Basic information

1995/0119(SYN) SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)	Procedure completed
Humanitarian aid **Subject** 6.50 Emergency, food, humanitarian aid, aid to refugees, Emergency Aid Reserve	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
DEVE Development and Cooperation	SAUQUILLO PÉREZ DEL ARCO Francisca (PSE)	21/06/1995

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
DEVE Development and Cooperation	SAUQUILLO PÉREZ DEL ARCO Francisca (PSE)	21/06/1995

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	GHILARDOTTI Fiorella (PSE)	23/06/1995

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	1902	1996-01-29
Development	1928	1996-05-28
Development	1897	1995-12-20
Energy	1938	1996-06-20

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
31/05/1995	Legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0201	Summary
10/07/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
13/11/1995	Vote in committee		Summary

13/11/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0283/1995	
29/11/1995	Debate in Parliament		Summary
15/12/1995	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0721	Summary
29/01/1996	Council position published	12768/3/1995	Summary
15/02/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
24/04/1996	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
24/04/1996	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A4-0125/1996	
20/05/1996	Debate in Parliament		Summary
23/05/1996	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1996)0239	Summary
20/06/1996	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
20/06/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
02/07/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1995/0119(SYN)
Procedure type	SYN - Cooperation procedure (historic)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legal basis	EC Treaty (before Amsterdam) E 130W
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/4/07519

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0283/1995 OJ C 339 18.12.1995, p. 0003	13/11/1995	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0589/1995 OJ C 339 18.12.1995, p. 0039-0054	30/11/1995	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A4-0125/1996 OJ C 152 27.05.1996, p. 0005	24/04/1996	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T4-0226/1996 OJ C 166 10.06.1996, p. 0015-0023	21/05/1996	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary

Council position	12768/3/1995 OJ C 087 25.03.1996, p. 0046	29/01/1996	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(1995)0201 OJ C 180 14.07.1995, p. 0006	31/05/1995	Summary
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1995)0721 OJ C 058 28.02.1996, p. 0008	15/12/1995	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	SEC(1996)0203	07/02/1996	Summary
Modified legislative proposal	COM(1996)0239	23/05/1996	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2000)0784	01/12/2000	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2001)0307	08/06/2001	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(2002)0322	03/07/2002	
Follow-up document	COM(2003)0430	16/07/2003	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2017)0662	13/11/2017	Summary
Follow-up document	SWD(2019)0421	21/11/2019	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2020)0006	16/01/2020	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2020)0358	07/08/2020	
Follow-up document	COM(2021)0659	29/10/2021	
Follow-up document	SWD(2021)0312	08/11/2021	
For information	SWD(2022)0352	31/10/2022	
Follow-up document	COM(2022)0647	21/11/2022	
Follow-up document	COM(2023)0500	31/08/2023	
Follow-up document	SWD(2023)0354	08/11/2023	
Follow-up document	COM(2024)0427	02/10/2024	
	COM(2025)0562		

Follow-up document		01/10/2025	

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Regulation 1996/1257 OJ L 163 02.07.1996, p. 0001	Summary

