Humanitarian aid

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The Commission presents its annual report on the European Union's humanitarian aid policies and their implementation in 2018.

Humanitarian crises have increased in complexity and severity over the last decades. Conflict remained the main driver of humanitarian needs, while natural disasters continued to result in many people needing emergency aid. In 2018, over 134 million people needed assistance.

The European Commission was at the forefront of the EU's response to crises, funding humanitarian aid operations for more than EUR 1.8 billion (UN humanitarian appeal was USD 25.4 billion) in over 90 countries with particular focus on supporting conflict-affected populations inside Syria and refugees in neighbouring countries.

Main findings in 2018

- ***Emergency Toolbox***: the Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) provided EUR 8.65 million to respond to severe floods in Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria, earthquakes and a tsunami in Indonesia and the effects of a tropical cyclone in the Philippines. The Epidemics Tool provided urgent funding for five outbreaks: Lassa fever (Nigeria), Ebola (DRC), cholera (Djibouti, Niger and Zimbabwe). The amount disbursed was EUR 2.775 million. The Small-scale Tool was used to respond to seven disasters of a total of EUR 2.225 million, namely: Tonga (tropical storm), Nigeria (refugee movement), Nicaragua (civil unrest), Guatemala (volcano eruption), Laos (dam collapse), Venezuela (floods) and Haiti (earthquake).

- ***Syria***: in 2018, the Syria crisis entered its eighth year. The Commission delivered life-saving assistance, mainly by providing food, medicine, water and shelter. The Commission’s actions benefited populations inside Syria as well as Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The Commission’s humanitarian assistance amounted to EUR 260 million.

- ***Turkey***: in June 2018, the EU agreed on providing an additional EUR 3 billion for the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey to support Syrian refugees. Under this second tranche, EUR 550 million were committed in 2018, out of which EUR 50 million for humanitarian aid, mainly on protection and health. This brought the overall humanitarian funding contracted under the Facility to over EUR 1.45 billion.

The Facility's flagship humanitarian programme, the Emergency Social Safety Net, continued to address basic needs and protection needs of 1.7 million beneficiaries. This was the largest single humanitarian project in the history of the EU.

- ***Ukraine***: after more than four years of conflict, humanitarian needs persisted in 2018 in eastern Ukraine. The conflict affected over 4.4 million people, out of which at least 3.4 million were in need of humanitarian assistance. The EU and its Member States remained one of the largest humanitarian donor, with a total of EUR 232 million of support.

- ***Yemen***: Yemen was the largest humanitarian crisis worldwide with 22.2 million people in need of assistance in 2018. During 2018, the Commission scaled up its response to the crisis by providing EUR 127.5 million of life-saving assistance to more than 14 million vulnerable people.

- ***Africa***: 2018 saw the worst food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel in many years. The Commission provided emergency assistance for a total amount of EUR 272.9 million for the various countries affected.

In the Central African Republic, close to 2 million were suffering from acute food insecurity, and two thirds of the population had no access to basic healthcare. About one in four citizens was forcibly displaced, either internally or to neighbouring countries (Cameroon, Chad and the DRC). The Commission allocated over EUR 33 million of humanitarian assistance to the crisis.

- ***Venezuela***: the living conditions of the population deteriorated due to a socio-economic and political crisis. Lack of medicines, combined with a dramatic reduction of the health system's capacity, resulted in a growing number of people lacking treatment. By the end of 2018, over 3.2 million people had left the country mainly for Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Brazil. A total of EUR 32 million was allocated by the EU for provision of notably health and nutritional services, water and sanitation, protection, EiE, as well as support to host communities. This amount includes EUR 7 million of EDF increase to support the pressing humanitarian needs.

- ***Rohingya crisis***: after the massive displacement in 2017, about one million stateless refugees resided in 2018 in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. The EU provided EUR 46 million in humanitarian assistance for the crisis, both in Bangladesh and Myanmar, in the form of basic health care, water, sanitation, shelter, nutrition, protection, psychological support and disaster risk reduction assistance.

Horizontal priorities

Education in Emergencies (EiE): in 2018 the European Commission dedicated 8.5% of its humanitarian budget to EiE activities in 34 countries (for an amount of EUR 91.6 million) thus surpassing the 8% target for the year. The Commission also adopted a Communication on EiE and protracted crises in May 2018. The new policy framework will enable the EU to leverage resources more predictably, flexibly and effectively based on a holistic and coordinated humanitarian-development nexus approach and clear strategic priorities.