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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

General Orientations on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid in 2025

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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ACLED	The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
ACTED	Acted International Foundation
AGDA	De facto authorities
ALERT	All Emergencies Response Tool
ARGUS	The Commission's duty system under phase 1 of the general rapid alert system
ASAL	Semi-arid lands
ATMIS	The African Union Transition Mission
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhea
CAAC	Children and Armed Conflict
CAR	The Central African Republic
CECIS	The Common Emergency Communication and Information System
COHAFA	The Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CRRF	The UN Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DFA	De facto authorities
DFA	De facto authorities
DFIs	Development finance institutions
DG COMM	The Commission's Directorate-General for communication
DG ECHO	The European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG HOME	The European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG INTPA	The Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships
DG NEAR	The Commission's Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DP	Disaster preparedness
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
DREF	The IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund
DRM	Disaster risk management
EEAS	European External Action Service
EHRC	European Humanitarian Response Capacity
EiE	Education in Emergencies
EMM	Europe Media Monitor
ERC	Enhanced response capacity
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPI	European Commission Service for Foreign Policy Instruments
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GBV	Gender-based violence
GHO	Global Humanitarian Overview
HDP nexus	Humanitarian-development-peace nexus
HIP	Humanitarian implementation plan
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
HQ	Headquarters
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IAS	The Commission's Internal Audit Service
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IEDs	improvised explosive devices
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross

Abbreviation	Definition
IHL	International humanitarian law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
INGO	International non-governmental organisations
IOM	The International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRG	Recognised government of Yemen
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NAs	local and national actors
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSAG	Non-state armed groups
NWSW	North-West and South-West
OCHA	Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PLW	pregnant and lactating women
RRMs	Rapid response mechanisms
RSC	regional security coordinators
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIO	The Southern Africa and Indian Ocean
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SAMIM	The SADC Mission in Mozambique
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SHOC	sting initiatives through the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre
SPaN	Social protection across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus
SRH	Sexual and reproductive healthcare
UCPM	The Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations' Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	UN World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

The European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) manages the EU's humanitarian assistance for the victims of conflicts, natural hazards and human-induced disasters in non-EU countries. DG ECHO's mandate is to save and preserve lives, reduce and prevent suffering, and safeguard the integrity and dignity of people affected by humanitarian crises by providing relief and protection. By taking anticipatory action and focusing on preparedness, DG ECHO seeks to preserve livelihoods and build up the resilience of affected populations. It also coordinates humanitarian assistance with and among EU Member States' humanitarian departments and agencies. The overall priority is to manage aid as effectively and efficiently as possible, to maximise the effect of EU-funded assistance, while observing EU law, international law and the principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity, non-discrimination and independence.

DG ECHO is also responsible for managing the UCPM¹, which covers interventions in Member States and other countries on the basis of the UCPM Decision², and helps implement Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369 on providing emergency support within the EU³. This Regulation lays down a framework for EU emergency support in the form of specific measures appropriate to the economic situation if there is an ongoing or potential natural hazard or human-induced disaster. This kind of emergency support can only be provided in exceptional circumstances where i) the exceptional scale and impact of the disaster is such that it has severe wide-ranging humanitarian consequences in one or more Member States, and ii) there is no other sufficient instrument available to Member States or the EU to address the situation.

This document, drawn up further to Article 16(1) of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation⁴, covers humanitarian aid operations for 2025. It does not cover DG ECHO's activities in civil protection. These are covered by the annual work programme for civil protection actions to be adopted on the basis of the UCPM Decision.

The Commission Communication *The EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles* of March 2021 (the 2021 Commission Communication on the EU's humanitarian action)⁵ and the subsequent Council Conclusions of 20 May 2021 set out key actions to increase the EU's global humanitarian impact and to address the substantial rise in humanitarian needs triggered by COVID-19 and exacerbated by recent conflicts and disasters.

1. General context for 2025

Humanitarian crises have become increasingly complex and severe in recent decades, and this trend is expected to continue in 2025. Conflict remains the main driver of humanitarian needs. Exacerbated by climate change and more frequent epidemics affecting greater numbers of people, disasters triggered by natural hazards are also increasing in intensity and magnitude, while the resulting social, health and

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en

² [Decision No 1313/2013/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924), as amended.

³ [Council Regulation \(EU\) 2016/369](#) on the provision of emergency support within the Union (OJ L 70, 16.3.2016, p. 1).

⁴ [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996](#) concerning humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1).

⁵ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/communication-commission-european-parliament-council-eu%E2%80%99s-humanitarian-action-new_en

economic shocks particularly affect the most vulnerable people (including people with disabilities, older people, women and children).

Across the world, **311.3 million people need humanitarian assistance** and protection. As reported by OCHA, in the first 6 months of 2024, global humanitarian requirements grew to USD 48.7 billion⁶.

Yet only USD 7.9 billion had been received against the GHO requirements by the end of May 2024. Cuts in food assistance due to underfunding are putting people at risk of starvation in places such as Burkina Faso, South Sudan and Yemen. Women and girls' ability to access sexual and reproductive healthcare and services for gender-based violence have been compromised in multiple crises. Children in Mali, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and other countries are being deprived of their future due to education funding shortfalls, while people are being put at greater risk of disease due to under-resourcing of water, sanitation and hygiene services in countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

The most underfunded emergencies to date⁷ (less than 35% funded) are emergencies in the DRC, Venezuela, Haiti, South Sudan and Colombia.

