REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

Annual Report on the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Policies and their Implementation in 2014

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the Commission's main activities and policy outcomes in 2014 in the field of humanitarian aid and civil protection, as carried out through its Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

Mr Stylianides succeeded **Ms Georgieva** as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and crisis management, on the 1st November 2014, with the mandate to deliver assistance to alleviate humanitarian crises around the world and to foster cooperation among civil protection authorities across Europe in responding to natural or man-made disasters in Europe and beyond[1]. ECHO's mission to help save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by crises is fulfilled through humanitarian assistance and civil protection operations.

Through ECHO, the Commission mobilises help for people in need across the world. This assistance is a fundamental expression of European solidarity and based on Articles 196 and 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU, the EU's legal basis for humanitarian aid and civil protection).

EU **humanitarian aid** is a lifeline for communities and victims of new, recurrent and protracted crises. It allows them to prepare better for future emergencies. Complementary **civil protection** operations offer immediate support in the form of expert teams, rescue equipment and real-time monitoring of developing disasters, in the EU and elsewhere. When disaster strikes, timely and effective intervention by the international community can make the difference between life and death. The EU and its Member States rose to the challenge of the major needs in 2014 and continued to provide a major proportion of the total reported international humanitarian response.[2]

HIGHLIGHTS

Through its humanitarian aid and civil protection instruments, the EU provided substantial needs-based emergency assistance in 2014 for **a total commitment of EUR 1 273 million:**[3]

- Together, the EU and its Member States were the **largest international aid donor** and were at the forefront of the response to all major crises around the world, notably those in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Ukraine, and the Ebola crisis;

- Approximately **121 million people** affected by natural or man-made disasters, or protracted crises received help;

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[1] With regards to the external dimension of his actions, the Commissioner contributes to the work of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President, who is responsible for steering and coordinating the work of all Commissioners in the realm of external relations. This approach fully takes into account the special modus operandi of humanitarian aid which must 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] According to data in the UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS) database; https://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=home).

[3] EUR 1 225 million for humanitarian aid and EUR 48 million for civil protection (EUR 28 million in the EU; EUR 20 million elsewhere).

- Humanitarian aid was provided to the most vulnerable people in over **80 countries**;

- The 24/7 Emergency Response Co-ordination Centre (ERCC) acts as the hub for the Commission's crisis response system inside the EU and outside where possible. The ERCC is also the first entry point of any call for assistance under the Solidarity Clause;

- The **conflict in Syria** continued undiminished into its fourth year and remains the biggest humanitarian and security crisis in the world. The humanitarian response to this complex crisis continued to place a heavy strain on aid budgets. In order to reach out to those most affected, the EU made available assistance worth over EUR 3 billion, making Europe the single largest aid donor;

- Exceptional efforts were made at EU level to tackle the major **Ebola outbreak** in western Africa. The Commission was one of the first international donors to react to the emerging crisis in March and, by means of various instruments, contributed over EUR 414 million in direct aid to the countries and medical research, bringing the total EU contribution to EUR 1.2 billion in 2014. To strengthen the European response, Commissioner Stylianides was appointed EU Ebola Response Coordinator by the European Council in October;

- The first **EU Resilience Forum**, jointly organised on 28 April by ECHO and the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), attracted over 160 participants from a range of organisations and backgrounds. The Commission demonstrated strong international commitment to resilience, re-affirmed the validity of the thematic policy approach and provided guidance on how to strengthen resilience further;

- The **EU Children of Peace initiative** was funded to the tune of EUR 6.7 million in 2014, benefiting 155 000 children;

- The **EU Aid Volunteers Regulation**[4] adopted on 3 April will support humanitarian action and create opportunities for 18 000 people to volunteer in operations worldwide by 2020;

- The new **Union Civil Protection Mechanism** (UCPM) implementing legislation[5] adopted at the end of 2013 introduced new elements, such as the voluntary pool, buffer capacities, advisory missions and peer reviews. In addition to current UCPM participants, candidate and European Neighbourhood countries will have access to many activities;

- The UCPM was activated **30 times** in 2014, in response mostly to natural disasters, but also to nine man-made disasters (civil unrest, conflicts, oil pollution and accidents).

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The global trend is clear: humanitarian challenges are growing in number and becoming more complex. The increasing vulnerability of certain populations gives rise to devastating humanitarian catastrophes. Endemic internal conflicts, ranging from asymmetrical terrorism to conventional war and in many cases highly ideologically charged, are intensifying.

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[4] 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).

[5] Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924).

A continuing surge in humanitarian crises

Like previous years, 2014 saw a continuing surge in humanitarian crises, including an unprecedentedly high number (four) of 'level 3' emergencies (the highest level in the United Nations' crisis rating system), in Syria, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Iraq. Around the world, armed conflicts and attacks on civilians are continuing, while natural disasters occur with increasing frequency and intensity. The number of people suffering from conflicts and displacement, or lacking the most basic necessities such as food, water, medical care and shelter, is constantly on the rise. While disaster often strikes the most impoverished parts of the globe, the EU and its neighbourhood have also seen their share of conflict and emergencies. Protracted crises also show worrying trends across the globe. Needs increasingly outweigh resources and the delivery of humanitarian aid and civil protection is becoming more complex. The extensive work carried out by the EU and its Member States in 2014 made a big impact on people's lives.

In the course of the year, **290 natural disasters** killed around 16 000 people and affected over 100 million worldwide.[6] Hydrological events such as floods and landslides were responsible for over half the deaths. Of the over 100 million, 34 % were affected by flood events and 39 % by droughts.

Climate change is one of the major causes of increasingly frequent climate-related events, together with population growth and patterns of economic development. The development of settlements in earthquake zones, flood plains and other high-risk areas has increased the likelihood of a routine hazard becoming a major catastrophe that affects many people.

Violations of International Humanitarian Law

Armed conflicts remain the major cause of man-made humanitarian disaster. Civilian populations are increasingly exposed to violence and suffering. The international humanitarian law and its principles are often not respected.

As in previous years, humanitarian organisations faced growing problems in gaining access to those in most need. Such **access restrictions** were most prevalent in areas of conflict and/or due to the absence of the rule of law.

