



VOICE asbl

ACTIVITY REPORT 2010

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VOICE

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ACRONYMS

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action
COHAFA	Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CONCORD	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
DEVE	Committee on Development (European Parliament)
DG	Directorate General (European Commission Department)
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EEAS	European External Action Service
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EVHAC	European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
GHP	Global Humanitarian Platform
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HR	High Representative (currently Lady Ashton)
HRI	Humanitarian Response Index
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOHA	Network on Humanitarian Action
PSC/COPS	Political and Security Committee (Council)
UN	United Nations
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VOICE	Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies
WG	VOICE Working Group

INTRODUCTION



2010 saw both the Haiti quake and the Pakistan floods, their scale and scope challenging humanitarians and the international community to a degree not seen before. At EU level many changes took place; humanitarian aid is now mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty and the new Commissioner responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis response now also has EU civil protection included in her portfolio. The European Parliament (EP) has more power than previously as demonstrated during the discussions on the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under High Representative Mrs. Ashton. A new institutional set-up and a strong wish to strengthen EU crisis response saw three EC Communications relevant to the VOICE network released in 2010.

Against this background, recognition of VOICE as key interlocutor on issues of EU humanitarian aid was demonstrated by a clear increase in external stakeholders seeking the network's opinion and input. In particular, the network gave significant and comprehensive contributions to the Mid-term Review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan which were reflected in the final European Commission Communication, as well as in the EP report on the same. VOICE similarly served as key facilitator of NGO input to consultations on the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, and successfully promoted the key messages developed together with other major humanitarian bodies in Brussels. With regards to the EC Communication on Disaster Response Capacity, VOICE members were considered major stakeholders as evidenced by requests for opinion by member states, media and the EP.

A new level of engagement was developed with Spanish and Belgian Presidencies of the Council of the EU, and the VOICE Board developed regular exchange with the Commissioner and her Cabinet. The network also focused on building the relationship with new MEPs and other relevant bodies in the European Parliament. VOICE increased its media exposure, participating in public debates with top level decision makers and giving VOICE opinions to journalists.

VOICE Working Groups continued to have impact on policy makers – the DRR group made recommendations which were incorporated into the Implementation Plan to the EU's strategy on DRR in Developing Countries, and the wide dissemination of the position paper on UN-led Humanitarian Reform was well received. This paper has already supported members' national-level advocacy in several EU member states.

Building bridges between national and EU policy level remains an important task for the network and Board members have engaged actively in this endeavour. Successful round tables were held in Madrid and in Brussels, giving visibility to NGOs and the opportunity to link the reality of humanitarian field operations to current policy debates. In addition, exchanges took place with national NGO platforms in Germany, Denmark, France and the Netherlands. VOICE members seek to constantly improve their work. Members exchanged lessons learned with member states through the Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) as well as at a round table drawing especially on members' experiences in responding to the major disasters in Haiti and Pakistan. In 2010 more than 100 organisations participated in VOICE public events.

Looking ahead, with the establishment of the EEAS, new modes of working have to be found between the various EU institutions and new policies are being developed. Many EU governments would like to see an increasing role for EU military and civil protection in humanitarian settings outside Europe. In this context, VOICE will promote the continued application of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and its principles, including at Member State level. VOICE members are major deliverers of humanitarian aid worldwide and expect that the EU will continue to support needs-based principled humanitarian aid, rather than using aid for security and visibility purposes. The EU has also started the process of developing a new long-term budget through the new Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF). In keeping with the importance of this process for the humanitarian sector, VOICE is already advocating for sufficient EU funding for humanitarian aid, as well as continuing to stress the importance of a diversity of professional humanitarian actors.

The successes of 2010 and the challenges for the year ahead underline the ongoing relevance of the VOICE network as a vital means of collective action by NGOs, enabling their views to be shared, understood and multiplied.

Kathrin Schick
Director
VOICE

1. ADVOCATING FOR INDEPENDENT HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid represents the major EU policy framework concerning humanitarian aid, signed by EU member states, the European Parliament and the European Commission in 2007. Humanitarian NGOs were very much engaged in its development and the subsequent consultation leading to its Action Plan. Consequently, the mid-term review of the Action Plan was a major priority of the VOICE network in 2010. This was reflected in a comprehensive consolidated consultation document provided to the European Commission preparing an EC Communication on the mid-term review and to the European Parliament, writing its corresponding report.

In keeping with the integration of civil protection into ECHO's portfolio at the beginning of 2010, another key priority was VOICE's engagement in the consultation process for the EC Communication on strengthening the EU's disaster response, which aims to explore the roles of civil protection and humanitarian aid. This coincided with the strengthening of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, via the establishing of the European External Action Service (EEAS). In discussions around both the Communication and the set up of the EEAS, VOICE sought to clarify the complementarity of roles of the various actors engaged in disaster response, while simultaneously raising awareness about the specificity of humanitarian aid. VOICE was recognised as an important stakeholder in these discussions, resulting in multiple meetings and speaking commitments, adding to the visibility of the network.

Throughout the year, VOICE expertise was frequently sought through requests for expertise and information and invitations to provide its perspective at events and seminars.

1.1 THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON HUMANITARIAN AID ACTION PLAN

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid is the backbone of EU policy on humanitarian aid. It is accompanied by an action plan, which had a mid-term review in 2010, in order to examine progress to date and identify what should be prioritised for the next three year period.

On the initiative of VOICE, the Development Committee of the European Parliament (EP) organised a briefing for new Members of Parliament (MEPs) on the mid-term review of the Action Plan. This event was the first occasion during which the new MEPs were briefed on EU humanitarian policies by humanitarian actors, namely VOICE, the Red Cross movement, DG ECHO and UNOCHA. The speakers stressed the need for greater respect of the humanitarian principles and for humanitarian aid to be clearly needs based. They collectively acknowledged the value of the Consensus and called for more action from EU member states towards its application and the implementation of the Consensus Action Plan at national level.

Given the expertise of VOICE on this matter, the network was widely acknowledged as one of the main interlocutors in the mid-term review process and invited to contribute to the broad consultation. Its contribution was based on a consolidation of member views, feedback from working groups, existing policy statements, and VOICE Board opinions. The comprehensive recommendations drawn up continue to act as a support to members' ongoing advocacy at national and EU level. The final outcome was the achievement of all the key messages advocated by VOICE being included in the EC Communication and the EP resolution. This includes the call for more attention for the promotion of IHL, strengthening the dialogue between humanitarians and the military, more focus on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and more attention to Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD). Also clearly recognised is the recommendation that the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid needs receive greater consideration at member state level, guiding member state humanitarian policies and decision making.

In the autumn of 2010, Board members shared the VOICE recommendations on the mid-term review with their respective national governments, which was particularly timely in relation to the preparation of Council Conclusions on the issue expected in mid- 2011.

