2014.

3. EU position on the new framework

In the Communication, the European Commission built its recommendations upon the past achievements in disaster risk management of a range of EU policies including civil protection, environmental protection, internal security, climate change adaptation, health, research and innovation and external action. These achievements are an important EU contribution towards building a coherent policy on disaster risk management at European and international levels.

The key proposals of the Communication were the following:

1. More transparency and better governance: The European Commission suggested governance standards, periodic peer reviews and the collection and sharing of globally comparable data on disaster losses and hazards.
2. A focus on results: the European Commission proposed the introduction of targets and measurable actions to reduce disaster risks.
3. A contribution of disaster risk reduction to sustainable and smart growth: All major infrastructure and projects should be risk-sensitive and climate-and-disaster-resilient. Innovative technologies and instruments to support disaster management should be further encouraged, in order to lead to increased business opportunities and contribute to green growth.
4. Special attention to the most vulnerable: The Commission promoted a more gender sensitive new framework to target vulnerable groups such as children, elderly people, and persons with disabilities, the homeless and the poor
- 5- Coherence with the international agenda (financing for development, climate change, and sustainable development goals)

Gender

1. Context

The European Commission is pursuing efforts to strengthen its gender capacity, following recommendations from a Gender Review, commissioned by DG ECHO in 2009.

2. Objective for 2014

The objective for 2014 was to support the implementation and dissemination of the humanitarian gender policy. The Commission's Staff Working Document on Gender in Humanitarian Assistance: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance (SWD (2013)290final) was adopted on the 22 July 2013 and outlines the Commission's approach to gender and gender-based violence in humanitarian aid. To support policy implementation and coherence, the Commission also introduced a Gender-Age marker, which applies to all projects funded by DG ECHO as of January 2014.

3. Deliverables

The Commission's Staff Working Document on Gender in Humanitarian Assistance: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance, outlines the Commission's approach to gender and gender-based violence in humanitarian aid. The Staff Working Document recognises that natural disasters and human-made crises are not gender neutral, but have a different impact on women, girls, boys and men. Thus, the principal objective of this document is to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance by systematically tailoring responses to the specific needs of women and men of all ages. The specific objectives, based on the gender-related commitments made in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid are: gender integration, participation and protection. In its framework for operations the policy outlines three different types of interventions to pursue the objectives: mainstreaming, targeted actions and capacity building.

To support policy implementation and coherence, the Commission has also introduced a Gender-Age marker which applies to all projects funded by DG ECHO as of January 2014 and became mandatory as of 1 July 2014. This tool is designed to foster and track gender- and age- sensitive programming. Each proposal receives a mark between 0-2 depending on how many of four criteria that are met. The four criteria to assess how strongly humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations are: 1) Gender and age analysis, 2) Adapted assistance, 3) Negative effects, and 4) Adequate participation. The gender-age marker was developed in collaboration with ECHO staff, partners and independent gender experts, including a senior GenCap. In 2014, ECHO offered 9 trainings on this tool to staff and partners, 3 at HQ and 6 at field level. A first assessment/"lessons learned" report are planned for June 2015.

On 2014 ECHO further strengthen its internal capacity on gender and age by recruiting a Global Gender Expert, based in Nairobi. Since 1 November 2014 ECHO also introduced a Code of Conduct that applies to both the professional and personal life of ECHO expatriate staff based in the field. The Code of Conduct includes strong language that forbids sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries.

The EU has been actively involved in the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies since the initiative was launched by the UK during the high-level "Keep Her Safe" in London in November 2013. In 2014 ECHO has been working together with DG DEVCO and the EEAS to translate all the EU's commitments made in 2013 into concrete actions, both at the programmatic (increased support for tackling GBV in the Syria crises) and political level (policy dissemination and capacity building). In 2014 the US took

over the Call to Action and in September the US Secretary of State, John F. Kerry, hosted a follow-up event during the UNGA session where MD Marinaki spoke on behalf of the EU. After the US took over the Call for Action last autumn ECHO has been actively involved in the development of an Call to Action Road Map, which aims to formulate a shared set of priority actions by GBV actors and other key humanitarian actors to strengthen the collective efforts to address GBV during and in the aftermath of conflict and natural disasters. ECHO is a member of the steering committee and also one of the focal points for the states/donors working group. ECHO will continue support and contribute to the on-going road mapping process. This process also complements other on-going EU processes like the new action plan on Human Rights and Democracy and the second EU Gender Action Plan for External Action.

