



# VOICE

European humanitarian NGOs.  
Standing together.

## EU humanitarian aid needs your support!

### VOICE POLICY RESOLUTION 2019

The EU is one of the key global players in responding to humanitarian crises around the world<sup>1</sup>. Strong and quality humanitarian aid is essential to respond rapidly and effectively to crisis affected populations. Currently, EU humanitarian aid spent through the European Commission is 1 billion a year. It is more vital and more relevant than ever in the efforts to save lives and alleviate suffering.

In 2019, nearly 132 million people are in dire need globally. The gap between need and funding is growing<sup>2</sup>. 88% of EU citizens believe the EU should respond to humanitarian need<sup>3</sup>.

*"NGOs are essential to the humanitarian response as they deliver the majority of international humanitarian aid due to their field-presence and flexibility, often with a high level of specialisation."*

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid

#### ➤ **Ensure that the EU leads the world in a principled approach to humanitarian crises**

- Use the EU's global influence to promote International Humanitarian Law and address violations<sup>1,4</sup>.
- All Member States should protect humanitarian action and personnel, and consistently support people in need's safe access to humanitarian assistance and protection.
- Ensure that all EU funding allocations support humanitarian aid that respects the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence<sup>1</sup>.
- Ensure that humanitarian aid is needs-based and that humanitarian decisions are not driven or changed by foreign policy imperatives<sup>1,5,6</sup>.
- Humanitarian assistance is not a solution to conflicts. Invest in conflict prevention and finding political solutions to conflicts.

*"We live in a world increasingly marked by countless attacks and violence against innocent people globally. This should never become the new normal, something we leave unchallenged."*

Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative/Vice President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, World Humanitarian Day 2017

1. EU humanitarian aid is rooted in the Lisbon Treaty (article 214), the Humanitarian Aid Regulation (1996) and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (the Consensus) (2007).
2. Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018, Development Initiatives (2018).
3. Special Eurobarometer 453 on Humanitarian Aid (May 2017).
4. European Guidelines on promotion of compliance with International Humanitarian Law
5. Council Conclusions on an Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises (2018).
6. EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, Joint Communication and Council Conclusions on a to resilience in the EU's external action (2017).

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

VOICE calls on the European Parliament, the European Commission and the EU Member States to strengthen EU support to crisis affected people through the following:

- Ensure that the EU leads the world in a principled approach to humanitarian crises
- Safeguard the EU's global humanitarian leadership
- Ensure that sufficient funding is in the hands of frontline responders as quickly as possible
- Support a diversity of NGOs to best meet people's needs
- Ensure aid flexibility, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen communities' resilience.
- Address administrative and legal barriers to humanitarian action

## Safeguard the EU's global humanitarian leadership

- Appoint a European Commissioner for humanitarian aid within the external relations team of Commissioners, all of whom will defend all of the above.
- Appoint a standing Rapporteur on humanitarian aid in the European Parliament Development Committee as a parliamentary 'guardian of the Consensus'.
- Continue working with professional humanitarian partners, including NGOs.

## Ensure that sufficient funding is in the hands of frontline responders as quickly as possible.

- A bigger and more predictable humanitarian aid allocation is needed in 2020 and in every year of the next MFF<sup>7</sup>. This would help to ensure that fewer needs will go unanswered. The EU should commit a total budgetary envelope of at least 12 billion over the seven years of the MFF.
- Ensure the EU's Emergency Aid Reserve is used first and foremost to support responses to humanitarian crises outside of the EU.

## Support a diversity of NGOs to best meet people's needs

- The EU must help safeguard the space for local and national civil society organisations to develop and play an active role in responding to crises<sup>8</sup>. This contributes to strengthening affected populations' decisions about aid and protection.
- The EU must maintain a diverse portfolio of humanitarian NGO partners to ensure its humanitarian efficiency and effectiveness. Working with a range of NGOs of different capabilities, expertise and experience from across all EU Member States strengthens the unparalleled humanitarian capacity that exists within European civil society to respond to needs in different sectors and geographic areas.<sup>1</sup>

## Ensure aid flexibility, reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen communities' resilience.

- The EU must increase risk informed development assistance to reduce disaster deaths<sup>6</sup> and ensure a higher proportion of EU aid goes to preparedness, prevention, early warning, and Disaster Risk Reduction. This saves lives and money. Member States and the European Parliament must support this in the development instrument under the next MFF<sup>9</sup>.
- The EU must be more flexible and support multi-year planning and funding of aid<sup>8</sup>. The EU must better link development and humanitarian assistance to reflect the reality that more crises are long-term or recurrent. This allows for adaptive programmes that respond dynamically to complex fast moving crises and better supports communities to withstand shocks and build crisis affected communities' resilience<sup>10</sup>.

*"Vulnerable populations' access to assistance and protection is being increasingly undermined. The pattern of attacks on aid workers and the legal and administrative barriers being placed on their ability to deliver aid is an increasing feature of too many crisis contexts."*

Dominic Crowley, VOICE President, 2019.

## Address administrative and legal barriers to humanitarian action

- The administrative costs, including for compliance and risk management, in humanitarian aid are going up<sup>11</sup>. Radical simplification of the EU's paperwork and procedures for EU humanitarian aid, in line with existing EU commitments, such as cross reliance on audits and assessments, would mean more aid to those who most need it.<sup>1, 8</sup>
- Transparency and accountability are core values for humanitarian NGOs. Member States and the European Parliament should ensure that requirements for accountability to both taxpayers and affected populations are balanced and are applied to all humanitarian partners equally.
- While in some contexts counter-terrorism measures and sanctions (restrictive measures) may be necessary, increased compliance with them seriously restricts humanitarian space and hampers humanitarian operations<sup>12</sup>. Member States and the European Parliament must ensure the necessary exemptions to allow effective humanitarian action to continue.

7. Recommendations from the 2019 OECD-DAC peer review of EU aid, and the Independent Comprehensive Evaluation of EU humanitarian assistance 2012-2016 (2018).

8. 'we must all act now' Joint NGO networks statement (2016), Agenda for Humanity (2016) and Grand Bargain commitments (2016 agreement between 59 of the biggest donors and humanitarian aid organisations, including UN, Red Cross and NGOs).

9. Proposal for a Neighbourhood and Development Cooperation Instrument (2018) and VOICE messages on MFF/NDICI (December 2018).

10. 'Lives in Dignity' EU Joint Communication on Forced Displacement and Development (2016)

11. ICVA 'Less Paper More aid' report (2016), NRC 'Institutional donor requirements'(2016)

12. NRC report 'Principles under Pressure' (2018), New Humanitarian Briefing 'Just how 'smart' are sanctions?' (April 2019), Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock remarks to Security Council on Safeguarding Humanitarian Space (April 2019)