1.2 THE EC COMMUNICATION ON STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Against the background of the earthquake in Haiti and the floods in Pakistan, and the EU's striving for greater efficiency, more visibility and strengthened crisis management, a new EC Communication on reinforcing the EU's disaster response was launched in autumn. DG ECHO was charged with the development of the Communication in line with had the leading role in this politically important its role of facilitating the coordination of member states' civil protection assets which is a central issue in this discussion.

VOICE's engagement in the consultation process reflects the links with issues highly relevant to the humanitarian community. This includes coordination in the field and at EU level, the role of EU civil protection and the military, prepositioning of stocks etc. Throughout the process, VOICE stressed the following concerns: the need for clear mandates and roles for different actors in disaster response in order to complement the efforts of professional humanitarian actors; the importance of continued support to principled needs-based humanitarian aid and a clear division of labour in major humanitarian crises between the EC Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response and High Representative Ashton of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The network also drew the attention to the fact that the EU needs to make a clear distinction in policy between disaster response within and outside of the EU.

The Communication was released in October. While it made some differentiation between emergency situations inside and outside the EU, it focused mainly on a strengthened role of civil protection and military in crisis response and fell short of addressing the above mentioned issues in any depth. It also proposed to establish strong links between the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) of ECHO and the EEAS services working on security issues. How this might impact on way the EU will implement humanitarian aid in the future remains to be seen.

The involvement of the network in this high profile debate led to a new engagement with the media, and the network's opinion was sought by the presidency of the Council of EU, the EP and UNOCHA. VOICE commented on the EC Communication at an EP Hearing on 10 November, which included participation by Ms. Georgieva (Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response), UNOCHA and high level civil servants from the French and German governments.

1.3 SHAPING THE NEW INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP FOR EU CRISIS MANAGEMENT

As promoting independent humanitarian action is one of the main strategic objectives of the network, the debates around the set-up of the European External Action Service (EEAS) were particularly important. In line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid- which states as a fundamental principle that humanitarian aid is not a crisis management tool-, the draft proposal for the EEAS structure presented by High Representative (HR) Mrs Ashton did not include humanitarian aid. However, there were concerns about the EP proposal, which did not seem to take into account the above-mentioned principle of the Consensus or questions around the impact that the EEAS could have on EU development policy. VOICE, together with representatives from CONCORD and other networks, met with MEP Brok, a leading MEP in the EEAS discussions. Concerns were shared with regards to the possible instrumentalisation of aid arising from the new structure and the meeting served to raise awareness about the principles contained in the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

The final institutional arrangement keeps DG ECHO outside the formal structure of the EEAS, while



the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid will coordinate with other relevant Commissioners and the EEAS whenever the situation demands it. However, challenges remain. The level of coordination and the division of labour between the services in the case of major catastrophes are not clear, and civil protection links up with certain services in the EEAS. Since a legislative proposal for the role of civil protection is under development, VOICE continues its advocacy in this area.

These activities are part of the continued efforts by the VOICE network to increase awareness of the dangers associated with the instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid for security or visibility purposes, as opposed to aid based on the needs of crisis-affected populations and the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and independence, as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

During the discussions leading up to the EC proposal for the next long-term EU budgeting period there were informal suggestions to consider merging the EU budget lines for humanitarian aid and crisis management, a move which would be in line with above-mentioned trends. The VOICE network advocated strongly against this proposal and it is to be hoped that the idea will not be taken further.

2. STRENGTHENING VOICE MEMBERS' COLLECTIVE INFLUENCE

VOICE members are active in humanitarian aid delivery worldwide and represent an immense body of professional experience and expertise. Based on this expertise, the network seeks to collectively influence relevant policy makers at EU institutional and member state level. VOICE positions are often developed in working groups which in 2010 focused on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), civil-military relations, UN-led humanitarian reform and the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA). Identifying advocacy opportunities in consultation with its members and sharing relevant EU policy developments as they link to operational reality and national level policy, the secretariat produced Flash bulletins and further developed the extranet as key elements of the network's internal communications. Advocacy tools such as positions and information papers were also developed to support members' collective action.

In 2010, VOICE targeted its EU-level advocacy primarily towards the rotating member state presidencies of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, with members continuing to be active and visible at national level and beyond. Good collaboration was established with the Spanish and Belgian presidencies and regular exchange took place with the relevant bodies of the EP. VOICE members briefed both national and EC officials on a number of occasions in Brussels and in member states. This included sharing views on country situations (e.g. Haiti, DRC, Sahel, Gaza, Pakistan, Sudan) as well as on issues such as access to crisis-affected populations, the EU disaster risk reduction strategy and EU funding for humanitarian aid. While the network has regular exchange with DG ECHO on a variety of levels, the FPA Watch Group, focusing on financial and legal matters related to EC contracts, has a particularly key role in this relationship. It brings together a substantial number of ECHO partners and, facilitated by VOICE, represents a unique donor-NGO interface for linking operational issues to donor policy and procedures. As such it lays the ground for wider interaction on a range of other relevant issues.

In 2010, the visibility of the network has increased, leading to a considerable rise in requests for opinion and interaction with a wide range of actors both in the humanitarian community and beyond. The network provided expertise to reports for policy makers on the following topics: transatlantic food assistance, EU DRR strategy and implementation plan, EC NGO financing and transparency, CSO development effectiveness, EU actions in the field of civil protection, European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance and ECHO's evaluation of EU funded programmes in Haiti.

2.1 DEVELOPING COMMON POSITIONS

2.1.1 Achievements of VOICE working groups

VOICE Working groups (WG) represent key means of gathering NGOs for strengthening cooperation and networking, and are facilitated by the VOICE Secretariat. WG bring together technical or thematic experts from VOICE member organisations, who find common ground and mutual interest in exchange on their subject area. Information and best practice are exchanged and common positions are developed, generating well-founded input to advocacy and policy development activities. As such, WG are important channels of influence to reach decision makers, especially on a national level.

WG meetings have also provided a useful context for exchange with policy makers and relevant stakeholders. In addition, participants have regularly been briefed on current and upcoming developments in EU humanitarian aid policy, raising awareness about the links between sectoral issues and the wider policy developments at EU and national level. This has resulted in a stronger overall engagement in advocacy from a number of member organisations. In 2010, 42% of VOICE member organisations participated in Working Group meetings.

A main priority of the **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) WG** in 2010 was to influence the Implementation Plan to the EU Strategy on DRR, through meetings with DG Development and consultants, participation in meetings of the EU DRR Steering Group (consisting of member states and EC services) and written recommendations. The Implementation plan was finally released in 2011 and the group was pleased with the inclusion of its recommendations in the final document. Notably, the final plan has an improved commitment to ensuring DRR issues are included in Country Strategy papers, identifying actions to take into account needs of vulnerable groups in DRR, and developing guidance to integrate DRR and climate risk management into EU programming.

