

THE GREY ZONE

OR

**THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

A DISCUSSION PAPER BY

VOICE

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Overview of the EC Approach	4
3. Problems in the EC Approach	6
4. The Case of a Natural Disaster – Hurricane Mitch	7
5. The Case of a Man-Made Disaster – Bosnia Herzegovina	13
6. Conclusions and Final Recommendations	19

1. Introduction

In the 1980s, the nature of relief and development were totally modified by the appearance of « permanent emergencies ». Indeed, the increase in internal conflicts, which often coincided with famine and displacement, required for humanitarian and development workers to operate on the same grounds. These interventions soon made the dichotomy between these two fields disappear since *“the needs of people whose livelihoods have been devastated by drought or war are often barely distinguishable from the needs of those living in absolute poverty and facing ‘permanent emergencies’.* Hence, there is overlap between the interventions and it is frequently the case that NGO and others are engaged simultaneously in relief, rehabilitation and development activities”¹. However, as this collapse of the old dichotomy between emergency and non-emergency situations was not accompanied by a sound strategy, operations often overlapped causing, among other things, the loss of development assets, the building of unsustainable infrastructures and the overlooking of local capacities. These circumstances gave birth to the debate/discussion on the link between relief, rehabilitation and development. The rationale of this debate/discussion is particularly well defined in the 1996 European Commission communication on “Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)”:

“Disasters are costly in both human life and resources; they disrupt economic and social development; they require a long period of rehabilitation; they lead to separate bureaucratic structures and procedures which duplicate development institutions. At the same time, however, development policy too often ignores the risks of drought and other shocks and the need to protect vulnerable households by helping to develop « coping strategies ». If relief and development can be linked, these deficiencies can be reduced”².

Since *“better development can reduce the need for emergency relief; better relief can contribute to development; and better rehabilitation can ease a transition between the two”³,* academics as well as practitioners focused direct efforts in exploring the theoretical background of the link between relief, rehabilitation and development. However, although humanitarian and development fields currently benefit from a subsequent strong theoretical basis, the link between relief, rehabilitation and development has not yet entered mainstream practice.

Nevertheless, in order to render the LRRD operational and address the underlying obstacles which beset the topic, the European Commission focuses since 1993 on developing an approach which would *“increase the effectiveness of the Union’s external action, and to improve the quality of development policy and of ECHO aid strategies”⁴.* Simultaneously, using theoretical knowledge as

¹ Walker in Margaret Buchanan-Smith and Simon Maxwell, “Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: an Introduction and Overview”, IDS Bulletin 25, November 4, Oct 1994.

² Communication from the Commission to the Council and European Parliament on Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD), Brussels 28/03/1996

³ Margaret Buchanan-Smith and Simon Maxwell, “Link Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: an Introduction and Overview”, IDS Bulletin 25, November 4, Oct 1994.

⁴ European Commission, Draft, “Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: an Assessment”, 2001.

well as empirical material, European NGOs and especially VOICE also concentrate on forming best practice for the LRRD issue.

In this context, this paper will contribute to the improvement of the EC's approach concerning the LRRD question. The paper will examine EC instruments and implementation tools to further identify the weaknesses of the EC LRRD approach and to subsequently create a more comprehensive and 'holistic' LRRD framework. In order to achieve that goal, the paper will first present an overview of past EC political endeavours regarding the LRRD. Then, institutional and political problems/barriers will be considered using the Bosnian crisis and the disaster created by Hurricane Mitch as case studies. Finally, the paper will draw upon this analysis to formulate recommendations.

1. Overview of the EC's Approach

The LRRD has been taken seriously into account in the development and revision of the Community's humanitarian aid and development policies since the early '90s, and the Commission has been self-reflective regarding its policies and implementation thereof.

The EC's efforts to link relief, rehabilitation and development were initiated in May 1993 with the emission of a communication for the European Council and the European Parliament. This communication outlined a special rehabilitation support programme for developing countries, responding to the needs stemming from destruction through war, civil disorder or natural disaster. In response to this communication, the Council (Development) defined, in December, the principal objectives, criteria and conditions for reconstruction aid, and called for close coordination between the EC and its member states. The same year, the European Parliament adopted a resolution, which emphasised the scale of the developing countries' need for rehabilitation aid. It thereby proposed the establishment of a specific financial framework which was subsequently rendered tangible through the establishment of a budget heading for the financing of rehabilitation operations in Southern Africa (B7-3210) and a general heading for rehabilitation and reconstruction operations in developing countries (B7-6410).

In December 1995, a more formal commitment was made by the EC through the explicit call for strengthening the link between relief and rehabilitation in article 2.10 of the Madrid Declaration. It emphasises the need for proactive crisis prevention, for a stronger commitment to development assistance, for more preparedness measures and resources to address forgotten crisis.

In November 1996, a legal basis for rehabilitation and reconstruction operations was set. Indeed, Council Regulation (EC) No 2258/96 stipulates that these operations would progressively take over from humanitarian activities and pave the way for the resumption of medium-term and long-term development aid. In April, the Commission had released a communication regarding linking relief, rehabilitation and development. The Communication, based on consultations with a large number of actors, including NGO, suggested that a holistic approach was going to be taken for the social,

economic and political development of developing countries. Three keywords summed up the subsequent recommendations: global strategic planning, coordination and timing.⁵

In 1999, the Commission submitted a communication on the future of the Community's humanitarian activities⁶, which referred to the transitional period between a crisis and ensuing structural stability as the "grey zone". This communication, based on an evaluation of instruments and programmes managed by the EC, which revealed the "grey zone dilemma", raised concerns about ECHO's constant activities in the "grey zone". It was argued that this resulted from the "absence of sufficiently flexible and rapid alternative instruments [to ECHO] in other parts of the Commission and a growing awareness of the complexity and interrelatedness of aid instruments in responding to humanitarian crisis."⁷

Hoping to capitalise on the reorganisation of the Commission and the merging of development and humanitarian portfolios, the Commission issued a communication in 2000 on how it will implement a coherent and effective strategy in the framework of linking relief, rehabilitation and development.⁸

In the Communication on the European Community's Development Policy in year 2000, it was clarified that ECHO will refocus its actions on its core mandate, and that the Commission will "consider how to better address post-crisis situations". Referring to the forthcoming communication on LRRD mentioned above, the Commission promised devising strategies that would take into account the "dynamic nature of crises and post-war situations" and to ensure that "the Commission and Member States make the best use of existing analytical capacities and instruments"⁹. Moreover, the Commission will explain how its various services could be organised to allow for rapid reaction, timely planning and smooth implementation, clarifying the responsibilities in the grey zone. For this purpose, an inter-service working group, coordinated by DG DEV and involving DG Relex, SCR and ECHO, was set to prepare a new communication. A draft of the Communication addresses obstacles to a successful transition between relief and development at two levels: international donor initiatives and the Commission's own instruments, and provides recommendations for how these obstacles should be approached.¹⁰

In 2001, this communication was issued and it will be used throughout this paper as a basis for criticisms as well as an analytical tool.