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 20/06/1996 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to give existing budget headings on European humanitarian aid a legal basis and to set clear goals for such aid and specify the types of situation in which such aid is to be provided, the links existing between humanitarian aid, action to ensure preparedness in the event of disasters, and rehabilitation and reconstruction operations, as well as laying down the procedures for conducting humanitarian operations in third countries. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid. SUBSTANCE: - objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid: . scope of humanitarian aid: assistance, relief and protection operations on a non-discriminatory basis to help the most vulnerable sections of the population in third countries and as a priority those in developing countries, victims of natural disasters, man-made crises (wars and outbreaks of fighting) or exceptional situations comparable to natural or man-made disasters; . objectives of humanitarian aid: to save and preserve life during emergencies and their immediate aftermath; to provide assistance to people affected by wars, especially where their own governments prove unable to help them; the transport of aid; rehabilitation and reconstruction work (particularly in the short term, to facilitate the arrival of relief and, where possible, on a more long-term basis); to cope with the consequences of population movements (refugees, displaced people, etc.); to ensure preparedness for risks of natural disasters (use of an early-warning system); and to support mine-clearance work and measures to combat anti-personnel mines; . types of assistance eligible for financing: purchase and delivery of any product needed for the implementation of operations, including the construction of housing or shelter for the victims; the costs associated with outside staff, whether expatriate or local; the storage, transport and distribution of relief; etc.; . back-up measures eligible for financing: preparatory studies; technical assistance; public awareness campaigns; measures to strengthen coordination; and humanitarian mine-clearance operations. The operations covered by the Regulation shall be exempt from taxes, charges, duties and customs duties. Community funding shall take the form of grants. - procedures for implementing humanitarian aid: aid operations may be implemented either at the request of international or non-governmental aid organizations from a Member State or a recipient country or on the initiative of the Commission. Selection of the organizations eligible for Community funding shall be based on the principles of sound management, impartiality and experience in the field. - procedures for implementing humanitarian operations: The Commission shall decide on emergency action for an amount not in excess of ECU 10 million, namely operations to meet immediate and unforeseeable humanitarian requirements, which are limited in duration. In respect of such operations involving amounts in excess of ECU 2 million, the Commission must inform the Member States within 48 hours of the initiatives it intends to finance. The Commission is responsible for appraising, deciding on, monitoring and assessing operations. When taking certain decisions, it will be assisted by a type IIIa committee (decisions on measures to protect humanitarian aid, goods and staff). A type IIb committee will assist it with decisions on global humanitarian aid plans and amounts in excess of ECU 2 million. Provision has also been made for regular assessment of humanitarian aid and the provision of information to the other institutions: the Commission must submit to the Council and the EP an annual report on all the humanitarian operations funded during the previous financial year. The Regulation is to be reviewed three years after its entry into force. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 05.07.1996.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 20/12/1995

Following the debate, the Council approved by a qualified majority - with the Danish, Finnish and Netherlands delegations voting against - the common position, which will be forwarded to the European Parliament under the cooperation procedure (Article 189b).

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 30/11/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

Adopting the report by Mrs SAUQUILLO PEREZ del ARCO (PSE, E), the European Parliament approved the proposal for a regulation with the following amendments: - humanitarian aid was defined as the immediate or long-term provision of any aid needed by the victims of natural disasters or man-made crises (floods, earthquakes, war etc.), including emergency aid (especially the construction of shelters and housing, food, medical relief etc.) and possibly including short-term reconstruction projects. It was to be provided without discrimination on the grounds of sex, age or religion and implemented directly or in consultation with multilateral organizations and NGOS. It should be possible to implement humanitarian aid where local authorities could not or would not guarantee the survival of the populations in question; - aid objectives were clarified: to create the conditions needed for subsequent cooperation aid, to ensure preparedness for risks of disaster, to take account of population movements within the country and to comply with current international conventions; - the participation of NGOs at all levels was strengthened: humanitarian aid was to be implemented by NGOs at the request of a Member State or a beneficiary country (the European Parliament clarified the eligibility criteria: properly constituted with head offices in a Member State, real capacity for the actions undertaken and knowledge of the local situation, impartiality); - the visibility of Community actions needed to be highlighted; - support needed to be granted to local aid structures and the capacity of organizations to intervene immediately needed to be strengthened; - the conditions for granting funding were to be laid down in a framework partnership contract to be duly complied with; - the European Parliament called for all actions implemented to be complementary to current action by other international organizations (United Nations, donor countries) and in close collaboration with the Council and the European Parliament itself. It asked to be notified of general aid guidelines and for the Commission to hold an annual meeting with all NGOs with a framework contract in order to study joint work strategies.

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.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 15/12/1995 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission's amended proposal incorporates, in full or in part, 18 of the 23 amendments proposed by the European Parliament at first reading. The amendments adopted by the Commission seek to: - ensure that assistance provided to underprivileged groups is not discriminatory (on grounds of sex, age or physical constitution); - ensure that humanitarian aid is visible, especially where local authorities cannot or will not guarantee the survival or protection of the population in question; - highlight the idea of a continuum between short-term rehabilitation actions and long-term development objectives; - ensure that certain actions take account of current international conventions (especially those relating to displaced persons); - strengthen coordination and consultation with humanitarian agencies, NGOs and international organizations; - grant Member States and beneficiary countries the same right of initiative to implement humanitarian operations as NGOs and international organizations; - clarify the objective criteria and factors which may be taken into account in order to determine NGOs access to funding under this regulation (impartiality and previous experience); - deal with the question of coordination in a single article by including coordination with international organizations which form part of the United Nations system; - clarify eligible types of aid (especially project monitoring and evaluation actions and expenditure to ensure that humanitarian actions are visible; the construction of housing or shelters for the population in question is also eligible); - clarify the implementation of global humanitarian aid plans in regions in which the humanitarian crisis is prolonged; - transmit evaluation reports to and engage in close dialogue with the European Parliament.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 07/02/1996 - Commission communication on Council's position

