



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Impact Assessment Board

Brussels,  
D(2012)

**Opinion**

**Title**

**DG ECHO - Impact Assessment on European Voluntary Humanitarian Corps**

**(Draft version- 15 May 2012)**

**(A) Context**

The Lisbon Treaty foresees the establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) (art. 214.5) to allow young Europeans to make a contribution to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union. In November 2010 the Commission adopted a Communication on the Voluntary Corps presenting the existing situation of volunteering, the guiding principles, gaps and necessary conditions to make a positive contribution to EU humanitarian aid. The Council and European Parliament (EP) are also associated to the process. Council Conclusions were adopted in May 2011, reaffirming the key role of the EU in promoting volunteering and encouraging the Commission to continue with the establishment of the Volunteering Corps. The EP adopted a Written Declaration in November 2011, identifying the selection, training and deployment of volunteers as key component of the Voluntary Corps. The Commission proposed an allocation of €210 Million for the Voluntary Corps under the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework over the period 2014-2020. This IA examines the most adequate approach to the establishment of the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.

**(B) Overall assessment**

**Although the report provides a useful overview of the main elements relevant for this initiative, it should present the analysis in a more complete, structured and accessible form, to better demonstrate the need for and value added, of EU action at this point in time. Firstly, the report should be clearer about what problem it wants to address, and provide a more focused discussion of the main obstacles to the effective provision of humanitarian aid that this initiative aims to address. Secondly, the report should provide greater clarity on all available options, identifying those which are really feasible, and adequately address the problems, while providing adequate justification for discarding some other options early on. Thirdly, it should provide a more detailed assessment of all relevant costs and benefits for all affected stakeholders, including the humanitarian aid NGOs. Fourthly, it should provide a clearer comparison of options in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Finally, the report should better explain how results from completed and still running pilot projects will be taken into account in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the initiative.**

### **(C) Main recommendations for improvements**

#### **(1) Better demonstrate the problem, the need for and the value added of EU action.**

The report should provide an overview of the current humanitarian volunteering system, clearly identifying the gaps in the system as pointed out by stakeholders. The concrete problems should be better described, such as for example the difficulties humanitarian aid organisations face in recruiting adequately trained volunteers, indicating clearly the urgency and scale of these issues and their evolution in absence of further EU action. On the basis of a strengthened problem definition, the report should present more clearly the necessity and value added of EU action so that political expectations can be framed in their proper context. Given stakeholders' concerns about duplication and competition, the report should address more explicitly the complementarity and coordination of EHVAC with the work of other organisations. The report should explain whether development assistance is a problem to be addressed, and should further clarify the scope of the initiative in terms of age group and geographical coverage. On that basis, the report should more transparently present the relative degree of priority and possible trade-offs between improving youth employability, promoting EU visibility, and providing humanitarian assistance where needed. Consequently the objectives should be reformulated in line with the redefined problems.

**(2) Better define the policy options.** The report should clearly present the available options, indicating the options which are realistic, and address the identified issues, and providing an adequate explanation for discarding certain options at an early stage (for instance those falling outside the budgetary limits of the MFF Communication, or those which fail to adequately address the main problems presented). It should present a "no further EU policy" option ('baseline') as well as more alternative options, such as expanding the mandate of the European Volunteer Scheme (EVS). The report should also clearly indicate how the different options compare in terms of delivering on public and stakeholder expectations. It should also clearly state that certain elements (criteria, training, register and visibility) will have to be present in each realistic option. The report should incorporate lessons learned from the pilot projects, and should indicate that these lessons will be used to further refine the implementing rules. The budgetary plan should be transparently presented, indicating the cost and the source of funding for each module.

**(3) Improve the assessment of impacts and present a clear overview of the direct/indirect costs for all stakeholders.** The report should assess the expected impacts of each option in more detail. The report should try to quantify the costs (including co-financing) and the benefits for all concerned parties, including sending/hosting organisations, beneficiary nations, and volunteers. It should provide cost estimates for the financial and administrative burden of the standards, certification and recertification mechanism for both sending and hosting organisations. Additionally, the report should indicate cost estimates of the training and deployment of volunteers for volunteers and affected organisations.

**(4) Provide a clear comparison of options and improve the assessment of cost-effectiveness.** The report should compare the options to the baseline scenario on the basis of effectiveness, efficiency and coherence. The assessment of cost-effectiveness of each option will need to be considerably improved in order to comply with the requirements of the Financial Regulation.

*Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.*

**(D) Procedure and presentation.** The report should check the consistency of the numbers presented in the implementation costs table in line with the technical comments provided separately. Repetitions should be avoided, especially throughout the problem definition and the assessment of impacts. Stakeholders' views should be better reflected throughout the report, especially in the problem definition, the policy options and the assessment of impacts.

**(E) IAB scrutiny process**

Reference number	2011/ECHO/003
External expertise used	No
Date of IAB meeting	06 June 2012