

VOICE

Voluntary Organisations In Cooperation in Emergencies



ACTIVITY REPORT 2001



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FOREWARD FROM PRESIDENT

Since the beginning of 2001 many changes have occurred within VOICE. We are now fully independent in legal terms, we have a new office, and will shortly complete a 100% turn over of staff. In spite of all this administrative turmoil, programme activities have continued throughout the period as can be seen from this report, which will I hope be of interest to all members.

It is not for me as President to go into great detail about what we have done. This is in any case contained in the main body of the report. But I do want to make three more general points. First a key element in our decision to set up a new Association under Belgian law arose from a perceived need to become less financially dependent on the Commission. It was however very important for the new VOICE to establish a good working partnership with ECHO as soon as possible. This report demonstrates in my view that this was achieved successfully. ECHO contracts have been awarded to the new VOICE; important work on the new Framework Partnership Agreement has continued, with the delays which occurred being due to inter service problems within the Commission rather than on the NGO side; and for the first time VOICE was able to play a constructive role in the preparations for the annual meeting of ECHO partners. We must not however be complacent about this, ECHO will only continue to support and listen to VOICE as long as it is worth its while to do so. This means we must strive to maintain a high level of both competence and representativity.

My next point is to stress that a high proportion of the Secretariat's time is inevitably spent on routine but important tasks, for example answering enquiries from members, the Commission or other networks, or meeting visitors, that do not show up as such in an annual report. The complications of setting up a new body means I have spent more time in the VOICE office than in previous years and I have been struck by how difficult it has been for the staff to find the necessary time within normal working hours to plan and carry out specific programme activities and to prepare the Strategic Plan, which is being presented to the Forum for its approval. Despite these problems of limited resources, I hope you will agree we have achieved a great deal in our first year as a fully independent body, and the prospects are good. VOICE has and will continue to bring added value, but in so far as we are the sum of our parts, we count on your continued support in the years to come.

Finally this is the last VOICE Annual Report for which I shall be writing the introduction as your President ~ I hope to prevail upon Kathrin to allow me to write a valedictory note for the Newsletter setting out a few thoughts on the challenges facing VOICE in the future. I do however want to take this opportunity to say that it has been a real pleasure to work with all the members of the Secretariat over the past 41/2 years. Their enthusiasm and support have helped to sustain me in what has at times been a difficult and challenging task. I wish them, and all VOICE members, every success in the future.

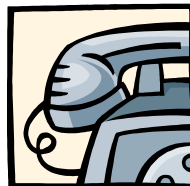
VOICE AT A GLANCE

VOICE is a network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout Europe that are active in the field of humanitarian aid, including emergency aid, rehabilitation, disaster preparedness and conflict prevention. VOICE was created in 1992, with a Secretariat established in 1993 under the Liaison Committee of European Development NGOs. In March 2001 VOICE became an independent NGO network with more than 90 members.

VOICE's essential overriding mission is to foster links among Humanitarian Aid NGOs. VOICE also aims to facilitate contacts with the European Union and to develop collaboration with international humanitarian organisations.

VOICE acts as a mouthpiece for the values and specific features of humanitarian NGOs, and gives the NGOs opportunities for discussion and collaboration, as well as services, which meet the needs of their humanitarian action. VOICE is also a linking entity for joint activities involving a number of NGOs or networks.

VOICE accomplishes these aims through four types of services: developing information, devising instruments for consultation, giving political expression to the shared concerns of NGOs and developing the life of its network.



VOICE

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VOICE STRUCTURE

A/ THE VOICE FORUM 2001-2002

The Forum is the General Assembly of the full members of VOICE, attended also by a number of observers and distinguished visitors.

The Forum approves the budgets, the accounts, the strategic plan and the annual work programme, proposes actions to be undertaken by the Sub-Committee on Humanitarian Aid, and modifies the Statutes/Internal Regulations. It has sole competence for the modification of its internal operation, the election and dismissal of the members of the Sub-Committee on Humanitarian Aid and the President, the approval of the amount of the subscription, and the dissolution of VOICE.

FORUM DATES

- 6/7 March 2001
- 15/16 May 2002

In 2001, the aim was to discuss the new FPA and the future of VOICE. The Forum set up a new independent VOICE. Agreement was reached concerning the way to handle the transition until the next Forum.

In 2002 the Forum will approve the strategic plan for the period 2002 – 2004 and debate the New Policy environment for Humanitarian Aid focusing especially on the issues of civilian/ military relations, forgotten crises and quality through partnership.

B/ THE PRESIDENT

The VOICE network is presided over by a President who may come from a member organisation or from outside VOICE. The president is elected by the Forum for three years. The current president, **David J. Church**, was elected by the December 1997 VOICE Forum. His mandate was prolonged for one year during the 2001 Forum.