According to the 2024 Global Report on Food Crises⁸, in 2023 around 282 million acutely food-insecure people required urgent food assistance in 59 countries/territories. This confirms a daunting upward trend, as it is the fifth consecutive year of growing numbers of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity, which **have more than doubled** since the report was first published in 2016.

Hunger is also becoming **more severe**. In August 2024, a famine was declared at the Zamzam refugee camp in Sudan, the first such declaration since 2017, while in the Gaza strip hostilities have left the entire population highly food insecure and at risk of famine. Overall, more than 0.7 million people in five countries/territories were projected to face Catastrophe (IPC/CH (*Cadre Harmonisé*⁹ (Harmonised Framework) Phase 5) in 2023, the highest number since the Global Report on Food Crises was first published.

Sixteen countries considered to be the most vulnerable to climate change by the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index are also affected by armed conflict, making it even more difficult to cope with climate change's impacts¹⁰. They represent 79% of all people in humanitarian need.

Epidemics pose great risks to the health, lives and livelihoods of people worldwide, bringing into sharp focus the close links between human, animal and environmental health (One Health¹¹), and require a new 'global health architecture' approach for quicker pandemic preparedness, prevention and response, with over 70% of epidemics occurring in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings. There has also been a sharp

⁶ [Global Humanitarian Overview 2024, Mid-Year Update \(Snapshot as of 31 May 2024\) | OCHA \(unocha.org\)](#)

⁷ To be updated when new data are available, after inter-service consultation.

⁸ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/global-report-food-crises-2022>

⁹ *Cadre Harmonisé*

¹⁰ Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Yemen. Source: IRC (May 2024), 'How to Make the New Climate Finance Target Work for Conflict-Affected Communities'.

¹¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab_1

deterioration in the ability to tackle pre-existing difficulties protecting vulnerable people, in particular in the areas of gender-based violence and access to **sexual and reproductive healthcare**. An increasing need for **mental health and psychosocial support** services is apparent all over the world.

Systematic **IHL violations** continue to be one of the key challenges for the protection of civilians and of infrastructure (such as water or energy systems and healthcare facilities) necessary for their survival, for humanitarian access, and for the safety and security of humanitarian and medical aid workers. These violations are the main reasons for continuously expanding humanitarian needs. **The July 2024 annual report of the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict drew attention to 32 990 grave violations against 22 557 children in 2023, the highest number of annual violations in almost 10 years and a 21% increase compared to 2022**¹².

According to the UNHCR, 120 million people (by May 2024, up from 117.3 million at the end of 2023) were forcibly displaced as a result of conflict, persecution and human rights violations. One in every 69 people, or 1.5% of the world's population, is now forcibly displaced. This is nearly twice as much as a decade ago and the 12th consecutive annual increase. The figure would make the global displaced population equivalent to the 12th largest country in the world (comparable to the size of Japan). This includes 43.4 million refugees (+7%, tripled in the last 10 years) and 6 million Palestinian refugees. The global number of IDPs has reached record levels, with almost 76 million people displaced in their own country at the end of 2023¹³. In 2023, almost three in four refugees (73%) came from just five countries: Afghanistan, Venezuela, Syria, Ukraine and Sudan. The fact that only 6.1 million displaced people returned to their areas or countries of origin in 2023 highlights the difficulty of finding lasting solutions.

Over 224 million crisis-affected children and adolescents are in urgent need of educational support. Over half of refugees of school-going age are not in school¹⁴. Girls living in conflict-affected countries are more likely to be out of school. Girls and women are also at much greater risk of sexual and gender-based violence, including early marriage and unintended pregnancy, as well as trafficking for sexual exploitation, and are more affected by disasters.

Global humanitarian needs are increasing dramatically, but funding is not. It is therefore essential to prepare for, anticipate, identify and focus on the main priorities and to observe the principles for the EU's humanitarian budgetary allocations. In 2025, EU humanitarian aid will remain focused on supporting the people who most need it because they are affected by crises that happen suddenly or are protracted or forgotten¹⁵.

Improving coherence between humanitarian, development and peace actions is more crucial than ever before, as part of an overall integrated approach to crisis and conflict. Closer cooperation is needed to develop sustainable responses for crisis-affected people.

¹² [Secretary-General Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict \(2024\)](#)

¹³ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023/>

¹⁴ [UNHCR Education Report 2023 – Unlocking Potential: The Right to Education and Opportunity | UNHCR](#)

¹⁵ The methodology used to do this is supported by INFORM.

The EU will continue to support the UN's central role in coordinating the international response to emergencies, in a spirit of effective multilateralism and with a view to finding collective solutions to global challenges.

2. Priorities

2.1. Horizontal thematic priorities: improving aid effectiveness and the efficiency and quality of operations

The 2021 Commission Communication on the EU's humanitarian action provides an overarching framework for its thematic priorities. Given the growing challenges, the EU will step up the work it does to address growing humanitarian needs.

The Commission will continue to work with Member States and other donors on addressing the growing **global funding gap for humanitarian action**. It will notably advocate for a sustained effort to meet the voluntary target for donors to devote to humanitarian aid 10% of the established target of 0.7% of gross national income for official development assistance, as agreed by the Council of the EU in May 2023.

