

Coordination with EU Donors in 2015

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 humanitarian aid contribution. Coordination with Member States mainly takes place in the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA). In 2015, the COHAFA was chaired by the Latvian and Luxemburgish Presidencies.

The working party, which brings together mostly representatives from capitals, met eleven times and held two informal meetings. In addition, the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC) discussed the Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection 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's and Member States' humanitarian aid activities in this area of parallel competence: there is a regular exchange on humanitarian aid policies/strategies; 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: the preparation of an EU position on the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 was the main area of activity in 2015 in this regard.

The Commission has increased its efforts to follow and contribute systematically to the work of the European Parliament and its main EP committees of relevance for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, such as the Development Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee (including Security and Defence for civil-military cooperation aspect and the subcommittee on human rights), the Environment Committee and the Budget/Budget Control Committees. In particular, the Commission worked closely with the Standing Rapporteur on Humanitarian Aid and the members of the Development Committee to raise awareness and interest in humanitarian matters.

2. Objectives for 2015

- Enhance coherence and coordination with Member States including through support to the COHAFA Presidency and improved exchange of information;
- Work with Member States towards an EU position on the WHS;
- Better link the humanitarian expertise from the COHAFA with the work of other relevant Council working parties;
- Follow and contribute to the work of different EP bodies.

3. Deliverables

- The Commission assisted the Presidency in the organisation and conduct of meetings of COHAFA, including by providing background or policy papers and situation/crisis reports;
- It 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;
- The COHAFA contributed common humanitarian messages to other Council working parties, which were used for the elaboration of Council conclusions/policy documents;
- The Commission 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.

Humanitarian Aid as "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, bringing 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. An Action Plan for 2015 was adopted on 10 April 2015 in the form of a Joint Staff Working Document¹, prioritising actions and presenting country cases for the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach.

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 2015

To maintain the established status of 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 by providing vulnerability analysis. A Joint Staff Working Document on Early Warning, to be adopted in 2016, sets up a system that integrates assessment from EU Humanitarian Aid. The Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department participated in Crisis Platform meetings on major crises, adding an additional layer of information and analysis to EU external action decision making. Its staff also contributed to two Political Framework for Crisis Approach (PFCA) documents on Libya and Boko Haram, and contributed to the CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) Lessons Learnt report. Humanitarian Aid continued to 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 South Sudan.
- Out: EU stakeholders recognised and accepted that, in line with the European Consensus, Humanitarian Aid is not a crisis management tool and cannot 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

¹ (SWD(2015) 85)

recognised that the allocation of EU humanitarian assistance was taken solely on the basis of identified needs.

European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

1. Context

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid has provided a common policy framework for the EU's and Member States' humanitarian action for nearly a decade. It sets out the fundamental principles and objectives of humanitarian action and provides guidance towards improved donor practice and coordination. A comprehensive Action Plan was adopted for 2008–2013 in order to trigger progress on the implementation of the Consensus. A Mid-Term review was carried out in 2010 which concluded that progress was overall good but it also identified scope for further action. Its findings were echoed in the independent evaluation on the implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid that was completed in 2014. The evaluation confirmed that the Consensus was still valid and valued however more would need to be done to implement it by the European Commission and, more importantly, the Member States. It provided a number of recommendations, e.g. to replace the Action Plan with a strategic implementation plan that would be developed in the Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) and introduce clear priorities rather than strengthening the overall implementation of the Consensus. Stakeholders, including Member States themselves, the European Parliament and implementing partners have also requested the elaboration of a follow-up implementation plan as a successor to Action Plan 2008–2013. As the timing coincided with preparations to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), work related to the Consensus was to take into consideration the developments of the WHS track.

2. Objective for 2015

In follow-up to the 2014 evaluation, draw up a new implementation framework for the Consensus that identifies clear priorities and ensures the involvement and buy-in of Member States.

3. Deliverables

- The Commission conducted several exchanges at the COHAFA throughout the spring of 2015 on the Consensus. The informal COHAFA in Riga, on 25-26 June 2015, was specifically dedicated to discussions on the future implementation of the Consensus and its priorities in order to generate ideas and momentum.
- The Commission consulted stakeholders, including the European Parliament and humanitarian partners to present its plans and seek views and input.
- The Staff Working Document on the Implementation Plan of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid was published on 27 November 2015. It identified three priorities for action during its 18-months duration: 1) upholding humanitarian principles and International Humanitarian Law (IHL); 2) a stronger needs-based approach; 3) enhanced coordination and coherence. Besides prioritisation, it also introduced two further novelties. First, it provided for the creation of a Task Force composed of the European Commission and volunteer Member States with the objective of facilitating and guiding the implementation. Second, it introduced country cases through which both Commission and Member States could look at the implementation of the Consensus in the field in order to better link policy and practice and help generate lessons learnt.

International relations

1. Context

The Commission, as one of the largest international humanitarian donors, maintains regular contacts with a plethora of interlocutors in the international arena. Through this engagement, the Commission 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" (ITA), a UN-led process to strengthen the effectiveness of the humanitarian system. The Commission – on behalf of the EU – also advocates for the strengthening of the international humanitarian system and for maintaining humanitarian space through relevant UN consultative and intergovernmental processes. The Commission's humanitarian aid strategic dialogues with key partners present also valuable opportunities to further discuss and explore strategic issues.

In addition, the Commission 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), 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: the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries (notably the United States, Norway, Switzerland, Canada and Japan), non-DAC countries (e.g. the United Arab Emirates, Turkey) and regional organisations such as the League of Arab States.

2. Objective for 2015

Engage at international and bilateral level in order to further improve the accountability and effectiveness, including coordination and leadership, of the humanitarian system.

3. Deliverables

Some concrete deliverables included:

- The Commission 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 the Commission's humanitarian field staff in order to monitor implementation;
- The Commission actively engaged in messaging on ITA and on the need for increased effectiveness of the humanitarian system in relevant executive boards of UN agencies with a humanitarian mandate (UNHCR, WFP, etc.);
- An OCHA field performance review for the ODSG was commissioned to provide valuable information in the endeavour to make the organisation more fit for purpose. The Commission also actively participated in the ODSG Geneva and New York meetings, as well as the ODSG mission to Turkey-Jordan-Lebanon in April 2015;
- The Commission continued its active engagement in intergovernmental processes at the UN, coordinating EU positions and negotiating on behalf of the EU the UN General Assembly and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) humanitarian resolutions. The Commission participated actively in the Humanitarian Segment of ECOSOC in June 2015 in Geneva;
- The support to the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) process was continued, including through high-level participation in meetings such as the annual High Level GHD meeting in June 2015 in New York;

- Humanitarian Strategic dialogues were conducted with the United States, complemented by monthly videoconferences, the ICRC, the UNHCR, the WFP and UNICEF;
- The Commission actively participated in the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It was closely involved in the preparation of the EU+MS statement on that occasion;
- Cooperation in the field of humanitarian aid was enhanced 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). The Commission participated at highest level in the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference (March 2015), and held its first high-level dialogue with Norway (June 2015) and first expert meeting with Japan (December 2015).