The president as chairperson presides over the meetings of the SCHA, carries out work representing the network in agreement with the decisions of the SCHA and ensures that the activities of VOICE are visible. The president guides and inspires the strategic choices of VOICE and supervises the activities of the secretariat.

C/ THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON HUMANITARIAN AID (SCHA)

The SCHA is the board of the Forum. It is made up of a maximum of eight persons and the president elected by the Forum.

The SCHA implements the decisions taken by the Forum. It is tasked with monitoring humanitarian issues on behalf of VOICE. In addition to the function of managing the decisions of the Forum, there is also a political function of representing VOICE to the European institutions. VOICE member organisations are eager to develop their capacity for political dialogue via the Sub-Committee on Humanitarian Aid, and emphasise their concern to give the Sub-Committee on Humanitarian Aid the political authority and competence necessary for the carrying out of its function.

David Church (President)

- **Jean-Luc Bodin** (Action Contre la Faim)
- **Will De Wolf** (Caritas)
- **Alexandre Kamarotos** (Médecins du Monde)
- **Paul Meijs*** (Care NL)

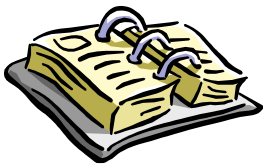
- **Paddy Maguinness** (Concern Worldwide)
- **Ann Mary Olsen** (Danish Refugee Council)
- **Anne Simon** (Care International)
- **Nino Sergi*** (InterSOS)
- **James Mackie** (CLONG - *Observer*)
- **Cécile Muller** (EuronAid - *Observer*)

**SCHA members whose mandate will expire*

D/ THE BUREAU

The Bureau is composed of:

- The President David Church
- The Treasurer Jean-Luc Bodin
- The Secretary Will De Wolf (replacing Anne Simon)
- The Director Kathrin Schick is present but has no right to vote.



SCHA AND BUREAU MEETINGS 2001-2002

•SCHA 2001	11/01; 24/01; 23/04; 01/06; 28/06; 20/09; 12/11; 7/12
•SCHA 2002	05/02 ; 12/03; 26/04
•Bureau 2001	23/01
•Bureau 2002	25/02; 17/04

E/ THE SECRETARIAT

The secretariat of VOICE asbl is located in Brussels, Belgium and has three staff: The director, the information officer and the administration officer. For the next six months (until July 2002) a project manager is running the project: Improving the quality of aid in conflict situations: training for good practice.

The Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the strategic plan and the work programme. It carries out administrative tasks and makes the contacts necessary for the smooth running of the SCHA and the ad hoc groups, ensures the financial management of the network and prepares the general policy documents. **Kathrin SCHICK**, VOICE Director manages its functioning.

THE SECRETARIAT'S STAFF

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F/ HUMAN RESOURCES

In its activities, VOICE relies on a number of human resources whose relevant contribution represents a major asset for the Secretariat and a space for professional development for many young talents.

Former Employees:

Joanna Lacna
Hermine Donceel
Pilar Mendez de Vigo

Gianni Rufini
Geoffrey Weichselbaum

Olivia Lind-Haldorsson
Zoé Maus

Former Interns:

Hilda Banka
Edoardo Manfredini

Thomas de Saint Maurice
Marie-Paul Kimek

Flora Lambert

Former Volunteers:

Rosário Campos Costa
Sofia Amor

Joy Gebre-Medhin
Hilda Banka

Hermine Donceel

ACTIVITIES

A/ EVENTS

VOICE has organized a range of seminars and conferences over the the past two years. More than 100 different NGOs have attended one or more seminars, 80 of them VOICE members. Minutes and discussion papers for each meeting are available on request.

VOICE/EURONAIID SEMINAR ON AFGHANISTAN: THE ROAD TO RECOVERY AND THE ROLE OF NGOS

Brussels, February 14, 2002

More than 50 NGOs and high-level EC officials participated in the jointly organised seminar between VOICE and EURONAIID, whose aim was to assess the new EC strategy in Afghanistan from the point of view of NGOs. The EC recognised the wealth of NGO expertise, knowledge and experience in the field in Afghanistan and therefore the importance of sustained substantive input from NGOs into the EC's strategy. The NGOs agreed on a range of recommendations.

Firstly, that NGO positions should continue to be reflected in the EC strategy. In this regard, formal mechanisms should be established for information sharing, on an annual basis, but also on Working Group levels. The removal of delays relating to EC procedures should be part and parcel of this process. In terms of activities in the field and the most immediate concerns, the NGOs stressed the central importance of food aid and food security. A recurring theme in the seminar was also that the EC Strategy should include as an objective Afghan ownership of the recovery and reconstruction process. Such empowerment is a crucial attempt in the longer-term perspective to Link Relief and Rehabilitation to Development (LRRD). All levels of Aghani society should participate in the decision making process, and the interim government should be given the responsibility, with support, to co-ordinate the activity of all humanitarian actors in the field.