In 2010, the **WG on civil-military relations** focused on developing messages for the VOICE input to the mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan, and on following the discussions around the comprehensive approach. The activities of the WG also fed into VOICE participation in civil-military-related discussions and activities. Key messages were included in external speaking engagements by the VOICE President and members on a range of occasions, including the high level meeting of the Global Humanitarian Platform, the MSF Humanitarian Congress in Berlin, the EP hearing on disaster response capacity and the launch of the Humanitarian Response Index at the European Development Days. OCHA also invited VOICE to join the IASC informal forum on humanitarian civil-military relations.

On the initiative of several VOICE members, the ad hoc WG on UN-led Humanitarian Reform met twice to develop a VOICE position paper containing recommendations to EU member states to actively engage in the UN-led humanitarian reform supported by the principles of the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. The position paper was finalised in October and widely disseminated in EU member states and relevant EU institutions. The position paper was also shared with the new UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, when she visited Brussels. In several member states it initiated discussions between government services and the NGOs.

2.1.2 Supporting members' advocacy activities

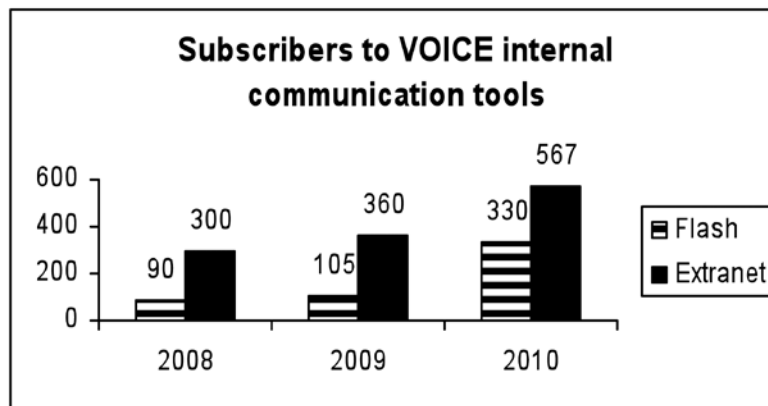
VOICE Flash and extranet

The Flash e-bulletins are the main tool for sharing information inside the VOICE network, providing a regular source of updates for members on network activity, opportunities for collectively influencing policy-makers, and other relevant news and resources. Via this tool, members are supported by the Secretariat to engage in advocacy initiatives, gain a better understanding of the functioning of EU institutions and policy processes, and share opportunities and positions with each other. Seven Flashes were produced in 2010.

The Flash e-bulletin is perceived as a very useful source of information and positive feedback is received from members. It is sent to all VOICE member organisations and is published on the VOICE extranet for easy reference.

In 2010, **VOICE's extranet** was expanded to become a more effective tool for sharing information across the network. In particular, information on thematic activities, including working groups, and on key current policy issues was shared in a more extensive fashion, reaching out further into member organisations. The extranet now serves as a key repository for members of relevant documents, links and publications.

As a result, use of the extranet has strongly increased this year, as evidenced by the surge in requests for access codes. At the end of 2010, 567 people working in VOICE member organisations were able to access the extranet, which is an increase of 62% from last year!



Tools for advocacy

The secretariat is constantly seeking to develop new tools to support and facilitate members' advocacy activities. Two new tools were developed to support members to interact effectively with EU decision-makers on issues relevant to humanitarian aid.

Advocacy sheets were developed in response to VOICE members' request. The Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) brings together member states' representatives responsible for humanitarian issues. An advocacy sheet was launched at the General Assembly in March 2010, explaining the COHAFA's mandate, how it functions, and how to lobby it. Another advocacy sheet, on the development the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), was launched at the beginning of 2011, explaining what the MFF is, who is involved in the process and how to influence it.

Through a special Advocacy Flash, members were given an overview of policy developments at EU level that would materialise during autumn, with timelines and practical ways to influence the various processes, including important messages to bring forward. This special edition was followed by an update in January 2011, focusing on the impact of advocacy activities and next steps in process. A similar communication tool was also produced in preparation of the ECHO Annual Partners Conference, to assist members in preparing their participation in the debates.

These tools have proven useful especially at national level, informing members' own advocacy efforts and increasing the relevance of the network for its members.

2.2 THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: PARTNERSHIP WITH DG ECHO

2.2.1 Liaising with Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva

Within the new European Commission, DG ECHO's portfolio was changed to include civil protection and a new Commissioner was nominated. VOICE had been lobbying for one Commissioner responsible for both humanitarian aid and development, together with the CONCORD network. From the start, the VOICE Board attached great importance to establishing a regular working relationship with the new Commissioner and her Cabinet. Led by the VOICE president, a VOICE delegation met with

the first Commissioner-designate. Soon after, Kristalina Georgieva was appointed as the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

Ms. Georgieva proved to be a very active and visible Commissioner, visiting several disaster-affected countries and numerous EU member states during the year. In preparation of her visits within the EU, including Denmark, UK and Ireland, the Secretariat briefed VOICE members on the key challenges related to the then most pertinent EU dossiers and corresponding VOICE messages.

During the year, VOICE reasserted its position as the main NGO interlocutor of the EU on humanitarian aid issues. The VOICE President and secretariat met for the first time with Commissioner Georgieva on June 22nd, to have an exchange on issues of common interest. VOICE raised concerns with regards to the need for a clear division of labour between ECHO and the EEAS; the need for a clear added value of the EVHAC and additional funding to set it up; and the importance of a stronger profile in humanitarian advocacy by the COHAFA. ECHO's visibility requirements were also discussed. The meeting led to regular dialogue with the Commissioner's Cabinet, and the full VOICE Board met the Commissioner in February 2011.

2.2.2 FPA Watch Group

The FPA Watch Group is the longest standing working group of the network. It is of high importance to VOICE members and other ECHO partners given its direct impact on operations. The Watch Group oversees the monitoring of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) implementation on behalf of NGOs, with a Task Force (9 members) carrying out much of the detailed work. In 2010, the Group held three meetings, and brought together 39 organisations, including observers. The Watch Group is facilitated by VOICE on behalf of all ECHO partners.

In 2010, the Watch Group continued its monitoring of the FPA implementation, through regular collaboration with DG ECHO. These meetings served as a forum for understanding ECHO priorities and constraints, and for providing NGO partner feedback on a wide range of FPA-related issues (including e-tools, liquidation issues, partner assessment, new decision-making mechanisms etc.)

The Watch Group also gave input for the revision of key support documents for FPA partners, in order to improve their clarity for FPA partners. Extensive comments were provided to ECHO on relevant technical issues, such as the draft single form guidelines, financial reporting guidelines and fact sheets. Input was also provided to ECHO on the definition of eligible HQ costs.

At the end of the year, the Task Force evaluated the year's work and interaction with ECHO with the aim of continuing to improve the partnership and interaction between FPA partners and ECHO.

2.2.3 Facilitating member engagement with DG ECHO

Through-out the year, frequent opportunities for consultation with DG ECHO were used to share members' views and further NGO partnership with ECHO. On several occasions, the VOICE secretariat facilitated members' involvement by developing a consolidated reply, strengthening the collective influence of the members.