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) [COM\(96\) 153 final](#)

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Assessment and future of Community humanitarian activities (article 20 of Regulation (EC) 1257/96) [COM\(99\) 468 final](#)

⁷ European Commission, Draft, "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: an Assessment", 2001

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the European Community's Development Policy [COM\(00\) 212 final](#), page 22

¹⁰ Draft Communication on the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: A Reassessment (presented at Development Council November 2000)

2. Problems in the EC Approach

Although the EC has developed a discourse on how to implement the LRRD, it has not substantially addressed the underlying obstacles, which beset the topic. The institutional and political barriers inherent to its organisational culture have not been modified to better suit current needs.

In relief operations pertaining to natural disasters as well as to man-made disasters, the nature of the EC apparatus and its political background often prevent the transition from relief to rehabilitation and to development. This is particularly noticeable in EC funding mechanisms. In view of the mediatization of relief, restrictions have been placed on the allocation of funds and priority has been given to emergencies. *“Relief aid is ‘easy money’, development aid is not: this reinforces the tendency to dress up interventions as being pure relief, rather than dressing them down as appropriate to longer term development as well”*¹¹. The budget portion granted to relief is constantly growing since emergency operations confer visibility to donors and thus makes them accountable to the western public. As soon as the momentum has ended, donors considerably decrease or cut funding. In addition, by giving prevalence to relief, donors neglect rehabilitation activities as well as development operations. This neglect is enhanced by the political conditionality imposed on aid – for example, related to good governance and to human rights records. *“Aid money for rehabilitation and recovery is often hardest of all to access, despite the fact that this may ease a transition from relief to development”*¹². This politicisation of aid has led donors to concentrate on relief operations and neglect rehabilitation as well as development, maintaining and reinforcing the existing dichotomy. Moreover, as the commission stated it, there is *“a lack of appropriate instruments, incompatible approaches or administratively cumbersome decision-making procedures”*¹³ within the EC. The main problems deriving from heavy bureaucratic procedures are summarised in bullet points below:

- A lack of active international co-operation between Donors, Agencies and Member States as well as between Member States and the EU.
- A lack of co-ordination between the General Directorates DG Dev, DG Relex, the SCR, ECHO and other EC services.
- SCR’s essential failure in providing “horizontal” co-ordination to programmes management throughout different EC units.
- The incoherence of the Community’s funding instruments in terms of “timing” and “nature” (some of them require too much time, others are applicable only to certain countries).
- The delays and time constraints in drawing up rehabilitation planning strategies for the management of post-emergency situations.
- The ineffectiveness or lack of global policy frameworks drawing together political, economic and social factors and appropriate political analyses.
- A lack of rapid and flexible procedures for post-relief measures (for example. ALA, EDF).

¹¹ Margaret Buchanan-Smith and Simon Maxwell, “Linking Relief and Development: An Introduction and Overview”, IDS Bulletin, Nov 4, 1994.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Draft Communication on the “Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: A Reassessment” (presented at the Development Council, November 2000), page 7.

- Delays in already pledged aid disbursement due to inefficient donors' bureaucracies.
- The delegation of responsibility to field delegations aimed, in certain circumstances, at avoiding the bureaucratic slowness, has proven problematic, as officials in the field are sometimes unprepared for such task.
- Little dialogue and consultation with NGOs which are main implementers.
- Limited participation of the different beneficiary groups.

3. The Case of a Natural Disaster – Hurricane Mitch

In the case of a rapid onset emergency, triggered by a natural disaster, such as the Hurricane Mitch crisis, interventions are very straightforward when it comes to linking relief, rehabilitation and development. Indeed, the absence of complex political contexts simplifies relief work and enables to prepare the grounds for rehabilitation and development in a smooth manner. Moreover, its temporary nature enables relief, rehabilitation and development workers to operate in a coordinated manner and thus operate according to a strategic plan. However, the institutional barriers encountered by the EC infringed, in the case of the Hurricane Mitch crisis, on the successful completion of a relief operation and thus of rehabilitation activities.

Vulnerability analysis, disaster prevention and preparedness, disaster management and contingency planning are very important parts of development planning, but should also be taken into account when implementing relief and rehabilitation activities. Working closely with and supporting local organisations and capacities is pivotal at all stages, making sure that activities are appropriate to culture and society as well as gender-sensitive.¹⁴

In practical terms, these elements can be implemented by for instance integrating relief administration into existing government structures, placing responsibility on the local level for the "first line defence" against emergencies. In cases where there are no strong local government capacities, NGOs can play a major role if enhancing local capacity is stated in their objective - which is mostly the case.¹⁵ Making sure that disaster preparedness is an integral part of long-term development by - at local level - establishing (or maintaining already existing) tools for early warning and contingency planning, is yet another example.

As regards to rehabilitation, the guidelines in the Stockholm Declaration concerning reconstruction after Hurricane Mitch are of interest. In May 1999, the Consultative Group for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America arranged a meeting in Stockholm in which reconstruction plans and donor pledges were presented. A final communication from the Consultative Group, known as the Stockholm Declaration, included guiding principles for the reconstruction of the countries, which had suffered devastation as a result of hurricane Mitch. The guiding principles coincide with the elements

¹⁴ See for instance Buchanan-Smith, Margaret & Maxwell Simon "Linking Relief and Development: An introduction and Overview, IDS Bulletin 25, November 4, Oct 1994

¹⁵ Buchanan-Smith, Margaret & Maxwell Simon "Linking Relief and Development: An introduction and Overview, IDS Bulletin 25, November 4, Oct 1994, page 6

required for linking relief, rehabilitation and development in natural disasters, taking into account the political aspects typical to the region:

Reduce the social and ecological vulnerability of the region, as the overriding goal; Reconstruct and transform Central America on the basis of an integrated approach of transparency and good governance; Consolidate democracy and good governance, reinforcing the process of decentralisation of governmental functions and powers, with the active participation of civil society; Promote respect for human rights as a permanent objective. The promotion of equality between women and men, the rights of children, of ethnic groups and other minorities should be given special attention; Coordinate donor efforts, guided by priorities set by the recipient countries and; Intensify efforts to reduce the external debt burden of the countries of the region.

At donor-level, coordination is an important element to support a successful LRRD. Moreover, ad-hoc cooperation proves to be unsustainable and efforts should therefore be made to institutionalise coordination and prioritisation between donors. Careful planning is another important element. Clear hand-over strategies must be developed and implemented - they should be integrated in humanitarian assistance planning but must remain flexible.

The following chapter will explore the intervention of the EU during the Mitch crisis in light of the above-suggested guidelines for linking relief, rehabilitation and development in natural disasters¹⁶.