The NGOs called on the EC's political support on two further issues: the expansion of the mandate of the peacekeeping forces beyond Kabul; and, the application of a code of conduct to prevent the poaching of NGO staff with the incentive of higher salaries.

Participants: EUROPEAN COMMISSION: AIDSCO, DG RELEX, ECHO; ACF, ACTED, ActionAid Alliance, ADRA, AFGHANAID (British Agencies Afghanistan Group), AGA KHAN Foundation UK, ASB, British Agencies Afghanistan Group, CAD (Children's Aid Direct), CAFOD, CARE International, CARE Netherlands, CARE Germany, CARITAS, Christian Aid, CIR, CISP, CLONG, COOPI, CORDAID, DACAAR/DRC, DCA, Deutsche Welthunger Hilfe/German AgroAction, EU-CORD, HANDICAP International, HELP, Hilfswerk Austria, HNI, ICCO, INTERSOS, Kerkinactie / ACT Netherlands, MDM, Mission East, MOVIMONDO, MPDL, MSF, Ockenden, NOVIB, OXFAM, PREMIERE URGENGE, SOLIDAR, SOLIDARITÉ AFGHANISTAN BELGIUM (SAB), TEAR FUND UK, Terre des Hommes, TROCAIRE, Groupe URD, WORLD VISION, EuronAid, VOICE

VOICE/UNHCR ROUND TABLE "REACHING THE VULNERABLE"

Brussels, November 27, 2001

On the occasion of the 2002 United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance in the Great Lakes Region and South Eastern Europe, a Round Table was organised by VOICE and the UNHCR. The theme for the CAP Launch as well as for the Round table was "Reaching the Vulnerable". The opening remarks were given by Mr. Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who emphasized the complementarities of the NGOs and the UN agencies and NGO representatives from German Agroaction, Care, and Action contre le Faim. Regional Issues were debated, with the participation of UN Humanitarian Coordinators from the Great Lakes Region, South Eastern Europe and NGO representatives.

NGOs accentuated the necessity of a reflection on how to link relief, rehabilitation and development. LRRD can be promoted through UN agencies, especially if the European Commission and the other donors realize there is a growing gap between relief and development. NGOs should work in partnership with the UN to tackle these issues.

Participants: UNHCR Brussels/ Burundi/ Geneva/ Skopje/ Special Representative for the Balkans, UNICEF Brussels, OCHA, WHO, FAO, UNEP, UNIC; ECHO Representatives; Belgian Government Representatives (Cabinet et Ministère de la Coopération au Développement); ADRA, Action Contre la Faim, CARE International, CARITAS Belgium, CINS, COOPI, EU-CORD, German AgroAction, Handicap International, Johanniter International (JOIN), ICRC Brussels, IRC, Movimondo, MSF Belgium, World Vision

NGO CONSULTATION MEETING ON AFGHANISTAN

Brussels, November 6, 2001

This consultation meeting was held in preparation to a European Parliament hearing on Afghanistan. The meeting presented a general review of the current humanitarian and political situation in Afghanistan; views on possible future developments; participants exchanged their concerns; the issue of humanitarian access was also addressed.

Participants: CARE, COOPI, German AgroAction, Danish Refugee Council, Children's Aid Direct, EuronAid, Handicap Belgium, HealthNet International, World Vision, VOICE

CHILD SOLDIERS CONFERENCE-DEFINING GOOD PRACTICE

Brussels, October 25-26, 2001

Armies and rebel fighting groups are resorting more and more to the use of child soldiers. Around 300,000 children – some as young as ten – are involved in armed conflict in at least 30 countries, and their plight needs to be at the top of the international political agenda.

The way in which these groups of children and young people are supported through the demobilisation process is critical to their long-term recovery and reintegration. Strategies for assistance must consider the needs of the entire community if reintegration is to be supported and must be for a reasonable period. The need for a long-term perspective is increasingly being recognised.

An updated study commissioned by ECHO, the EU's Humanitarian Aid Office and carried out by Save the Children UK, reveals a gap between international law and reality on the ground and notes that law is powerless against other factors that lead to recruitment.

As a result of the findings, good practices and guidelines for agencies and other actors working with child soldiers and children associated with the fighting forces were presented in the course of this one and a half day conference.

More than 100 Participants addressed the topic of awareness raising among NGOs and public opinion as well as promoting support for work with child soldiers. Prevention of underage recruitment, release of children by the armed groups, re-integration of former child soldiers and the needs of girls and children with disabilities were the main key aspects debated during this ECHO supported international conference .