VOICE members provided input to the questionnaires of the EC on the **EU Humanitarian Food Assistance Policy and on the Food Aid Convention** in 2009, with the Secretariat amalgamated the responses. VOICE members' collective advocacy can be considered as very successful as their input is reflected well in the EC Communication on Humanitarian Food Assistance issued in March 2010. Building upon the fruitful collaboration around the EC Communication, the Secretariat convened a meeting in April bringing together NGOs with expertise on food assistance with relevant ECHO staff. This meeting enabled mutually beneficial exchange on the EU's position in relation to food assistance and the Food Aid Convention.

During the summer, VOICE was requested to provide input for the **mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan** (see above). The consolidated input given was an extensive and detailed document, welcomed by DG ECHO as a very valuable contribution. Another priority of the network in 2010 was to influence the proposal for the development of the **European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps**. VOICE members and secretariat were engaged in the various steps of the consultation process towards the EC Communication on this subject (see below).

At the end of November, the DGs involved in EC External Action, including DG ECHO, requested partners to provide input for the questionnaire consultation on **'What funding for EU external action after 2013'**? A workshop was organised by the Secretariat in January 2011 in order to develop the main messages of the network on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework. This topic has a high priority among VOICE members and 18 members participated. Moreover, an advocacy sheet was developed to assist members in their related advocacy efforts.

The 2010 ECHO Partners Conference was entitled *"Efficient and effective humanitarian response in an increasingly difficult environment"* and again saw an active involvement of the VOICE network. For the first time, the Conference focused on humanitarian policy and advocacy, with key interventions by the Commissioner, the new UN Emergency Response Coordinator, Mrs. Amos and the ICRC Director-General Mr. Daccord. NGO partners were represented in the high-level debate by VOICE members, Mrs. Rasmussen (NRC) and Mr. Miribel (ACF France). At the end of the conference, the VOICE President gave a speech about key concerns for the VOICE network. VOICE Board and members were very visible through presentations during workshops and during the plenary session, actively contributing to the discussions. The latest newsletter, *"Haiti: The NGO perspective"*, was distributed to over 200 people.

Apart from these official meetings and consolidated forms of input, the VOICE Secretariat has a regular informal exchange with staff in the three directorates of ECHO, including several of the desks.

2.3 LIAISING WITH ROTATING PRESIDENCIES OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

In 2010, the VOICE Secretariat has built up a strong working relationship with EU presidencies, and in particular with the rotating presidencies' chair of the **Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid** (COHAFA). The COHAFA is the designated body in the Council for humanitarian aid.

The secretariat met several times with the **Spanish COHAFA chair**, during the Spanish Presidency of the Council to the EU, successfully raising issues of concern to NGOs. The potential instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid, challenges related to the UN-led Humanitarian Reform and the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) were all issues on the agenda. Moreover, based on input from members, the Secretariat has been able to brief the presidency on NGO concerns related to specific country situations appearing on the COHAFA meeting agendas. The Spanish representative also had an extensive exchange with the VOICE Board and spoke at the VOICE event in Madrid in June.

Building on the success of the informal exchange with selected NGOs and networks set up by previous presidencies of the **Political and Security Committee** (PSC/COPS) of the European Council, the Spanish presidency decided to continue this form of dialogue. The PSC is the highest political body in the Council. In February and June, VOICE was invited to these informal briefings. Topics discussed included the EU crisis management set up, as well as relevant country situations. Based on information provided by members, the VOICE Secretariat was able to give input on Gaza, Haiti, Palestine, Colombia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Niger, DRC, Sri Lanka, South-Ossetia and Syria. These meetings proved to be very useful, enabling humanitarian concerns to be heard beyond the traditional EU channels. Unfortunately the Belgian presidency did not continue this initiative.

The preparation of the **Belgian presidency** of the Council of the EU started early in the year, and the Secretariat met several times with the Belgian COHAFA representative during the spring. As a consequence, regular exchange continued during the presidency, on issues including the three EC Communications and possible EU standardisation of project forms. In October, an in-depth exchange between the Belgian COHAFA Chair and the VOICE Board took place, followed by a speech at the

VOICE event. At the end of November, VOICE members Concern Worldwide and Save the Children UK briefed the COHAFAs on Haiti and Sudan, while the secretariat shared the networks' views on the EVHAC Communication with member states' representatives.

Towards the end of the year, the VOICE Director had several meetings with the Hungarian representative who would subsequently chair the COHAFAs during the 2011 Hungarian presidency. A first exchange also took place with the forthcoming Polish presidency and Polish Development Minister, who invited VOICE together with CONCORD, Oxfam International and ActionAid to discuss priorities for the forthcoming presidencies and potential ways of cooperation.

2.4 THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In 2010 the VOICE Secretariat further developed its relationship with the new European Parliament (EP) through a variety of activities. This is especially important given the increased power of the EP since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

At the beginning of the year, the Secretariat of the EP Development Committee requested VOICE input in preparation of the hearings of Commissioners-designate Ms Jeleva and Ms Georgieva. This input was integrated into the supporting documents which MEPs drew upon during the hearing, raising questions about the maintenance of the portfolio's independence from political considerations, as well as civil protection, and observance of IHL.

The VOICE Secretariat established a good collaboration with the EP's Standing Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid, (MEP Michèle Striffler), a position strongly lobbied for by VOICE. Regular input was provided to the Rapporteur on country issues, such as Haiti and Gaza, which was often reflected in her speeches. The VOICE Secretariat also briefed Ms. Striffler before her field visit to Haiti, after which she praised NGOs for their work in the country. A comprehensive document of comments and recommendations from the network was provided to support preparation of the EP's resolution on the mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan.

During the year, VOICE achieved high visibility from regular invitations to speak at events and debates in the EP. In March, VOICE briefed new MEPs on the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, together with DG ECHO, OCHA and the Red Cross. At the end of August, VOICE spoke at the extraordinary debate organised by the DEVE committee on the EU's response to the Pakistan floods, together with the UN and the Red Cross. The meeting also saw the participation of Commissioner Georgieva and was broadcast live on the EP television. The VOICE Director raised issues including 1) the need to transform pledges in cash more quickly and to ensure funding for a diversity of actors; 2) the need for more attention to the protection cluster and education in emergencies; 3) the necessity of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable; and 4) the logistical challenges triggered by the response. VOICE was again asked to participate in an EP Hearing in November, to comment on the EC Communication on strengthening the EU's disaster response (see above).

The VOICE Secretariat also regularly attended EP committee meetings and contributed to EP reports and studies. For example, input was given to a study on the *"Financing of non-governmental organisations from the EU budget – effectiveness and transparency"*. VOICE drew attention to the role of the EC lobby register, the work of the FPA Watch Group, NGOs engagement to prevent corruption in humanitarian aid, and the previous work done by NGOs concerning the Financial Regulation. VOICE continues to follow this issue since transparency and budget effectiveness remain a core concern, both for the NGOs and the EU institutions.