The Hurricane

Hurricane Mitch ripped through Central America in the final days of October 1998. It was to be the worst natural disaster that Latin America had experienced in the past 200 years. The direct impact of the hurricane was so massive that evaluations of the damages could not be completed and thus no accurate numbers regarding mortalities and casualties were made available. Similarly, there are no figures concerning the social and economic consequences of the crisis in affected countries. There are however accounts of approximately 10,000 deaths; 9,000 disappearances; 12,000 casualties; 617,000 evacuated people; and 85,000 people living in provisional shelters. The Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), estimated that the global damages amounted to US\$ 6,018 billion, including direct damages worth of US\$ 551.9 million in the social area (housing, health and education), US\$ 656.9 million in infrastructure (roads, bridges, trains, energy, water and sanitation, risk and drainage) and US\$ 1,824.1 billion in production (agriculture, cattle raising, fishing and forests, manufacture, commerce, restaurants and hotels).

The EU Relief and Reconstruction Approach

¹⁶ At the end of 1999, aid granted by the Commission totalled EUR 238,985,000: Initial ECHO emergency programme EUR 6.8 million; Revamping of some ECHO projects in the region EUR 3 million; Additional humanitarian aid from ECHO EUR 9.5 million; Co-financing via NGOs EUR 17.9 million; Food aid and food security EUR 30 million; RPRCA: studies and technical assistance project EUR 8.2 million; ECHO humanitarian aid programme for the victims of the Hurricane Mitch EUR 16 million; RPRCA (PRRAC) "Regional Programme for the Reconstruction of Central America" EUR 82 585 000; HIPC debt reduction: EUR 30 million and; EIB loan to the CABEI: EUR 35 million (Data Sources: "Documento Informativo Programa Regional para la Reconstrucción de Centroamérica (PRRAC) and support from Mrs Valeria Forlani from ECHO 3)

The Commission responded promptly to the emergency caused by hurricane Mitch. On the 4th of November 1998, an initial emergency grant reaching EUR 6.8 million, channelled via the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), was announced. This first grant supported distribution of basic necessities (food parcels, emergency relief items and medical support) carried out by 11 European NGOs and the Spanish and German Red Cross. ECHO also provided EUR 3 million to revamp humanitarian aid projects already under way in the region¹⁷. On 21 December 1998 the Commission approved an additional EUR 9.5 million for sanitation, health and shelter, split up in 29 projects that started in February 1999.¹⁸

DG Development (DG DEV), which already supported rehabilitation operations and food aid/security, redirected its support to the worst affected victims of the hurricane. In parallel, EUR 14 million were made available in Euronaïd resources (NGOs, food aid, tools, seeds and other inputs) along with new funds amounting to EURO 16 million for operations in support of rehabilitation (financing and inputs via NGOs). Regarding NGO co-financing, DG DEV decided to give priority to proposals from NGOs in the region during 1999. This co-financing totalled EUR 17.9 million, an increase of 35.75% from 1998.

In September 1999 ECHO launched its Global Plan "Humanitarian aid for the victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America¹⁹", granting further EURO 16 million for 53 projects on health, water/sanitation and housing rehabilitation operations in Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. The plan, which stretched over October 1999 - June 2000, included rehabilitation elements that would support the transition towards a structured rehabilitation and economic reconstruction from other EU budget sources. Two grants were presented in 2000 after the decision that ECHO was to phase out its activities, one of which was a response to specific needs identified in Honduras and Nicaragua (health, water/sanitation). Additionally, in order to consolidate and to complete the activities of the Global Plan, the Commission approved a further decision for Honduras (EUR 1.5 Millions) on 11 August 2000. Furthermore, a relief programme amounting to EUR 1.84 million following on an earthquake in Nicaragua was approved. ECHO plans to withdraw by March 2001, 28 months after the emergency began.

DG External Relations (DG RELEX) had already in April the same year presented a Communication on a Community Action Plan for Reconstruction Central America which outlined short and medium term rehabilitation activities. The main component of the action plan is the "Regional programme for the Reconstruction of Central America" (RPRCA, later PRRAC). This plan was supported with funds reaching EURO 250 million, which would be allocated between 1999 and 2002 (the first payments totalling EUR 82.585 million was approved in 1999). Its direct or indirect beneficiaries exceed 4 millions people: 900,000 in El Salvador; 500,000 in Guatemala; 1,600,000 in Honduras and 1,200,000 in Nicaragua.

¹⁷ These re-oriented projects have been completely implemented and their final payments have been made. (Valeria Forlani, ECHO 3)

¹⁸ 22 of these projects were finalised in September 1999. For the remaining 7, ECHO is either awaiting or processing final reports.

¹⁹ Adopted by the Commission the 12 of October 1999.

The PRRAC was to ensure that there would be a consistency in the measures the commission activated to respond to the crisis. It was adopted on the basis of the 1996 regulation on rehabilitation and reconstruction operations in developing countries, retrieving its funding from the B7-313 budget line.²⁰ The PRRAC is a multi-sectoral programme, covering Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, including rehabilitation of infrastructure, equipment for and management of education, as well as health and housing services, with the objective of supporting transition towards sustainable development.

PRRAC takes into account the importance of local involvement. One of its specific objectives is "to strengthen the local government and civil society by supporting the formulation and implementation of rehabilitation and development plans in order to prepare and launch a regulatory structure for risk prevention and to reduce the impact of natural disasters". Moreover, the programme envisages a horizontal component to support decentralisation and the strengthening of powers at municipal level.

In order to maximise effectiveness, the PRRAC would be slotted into the national plans of the recipient countries in coordination with operations carried out by EU Member States and other international donors.

Looking at the PRRAC and its components, it would seem that the program has come a long way in integrating and taking into account the guidelines as regards to linking relief, rehabilitation and development in natural disasters, discussed above. Main elements such as establishing tools for prevention and preparedness, involving and strengthening local capacities and co-ordination among donors are there. When it comes to the implementation of the PRRAC and the measures taken in practice to ensure consistency in Commission activities, the outcomes are however less favourable.

Delays

Generally speaking, the PRRAC is considered to be a particularly effective and innovative measure as it envisages a decision-making decentralisation (its seat is the EC Delegation in Managua). Nevertheless, there have been serious delays in the implementation of PRRAC projects.²¹ The

²⁰ Plus the cost of the Technical Assistance Office (TAO), made up of experts to help the decentralised management structure in Nicaragua, that has been estimated at EUR 6.6 million and its financing is additional to the PRRAC.