Aid Effectiveness

1. Context

Aid effectiveness is one of the main thematic areas around which the discussions of the humanitarian community have been focusing in the context of preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) taking place in 2016 in Istanbul. In a context of the ever widening gap between humanitarian needs and funding, and the increasing variety of actors involved in humanitarian assistance, the aim is to develop a clearer common understanding of humanitarian effectiveness and strategies how to enhance it.

The EU, as one of the major humanitarian donors, is a good reference and driver for best practice in advancing aid effectiveness. Its approach to humanitarian effectiveness is reflected in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (section 3.3) – notably involving issues of the speed, quality, and suitability of aid delivery in line with internationally recognised standards and principles. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the global architecture for aid delivery needs to be streamlined and improved.

In view of increasing effectiveness and cost efficiency of humanitarian operations, there is a need to look also into new and innovative financing sources and modalities, including reducing of transaction cost. Presently humanitarian actors still need to improve their situation analysis and their determining of common priority response actions. Prioritising limited resources is the pre-requisite to make gains in effectiveness and programming/operational quality. Improved coordination and accountability for the collective as well as individual performance in aid delivery thus remain primary requirements for aid effectiveness.

2. Objective

The objective for 2014 was to develop ECHO's contribution and leadership in the debate around aid effectiveness in the context of the WHS and regional consultation process, in particular focusing on few selected priority areas¹¹ where ECHO sees a potential positive impact on the overall effectiveness of the system, and to promote these in the context of the discussion on the WHS, with a special focus on the Regional Consultation that took place in Budapest on February 3 and 4, 2015.

3. Deliverables

¹¹ The selected priority areas for aid effectiveness for ECHO are the following: Accountability, Better Information for Better Decisions and Improving Quality, Measurability through the use of Key Result Indicators and Marker Systems.

ECHO has presented in June 2014 an Issues Paper on Humanitarian Effectiveness for the Informal Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) in preparation of the World Humanitarian Summit. This paper highlights the main issues for the EU with regards to humanitarian effectiveness, provides an analysis of the challenges and opportunities of each and proposes a few key discussion points about the role of the EU in streamlining the global architecture for humanitarian aid delivery to improve its efficiency, promoting a broader application of good practice within and beyond the EU and advancing humanitarian effectiveness on the basis of Speed & Quality, Measurability, Accountability and Modalities & Tools.

Following the informal COHAFA, a mapping exercise has been carried out to identify a number of examples that demonstrate where recent policy work has already put the EU in the vanguard on the key elements of humanitarian effectiveness that had been identified in the Issue Paper. Among other examples, the establishment of sectorial and cross-cutting policy standards for quality aid delivery, the work on Disaster Risk Management, INFORM, cash-based assistance, support to local capacities, the use of Key Result Indicators and Marker Systems (Gender & age marker, resilience marker) as well as ECHO's engagement with the Global Clusters were highlighted by this mapping exercise as initiatives that improve aid effectiveness and the functioning of the humanitarian system.

The issue paper and mapping exercise were both feeding into the WHS Scoping Paper on Humanitarian effectiveness that was developed in preparation of the Regional Consultation for Europe held in Budapest in February 2015. As co-leader together with OECD, Canada and Finland and moderator on this topic at the WHS European Consultation, ECHO has been actively involved in the preparations of the Consultation through providing inputs to the drafting of the breakout group questions and background notes and common messages on aid effectiveness in Budapest.

