



VOICE (*Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies*) is a network representing some 90 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide. Seeking to involve its members in information, training, advocacy and lobbying, VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the EU on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness and promotes the values of humanitarian NGOs.

VOICE General Assembly 2008

Brussels, 29th April 2008
General Policy Resolution

The VOICE network,

WELCOMING the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid signed on 18 December 2007 by the Presidents of the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the European Union on behalf of the 27 EU Member States,

HAVING REGARD to the active engagement of VOICE as a network of European humanitarian NGOs in the process of developing the Consensus,

APPRECIATING the commitment to developing an Action Plan to implement the Consensus, the openness to do this in dialogue with the implementing partners, and the recognition of NGOs' expertise as fundamental to the delivery of a speedy, effective and professional EU humanitarian response,

NOTING that the Consensus recognises the fundamental importance of the humanitarian principles and International Humanitarian Law for humanitarian aid, acknowledges the added value of a diversity of professional civilian humanitarian actors in delivering aid and of the independence of NGOs,

NOTING that the Consensus emphasises that EU humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool, and commits to the use of civil protection and military assets in emergency relief only in line with international guidelines, in compliance with humanitarian principles and always on the basis of identified needs,

DRAWING ATTENTION to the consequences of climate change, which is likely to further increase the frequency, severity and impact of natural disasters, the expected increase in humanitarian needs due to increases in the number of people in vulnerable situations and the risk of increased population movements,

NOTING the EU's concerns and the debates in the European Parliament concerning the food crisis deriving from factors such as the increase in cost of food, high energy prices, and increased production of biofuels - all of which impact heavily on the provision of basic food needs to and the vulnerability of people especially in developing countries,

COMMITTED to contribute to and improve EU policy and practice on Disaster Risk Reduction mainstreaming within the context of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action,

CALLS UPON THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (Council, European Parliament and European Commission) and THE 27 MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. To commit to continue the strengthened dialogue between the EU Member States and humanitarian NGOs, and report annually on the implementation of the letter and spirit of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.
2. To ensure that humanitarian aid is considered as a separate budgetary item in the preparatory framework for the EU budget 2013-2020, that budgetary commitments are made only in a manner consistent with humanitarian principles and OECD DAC commitments, and that there is a significant increase in the volume of humanitarian aid funding and in the allocation of this funding to NGOs.
3. To ensure that, while the Lisbon Treaty includes a separate chapter on humanitarian aid, the working processes and structures established for the European External Action Service respect humanitarian principles, and that humanitarian aid is managed in accordance with these principles. This is best achieved when humanitarian aid is in association with, and absolutely not a part of, the External Action Service jointly with the other EU external action instruments.