Participants: European Commission (Cabinet Nielson, ECHO, DG Development, DG Environment, DG Relex), ALISEI, Belgian RED CROSS, CARITAS Europe, Children in Crisis, CINS, CISP, COALITION to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, COOPI, CRIC, CORDAID, DANCHURCHAID, DEUTSCHE WELTHUNGERHILFE, Enfants Réfugiés du Monde, EU-CORD, GOAL, GRIP, HANDICAP International France, HARVARD University, Hellenic RED CROSS, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, INTERSOS, IRC Brussels, MALTESER Aulandsdienst, MONDE DU TRAVAIL LIBRE – CISL, MOVIMONDO, MEDECINS DU MONDE International, MERCY CORPS Europe, MPDL, OXFAM (GB, International, Solidarité), PTM, SAVE THE CHILDREN Netherlands, SAVE THE CHILDREN Sweden, SOLIDARIDAD International, TROCAIRE, TEARFUND UK, Terre des Hommes Italy, WORLD Vision, UNHCR, UNICEF, VOICE.

B/ RELATIONS WITH ECHO

FPA - WATCH WORKING GROUP TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Framework Partnership Agreement defines the contractual relationship –regulations and responsibilities -- between ECHO and its over 200 implementing partners. The new FPA is expected to come into force on 1st Jan 2003. VOICE, which through its membership represents over half of ECHO partners, offered itself as co-ordinator for Humanitarian NGOs.

The first negotiation of the framework partnership in 1999 demonstrated how important it was to ensure co-ordination and optimal information exchange in ECHO negotiations. VOICE resumed its facilitation and coordination of the latest FPA consultation process between ECHO Partners and ECHO in 2001. The process has been much delayed due to internal Commission bottlenecks, such as the new financial regulation, which has given rise to a later start-date for the new FPA. The FPA consultation which continues in 2002 is a much more profound process of change than originally envisaged. It is now likely that the new FPA will be initiated on January 1, 2003, with a transitional period being envisaged during the winter of 2002. The consultation process should terminate over the course of the summer/autumn 2002.

To date the roles and duties of VOICE have included:

- ❑ Contact with all ECHO partners regarding the FPA consultation process with ECHO in order to ensure that all ECHO partners are informed and to ensure that they have an opportunity to express their opinions. Three surveys of ECHO partners were undertaken in relation to specific matters of concern.
- ❑ Information for VOICE members who are not participating in the FPA Watch Group has been circulated regularly via the newsletter.
- ❑ Contact between the FPA Watch Group, FPA Task Force (executive of the Watch Group) and ECHO
- ❑ Within the framework of the consultation process VOICE acted as minute taker, ensuring the discussions are as transparent and representative as possible, disseminated information, liaised with the Red Cross, and corresponded officially with Director-General Mrs. Adinolfi as required.

In 2002-2003:

- ❑ VOICE will continue to facilitate the process until its closure, attempting at all times to ensure that the interests of humanitarian NGOs are protected and defended.
- ❑ VOICE will do its utmost to ensure that the transitional period is as unproblematic as possible, by providing information to its members and acting as a point-of-contact for NGOs who may have sensitive questions they do not wish to direct to ECHO.
- ❑ VOICE will ensure that the email fpa@ngovoice.org provides an interface for problems among members with the implementation of the new FPA.

As well as the technical aspects of the FPAWG it is necessary to underline the importance of the group as a place of co-operation, exchange of information and reflection. This dynamic of co-operation solidifies the strength of the group but above all improves the level of professionalism of NGOs allowing them to retain and protect their unique status.

STEERING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP WITH ECHO

VOICE was one of the leading NGOs driving the momentum towards the establishment at the start of 2002 of a Steering Committee, tasked with the follow up to concerns outlined in the ECHO partner conference in 2001. VOICE has liaised closely with ECHO in the preparation of the SC meetings, which will continue over the coming months. The theme of Quality and Partnership is one prominent area of focus.

C/ ACTIVITIES

N.B. Due to VOICE's transition, the number of projects undertaken was limited for this period. Closed projects are presented in the second part of this section.

I. 2001-2002

VOICE WITH SAVE THE CHILDREN UK AND INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION TERRE DES HOMMES - DECLARATION ON PALESTINE

In a letter sent April 15th to European Commission President Romano Prodi, VOICE, together with Save the Children UK and the International Federation of Terre des Hommes urged the EU to take all and any appropriate measures in its power to avoid a further and unacceptable humanitarian crisis in Palestine. The letter supported the fundamental right of the Palestinian People to receive all necessary Humanitarian Assistance required in the current humanitarian crisis, welcoming the Madrid statement by the heads of State and Governments concerning the necessity of immediate emergency relief for Palestinian people. It agreed with the Commission's position urging the Israeli authorities to give relief agencies full access to the victims of the escalating conflict in the Palestinian territories. Copies of the Statement were also sent to the Council and the European Parliament, among others.