2.5 VOICE VISIBILITY IN EU MEMBER STATES

In order to influence EU policies, much advocacy also has to take place at national level, in EU member states. During 2010, VOICE Board and members have been increasingly visible at national level,

through advocacy activities and roundtables and events. As such, VOICE messages were discussed and exchanges took place with national platforms in France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark, Spain and Hungary. The president and the secretariat have also given presentations and actively participated in numerous internal events of our members, strengthening the visibility of the network.

2.5.1 Roundtable in Spain

Towards the end of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, VOICE organised a roundtable in Madrid in collaboration with the Spanish NGO platform Coordinadora and VOICE member Médicos del Mundo. This event aimed to link current EU policy issues to the national context and enabled exchange between NGOs from different EU member states.

Relevant topics covered included the challenges for humanitarian NGOs in the aftermath of the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, and complementarity between European actors responding to the Haiti emergency. Presentations were given by the Spanish presidency, the Spanish NGO platform and DG ECHO as well as by several VOICE members. Useful debates took place around operational challenges such as coordination and the media focus on military engagement in humanitarian aid.

2.5.2 Panel Discussion in Belgium

In October, VOICE organised an event in the context of the Belgian presidency of the Council of the EU. The event served as a forum for sharing NGO perspectives and lessons learned on issues

highlighted by the mega-disasters in Haiti and Pakistan. Speakers were from the Belgian presidency, Caritas Belgium, ICCO-Kerk in Actie, Concern Worldwide and Handicap International France.

Topics discussed included Disaster Risk Reduction, civil-military relations, the functioning of the cluster system and pooled funds, the influence of stabilisation efforts on the response and the impact of humanitarian assistance on local capacities. The event was a great success with over 100 attendees, including from the European Parliament and DG ECHO. Moreover, the event report was also shared with the Commissioner's Cabinet.

2.5.3. Other activities at member state level

The opinions of the VOICE network are increasingly sought by national NGO bodies, national governments and parliamentarians from member states.

On June 1, VOICE was invited by DG Development to brief more than 130 ACP Ambassadors on the new challenges of humanitarian aid, raising awareness about the specificity of humanitarian aid, current challenges and trends to an audience largely specialised in development issues. Other speakers included the World Bank, FAO, WFP and DG ECHO. The VOICE Director discussed several challenges linked with humanitarian interventions in fragile states and stressed the importance of the role of affected states and local governments for access, DRR and respect of the humanitarian principles. Other issues raised included the added value of NGOs, the importance of working together with local actors and of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).

VOICE visible at member state level:

- Meeting with German parliamentarians from the Bundestag Committee on development and trade, raising awareness around the specificity of humanitarian aid and the possible impact of military engagement in humanitarian crises on aid worker security
- Linking EU humanitarian policy developments to national NGO context through interventions at high-level NGO conferences, such as the Ditchley conference in the UK on fragile states (NGOs, the UK government and the Humanitarian Policy Group), and the Forum Espace Humanitaire (principals of all French humanitarian NGOs)
- Contributing to report commissioned by Minister Bernard Kouchner on "analysis and recommendations on crisis and post-crisis situations"
- Briefing EP representatives and German media on the importance of the humanitarian principles at event organised by VOICE member Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe on the humanitarian situation in Colombia and the role of the military
- Numerous briefings to groups of master students from several member states.

3. OUTREACH WITHIN AND BEYOND THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

VOICE has built up a strong line of contact and regular exchange with other humanitarian actors, which is important for common positioning, mutual learning and cooperation in advocacy where relevant. Outside the traditional humanitarian system, VOICE ensures visibility through the regularly updated website, VOICE Out Loud newsletters and, increasingly, media contacts.

3.1 COLLABORATION WITH HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

3.1.1 Relations with ICVA

VOICE continued to exchange with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Geneva-based global network of humanitarian NGOs. For example, VOICE has worked with ICVA on the Global Humanitarian Platform (see below) and the preparation of the Annual Conference of the MCDA group on the use of military and civil defence assets. Moreover, the networks attended each other's strategic meetings, such as the General Assembly and Board meetings. A common Board meeting is planned for May 2011 in Brussels.

3.1.2 Engagement in the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP)

VOICE has been involved in the GHP since its beginning in 2006. The GHP is a forum bringing together the three main families of the humanitarian community - NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the UN and related international organisations. The goal of the GHP is to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian aid and to engage in a dialogue on strategic issues of common concern.

In preparation of the 2010 high level meeting, VOICE issued a discussion paper together with ICVA, stressing the relevance, added value and benefits of continuing the GHP for another three years. VOICE and ICVA saw an added value in the GHP's ability to integrate southern NGOs into the debate and felt that more needed to be done in order to put the Principles of Partnership, the GHP's main product to date, fully into practice. During the high level meeting in February, the VOICE President gave a speech on humanitarian-military relations, one of the strategic topics discussed. The final outcome of the meeting was that the platform will continue. VOICE is a member of the GHP Task Force, together with ICVA, InterAction, SCHR, the Red Cross movement and relevant UN agencies.

3.1.3 Strengthening collaboration with Brussels-based humanitarian actors

During 2010, the VOICE Secretariat further strengthened its relations with other Brussels-based humanitarian actors, including the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières.

The increased dialogue and exchange led to the development of a number of common master messages between VOICE, UNOCHA, ICRC and IFRC on the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) which formed the basis of subsequent advocacy: the EVHAC should answer to humanitarian imperatives only; should not merely serve visibility purposes; should be used on a case-by-case basis, depending on the security situation; should be in line with the increasing professionalization in the sector and the reinforcement of local capacities; and should be set up with additional funding. Subsequent dialogue between the same parties included an exchange on civil protection.

VOICE and other humanitarian actors: a broad range of connections:

- Engaging with the CONCORD network on common concerns, such as the Haiti response, LRRD, CSO Aid effectiveness or the EU budget
- Giving input to the evaluation of the Transparency International Handbook
- Briefing Southern partners of the ACT Alliance on EU humanitarian aid policy as it relates to NGOs
- Giving input to Global Public Policy Institute for their consultancy study on Transatlantic Dialogue on Food Assistance, funded by DG Relex
- Exchanging with other relevant actors such as the Standing Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), ELHRA (Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance), Quality and Accountability Initiatives (e.g. Sphere, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), People in Aid), Solidar, Humanitarian Futures Programme, Groupe URD, the European Interagency Security Forum, etc.

On June 28th the VOICE Director gave a speech during a symposium co-organised by the ICRC and the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), based in Paris. The EUISS is a highly influential think-tank whose events regularly feed into the EU decision-making process. VOICE commented on the UN-led humanitarian reform and coordination at EU level.

3.1.4 Engagement with NOHA network

VOICE also collaborated with the NOHA network, which brings together several universities for a master's degree programme in humanitarian aid. The VOICE Director joined the NOHA External Advisory Committee, and gave speeches at major NOHA conferences in Poland and Spain. VOICE also contributed to the NOHA Fall School, participating in a roundtable on funding and donor relations.