Aid effectiveness and result-oriented actions are still priorities for 2025, centred around a needs-based and people-focused approach. The increasing scale of humanitarian needs means there is an urgent need to reform humanitarian action, including by promoting anticipatory action, quality funding, locally led actions and the nexus¹⁶. The EU will continue to support all stages of the Grand Bargain¹⁷ process: the EU remains in the facilitation group, continues to fund the secretariat and to implement the Grand Bargain commitments.

In 2025, DG ECHO will continue to promote **multi-year funding**, given the demand-driven context of humanitarian aid. It will also aim to increase flexible funding¹⁸.

In 2025, drawing on the lessons learnt from the pilot programmatic partnerships ending in 2024, DG ECHO will work more closely with the ICRC and the UN OCHA, with two new programmatic partnerships. Collaboration with the IFRC will also continue, albeit differently. This collaboration will form part of the proposed policy HIP (point 3.10). DG ECHO will also continue implementing 12 programmatic partnerships that started in 2023 (four with UN partners, three with international organisations, and the other five with INGOs). The regions these partnerships cover include West and Central Africa, the Greater Horn of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and northern Africa.

DG ECHO continues to mainstream the **multiannual** programmatic partnership model in 2025 through the geographic HIP. Multiannual strategies help address vulnerable populations' needs efficiently and effectively, giving partners more predictability, while supporting strategic priorities of mutual interest.

¹⁶ [HDP Nexus](#)

¹⁷ [Grand Bargain](#)

¹⁸ An example is the multi-year project with the UNHCR in Uganda to address deforestation that started in 2023.

Aid effectiveness and efficiency will also be achieved by communicating on, disseminating, implementing and updating existing policies as appropriate.

DG ECHO promotes a **strategic approach to the humanitarian supply chain** to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian aid, given it accounts for 60-80% of aid spending¹⁹. This strategic approach should also help achieve other key objectives, such as tackling the funding gap, greening (75% of humanitarian aid-related emissions are estimated to come from procurement alone²⁰) and improving the quality of operations when it comes to access, digitalisation and localisation. DG ECHO plans to make funding available to support a shift, in the humanitarian sector towards a strategic approach to supply chain. The support will be complemented by high-level engagement, advocacy and raising awareness.

DG ECHO will keep developing and deploying **ReliefEU Capabilities** (formerly the EHRC), a set of operational tools to provide rapid but temporary support to partners to cover an affected population's immediate needs. ReliefEU Capabilities will continue to complement the funding allocated to crises and to further support humanitarian partners.

DG ECHO supports the **development of innovative solutions and approaches** in cooperation with a wide range of actors, including DFIs, the private sector and the scientific community. In this regard, helping humanitarian partners to responsibly realise the cost-effectiveness and efficiency gains to be made thanks to digital technology, including primarily by supporting the interoperability of the digital information management systems of humanitarian organisations, will go a long way towards giving more effective assistance to people in need. Building on the pilot humanitarian blended finance exercise²¹, DG ECHO will look into options to develop and scale up innovative financing methods to help harness new sources of DFI and private capital, provide ways of working with the local private sector, and help to link humanitarian and development assistance in fragile contexts.

In line with the 'do no harm' principle, DG ECHO will keep integrating **climate and environmental considerations** into its humanitarian aid policies and interventions. As the climate and environmental crisis deepens, humanitarian actors have a collective responsibility to ensure that their operations address the impacts of climate change and do not further harm the environment people live in, or their health and well-being. Reducing the environmental impact of EU-funded humanitarian operations helps achieve the objectives of the Commission's 2021 Communication on the EU's humanitarian action, which places a strong emphasis on addressing climate and environmental factors as part of humanitarian programming. It will also contribute to reaching the targets of the European Green Deal²².

Since 2023, DG ECHO has been requiring mitigation of the negative environmental impacts of the actions it supports. This is primarily achieved by applying the minimum environmental requirements that came into force in 2023. To support this step change, DG ECHO provides capacity-building support and support for rolling out **environmental guidance for humanitarian projects**²³.

¹⁹ These figures represent the entire supply chain from procurement to delivery on the ground.

²⁰ [Towards Halving Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2030 in the Humanitarian Sector: a Sectoral Roadmap](#)

²¹ [DG ECHO Pilot Initiative on Blended Finance for Humanitarian Aid: Lessons Learned \(europa.eu\)](#)

²² https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

²³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment_en

In line with the 2021 Communication on the EU's humanitarian action, DG ECHO and Poland (as part of its Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2025) intend to co-organise the fourth edition of the **European Humanitarian Forum in the second quarter of 2025**. This well-established international event will host high-level discussions as well as workshops on humanitarian policies, strategies and operations. It is an inclusive platform for strategic and open debates between the EU's political decision-makers and the wider international humanitarian community, including i) UN agencies, ii) signatories of the humanitarian call for action²⁴, iii) international and national NGOs, iv) the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement (the ICRC and IFRC), v) international financial institutions, vi) academics, vii) think tanks, viii) local responders and ix) local representatives.

Thematic policies

Over the years, the Commission has developed humanitarian **policies and guidance**²⁵ in different areas²⁶. These documents outline the Commission's position on key international frameworks and standards, provide its implementing partners with concrete recommendations on programming, and promote a needs-based, people-centred and integrated approach across sectors. The overall objective is to ensure the quality, coherence and accountability of EU-funded humanitarian operations.