In view of the new provisions on emergency intervention decided by the Commission and the compromise reached with regard to comitology, whereby the Commission obtained reasonable deadlines for consulting the committee (1 month instead of 3 months as a general rule), the Commission endorsed the Council's common position.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 21/05/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

Adopting the recommendation for second reading by Mrs SAUQUILLO PEREZ DEL ARCO (PSE, E), the European Parliament approved the common position of the Council concerning humanitarian aid with the following amendments: - exemption from tax, levies and customs duty for humanitarian operations, - strengthening of relations with the humanitarian organizations, notably through the holding of an annual meeting between organizations linked to humanitarian aid and the Commission, in order to study joint work strategies and assess the results of the actions carried out.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 29/01/1996 - Council position

The Council's common position takes over the main points of the commission's amended proposal and 14 EP amendments (either in full or in part). In particular, the common position incorporates those amendments seeking to strengthen coordination with international and/or non-governmental organizations, lay down certain conditions for NGO access to Community financing (impartiality, previous experience), give the Commission the task of monitoring and evaluating humanitarian projects, define global humanitarian aid plans and include new operations eligible for funding (inter alia, housing and shelter for refugees). It does not, however include the requirement to submit evaluation reports to the EP, although it does ensure that Parliament will be better informed by means of new provisions regarding the annual report it is to receive, which must include an assessment of the action taken. At the same time, the Council inserts a number of new provisions covering the following: - inclusion among the activities eligible for financing humanitarian mine-clearance operations and awareness campaigns for local communities on anti-personnel mines; - insertion of a new article on emergency operations (and the procedure for taking decisions on such activities); this enables the Commission to take decisions on emergency operations costing no more than ECU 10 m. It must inform the Member States of such operations within 48 hours; - information to forward to the committee: the Commission must undertake to inform the humanitarian aid steering committee of the evaluations it intends to carry out and any timetable for doing so; - the Council requires the Commission to evaluate humanitarian operations and global plans in conjunction with the Member States; - insertion of a review clause under which the Commission is obliged to submit three years after the entry into force of the Regulation an overall evaluation of the activities financed by the Community, together with suggestions on the future of the Regulation; - provision for a type IIIa committee for decisions regarding action to protect humanitarian aid goods and staff and decisions concerning direct operations by the Commission, with a type IIb committee taking responsibility for global humanitarian plans and amounts in excess of ECU 2 m.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 31/05/1995 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to give a legal basis to humanitarian aid which has no legal basis and to define the scope of this aid, coordination procedures and terms of cooperation between the Community, the Member States and international and non-governmental organizations. CONTENT: * The first part of the proposal sets out clear objectives and general criteria for humanitarian aid provided by the Community and specifies: . the types of situation which may give rise to humanitarian aid (such as emergency and post-emergency aid, aid in the event of war, short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction work, aid for refugees and repatriated persons and reintegration aid, natural disaster early warning systems, protection for the victims of conflict etc.); . the types of assistance which might be financed (purchase and delivery of any product needed in order to implement operations, costs of outside staff (expatriate and local), storage, transport and distribution of relief and public awareness campaigns). This aid is non-repayable; . the types of eligible aid which support humanitarian action proper (preliminary studies, technical assistance, public awareness campaigns etc.). * The second part of the proposal specifies the procedures for implementing humanitarian projects and addresses relations with operational partners and cooperation with the Member States of the Union (humanitarian projects financed by the Community are implemented either at the request of international organizations or on the initiative of the Commission). This part also defines the criteria by which eligible organizations are selected. * The third part of the proposal defines the operational procedures to be followed when implementing humanitarian aid programmes financed by the Community. It suggests that the Commission should have overall responsibility for taking decisions on and implementing humanitarian projects. However, it would assisted for certain decisions by an advisory committee made up of representatives from the Member States of the Community and chaired by a representative from ECHO (EC Humanitarian Office). This section also includes provisions on the regular evaluation of humanitarian aid and the presentation of an annual report by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on all these humanitarian aid operations.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 28/05/1996