3.2 VOICE VISIBILITY THROUGH WEBSITE, VOICE OUT LOUD AND MEDIA

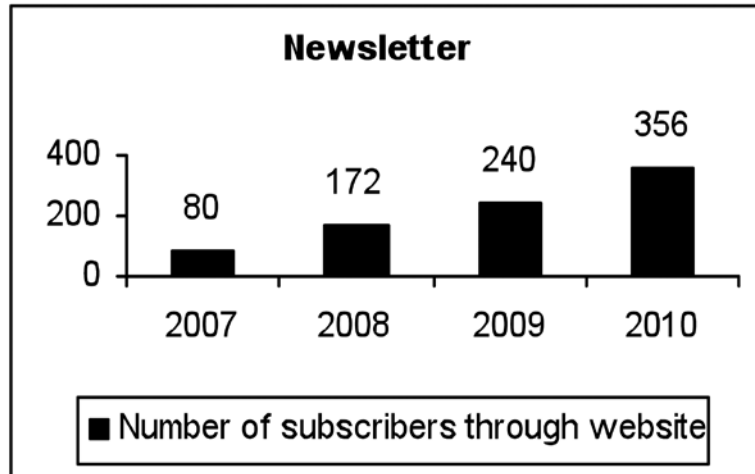
The **VOICE website** offers visitors the possibility to learn more about the network's organisational structure, its members, purpose and activities, as well as to access relevant and timely information on EU humanitarian policy. Briefings, policy papers, events reports and thematic newsletters are downloadable, and news items are regularly posted. In addition, the site is a means of showcasing and sharing members' statements and publications and includes links to their websites. It also acts as a multiplier to other advocacy and information activities.

The most widely disseminated product of the VOICE network is the bi-annual external **newsletter VOICE Out Loud**. The VOICE Out Loud newsletters are designed to give a largely non-professional audience an insight into the field reality and working environment in which humanitarian NGOs operate as well as related policy issues. The newsletters take a thematic approach to humanitarian questions and rely upon the experience and expert input of VOICE members. The collaboration of the members is thus gratefully acknowledged.

In June, a Newsletter was published on '*The humanitarian sector: perspectives on current trends and future challenges*'. Senior humanitarians of longstanding experience in the sector were asked to reflect on trends and challenges, and gave their opinion on the state of the humanitarian system. Topics addressed included cooperation with other actors (such as the military), professionalization of the sector, the field value of the humanitarian principles and the potential danger of the instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid.

The scale of the disaster in Haiti meant that it remained a focus of much discussion throughout 2010, but many evaluations failed to integrate the views of NGOs as key actors. Therefore, VOICE Out Loud 12, '*Haiti: The NGO Perspective*', aimed to share reflections and lessons learned from an NGO perspective. Several contributors highlighted good practices on how to engage disaster-affected populations in the response, and the importance of quality and accountability. Other topics included coordination, the importance of DRR and protection. The issue also contained an interview with the Standing Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid of the EP.

More than 950 individuals receive the newsletter in printed or electronic version. Recipients include representatives of EU institutions, officials in member states, ECHO partners as well as universities and think-tanks. Moreover, in order to reach a wider audience (including in the field), both issues were made available on Reliefweb, Alertnet and the ECHO intranet.



During 2010, VOICE increased its **media exposure**, participating in public debates with top level decision makers and sharing VOICE opinions with journalists, for example on the EVHAC, the Haiti response and the EC Communication on strengthening the EU's disaster response capacity.

In January, the television service of the EP, broadcasting to EU member states, invited the VOICE director to take part in a televised discussion with the EP Standing Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid. The broadcast centred on the need for better visibility and coordination of EU humanitarian efforts, and discussed the work of NGOs, the EU reaction to the Haiti disaster and the response to the Pakistan earthquake in 2005. The VOICE Secretariat also contributed two articles for the Parliament magazine, on the EU response to Pakistan and to Haiti.

During the European development days, VOICE was invited by its member Islamic Relief to participate in a televised panel discussion on the impact of recent humanitarian crises on the chances of achieving the Millenium Development Goals. Commissioner Georgieva and the Vice-President of the European Parliament Isabelle Durant were among the panellists. The VOICE Director emphasised the experience of NGOs as the deliverers of the majority of humanitarian assistance in the field; the importance of a diversity of humanitarian civilian actors in the field (UN, Red Cross, NGOs); the need for clear mandates and roles for other actors in mega-disasters; the necessity of investing in Disaster Risk Reduction; and the need for stronger EU advocacy when IHL is breached. The video can be viewed on the EC website.

4. SUPPORTING THE HIGH LEVEL QUALITY OF VOICE MEMBERS' HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

VOICE supports the work of its member organisations by, among other things, organising trainings and keeping members informed on the latest developments in NGO quality initiatives. During 2010, relations were strengthened with various quality initiatives and other relevant bodies, including NOHA and DARA. VOICE also engaged in influencing the development of the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.

4.1 INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN AID CORPS

The European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) is intended to provide a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the EU. Its inclusion in the Lisbon Treaty requires that legislation for the EVHAC is developed.

EU humanitarian actors have always been sceptical concerning the added value of such an initiative. DG ECHO contracted consultant studies on the EVHAC in 2005 and 2010, and organised a stakeholder conference in September 2010. The VOICE network contributed to each of these steps and adopted a proactive advocacy strategy, as agreed in the 2010 VOICE General Policy Resolution.

The network's input was cited extensively in the consultant's report, and was reflected in the EC Communication. In line with VOICE members' input, the guiding principles of the Communication contain the need for the EVHAC to a) be based on the humanitarian principles; b) take account of sector professionalism and safety; c) build on existing structures and avoid duplication. Moreover, the proposals launched by the sector during the Stakeholders' Consultation meeting were taken into account, such as exploring the development of stand-by rosters of professional volunteers and engaging volunteers at HQ level to be able to release experienced staff to the field. Key conditions set reflect concerns that any Corps should be demand-driven, not divert funds from core operational budget and support local capacities. Lastly, the Communication also stipulates that the EVHAC would not only function in 'classic' humanitarian response, but also in DRR activities and transition situations.

4.2 FOCUSING ON QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

VOICE continues to **share information** about quality and accountability (Q&A) initiatives with its members. In 2010 the network organised a roundtable examining key challenges for the sector in delivering quality aid and ran trainings on accountability. The Flash bulletin has been used to share Q&A information and a specific section of the VOICE extranet dedicated to the same.

On the eve of its 2010 General Assembly, VOICE organised a **roundtable** around the current challenges for the humanitarian system: "*Humanitarian NGOs in a Changing World: How do we adapt?*" 90 people from NGOs, the Red Cross, UN, EC, EP and member states attended the very stimulating event. Dr. Randolph Kent (Humanitarian Futures Programme), shared his insights on the future challenges NGOs will have to face and Mr. John Mitchell (ALNAP) and Paul Harvey (Humanitarian Outcomes) presented the ALNAP pilot study "*The State of the Humanitarian System*". Combined, the presentations gave the audience both commentary and statistics by which to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the humanitarian system and prospects for the future of humanitarian action. During the General Assembly, the handbook of Transparency International on '*Preventing corruption in humanitarian operations*' was also distributed to VOICE members.