World Humanitarian Summit

1. Context

The first ever World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) will take place in Istanbul on 23-24 May 2016. The Summit has three main goals: 1) To re-inspire and reinvigorate a commitment to humanity and to the universality of humanitarian principles, 2) To initiate a set of concrete actions and commitments aimed at enabling countries and communities to better prepare for and respond to crises and be resilient to shocks, 3) To share best practices which can help save lives around the world, put affected people at the center of humanitarian action and alleviate suffering.

2. Objective for 2015

The 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 2015, the EU aimed to consolidate its preparations ahead of the WHS, including by providing input to the various stakeholder consultations and related studies, and by developing and disseminating its own position on the Summit.

3. Deliverables

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

- Co-chaired, together with Hungary and Finland, the "European and Others regional consultation", which took place on 3-4 February 2015 in Budapest;
- Provided input and participated in all regional, global and thematic consultations: in the Middle East and North Africa in March, in Latin America and the Caribbean in May, in the Pacific Region in June/July, and in South and Central Asia in July. The Commission also participated at high-level in the Global Consultation held in Geneva on 14-16 October 2015, the last in the series of multi-stakeholder consultations organised before the Summit;
- Remained involved in other WHS-related initiatives: the Commission attended at high-level the Global Forum for Improving Humanitarian Action held in New York in June 2015 and participated actively in WHS-related discussions in Geneva and New York, notably in the context of donor fora;
- Published and disseminated its own position paper ahead of the Summit following broad consultation. In September 2015, the Commission adopted the Communication "Towards the World Humanitarian Summit – A global partnership for principled and effective humanitarian action", which sets out the EU's vision for creating a global partnership for humanitarian action and concrete recommendations for reshaping humanitarian aid. It focuses on two priority areas: 1) principled humanitarian aid and 2) effective humanitarian action. This position was subsequently endorsed in the Council Conclusions of 10 December 2015 and the European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2015.
- Mobilised EU networks in support of the WHS: the Commission partnered with the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) to prepare a series of 'European Humanitarian Roundtables' to be held early next year in four European cities (Aix-en-Provence,

Uppsala, Warsaw and Dublin) to present and discuss the core themes and priorities of the WHS process and the EU's policy position towards the WHS.

Communication Strategy

1. Context

ECHO's operations and policy priorities are supported by a comprehensive and multi-media communications 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, ECHO develops its own communication actions and cooperates through its network of humanitarian partner organisations on joint communication and outreach activities, including media relations.

2. Objectives for 2015

As established by successive Eurobarometer surveys¹, the EU's humanitarian aid actions, as well as the coordinated approach to disaster response inside and outside Europe, enjoy strong support from EU citizens. Throughout 2015, ECHO's communication activities aimed to underpin continued 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 with partner organisations also remained priority. Throughout 2015, **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 (SPP), ECHO provided nearly 500 **press products, in particular press release, for publishing** via the Commission's central services or outside Europe (172), as well as media speaking points, draft articles and opinion pieces, answers to written interviews and lines to take. In addition, **over 250 new or updated versions of fact sheets**² were published, providing a comprehensive overview of crises situations and EU's response as well as horizontal policies. Factsheets were downloaded almost 300 000 times in 2015 (nearly 2.5 times more than in 2014). Throughout the year, 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

The surge in humanitarian crises continued throughout 2015, in turn with significant impact on the planning and execution of ECHO's communication activities. ECHO communication actions are designed to **underpin its strategic priorities and response to major crises**. The crises in Syria and its consequences for the neighbouring region, the refugee influx in Europe, and other major crises such as South Sudan, Central African Republic and Eastern Ukraine were high on the communications agenda along with large-scale natural disasters such as the devastating earthquakes in Nepal.

Thematic priorities included international humanitarian law (IHL) and education in emergencies. The latter was supported inter alia with a large-scale exhibition dedicated to children affected by the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in cooperation with humanitarian partners. As regards IHL, at the occasion of the **World Humanitarian Day** in August, ECHO organised an integrated awareness campaign focussing on the worldwide increase in attacks

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_434_en.pdf

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

against humanitarian workers. The action included a billboard campaign in major transport hubs across eight EU countries and Ukraine (outreach of over **50 million citizens**), advertisement in major print and digital media (reaching over **10 million readers**) and extensive social media activities.

ECHO also organised dedicated communication actions for a number of other international days such as World Refugee Day and Disaster Risk Reduction Day and secured ECHO's presence and visibility at relevant **outreach events**, such as Salon de Solidarité (Paris), Aidex (Brussels) and World EXPO (Milan). Among various activities in Milan, ECHO coorganised a large-scale photo exhibition jointly with WFP and a sold-out concert at the main EXPO hall.

Extensive communication support was likewise provided for the 2015 edition of the **Civil Protection Forum**, organised in Brussels in May. Activities included professional video production, development of visual identity and live social media coverage of debates.

Awareness Raising Campaigns with Partner Organisations

Close cooperation with humanitarian partners has remained integral to ECHO's communication strategy. Among strategic highlights of 2015, was the close cooperation in the area of communication, which got underway with the **International Committee of the Red Cross** (ICRC). With emphasis on reaching audiences in the EU, ECHO and ICRC co-organised a number of joint actions including an audiovisual production on resilience, a billboard campaign on protection of health care (IHL), a photo exhibition concerning humanitarian principles and a cinema spot addressing the issue of gender-based violence, alone reaching nearly **200,000** people in Brussels movie theatres (and scheduled to travel to other EU capitals).

Apart from ad hoc actions throughout the year (media trips, joint outreach activities, exhibitions and similar), two large-scale campaigns with partner organisations were implemented through grant agreements.