As in previous years, the overarching priority of EU humanitarian aid operations will be to ensure protection and to meet the life-saving needs of affected populations, focusing on people in the most vulnerable situations.

Serious **IHL violations** have been increasing in recent years. In some armed conflicts, IHL violations are widely reported as strategic methods of warfare. Such methods have long-term humanitarian consequences. Continued breaches of IHL have made protection a key challenge in today's humanitarian context. The Commission intends to support actions to prevent IHL violations and improve compliance with IHL (e.g. through better monitoring of IHL violations and advocacy actions).

In 2024, DG ECHO set up 'Protect Aid Workers', a mechanism that provides legal, medical and material support for humanitarian workers under attack in the Middle East and northern Africa. In 2025 it will be extended to eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Moreover, in June 2024, the EU also adopted revised **Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict**, strengthening comprehensive and coordinated efforts to protect and support children caught in the crossfire of conflict and war in EU priority countries for children and armed conflict for 2024-2025.

Humanitarian access

²⁴ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/en_strategy_on_strengthening_the_eus_contribution_to_rules-based_multilateralism.pdf

²⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/resources-campaigns/policy-guidelines_en

²⁶ Including protection; gender; health; nutrition; food; shelter and settlements; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); education; cash; localisation; environment, logistics and disability inclusion.

Recognising humanitarian access as a key priority, DG ECHO contributes to the overall strengthening of analysis and tools aimed at helping humanitarian actors secure humanitarian access, improving capacity-building initiatives for individuals and organisations undertaking humanitarian negotiations and engaging with armed actors, and supporting the humanitarian community's coordination efforts with respect to humanitarian access initiatives.

Protecting and focusing on the most vulnerable people

Upholding the rights and dignity of conflict-affected people and ensuring a **people-centred approach** remains DG ECHO's priority. In 2025, DG ECHO will keep prioritising protection in its humanitarian assistance, in line with the provisions of the 2021 Communication on the EU's humanitarian action and the Commission staff working document 'Humanitarian protection: improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises'²⁷. DG ECHO will keep mainstreaming protection in its humanitarian projects and supporting specialised protection interventions and protection advocacy.

Humanitarian assistance must be inclusive and accessible to all, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity or any other discriminatory factor. DG ECHO will prioritise inclusive programming to ensure all affected populations have access to humanitarian assistance, particularly the most marginalised people and people who may have additional vulnerabilities in emergency contexts.

Humanitarian crises affect women, girls, boys and men differently. Their differing needs and specific vulnerabilities in crisis and post-crisis situations should be addressed accordingly. DG ECHO will seek to maximise the **mainstreaming of gender and age** across all sectors and apply this approach to SGBV in humanitarian crises as outlined in the staff working document 'Gender: different needs, adapted assistance'²⁸, the DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker²⁹, the DG ECHO Humanitarian Protection Policy³⁰ and other relevant documents. This is in line with and helps implement the EU gender action plan III³¹. The EU will also remain an active member of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies initiative³² and continue to fulfil its commitments in relation to the road map for 2021-2025. DG ECHO will help prevent and respond to SGBV through targeted actions and the mainstreaming of gender and age needs. It will also be looking into combining policies and strategies to promote inclusive programming.

Humanitarian crises expose children to unspeakable physical and psychological suffering. In line with the EU strategy on the **rights of the child** covering 2021-2024³³, the EU will continue to emphasise child protection, addressing all types of violence against children and providing MHPSS. Specifically, DG ECHO continues to intensify its work to prevent and end grave violations against children affected by armed conflict, including through advocacy activities to promote compliance with IHL, and through targeted

²⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/policy_guidelines_humanitarian_protection_en.pdf

²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf

²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_age_marker_toolkit.pdf

³⁰ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/protection_en

³¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0284>

³² [Call to action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf)

³³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-european-child-guarantee_en#:~:text=The%20EU%20Strategy%20on%20the%20Rights%20of%20the,what%20the%20EU%20plans%20to%20do%20for%20them.

quality funding. The EU will also attend to the needs of other age groups (young people, for example, in line with the EU Youth Action Plan (2022)³⁴, and older people).

People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by natural hazards and human-induced disasters. They also face multiple barriers in accessing humanitarian services (such as water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and food) and may have specific protection needs. In 2025 DG ECHO will continue to ensure the implementation of the 2019 operational guidance on the inclusion of people with disabilities in EU-funded humanitarian aid operations³⁵ and to make sure that its work is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities³⁶. It will also help implement the EU's 2021-2030 strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities³⁷ by supporting the building of humanitarian organisations' capacity to adequately address the needs of people with disabilities. DG ECHO will also work closely with organisations representing people with disabilities.

Education

DG ECHO continues to provide support to make education more resilient, equitable and efficient by delivering **safe and quality learning opportunities** for children and adolescents affected by humanitarian crises and emergencies. Special attention will be given to girls and children with disabilities, in line with **Education in Emergencies (EiE)**, as mentioned in the Commission staff working document 'Education in Emergencies in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations'³⁸. DG ECHO will promote effective and sustained investment in education, earmarking **10% of the EU's initial humanitarian budget for EiE**, and help protect education from attack.