The overall situation and working environment for humanitarians continued to deteriorate, particularly in Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Ukraine. In other countries, in particular Somalia, Nigeria, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the security situation remained volatile. In many conflict zones, such as Somalia and Syria, humanitarian workers witnessed particularly brutal methods of warfare, including the targeting of civilians and the use of sexual violence as a weapon.

A key challenge faced by the humanitarian system in recent years has been the growing gap between a rising number of people in need and a **lack of resources** to assist them. In 2014, the UN launched a consolidated funding appeal for USD 18 billion[7] for humanitarian needs, an unprecedented amount due partly to the rising cost of response, conflicts having more protracted impacts and deepening environmental vulnerability in some parts of the world.
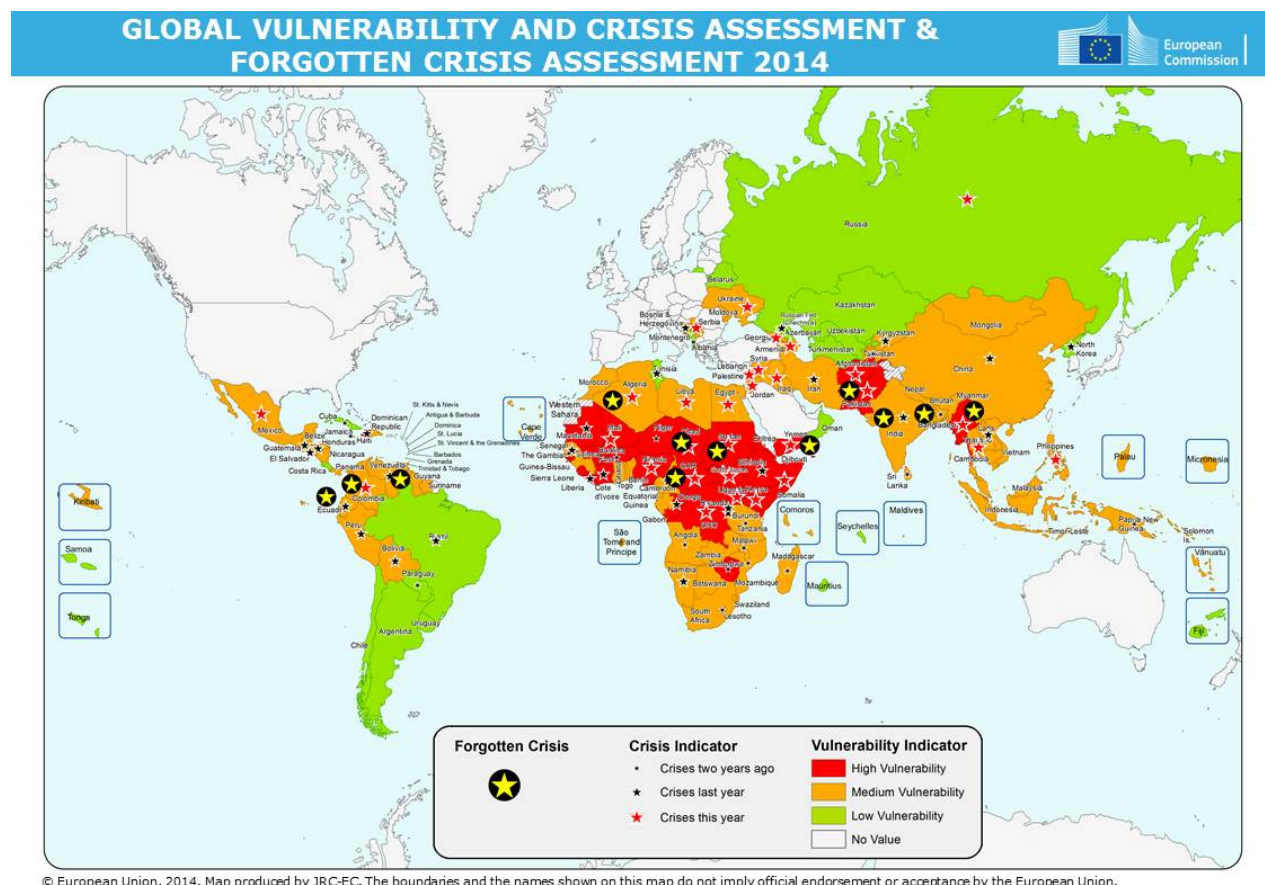
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[6]   Statistics published by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR); www.unisdr.org.

[7]   FTS database (see footnote 2).

Greater challenges require donors to respond to disasters more efficiently, making better use of their limited resources. For the Commission, this translates into:

− identifying **efficiency gains** when working with its partners;

− continuing to play a **central coordination role** with humanitarian actors worldwide; and

− finding innovative funding options.

GLOBAL VULNERABILITY AND CRISIS ASSESSMENT & FORGOTTEN CRISIS ASSESSMENT 2014

© European Union, 2014. Map produced by JRC-EC. The boundaries and the names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the European Union.

HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS

ECHO aims to save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises (see Article 214 TFEU, the **Humanitarian Aid Regulation**[8] and the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**).[9]

The Commission facilitates coordination with and among the Member States to ensure the efficient delivery and complementary of EU humanitarian aid.[10] The overall priority is to maximise the impact of EU aid for people in need and to ensure that it is always delivered in accordance with international humanitarian law. The EU upholds at all times the **humanitarian principles** of impartiality, neutrality,

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[8] Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 on humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1).

[9] Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission – The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, p. 1), that sets out a common vision for improving the coherence, effectiveness and quality of the EU's humanitarian response.

[10] Article 214(6) TFEU.

humanity and independence, and provides assistance to the most vulnerable, irrespective of nationality, religion, gender, ethnic origin or political affiliation.

