



Ten years of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: A point of reference in a challenging world

UN, ICRC, EU Red Cross office and VOICE joint messages at the occasion of the ten years of the Consensus

The European Consensus shows EU's commitment to fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, creating a common and unbiased framework to deliver humanitarian aid.

- **The management and delivery of humanitarian aid needs to remain principled, unconditional and based on assessed needs. EU's strategies, policies and action plans need to fully respect the principled nature of humanitarian aid, and define clear actions to ensure upholding international law.**

The Consensus has laid the ground to a strong EU humanitarian architecture: a specific article in the Lisbon Treaty, the establishment of the Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), a Standing Rapporteur in the European Parliament and a Commissioner portfolio.

- **These elements are not only central to ensure coordination, accountability and needs-based humanitarian aid but also must be instrumental in making sure that humanitarian aid remains distinct from political objectives of the EU's external action and internal interests.**

The Consensus has played a fundamental role in acknowledging the importance of the different humanitarian organisations. It stresses the added value of NGOs and the comparative advantages of the UN, the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as partners. The plurality and diversity of ECHO's partners is crucial to respond to the variety of crises and needs of affected populations worldwide.

- **The EU must ensure that plurality and diversity will be safeguarded in the future and are not negatively affected by other objectives of the EU's humanitarian policy.**

The Consensus enhanced the coordination and harmonization of European as well as international cooperation in humanitarian actions. One of the EU focus of attention should be to ensure better coherence, coordination and complementarity of various actors.

- **To avoid the duplication of existing international mechanisms, sharing information and developing a joint approach is crucial.**
- **Joint planning between EU and UN at country level must be strengthened to build on each other's comparative advantage.**

The Consensus has underlined the importance to respond adequately to protracted crisis.

- **The EU and its Member States are encouraged to consider long-term strategic humanitarian investments supported by predictable and flexible multi-year finance in situations of protracted conflict and chronic crisis.**

The Consensus supports capacity building activities to strengthen local disaster response and encourages humanitarian actors to foster partnership with local organisations in affected communities.

- **The EU is encouraged to effectively implement the Grand Bargain's commitment to localization which recognizes the essential role of local actors in humanitarian response. To be successful in capacity strengthening, investments, including through development funding and policy, must be focused on disaster prone contexts well before an emergency strikes, and should be part of an overall strategy to reduce and manage risks at the national and community level.**

The Consensus recognizes the link between humanitarian aid and development cooperation to guarantee the achievement of long-term development objectives.

- **Tangible targets for linkages between humanitarian and development effort must be clearly set by the EU while retaining the unconditional and principled rule of humanitarian aid.**
- **Despite the necessary joint approach with development partners, it is crucial that humanitarian aid retains its specificity and remains needs-based.**
- **This joint approach must refrain from becoming politicized, transforming humanitarian aid into a crisis management tool.**

The commitments taken by the EU at the World Humanitarian Summit in the Agenda for Humanity are largely reflect the Consensus.

- **The European Union, its Member States and the European Parliament must ensure adequate and timely follow up of the WHS commitments and use them as a direction for action in the next years for a continued implementation of the Consensus.**