

Take a stand: Pledge for Humanitarian Action!

VOICE POLICY RESOLUTION 2024

This document calls on all political actors, whether at the EU or in its Member State, to focus on three priority areas to address the growing level of humanitarian needs and to drive the positive change that the world desperately needs.

2024 is a year of change, marked by elections worldwide, including in nine European countries and for the European Parliament. At the EU level, there may be a new President of the European Commission, and new Commissioners will be appointed. The humanitarian legacy facing these political actors is incredibly challenging, and their responsibility to address it is enormous. Escalating conflicts and the climate crisis have caused dramatic increases of people facing acute [food insecurity](#) and displacement.

Political actors - whether newly elected or incumbent - are confronted with a new geopolitical context, and a worldwide humanitarian situation that demands swift and decisive action. We believe that you must use all relevant political tools to create the environment needed to address the growing levels of need. This is a starting point to contributing to a better world for everyone, including future generations. According to the [Eurobarometer](#), EU citizens strongly believe that the EU should continue to be a global leader on humanitarian action, and show continued support for international, local, and national humanitarian NGOs. Working directly with affected populations, NGOs have consistently demonstrated professionalism, [flexibility](#), efficiency, accountability, and a commitment to further improving their practices, including reducing their environmental footprint.

The EU is not a new actor in this field. Since the signing of the [Treaty of Lisbon \(art.214\)](#) in 2009, it has committed itself to delivering principled humanitarian action and implemented [specific procedures](#) to enable its partners to assist those in need in a rapid and efficient manner. The [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#) and the [EC Communication on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles](#) have reconfirmed the EU's commitment to principled humanitarian action.

VOICE CALLS ON ALL EU POLITICAL ACTORS TO FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING PRIORITY AREAS:

- **Increase the space for principled humanitarian action**
 - Promote, uphold and ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and protect civilians and humanitarian workers, irrespective of their nationality.
 - Ensure the core humanitarian principles remain at the heart of humanitarian action and the EU's funding decisions.
 - Use humanitarian diplomacy to remove bureaucratic and administrative impediments to humanitarian access, including for local partners.
 - Enhance the inclusive and effective implementation of humanitarian exemptions in EU and Member States' sanctions regimes.
- **Close the funding gap**
 - Commit to allocating 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2030, at least 10% of which should be for humanitarian action, and to allocating more development funding to fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCS).
 - Guarantee that humanitarian funding allocations are needs-based and not reallocated for political or economic reasons. This is key to addressing neglected crises and FCS.
 - Increase the EU's main humanitarian budget to a minimum of €2.6 billion per year and ensure that the entire Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR) is mobilised to reinforce this budget.
 - Ensure that the humanitarian budget is kept as a separate budget line and that the development budget lines have a strong focus on fragile contexts in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).
- **Address the growing number of conflicts and climate related disasters**
 - Deliver new and additional climate financing as grants and enable NGO access to these.
 - Support affected communities and local actors, in particular women and girls, to lead the design and implementation of all measures to address climate change.
 - Stay engaged in FCS and enhance collaboration between development, humanitarian and peace actors to scale up anticipatory actions and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).
 - Introduce and ensure quality funding and flexibility between humanitarian and development budgets to enable an effective humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus approach.

Increase the space for humanitarian action

It is becoming extremely difficult for humanitarian actors, local, national, and international, to implement principled humanitarian responses. Access is increasingly constrained or compromised, food is being used as a weapon of war, and the number of aid workers being attacked remains disturbingly high. Gaza is a sadly acute example of these phenomena. In this context, the call to respect the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence is more important than ever. All people in need deserve the same fair level of humanitarian assistance and protection, regardless of their location or their political context. VOICE members appreciate DG ECHO's commitment to making principled funding decisions and call for this approach to be kept at the heart of the EU's humanitarian strategy. To ensure access to those in need, the EU and its Member States can play a crucial role in using humanitarian diplomacy to remove [bureaucratic and administrative impediments](#) for NGOs seeking to access those most affected by conflict and disasters. Moreover, due to the increasing number of conflicts, it is essential for the EU and its Member States to promote, uphold and ensure respect for [IHL](#), and to protect civilians and humanitarian workers, no matter what their nationality. In line with [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2664](#), we also call on them to guarantee humanitarian exemptions in their sanctions regimes, support the transposition of Resolution 2664 into the national regulations of countries in which there are humanitarian interventions, and support all actors to better implement these exemptions, especially banks and the private sector.

Close the funding gap

The [funding gap](#) between needs and resources is widening. For the past three years, only five donors have accounted for around 70% of [global humanitarian funding](#), with a trend showing a decrease of [ODA](#) to fragile contexts. Countries such as [Syria](#), Honduras, and Venezuela are among the too many neglected crises now bearing the brunt of this funding gap. The lives of millions of people cannot rely only on this small group of donors. EU Member States must follow the recommendations set out in the [Council Conclusions on addressing the humanitarian funding gap](#), and allocate 0.7% of GNI to ODA by 2030, with at least 10% earmarked for humanitarian action. They should guarantee that humanitarian funding allocations are not reallocated for any political or economic reason and continue supporting the Grand Bargain commitments by promoting localisation and quality funding. It is also essential that [DG INTPA](#) and development donors meaningfully support FCS to avoid a further exacerbation of humanitarian needs and to address protracted crises. Considering the [outcome of the recent MFF revision](#), we urge the EU and its Member States to increase the EU's humanitarian budget to a minimum of €2.6 billion per year, and to ensure that the entire EAR is mobilised to reinforce this. As important discussions will soon take place on the new MFF, we also call on all political actors to ensure that principled humanitarian action is protected and reinforced in the next MFF, by keeping it as a separate budget line and ensuring the development budget lines have a strong focus on fragile contexts.

Address the growing number of conflicts and climate related disasters

[Climate change](#) has become a multiplier of humanitarian crises, catalysing displacement, additional conflicts, and exacerbating gender-based violence. It does not impact all countries or people equally, and those countries contributing the least to climate change are bearing the worst of its consequences. [Humanitarian NGOs](#), which constantly deal with the effects of the climate crisis, welcome the establishment of climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund and the Loss and Damage Fund. However, we urge the EU and its Member States to ensure that climate financing is new and additional, delivered as grants and not loans, and enable NGO access to these. Political actors must also support affected communities and local actors, in particular women and girls, to lead the design and implementation of all measures to address climate. Moreover, a multi-sectoral, prevention-oriented and nexus approach are needed to address the global climate crisis. The EU and its Member States must be less risk-averse by staying engaged in FCS, and foster collaboration between humanitarian and development services to ensure anticipatory actions and DRR interventions are kept high on the political agenda and scaled up. This collaboration, together with quality funding and flexibility between humanitarian and development budgets, is key to enabling an effective HDP nexus approach.

Dear Member of the European Parliament, new Commissioner, and all political actors in the EU, we call on you to take a stand in one or more of the three priority areas and to pledge to support principled humanitarian action. Please engage with your colleagues in other sectors and be a force for positive change.

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