

Presentation of VOICE Study

THE EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN AID: AN NGO PERSPECTIVE

May 2014



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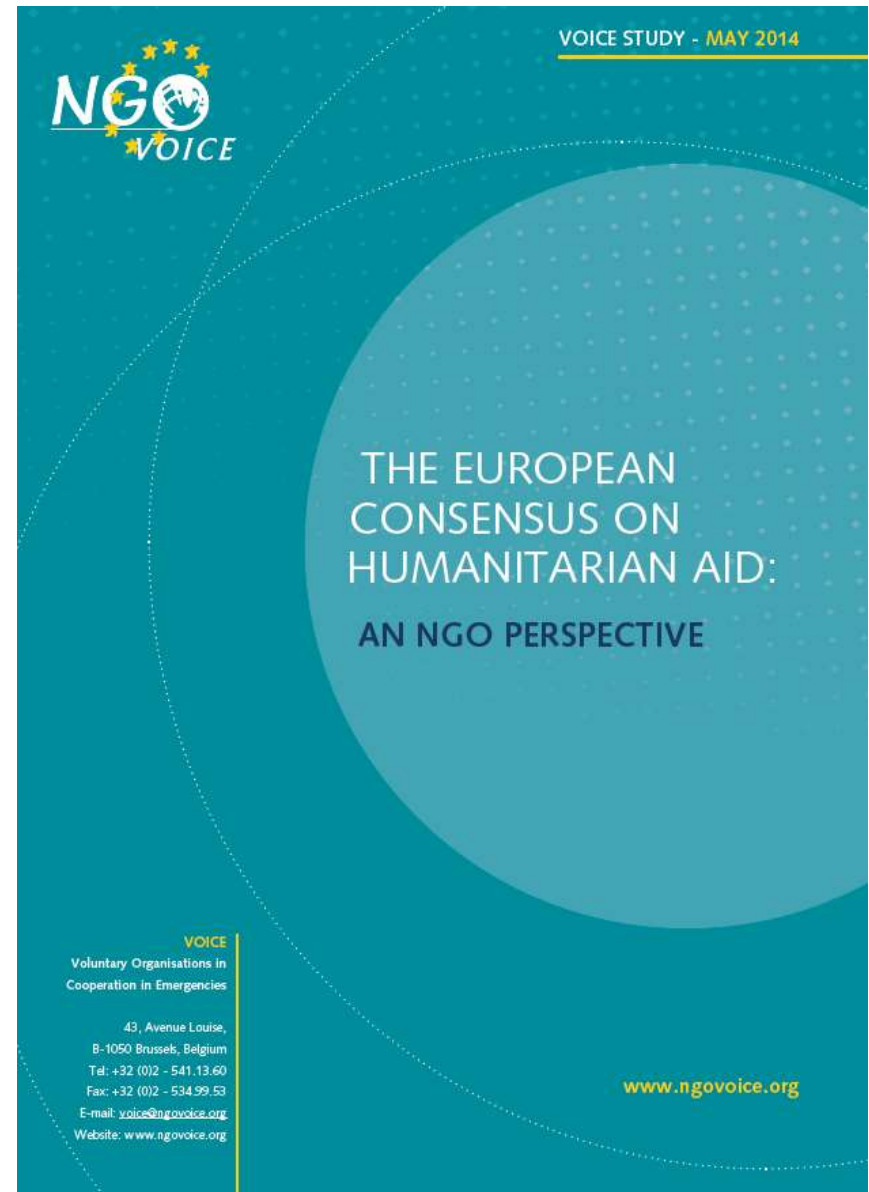