VOICE is following the developments in Palestine concerning Humanitarian Aid closely and may consider further activities in the future.

RAPID REACTION MECHANISM - CFSP

A meeting debating the possible consequences of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) and the Common Foreign and Security Policy for Humanitarian Aid was organized by World Vision in Brussels in March 2002. It brought together several VOICE members and the Red Cross Family.

The Kosovo crisis pushed the EU to put more attention on conflict prevention approaches and non-military crisis management. The development of the RRM and increased civilian/military relations attempt to be tools to react more effectively to future crises. The ambiguity of the linkage between the different EU institutions involved, including ECHO's possible role and consequently the role of HA NGOs, are issues to be followed. Due to the importance and complexity of the issue, it was agreed that there is a need for more information about the new structures in the Council and the Commission as well as about the possible impact these could have on the implementation of Humanitarian Aid in the future. Another issue, which also was discussed, was the access to funds under the Rapid Reaction Mechanism for NGOs.

VOICE, together with World Vision, has prepared a briefing on the above-mentioned issues, which will be distributed to all VOICE members.

PRIMARY EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Following the Peruvian earthquake in September 2001, VOICE established contact with member and non-member organisations who implemented the first Primary Emergency Decision in order to have their feedback on their experience of the Decision.

A subsequent detailed survey of the relevant ECHO partners was undertaken, comments were sought from ECHO and a Briefing Paper for all VOICE members was developed. As the procedure has been deployed several times since Peru it was considered timely and useful to provide information on this funding mechanism for members.

Moreover, given the specific conditions that have to be met in order for a crisis and for an ECHO partner to receive financing under this procedure it was considered very important that lessons-learned be shared among VOICE members.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HUMANITARIAN AID IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS: TRAINING FOR GOOD PRACTICE

The over-arching theme of this ECHO-funded project is that of conflict awareness and sensitivity. Such skills are considered to be at the basis of any discussion regarding humanitarian aid in situations of conflict or potential conflict.

This Conference will increase the capacity of NGOs to competently deal with unstable situations, providing a training guideline for staff, thereby improving the quality of humanitarian personnel. As emergency contexts and interventions do not allow much time for specific analysis of conflict dynamics or potential triggers of conflict in advance, this project would provide NGOs with skills to act appropriately, based on acquired knowledge of conflict dynamics, triggers, contexts etc.

By mid-July a conference paper will be published, reflecting the input of the keynote speakers, the outcomes and recommendations of the workshops along with guidelines for training devised through the input of the plenary sessions and the workshops will be published.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate a practical implementation of this Conference by the NGO participants a one-day training-of-trainers session will be held a month after the conference. At this training session, NGO participants will be provided with further information as to how to integrate conflict sensitivity and conflict-related matters arising from the workshops into their internal training sessions.

The conference will focus on the following themes:

- **Information Management**
- **Local Partners**
- **Project Management**
- **Security Management**

LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

VOICE has been doing lobby work on the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development for more than 18 months. A first policy paper, "*The Grey Zone or the Missing Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development*", was issued by VOICE in February 2001.

In April 2001 the European Commission presented a "Communication on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)". While VOICE welcomed this initiative, it was noted that the Communication was not focused on the practical or financial measures for its implementation. Against this background CISP and VOICE decided to set up a working group directly involving European NGOs in order to strengthen the dialogue between NGOs and the Commission on the operational definition of the Link between Relief, Rehabilitation and Development. The working group drew up a number of recommendations to be taken into account by both donors like ECHO, and by NGOs. These recommendations are based on the concrete experiences of EU Member States NGOs, which are working in areas of the world where humanitarian and preliminary rehabilitation operations are carried out.

In September 2001, many of VOICE 's members, together with the CLONG and the UNHCR held a round table meeting with MEP Max van den Berg to give their input into the report on LRRD, which was presented by the EP in December 2001. Last year's ECHO annual partner meeting included a workshop on the LRRD issue.

A publication by CISP and VOICE in Winter 2001, which contains recommendations from the working group has greatly benefited from the answers supplied by VOICE's NGO members to a "thematic questionnaire". This publication also contains four case studies based on the experiences of NGOs working in the field, which demonstrate how they were able to transfer the conceptual dimension of the LRRD into real situations.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Following on the EC legal framework for combating trafficking in human beings, VOICE initiated, in cooperation with Save the Children, UNICEF, ICMC, ECPAT and others a lobby initiative. Concerns about the lack of provision for protection of trafficking victims and witnesses was been circulated by a number of

organisations, including the VOICE letter "NGO Recommendations the EC Proposal for Combating trafficking in Human Beings", signed by 49 NGOs.