In addition, VOICE organised two **trainings** on "Accountability in Humanitarian Aid", in collaboration with the One World Trust and the Emergency Capacity Building project (ECB). These trainings provided more than 30 participants with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the principles of accountability, to understand drivers and barriers, and to become acquainted with a range of quality/accountability standards and initiatives in the sector. The participants evaluated the training highly and reported that they would take active measures to improve accountability systems and approaches within their own organisations as a result.

VOICE also continued its work with the CONCORD working group on Aid effectiveness. VOICE gave a humanitarian perspective to the group discussions, which was reflected in the draft paper produced on aid impact. In August 2010, VOICE fed into the process of the development of an INGO position on a CSO aid effectiveness framework for the Open Forum process.

VOICE is a Full Member of ALNAP and an Associate Member of People in Aid and has regular contacts with Sphere, HAP, as well as ELHRA (Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance), Humanitarian Futures Programme and Transparency International.

At the end of the year, VOICE, together with other humanitarian networks, met with several of the major quality and accountability initiatives (People in Aid, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and Sphere). The workshop discussed the proliferation of quality initiatives in the humanitarian sector, and how to work towards coherence and user-friendliness. VOICE shared its practical experience of supporting NGO engagement with the initiatives and its perspective related to advocating quality across the network's membership.

4.3 STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH DARA

Linked to seeking improved quality of humanitarian aid, VOICE's interest in donor accountability led to an increased exchange in 2010 with Development Assistance Research Associates (DARA). DARA is an independent organisation committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid, in particular via the publication of the Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) which annually assesses and ranks donor commitments, using the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles as a benchmark. Given the importance that VOICE attaches to the GHD principles, the HRI is a very relevant tool for advocacy and lobbying. The VOICE President is also a member of the Peer Review Committee of the HRI and was interviewed for the DARA series '*Humanitarian Voices*', during which he talked about VOICE, the European humanitarian aid system and politicisation of aid.

In May, the European Policy Centre organised a debate on the EU response to the Haiti earthquake to inform representatives of EU member states and EU policy makers. VOICE and DARA were invited to give their perspectives on donor engagement in Haiti. VOICE emphasized the importance of quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector and among its members and advocated for quality donorship, while DARA presented the 2009 HRI.

During the European Development Days in December, the VOICE Director was invited by DARA to comment on the launch of the 2010 HRI, which identified politicisation of aid as one of the main trends. Close to 80 people attended the launch, including participants from the EC, member states, UN, Red Cross, NGOs, as well as the media.

5. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE NETWORK

5.1. VOICE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 10th General Assembly (GA) of VOICE in 2010 provided members with the opportunity to learn more about the challenges ahead for EU humanitarian policies following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. The new portfolio of the Commissioner responsible for humanitarian aid and DG ECHO was also discussed. Through individual and family representations, a total of 65 VOICE member organisations participated in the General Assembly, which accounts for 78% of the total membership of the network. The GA also saw the participation of ICVA, SCHR, ICRC and IFRC as observers.

The 2010 General Assembly re-appointed Evert Van Bodegom for another term of office on the Board, and elected four new Board members: Floris Faber, Dominic Crowley, Pedro Luis Rojo and Kerry Smith.

The General Assembly welcomed three new members: Plan International Germany, Save the Children Denmark and Secours Islamique France. VOICE Members also voted to prolong the Strategic Plan 2008-2010 for an additional year, through 2011, and approved the work programme for 2010.

ECHO Director Peter Zangl addressed the GA as key note speaker. After underlining that NGOs are key partners of ECHO and that they enjoy a relation based on trust, transparency and frank dialogue, Mr Zangl addressed the priority issues for ECHO such as the EU response to the Haiti earthquake, the outcomes of the Copenhagen Climate summit and the mid-term review of the European Consensus Action Plan. VOICE members raised issues including the EVHAC, the role of civil protection under ECHO, the coverage of humanitarian needs in Haiti and the cluster system.

Through its General Policy Resolution, the GA enforced key advocacy messages that the network wished to bring to the attention of the EU institutions and member states over the year. Against the background of the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the newly elected EP and the reshaping of the Commission, VOICE members stressed the importance of the upcoming mid-term review of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan, the complementarity of humanitarian aid and civil protection under the new ECHO portfolio and considerations for the development of EVHAC.

5.2. VOICE NETWORK MEMBERS IN 2010

VOICE is a network focusing on EU humanitarian aid, and is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster risk reduction. In 2010, the network was composed of 86 operational European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide. The network's Secretariat is based in Brussels. VOICE, unlike its members, is not operational in emergencies.

VOICE members are dedicated to saving lives, preventing suffering, and bringing swift humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable groups. They base their work on the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. They are committed to follow the *"Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief"* and the *"Humanitarian Charter"* from Sphere and set high standards of professionalism and expertise. They seek to include a participatory approach with their local partners and to link relief, rehabilitation and development in order to ensure the sustainability of their interventions. The majority of VOICE members (92%) have signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with DG ECHO.

5.3. VOICE BOARD



The role of the VOICE Board is to ensure that VOICE adheres to its purpose and statutes. It decides on strategic directions and policies, provides governance and accountability, and ensures proper management of the network. The Board members contribute their professional experience on a voluntary basis, and as such represent the broader membership of the VOICE network. The Board met four times in 2010.

At the end of 2010, the VOICE Board was comprised of Wolf-Dieter Eberwein (VOICE President); Evert Van Bodegom (ICCO), Lisa Henry (DanChurchAid), Brian Ingle (Plan International UK), Sid Peruvemba (Malteser International), Floris Faber (Mission East), Dominic Crowley (Concern Worldwide), Kerry Smith (Save the Children UK) and Sandrine Chopin (Handicap International France, co-opted in October to replace Pedro Luis Rojo who resigned during the year for personal reasons).

The Executive Committee (Excom) is the executive body of the Board for administrative tasks, and guarantees the financial and legal accountability of VOICE. The 2010 ExCom consisted of Wolf-Dieter Eberwein (President), Sid Peruvemba (Treasurer), Evert Van Bodegom (Secretary) and Kathrin Schick (Director; without a vote), who met six times in 2010. The new Board elected Sid Peruvemba as new VOICE treasurer and confirmed the composition of the Executive Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2010.

5.4. VOICE SECRETARIAT

The VOICE Secretariat is responsible for facilitating the activities indicated in the VOICE Annual Work Programme and Strategic Plan. It is also in charge of the financial management of the association, under the supervision and general control of the VOICE Board.

