



General Policy Resolution

VOICE General Assembly
Brussels, 13 May 2004

The VOICE network,

COMMITTED to humanitarian assistance work according to the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence,

RECOGNISING the changing nature of humanitarian crises, which, with time, have become increasingly complex and involve greater numbers of actors, stakeholders, and affected populations,

CONCERNED about the challenges to these principles, globally as well as in the EU political sphere, which have led to a growing number of practical risks and threats at field level (in particular regarding the security of aid workers),

CONSCIOUS of the role of the UN in promoting multilateral approaches and safeguarding respect for humanitarian principles,

NOTING that the threat of terrorism has become a defining factor in all security considerations, and that solutions to help mitigate this threat have so far eluded the international community,

HAVING REGARD to the EU's new Security Strategy, which creates an opportunity for the EU to choose a Human Security approach that takes root causes of threats into consideration, rather than a view that merely combats the symptoms, and that could include expressing solidarity with countries outside the EU and focusing spending on the alleviation of suffering,

CONSIDERING the changes in the EU political environment taking place in 2004: the renewal of the European Parliament, the reform of the European Commission, and the opportunities offered by the accession of ten new Member States,

ACKNOWLEDGING the opportunities afforded by a new European Constitution, which will, for the first time, enshrine international humanitarian law principles as a legal basis for EU humanitarian assistance,

WELCOMING the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative's reconfirmation of humanitarian principles, and expecting to see the commitments of participating donors reflected in consistent implementation of the Principles and Good Practice it sets out,

1. **URGES THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS** to ensure that EU humanitarian aid is not used as a tool for fighting terrorism, or for any other political aim, and to sustain a framework for principled EU humanitarian action carried out by NGOs, such as that provided by ECHO;
2. **CALLS UPON EU GOVERNMENTS** to engage multilaterally in response to crises, carefully choosing the crises they respond to, and considering primarily the specific needs at hand.