DG ECHO's comprehensive approach to children's needs will focus on four EiE objectives: i) access, ii) quality, iii) protection and iv) better EiE response capacity, including accelerated education and a rapid education response.

Cash

DG ECHO will maintain its focus on a '**basic needs approach**': an integrated multisectoral or cross-sectoral approach to programming that aims to serve to a large extent the basic needs of affected populations. Addressing needs in a coordinated and demand-driven way puts people back at the centre of interventions, especially if they are empowered to make choices and tailor assistance to their individual needs.

In this regard DG ECHO will explore ways of expanding the use of **cash transfers**, which, in addition to demonstrated efficiency gains, give affected populations the dignity of being able to have more choices and flexibility and more control over their own lives. In particular, DG ECHO encourages the use of **multipurpose cash transfers** (cash transfers beneficiaries use to meet their basic needs).

³⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5884

³⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/doc_echo_og_inclusion_en.pdf

³⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

³⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

³⁸ [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/190328%20SWD%20EiE%20in%20EU-funded%20Humanitarian%20Aid%20Operations%20SWD\(2019\)150%20final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/190328%20SWD%20EiE%20in%20EU-funded%20Humanitarian%20Aid%20Operations%20SWD(2019)150%20final.pdf)

Food assistance

Humanitarian **food assistance** will remain crucial for responding to the current global food crisis. DG ECHO will continue to provide **food assistance** that is adapted to the needs of specific groups and crisis situations. It will also increase its efforts to provide food assistance in the most efficient and effective manner, advocating for cash-based interventions whenever feasible and emphasising the importance of acting ahead of disasters through improved disaster preparedness and anticipatory actions.

DG ECHO will strive to keep political attention trained on the global food crisis and step up advocacy in relation to conflict, humanitarian access and the mobilisation of financial resources. It will collaborate with other EU institutions, Member States and partners to further operationalise the Team Europe Response adopted in 2022, following the HDP nexus approach. It also intends to update its humanitarian food assistance policy to bring it into line with the new global context.

Nutrition

DG ECHO plans to maintain support for **nutrition** in emergencies and to advocate for more consistent inclusion of nutritional needs in food security actions. DG ECHO is committed to implementing the 2023 WHO guidelines on the prevention and management of wasting and nutritional oedema (acute malnutrition), and to developing and encouraging the widespread use of tools and innovative approaches to ensure efficient and effective programming. Nutrition outcomes are multifaceted, so DG ECHO promotes i) a multisectoral and integrated approach to addressing severe and high-risk moderate acute malnutrition and ii) closer coordination of humanitarian and development approaches. The ultimate objective is to reach as many malnourished people as possible. However, DG ECHO closely follows developments and changes in the nutrition sector so it can adapt the way nutrition services are provided, better integrate them into healthcare facilities, with more efficient referral systems, and develop the local skills needed for the early detection and prevention of undernutrition³⁹, helping to make communities resilient. The EU's humanitarian nutrition approach⁴⁰ contains guidance on how to provide nutrition services for the most vulnerable population groups.

Health

Health assistance will remain a core area of DG ECHO's humanitarian aid intervention. Its overriding objective is to limit excess preventable mortality, permanent disability, and disease associated with humanitarian crises. DG ECHO does this by ensuring access to basic healthcare through a high-quality, health-in-all-policies and needs-based approach. This includes emergency medical aid, outbreak preparedness and response, comprehensive primary healthcare and life-saving referral care, SRH, mental health and psychosocial support MHPSS, community outreach, capacity building and health infrastructure rehabilitation. In particular, MHPSS and the response to GBV will continue to be addressed through a multisectoral approach in tandem with protection efforts. DG ECHO intends to review its health assistance

³⁹ lack of nutritious food or nutrients in general

⁴⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/nutrition_thematic_policy_document_en.pdf

guidelines, including the ‘Health – general guidelines’ and the technical annexes⁴¹, to ensure that it continues to fund context-specific humanitarian health services in line with the latest global challenges.

Shelter and settlements

The EU’s approach to **shelter and settlements** (S&S) reflects the increased need for humanitarian interventions in this area and their importance for efficient and effective post-disaster responses and anticipatory action. Shelter is crucially important in providing protection, strengthening health and re-establishing livelihoods. DG ECHO interventions in this area will be underpinned by i) promoting shelter solutions that are suitable for local areas and delivering S&S services in urban areas, ii) strengthening local capacity and ownership and iii) recognising the environmental component of any S&S action through environmental screening (or assessment) according to DG ECHO’s minimum environmental requirements. These activities are in line with the humanitarian shelter and settlements guidelines⁴².

Water, sanitation and hygiene

As one of the largest donors in this area, DG ECHO has significantly helped improve access to **water, sanitation and hygiene** (WASH) services for people affected by humanitarian crises. People’s right to have access to safe water and sanitation are central to DG ECHO’s WASH mandate, as are its efforts to integrate environmental considerations into humanitarian WASH actions in order to increase the resilience of people in need and affected communities. The primary objective of the WASH policy is to save lives and alleviate the suffering of populations facing severe environmental health risks and/or water insecurity in humanitarian crises. Systematic quality control, compliance with international quality standards and systematic performance monitoring are key aspects of DG ECHO’s WASH policy⁴³.