In parallel, internal reflection papers on Humanitarian Financing and financial tracking were produced to highlight the idea that the scale of needs calls for not only for an increase in funding levels to close the gap between needs and resources, but new, innovative and flexible sources of funding must be found and scaled up on one hand, and existing resources must be used in a more effective and coordinated way on another hand (including public, private, diaspora, national and international sources), and targeted to where the need of affected people are greatest. This would require better and more transparent financial tracking of humanitarian aid from all donors down to the beneficiaries, which would also improve accountability both to affected populations and to donors' constituencies and beyond.

Last, but not least, ECHO provided financial support to the WHS Secretariat in New York through the 2014 ERC funding instrument.

EU Children of Peace Initiative

1. Context

As the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the EU for its contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe, the EU decided to dedicate the award to help children affected by conflict.

2. Objective for 2014

In 2012 ECHO launched a dedicated funding line for humanitarian projects aimed to help children affected by conflict through education in emergencies, the so-called EU Children of Peace Initiative. In 2012, 2 M EUR was allocated to 4 projects providing education to 28,000 children. In 2013, 4 M EUR was allocated to 9 additional projects benefiting 80,000 children.

In 2014 the Commission increased the funding to 6 712 500 EUR, including €500 000 contribution assigned revenue from the government of Luxemburg and €250 000 contribution assigned revenue from the government of Austria. A funding decision and call for proposals for humanitarian projects aimed at assisting children affected by conflict through education, was published in May 2014 and the projects were selected during a steering committee that took place 16 July 2014.

3. Deliverables

As a result of the 2014 call, 12 additional humanitarian projects providing education in emergencies was selected in 10 countries, benefitting an additional 155 000 conflict-affected children worldwide:

In Cameroon, UNICEF will ensure that all children and adolescents in the seven targeted refugee sites and in their hosts' villages benefit from psycho-social assistance and have access to quality continuous education.

In Central Africa Republic, Save the Children supports 27 schools in providing conflict-sensitive education in a healthy and protective learning environment to 16 630 highly vulnerable children.

In Democratic Republic of Congo, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and AVSI will grants children affected by conflict quality education in a safe environment in North Kivu.

In Mexico and Guatemala, UNHCR tackles the serious education and protection issues for unaccompanied children forced to displacement in the Central America region.

In Myanmar, Plan-DE provides quality primary education and life skill education, including peace education, mine risk education and DRR for 11 508 children and adolescents.

In Niger, IRC provide assistance to 10 000 Malian refugee children in five Malian camps in Tillaberi and Tahoua regions and to Nigerian refugees, Nigerian returnees, and affected host communities.

In Somalia, Concern provides 6000 children with access to quality primary education; establish safe, child-friendly learning environments; and enhance the quality of learning in schools by supporting curriculum development, training and incentivising teachers.

In Sudan, ZOA create 'safe haven' schools, where particularly vulnerable children (IDPs, victims of violence) in Darfur are given the opportunity to learn, play and heal in a protective environment. Psychosocial support and recreational therapy are also provided.

In Tanzania, IRC provide age appropriate classrooms and educational learning materials and a safe play area in order to ensure children learn in a safe and protected environment. Child protection mechanisms will also be strengthen.

In Turkey, UNICEF and Concern will ensure access to primary education and psycho social to Syrian refugees' living out of camps.

Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Context

ECHO supports DRR as an integral part of humanitarian action through a community based and people-centred approach. Our action focuses on supporting local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to natural disasters through a combination of community-based projects and projects at national or regional level aimed at increasing resilience.

2. Objective for 2014

In order to ensure coherence in the programming and funding of its DRR actions, to establish best practice in disaster risk reduction, including successful strategies in scaling up of DRR projects, and to position ECHO DRR funded programmes, such as DIPECHO, in the context of resilience-building strategies overall, two DRR objectives were established for 2014:

1. Develop, test and apply the "DRR for Resilience" training course in support of the DRR policy guidelines finalised in 2013.
2. To mainstream DRR – and DIPECHO type action – within Humanitarian Implementation Plans and resilience strategies. To include development and testing of a DRR section to the Integrated Analysis framework.