The staff of the VOICE Secretariat in 2010 comprised the Director (Kathrin Schick), Advocacy and Communication Officer (Virginie Vuylsteke, replaced by Inge Brees in April) and Office Administrator (Teg Malla). The Project Coordinator (Magali Mourlon, replaced by Mags Bird as Programme Coordinator in May) oversaw a DG ECHO co-financed project. We would like to thank the Secretariat for their commitment and dedication to the network. We also thank the very capable interns, Clara Egger and Maroussia Klep, who have supported the work of VOICE during the year.

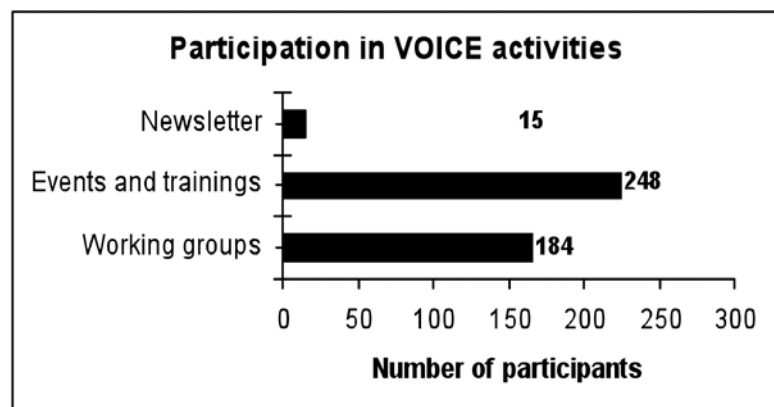
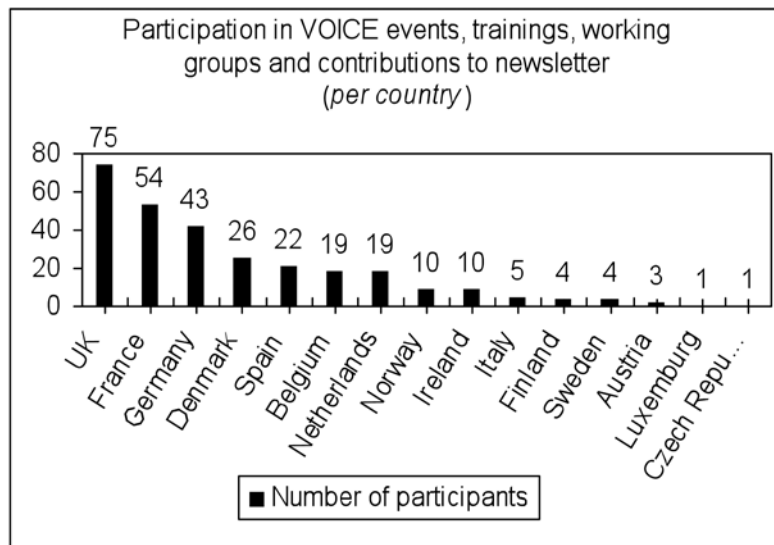
5.5. FINANCES

Financial independence has always been of importance to the network. In 2010, the turnover of the VOICE network as administered by the Secretariat was € 423,861. This amount was made up of 70% membership fees and 30% from other sources. In 2010, VOICE received an operating grant under the DG ECHO Grant facility as co-financing to implement the project 'Reinforcing the VOICE network and its collective influence: building capacity, advocating and raising awareness in order to improve the implementation of humanitarian aid projects'. This enabled VOICE to offer its members and DG ECHO NGO partners' additional activities such as trainings and provided resources for the Secretariat to increase its outreach, as well as its role in advocacy and networking.

6. STATISTICS

Most active members in 2010

Action Contre la Faim (FR)
 Mission East (DK)
 Médecins du Monde (FR)
 ICCO (NL)
 Norwegian Refugee Council (NO)
 Handicap International France
 Malteser International (DE)
 Save the Children UK
 International Medical Corps UK
 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DE)
 Plan International UK
 International Rescue Committee (UK)
 Oxfam Solidarité-Solidariteit (BE)
 Welthungerhilfe (DE)



86 VOICE MEMBERS IN 2010

AUSTRIA

CARE Österreich
 CARITAS Österreich
 Hilfswerk Österreich
 SOS Kinderdorf International
 World Vision Österreich

BELGIUM

CARITAS Secours International Belgium
 Handicap International Belgium
 Médecins du Monde Belgium
 Oxfam Solidarité - Solidariteit

CZECH REPUBLIC

People in Need (PIN)

DENMARK

ADRA Denmark - Nødhjælp og udvikling
 ASF Dansk Folkehjælp
 DanChurchAid (DCA)
 Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
 Mission East - Mission Øst
 Save the Children Denmark

FINLAND

FIDA International
 Finn Church Aid
 World Vision Finland

FRANCE

Action Contre la Faim
 ACTED - Agence d'Aide à la Coopération
 Technique et au Développement
 CARE France
 Handicap International France
 Médecins du Monde (MDM) France
 Première Urgence
 Secours Catholique - Réseau Mondial
 CARITAS
 Secours Islamique France
 Secours Populaire Français
 Solidarités International
 Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF)
 Triangle Génération Humanitaire

GERMANY

ADRA Deutschland e.V
 Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB)
 Deutschland
 CARE Deutschland - Luxemburg e.V
 Deutscher Caritasverband e.V (CARITAS
 Germany)
 Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
 Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V.
 Malteser International
 Medico International
 Plan International Germany
 Welthungerhilfe
 World Vision Germany

GREECE

Médecins du Monde - Greece

IRELAND

Concern Worldwide
 Trócaire
 World Vision Ireland

ITALY

CARITAS Italiana
 CESVI - Cooperazione e Sviluppo
 CISP - Comitato Internazionale per lo
 Sviluppo dei Popoli

LUXEMBOURG

CARITAS Luxembourg

THE NETHERLANDS

CARE Nederland
 Cordaid
 HealthNet TPO
 ICCO
 Oxfam Novib
 World Vision Nederland
 ZOA Refugee Care

NORWAY

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

PORTUGAL

Medicos do Mundo

SPAIN

Acción Contra el Hambre
 CARITAS Española
 Intermón Oxfam
 Médicos del Mundo

SWEDEN

Church of Sweden - Svenska kyrkan
 International Aid Services (IAS)
 PMU Interlife

SWITZERLAND

Lutheran World Federation
 Medair

UNITED KINGDOM

Action Against Hunger
 ActionAid
 ADRA UK - Adventist Development and
 Relief Agency
 CARE International UK
 CAFOD
 Christian Aid
 CORD
 International Medical Corps UK
 International Rescue Committee (IRC-UK)
 Islamic Relief Worldwide
 Marie Stopes International
 Mercy Corps
 Merlin
 Oxfam GB
 Plan International UK
 Save the Children UK
 Tearfund
 World Vision UK



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The views expressed herein should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

VOICE

VOICE stands for Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies. It is a network representing more than 80 European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in humanitarian aid worldwide. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness. As a European network, it represents and promotes the values and specificities of humanitarian NGOs, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors.