Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 01/12/2000 - Follow-up document

In 1999, the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) witnessed change in relation to its personnel and also in the ways it conducts business. The year started with a new Framework Partnership Agreement, aimed at improving the way ECHO cooperates with its partners both in the governmental and non-governmental world. With respect to operations, the Kosovo crisis radically influenced ECHO's priorities for 1999 and the funds it managed; for the first time, ECHO provided more than 800 MEUR in support of humanitarian operations, roughly half of which was devoted to the Kosovo crisis. Other EU humanitarian efforts in 1999 included: - ECHO funded projects in 70 countries and the presence of 65 field experts; - successful cases of "phasing out" by ECHO giving way to development programmes: Niger and Mali, the belated case of Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo itself; - the evaluation conducted under Article 20 of the regulation governing humanitarian assistance was, according to the Commission, the highlight of the year. In conclusion, the single most important message from the Communication is the need to focus on results. In order to implement the recommendation of the Commission's Communication, a work plan has been drawn up to guide ECHO's reform in the year to come. The implementation of this plan will be a major challenge for ECHO in 2000 and beyond.