3. Deliverables

The DRR for Resilience Course was tested at HQ level before being further developed at regional workshops conducted in Central America, the Caribbean and Asia for EU delegations, ECHO field staff and Member states. The training materials and course are now established and will be delivered by ECHO field staff.

A full review of the DIPECHO programme took place with operational units and the ECHO DRR working group. In December 2014 an approach paper was agreed setting out the parameters for how DRR would be prioritised for better results:

- Geographical prioritisation would be on the basis of needs and vulnerabilities through a new evidence-based analysis tool (InfoRM, IAF Section D).
- Full integration in regional/country/crisis strategies where relevant to concretely link with humanitarian assistance and other DRR/resilience strategies while enhancing synergies with the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.
- A wider approach to risk mitigation to better address context-specific situations linked with conflict, fragility and insecurity.
- Allocation of the DP budget on an annual instead of bi-annual basis.
- Embedding of civil protection expertise in DIPECHO projects and use of innovative elements of new CP legislation (advisory missions, satellite mapping), promoting more linkages with, and engagement by humanitarian assistance.

2014 ECHO DRR commitments

13% of ECHO's humanitarian funding went to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities in 2014. DRR, as part of the broader Resilience Building approach, was integrated into 48% of all ECHO funded projects. The highest proportion of ECHO's DRR funding was spent in

Africa (41%), followed by Asia & Pacific (27%), Latin America & Caribbean (11%) and the Middle East (10%).

Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) funding

1. Context

The Commission is committed to supporting the development and strengthening of the global humanitarian aid system namely in terms of collective preparedness and response capacity. In order to do so, ECHO has set aside funds for humanitarian capacity building, the Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC). Its overall rationale is that investments into the global humanitarian system lead to more rapid and more cost effective humanitarian responses, allowing a better and broader humanitarian coverage. The ERC thus provides funding on a strategic and global level which cannot be covered under regional or country programming.

The Enhanced Response Capacity funds projects of up to two years duration implemented by non-governmental organisations and international organisation partners. Proposals for ERC funding should demonstrate their potential to achieve capacity outcomes and effects for the humanitarian system as a whole (as opposed to individual humanitarian organisations). That is why projects put forward by a consortium of organisations and co-funded by other donors are particularly appreciated.

2. Objective for 2014

As defined in the ERC guidelines valid for 2014, it focuses on seven areas of global needs: (1) Resources (human and technical, namely in terms of surge capacity); (2) Coordination and roll out of the Cluster approach; (3) (Rapid) Needs assessment and related methodologies; (4) Emergency Preparedness, Disaster Risk Reduction and Early Warning; (5) Local Capacity Building; (6) Quality, accountability and respect of humanitarian principles and laws; (7) Logistics and other needs including security.

3. Deliverables

In 2014, 21.5 Million Euros were made available for the ERC to support 14 new capacity building projects. This includes innovative approaches like cash and vouchers transfer modalities and sustainable energy solutions for food utilization. Specific funding has also been provided to the global clusters for Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM), Nutrition and protection as well as the cluster working group on early recovery. As small follow-up grant allowed 'Quamed', an initiative ensuring quality of locally procured medicine supported by ERC since its launch in 2012, to move towards full sustainability through contributions by its increasing number of members.

Health

1. Context

Health is both a core sector of humanitarian aid interventions, and the main reference for measuring overall humanitarian response. Over the past decade DG ECHO has allocated an

average of around € 200 million on humanitarian health per year, which accounts for 20% – 30% of global humanitarian health funding¹².

Over 300 million people each year are in need of humanitarian health assistance as a result of natural disasters and conflicts. With the global trends of climate change and a growing and ageing population, together with the increasing frequency and scale of natural disasters and the persistency of conflicts, these humanitarian health needs are continuing to increase.

In addition, the role of health in humanitarian settings is both changing, and becoming more important. On the one hand, this is due to the persistent weakness of health systems in many of the areas of potential and active humanitarian health interventions. On the other hand, the changing role is related to the increasing range of health services now expected of health in humanitarian settings. For example, the change of disease patterns towards chronic non-communicable diseases, and the health risks associated to growing urban populations bring new challenges that need to be addressed with new strategies and approaches.

