



VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is a network representing 83 European non-governmental organisations active in humanitarian aid worldwide. We are the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid, relief, rehabilitation and disaster preparedness.

Brussels, 25 February 2011

Dear Commissioner,

As a network of 83 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide, VOICE is strongly concerned by the discussions on-going in the European Commission about a potential merger of the humanitarian aid budget line with crisis management funding in the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework.

This proposal risks instrumentalising humanitarian aid for political and security purposes, jeopardising the needs-based nature of EC-funded humanitarian aid. It could undermine the humanitarian principles of humanity, independence, impartiality and neutrality, which were subscribed to by the European Commission and the Member States in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2007) as the fundamental basis for EU humanitarian aid.

As the Consensus states, "*This principled approach is essential to the acceptance and ability of the EU, and humanitarian actors in general, to operate on the ground in often complex political and security contexts*" (art.10). It is fundamental for the security of implementing partners and beneficiaries that humanitarian aid is independent and also perceived as such in the field. If humanitarian aid becomes linked to crisis management, it could badly affect the credibility and effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Funding should continue to be attributed on the basis of needs of crisis-affected populations with the sole purpose of saving lives.

In order to safeguard the independence of humanitarian aid, it is crucial that a separate humanitarian aid budget line is preserved in the next EU budget after 2014.

For more information, please have a look at the press release by Oxfam International and VOICE: "[NGOs warn EU budget proposals risk compromising independence of EC Humanitarian Aid](#)".

Thank you for your attention to this issue which is of primary concern to our members working in humanitarian aid worldwide. We would be very happy to discuss this matter further with you, so please do not hesitate to contact us at information@ngovoice.org.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions,

Yours sincerely,

Kathrin Schick

VOICE Director