

ROADMAP

Title of the initiative: Proposal for a Communication on the setting-up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

Lead DG: ECHO

Expected date of adoption of the initiative (month/year): November 2010

Initial IA screening & planning of further work

A. Context and problem definition

What is the political context of the initiative? How does this initiative relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?

This initiative is contained in a clause of the Lisbon Treaty (Art.241.5) which states that it shall be set-up by means of a Regulation. The idea for the creation of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) was put forward by the Greek Presidency of the EU in 2003. Its creation was also mentioned in a provision of the EU Constitution. The CLWP foresees the adoption of a Communication in 2010.

What are the main problems identified?

In the last years there has been a growing interest among Europeans in giving a contribution in crisis situations, both inside and outside the EU. Partner organisations, especially in the civil protection field, have approached the Commission on several occasions asking it to respond to this growing interest and the related needs.

The creation of an EVHAC gives rise to some issues which need to be analysed, including the administrative nature of the Corps, security issues (80% of the humanitarian aid goes to war zones), risks of duplication of existing voluntary schemes, and coherence with the increased professionalism in humanitarian aid action. An Impact Assessment study, which will be carried-out in view of the Legislative proposal foreseen for 2012, will further assess the potential impact of the setting-up of an EVHAC on these issues.

The existing voluntary schemes are currently being reviewed (both internally and through an external contract). The outcome of this review will provide the bulk of the related Communication.

Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity?

Yes. The lack of Community action would conflict with the requirements of the Lisbon Treaty (Art.241.5). Furthermore, a common European framework for volunteering in humanitarian aid for which this communication would prepare the ground would strengthen EU coordination and ensure increased coherence of response strategies to humanitarian needs.

B. Objectives of EU initiative

What are the main policy objectives?

The overall objective is to contribute to the establishment of a framework for joint contributions from Europeans to humanitarian aid and other operations of the Union.

The specific objectives are to inform stakeholders on the current situation and main gaps of volunteering in Europe (with particular focus on humanitarian aid), and to facilitate the participation of stakeholders to the public consultation which will be launched after the Conference on European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps on 30 September 2010.

Does the objective imply developing EU policy in new areas or in areas of strategic importance?

No, humanitarian aid and the other possible areas within its scope are already covered by Union law and policies

C. Options

What are the policy options? What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered? Would any legislative initiatives go beyond routine up-date of existing legislation?

At this stage it is not possible to determine the policy options. The review of the current situation of volunteering in Europe and consultations in the framework of the future IA for the legislative proposal will help in determining the policy options.

Does the action proposed in the options cut across several policy areas or impact on action taken/planned by other Commission departments?

The Communication is likely to focus on humanitarian aid and civil protection. However, there might be links to other policy areas such external relations and development cooperation

Explain how the options respect the proportionality principle

The proportionality principle will be addressed in the framework of the future IA for the legislative proposal, once the policy options are identified.

D. Initial assessment of impacts

What are the significant impacts likely to result from each policy option (cf. list of impacts in the Impact Assessment Guidelines), even if these impacts would materialise only after subsequent Commission initiatives?

The purpose of the Communication is to take stock of the current situation and present the main issues which will be further analysed in the future IA accompanying the legislative proposal. It is not planned to foreshadow any political line or define future policies.

For these reasons, the only likely impacts of the Communication are that the Member States and stakeholders are better informed about the state of play with regards to the development of the EVHAC. It will enable them to participate, be consulted and give feedback in the framework of the IA.

Could the options have impacts on the EU-Budget (above 5 Mio €) and/or should the IA also serve as the ex-ante evaluation, required by the Financial Regulation?

The Communication will not have an impact on the EU-Budget.

The creation of EVHAC will have an impact on the EU Budget. Estimations will be part of the Impact Assessment that will be conducted for the future legislative proposal.

Could the options have significant impacts on simplification/administrative burden or on relations with third countries?

N.A

Who is affected?

All relevant stakeholders who will be informed and who are likely to participate in the setting-up of an EVHAC.

E. Planning of further impact assessment work

What information and data is already available? What further information needs to be gathered? How will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor) and by when? What type and level of analysis will be carried out (cf. principle of proportionate analysis)?

An IA is not planned given that the purpose of the Communication is to take stock of the current situation. It will not foreshadow any political line or define future policies.

A review on the establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was carried-out by an external consultant in 2006 ("Review concerning the establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps"). Information was gathered from the main stakeholders, including humanitarian aid voluntary organisations and humanitarian aid partners.

A first review of the current situation has been carried-out internally. An external study was launched in June in order to complement the information available and identify the main gaps. The final report is expected in the course of the month of October.

Which stakeholders & experts have been/will be consulted, how and at what stage?

Relevant stakeholders include: representatives of Member States, humanitarian aid actors and other relevant NGOs, national voluntary schemes actors, general public, people interested in volunteering