VOICE therefore produced a new letter at the occasion of the 27 and 28 September 2001 meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers, which contains recommendations developed in line with the amendments made by the European Parliament. The drafting of this document was done by VOICE in collaboration with organisations that have expertise in the area of trafficking, such as ECPAT, ICMC, UNICEF, Save the Children and Anti-Slavery International.

THE SPHERE PROJECT ONGOING SINCE 1997

The Sphere Project is a joint effort by non-governmental organisations led by InterAction and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response and supported by VOICE, ICRC and ICVA.

The Sphere Project employed a cooperative, collaborative process to develop a Humanitarian Charter for persons affected by calamity or armed conflict and an associated set of Minimum Standards in essential areas of humanitarian response. The areas are water & sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter, site planning and health care. The aim is to link defined levels of service for these areas to fundamental human rights and humanitarian principles.

In this context, the Humanitarian Charter reflects the determination of agencies to improve both the effectiveness of their assistance and accountability to their stakeholders. The Minimum Standards are designed with this in mind and each standard is accompanied by a series of indicators. These are important not only in the design and implementation of programmes, but also to provide a way for people affected by disasters, agency staff, donors, the wider public and others to review the provision of assistance.

In January 2002, it was decided to extend the Sphere Project. Gender and Environment will be integrated into a revised document. VOICE will continue its participation in the process.

II. CLOSED

CHILD SOLDIERS EXHIBITION 2000-2001

Th More than 300,000 children are currently recruited or participate in armed conflict worldwide. Most are aged between 15 and 18, but there are child soldiers as young as ten. They usually fight for rebel groups in internal conflicts. Some of them, however, are part of national armies or 'volunteers'. Child soldiering is not confined to one country or region: it has been documented globally, from Cambodia to Peru.

Why do children take up arms? Recruiters may trawl increasingly younger age groups after heavy casualties in combat. Children are usually more obedient and cheaper to feed than adults. Sometimes children are forcibly recruited or even abducted to military camps. Many of them are tortured, drugged or sexually exploited, especially girls.

To draw public attention to this alarming trend, VOICE has organized "No More Child Soldiers -- A Photographic Exhibition", with the support of ECHO, the European Commission Humanitarian Office and under the auspices of the European Parliament. The project consisted of a touring exhibition of 49 pictures describing the use of child soldiers around the world. The aim was to solicit the awareness of the issue of child soldiers among policy makers and politicians, as well, as to sensitise the general public.

The photo exhibition opened in Lisbon on the 10th January 2000, then to Dublin, The Hague, Paris, European Parliament, Rome, Copenhagen and ended on the 15th April 2000 in Brussels. VOICE received enthusiastic feedback about the project, both in Belgium and abroad. Foreign countries, NGOs and international institutions, such as United Nations, have requested the use of the exhibition for educational/lobbying purposes.

As a result of the deep impact and success of the Child Soldiers project a second phase of the exhibition will be "on tour" in the near future. The countries, which will be involved this time, are: Greece, Germany, Italy,

Spain, Sweden and Uganda. We look forward to similar positive feedback and results from this second phase of a very profound and timely project.

***FOCUS BALKANS
2000 - 2001***

Focus : Balkans aims at raising awareness among European decision-makers for the Balkans. Its purpose is to provide a thorough analysis of the overall Balkans reconstruction strategy to the NGO community, local and governmental authorities, the media and various other actors. It highlights progress, points out problems, monitors the design and implementation of policies and activities, and reports testimonies from the field. On this basis, Focus: Balkans is a working tool for those who are involved at various levels in the reconstruction of the region, providing inputs and comments, contributing towards problem-solving and improving the performance of the international operations in the area.

The Newsletter 'Focus: Balkans', first published in April 2000, is widely distributed in its paper version in the Balkan region, EU countries, Switzerland, Norway and in the United States of America. In Brussels, members of the European Parliament, civil servants from the interested Commission departments, personnel of international organisations and Delegations receive it. An e-mail version is available for a wider distribution, particularly for NGO field workers in the region and for American NGOs.

The magazine was much welcomed at the time, to the point that we were unable to keep up with all the requests from potential readers. A strong demand for increasing distribution also in non-EU countries and throughout the UN system has had so far to be rejected.

***HSPN: HUMANITARIAN SAFETY AND PROTECTION NETWORK
ONGOING SINCE 1998***

The idea for a HSPN arose from a Security workshop held in 1998 where several major NGOs agreed to reinforce the security of the humanitarian personnel in the field through a better information collection process and network. These NGOs agreed to share, on a confidential basis, detailed accounts of their security and safety incidents within the framework of a database to enable themselves and others to make timely and informed decisions for operations in a specific area. The database supplied by the NGOs that are partners of the project runs through an inter-NGO exchange site using Internet technology with restricted access.