As always, the EU's response to crises in 2014 was driven by needs and tailored to specific circumstances. Aid was delivered in a variety of forms and across sectors, including health (e.g. psychological support, financing of clinics), protection (e.g. activities addressing sexual violence), food and non-food items, shelter, water/sanitation, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The EU continued to support relief operations in response to several **man-made crises**, many of which are becoming increasingly protracted and complex:

- The **Syrian conflict** carried on unabated into its fourth year and remained the biggest humanitarian and security crisis in the world. Tens of thousands have lost their lives due to the fighting. Half the population have been forced out of their homes, with over 3.8 million seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. In addition to the in-kind assistance provided through the UCPM, the EU offered more than EUR 3 billion in assistance to those in need. Aid was provided to support some 12.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria and the millions of Syrian refugees and their host communities in the region. EU aid helped to finance medical emergency relief, protection, food/nutritional assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and logistics services. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/syria_en.pdf#view=fit

- The people of **Iraq** are suffering from the consequences of the country's worsening security situation. The escalation of violence in 2014 had a dramatic impact on the humanitarian situation, with over two million more people displaced in the course of the year. In parts of the region, displaced persons are trapped between frontlines and aid cannot get to them. In addition, Iraq hosts almost a quarter of a million refugees from the fighting in neighbouring Syria. The EU has scaled up its operations and increased its humanitarian aid budget to EUR 163 million to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. In 2014, it helped provide life-saving healthcare, food, basic shelter, water/sanitation and protection, and delivered humanitarian in-kind assistance such as food and other urgent supplies through the UCPM. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/iraq_en.pdf#view=fit

- Plagued by unrest, insecurity and political instability, the **Central African Republic** (CAR) is another humanitarian hotspot. Due to the lethal combination of inter-community violence, frequent natural disasters and the overall weakness of state institutions, over half of its 4.6 million population are in need of humanitarian assistance. The EU worked tirelessly to draw international attention to the crisis in CAR and its effects on neighbouring countries. As the largest donor of life-saving assistance to the country, the EU provided over EUR 128 million in aid for humanitarian intervention in 2014, of which the Commission disbursed EUR 55 million from December 2013 onwards, including EUR 14 million for CAR refugees in neighbouring countries. In addition, the Commission organised repeated airlifts of aid workers and relief material into CAR. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/car_en.pdf#view=fit

- **South Sudan**, the youngest and one of the poorest countries in the world, has witnessed a surge in internal tension and fighting. At least 10 000 people have been killed since the political conflict in the country turned violent at the end of 2013. Nearly two million men, women and children have fled their homes, with some 470 000 seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. The conflict compounded humanitarian needs. By the end of 2014, 3.8 million

people in South Sudan had received humanitarian assistance, including 245 000+ refugees. In 2014, the Commission provided over EUR 110 million in humanitarian aid in response to the crisis. Total EU assistance (including Member States') came to over EUR 267 million. EU humanitarian experts are permanently based in the region, working closely with relief organisations and monitoring the efficient use of EU funds in the light of humanitarian needs. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/south-sudan_en.pdf#view=fit

In addition to these 'level 3' emergencies, long-term crises caused by conflict, violence and natural disasters, including droughts and floods, left millions across the world in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2014, the EU funded operations in response to a number of **new or protracted emergencies**:

- By the end of 2014, the conflict in **eastern Ukraine** had resulted in the displacement of more than 600 000 people and growing humanitarian needs. The Commission redoubled its efforts to respond actively to the crisis. It scaled up its assistance twice, from an initial EUR 2.5 million under an emergency decision adopted in early August 2014, to a total of EUR 11.05 million. In addition, the UCPM was activated on several occasions to facilitate the transport of in-kind assistance from Member States. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/ukraine_en.pdf#view=fit

- Typhoon Haiyan, one of the worst natural disasters in recent years, struck the **Philippines** in November 2013. Its consequences are still affecting the population. Months after the storm hit the country, killing more than 6 200 and displacing over four million, people were still struggling to rebuild their homes and livelihoods. The EU has helped more than 1.2 million people with over EUR 180 million worth of humanitarian aid, by contributing to the provision of shelter, food, clean water and sanitation. It supported the local population's efforts to rebuild and be better prepared for future natural disasters. The ERCC played a leading role in coordination, information exchange, needs assessments, the deployment of expertise and the delivery of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection assistance. http://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/asia-and-oceania/philippines_en

- **In western Africa**, the largest ever recorded outbreak of **Ebola** killed close to 8 000 people. The affected countries and humanitarian organisations fighting to control the spread of the disease faced complicated challenges, including high infection rates among medical workers, a lack of medical equipment, growing food insecurity and limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The Commission was one of the first international donors to react to the emerging crisis in March. With funds reaching almost EUR 140 million and leveraging an additional €100 million from the pharmaceutical industry, the Commission rapidly allocated the funds to 13 research projects on potential treatments, vaccines and diagnostic tests, through an emergency procedure under Horizon 2020 and the Ebola+ call of the Innovative Medicines Initiative. A Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness, GloPID-R[11], was also funded by the Commission and other funders of preparedness research. Overall, the Commission contributed more than EUR 414 million in direct aid to the countries and in medical research, bringing the total EU contribution to over EUR 1.2 billion. The funds supported the life-saving work of its humanitarian partners, enabled the deployment of

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[11] GloPID-R is a network of research funding organizations in the area of infectious disease preparedness research. Its main objective is to ensure research progress by launching a coordinated emergency research response (within 48 hours) in case of a significant new or re-emerging outbreak.

medical staff and mobile laboratories, and provided budgetary support to healthcare systems in the countries affected. The EU provided critical logistical support to ensure the rapid transport of equipment and experts to the region by air and sea. The ERCC provided a platform for the coordination of European assistance to the region (see section on civil protection operations for additional information). The Ebola Task Force met daily, enabling EU Member States, bodies and services, international organisations and other key partners to exchange information and coordinate their action. Also, ECHO established an EU medical evacuation system for international humanitarian workers and facilitated the delivery of substantial in-kind assistance from the UCPM states to the Ebola-affected areas.

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/ebola-in-west-africa_en

Furthermore, throughout 2014, the EU maintained its focus on the world's '**forgotten crises**', allocating 17 % of its initial funding to assist people caught up in protracted disasters which often escape the attention of the international community, such as:

- Algeria — Sahrawi Refugee crisis;

- Bangladesh — Rohingya refugee crisis and Chittagong Hill Tracts;

- India - conflicts in Jammu and Kashmir, central India (Naxalite insurgency) and in the North East of India;

- Myanmar/Burma — Kachin conflict and Rakhine crisis;

- Colombia crisis — population affected by the internal armed conflict in Colombia and Columbian refugees in Ecuador and Venezuela.

The EU also provided humanitarian assistance to cope with the consequences of the following **natural disasters**:

- floods/landslides in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Kenya, Solomon Islands, Bolivia, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, the Caucasus, Ethiopia, southern Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan;

- epidemics and plagues in western Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Niger, Uganda, Afghanistan, Bolivia, Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua;

- forest fires in Chile;

- droughts in Haiti, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and southern Africa;

- harsh winter in Armenia;

- cyclones/hurricanes/tropical storms/volcano in the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, southern Africa, the Caribbean and Ecuador; and

- earthquakes in the Caribbean, Bangladesh, Haiti, Nicaragua, Guatemala and the Caucasus.

The Commission adopted a two-pronged strategy to respond to the disasters:

- ➢ rapid response — providing humanitarian aid and facilitating and coordinating civil protection assistance; and

- ➢ disaster preparedness — identifying the most vulnerable geographical areas and populations to be covered by specific disaster-preparedness programmes.

In 2014, the EU maintained its support for DIPECHO[12] programmes for Africa and the Indian Ocean, Central Asia and the Caucasus, South-East Asia, and Central and South America.

Disaster preparedness and resilience

Resilience-building is mainstreamed in EU programming in order to maximise the added value of the EU's assistance to the most vulnerable. This is crucial if humanitarian responses are to address longer-term rehabilitation and development needs appropriately from the start. The Commission's strategy combines **resilience, disaster-risk reduction (DRR)** and **DIPECHO programmes** to increase overall effectiveness and implement the Resilience Action Plan. DIPECHO intervention is used to develop resilience within humanitarian action and build national and local capacities.

Humanitarian and development actors need to work hand in hand to reduce the devastating impact of recurring disasters and improve the prospects for sustainable development. The EU has developed a **disaster-risk management framework** which promotes a holistic approach to natural and man-made risks across all sectors. This involves risk assessments and planning, improved data and knowledge collection, sharing good practices (e.g. through INFORM[13], peer reviews), developing minimum standards for disaster prevention and building resilience to disasters by including disaster-risk management in other policy areas, including climate adaptation, cohesion, development, environmental impact assessment, the internal security strategy and research, health, nuclear safety and insurance initiatives.

The EU promotes resilience and disaster-risk management in international fora, including through the establishment of sustainable development goals. In 2014, ECHO worked intensively with other Commission departments to develop an EU position and play a leading role in shaping the **2015 Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction** (post-2015 HFA) in the build-up to the Sendai Summit (March 2015).

Evaluations have shown that ECHO-funded DRR actions enabled local communities and institutions to prepare better for, mitigate and respond to natural disasters, thereby increasing resilience and reducing vulnerability. ECHO works closely with Member States' civil protection authorities to improve disaster prevention, preparedness and response. In view of the increasing frequency and complexity of disasters in the EU and around the world, ECHO aims to enhance the coordination and planning of EU civil protection operations, making maximum use of available expertise and resources and ensuring full complementarity with EU humanitarian aid. At the same time, it is developing effective prevention and preparedness policies with the Member States, seeking to strike a balance between national responsibilities and European solidarity.

As part of the international humanitarian system, the EU played a key role in encouraging other countries and regions to increase their contribution to humanitarian preparedness and response. This included working with emerging economies to mobilise resources more effectively for humanitarian action and disaster response.

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[12] Disaster Preparedness ECHO (DIPECHO) is a specific programme dedicated to disaster preparedness. It targets highly vulnerable communities in some of the most disaster-prone regions of the world.

[13] Index for Risk Management

EU Children of Peace

Children are among the most vulnerable victims of humanitarian crises, but child protection and education in emergencies are among the forms of humanitarian action that attract the least funding. Education requires a longer-term approach that cannot be entirely provided by humanitarian aid, so Commission departments (notably ECHO and DEVCO) maintained their close policy cooperation on education in emergencies in 2014. Coordination has been established at EU level, and complementarity and synergy between the EU Children of Peace initiative and other EU funding instruments, in particular for development and crisis management (including the Global Partnership for Education), are actively encouraged. In 2014, the Children of Peace initiative brought aid worth EUR 6.7 million to 155 000 children.

Link to other EU instruments

The **resilience agenda** has promoted new approaches to combining humanitarian aid and development to greater effect. By working together to analyse risks and vulnerabilities and set strategic priorities, those managing humanitarian assistance and other EU instruments have been able to identify specific areas of synergy and coherence in many contexts, including:

- Ethiopia – ECHO and the EU Delegation have launched the RESET programme combining humanitarian and development approaches to resilience;

- the Central African Republic — the newly established EU Trust Fund (EUTF) focuses on linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) and resilience with contributions from the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), ECHO and the Member States. The EUTF action complements intervention under the Instrument for Stability;

- the Pro-Resilience Action programme — funded by DEVCO under the DCI, PRO-ACT focuses on crisis prevention and post-crisis response strategy, with contributions to safety-net programmes in synergy with ECHO assistance in the countries in question.

EU instruments for Research and Development have contributed to enhancing knowledge on DRR, civil protection and crisis management through a wide range of projects involving various stakeholders engaged in research, policy making and field operations (industry/SMEs[14], first responders, civil protection units, decision-makers etc). In particular, the EU 7th Framework Programme on Research and Development, including the Environment Programme (overseen by RTD) and the Secure Societies Programme (overseen by HOME), have funded actions in support to Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection policies, which are now pursued under Horizon 2020 in close cooperation with ECHO.

CIVIL PROTECTION OPERATIONS

One of the EU's main tools for providing help in emergencies is the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)**. The Commission (ECHO) encourages and facilitates cooperation between the 34 UCPM states[15] in order to improve prevention of, preparedness for and protection against natural, technological or man-made disasters in Europe and elsewhere.

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[14]   Small and Medium Enterprises

[15]   The 28 EU Member States, plus Iceland, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro and Serbia. Turkey has signed the agreements to officially join the UCPM.

The UCPM was activated 30 times in 2014, notably in response to requests for assistance, pre-alerts and monitoring. Most of the activations related to natural disasters, including:

- floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia;

- forest fires in Sweden and Greece;

- severe weather conditions in Slovenia; and
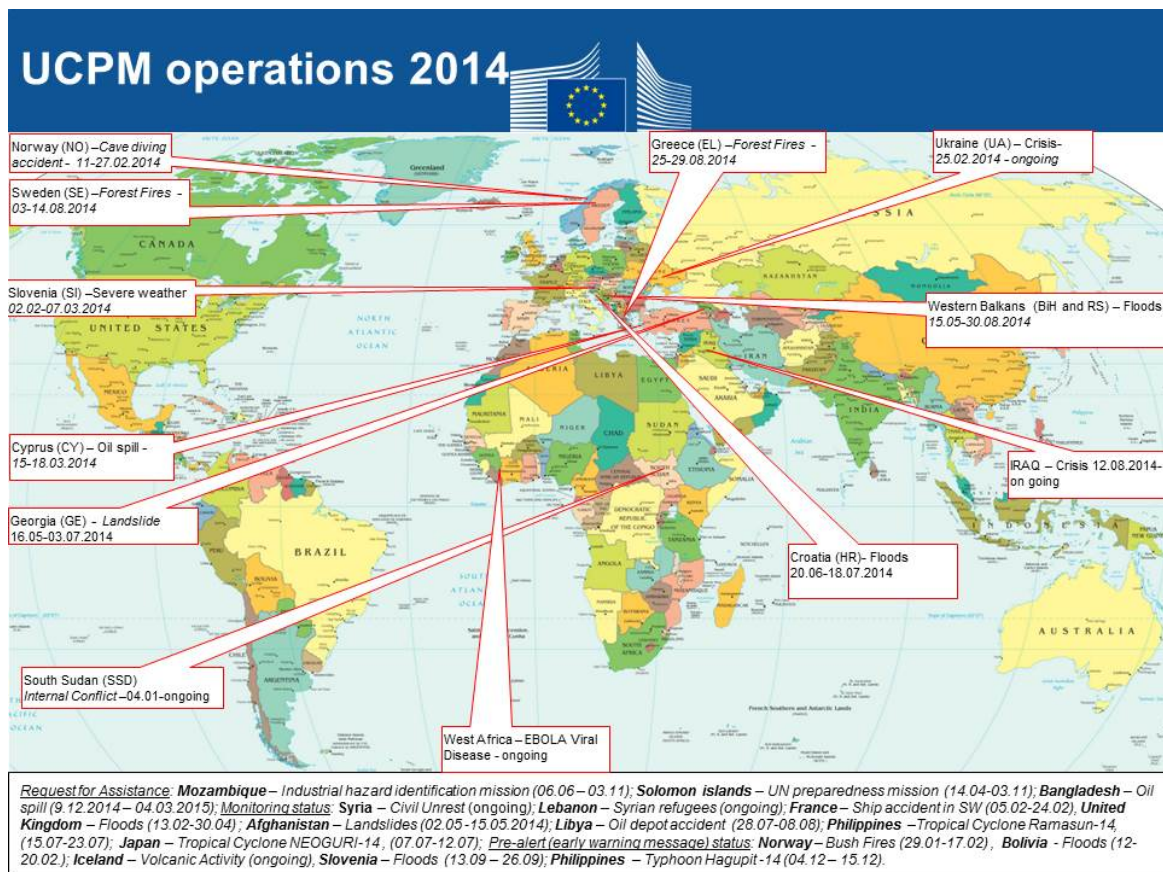
- tropical cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis.

Nine activations related to man-made disasters, including civil unrest or conflict and maritime pollution or accidents (e.g. in Norway and Cyprus).

Assistance can take the form of in-kind assistance, equipment and related teams, but it can also involve sending experts to carry out assessments and facilitate coordination. If assistance is required in a non-EU country, the UCPM relies on government resources and usually works alongside, or hands over to, humanitarian aid personnel. The UCPM's operational heart is the **Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)**, which operates around the clock and which any EU or non-EU country affected by a disaster and overwhelmed by its magnitude can contact with a request for assistance.

In 2014, the ERCC had its coordination mandate confirmed by the European Council. In support of field operations, the Commission provided EU Member States and associated users with reference and damage extent and grading maps using the **Copernicus service** (GMES Initial Operations-Emergency Management Service), for which the ERCC is the single entry point for activation. The service was activated 50 times (out of which 26 activations for floods, 3 for forest fires and 4 activations related to refugee and Internally Displaced Persons crises) and delivered satellite-derived maps for various types of disasters or crises. The ERCC also benefited from the analytical and technical support of the **Joint Research Centre**, the Commission's in-house scientific service (e.g. through GDACS[16]).

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[16]   Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System,

UCPM operations 2014

Norway (NO) –Cave diving accident - 11-27.02.2014

Sweden (SE) –Forest Fires - 03-14.08.2014

Slovenia (SI) –Severe weather 02.02-07.03.2014

Cyprus (CY) – Oil spill - 15-18.03.2014

Georgia (GE) - Landslide 16.05-03.07.2014

South Sudan (SSD) Internal Conflict –04.01-ongoing

West Africa – EBOLA Viral Disease - ongoing

Greece (EL) –Forest Fires - 25-29.08.2014

Ukraine (UA) – Crisis- 25.02.2014 - ongoing

Western Balkans (BiH and RS) – Floods 15.05-30.08.2014

IRAQ – Crisis 12.08.2014- on going

Croatia (HR)- Floods 20.06-18.07.2014

Request for Assistance: **Mozambique** – Industrial hazard identification mission (06.06 – 03.11); **Solomon islands** – UN preparedness mission (14.04-03.11); **Bangladesh** – Oil spill (9.12.2014 – 04.03.2015); Monitoring status: **Syria** – Civil Unrest (ongoing); **Lebanon** – Syrian refugees (ongoing); **France** – Ship accident in SW (05.02-24.02), **United Kingdom** – Floods (13.02-30.04); **Afghanistan** – Landslides (02.05-15.05.2014); **Libya** – Oil depot accident (28.07-08.08); **Philippines** –Tropical Cyclone Ramasun-14, (15.07-23.07); **Japan** – Tropical Cyclone NEOGURI-14, (07.07-12.07); Pre-alert (early warning message) status: **Norway** – Bush Fires (29.01-17.02), **Bolivia** - Floods (12-20.02.); **Iceland** – Volcanic Activity (ongoing), **Slovenia** – Floods (13.09 – 26.09); **Philippines** – Typhoon Hagupit -14 (04.12 – 15.12).

The new UCPM legislation puts greater emphasis on risk management and disaster prevention and preparedness. There were preparedness/environmental missions, together with UNOCHA/UNEP[17], to Mozambique, the Solomon Islands and Bangladesh. Many UCPM countries offered assistance to South Sudan, Ukraine and Iraq to support the efforts of national governments and/or international organisations to address deteriorating humanitarian situations. **Complementarity between humanitarian aid and civil protection** assistance was ensured in each case.

The UCPM countries, ECHO and its partners made considerable efforts to respond to the **Ebola virus outbreak in western Africa.** The ERCC played a pivotal role in coordinating the EU response from the start, holding regular coordination meetings from early summer 2014 — well before the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak a 'public health emergency of international concern'. An EU Ebola Task Force was established, bringing together all relevant Commission departments (HQ and field), the European External Action Service (EEAS), including EU Delegations in the affected countries, various UN bodies and the Commission's humanitarian partners to ensure a constant exchange of information between all concerned. To bolster the European response, Commissioner Stylianides was appointed EU Ebola Response Coordinator by the European Council in October.

As well as coordinating the response, the ERCC acted as operational hub, matching requests to offers of assistance and playing a major role in facilitating logistics and transport. After the UCPM was activated in August at the request of the WHO, 14 UCPM countries provided in-kind assistance and expertise through the UCPM and nine provided bilateral assistance. The EU coordinated and co-financed transport

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[17]   UNOCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
          UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

operations, such as two round trips of a Dutch naval vessel with 10 000 tonnes of assistance donated from all over Europe. The ERCC supported over 100 cargo flights to the affected countries. By the end of the year, UCPM countries had submitted transport co-financing requests for more than EUR 8 million. Also, the UCPM deployed four experts to support UN disaster assessment and coordination (UNDAC) missions in Liberia, Ghana and Mali. Lastly, but no less importantly, the Commission established an EU medical evacuation system for international health workers, which was managed by the ERCC. This was successfully activated on a number of occasions and ensured the medical evacuation of international humanitarian workers to well-equipped hospitals in Europe.

In May, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were affected by the worst floods for a century. The ERCC responded immediately to their requests for assistance by activating the UCPM and 23 Member States provided support in the form of rescue boats, helicopters, high-capacity pumps and water purification equipment, making it the biggest ever civil protection operation of this type in Europe. Over 1 700 people were directly rescued by the EU teams. The immediate civil-protection response was complemented by EUR 3 million in humanitarian aid to help the most vulnerable in both countries. Humanitarian assistance was provided to half a million people affected by the disaster.

ARETE 2014 is a successful exercise of inter-service coordination and enhancement of EU disaster preparedness conducted in Belgium by ECHO and HOME. ARETE 2014 simulated a complex chemical and terrorism situation including hostage-taking. It is a first-time example of highly representative and visually enhanced modelling of civil protection and law enforcement intervention on local, regional, national and EU level.

FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

ECHO's total budget was lower than in 2012 and 2013 in terms of commitment appropriations, due to payment constraints on Heading 4 (Global Europe) and the EU budget as a whole. This restricted the scope for increasing the humanitarian budget in 2014.

At the same time, **budget execution (in terms of payment appropriations) was the highest ever**. ECHO received an additional injection of EUR 346 million in payment appropriations for humanitarian aid in December (EUR 256 million from the Amending Budget, EUR 30 million from the EAR[18] and EUR 60 million redeployed from other policy areas). This was used for outstanding pre-financing payments to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations, new contracts for the crises in Syria and Iraq, and final payments on completed operations.

Before the injection towards the end of the year, 2014 was marked by the insufficient level of payment appropriations, which had started to have an impact in the second half of 2013. In line with sound financial management practice and to ensure operational continuity, the authorising officer by delegation requested budget reinforcements and applied conservative measures to limit the risk of running out of payments before the summer break. This included reducing pre-financing rates and implementing the Commission's 2014 Worldwide Decision in two phases. These mitigating measures gave rise to significant operational and administrative problems for ECHO's implementing partners.

The increase in conflict- and natural disaster-related crises that last for many years means that ECHO needs as little of its funding as possible to be earmarked, so as to

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[18]   Emergency Aid Reserve

have more flexibility in managing its operations. It is also a key reason to **improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations** and **find innovative funding options**.

In the course of 2014, ECHO took further advantage of the new funding options under the 2012 Financial Regulation[19]. Pursuant to Article 21(2)(b),[20] it made greater use of external assigned revenues, as follows:

− in July, Austria contributed EUR 250 000 to the Children of Peace initiative;

− in November, a contribution agreement was concluded with the UK's Department for International Development for GBP 107.5 million (approx. EUR 134 million) for action in the Sahel over a three-year period;

− also in November, in the context of tripartite cooperation between ECHO, the Government of Ivory Coast and France's Agency for Development, around EUR 2.5 million was transferred for Ebola preparedness activities in Ivory Coast; and

− a EUR 1 million contribution agreement for Ebola preparedness activities in Burkina Faso was concluded with Austria in December.

EU funding was provided to the following regions:[21]

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[19]   Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1).

[20]   Member States and non-EU countries, including their public agencies, entities or natural persons, may provide the Commission with revenue assigned to certain external aid projects or programmes financed by the Union.

[21]   For civil protection, the figures in the table are not broken down by country/region.

ECHO 2014 BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION (commitment appropriations, rounded figures)

Region/country	€ million	%
Africa	**572**	**45 %**
Sudan & South Sudan	143	
Central Africa	77	
Great Lakes	56	
Horn of Africa	116	
Southern Africa, Indian Ocean	7	
West Africa	174	
Middle East, Mediterranean and European neighbouring countries	**340**	**27 %**
Middle East	315	
Mediterranean	12	
European neighbouring countries	14	
Asia, Pacific	**133**	**10 %**
Central Asia	8	
South-West Asia	94	
South-East Asia and Pacific	31	
Central & Latin America, Caribbean	**48**	**4 %**
Central & Latin America	24	
Caribbean	24	
Worldwide disasters	**38**	**3 %**
Civil protection	**48**	**4 %**

Within EU	29	
Outside EU	19	
EU Aid Volunteers	**12**	**1 %**
Complementary operations	**82**	**6 %**
TOTAL	**1 273**	**100 %**

As in previous years, the majority of EU funding (45 %) was allocated to Africa. Substantial assistance was also provided to the Middle East (Syria and neighbouring countries).

Around 98 % of the 2014 humanitarian and civil protection budget was used for operational activities and about 2 % for administrative and policy aspects. Operational staff represents 64 % of the human resources and the rest work in administrative and policy support.

ECHO ensured rapid and effective delivery of EU relief assistance with the help of 328 staff members at its headquarters in Brussels and through its extensive field network. To improve the Commission's response to disasters in non-EU countries, 156 international humanitarian experts and 325 local staff members were employed in ECHO field offices as of 31 December 2014.[22]

The worldwide network of field offices allows up-to-date analysis of existing and forecast needs in a given country or region, ensuring adequate monitoring of intervention and facilitating donor coordination at field level.

Framework partnership agreement

As a **humanitarian aid donor**, the EU does not implement humanitarian assistance programmes.[23] It fulfils its mission by funding humanitarian action by partner organisations with which it has signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA).

A set of simplification measures was introduced in the 2014 FPA to enhance efficiency and the use of resources. As a result:

– the partner candidature procedure was streamlined, reducing drastically the time needed to sign an FPA, from 7-10 months to 2-3 months. The procedure now involves a meeting with the candidate at the final selection stage to ensure more accurate, transparent and efficient evaluation; and

– the content of the 'single form' used by partner organisations to submit project proposals and for operational reporting can be adapted according to partners' specificities and the nature of the crisis; and

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[22] See the Commission's Communication *Reinforcing EU disaster and crisis response in third countries* (COM(2005) 153).

[23] It delivers one operation directly: the ECHO Flight programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya to provide logistical support in a region prone to access problems.

- the 'single form' has been structured in a way that allows ECHO to better extract information needed to improve its reporting capacities (e.g. gender-age markers, disaggregated data on beneficiaries, etc.) and ensures the coherence of funded actions with ECHO priorities and policies; and

- the volume of information to be provided in the 'single form' has been reduced and the encoding system has been simplified as far as possible.

Partner organisations include a wide range of professional bodies (European NGOs and international organisations such as the Red Cross and the various UN agencies)[24] and specialised agencies in the Member States. The diversity of implementing partners enables the EU to cover a growing list of needs across the world, often in increasingly complex contexts. Commission-managed grants and contributions are allocated to projects selected on the basis of proposals. Of the 2014 actions under signed humanitarian agreements:

- 48 % were carried out by NGOs (109 partners);

- 36 % by UN agencies (15 partners);

- 14 % by international organisations (3 partners);

- 1 % through a direct contract with ECHO Flight[25] (1 partner); and

- 1 % through a contract with Noha University (1 partner).

HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION POLICY

ECHO's activities in 2014 were dictated by the increasing number and intensity of occurring crises. At operational level, ECHO contributed significantly to the coordinated efforts of the international community to respond to a record number of major crises occurring simultaneously.

At policy level, progress was made on several **important initiatives**. The Commission and Member States developed common strategic positions and increasingly aligned their support on a range of 'good practice' initiatives, such as innovative improvements in the allocation of humanitarian aid on the basis of assessed needs. This is in line with the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**, in particular the commitment to established humanitarian principles and good practices that underpin EU humanitarian aid, including humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law, and the 'good humanitarian donorship' principles.

Coherence between humanitarian and development aid is high on the agenda for the EU institutions and the Member States and they took several initiatives in this respect in 2014.

The Commission took humanitarian action to increase the chances of survival of people affected by crises and disasters. This objective was achieved by means of assistance to those directly affected, improving the conditions of vulnerable communities and **building capacities and resilience** to disaster.

In the light of the above and the diminishing funding available to donors, it is becoming increasingly important to base operational action and funding decisions on

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[24] The European Community and the UN have signed a specific Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).

[25] The Commission's humanitarian air service.

solid evidence and to ensure **coherence and complementarity**. To that end, the Commission took initiatives during its chairmanship of the UNOCHA Donor Support Group (July 2013 to June 2014) to make the humanitarian system more efficient; these culminated in preparations for the **World Humanitarian Summit** in 2016. The Commission held in-depth discussions with Member States and partners at the ECHO Partners Conference on 25-26 November 2014 in Brussels with a view to preparing forward-looking policy papers for the European consultation that took place in Budapest in February 2015.

As a global donor, ECHO seeks to shape and boost the global humanitarian response through new and innovative approaches in sectors such as food, sanitation, shelter, education and communication, and to develop innovative solutions for disaster monitoring and preparedness. On 15 January 2014, experts from NGOs, Member States, the private sector, the UN, academia and other Commission departments met for a **roundtable on innovation in humanitarian aid and disaster management**. This was a springboard for the Commission to reflect on ways of developing better science and policy interface in disaster risk management notably by advancing the uptake of research and operational results.

ECHO views effective **civil/military coordination** as essential to promote respect for humanitarian principles and in 2014 it stepped up coordination with EU military staff substantially. For example, the EU CSDP mission to improve overall security in Bangui (EUFOR CAR) was launched in February 2014, but ECHO had been in systematic contact with its EEAS counterparts from the start of the planning process. This was in line with the EU's comprehensive approach to conflicts and crises and ensured that military actors had a clear understanding of the humanitarian issues and respect for the *modus operandi* of humanitarian aid.

On 28 April, ECHO and DEVCO jointly organised the first **EU Resilience Forum**, which was attended by Commissioners Georgieva and Piebalgs and over 160 participants from a range of organisations. It highlighted the strong international commitment to resilience, re-affirmed the validity of the EU's thematic policy approach and provided useful guidance on how it can be optimised.

As part of a series of thematic policy documents, ECHO published new consolidated *Humanitarian Health Guidelines* in 2014. These outline the objectives and principles of ECHO-funded health intervention, entry and exit criteria and key determinants for intervention, and contain dedicated sections on coordination and advocacy on humanitarian health.

In April, ECHO and DEVCO presented a joint **issues paper on development and protracted displacement**, including situations affecting refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees, such as camp and urban displacements and displacement within host communities, to the relevant Council working groups. The paper raised a number of questions that led to the launch of a consultation process. Its objective is to explore possibilities for the early involvement of development actors in displacement crises, in order to:

➢ prevent protracted displacement; or

➢ find durable solutions in existing protracted situations.

Informal consultations with stakeholders (Member States, development actors, international organisations, NGOs, etc.) are ongoing.

The **Enhanced Response Capacity** (ERC) exists to save lives more efficiently and effectively, and more specifically to:

➢ increase the impact of investments;

➢ facilitate a joint donor approach; and

➢ provide a longer-term framework.