Parliament having recently given its opinion and the Commission having presented its amended proposal under the cooperation procedure, the Council reached a political agreement on the regulation at its second reading. The common position had been adopted at its last meeting of the Development Council in December.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 16/07/2003

PURPOSE : to present the Humanitarian Aid Office : ECHO - Annual Report 2002. CONTENT : in 2002 natural disasters affected 170 million people and killed almost 40,000. More than 42 ongoing wars and violent crises throughout the year left behind a humanitarian legacy of 37 million uprooted people. Despite the fact that ECHO, with a budget of EUR 537.8 million in 2002, once again was amongst the three main humanitarian donors world-wide, global humanitarian aid of USD 4.5 billion (OCHA) remains only a fraction of global military spending of USD 839 billion (SIPRI Yearbook 2002), obliging the humanitarian community to limit its response and to focus on the areas of highest needs. ECHO's response followed the global evolution of the essential needs of people affected by natural and man-made disasters, with a continued shift from Eastern Europe to Africa and Asia. Half of the violent crises were located in Africa, hosting 27.5% of all refugees. Asia hosted the largest refugee population world-wide (48.3% of all refugees). ECHO succeeded in implementing its needs-based strategy, as reflected by the regional distribution of its funding of humanitarian operations: populations of ACP countries were the biggest recipient of aid (EUR 211.5 million or 39%), followed by Asia (EUR 137.96 million or 26%) and by Eastern Europe (EUR 85.3 million or 16 %). New emergencies, like the one in Afghanistan caused by the accelerated return of somewhere between 1.5 and 2 million refugees and the food crisis in Southern Africa with up to 13 million people facing serious food shortages required ECHO to call on the

emergency aid reserve for an additional EUR 80 million in commitment appropriations. Also, in the context of 'post 11 September' international politics, ECHO started in a timely manner to make contingency plans to deal with the humanitarian consequences of a war in Iraq. This involved close co-ordination with Member States, major partners, especially those in the UN and Red Cross movement, and with other major donors such as the United States. Whereas the plight of the Iraqi people, caused by two major conflicts followed by ten years of international sanctions, received increasing media attention in 2002, other humanitarian crises have disappeared from the headlines. ECHO successfully continued its support in favour of forgotten crises. The total funding allocated to forgotten crises identified in Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Angola, Chechnya and Western Sahara reached EUR 85 million (16% of ECHO's budget). Another feature of ECHO's work was to achieve sustainability of its operations, by trying to hand-over projects or lay the ground for future linkage to longer-term development instruments. Such implementation of a policy linking relief, rehabilitation and development ('LRRD') was marked for the phasing-down of its operations in the Balkans. Also, in Sierra Leone and in Angola ECHO's provision of humanitarian aid became part of an integrated EC Action plan to tackle the humanitarian crises and the initial resettlement process. New developments in relation to crisis management matters under the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as in the context of the "Convention for the Future of Europe" have necessitated an active response from ECHO explaining and defending the specificity of the "humanitarian space." ECHO deepened its relationships with its major partners through the so-called "Strategic Programming Dialogues". They were held in November 2002 for the third year running with the main UN agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, OCHA and, for the first time, WHO). Similar dialogues were held with the ICRC, IFRC and the NGOs. In 2002 ECHO undertook significant efforts to further improve communication, collaboration and co-ordination with the European Parliament. The EP adopted in its plenary session on 14 January 2003 the report prepared by Mrs Carlotti, expressing the EP's favourable appreciation of ECHO's progress in effective aid delivery, simplification of procedures and sound financial management during the period 2001-2002. ECHO enhanced its information, communication and awareness raising activities during 2002, notably through increased coverage in the mass media and through the launch of its redesigned website in November.. As concerns the continuous implementation of reform in 2002, ECHO moved away from centralised to partially decentralised financial circuits. The internal control systems has been reoriented and further strengthened allowing a better assessment of risks related to humanitarian projects and a more efficient monitoring of progress by concentrating on outputs. In July 2002 ECHO underwent an internal re-organisation to further improve the efficiency of the service, to create new synergies and a better distribution of the workload between units.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 23/05/1996 - Modified legislative proposal