²¹ The first payment of EUR 82.5 million was foreseen for 1999. The second payment (50 million) was to be done in 2000, the third (75.5 million) in 2001 totalling and the fourth (41.9 million) in 2002. The program started on the 5th of October 1999. The PRRAC projects were presented to the Member States on the 26th of November 1999, and again on the 18th of May 2000 when the modalities of execution were communicated. In July 2000 the officials finally arrived in Managua and on the 30th - 31st of July 2000 the Financial Agreements with the four beneficiary States were signed for a total of 82.5 MEURO. The first public tenders for an amount of 4.7 MEURO were published on the 12th of September, and after the assessment of the proposals made in November, the contracts were to be signed in December 2000. The elaboration of the Terms of Reference for the biggest projects (16 in the four countries) finished in November last year. For the first group of 8 big projects already defined, the preparatory information regarding the advertisement for the Public Tender was published the 30th of September 2000. For the remaining projects the EC will publish a notice for the Tenders in December 2000. In the view of DG Relex the PRRAC was supposed to start in the first quarter of the year 2000.

operational implementation of the intended decentralisation has been slow, partly due to late approval of contracting staff for the Managua office and the need for reviewing procedures. The elaboration of terms of reference for projects, the release of tenders and the approval/signing of contracts have indeed extended over a long period of time. Moreover, the Communication on the PRRAC, which was presented in March 1999, was only approved by the Parliament in June 2000. Two years after Hurricane Mitch, the activities on the ground had not yet started and only a limited amount of projects had been launched.

There were also delays as regards to food aid. Despite a swift decision to prioritise support to Honduras and Nicaragua in the Food Security budget line, focussing on agricultural rehabilitation, no administrative procedures were defined to facilitate the rapid execution of projects. Furthermore, no appropriate decisions were taken to rapidly intervene in the most vulnerable sectors hit by the hurricane in Guatemala and El Salvador.

Moreover, despite the fact that ECHO's action was immediate and well-targeted²², the decision that DG1-B (now DG Relex) could reallocate up to 15% of their operating budget to deal with the emergency had limited impact due to bureaucratic delays which in turn prevented projects being implemented.

Approach

As there are important elements missing in its definition and implementation, the PRAAC can hardly be seen as a short to medium term rehabilitation. For instance, a considerable amount of money has been pledged and the implementation from the decentralised office was much too slow: thus flexibility is not ensured. Considering the ambitious framework and the amount of money pledged, the PRAAC corresponds to sustainable development rather than to a relief operation, thus leaving a gap between emergency activities implemented by ECHO and the implementation of PRRAC activities.

As regards to activities, many NGOs are critical to the technical approach of the PRRAC. The decision to prioritise reconstruction of infrastructure in the areas of education and health should be complemented with a holistic and sustainable intervention, including specific targeting of the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

The proportion of PRRAC funding specifically directed towards local civil society promoted initiatives is small, considering the over-all budget²³. It is estimated that out of some 200 proposals submitted by national civil society organisations in response to public tenders, only approximately 10% will actually be granted funding. The following year's budgetary breakdown is foreseen to be along similar lines, implying that a similar amount of NGOs will be left empty-handed.

Co-ordination and consistency

²² Permission was granted to agencies with existing ECHO funds to channel their money to the emergency effort, demonstrating ECHO's flexibility and effectiveness in dealing with situations of this type, and a second round of allocations were made rapidly.

²³ Out of an overall budget of 250 MEURO, only 13 MEURO are pledged towards national civil society bodies.

At the time of the disaster, the European Union already had coordination structures on the ground capable of implementing, in a timely manner, the planned reconstruction activities. However, instead of making use of their existing structures, the Commission preferred to send missions of experts and priority was given to the creation of a special ad-hoc unit.

The problem of coordination between ECHO and Euronaid affected the efficiency of food aid. Since there was a lack of coordination, it would have been preferable to work exclusively through ECHO to respond to the food emergency, given their rapid decision-making mechanisms, instead of channelling funds through Euronaid. Aid should have been channelled via Euronaid at a later stage, after food security projects were initiated.

ECHO will be operating in the affected area until March 2001. Although it dealt with the emergency aspect of the crisis expediently, it is not mandated for dealing with the second-phase of action. This is particularly worrying since there are no satisfactory instruments to ensure a transition to rehabilitation and thus to development.

Recommendations

In order to make the efforts of linking relief, rehabilitation and development more successful, VOICE would like to make the following recommendations:

- Streamline administrative procedures that, with the exception of ECHO, have been too slow to produce effective intervention;
- Re-examine the approach and adopt a strategy with a local, integrated, sustainable focus;
- Prioritise proposals from the region aimed at promoting reconstruction, and consider increasing the percentage of EU co-financing;
- Make sure that Member States inform the Commission about the projects they fund, in the same way as the EC does with them, and take into account this information;
- Provide capacity for the unit that will operate in Central America to deal with proposals coming from civil society. Allow national and international NGOs to submit and implement rehabilitation projects, as strategic partners in this phase;
- Enable civil society organisations to access funding through other budgetary headings of PRRAC, especially as regards to public tenders in the areas of sanitation, health, shelter, education and training. Along with consultancy firms and other private/public bodies, both local and European NGOs should be expressly included in the Terms of Reference;
- Take into account, in the Terms of Reference for the most heavily funded sectors the need for continuity between emergency and development by appropriate targeting of funding;

- Evaluate the programmes implemented so far, with the aim of examining the effectiveness of the work already carried out and drawing guidelines for the implementation of future projects;
- Plan extensive investment in disaster prevention and preparedness in the Central American region, broadening the number of concerned countries.

4. The Case of a Man-Made Disaster – Bosnia-Herzegovina

In the case of complex political emergencies associated with internal wars, linking relief, rehabilitation and development is much more difficult. Standardisation of activities is impossible given the specificity of crisis. "Prevention and preparedness measures are most difficult and complex, and rehabilitation leading to development often more protracted"²⁴.

There is not a single answer to how relief, rehabilitation and development should be linked in man-made disasters, nor is there a specific set of tools that will do the job. The reality is more complicated than that, and the approach to LRRD must be multi-faceted and based on specific country and/or regional situations. We are therefore left with general guidelines and frameworks that are not always easy to operationalise or implement. The main recommendations global strategic planning, coordination, timing and flexibility are applicable to man-made as well as to natural disasters. However, political and social elements involved in man-made disasters, often limit the possibility of a smooth transition between relief, rehabilitation and development.

It is of great importance that each donor adapts its own resources, procedures and instruments in relation to what others are doing. Even more important is to make sure that the lack of donor incentive does not disrupt the transition between relief, rehabilitation and development due to withholding of funding or the adoption of a "wait-and-see" attitude.

Political analysis, conflict prevention and peace-building activities are often mentioned as activities that will support LRRD in man-made disasters. Serious attempts should be made to integrate these activities at all levels of aid distribution.²⁵ Relief, usually restricted to health, nutrition, shelter, physical protection and water/sanitation might not be appropriate to address the root causes of conflict. However, in order to support a normalisation of society and a smoother transition towards rehabilitation, a broader approach could be taken, including building social and political institutions as well as psychological support and demilitarisation.²⁶

²⁴ Margaret Buchanan-Smith and Simon Maxwell, "Linking Relief and Development: An Introduction and Overview", IDS Bulletin, Nov 4, 1994.