The campaign "**The Family Meal – what brings us together?**"³ with World Food Programme (WFP) presented EU food assistance in different environments through the universal concept of a family meal. The main product of the campaign, a photography exhibition with images from EU-funded food assistance projects in five countries, was viewed by over **21 million visitors** in 10 Member States in 2015. It was also featured prominently at the EU Pavilion during the Milan Expo with the related theme *Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life* as well as at 24 other venues across Europe. The social media component of campaign alone reach nearly **38 million users** on Twitter.

An integrated campaign "**EUsavesLives**"⁴ was organised jointly with NGO OXFAM aiming to raise awareness of the situation of refugees from South Sudan, CAR and Syria. The campaign had an estimated reach of **115 million people**, through media, advocacy and digital engagement. The main communications product, a professional documentary film about everyday life in the al-Zaatari, has been displayed and competing at film festivals both in Europe and throughout the world.

Website⁵

ECHO **relaunched its website** in July 2014 in line with DG COMM's web rationalisation and digital transformation processes. With a modern and fresh look, high-quality up-to-date

³ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/family-meal-what-brings-us-together_en

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/resources-campaigns/campaigns/eusavelives-you-save-lives_en

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

content including frequent news updates and human interest stories from the field, ECHO's website attracts hundreds of thousands of web-users every month.

In 2015, the total number of visits to the website was close to **1.7 million** (more than double the visits in 2011). Unique visitors grew to over 800,000. Showing the human face of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection and featuring personal accounts from experts in the field and partners, ECHO's blogs (stories, photos and videos) are also among the top web products with some 212,000 views in 2015 (nearly double the 2014 figure). In 2015, ECHO published on its website: 81 photo stories from crises areas around the globe, 93 audiovisual productions outlining EU-funded activities, and 153 written human-interest stories (more than double the stories published in 2014). Contributing to the impression of a dynamic website were also 135 news stories.

Social Media

ECHO implements a proactive social media strategy. The immediate outreach of social media makes them particularly well-suited for ECHO's core business, demanding rapid and targeted dissemination of information on crisis developments and the EU's response. ECHO strategically deploys social media to drive traffic to its web platform and supports the outreach of the Commissioner. The following accounts are primarily used: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr (photo), YouTube (AV).

ECHO is the second-most followed Commission service on **Facebook**, growing by almost one-third in 2015 (from 69 000 to nearly 110 000 fans). The account reached an average of 300 000 people per week in 2015.

On **Twitter**, ECHO is number 3 among Commission services as regards the number of followers (36 700) and average number of tweets per day. The followership nearly doubled on 2015 and had an average reach of 700 000 impressions per month. In addition, ECHO regularly hosts and participates in Twitter chats that reaching millions of citizens in interactive conversations on humanitarian issues.

ECHO's photo repository on **Flickr** features over 14 000 free-of-use photos from ECHO and its humanitarian partners. Photos have been viewed over 12 million times, averaging of 300 000 views per month. ECHO's audiovisual productions are available on the **YouTube** channel. The average of 6 000 views per month exclude views on Twitter and Facebook, which account for the majority.

Publications

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 45 000 publications were distributed, including both printed and electronic versions; a decrease from 2014, reflecting an overall shift away from publication towards more dynamic content.

Visitors and citizens' inquiries

ECHO regularly receives **visitors groups** to explain EU's action in the field of humanitarian aid and civil protection. In 2015, on average four per month of such general presentations, were given to different visiting groups (students, academia, journalists, stakeholders). This represented twice the number of presentations in 2014.



EU Aid Volunteers in 2015

1. Context

As envisaged by the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union established the EU Aid Volunteers initiative in 2014¹. The objective is to contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid and to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities in third countries, while giving the European citizens an opportunity to show solidarity with people in need through taking part in humanitarian action in these countries.

2. Objectives for 2015

The budget for the implementation of the initiative in 2015 was set at EUR 13 868 000 for the purpose of building capacities of hosting organisations in third countries and providing technical assistance for sending organisations based in the EU Member States; contributing to resilience building and disaster risk management in vulnerable, fragile or disaster affected countries and forgotten crises; preparing the selection, training and deployment of volunteers and the public launch of the initiative, establishment of the EU Aid Volunteers Platform, launch of the call for tender for the selection of the training provider, and various communication activities.

3. Deliverables

- **Certification:** All organisations wishing to send or host volunteers under the EUAV initiative **must be certified**. The certification process verifies that the high standards and procedures of volunteer management set to protect and manage volunteers during their deployment under the EUAV initiative can be fully realised and met by all participating organisations. A call for applications was published in January 2015. The objective is to compile a list of 100 certified sending and hosting organisations wishing to participate in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. 37 applications have been submitted, 13 sending organisations and 7 hosting organisations have been certified and no applications have been rejected by the end of 2015. The remaining 17 applications are being evaluated in 2016. Certification is an on-going process and applications will be accepted until 30 September 2020.
- **Technical assistance/Capacity building:** A call for proposals was published in January 2015 providing funding with a total budget of EUR 6 948 000 for the co-financing of projects for capacity building for hosting organisations and technical assistance for sending organisations in different areas such as disaster risk management, volunteer management, capacity to undergo certification, tools and methods of needs assessment, building partnerships, communication activities. Ten projects were selected for co-funding with a EU grant of EUR 4,872,715.51. Twenty-two organisations under technical assistance projects and 66 organisations under capacity building projects are involved in the implementation to strengthen their management and operational systems, and to work in partnership to implement best practices in humanitarian aid delivery and volunteer management.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ("EU Aid Volunteers initiative") (OJ L 122, 24.4.2014, p. 1).

- **Deployment:** Deployment of volunteers is one of the main actions under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. A call for proposals was published in July 2015 providing funding with a total budget of EUR 8,400,000 for the co-financing of projects for deployment of EU Aid Volunteers, including apprenticeship placement for junior professionals and capacity building and/or technical assistance for implementing organisations. The projects are to be implemented by a consortium of at least three certified sending and three certified hosting organisations. By 30 October 2015 (the deadline of the call for proposals) two applications involving 26 organisations were submitted. The evaluation of the applications and the signature of the grant agreements are to be finalised in 2016 with a maximum EU grant of EUR 1,392,442.17 and start of the implementation foreseen for June/July 2016.
- **Training Programme:** An open call for tender for training was published on 30 October 2015. The objective is to develop the training programme for the EU Aid Volunteers initiative; to provide training services to candidate volunteers; and to assess the competences of the candidate volunteers trained. The evaluation of the applications and the signature of the framework contract are to be finalised in the first half of 2016 with a training programme to be available to the candidate EU Aid Volunteers before their deployment.
- **Support Measures:** The Annual Work Programme for 2015 provides financial assistance of EUR 418,000 for support measures aiming at information and awareness raising of potential beneficiaries concerning the programme.