In its amended proposal, the Commission incorporates just one of the two amendments adopted by Parliament at second reading, namely a provision whereby the operations governed by this regulation would be exempt from tax, levies and customs duty. The amendment concerning an annual meeting between the Commission and NGOs involved in humanitarian aid in order to study joint work strategies was rejected.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 08/06/2001

A visible reduction in the number of natural disasters in the year 2000 was off set by the considerable increase in man made crises. So noted the European Commission's Annual Report for the year 2000. The number of ongoing wars and violent crises at the end of 2000 had increased to 36 and include conflicts in the Northern Caucasus, Colombia, Israel/West Bank and Afghanistan. The Report estimates that the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) is currently 20-25 million world-wide. Although lower than equivalent numbers for the mid-1990's, they remain nevertheless unacceptably high, not least because they risk destabilising the host countries themselves. The EU's humanitarian assistance programme is channelled through ECHO which is responsible for distributing EU funds. In 2000, 121 funding decisions relating to ECHO were approved amounting to a total of EUR 491.7 million. The geographical distribution of funds reflects the improvement of the war situation in the Western Balkans. For example, in 1999 the ex-Yugoslav states were the recipient of 55% of the ECHO budget. In 2000 this figure dropped to 20% The three main type of partners working with ECHO in the year 2000 were: - EC-NGOs (they received 65% of ECHO funding); - the United Nations (which received 19% of funding) and - other international organisations (which received 10% of funding). Stemming from the 1999 "Article 20" evaluation a number of organisational and procedural changes to further enhance the effectiveness of ECHO are being introduced. Unfortunately however, a number of challenges, common to all humanitarian organisations, remain unsolved. Largely these relate to the increasing number of security incidents, denial of access to victims and the risk of negatively influencing fragile local communities through aid. As the report notes, humanitarian aid can only treat some of the symptoms, it cannot address the root causes of the problems, which need to be addressed through tools such as conflict prevention, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 13/11/2017 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its annual report on the European Union's humanitarian aid policies and their implementation in 2016.

It is prepared pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid, which requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the European Parliament and to the Council with a summary of the operations financed in the course of the preceding year.

In 2016, humanitarian crises increased in number, complexity and severity. There were over 50 armed conflicts, with little or no improvement in the most severe largescale crises such as those in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan or the Lake Chad region.

Natural disasters – linked to mega-trends such as climate change, urbanisation and demographic pressures – have in recent years created humanitarian needs for an estimated 26 million people every year. Overall, more than 95 million people in 40 countries were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2016, and almost 65 million people (half of them children) were forcibly displaced – more than ever before.

Against this dramatic background, the **EU's humanitarian aid budget in 2016 was the highest ever, at EUR 1.8 billion**.

Main findings in 2016:

- **The Syria crisis**: a significant proportion of the EU's humanitarian budget in 2016 went on supporting refugees in the countries most directly affected by the crisis in Syria, as well as people inside Syria in need of humanitarian assistance. The Commission thus allocated EUR 454 million to humanitarian operations in Syria and neighbouring countries, in line with the pledges made at the London conference of February 2016. Inside Syria, almost half of the Commission's humanitarian assistance went to immediate life-saving and emergency humanitarian operations.
- In **Jordan and Lebanon**, EU humanitarian funding has contributed to cash assistance for the most vulnerable refugees, lifesaving secondary healthcare, non-formal education, shelter as well as water, hygiene and sanitation. Efforts also focused on strong advocacy at international level for unhindered humanitarian access, protection of refugees and respect for international humanitarian law.
- The EU also put in place the Facility for Refugees in **Turkey**, to help respond to the needs of the three million refugees hosted by Turkey. The EUR 1.4 billion humanitarian leg of the Facility for 2016 and 2017 is focused on supporting mainly out-of-camp refugees (who make up the vast majority of refugees in Turkey, and are also the most vulnerable). To this end, the Commission – working through the World Food Programme and the Turkish Red Crescent – launched the EU's biggest-ever humanitarian project, the **Emergency Social Safety Net** (ESSN), aiming to provide **monthly cash transfers to one million of the most vulnerable refugees via debit cards**.
- **Africa**: as in previous years, the response to humanitarian crises in Africa was another significant part of the EU's humanitarian assistance, with particular focus on the complex emergencies across the Sahel and Horn of Africa as well as the Lake Chad region, where food security crises were overlaid with a number of protracted conflicts. Overall, the Commission allocated EUR 747 million to crises in sub-Saharan Africa. The largest allocations went to Sudan and South Sudan (EUR 192 million) and to the Horn of Africa (EUR 203 million), as well as West Africa (EUR 140 million).
- **Iraq, the wider Middle East and North Africa**: the EU played a key role in providing assistance to the victims of the conflict in Iraq (EUR 159 million) and was at the forefront of international advocacy efforts. Furthermore, the EU continued to provide significant support to humanitarian operations in Yemen (EUR 70 million), as well as in Palestine (EUR 25 million).
- **Ukraine**: the EU remained one of the largest humanitarian donors in the Ukraine crisis. In total, EUR 28.4 million was mobilized for the EU's humanitarian response to the crisis.
- **Emergency Toolbox**: the EU's Emergency Toolbox for humanitarian aid is designed to respond rapidly to sudden-onset emergencies. It is composed of three funding mechanisms: for epidemics; for small-scale response; and for support to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The financial allocation amounted to a total of EUR 11.5 million, of which EUR 3.5 million for epidemics; EUR 5 million for small-scale response and EUR 3 million for the DREF.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 21/11/2019 - Follow-up document

This Commission staff working document sets out the general guidelines on operational priorities for humanitarian aid in 2020.

The report stressed that while global humanitarian needs are dramatically increasing, funding is not. It is estimated that more than 141 million people across the world need humanitarian assistance and protection – and more funding than ever before is required to help them. It is therefore essential to identify and focus on main priorities and respect the guiding principles, on which the EU's humanitarian budgetary allocations are determined.

In 2020, EU humanitarian aid will continue to focus on supporting those most in need following sudden-onset, protracted and forgotten crises.

Priority areas

Efforts will continue to focus on the following areas:

- multi-sectoral emergency assistance and protection for populations affected by conflict;

- nutrition support to help reduce excessive morbidity and mortality of children under five in areas where severe acute malnutrition has reached the emergency threshold;

- adequate food assistance to populations facing severe food insecurity;

- support to enhancing preparedness and response capacity in high-risk areas;

- emergency response to epidemics and natural disasters as appropriate.

In addition to the direct action to help those most in need, efforts will continue to draw high-level attention on the urgent need to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable populations in the Sahel and implement the Humanitarian-Development Nexus on a large scale.

Programmable funding should be mobilised in addition to emergency funding in order to maintain access to basic services for the population and reduce the risks on social cohesion. Interventions will primarily cover vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria. In addition, Disaster Risk Reduction will be supported in some of these countries. In all West and Central Africa countries, a response to epidemics and new emergencies can be provided as appropriate; if important unmet humanitarian needs emerge.

Operational objectives and budget planning

The report noted that the general EU budget earmarked on the budget lines for humanitarian aid/food assistance and disaster preparedness is EUR 896 154 500. This amount is to be used to finance humanitarian aid operations aiming essentially to:

- provide humanitarian aid to vulnerable people affected by natural disasters, man-made crises or exceptional situations, which have entailed or are likely to continue entailing major loss of life, physical and psychological or social suffering or material damage;

- provide first initial response to cover the immediate needs of the most vulnerable in the days after a large scale emergency or a sudden onset humanitarian crisis as well as humanitarian assistance for response and disaster preparedness to populations affected by disasters where a small scale response is adequate and to populations affected by epidemic outbreaks;

- improve the conditions for delivering humanitarian aid by supporting transport services to ensure that aid is accessible to beneficiaries;

- increase the coherence, quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid through e.g. the development of innovative approaches, methodologies, tools, the support to capacity building, coordination and preparedness development of innovative approaches, methodologies, tools, the support to coordination and preparedness.

Humanitarian aid

1995/0119(SYN) - 16/01/2020 - Follow-up document

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.