Strategic humanitarian supply chain

DG ECHO promotes a more strategic approach to the humanitarian supply chain, which is crucial in all humanitarian sectors and has a huge impact on many of the key humanitarian aid priorities (such as the funding gap, aid efficiency, greening, digitalisation, access and localisation). Better use of supply chains and greater efficiencies ultimately make it possible to help more people. Better strategic planning results in:

- items arriving more quickly and through better access;
- higher quality items through better procurement;
- lower prices, making it possible to help more people;
- greener procurement and operations;
- positive contributions to the localisation agenda.

⁴¹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/health2014_general_health_guidelines_en.pdf

⁴² https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/shelter_and_settlement_guidelines.pdf

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/WaSH_policy_doc_en.pdf

The intention is to continue to encourage actors to strategically take the humanitarian supply chain into consideration in all funding to ultimately increase the impact of aid as a whole. DG ECHO will seek to deepen understanding of best practice and aim to systematise strategic thinking in this area in 2025.

Risk-informed preparedness for response and anticipatory action

DG ECHO's goal for 2025 is to further promote disaster preparedness, both by integrating preparedness activities into EU-funded humanitarian operations and by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen preparedness capacities ahead of a crisis (under the Disaster Preparedness budget line).

In line with the Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note⁴⁴, DG ECHO consistently integrates risk analysis into its needs-based approach to preparedness. Understanding and anticipating potential risks is crucial to be able to act early and intervene before a crisis hits or a situation deteriorates, thereby reducing suffering and humanitarian needs. DG ECHO will also continue to promote a people-focused approach to preparedness, prioritising assistance according to individual vulnerabilities and risk exposure and leaving no one behind.

The core objective of the preparedness interventions DG ECHO funds is to strengthen the capacity of in-country preparedness and response systems (all first responders) to act as locally and as early as possible. To this end, DG ECHO promotes a system-based approach, ensuring sustainability by focusing on strengthening the capacities of communities and national and local governments.

In 2025, DG ECHO will keep developing and piloting new approaches to scale up anticipatory action following the commitment it made in the 2021 Communication on the EU's humanitarian action.

DG ECHO will seek further synergies with the UCPM⁴⁵ to work with and support local and national government bodies and response systems, including by using specific tools (such as civil protection prevention and preparedness missions).

The HDP nexus and cross-cutting issues

The objective of the HDP nexus is to better link urgent relief to long-term solutions in order to reduce needs and tackle the root causes of conflicts and crises. It is now well accepted that the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation also need to be taken into account, as highlighted by the Joint Communication⁴⁶ on 'a new outlook on the climate and security nexus'. Without compromising humanitarian principles, DG ECHO seeks to contribute to long-term strategies to build the capacity and resilience of the most vulnerable people and address the underlying reasons for their vulnerability, and to shift towards more systematic and upfront coordination and complementary programming between humanitarian, development and peace actors in all relevant contexts. Where relevant, complementarities and synergies with EU Country and Multi-annual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) will be enhanced. This will include coordination between EU institutions, EU Member States and other relevant organisations to find

⁴⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/dg_echo_guidance_note_-_disaster_preparedness_en.pdf

⁴⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en

⁴⁶ JOIN(2023) 19 final of 28 June 2023.

opportunities for synergies, and for them to jointly help strengthen resilience and create pathways towards sustainable peace.

Currently, over 120 million people are **forcibly displaced worldwide** due to persecution, conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, disasters or the effects of climate change. The Commission Communication *Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance*⁴⁷ outlines a development-led response to addressing forced displacement. Its main objective is to strengthen the resilience and self-reliance of displaced people and their host communities through a multi-actor approach to displacement crises from the outset. Both development and humanitarian actors will expand the implementation of this approach in a growing number of countries.

DG ECHO will further strengthen its efforts to raise awareness of the situation of vulnerable IDPs. This includes supporting the implementation of the objectives of the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement⁴⁸ launched in June 2022, including the outcomes of the work done by Mr Robert Piper, UN Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement.

Displacement caused by disasters, environmental degradation and the effects of climate change is a growing challenge. DG ECHO will further enhance its operational and policy engagement in this area, along the lines of the July 2022 staff working document addressing displacement and migration caused by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation⁴⁹. The **Global Compact on Refugees**⁵⁰ is a multilateral framework aimed at developing a more sustainable and dignified response to refugees' needs, in line with the EU approach to forced displacement and development. In 2025, the EU will work to implement the pledges announced at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023.

Social protection systems have been recognised as one of the key ways of strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations. They have traditionally been within the remit of the development sector, but the humanitarian community can play a significant role in aligning its work with, and complementing these efforts, by supporting the creation of shock-responsive social protection systems and safety nets (such as cash transfers) for the most vulnerable people. This requires coordination and dialogue to increase synergies between humanitarian and development action.

In 2018-2019, the Commission developed a guidance package on social protection across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (SPaN)⁵¹. In line with this guidance, DG ECHO will continue to work with development actors to support the development of shock-responsive social protection systems whenever feasible.

An increasing number of people in need of humanitarian assistance are seeking refuge in cities. However, cities' high population density means that crises affecting them tend to have a much more severe impact. DG ECHO will therefore continue to advocate for greater attention to be paid to humanitarian needs,

⁴⁷ [Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance](#)

⁴⁸ [Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement \(un.org\)](#)

⁴⁹ [Addressing displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵⁰ [Global Compact on Refugees](#)

⁵¹ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus>

preparedness and resilience in urban environments. It will also explore the potential of area-based approaches and other analysis tools to improve the assessment of, and response to, urban crises.