Among the support measures are the Info and Network Days, short movies production, conferences and the EU Aid Volunteers network. The network allows stakeholders to exchange best practice and increase participation. The key tool to enable the work of this network is the EU Aid Volunteers platform, which entered production in 2015. The platform under development by the Commission will support partners in the deployment of EU Aid Volunteers through providing a volunteer tracking system, enabling online volunteering and functioning as the database of EU Aid Volunteers. The platform will be launched in 2016, with its initial phase focusing on support for the first deployment projects.

In 2015 a unique visual identity for the EU Aid Volunteers initiative was developed comprising the EU flag, the name of the initiative and the EU Aid Volunteers slogan 'We Care, We Act'. It is being rolled out across the initiative, to be used by the Commission and all third parties participating in the initiative.

A Communication Plan 2015-2020 was approved in July 2015 outlining the communication strategy, objectives, key messages and possible communication activities underpinning the EU Aid Volunteers initiative. Implementation is undertaken by the Commission and third parties participating in the initiative primarily volunteers, sending organisations in Europe and hosting organisations in third countries.

The actions presented above are delegated to and implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency (EACEA) in cooperation with the Commission services². The division of tasks between the Commission and EACEA is based on Commission Decision C(2013)9189 of 18.12.2013 delegating powers to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency with view to performance of tasks linked to the implementation of Union programmes in the field of education, audiovisual and culture comprising, in particular,

² Commission Decision C(2013)9189 of 18.12.2013 delegating powers to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency with view to performance of tasks linked to the implementation of Union programmes in the field of education, audiovisual and culture comprising, in particular, implementation of appropriations entered in the general budget of the Union and of the EDF allocations (as amended by Commission Decision C(2015)658 of 12.2.2015).

implementation of appropriations entered in the general budget of the Union and of the EDF allocations. EACEA is an executive agency responsible for the implementation of the technical aspects of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative through calls for proposals, calls for tender and contract management thereafter and for the implementation of the corresponding budget appropriations in line with the annual work programmes adopted by the Commission.

In terms of operational management, the Commission remains directly responsible for setting up the Network of the EU Aid Volunteers, the central online platform and communications.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

1. Context

The Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction 2015-2030 was adopted by United Nations Member States at the third UN world conference on disaster risk reduction in March 2015 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly¹. The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015.

With the new framework, disaster risk reduction is firmly anchored as a key element of sustainable development efforts.

During the negotiations, Commission services, coordinated by DG ECHO, played a significant role on behalf of the EU in building an ambitious framework. Many of the Sendai recommendations are based on existing EU disaster risk management policies and programmes, such as the majority of the ongoing civil protection and humanitarian aid actions.

2. Objective for 2015

Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Action over the next 15 years will require strong commitment and political leadership.

Commission services, coordinated by DG ECHO, have been developing an action plan on the implementation of the new international framework to be published in 2016. Building on existing EU policy and legislation, the Action plan will assess the series of actions proposed, the targets and their implications for EU policies including those under DG ECHO's responsibility, and will identify a series of measures that could form the backbone of an EU risk-informed policy landscape.

DG ECHO is also playing an active role in the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group established to develop global indicators to measure global progress in implementation of the Sendai framework.

ECHO worked also with other Commission departments to promote disaster risk reduction in the negotiations on other international processes and agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Abba Action Agenda, and the 21st Conferences of the parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

3. Deliverables

The majority of ECHO's HIPs prepared in 2015 include resilience requirements, relevant also for Sendai implementation. Sendai implementation has also been addressed as a priority in the EU Aid Volunteers programme and in the prevention and preparedness projects under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

¹ A/RES/69/283, adopted by the General Assembly on 3 June 2015

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 2015

- Continue the 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 in the context of the World Humanitarian Summit preparations, and across governments and institutions.
- 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 2015, the EU continued to strengthen its advocacy for respect of international humanitarian law (IHL) in the framework of EU humanitarian aid. For example, in his statements on the attacks against the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Yemen of 25 August and 2 September 2015, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, the Commissioner called on all parties to the conflict to respect International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and to cease targeting humanitarian workers so that they can do their job and deliver humanitarian aid to people in need. Similarly, in his statement of 18 September 2015 on the attack on civilian areas of Aleppo, Syria, the Commissioner condemned all indiscriminate attacks on civilians and urged all parties to the conflict to respect IHL and the protection of civilians. Similarly, on the airstrikes against an MSF hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, in his statement on 3 October the Commissioner called on all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and ensure that health care facilities and humanitarian workers are protected.

In 2015, 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.

Protection

1. Context

(Humanitarian) protection refers to addressing violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse for persons and groups in the context of humanitarian crises, in compliance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and within the legal frameworks of International Human Rights Law, IHL and Refugee Law. Protection is not a matter of concern for humanitarian actors alone and other EU instruments are complementary, e.g. the funding instruments for crisis management, human rights, good governance and rule of law, development; political measures of CFSP (i.e. declarations, political dialogue and preventive diplomacy, sanctions), and military measures under the ESDP.

2. Objective for 2015

ECHO supports financially non-structural activities aimed at reducing the risk for and mitigating the impact on individuals or groups of human-generated violence, coercion, deprivation and abuse in the context of humanitarian crises, in compliance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

ECHO may finance responsive as well as remedial actions, but will in principle exclude environment-building actions. However, many activities (e.g. IHL dissemination and advocacy, reporting and persuasion) are difficult to categorise. In terms of partners, ECHO funds mandated international organisations, i.e. ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF; other specialised humanitarian partners, UN agencies, Red Cross societies and non-governmental organisations. Funding criteria in the field of protection are added value and recognised experience in protection.

ECHO has a three-pronged approach to protection projects:

- 1) At minimum, ECHO expects that protection is mainstreamed in all (geographic) assistance projects;
- 2) ECHO encourages partners to follow an integrated approach, where protection is actively used to enhance other sector access and/or where other sectors are actively used to enhance protection;
- 3) Targeted or stand-alone protection actions (e.g. through ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, NGOs), which also includes capacity building and strengthening of coordination mechanisms (e.g. ICRC, Geneva Call, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sexual and Gender-Based Violence guidance and tools, the Global Protection Cluster and field protection clusters).

3. Deliverables

During 2015, ECHO expanded its dedicated protection staff in the field to include a Global Thematic Coordinator on Protection in Amman, as well as two Technical Assistants on Protection (Amman and Yaounde).

ECHO continued to fund, under the Enhanced Response Capacity, a project to support capacity building of the Global Protection Cluster (ERC 2015).

ECHO also continued to roll out its dedicated protection training, undertaken since 2012 with the Inspire Consortium, to ECHO staff and partners.

The major task undertaken in 2015 involved the beginning of the revising and updating of the 2009 Protection Funding Guidelines to reflect recent developments in the area of protection.

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 Policies¹ and subsequent Council Conclusions of May 2010². 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 2016, 11 EU Member States³ have signed, ratified, accepted or approved the FAC.

2. Objective for 2015

ECHO is keen to continue rolling out of the Food Assistance policy and promote the use of innovative solutions to address all the pillars of food security in line with its mandate.

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.

3. Deliverables

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 2016.

ECHO is promoting the use of the most effective modality to deliver food assistance. In 2015, the use of cash based intervention in food assistance increased and reached the highest proportion ever (near 50%) in the history of ECHO. HFA is the sector where cash-based support is most advanced.

With its financial support and in particular with ERC funds, ECHO has supported its partners and a network of Universities to develop a series of innovative tools aimed at promoting the use of the most sustainable, efficient and environmentally friendly technologies for food utilization in emergencies. Among them is an open and free web-based decision support system, guidelines and e-trainings for humanitarian workers. ECHO also contributed to develop an emergency Livelihood Toolbox and promoted further capacity building on how to support sustainable livelihoods in emergency operations.

¹ COM(2010)127 and COM(2010)126

² Doc. 9597/10

³ Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The EU's financial commitment under the FAC for 2015 was EUR 350 million – this was successfully honoured with total food assistance surpassing EUR 424 million. As Chair in 2015, the EU played a key role in the work of the FAC, contributing to policy discussions, through the FAC seminars, on food assistance, gender and accountability and the World Humanitarian Summit, including a joint statement by FAC members to the WHS.

Nutrition

1. Context

The adoption of the Communication 'Enhancing maternal and Child nutrition in external assistance' and the 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 commitments 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 2015

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, there is a need for continued support for the implementation of this approach as well as a strong commitment to further improve quality and effectiveness of nutrition responses.

Therefore, the main strategic objectives of ECHO in nutrition, reflecting the increasing mobilisation towards innovation and effectiveness, open up a new phase:

- in the evolution of acute malnutrition **treatment** on the one hand, and
- in the **prevention** of malnutrition on the other hand through a multi-sector approach and the promotion of nutrition-sensitive programming.

This also includes moving away from the traditional divide between development and humanitarian assistance and between the different forms of undernutrition (stunting and wasting).

3. Deliverables

- Further dissemination of the policy and existing guidance within ECHO and with partners to enhance the quality and effectiveness of responses and prevention, through support to country strategies, operations and dialogue with partners
- Further dissemination of the guidance on Infant and Young Children in Emergencies to address appropriately the specific nutrition needs of young children, women and carers across sectors
- Finalisation and development of a dissemination strategy for the Technical Issue Paper (TIP) on WASH in NUT to enhance nutrition outcomes in the WASH and Health sectors.
- Development of an action plan for the process of integration of nutrition into the health systems and identification of two priority work streams: protection of nutrition

status through malaria prevention and minimum health package for nutrition action in contexts with no health service.

- Desk review finalised on "Maximising the nutritional impact of Humanitarian Food Assistance".
- Active consultation and dialogue with partners and other donors on innovative approaches to treat and prevent undernutrition. Key priorities have been identified and pursued:
 - Improving acute malnutrition treatment performance through active participation and support to global initiatives such as the SAM 2.0 agenda
 - Promoting a multi-sector approach to nutrition causal analysis, needs assessment and response analysis
 - Promoting inter-cluster coordination involving the Global Nutrition Cluster
 - Strengthening the joint humanitarian and development approach to nutrition

Cash

1. Context

ECHO has, over the last few years, been at the forefront of promoting the use of cash based interventions where beneficiaries receive cash instead of or in addition to in-kind assistance. ECHO encourages the use of multi-purpose cash-based assistance (MPCT), which corresponds to the amount of money that a household needs to cover, fully or partially, their basic needs.

2. Objective for 2015

ECHO is keen to expand its use of CBI and to maintain a leading role in the promotion and scaling up of CBI and MPCT with further a) advocacy, b) knowledge and c) tools.

3. Deliverables

ECHO expanded its use of cash and vouchers in 2015. Increases were observed not only for the Food Assistance sector, with up to 50% of its commitment expressed in CBI, but also in other sectors such as WASH, Shelter and Non Food Items.

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. In June 2015, the Council of the European Union adopted Conclusions on 10 Common Principles for Multi-Purpose Cash-Based Assistance. The principles introduce the notion of a humanitarian response across sectors to address basic needs, with dignity, flexibility and choice for beneficiaries. Council Conclusions provided political endorsement for the common principles and paved the way for greater advocacy with other donors and ECHO's partners, as well as in view of the World Humanitarian Summit. ECHO has also taken part in the High-Level panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, convened by DFID to examine the transformative potential of cash transfers for humanitarian responses and the humanitarian system.

The external evaluation on 'the use of different Transfer Modalities in ECHO Humanitarian Aid actions 2011 – 2014' was completed in 2015 (ADE, 2015). The study demonstrated that for ECHO funded actions, CBI are overall more efficient and effective than in-kind operations

and that further efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved by promoting CBI and particularly MPCT at scale. This provides a further impetus to reinvigorate efforts towards more and larger CBI programming.

With its financial support and in particular with the ERC funds, ECHO has supported its partners to develop MPCT tools. Among them the Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants, a complete Cash Toolbox and a Market Toolbox. CaLP training programmes have, with initial ECHO funding, provided training for hundreds of humanitarian experts on CBI in emergencies. Moreover a Cash and Markets Capacity Building Roster (CashCap) funded by ECHO is now in place to deploy senior cash and market programming experts to facilitate and strengthen capacity of the humanitarian sector to undertake and promote cash transfers in different contexts of a crisis or an emergency.

Gender

1. Context

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

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.

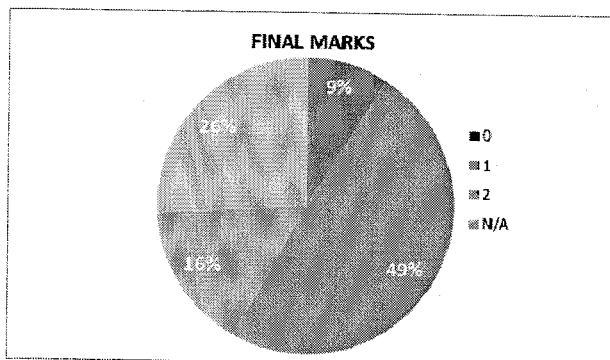
2. Objective for 2015

The objective for 2015 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 ECHO as of January 2014.

3. Deliverables

To support policy implementation and coherence, the Commission has introduced a Gender-Age marker which applies to all projects funded by ECHO as of January 2014 and became mandatory as of 1 July 2014. The Gender-Age Marker uses a set of four criteria to assess how strongly humanitarian actions are adapted to and integrate gender and age considerations: 1) Gender and age analysis, 2) Adapted assistance, 3) Negative effects, and 4) Adequate participation. Each proposal receives a mark between 0-2, a mark of 2 meaning that all 4 criteria are met. The gender-age marker was developed in collaboration with ECHO staff, partners and independent gender experts, including a senior GenCap.

In 2015, ECHO offered 7 trainings on this tool to staff and partners, 1 at HQ and 6 at field level. A first internal assessment/"lessons learned" was conducted during the autumn of 2015 and aimed to assess both ECHO's efforts to disseminate the Gender-Age Marker, as well as to measure the marks for 2014, which looks as following:



The report will be finalised during the spring of 2016 and disseminated to staff and partners.

On the 21 September 2015, the Commission adopted the Joint Staff Working Document "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020". The Staff Working Document builds on the lessons learned and achievements of its predecessor, the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development 2010-2015. This new document provides a result-oriented framework for action to advance the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment for all EU's external services and for the first time this action plan also include a humanitarian objective on protection from gender based violence in emergencies.

The EU has been actively involved in the global initiative Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies since its launch by the UK during the high-level event "Keep Her Safe" in London in November 2013. In 2015, ECHO has been working together with 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). ECHO has also been actively involved in the development of the Call to Action Road Map 2016-2020, which is a time-bound and measureable operational framework that aims to fundamentally transform the way GBV is addressed in humanitarian operations through collective action by a range of different stakeholders. ECHO is a member of the steering committee and also co-chair 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 EU Gender Action Plan for External Action 2016-2020. The Call to Action Road Map was launched during a high level event at UNGA in 2015 where Commissioner Stylianides spoke on behalf of the EU.

Education in Emergencies

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 through education.

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, EUR 2 million was allocated to 4 projects providing education to 28,000 children. In 2013, EUR 4 million was allocated to 9 additional projects benefiting 80,000 children. In 2014, the Commission increased the funding to EUR 6 712 500, including EUR 500 000 contribution assigned revenue from the government of Luxemburg and EUR 250 000 contribution assigned revenue from the government of Austria. The funding of 2014 was allocate to 12 projects and came to benefitting an additional 155 000 conflict-affected children in 10 countries worldwide.

2. Objective for 2015

The objective for 2015 was to facilitate the EU Children of Peace initiative. A funding decision and call for proposals for humanitarian projects aimed at assisting children affected by conflict through education, was published in November 2014 and the projects were selected during a steering committee that took place 25 March 2015.

3. Deliverables

In 2015, ECHO further came to increase its funding for education in emergencies and allocated a total of EUR 11 million, including EUR 1 million dedicated funding for providing children affected by Ebola with education. As a result of the 2015 call, 18 projects were selected in 20 countries. Since 2012, a total of EUR 23 712 500 has been allocated and by the end of 2015 more than 1.5 million children have benefitted from the EU Children of Peace Initiative in 26 countries around the world.

During the Oslo Summit on Education for Development on the 7 July 2015, EU's Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides announced his commitment to step up the Commissions funding for education in emergencies to 4 % of the EU's overall humanitarian budget by the end of his mandate in 2019. This target will already be reached in 2016 thanks to strong support from the European Parliament and EU Member States and the agreement reached to add EUR 26 million to the humanitarian budget for 2016 for education in emergencies. Ensuring that education is at least 4 % of the overall humanitarian aid budget is the global target set by the initiative Education Cannot Wait: A Call to Action, which was launched in UN General Assembly in 2012.

In 2015, ECHO continued to develop its strategic thinking on education in emergencies, developing technical internal guidance. ECHO's Policy Officer also participated at the annual meeting of the Global Education Cluster in Istanbul in October. Furthermore, ECHO worked closely with development colleagues in DEVCO to contribute to the global platform on education in emergencies and protracted crises initiated at the Oslo Summit and led by a champion group consisting of Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education; Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director; and Julia Gillard, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Education.

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, ECHO has allocated an average of around EUR 200 million on humanitarian health per year, which accounts for 20% – 30% of global humanitarian health funding⁴.

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 protracted 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 2015

The application of the 'Humanitarian Health Guidelines'⁵ has been central to ECHO's work. 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.

A particular priority for promoting improved coordination and advocacy on humanitarian health was the reform of the global humanitarian health governance for outbreak response following the West Africa Ebola crisis.

3. Deliverables

Analysis of the West Africa Ebola crisis showed the huge cost due to the ineffective and inefficient use of available resources in the early phases of the response. Central to this was the weakness of global health governance for outbreak response and its articulation with the global humanitarian architecture. This analysis contributed to the coordinated EU position in the negotiations for major reform of the World Health Organisation for its role in global health governance for outbreak response, with greater emphasis on articulation with humanitarian health actors.

As an extension of the Humanitarian Health Guidelines, specific guidance was developed setting out best practice for health responses for Displaced and Refugee populations, which was presented at the Global Health Forum.

⁴ According to UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service.

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/health2014_general_health_guidelines_en.pdf

Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Context

ECHO supports DRR as an integral part of humanitarian action through a people-centred approach. Our actions focus on supporting local communities and institutions to better prepare for, mitigate and respond adequately to risk and natural disasters through a combination of projects at local, national or regional level aimed at increasing resilience where it matters most – in vulnerable communities.

A key priority is the support and practical implementation of the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, reflecting a change of emphasis towards a whole-of-society and all – hazard risk approach across all economic, social, and environmental policy areas.

2. Objective for 2015

DRR objectives established for 2015 were:

1. To mainstream DRR and risk assessments within Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) and resilience strategies. To include development and testing of a DRR section in the Integrated Analysis framework (IAF).
2. To enhance the effectiveness and strategic purpose of ECHO's disaster preparedness interventions including the further development of modalities for anticipation and early action.
3. To contribute to the EU Action plan in response to the Sendai framework and other 2015 international agreements to further enhance and promote a disaster risk informed approach for all EU policies.

3. Deliverables

A DRR section (section D) was added to the IAF along with accompanying guidance explaining how DRR would be prioritised within HIPs for better results:

- Geographical prioritisation 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 disaster preparedness budget on an annual instead of bi-annual basis.
- Embedding of civil protection expertise in ECHO DRR projects and use of innovative elements of new CP legislation (advisory missions, satellite mapping), promoting more linkages with, and engagement by humanitarian assistance.

16% of ECHO's humanitarian funding went to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities in 2015. DRR, as part of the broader Resilience Building approach, was integrated into 43% of all ECHO funded projects.

Early action and anticipation (risk informed programming) are proven to be cost effective. Managing risk and responding to changes in risk in a timely fashion, rather than responding to events after they have already escalated, is a core part of ECHO work. In 2015, ECHO made considerable advances developing and acting upon risk based approaches:

- El Nino response December 2015 to address existing drought related humanitarian needs but also to support preparedness and early action in anticipation of needs.
- ECHO continued to develop knowledge with further work on scalable safety nets and the monitoring of risk financing mechanisms being developed by humanitarian and development colleagues (e.g. joining the Dialogue Platform on Forecast-based financing, following the Africa Risk Facility, discussions with the NGO "Start-network").

A first draft of the Commission staff working document: "Action Plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2030" was prepared in anticipation of 2016 agreement.

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. 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.

2. Objectives for 2015

One of the policy priorities was to ensure that resilience principles, designed to address recurrent and predictable crises, were suitably incorporated into the international policy frameworks and agreements; the Sendai framework for DRR, in the SDGs objectives and targets, in the COP 21 preparation and in the preparations to the World Humanitarian Summit.

For 2015, the emphasis was on putting commitments into practice, further developing the knowledge base and demonstrating that resilience approaches lead to better humanitarian-development aid effectiveness and accountability.

3. Deliverables

2015 has helped to institutionalise the resilience agenda. Resilience is now an increasingly accepted concept that is being acted upon and delivering results on the ground:

- There is solid progress towards reaching the objective of “Zero Hunger” in the Sahel within the next 20 years. There is strong national ownership of the AGIR initiative. Seven countries are in the process of validating their finalised Country Resilience Priorities. Nine other countries have initiated inclusive national dialogues.
- 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 with four to be approved. In Kenya and Ethiopia, these have been fully integrated into national development frameworks and are under implementation. In four countries, ECHO-DEVCO have collaborated on joint humanitarian/development strategies to address chronic and underlying vulnerabilities: (South Sudan, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia)
- Resilience is more systematically integrated into EDF programming, MIP and NIP design elsewhere. 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 2012 Communication committed ECHO to integrating resilience into all HIPs. This is now the case. In 2015, ECHO introduced a resilience marker for all projects. This was positively assessed by an internal ECHO review of and by an external review organised by NGO partners through VOICE .
- The EU continues to develop and collect good practice for resilience. In spring 2015, ECHO and DEVCO distributed (online and in print) – the "EU Resilience Compendium" of good practice examples from across the world. In October 2015, ECHO produced a report "Resilience in Practice" – highlighting that 15 international organisations are changing the way they work for better results.
- Co-operation is a key principle behind the implementation of the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – as is the targeting of services to the most vulnerable and the inclusion of crisis modifiers in development assistance.
- Of notable success was early co-ordination between ECHO and DEVCO post Nepal earthquake and with the pre-emptive response to El Nino announced in December – responding to humanitarian need but also boosting preparedness in anticipation.
- The advantages of flexible funding, crisis modifiers and contingency funds to build resilience are being realised and acted on. New mechanisms (e.g. ProAct and the EU trust funds) incorporate flexibilities and there is better use of existing mechanisms (e.g. in Nepal).
- Internal support systems continue to be developed for effective resilience approaches; joint DEVCO/ECHO resilience training in fragile contexts was delivered in July 2015.
- A major success has been the EU contribution to coherence and integration of resilience principles into Sendai, the SDGs and into WHS objectives. A priority WHS action area is increased partnership between development and humanitarian communities.

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 global 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 community 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 2015

The ERC Humanitarian Implementation Plan for 2015 identifies two components: The first component focused on the support to the humanitarian system, namely in terms of governance including coordination mechanisms. In this regard, the ERC sought to support global activities which are directly supporting coordination on field level, while core functions of global clusters are expected to be mainstreamed into the core budget of the Cluster Lead Agencies. The second component supported initiatives to strengthen humanitarian capacity through new, innovative approaches. Priority areas for which partners were invited to submit proposal included beneficiary accountability, protracted refugees and displacement situations in camp and non-camp settings, collaboration and coordination in urban settings, the capacity of regional organisations for disaster management and response as well as methods and modalities for education in emergencies.

3. Deliverables

In 2015, ECHO contributed EUR 15 million to 17 capacity building projects through the ERC. With regards to humanitarian governance and coordination, funding went to field support structures of the global clusters for health, shelter, WASH and protection as well as a senior level support teams for the roll-out of the Transformative Agenda. Innovative initiatives included, for example, the development of light and dynamic feedback mechanisms to collect beneficiaries' opinions, adapt responses and report back to beneficiaries. Other projects seek to increase awareness and mitigate corruption risks in humanitarian action. The potential and limitations of the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for mapping, payload delivery and monitoring are explored in projects that bring together humanitarian actors and specialist drone operators. The ERC portfolio for 2015-16 also includes projects on multi-sector approaches to malnutrition prevention, protection of schools as zones of peace and the collaboration of diaspora communities with the traditional humanitarian community.

Union Civil Protection Mechanism

1. Context

Following the completion of the new legal basis for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU adopted on 16 October 2014), the full range of civil protection actions at EU level were implemented in 2015. This included, in particular, the voluntary pool of Member States' response capacities, the European Medical Corps, the buffer capacities and new international cooperation possibilities.

2. Objectives for 2015

- Encourage Member States to register their disaster response capacities in the voluntary pool including in the new European Medical Corps;
- Sign agreements with Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia to participate in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM);
- 2015 European Civil Protection Forum, counting almost 900 participants.

3. Deliverables

- European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC) in the form of a voluntary pool:

During 2015, Participating States of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism showed a high willingness to commit their disaster response capacities to the voluntary pool. By early 2016, some 40 capacities were registered or already committed and awaiting registration. All of these capacities still needed to be quality-certified in the year 2016. Assets from the voluntary pool were already deployed in 2015, e.g. medical evacuation of highly infectious patients and a mobile laboratory during the Ebola crisis, as well as search and rescue teams to Nepal (please find more details in the ERCC section).

- European Medical Corps (EMC):

The European Medical Corps (EMC) was established in 2015 and officially launched on 15 February 2016. The EMC is the new part of the voluntary pool created for mobilising medical and public health experts and teams for preparedness or response operations inside and outside the EU. The EMC is Europe's contribution to the Global Health Emergency Workforce being set up under the helm of the World Health Organization. It will significantly increase the availability of doctors and medical equipment in response to emergencies, and will also allow for better planning and preparations for response to emergencies with health consequences. By January 2016, nine Member States had already offered teams and equipment to the European Medical Corps.

- International cooperation:

Signature with Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia of the agreements to participate in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. While Montenegro and Serbia became Participating States to the UCPM already in early 2015, the ratification process for Turkey was delayed on the Turkish side until 2016.

- 2015 European Civil Protection Forum

The 5th European Civil Protection Forum took place in Brussels on 6 and 7 May 2015. Some 900 participants from governments, academia, civil protection authorities, first emergency responders, international organisations, European Institutions and stakeholders, discussed in this two-day conference about 'Partnership and Innovation'. The exhibition featured

innovative solutions and technologies, including a demonstration of remotely piloted aircraft systems.

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 (UCPM). 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(s) for 2015

The general objective for 2015 was to enhance the response to emergencies through the implementation of the new civil protection (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.

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. They support the UCPM by providing transports and logistics solutions or transport grants to the Participating States.

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. The new voluntary pool of assets (see UCPM Fiche), better planning and the preparation of a set of typical disaster scenarios have 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.

In the context of the Nepal devastating earthquake of April 2015, the UCPM was activated upon request from UN-OCHA and the Nepalese authorities immediately. The UCPM facilitated the coordination and deployment of Heavy Urban Search and Rescue, Medical Advanced Post and Water Purification modules, experts in structural engineering, and other technical assistance on top of in-kind assistance and relief teams from 13 Participating

States. The ERCC deployed two EU Civil Protection Teams (EUCPT) to support the operations on site in close coordination with ECHO Technical Assistants in Kathmandu and the United Nations. The EUCPT ensured presence to strategically important points of the response operations: Kathmandu and the two Humanitarian Hubs in Gorkha and Chautara (Sindhupalchok province). The Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated and provided 44 reference and damage assessment maps based on satellite imagery to support the ongoing operations.

In the context of the refugee crisis in Europe, UCPM has been a key instrument at the disposal of Member States and neighbouring countries in need of immediate material support to cope with the refugee influx. The UCPM was activated by 5 countries in 2015: Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Greece. Four requests are still active. In total, 23 countries have made offers of assistance, supplying tens of thousands basic relief items such as tents, sleeping materials, personal protective items, heaters, generators and lighting. ERCC facilitated the coordination of this assistance and financed transport costs.

In 2015, the refugee and migration crisis in Europe had triggered the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR¹) activation for the first time (initially in the information sharing mode on 30 October, followed by full activation on 9 November). Serving as the central 24/7 contact point at Union level for Member States, all EU services and other stakeholders, the ERCC had a visible and central role in supporting the overall EU response. One of the main supporting elements launched upon IPCR activation was the Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) - the information gathering, analysis, and disseminating capability to support the decision making process at EU political (Council) level. HOME for this crisis had been entrusted to lead the production of ISAA reports, to which ECHO had contributed considerably (mainly as regards the humanitarian situation and civil protection) with other services (mainly EEAS, NEAR, FPI, DEVCO) providing full support within their areas. The ERCC ensured full support by facilitating the production and dissemination of ISAA weekly reports and other information products, as well as moderating the IPCR web platform.

¹ The IPCR arrangements reinforce the Union's ability to take rapid decisions when facing major emergencies that they require timely policy coordination and response at EU political (Council) level.

Transport and Logistics

1. Context

The logistics chain is the backbone of humanitarian assistance. Positioned at the heart of humanitarian aid provision, it is much more than procurement, warehousing, transport and information management. It is vital for all sectors of activities, from initial access for needs assessment to the "last mile delivery", project cycle design and management. Moving staff and large quantities of relief items is already expensive when the context is favourable. Access becomes a real challenge in complex crisis situations where safety of humanitarian aid workers is not ensured and basic infrastructures like roads, bridges, airports is lacking. The logistics performance has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the humanitarian response. Logistics support to operations has moved from being considered an accessory function to a strategic one. In this context, ECHO operates a humanitarian air service known as ECHO Flight and funds UN humanitarian air transport services (UNHAS) in more than 10 countries. These services are for humanitarian partners and aid organisations operating in Africa.

ECHO is also using its framework contract with Kuehne&Nagel to provide storage, transport and logistics solution to its humanitarian partners.

2. Objective for 2015

ECHO aimed to open up humanitarian access by providing logistics solution to its partners and a dedicated, safe and cost-effective humanitarian air transport services to remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the rest of the world and. These objectives were successfully achieved.

3. Deliverables

Using its six aircrafts, ECHO Flight transported more than 25 000 passengers and 300 tonnes of cargo, directly supporting more than 300 projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mali, Ethiopia and Somalia

Although the priority is to support Union-funded humanitarian or development projects, other relief and development projects that are not funded by the Union also benefit from ECHO Flight, which enhances the LRRD² process. In 2015, 75% of the passengers and 87% of the cargo transported belong to EU funded projects.

ECHO Flight is constantly reinforcing its collaboration with other Humanitarian Air Services (HAS). A letter of intent between ECHO and WFP was signed to that effect.

The Transport and Logistics team of ECHO organises the deployment of UCPM teams for assessment, advisory and coordination missions and manages the transport grants. A total of 38 deployments in 9 different countries took place in 2015. More than EUR 13 million were allocated to 79 transport grants for civil protection operations in more than 20 countries inside and outside EU.

ECHO is also providing a transport broker service in the framework of civil protection and humanitarian aid operations. In 2015, the service was used by the UNICEF and UNHRC for humanitarian flights to Ukraine and Nepal.

Furthermore, an EU MEDEVAC system has been put in place to ensure that international health workers operating the Ebola response on the ground would get appropriate treatment and would be transported to hospitals in Europe in case of infection. 15 health workers benefited from medical evacuation to Europe with EU ME

² Linking relief, rehabilitation and development

