

A Call for Humanity: It's Time for EU Leaders to Take a Stand

An open letter from [VOICE](#) and the CEOs of 96 humanitarian NGOs to all decision-makers in the European Union and its Member States.

It only took a few days for the [U.S. decision to freeze its foreign aid](#) and dismantle USAID to sever the lifeline of millions of people worldwide and disrupt the entire humanitarian system.

Almost overnight, vaccine and nutrition treatment distribution halted, clinics and schools closed, and access to clean water and sanitation - among other critical services - was jeopardised. This is a dramatic blow to the [307.6](#) million people projected to need urgent humanitarian assistance and protection in 2025. For example, with the US foreign aid suspension, 95 million people would lose access to basic healthcare¹ and 23 million children would lose access to education programs, increasing poverty cycles². Many grassroots, local and national NGOs that are the backbone of humanitarian responses have already suspended programs, laid off staff and many face closure, severely impacting their capacity to respond to the urgent needs of affected communities.

The US decision is unprecedented in scale, form, and impact, and is part of a worrying long-term trend. The gap between humanitarian needs and available funding has more than tripled from \$8.4 billion in 2016 to \$26 billion in 2024³, due to a massive increase in needs and, more recently, significant funding cuts from multiple donors, including European States.

In this challenging time, we urge the EU and its Member States to take unified and decisive actions to uphold the core [values](#) of its foundation – solidarity, the eradication of poverty, and the protection of human rights. This is not only a legal obligation from the [Lisbon Treaty](#) (article 214), nor merely the will of [European citizens](#), it is also fundamental in reflecting European values within the broader global community. Guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, humanitarian action saves lives and strengthens communities' resilience every day. To uphold these values, we urge the EU and its Member States to remain global leaders in solidarity by taking the following actions.

- We urge the EU and its Member States to **stand by crises-affected communities, by increasing the humanitarian funding** that ensure their continuous access to basic services. In particular, as discussions accelerate on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework, the current global humanitarian crisis should serve as a wake-up call for adopting a stronger humanitarian budget.
- We call on the EU and its Member States to increase their dialogue with national and international partners, and demonstrate understanding, flexibility, and extensive support - administratively, financially, and legally - with actors delivering humanitarian assistance. International, national, and especially local NGOs are facing immense challenges in fulfilling their commitments to people affected by crises. **Emergency support measures and enhanced quality, localised and flexible funding**, as laid out in the [Grand Bargain commitments](#), are critical to maintaining humanitarian actors' operational capacity.
- In the longer term, we call on the **EU to take the lead as a convener of a global strategic dialogue to shape a principled, sustainable and flexible new humanitarian system** that works with and for the most vulnerable communities and that relies on a diverse range of actors, including new donors, private sector and robust EU and Member States' support.

The far-ranging impacts of the decisions of one single state show how intertwined our world is. This is a call for all EU political actors to stand up for humanity and lead a new positive political dynamic that saves lives and makes a real difference for all, at home and worldwide.

¹ [USAID: The Benefits and Upcoming Losses in Numbers](#)

² [USAID: The Benefits and Upcoming Losses in Numbers](#)

³ [FTS UN OCHA](#)

Signatures

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Acción contra el Hambre - Manuel Sánchez-Montero, CEO

ACODEV - Raphaël Maldague, Director

Act Church of Sweden - Erik Lysén, Director

Action Contre le Faim France - Chibuzo Okonta, CEO

ACAT France (Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture) - Solange Moume Etia, Directrice du pôle programmes et plaidoyer

ADRA Croatia - Slavica Marcheta, CEO

ADRA Deutschland e.V. - Christian Molke, CEO

Agir Ensemble pour les Droits Humains (AEDH) - Carole Martin De Champs, Déléguée générale

Aktion Gegen den Hunger - Jan Sebastian Friedrich-Rust, CEO

ALBOAN - Mary Tere Guzmán, CEO

Alianza por la Solidaridad-ActionAid Spain - Cristina Muñoz Pavón, General Director

Alliance des Avocats pour les Droits de l'Homme (AADH) - Noanne Tenneson, Déléguée générale

Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland - Edith Wallmeier, Member of the Executive Board

Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) France - Anne Lutun, Déléguée générale