Many new developments were made to the HSPN website providing access to up-to-date country security reports, an agenda of relevant meetings, conferences etc., and a HSPN news section. The links section on the website was updated and upgraded with references and direct links to many institutions and sources which are involved in areas such as: Humanitarian Activity; Security; Country Situation Analyses; Safety issues for Personnel. CD-ROMs were sent to the members so that they may upload the software and provide their regional offices with the necessary user information in order to input into the database. The HSPN held a training workshop from 30th November to 1st December 2000 in Brussels. The training centered the debate firmly on the imperative of incident reporting and analysis in the development of a Security Management Strategy. The HSPN databases and website were presented to the participants and their use as a reporting mechanism and analysis tool were demonstrated.

The project had financial support from its partner NGOs, ECHO 4 and the Dutch and French Governments. Informal links were developed with Interaction, USECOORD, ODI and the URD group. However, the project encountered some difficulties due to the ambitious nature of its goals – it is now closed and the website is no longer accessible. However, VOICE has an archive of the progress made, the website can be reactivated and the project resumed, when or if at a later date NGOs are ready or see value in exchanging security information.

***HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS REVIEW
ONGOING SINCE 1998***

The *Humanitarian Affairs Review* (HAR) is a quarterly journal published by Forum Europe in partnership with ECHO and VOICE. The first issue of HAR was published in April 1998 in English and French on a quarterly

basis with each issue being distributed to around 7,000 key players and decision-makers in the field of humanitarian aid.

The project has been covered until 2002. VOICE is still sitting on the board but is looking forward for further collaboration.

<p style="text-align: center;">HUMANITARIAN WEB INITIATIVE 2001</p>

The Humanitarian Web Initiative-HWI is an internet-based system comprising of web sites, databases, PC software and communication facilities. Its goal is to integrate the information resources of Voice and One World, in co-operation with the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN), EuronAid and Euforic, and other possible partners, in order to make them available to the humanitarian community on the Internet.

The project aims at harmonising, integrating and systematising the access to most of the existing web resources of humanitarian interest, avoiding duplications and simplifying the access to information for concerned users. This has the goal of improving response capability, strategic design and targeting of actions, as well as the transparency and accountability of humanitarian operations. HWI intends to provide an integrated, comprehensive and systematic tool for access to information for humanitarian operators. It also aims at improving the communication among concerned actors and the response capability by offering a single centralised point of reference in the web.

D/ POLICY PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

I. POLICY PAPERS

- **Afghanistan – The Road To Recovery And The Role Of NGOs** – Report Of The Seminar Organised By EuronAid And Voice, Brussels, 14 February 2002, Prepared for VOICE and EuronAid by Nassim Jawad
- **CHILD SOLDIERS. Defining Good Practice** – Report of the Conference held in October 25-26, 2001 by Olivia Lind Haldorsson and Hermine Donceel, March 2002.
- **LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT - Ideas and Suggestions from European NGOs**: Edited by Olivia Lind Haldorsson (VOICE), Giovanna Brambilla and Giovanna Solari (CISP), (Rome, November 2001)
- **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, PREVENTION AND VULNERABILITY REDUCTION IN NATURAL CATASTROPHES**: a discussion paper (Brussels, May 2001).
- **THE GREY ZONE**: Linking Relief-Rehabilitation and Development in EU (Draft - Brussels, March 2001).
- **THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF NGOs IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-TORN COUNTRIES** (Brussels, September 2000).
- **THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN HUMANITARIAN AID - The NGO View** (Brussels, July 1999)
- **POST-MITCH**: *Brussels Document*: proposals from European NGOs to the Stockholm Summit on Reconstruction and Development in Central America (Brussels, 11 May 1999) – Also exist in Spanish..
- **POST MITCH**: de la emergencia al desarrollo. Seminario estratégico de VOICE (Bruselas, 17-18 Marzo de 1999). Conclusiones de los grupos de trabajo (Bruselas, 22 de abril de 1999) [in Spanish only].
- **IRAQ**: VOICE Position Paper on Iraq (Brussels, 19 November 1998).
- **SOMALIA**: Memorandum on the main challenges facing international cooperation in Somalia. Summary of the proposals made by the international NGOs (Brussels, 10 July 1998).
- **ICC**: The European humanitarian and development NGOs for the International Criminal Court (Brussels, 10 June 1998).
- **EL NIÑO**: VOICE/EuronAid: European NGOs' proposals to improve Disaster Preparedness in cooperation with the EC (Brussels, April 1998).
- **GUINEA-BISSAU**: Appeal for Guinea-Bissau (6 June 1998)

II. PUBLICATIONS

- **VOICE NEWSLETTERS*** - 12 to 20 issues a year
N.B.: VOICE has carried on issuing a Newsletter at least once a month. However the French version is not circulated for some months in 2002.
- **FOCUS: BALKANS*** - 8 Issues published in 2000
- **HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS REVIEW** - Quarterly magazine – published jointly with ECHO since 1998.
Website: <http://www.humanitarian-review.org>
- **VOICE HUMANITARIAN AID DIRECTORIES**
- **VOICE REPORTS** : Annual Report (1998-2000); Annual Report (1998-99); Annual Report (1996); HSPN Project (Humanitarian Safety and Protection Network); HSPN Activity report/ Rapport d'activité (June 1999)

* Also available on the VOICE website: <http://www.ngovoice.org>

VOICE MEMBER NGOS

Austria

- CARE Österreich
- CARITAS Österreich
- Österreichisches Hilfswerk International
- SOS Kinderdorf International
- UMCOR Europe
- World Vision GEV

Belgium

- CARITAS Secours International Belgium
- Handicap International Bureau de Liaison
- OXFAM Solidarité/Solidariteit Belgium

Denmark

- ASF Dansk Folkehjaelp
- CARITAS Dansk
- DanChurchAid / Folkekirkens Nodhjaelp
- Danish Refugee Council / Dansk Flygtningehjaelp
- Mission Øst / Mission East

Finland

- Nada Hope r.f.
- World Vision Finland

France

- ACF – Action Contre la Faim
- ACTED – Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement
- AMI – Aide Médicale Internationale
- Atlas Logistique
- CARE France
- CARITAS France (Secours Catholique)
- Première Urgence
- MDM – Médecins du Monde International
- Triangle "Génération Humanitaire"
- TULIPE – Transfert d'Urgence de l'Industrie Pharmaceutique

Germany

- ADRA – Adventist Development and Relief Agency Germany
- ASB – Arbeiter Samariter Bund Deutschland
- CARE Germany
- CARITAS Germany
- DWHH – Deutsche WelthungerHilfe / German AgroAction
- Diakonisches Werk der EKD / Diakonie Emergency Aid
- Johanniter Unfall Hilfe
- Malteser Hilfsdienst - ABT. Auslandsdienst
- Medico International
- World Vision Germany

Greece

- IISA - Institute of International Social Affairs

Ireland

- CONCERN Worldwide
- GOAL
- TROCAIRE – The Catholic Agency for World Development
- World Vision Ireland

Italy

- ALISEI
- AIBI – Associazione Amici dei Bambini
- AFMAL - FBF
- ARCS – Arci Cultura e Sviluppo
- CCM - Comitato Collaborazione Medica / Doctors for Developing Countries
- CARE Italy
- CESVI - Cooperazione E Sviluppo
- CINS – Cooperazione Italiana Nord - Sud
- CISP - Comitato Internazionale Per Lo Sviluppo Dei Popoli
- COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale
- COSV - Comitato Di Coordinamento Organizzazioni Per Il Servizio Volontario
- CRIC – Centro Regionale D'intervento Per La Cooperazione
- GVC – Gruppo Volontariato Civile
- ICS – Consorzio Italiano Di Solidarieta - Associate
- INTERSOS
- MLAL - Movimento Laici America Latina
- MOVIMONDO

Luxembourg

- CARITAS Luxembourg

The Netherlands

- CORDAID
- CARE Nederland
- ICCO
- WORLD VISION Nederland
- ZOA Refugee Care

Norway

- NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID

Portugal

- AMI - Assistencia Medica Internacional

Spain

- Ayuda En Acciòn
- CARITAS Spain
- CIR - Comite Internacional De Rescate
- MPDL - Movimiento Por La Paz, El Desarme Y La Libertad
- PTM - Paz Y Tercer Mundo

Sweden

- CARITAS Sverige
- Lutherhjälpen - Church Of Sweden Aid
- PMU INTERLIFE Sverige
- Star Of Hope International

Switzerland

- ACT - Action By Churches Together – Associate

- *CARITAS Suisse*
- *Lutheran World Federation*
- *MEDAIR*

United Kingdom

- *ACTIONAID*
- *CAFOD - Catholic Fund For Overseas Development*
- *CARE UK*
- *Christian Aid*
- *Health Unlimited*
- *Helpage International – UK*
- *MERCY CORPS Scotland*
- *MERLIN - Associate*
- *OXFAM UK*
- *SCF - Save The Children Fund - UK*
- *TEAR FUND*
- *WORLD VISION – UK*

United States

- *International Rescue Committee - Associate*

<i>NETWORKS AND FAMILIES</i>

- *EU CORD*
- *SOLIDAR*

<i>OBSERVERS</i>

- *CLONG*
- *EuronAid*