²⁵ VOICE is aware of that it is not always possible or even suitable to adopt such a model, due to constraints and complexities in the disaster environment.

²⁶ Buchanan-Smith, Margaret & Maxwell Simon "Linking Relief and Development: An introduction and Overview, IDS Bulletin 25, November 4, Oct 1994

Rehabilitation in war-torn societies must necessarily include the re-establishment of the rule of law as well as the re-establishment of civil society and should not be limited to technical reconstruction of houses and infrastructure.²⁷ Depending on the level of tension, targeted assistance such as training, political dialogue, institution building, repatriation support, confidence building measures and support for conflict resolution activities could be integrated in reconstruction activities. It is essential that these elements are not under-estimated as they will have "a determining influence on the reconstruction of the country itself"²⁸ and therefore facilitate the transition towards development. De-mining operations should be implemented, according to a coherent civilian demining strategy.²⁹ Developmental approaches should address the entire cycle of conflict and peace, concentrating on conflict prevention through their activities.

The EC Regulation 1257/96 offers a comprehensive and sophisticated methodological guidance for EC actions in post-conflict situations. Although not specifically developed for the purpose of linking relief, rehabilitation and development, there are elements that support such a process.

- Global policy frameworks should draw together economic, social (including gender), and political (democratisation, human rights and the rule of law) factors into development and define more clearly linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development;
- Increasing prominence needs to be given to conflict prevention, with the ultimate goal of reaching a situation of "structural stability" (i.e. a situation involving sustainable economic development, democracy and respect for human rights, viable political structures, healthy social and environmental conditions, with the capacity to manage change without resort to violent conflict);
- Conflict prevention should be considered within the broader sense of "peacebuilding" and be treated as an intrinsic element of these global policy frameworks. A policy of peace-building necessitates the adoption of a peace-building approach in the sense that all measures should take the structural root-causes of violent conflicts into consideration, and should be targeted at the stabilisation of societies;
- Political analysis capacity must be enhanced, in order to focus on structural root causes of conflict, identify potential trouble spots and translate analysis into timely political actions at the level of the Union;

²⁷ It is worth noting that "development of a social capital and civil society is not an end in itself but part of a process that has the potential to inhibit the return to violence" (Pugh, Michael "Post-Conflict Rehabilitation: social and civil dimension" 1998). Moreover, VOICE does not argue that there is a blueprint that fits every situation - measures have to tailor-made to suit each circumstance.

²⁸ Draft Communication on the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: A Reassessment (presented at Development Council November 2000) page 7

²⁹ Draft Communication on the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: A Reassessment (presented at Development Council November 2000) page 6

- Rehabilitation planning strategies must be developed, and accompanied by the application of appropriate rules and procedures allowing rapid and flexible response to ensure effective bridging with relief assistance;
- People - both victims and participants in violent conflicts - must be reintegrated into civil society, in its economic, social and political aspects. In other words, the human dimension is an essential feature of rehabilitation;
- As a basic prerequisite of democracy, the development of political dialogue should not await the arrival of better times before being put in place. From the very beginning, particular attention must be given to allow various groups and minorities to express themselves;
- The actions should extend beyond the period of reconstruction itself and be incorporated into longer-term development plans. Such actions are essential if external assistance is to have a sustainable impact in the long term. More support is needed for the longer-term operations of international and local NGO's which were present at the time of the humanitarian crisis, by associating those which are able to do so with the programming of rehabilitation funds, in the basic sectors, and by insisting during implementation on an approach emphasising viability of actions in the medium term and use of local structures;
- Community actions in these areas can only play a catalytic role in assisting governments to start the ball rolling. Priority must be given to methods that maximise the involvement of the local population, and make use of small-scale credit for the private sector;

Again, it would seem that the EU has adopted a comprehensive and well-developed view to linking relief, rehabilitation and development in man-made disasters. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, we will see that official statements and regulations are not sufficiently accompanied with real operationalisation and implementation;

The Bosnian Crisis

The war in the former Yugoslavia lasted for four years, ending in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Agreement. However, although overt violence ended, the systematic destruction of towns and villages carried on as militias withdrew. Flows of refugees, unseen since World War II in Europe, exceeded 2 millions people, more than half of the country's population. More than 1.2 million citizens fled abroad. The war resulted in approximately 200, 000 deaths. Violations of international law and crimes against humanity took place; houses and infrastructures were extensively damaged and the population was severely traumatised.

The EU Relief and Reconstruction Approach

Since 1991, ECHO has allocated more than one billion EURO in humanitarian aid to BiH. Through its implementing partners, ECHO has not only improved access to health care and social assistance; it has also played a major role in facilitating the return process. Its flexible procedures allowed for quick intervention in case of spontaneous returns, such as in the cases of Stolac and Capljina, and to start pilot return projects in politically difficult regions as for example in Eastern Republika Srpska.

The signing of the Dayton Peace Agreements led to the gradual reduction of humanitarian aid in favour of operations designed to rehabilitate social infrastructures and housing. From 1995 to 1999, ECHO however continued to fund projects in BiH filling the gap of a non-existing social security system. Eventually, ECHO phased out in the year 2000.

Shortly after the signature of the Peace Accords, the European Commission and the World Bank organised the first donors' conference in which large amounts of funding were pledged by a number of international donors.³⁰ The Commission announced ECU 1 billion for four years of reconstruction (1996-1999) not including humanitarian aid, and supported the implementation of peace and the democratisation process. Basically, the EU's commitment covers four main areas: repair of war damage and reconstruction of housing and infrastructure; institutional building; revitalisation of the economy and private sector development and; consolidation of democracy and civil society.

In 1997, EC assistance moved away from only addressing emergency needs; it rebuilt sectors fundamental to the overall revival of the economy. Following the conclusions of the London Peace Implementation Council of December 1996, the Commission tried to develop an integrated approach with the aim of linking the reconstruction and refugee return aspects of its assistance. At the same time, significant funding was provided to institutions to support the implementation of Dayton, such as the Office of the High Representative, the International Police Task Force, and UNHCR.

Under the guidance of the High Representative, the EC applied the principles of conditionality in implementing its assistance. Political considerations did in some cases result in delay or disruption of programme implementation in 1997. For example, conditionality requirements led to the repeated postponement of the Donor Conference, originally planned for the beginning of the year. It was finally held in July, when the Commission pledged EURO 230,7 million for reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Commission also decided to suspend part of the programme in July 1997 as a result of suspicion that individuals not committed to the Dayton agreement were benefiting from projects in the Republika Srpska.