AWO International - Ingrid Lebherz, Executive Director

Ayuda en Acción - Jorge Cattaneo García, CEO

Bibliothèques Sans Frontières - Jérémy Lachal, Directeur Général

Caritas Europa - Maria Nyman, Secretary-General

Caritas Germany - Oliver Müller, International Director

Caritas International Belgium - Luc Van Haute, General Manager

CESVI - Stefano Piziali, General Manager

Christian Aid Ireland - Rosamond Bennet, CEO

COAST - Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, CEO

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) - Steven Muncy, Executive Director

Coordination SUD - Olivier Bruyeron, President

Cordaid - Heleen van den Berg, CEO

Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity (CROSOL) - Branka Juran, Platform Co-ordinator

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EDUCO - Pilar Orenes, CEO

Electriciens sans frontières - Hervé Gouyet, President & Alexandre Anjuere, Executive Director

Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort (ECPM) - Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan, Délégué général

Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ) - Agne Kuimet, Director

EU-CORD - Ruth Faber, CEO

Finn Church Aid (FCA) / Kirkon Ulkomaanapu sr - Tomi Järvinen, Executive Director

Finnish Refugee Council - Annu Lehtinen, Executive Director

Foundation Terre des Hommes Lausanne - Barbara Hintermann, Director General

Fundación Entreculturas - Ramón Almansa, CEO

Fundación Mundubat - Antonio José Montoro Carmona, CEO

German Doctors e.V. - Dr. Christine Winkelmann and Dr. Harald Kischlat, Management board

Global Responsibility - Lukas Wank, Director

Handicap International - Humanity & Inclusion - Manuel Patrouillard, Global Executive Director

Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V. - Dr. Thorsten Klose-Zuber, Secretary General

HelpAge Deutschland - Sonja Birnbaum, CEO

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ICVA - Jamie Munn, Executive Director

INTERSOS - Konstantinos Moschochoritis, Director General

Johanniter International Assistance - Susanne Wesemann, Director

Kindernothilfe e.V. - Katrin Weidemann, CEO

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Médicos del Mundo España - Nicolás A. Dotta, Executive Director

Movement for Peace (MPDL) - Enrique Sánchez Antón, General Coordinator

Mreža mladih Hrvatske / Croatian Youth Network - Marin Capan, President

Network LINK 2007- Cooperazione in Rete - Roberto Ridolfi, President

NGO Resource Center (NGORC) - Fredric Larsson, Director

Nonviolent Peaceforce - Tiffany Easthom, CEO

Norwegian Church Aid - Arne Næss-Holm, General Secretary

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Oxfam - Amitabh Behar, Executive Director

People In Need - Simon Panek, CEO

Philippines Inclusive NGO Network (PINGON) - Steven Muncy, Convenor

Plan International's EU Liaison Office - Niamh Nic Carthaigh, Head of Office and Senior EU Representative

Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD - Rita Leote, Executive Director

Plateforme des Droits Humains (PDH) - Charlotte Millereaux, Déléguée générale

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Polish Humanitarian Action - Maciej Bagiński, CEO

Première Urgence Internationale - Thierry Mauricet, CEO

RefugePoint - Sasha Chanoff, Founder and CEO

Secours Islamique France - Mahieddine Khelladi, Executive Director

Solidarité Internationale LGBTQI (SIL) - Robert Simon, Président

Solidarités International - Kevin Goldberg, CEO

SOS AFRICAINES EN DANGER - Danielle Merian, Présidente

SOS Children's Villages - Angela Maria Rosales, CEO

SOS-Kinderdörfer weltweit - Lanna Idriss, CEO

Stichting Vluchteling / The Netherlands Refugee Foundation - Renske Boetje, Director a.i

Terre des Hommes Deutschland - Joshua Hofert, Spokesperson and Executive Director of Communication

Terre des Hommes International Federation - Valerie Ceccherini, Secretary General

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Terre des Hommes Netherland - Julie Verhaar, CEO

Terre des hommes Schweiz - Franziska Lauper, Executive Director

Terre des Hommes Suisson - Anne Hassberger, Secretary General

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Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR) - Pénélope Faulkner, Présidente

Vision Hope International - Stephan Kraemer, CEO

War Child - Rob Williams, CEO

WeWorld - Dina Taddia, CEO

ZOA - Chris Lukkien, CEO