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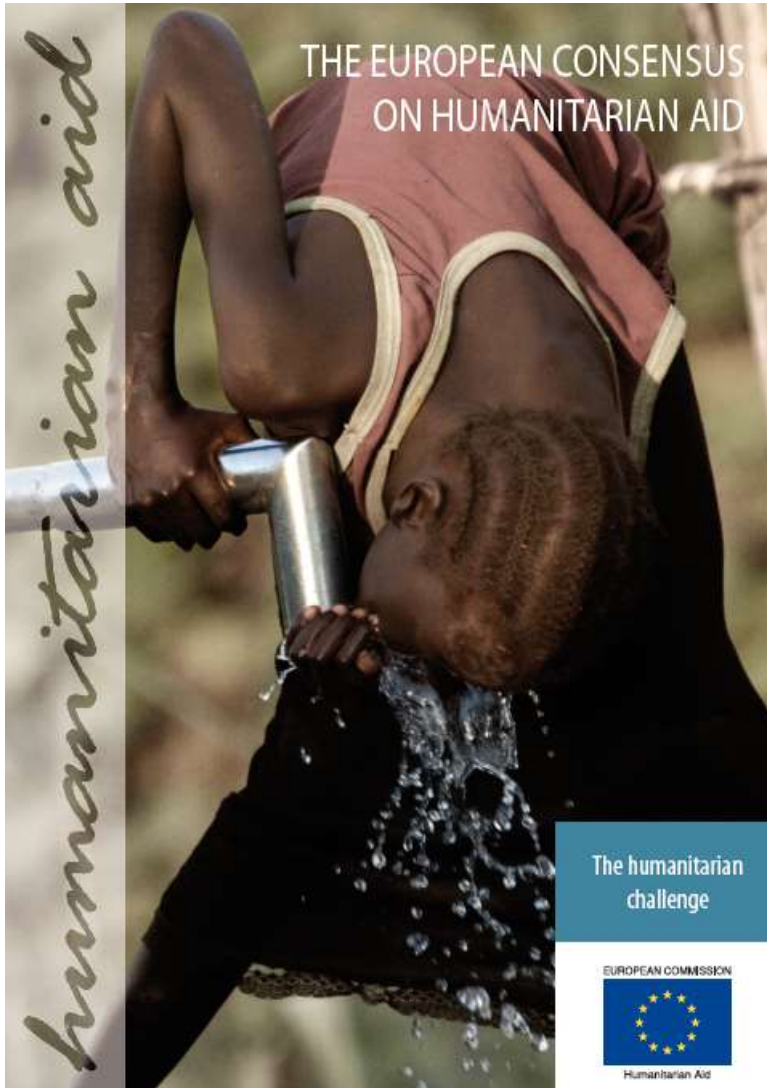
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METHODOLOGY

- This report was researched and written by: **DARA**, commissioned and edited by **VOICE**
- **A desk review** of all the EU MS's humanitarian aid policies and strategies
- An online survey of **83 NGOs** across EU Member States and **17 humanitarian departments** of EU governments.
- **7 NGOs** groups focus gathering **85** representatives from **62** organisations in **7** Members States
- Interviews with **key stakeholders** from NGOs, governments, IO



The EU Consensus on Humanitarian aid



- An agreement on the European Consensus on Humanitarian aid was reached in **2007** by the EC, the EP and the Members States
- **Main Objective:** Provides a common visions and strong policy framework for the EU and Members States when developing their humanitarian policies and strategies
- First Action Plan for implementation was agreed upon in **2008**
- Commission adopted an **18 month** Implementation Plan on **27 November 2015**
- Second Action Plan to be adopted in **2017**



The EU Consensus on Humanitarian aid

The Consensus is not legally binding but reflects political commitment and common vision of Member States and the EC to adhere to best practice in their support for Humanitarian Aid

The Consensus is based on extensive consultation with Member States and Humanitarian organisations, beginning in December 2006, identifying common challenges in HA.

Article 100. of the Consensus foresees the creation of an action plan to ensure the implementation of the Consensus.

A central tool for a common approach to Humanitarian Aid

**The Council Party on
Humanitarian Aid and Food
Aid
(COHAFA)**



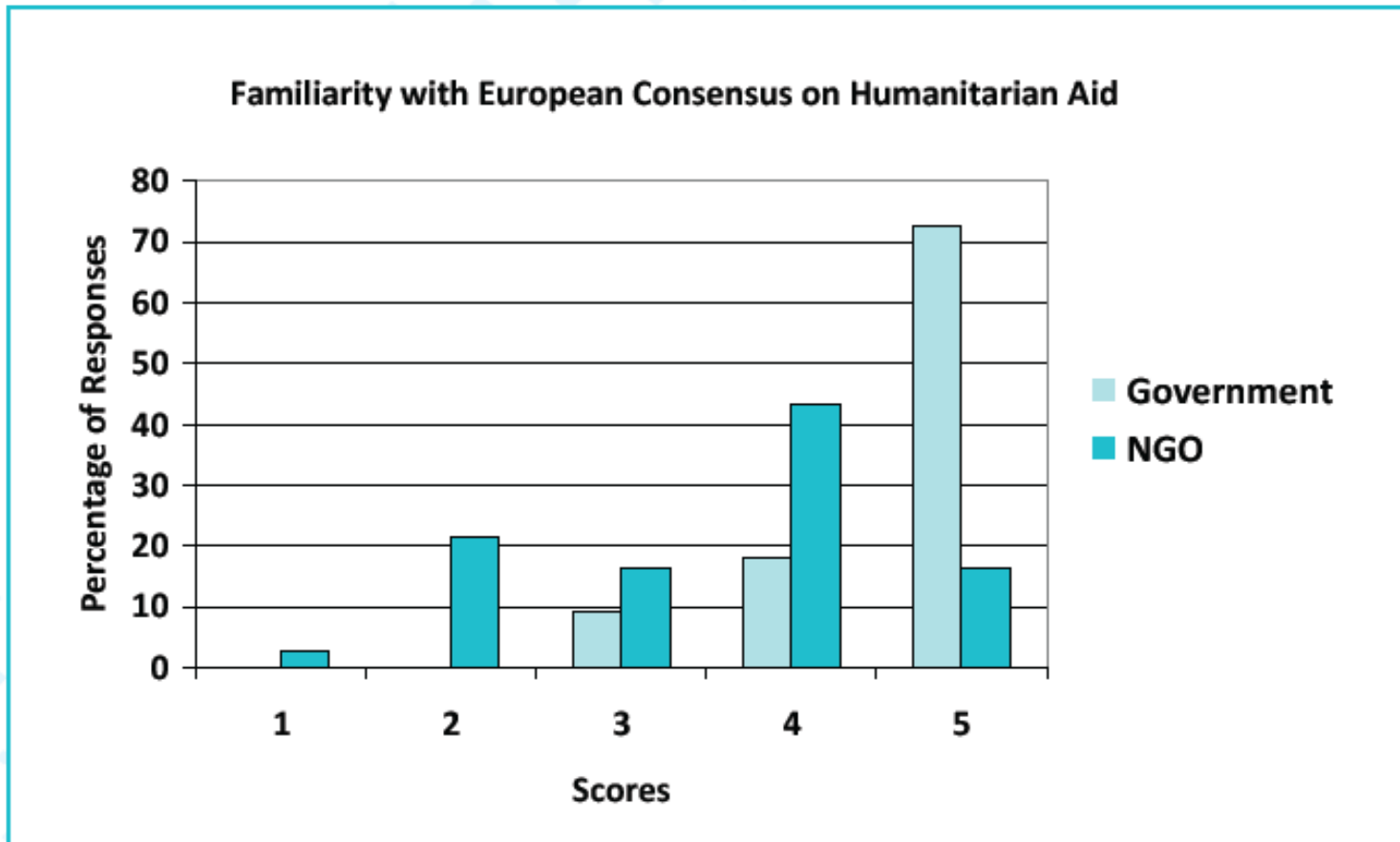
The goals of COHAFA include **promoting the Consensus, improving coordination** among Member States in humanitarian action, as well as **improving the transition from humanitarian to development assistance**.

The creation of **COHAFA** represents the fulfilment of one of the points included in the Consensus Action Plan.

Applying the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

Survey question:

How familiar are you with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid ?





Reflection of the Consensus in MS's policy documents

There is several examples of governments who make the Consensus a **very prominent part of their policies**: At least, 16 MS refer explicitly to the Consensus in the documents

Member States are **more familiar with the Consensus** than NGOs, this is somewhat to be expected as the document is **addressed to and signed by them**.

The key question relates to implementation of and compliance with the Consensus. **NGOs see a gap between rhetoric and actual practice**, and agree that they could do more to monitor Member States' application of the Consensus.

Members States see the Consensus as an effective policy tool, **especially governments being new to the domain of humanitarian affairs**

Recommendations

- ❖ Member States and NGOs should **use the Consensus actively** to inform both humanitarian policies and practice.
- ❖ Member States should use it as **their core reference** to ensure that their actions, funding and programming decisions are consistent with **the principles contained in the Consensus.**
- ❖ At EU level **a follow-on Action Plan to the Consensus** should be a key tool to support a coordinated and collective approach to a number of agreed priority areas.



Putting Humanitarian Principles into Practice

Both Member States and NGOs see the **humanitarian principles as the most important part of the Consensus**. Humanitarian principles are very much present in Member States' humanitarian policies

However NGOs are **critical of the application in practice** of Humanitarian principles and expressed concern over **the independence of humanitarian decisions** from other governments priorities

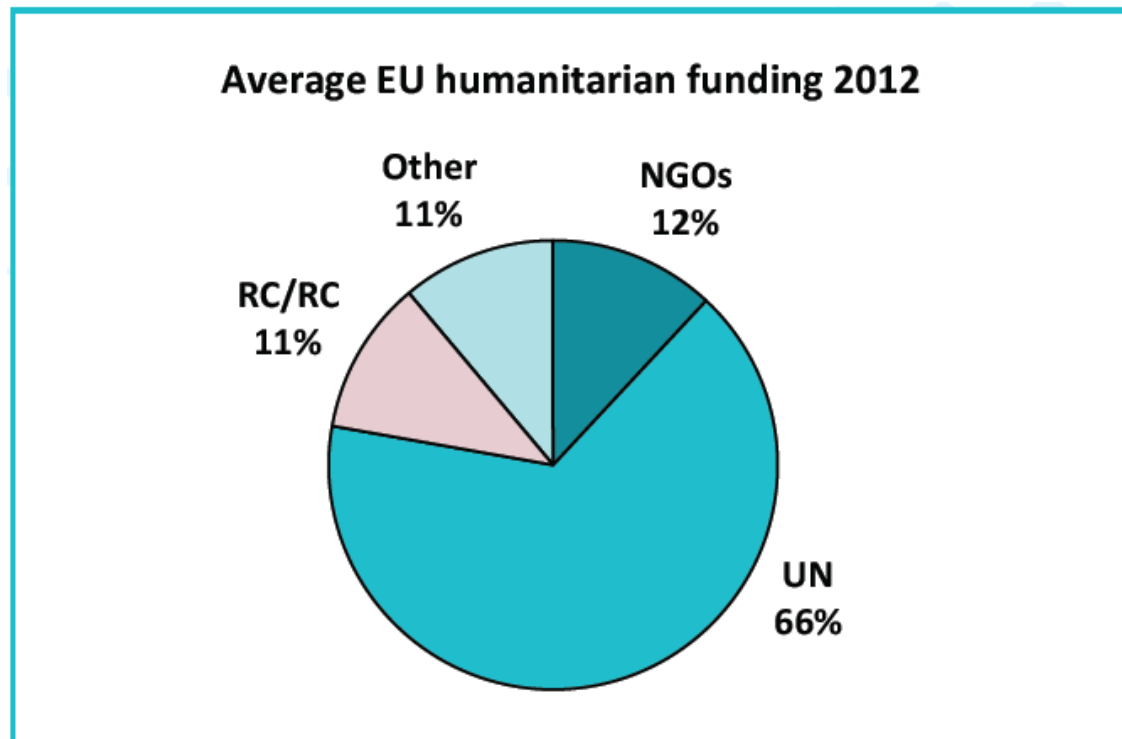
Recommendations

- ❖ Member States should use the Consensus **to ensure respect for humanitarian concerns** in all areas of their policy and action. A wider understanding and application of the principles is important to **avoid the instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid** for political purposes.
- ❖ Member States and NGOs should engage in **systematic exchanges on humanitarian issues**. Dialogue and exchange of good practices between MS is important to **develop informal/ formal coordination mechanisms**.
- ❖ Member States should create opportunities for **dialogue between humanitarian NGOs and the military** in order to ensure clarity in relation to respective mandates and roles, and **respect for and adherence to humanitarian principles**.

Limited Government Funding to NGOs

“NGOs are essential to the humanitarian response as they deliver the majority of international humanitarian aid (...)” *the Consensus art.49*

Survey Question: Who do you prioritize in your funding as partners in your humanitarian operations?



Recommendations

- ❖ Member States should consider **re-balancing the distribution of funds** between humanitarian actors to reflect the comparative advantages and the **proportion of aid delivered by NGOs**.

- ❖ Member States should undertake a more thorough analysis of the **comparative advantages of each of the three** main operational humanitarian families – the UN, International Organisations, and NGOs, especially at a time when they put such emphasis on **‘value for money’** and **results-based management**.

Administrative requirements: An Excessive Burden?

Despite the Consensus promoting the reduction of the administrative requirements, NGOs didn't noticed major improvements

Disparity between
NGOs and UN
requested donors'
conditions

Wide requests all
along the project
circle

Impact on
humanitarian
operations and
efficient use of
resources

Diverging practice
among Member
States

Balance between
administrative
requirements &
Flexibility

Recommendations

In the interest of aid effectiveness, Member States as donors should:

- ❖ Make measurable efforts to **reduce the administrative burden** for NGOs.
- ❖ **Review their information requirements** at all stages of the project cycle.
- ❖ Seek further ways to **harmonise their administrative requirements** and templates.

The Wider Context of Humanitarian Action

DRR

- Efforts to incorporate further DRR into MS 's policies and strategies had been made. However findings highlight a recurrent lack of political focus on preparedness and prevention, leading to little support to NGOs for DRR activities.

LRRD

- Efforts regarding LRRD vary among MS, some MS support LRRD through their resilience agenda within the humanitarian funding streams while others pursue in their development programming.

Capacity building and local actors

- The Consensus support capacity building activities to strengthen local disaster response. However more efforts still needed especially from development actors.

Recommendations

- ❖ The Consensus should be used as **a tool to further work on LRRD and DRR** by Member States, NGOs and other relevant actors.
- ❖ More effort is needed **to raise awareness** of the importance of **investing in DRR measures**, especially at **local level**, and to secure active integration of DRR into development policy and practice.
- ❖ Member States need to grant greater priority to LRRD by improving **coordination between governments' humanitarian and development agencies**, and providing more flexible LRRD funding.



Thank you!

VOICE

Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies

www.ngovoice.org

information@ngovoice.org