2. Objective for 2014

In 2014 DG ECHO set out its approach to humanitarian health in its 'Humanitarian Health Guidelines'¹³. These comprise General Guidelines for the overall approach, and specific Technical Guidelines, as well as Decision Trees.

In a single reference document, these Guidelines provide the basis for a coherent approach, setting out best practice and quality in humanitarian health delivery, and promoting improved coordination and advocacy on humanitarian health.

3. Deliverables

In February, Humanitarian Health Guidelines were formally approved and disseminated.

The West Africa Ebola crisis was the major test in the health sector in 2014. The ECHO Technical Guidance on Health proved to be wholly appropriate. From the policy position set out in the guidance, an analysis of the global response to the Ebola outbreak was conducted, and the weak points identified – notably in global humanitarian health governance.

At the Global Health Forum in November, the work of the Guidelines was promoted and discussed with aid agency partners and other Commission Services involved with humanitarian health response.

Following its analysis of the short-comings in the West Africa Ebola outbreak, DG ECHO was closely involved in the coordinated EU position for the negotiations for reform of global health governance, and notably the Resolution adopted by the WHO Executive Board on January 25, 2015.

¹² : According to UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/health2014_general_health_guidelines_en.pdf

Humanitarian Food Assistance and the Food Assistance Convention

1. Context

The EU's approach towards food security and humanitarian food assistance in external assistance is set out in the Communications on the EU's Food Security and Humanitarian Food Assistance Policies¹⁴ and subsequent Council Conclusions of May 2010¹⁵. Since the end of 2012, this policy framework has been further developed to include comprehensive and innovative policies on resilience, nutrition and gender, each of which will have a significant impact on the way we tackle food insecurity.

The EU's commitment to effective humanitarian food assistance is also demonstrated through its commitment to implement the Food Assistance Convention (FAC), of which the EU is a member since December 2014. As of April 2015, 11 EU Member States¹⁶ have signed, ratified, accepted or approved the FAC, with a further 2 MS working towards accession.

2. Objective for 2014

DG ECHO is keen to take a leading role in implementation of the FAC, in line with its policy direction, which has seen a shift from food aid to food assistance, promoting cash-based assistance, where appropriate and using the FAC as a platform to push forward the policy agenda and innovative ideas and approaches in international fora. Roll out of the Food Assistance policy is also to continue.

3. Deliverables

DG ECHO is promoting the use of the most effective modality to deliver food assistance. The thematic policy document on the use of cash and vouchers, published in December 2013, is widely used by ECHO and its partners. The EU's response to the Syria regional crisis has been the catalyst to boost cash-based assistance and to refine strategic and policy thinking on its potential. This has resulted in the development of common principles for multi-purpose cash-based assistance, which will be the subject of Council conclusions in 2015. Support to key partners, such as WFP and UNHCR, through the ERC facility, has been instrumental in encouraging a shift towards cash-based assistance.

Roll out of the Food Assistance policy has continued with the development of e-learning modules and policy papers on social protection and safety nets and on the integration of protection in food assistance programming initiated. These activities will be completed during 2015.

The EU's financial commitment under the FAC for 2014 was € 300 million – this was successfully honoured and it will increase to € 350 million in 2015. As Vice-Chair in 2014, the EU played a key role in the work of the FAC, contributing to policy discussions, through the FAC seminars, on cash-based assistance and resilience. In November 2014, the Food Assistance Committee, a committee consisting of the Parties to the Convention, elected the EU as Chair from 2015 for one year.

¹⁴ COM(2010)127 and COM(2010)126

¹⁵ Doc. 9597/10

¹⁶ Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Discussions have begun in Estonia and the Czech Republic.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

1. Context

International law – including international humanitarian law (IHL), human rights law and refugee law – provides the normative framework that underpins the operating environment of humanitarian action, including both assistance and protection. In doing so, it spells out the obligations of duty bearers (primarily, but not only, States) regarding fundamental issues such as, inter alia, the right to receive humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians (including medical and humanitarian personnel and objects), as well as the specific protection rights of refugees, women and children.