In line with the Grand Bargain commitments and the objectives outlined in its 2021 Communication on Humanitarian Aid, in 2023 DG ECHO published new ‘Guidance on equitable partnerships with **local responders** in humanitarian settings’⁵². The guidance is intended to recognise and strengthen the capacity of local and national actors (L/NAs) to respond to crises. It sets out key recommendations and commitments for more equitable partnerships with local responders. In 2025, DG ECHO intends to fully implement this guidance, focusing on (i) recognising the value and skills of L/NAs and supporting institutional capacities; (ii) establishing more equitable partnerships; (iii) ensuring the participation of L/NAs throughout the humanitarian response cycle and strengthening their participation and leadership in humanitarian coordination; and (iv) facilitating access to localised financing models, including through contributions to country-based pooled funds (CBPFs). DG ECHO will also continue to scale up the share of humanitarian funding delivered to local actors as directly as possible.

2.2. Operational priorities reflected in the budget allocation

2.2.1 General methodology

In line with Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁵³, the Humanitarian Aid Regulation⁵⁴ and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid⁵⁵, and acting on the basis of the relevant financing decision⁵⁶, DG ECHO is committed to providing relief and protection for populations affected by natural hazards or human-induced disasters in a safe and secure manner. The needs-based assessment leading to the allocation of funding is supported by its funding allocation methodologies, based on a number of factors, including INFORM Risk, INFORM Severity (next section), an overall security evaluation and expert input. This assessment also pays special attention to forgotten crises.

The analytical preparatory work serves as a basis for DG ECHO’s HIPs, which provide detailed information on the operational priorities it has identified.

DG ECHO continually reassesses humanitarian crises as they evolve. As needs decrease, often thanks to rehabilitation and development, it scales back its efforts. Emphasis is placed on coordinating humanitarian aid and development through the HDP nexus approach. The exit strategy for humanitarian interventions is reviewed twice a year: initially during funding allocation and then in a mid-term review to reassess priorities based on evolving needs. These strategies are coordinated with development and peace actors from the outset.

⁵² <https://www.urd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/dg-echo-guidance-note-promoting-equitable-partnerships-with-local-responders-in-humanitarian-settings.pdf>

⁵³ Article 214 TFEU.

⁵⁴ [Council Regulation \(EC\) NO 1257/96](#) of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p.1).

⁵⁵ [Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission on the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#) (OJ C 25, 30.1.2008, p.1).

⁵⁶ Commission Implementing Decision financing humanitarian aid operational actions from the 2025 general budget of the European Union.

2.2.2 INFORM Risk and INFORM Severity

The **INFORM Risk Index**⁵⁷ is a global open-source risk assessment of humanitarian crises and disasters that analyses the following three aspects of risk:

- hazard and exposure (the probability of physical exposure to specific hazards);
- vulnerability (the economic, political and social characteristics of a community that can be destabilised if a hazard event occurs);
- lack of coping capacity (a country's ability to cope with disasters).

INFORM Severity⁵⁸ is a composite indicator that measures and compares the severity of humanitarian crises and disasters, based on these three aspects:

- the impact of a crisis (the scope of its geographical and human effects);
- the conditions of the people affected by the crisis (information on the distribution of people affected by the crisis);
- the complexity of the crisis (factors that affect its mitigation or resolution).

The INFORM tools are scientifically rigorous and freely accessible, offering a common and objective language to analyse risks and crises.

2.2.3 Forgotten Crises Assessment

The Forgotten Crises Assessment highlights severe humanitarian crises where affected populations receive little or no international media attention, **insufficient or no international assistance and little humanitarian funding**. In principle, the EU – as a global principled donor⁵⁹ – allocates at least 15% of its initial annual humanitarian budget to forgotten crises. This assessment, based on evidence as far as possible, relies mainly on information from the INFORM indices (explained above), the EMM⁶⁰, the OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS)⁶¹, and input from field experts. The final list of forgotten crises is prepared in agreement with the EU Commissioner for Crisis Management.

For 2025, DG ECHO regards the following crises as forgotten crises:

⁵⁷ <https://drmkc.irc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk>

⁵⁸ <https://drmkc.irc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Severity/About-INFORM-Severity-Index>

⁵⁹ Principled aid is a term used to describe the allocation of international aid in a way that is consistent with the values of global solidarity and collective action.

⁶⁰ The EMM explores and presents news reported by the world's online media. Monitoring thousands of news sources in over 70 languages, the EMM uses advanced techniques to extract information to automatically determine what is being reported in the news, where things are happening, who is involved and what they said. https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/text-mining/topic/europe-media-monitor-emm_en.