In 1998, the European policy engaged in sustainable reconstruction by moving away from emergency interventions and supporting economic development as well as institutional building. This policy was

³⁰ Attempts to coordinate donor activities have since then resulted in regular donor conferences under the joint auspices of the World Bank and the EU and a World Bank/European Commission Office for South-East Europe has been set up in Brussels. Coordination has also been organised at a local level in BiH through the Economic Task Force, the Return and Reconstruction Task Force (RRTF) and other more sector specific Task Forces run by the Office of the High Representative. Herzegovina.

reflected in the reduction of ECHO funding between 1997 and 1998, despite the obvious need for continued humanitarian assistance given the low level of returns.

Significant steps to improve the level of implementation of EC funded projects were also taken in 1998. The management of programmes was decentralised from the EC headquarters in Brussels to the Commission Representation in Sarajevo. It was supported by a Technical Assistance Unit and monitoring teams created in 1998, which supported projects in various sectors such as transport, energy, water, public buildings, agriculture, bridge reconstruction, economic regeneration, privatisation, health and telecommunications.³¹

The same year, with the purpose of streamlining procedures, the Commission regrouped the main budget lines into the "reconstruction" programme Obnova, still the Commission's main financial instrument in BiH. The Obnova programme's regulation mentioned the restoration of civil society as one of the prerequisites for peace and stability. In its introduction it emphasised the need for "operations aimed at achieving economic and social objectives, in particular employment, the restoration of civil society, and the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons". It specifically included "cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, foundations and non-governmental organisations" among the actors eligible to participate in the implementation of projects (article 3).

As recognised by the Ministerial meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in Madrid on 15-16 December 1998, substantial efforts were still required from the international community to consolidate the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH and to make the peace process self-sustainable. The PIC conclusions stressed in particular that the next two years would be vital in strengthening the peace process and building democratic and market-oriented institutions. It was acknowledged that the efforts of the international community alone couldn't solve the difficult issue of the return of refugees and displaced persons, nor the transition to a sustainable economical and political environment. This could only be achieved with the full commitment of the local authorities as well as the good will of the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Commission's communication of 26 May 1999 on the Stabilisation and Association Process for countries of South Eastern Europe³² mentioned "increased assistance for democratisation, civil society, education and institution building" among the main components of the new stabilisation and association process. Recognising that efforts to promote economic development would be greatly facilitated by, among other things, the viability of civil society, this document advocated support for civil society organisations and initiatives. It stated that "particular emphasis will be given, though civil society organisations, to the post-conflict rebuilding of consensus, to conflict resolution and to the

³¹ The Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) assists the EC Delegation with administrative aspects of the tendering and contracting procedures in order to accelerate the commitment of EC funds, project identification, preparation and approval as well as project supervision/monitoring.

³² Commission Communication to the Council and European Parliament on the Stabilisation and Association Process for countries of South Eastern Europe" (ref. COM (1999) 235 of 26 May 1999).

lightening of the psychological burden consequent to war” – and considered it appropriate to channel financial resources to local community-based organisations.

In 1999, the Commission also proposed to focus on refugee returns and on activities that would foster economic development and democratic institutions, moving from "reconstruction" to a phase of "stabilisation and consolidation". In a Communication on Future assistance to the Western Balkans³³, it was announced that the Commission intended to propose a new legal basis. The Obnova and Phare were to be replaced by a single legal framework, for implementation during 2000-2006, known as CARDS. Surprisingly, the CARDS takes a technical approach to reconstruction and development. Social and political elements of the reconstruction process seems to be left to conditionally, respect for the basic principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights are prerequisites for receiving aid under CARDS.

The EC has also pledged funding for the purpose of rehabilitation of BiH available via the Stability Pact "Quick Start Package".

It would seem that many of the elements that encourage the LRRD in man-made disasters, such as decentralisation efforts, peace-building and conflict prevention focusing on civil society and coordination between donors are present in the EU philosophy for intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The link between relief, rehabilitation and development is however weak, in particular as regards to integrating it in the implementation of rehabilitation activities. There are, as we will see below, for instance important delays, lack of flexibility, stark incoherence in the different EU services, but also flaws in the approach.

Delays

Several independent agencies have criticised the inefficiency and delays in EU donations to Bosnia-Herzegovina. This has not only reduced their impact and value, but also created a so-called "grey zone" between emergency relief and reconstruction. For instance, up to the summer 2000, the EU had only spent approximately 50 % of the 1999 budget.

As for 2000, funding has been drastically cut, including all of ECHO's funding³⁴. 50.1 million Euro was allocated to refugee assistance through the Obnova 2000 programme. Of this 50.1 million Euro, only 35 million are allocated to actual reconstruction projects. The Obnova programme officially expired at the end of 1999. However, funds were still available in 2000 as the 1999 program was approved only

³³ COM (1999) 66

³⁴ Decided by the Commission on the 9th of March 1999 and endorsed by the EU Member States in the light of the following circumstances:

- A prioritisation of limited EU funds for relief to the most severe humanitarian crises and post-conflict settings throughout the world.
- The slow but steady economic and social recovery in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is partially a consequence of the large scale international reconstruction programme implemented in the country since 1996.
- The decentralisation of the management of the Commission reconstruction and recovery assistance to an expanded European Commission Representation Office in Sarajevo.
- A conviction that activities within the ECHO mandate do not in the medium-to-long term present the best and most efficient and sustainable types of support to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

in December 1999. Furthermore, the EU's Obnova 2000 programme was yet to produce any results in supporting refugee returns last summer.³⁵

NGOs have in some cases had to wait up to five months to receive the instalments from the EC. The decision to de-centralise project management and give responsibilities to the delegations in BiH was positive as such. However, it did not improve the situation since administrative procedures were not decentralised. ICG reported that agencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina in general felt that the process of funding applied by ECHO was far more suitable than the one adopted by DG RELEX, stating that the DG RELEX procedures, "designed to be totally transparent it [was] also designed for a country in the development phase with no political obstruction".³⁶

Our case study also displays a lack of flexibility. Despite the nature of the return process and rehabilitation, which often demands changes in programs and activities due to spontaneous return, enough has not been done in order to ensure a swift, efficient and informed response which would be appropriate to changes in the environment.

Co-ordination and consistency

The implementation of the Obnova program³⁷ following the successful execution of humanitarian aid by ECHO was an ideal opportunity for linking relief and rehabilitation by allowing the programs to co-exist and then being efficiently linked. This potential was however not acknowledged, and there were no procedures put in place to facilitate complementarity, consistency and communication.

In order to ensure flexibility after ECHO's withdrawal, a new tool, the Flexible Reaction Mechanism, was created. The FRM was to increase the flexibility of Obnova program regarding funding of projects in response to unidentified spontaneous return movements also in cases where prerequisites for repatriation were lacking. However, the FRM applied procedures developed for Obnova, which were not adequately flexible and rapid as they were defined for post-emergency reconstruction. The tool designed to ensure flexibility and rapid response, aimed at filling the gap after ECHO, thus still used slower procedures of a tool for rehabilitation, in a situation where spontaneous returns still took place - demanding flexibility and rapid response.

As regards to project selection, the EC not only failed to capitalise on existing know-how, but ignored the possibility of ensuring a link between emergency and rehabilitation by guaranteeing consistency. While ECHO BiH was involved in the Project Selection Committee for FRM, it was not consulted in the selection of projects to sustain refugee returns under Obnova 2000, even though these kind of projects had previously been designed by concerned NGOs in cooperation with ECHO. It would seem that the

³⁵ ICG Balkan Report no 95 "Bosnia's refugee logjam breaks: is the international community ready?" Sarajevo/Washington/Brussels 30 May 2000.

³⁶ ICG Balkan Report no 95 "Bosnia's refugee logjam breaks: is the international community ready?" Sarajevo/Washington/Brussels 30 May 2000.

³⁷ Council Regulation (EC) No. 1628/96 of 25 July 1996, amended by (EC) No. 2240/97 of 10 November 1997 and (EC) No. 851/98 of 20 April 1998.

choice to benefit from the knowledge and experience of ECHO was restricted to a tool designed to ensure rapid response, and did not expand to longer-term reconstruction programs.

Another example illustrates a missed opportunity to capitalise on structures already put in place. A few months before withdrawing, ECHO set up a sophisticated reporting/information gathering system in cooperation with implementing partners. This had the aim of exploring the effectiveness and impact of projects, replacing the less informative monthly standard reporting form. Neither Obnova, nor FRM took use of this system, partly missing an opportunity to capitalise on a well functioning information system, but also an already existing mechanism which could have provided a continuum in information gathering and relations with NGOs.

Approach

The approach to how one should link relief, rehabilitation and development in man-made disasters is not always evident. However, taking into account what has been said above about the main elements to consider, such as peace-building, conflict prevention, involving the local communities etc., it is surprising to see that the regulations on assistance to the South Eastern Balkans lack these elements. Even more remarkable is that these elements have been clearly stated as being prerequisites for a successful reconstruction process in numerous EU documents and regulations, including the 1996 Communication on LRRD and yet, there is very little evidence of them being actually implemented.

Rehabilitation based on the reconstruction, not only of houses and infrastructure, but on the rebuilding of a strong civil society, the re-establishment of the rule of law and reconciliation, will provide a solid base for a longer-term development. Including these aspects already in the reconstruction of a war-torn country will provide a smoother transition towards development. Beyond the technical aspects, the process of return constitutes enormous political and humanitarian problems as they pervade the entire fabric of the Bosnian society. Unfortunately, this level of analysis seems to be largely overlooked by donors' policies: a more simplistic approach prevails, based on the trinity of Re-building - Return - Restore market economy³⁸. As regards to LRRD it is of importance that strategies addressing "integration between displaced people and host population, co-ordination between relief and development agencies, collaboration between international and local organisations, the utilisation of displaced population's skills and knowledge, etc."³⁹ are produced and implemented.

Moreover, EC aid has in some cases proven specifically inefficient, due to the lack of flexibility and the absence of connection to "real-world" information. For instance, ICG reports that the EU insists on hiring contractors to carry out reconstruction work, presenting returning refugees with "the key to a reconstructed, finished home". However, approximately 95 per cent of all private detached homes in

³⁸ The Obnova regulation does in fact mention the restoration of civil society as one of the prerequisites for peace and stability. It also emphasised the need for «operations aimed at achieving economic and social objectives, in particular employment, the restoration of civil society and the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons». Moreover, it specifically included «cooperatives, mutual societies, associations, foundations and non-governmental organisations». among the actors to be involved in the implementation of projects. These elements were not included in the new regulation, CARDS, which takes a much more technical approach to reconstruction.

³⁹ University of York, Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) Website <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/prdu/research.htm#four> 24 May 2000

Bosnia were designed and built by their occupants. Construction companies rarely engaged in building private homes. The result is that most Bosnians know how to reconstruct their own homes.⁴⁰

Recommendations

- Streamline procedures in order to ensure speed, flexibility, efficiency and informed decision-making. Rapid and flexible response will improve the link between relief and rehabilitation and will avoid the creation of a grey zone.
- Systematic availability of actors present during a humanitarian crisis for longer-term operations. Make sure that support, know-how and experience is capitalised upon by long-term operations, thereby linking relief and rehabilitation.
- Support and strengthen delegations in the field in order to make the most of decentralisation.
- Re-examine the rehabilitation approach, making sure that reconstruction is not limited to technical aspects, but also includes social and political elements such as the strengthening of civil society, human rights etc., maintaining strong links with local communities. This will provide a sustainable base for re-building Bosnia-Herzegovina and link medium and long-term activities.
- Involve local communities at all stages of aid and capitalise on the populations' know-how.
- Invest in peace-building, conflict prevention and reconciliation activities.

5. Conclusion and Final Recommendations

In this document, we have shed light on the institutional and political problems which prevent the effective implementation of a link between relief, rehabilitation and development in EC interventions. Some of the flaws in the EC approach and the lack of commitment in implementing EC guidelines have been highlighted. Coming back to the main points of criticism made in chapter 3, some recommendations are here presented and they all pertain to questions of global strategic planning, coordination, timing and flexibility.

Timing and Flexibility

Reduce bureaucratic slowness by:

- Introducing less controls of the projects ex-ante coupled with more effective and rigorous evaluations and controls ex-post;
- Defining new tools for evaluation and training more staff to deal with such measures. Regarding the quality of the implementers we already have a good example represented by the FPA⁴¹ that could be followed and extended. Too many controls ex-ante are ineffective if there is no evaluation ex-post.

⁴⁰ ICG Interviews with Bosnian contractors and government officials.

⁴¹ Framework Partnership Agreement between ECHO and partners.

- Examining ways of limiting the principle of personal responsibility of functionaries that has proven to be an obstacle to the rapid acceptance of projects.
- Adopting alternative mechanisms to avoid the demand for bank guarantee, which are not affordable for NGOs.
- Studying new ways to fulfil the structural deficit on the side of the EC (which is overloaded and understaffed) through the employment of more staff and appropriate in-house training.
- Enhancing the level of co-ordination between the EC delegations and Brussels Headquarters.
- Strengthening the level of decentralisation on the ground in both quantity and quality, in order to make the entire process more timely and effective. The rationale of administrative decentralisation is only valid if it allows functionaries to directly assess the substantial impact of projects. Duplication of structures for administrative management will only lead to increased expenses. The field delegations (well prepared and adequately staffed) are in an ideal position to make relevant and appropriate proposals. Decentralisation would enhance the standards of political analysis, better contacts with NGOs at grassroots level, and a more constructive relationship with minorities and local groups.

Co-ordination and coherence

Aiming at enhancing the coherence of the existing EU funding tools, the following is recommended:

- Consider budget lines in a more symbiotic, integrated manner, permitting greater coherency and efficiency for both applicants and administrators. The current mechanisms have the potential to operate in an effective manner if they are correctly implemented;
- Initiate a study for the reorganisation of all budget lines, in order to avoid gaps in the process of going from emergency to sustainable development (e.g. make them cover all the countries or shifting some money from the largest budget lines to rehabilitation headings);
- Re-define the role of ECHO by taking into account the importance of linking emergency aid and post-emergency rehabilitation and development. VOICE thinks that there are two possible solutions: (1) extending ECHO's mandate to the general crisis management (requested by many the NGOs because of the flexibility and speed of its procedures) (2) establishing ad-hoc tools to ensure continuity between relief and development and to ensure ECHO's adherence to its mandate.
- Define a new strategy for disaster preparedness and prevention
- Define a new strategy for conflict prevention

Global strategic planning

As pointed out in the EC 1996 Communication on LRRD, "global policy frameworks should be prepared for each country and region", drawing together "economic, social (including gender) and political (democratisation, human rights and the rule of law) factors in development and define more clearly linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development". This need to be strengthened at all stages, in planning, implementation and in the continuum towards other types of intervention.

The EC does not only have to strengthen its global strategic planning but also has to reinforce coordination and coherence, to adopt and implement a “global approach”. The same actor/donor (e.g. EU) must be able to manage the whole process ranging from emergency to sustainable development. Unfortunately, the assumption that a single Commissioner would easily resolve many problems related to lack of co-ordination between different EC services (improve the situation of the grey zone and strengthen prevention and preparedness) has been proven to be inaccurate. No preventive strategy has been implemented or presented, while existing preparedness facilities are continually weakened.

Emergency

- Rapid Assessment should be carried out by ECHO in coordination with other agencies and donors, and in cooperation with its partners. ECHO could for instance adopt a similar system as that of the OFDA, who has expert teams consisting of a mix of staff from USAID and NGOs, drawing together expertise from both the field and governments. Such a co-operative approaches integrate a wide range of information and allow a rapid and effective reaction at all levels. ECHO would dispose of a highly qualified personnel to conduct initial assessments and improve consistency in planning and coordination.
- Implement and update Country Strategy Papers and Global Plans in close cooperation with other agencies and NGOs in the field. Make sure that these include elements that facilitate the transition to rehabilitation by adopting broad approaches to emergency relief.
- Ensure that the timeframe of emergency aid is appropriately adjusted to the situation by making solid assessments. Decisions should be realistic and well informed, independently from for instance rigid exit strategies. On the one hand, emergency aid of protracted duration has the potential to incur dependence. On the other hand, if emergency aid stops suddenly without been replaced by an adequate tool for rehabilitation a grey zone appears. Consequently, beneficiaries are left without aid and an opportunity to build on previous levels of aid is missed.

Rehabilitation

- Plan and implement reconstruction and rehabilitation in less technical/structural terms: reconstruction should also include “societal reconstruction”, “reconciliation” or, in case of natural disaster, “attainment of order”.
- Develop integrated frameworks, encompassing activities in various domains (agriculture, business development, education, local reconciliation, civil society, psychosocial measures, etc).
- Focus on flexibility and informed decision-making, avoiding rigidity and timing of planning/implementation cycles (e.g. ALA and EDF) and taking into account the actual situation in the area of intervention.
- Plan activities so that there can be a smooth transition between rehabilitation and development, thereby limiting the duration of rehabilitation. This includes involving local communities at an early stage, profiting from local capacities, training etc.

Recommendations for development actions

- (a) Ensure that Member States and the EU make use of guidelines and/or procedures that ensure the inclusion of risks and vulnerabilities in planning, programming and implementation of development aid.
- (b) Ensure that conflict prevention and disaster preparedness play an effective part in the design of development policies. Implement conflict prevention and disaster preparedness policies to a greater extent.
- (c) Ensure that at all stages, civil society and local capacities are reinforced and/or strengthened in order to improve local coping strategies such as emergency preparedness and management.
- (d) Streamline demining into the whole process of LRRD.

In short, there should be a community of intents, a strong planning and an effective strategy among all donors, over-bridging all political and formal interests. Instruments and procedures should rather take into account the specific cultural, social, political and geographical features of the area of intervention. This naturally involves implementing partners who must participate in improving the link between relief, rehabilitation and development. In this regard, VOICE applauds the new commitments made by the European Commission in its 2001 draft-communication on "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development". Indeed, its analysis largely converges with that of VOICE and the steps it foresees to take in order to optimise EC bodies are similar to those recommended by VOICE. In parallel to these actions, more frequent consultation among donors, agencies and NGOs could prove to be central to improving global planning and strategies, timing and flexibility as well as coordination and coherence.

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APPENDIX A

EC Assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons 2000 programme.

Programme Component	Budget in MEURO
1. Housing and Related Activities	35.00
2. Quick Reaction Mechanism	8.00
3. Micro Project Facility	2.00
4. Legal Aid and Information Centres	2.30
5. Benefits Commission	0.50
6. Mine Clearance	2.30
TOTAL	50.10

Component 1 - Housing and Related Activities – 35 MEURO

Breakthrough and Spontaneous Returns; Regional Cross Border returns (axis Croatia to BiH); Contested space and Property legislation Implementation; Sustainability of return.

All contracts are signed. Implementation has started.

Component 2 - Flexible Reaction Mechanism – 8 MEURO

As a special tool to further increase flexibility in the programme, an amount of Euro 8 million was set aside to fund projects in support of as yet unidentified spontaneous return movements. Projects under this programme would be contracted by the EC Delegation after close consultation with the RRTF field offices. Partners selected from NGOs or other organisations will implement these projects, which had already successfully implemented OBNOVA return projects, or ECHO framework partners. The mobilisation of these funds entails the preparation of new contracts with the selected implementing partners⁴².

APPENDIX B

1991-1999: EU assistance to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia&Herzegovina	1991	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
Phare + Obnova				230,89	205,10	190,64	118,36	744,99
Humanitarian aid	495,26		145,03	142,45	105,00	87,95	58,90	1.034,599

⁴² The project selection has started and the first contracts were signed in the summer 2000.

(ECHO)								
Mostar, customs, voluntary return of refugees and demining			70,00	65,40	39,90	15,00	13,50	203,80
Media		0,21	0,65	1,65	4,09	2,24	2,40	11,24
Democracy & Human Rights			0,70	4,80	4,80	1,80	n.a.	12,10
BOP support (DG ECFIN)							60,00	60,00
Total =	495,47		216,38	445,19	358,88	297,63	250,76	2.066,1