The ratification of treaties, dissemination of information on their provisions to all duty bearers (states and non-state actors) and, above all, the full implementation of these legal provisions in practice are therefore fundamental to the shaping of what may be described as an enabling operating environment for humanitarian action.

2. Objective for 2014

To continue outreach for both general and case-specific advocacy for the respect of international law, including IHL, human rights law and refugee law, as well as for the humanitarian principles, through all EU policy channels and in all relevant international bodies, such as the United Nations, and across governments and institutions.

To continue disseminating information and providing training on IHL and the humanitarian principles, as an important aspect of promoting compliance with IHL and for enhancing awareness of its provisions among relevant professionals, especially those working in contexts where IHL is often violated.

3. Deliverables

During 2014, ECHO continued to strengthen its advocacy for respect of international humanitarian law (IHL) in the framework of EU humanitarian aid. Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2139 on 22 February, Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva issued a statement welcoming the resolution, which focuses on humanitarian access inside Syria, and calling for it to be translated into action on the ground. The Commissioner also took the opportunity to reiterate that all parties to the conflict should respect international humanitarian law. Throughout 2014 the Commission continued to advocate the full implementation of the resolutions related to humanitarian access and international humanitarian law inside Syria in all forums, including the High-Level Ministerial Event on the Humanitarian and Development Situation in Syria chaired by Commissioner Georgieva on 23 September, during the UN General Assembly week.

In 2014, the EU continued to provide financial support to a project enhancing the International Committee of the Red Cross's capacity to provide IHL training and dissemination for military/security forces and armed non-state actors in key conflict affected countries, namely Iraq, Colombia and the DRC. The EU also continued to fund the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action and Geneva Call for a project under which trainings of armed non-state actors on IHL take place in Sudan; the action also supported a meeting of signatories of the Deeds of Commitment in order to review and promote the implementation of the Deeds.

Nutrition

1. Context

The adoption of the Communication 'Enhancing maternal and Child nutrition in external assistance' and the DG ECHO Staff Working Document on 'Addressing undernutrition in emergencies' in 2013 reflects the increasing commitment of the EU towards nutrition as well as a shift in the approach to address undernutrition. This policy framework and commitment are further reinforced by the Resilience policy and action plan and the gender policy, which address fundamental issues in relation to nutrition: multitude of causes, anchored in structural issues, fragility to risks and hazard, specific vulnerabilities based on gender and age.

2. Objective for 2014

The development and wide adoption of the CMAM (Community-based Management of Malnutrition) approach over the last decade has allowed humanitarian assistance to save more lives than ever before. However, implementation of nutrition policy continues to be supported by a strong commitment to improve effectiveness through:

- Improving the quality and effectiveness of responses
- Supporting partners to develop and adopt more efficient approaches
- Promoting a multisector approach to nutrition to enhancing prevention
- Moving away from the traditional divide between development and humanitarian assistance and between the different forms of undernutrition

3. Deliverables

- Dissemination of the policy and existing guidance within ECHO and with partners to enhance the quality and effectiveness of responses, through support to country strategies, operations and dialogue with partners
- Development and dissemination of a new guidance on Infant and Young Children in Emergencies to fill an important gap in understanding and to address appropriately the specific nutrition needs of young children, women and carers across sectors
- Initiate work with partners on developing specific guidelines to enhance nutrition outcomes in the WASH and Health sectors
- Active consultation and dialogue with partners and other donors on innovative approaches to treat and prevent undernutrition. 3 key priorities have been identified and pursued:
 - Improving CMAM performance
 - Developing and implementing a multisector approach to nutrition
 - Strengthen the joint humanitarian and development approach to nutrition

Policy Support/INSPIRE

1. Context

In order to improve the coherence, quality, effectiveness and overall impact of European Union funding, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) is developing a range of policy products. To ensure the highest quality for these products requires the engagement of expertise in the areas concerned.

