



General Policy Resolution
VOICE General Assembly
Brussels, 29 April 2005

The VOICE network,

HAVING REGARD to the unprecedented global reaction to the tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean on December 26th and the international solidarity that was expressed,

RECOGNISING the role of European NGOs both in operational crisis response and in the responsible channelling of public and private funds towards beneficiaries in need,

NOTING that the humanitarian community gives considerable attention to the quality and accountability of emergency response and the principles of good practice reflected in the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct,

NOTING that voluntarism has long been a component of the NGO movement, within a context of ever growing professionalism among humanitarian NGOs,

APPRECIATING the European public's engagement in civil society and international solidarity through regular support to the work of humanitarian NGOs.

CONCERNED that attention to the tsunami disaster has drawn capacities and finances away from other very urgent crisis situations worldwide, in particular crises that remain "forgotten" by the international press and political or economic interests,

DRAWING ATTENTION to the crisis in Darfur, in which access and assistance to civilians has been hampered by high-level political deliberations linked to strategic interests,

CONSCIOUS of the need for sufficient access and security as a precondition for effective humanitarian assistance work, and of the threats to humanitarian access and security that can result from humanitarian aid being used for political purposes,

WELCOMING the European Commission's Communication of 20 April 2005 on Reinforcing EU Disaster and Crisis Response in Third Countries because it reflects the importance of humanitarian principles in the delivery of EU humanitarian aid,

1. **CALLS UPON THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION** to employ its foreign policy developments towards ensuring that humanitarian principles are respected at an international level, and that access and security for civilian humanitarian actors are guaranteed, as crucial elements of effective disaster response.
2. **CALLS UPON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION** to recognise that, given the complexity of current emergencies, it is important that all involved in crisis response and disaster management, including any European voluntary humanitarian aid corps, be suitably qualified, professional and well trained.