The ERC funds the field-testing and roll-out of important humanitarian tools, such as integrated food security phase classification, multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessment, the assessment capacities project for coordinated needs assessment, rapid response teams and surge capacity to allow clusters and tools to respond better to major emergencies.

Many ERC-funded projects have directly or indirectly targeted local capacity-building, but the sustainability of this crucial activity remains a major challenge in contexts of poor local governance and scarce resources. The support given to the global clusters system is a key achievement of ERC funding. The 'level 3' response to Typhoon Haiyan, which deployed the full range of IASC[26] Transformative Agenda instruments for the first time, was much more rapid, robust and comprehensive than in previous major disasters.

The western African Ebola outbreak pointed up weaknesses in the international community's response to major public health crises and highlighted the need for a more effective 'global health cluster'. With ERC funding, ECHO has recently become involved in making the necessary improvements to the cluster, applying experience and lessons learned from ERC work with other global clusters.

In 2014, the EU established a European voluntary humanitarian aid corps, the **EU Aid Volunteers**, to give citizens the opportunity to be involved in humanitarian action. The Aid Volunteers Regulation was adopted on 3 April, followed by a first annual work programme for 2014. As envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty, the programme aims to strengthen the Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian aid and train the humanitarian leaders of tomorrow, while giving young Europeans an opportunity to show solidarity with people in need. It is open to experienced humanitarian aid experts, but also to young people who envisage a career in the field of emergency aid. It will create opportunities for 18 000 people to volunteer in humanitarian operations worldwide by 2020. The focus is currently on preparing the implementing rules for the initiative: standards (safety, volunteer management, working conditions, etc.) combined with a certification mechanism for future sending and hosting organisations and a common training programme for all future Aid Volunteers.

Following the adoption of the **UCPM legislation** at the end of 2013, the first half of 2014 saw intensive efforts to implement it. Member States agreed on all necessary implementing provisions, including the rules for the functioning of the new voluntary pool of disaster-response assets. A first start-up configuration for the pool was agreed and will be implemented in 2015, with over 50 civil protection modules and teams and other response capacities, including urban search and rescue teams, camp and shelter facilities, advanced medical posts, field hospitals, medevac assets and numerous other capacities.

ECHO worked on:

– a framework for prevention and preparedness advisory missions (a new tool the EU can use to help countries requesting civil protection assistance); and

– the new prevention aspects of the UCPM legislation, including discussions with Member States on the new Commission guidelines on risk management capability assessments and the new European peer review programme.

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[26] Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The Commission embarked on more consistent **global outreach to strategic partners**, including China, Japan and ASEAN. It is cooperating more closely with Japan on the post-2015 HFA. Cooperation and policy exchange with the ASEAN Secretariat are ongoing and operational contacts with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) are being strengthened.

UCPM assistance, including assistance from the voluntary pool, can be requested by affected countries or via UNOCHA or other international organisations such as the IOM[27].

In 2014, the UCPM:

− strengthened cooperation between its participating states;

− addressed gaps in national response capacities;

− shifted the focus towards a more prevention-related approach;

− provided a single contact point that coordinated EU-level efforts; and

− raised the EU's profile by expressing solidarity with countries affected by major disasters.

ECHO worked intensively with other Commission departments to prepare an EU position and play a leading role in shaping the **post-2015 HFA** in the build-up to the Sendai Summit. Its ideas on the post-2015 HFA were set out in a Commission Communication *Managing risks to achieve resilience*[28], on the basis of which the Council adopted conclusions on 5 June.

On 24 June, the Council adopted a decision[29] on the rules and procedures for implementing the **'solidarity clause'**. Under the Treaty, if a Member State is affected by a natural or man-made disaster or victim of a terrorist attack, the Union and other Member States must act jointly in a spirit of solidarity to assist it. The implementation rules see the UCPM as one of the key instruments likely to be mobilised in most cases when the clause is invoked. As the central 24/7 EU-level contact point for Member States and other stakeholders in all crises triggering the clause, the ERCC will also play a key role. In collaboration with other Union crisis centres, it will also facilitate the production of 'integrated situational awareness and analysis' reports to support political decision-making in the Council in the context of 'integrated political crisis response' (IPCR) arrangements triggered automatically by the solidarity clause being invoked.

CONCLUSION

Around the world, armed conflicts and attacks on civilians continue and natural disasters are occurring with increasing frequency and intensity; with climate change, this trend is set to continue. The relentless rise in the number of people suffering calls for more efficient humanitarian action to ensure that the right aid reaches those most in need at the right time, but also finding ways of doing more with less.

Throughout 2014, the EU responded effectively to the increasing need for emergency response and relief aid worldwide. With less than 1 % of the total EU budget, amounting to just over EUR 2 per EU citizen per year, EU humanitarian aid annually

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[27] International Organization for Migration

[28] COM (2014) 216 final

[29] Council Decision 2014/415/EU of 24 June 2014 on the arrangements for the implementation by the Union of the solidarity clause (OJ L 192, 1.7.2014, p. 53).

provides immediate assistance, relief and protection to around 120 million victims of conflict and disaster. The EU responded to all major emergencies (including those in Syria, Iraq, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and eastern Ukraine, and the Ebola outbreak in western Africa) and confirmed its position as the world's leading donor of humanitarian assistance.

The UCPM enables a faster and more efficient response to major disasters in the EU and elsewhere based on the rapid and effective deployment of EU relief assistance. Important progress was made with the adoption of new UCPM legislation that greatly improved arrangements for disaster-response cooperation among Member States.

The Ebola outbreak underlined the importance of coordinating humanitarian assistance and civil protection operations and the need for close cooperation between the Commission, other EU actors, Member States and other international responders. More coordinated response action and improved prevention and preparedness ensure that lives are saved and assistance meets the most acute needs of those affected.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SOURCES

General information on ECHO: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en

Individual country geographical/policy factsheets:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2014/ECHO_AR2014_Annex1_GEOFiches.pdf#view=fit

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/annual_report/2014/ECHO_AR2014_Annex2_PolicyFiches.pdf#view=fit

Financial information on Commission humanitarian aid and civil protection activities in 2014: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/funding-for-humanitarian-aid_en

Operational information from previous years:
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/annual_reports_en.htm