2. Objective for 2014

The specific objective is to provide ECHO staff with expertise to assist policy development in support to humanitarian aid actions. The expected results of the contract are the following:

- Policy development and thematic guidance improved
- Seminars, workshops tailored to participants' needs designed and deployed
- Policy dissemination and knowledge sharing methodologies improved and relevant tools developed

3. Deliverables

Research papers have been developed, training workshops were organized, and dissemination materials were developed:

- Mapping study on Public Private Partnerships for humanitarian action
- Voluntary pool of asset study: quality and interoperability requirements for modules and other response capacities and process for a certification procedure for the capacities made available by Member States
- Market assessment in Lebanon to support the cash reflection
- Nutrition: Infant and Young Children Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) guidance note
- Testing of the resilience marker
- Innovation: knowledge and information management through the setting up of an innovation group on capacity4dev
- Workshops/trainings for ECHO staff and partners: protection, gender and DRR

Resilience

1. Context

In October 2012, the Commission presented its Communication “The EU Approach to Resilience-

Learning from Food Crises”, which sets out key policy principles for action to help vulnerable communities in crisis-prone areas build resilience to future shocks. Drawing on experiences in

addressing recurrent food crises (mainly in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel) and with the aim of

widening the scope and enhancing the effectiveness of the EU’s responses, this was followed by the 2013-2020 Commission staff working document, "Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries" to put commitments into practical application – ensuring the inclusion of resilience as a key consideration of all EC Development assistance and all humanitarian implementation plans. The EU resilience approach is focused on people, prioritising the most vulnerable.

2. Objectives for 2014

The EU intends to place resilience as a central objective of all development and humanitarian assistance in fragile and vulnerable countries. Development and humanitarian programmes must be focused on the areas and populations most at risk and work towards shared objectives– in support of Country and local strategies. Wherever possible a humanitarian response will set the foundations to build resilience in the longer term – to avoid future re-occurrence of crises.

The Resilience Action Plan is time bound and accountable, setting out measures to develop national and regional resilience capacities, build the understanding and evidence base for better resilience based approaches, and to develop methodologies and tools to support resilience – including EU procedures and mechanisms.

3. Deliverables:

After two years of intense work, 2014 has helped to institutionalise the resilience agenda at EU level as a mechanism for improved aid effectiveness, risk informed programming, flexibility and heightened accountability.

- There is solid progress towards reaching the objective of “Zero Hunger” in the Sahel within the next 20 years. Thirteen of seventeen countries are formulating their Country Resilience Priorities (CRP-AGIR).
- SHARE in the Horn of Africa. IGAD and all MS have developed Regional and Country Programming Papers. Four out of eight countries have developed country resilience priorities. In Kenya and Ethiopia these have been fully integrated into national development frameworks and are under implementation.
- Resilience is more systematically integrated into EDF programming, MIP and NIP design.. Strategic assessments to determine resilience objectives are being acted upon in a number of risk prone countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Haiti, Mali, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Jordan, South Sudan) with ECHO, DEVCO, Member states and other stakeholders.
- The majority of ECHO's HIPs prepared in 2014 include resilience requirements. The disaster preparedness programme (DIPECHO) will now be integrated into HIPs and contribute to longer term resilience strategies.
- On November 2014, ECHO introduced a quality "Resilience Marker" for all humanitarian projects. After a testing period it will become mandatory.
- Internal support systems are being developed deliver effective resilience approaches; joint DEVCO/ECHO resilience training was delivered in July 2014, and joint DRR for Resilience training has been conducted with delegations in three regions.
- The EU continues to develop and collect good practice for resilience. In Spring 2014 a high level Resilience Forum successfully brought together a diversity of experience to demonstrate that resilience concepts are increasingly being applied in a diversity of contexts by Governments and international agencies.

Union Civil Protection Mechanism

1. Context

Following the adoption of a new legal basis for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (Decision 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council), there was a need to prepare an Implementing Decision.

2. Objective for 2014

In order to start implementing certain new actions provided for in Decision 1313/2013/EU (voluntary pool, buffer capacities, training network), a speedy preparation and adoption of new implementing rules was necessary. The draft text was discussed at several meetings of the Civil Protection Committee and a final text was agreed in September 2014. Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU was adopted on 16 October 2014.

In the area of international cooperation, discussion on possible membership in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and its conditions was taking place with Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey in 2014. As a result of the discussion, these countries should join the Mechanism in 2015.

3. Deliverables

- Implementing Decision

With the adoption of the Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU all elements of Decision 1313/2013 can now be implemented. This includes the programme of training courses, the exercise programme, prevention and preparedness projects, the exchange of experts programme, as well as the creation of voluntary pool, increased transport funding for transport for assets registered in the voluntary pool, identification of gaps and buffer capacities. The increased transport co-financing should contribute to a higher willingness and ability of Member States to provide assistance. The voluntary pool was launched towards the end of 2014.

- International cooperation

Successful completion of negotiation on the membership of Montenegro and Serbia in the UCPM in 2014, they will become full participating states in 2015. Following the floods in Serbia and Bosnia, a regional flood protection programme was launched under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

- Marine pollution

Launch into operation the Internet based Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) for marine pollution emergencies at-sea and on-shore

Signature of the Working Arrangement between ECHO and the Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) on cooperation in the framework of maritime emergencies, including marine pollution preparedness, monitoring and response

- Solidarity Clause

ECHO has contributed to negotiations on the Council Decision (**2014/415/EU**) on the implementation of the Solidarity Clause (Article 222 TFEU), leading to its adoption in June 2014. The Decision foresees a very central role for the ERCC, as an invocation of the Clause shall be addressed to the Presidency of the Council, as well as to the President of the Commission through the ERCC, which shall also act as the central 24/7 contact point at the Union level and facilitate the production and distribution of Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) reports.

Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)

1. Context

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) was established within ECHO in May 2013 as a successor to the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), which for over 10 years was responsible for coordinating and facilitating disaster response in the framework of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Any country affected by a major disaster inside or outside the EU can make an appeal for assistance directly to the ERCC. The ERCC is also a platform for coordinating humanitarian aid and civil protection assistance within ECHO as well as a Commission crisis centre for coordinating disaster response especially in multi-dimensional disasters.

2. Objective for 2014

The general objective for 2014 was to enhance the response to emergencies through the implementation of the new CP legislation and making use of the ERCC capacities. This objective was successfully achieved.

3. Deliverables

The ERCC ensures 24/7 monitoring and immediate reaction to disasters all over the world. It coordinates European response to natural and man-made disasters so that help is efficient and matches the needs. The Centre collects and analyses real-time information on disasters, monitors hazards, prepares plans for the deployment of experts, teams and equipment, and works with Member States to map available assets and coordinate the EU's disaster response efforts by matching offers of assistance to the needs of the disaster-stricken country.

The ERCC provides operational support and integrated situational awareness and analysis for the coordination of disaster management actions of Commission departments (e.g. ARGUS) and with other relevant EU institutions, for example, in the case of the Solidarity Clause activation or in the framework of the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) arrangements. It is reinforcing its role as the platform for coordinating ECHO disaster response through both humanitarian aid and civil protection instruments.

A number of responsibilities and files linked to Transport and Logistics previously managed by other ECHO units have been regrouped in the Emergency Response Unit. ECHO Transport and logistics operations have developed in a significant way recently and are supported by the resources and 24/7 capacity of the ERCC.

As regards the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), the Centre is developing capacity to implement additional tasks stemming from the new CP legislation and its implementing rules. One of the key new elements is the voluntary pool of Member States' pre-committed assets, which became operational in October 2014. Four modules and other response capacities have been registered in the voluntary pool and the registration of 27 additional modules has been formally pledged so far. This pool has further improved the speed, quality and predictability of European response to disasters, and it has been already successfully used in the response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2014. Better planning and the preparation of a set of typical disaster scenarios have further enhanced the ERCC's capacity for rapid response. The ERCC also supports a wide range of prevention and preparedness activities, from awareness-raising to field exercises simulating emergency response. Advisory civil protection prevention and preparedness missions are continuously growing in number, also the deployment of UCPM experts to UN-led missions has significantly increased.