⁶¹ <https://fts.unocha.org/>

Region	Country	Crisis Name
Africa	Algeria	Sahrawi refugees in Algeria
	Burkina Faso	Conflict in Burkina Faso
	Burundi	Complex crisis in Burundi
	Cameroon	Multiple crises in Cameroon
	DRC	Complex crisis in DRC
	Mozambique	Multiple crises in Mozambique (incl. Cabo Delgado insurgency)
	Nigeria	Crisis in Northwest Nigeria
	South Sudan	Complex crisis in South Sudan
	Uganda	Displacement in Uganda
Asia	Iraq	Multiple crises in Iraq
	Jordan	Syrian refugees in Jordan
	Lebanon	Socio-economic crisis in Lebanon
	Philippines	Mindanao conflict in Philippines
	Yemen	Conflict in Yemen
Latin America and Caribbean	Colombia	Complex crisis in Colombia
	Honduras	Complex crisis in Honduras
	Mexico	Multiple crises in Mexico
	Venezuela	Complex crisis in Venezuela

2.2.4 Other considerations

DG ECHO strives to address numerous crises within its budget, ensuring swift, efficient and comprehensive responses. Funding is based on needs assessments and coordination with other donors. However, aid delivery can be compromised by the absence or capacity of implementing organisations and access restrictions due to insecurity or administrative obstacles. DG ECHO ensures proper needs assessment and monitoring, operating in remote management mode only when absolutely necessary and justified by humanitarian imperatives.

Partners face the most restrictions in conflict areas where the rule of law is weak or there are political and administrative barriers, often due to politically motivated obstruction by governments or de facto authorities.

2.2.5 Operational objectives and budget planning

The draft EU budget for 2025 earmarks EUR 1 820 081 158 for humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness⁶². This is to be used for operations essentially aimed at dealing with the priorities under Appendix 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of humanitarian aid actions from the 2025 general budget of the European Union.

DG ECHO will maintain its extended **regional approach**, with regional responses in certain HIPs. A regional approach has the considerable advantage of making EU humanitarian assistance more rapid and flexible, and of simplifying/streamlining HIPs.

⁶² Draft budget for 2025, as proposed by the Commission, excluding the allocation for technical assistance. 10% of the initial humanitarian budget is earmarked for education in emergencies.

The following sections set out in more detail how DG ECHO will support humanitarian and food assistance for vulnerable people affected by disasters. They also describe in detail its disaster preparedness operations.

2.3. West and Central Africa

The total number of people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance in the broad region of West and Central Africa, including the DRC, reached 72.3 million in 2024. People in need represent one quarter of the population of the DRC and 9.3% of the total population in the other countries of West and Central Africa. An unprecedented total of 55 million people were in food crisis between June and August 2024 in the Sahel and Lake Chad countries (including coastal countries), up by 92% from the average over the previous 5 years (2018-2023). After Nigeria (with 31.8 million food-insecure people), the DRC is the second largest food crisis in the world in terms of the number of acutely food-insecure people, with one quarter of the population i.e. 25.4 million people at crisis and emergency level. Conflict and the acute vulnerability it creates for the populations affected is what causes forced displacements in the region. Based on official figures, 12.1 million people are forcibly displaced in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions. In the DRC and the Great Lakes region, a total of 8.1 million people are forcibly displaced, including more than 940 000 newly displaced people since the beginning of the year in the DRC due to the intensification of the conflict with M23 in the East of the country.

2.3.1. Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) and spill-over to coastal countries

The crisis in **Burkina Faso** is one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises in the world, with well over 2 million people internally displaced and over a quarter of the country's population in need of humanitarian aid. Overall, in 2024, 6.3 million people need humanitarian assistance, a 35% increase compared to 2023, according to the HRP. 2.7 million Burkinabè were estimated to be in food crisis (IPC3+) during the lean season in 2024, including 423 000 people in phase 4 (pre-famine).

Mauritania's situation remains very worrying, due to the worsening of the situation in neighbouring Mali. Between the end of 2023 and August 2024, the country had registered an increase of over 128% in the number of refugees, bringing it to 241 000 refugees from Mali. The 2024 lean season was characterised by significant acute needs, with 656 652 people in food crisis (up by 39% from 2023).

In **Mali**, 7.1 million people were estimated to need humanitarian assistance in 2024, representing 31.7% of the country's total population. A new methodology was used to calculate this caseload in 2024, making comparisons with previous years more difficult. More than 1.3 million people have been forced to flee, almost 355 000 of whom continue to be internally displaced. During the 2024 lean season, 1.24 million people were estimated to need emergency food assistance (IPC phase 3+). Food insecurity is higher in areas affected by insecurity, mainly central and northern Mali, including the Mopti, Ségou, Gao and Tombouctou regions. Menaka hosted 2 575 people in IPC 5 (famine) during the 2024 lean season.

In **Niger**, it was estimated that the number of people who needed humanitarian assistance increased from 4.3 to 4.5 million people between 2023 and 2024, although no final HRP was available to confirm this number. Measures such as the imposition of armed escorts or the continuous closure of the border with Benin have made the rollout of the humanitarian response much more difficult. The escalation of the conflict in Niger

has resulted in more forced displacements: these increased by 36% between 2023 and 2024, bringing the number of forcibly displaced people to 867 000.

The spill-over of the Central Sahel conflict into four coastal countries remained unabated in 2024, causing further displacements in **Ghana, Togo, Benin and the Ivory Coast**, affecting an estimated 165 000 people, including around 130 000 refugees and 35 000 internally displaced people.

In 2025, DG ECHO will focus on the humanitarian consequences of conflict and violence, forced displacement and the food and nutritional crisis. It will give emergency multisectoral assistance (notably emergency food assistance, protection, healthcare and nutrition, EiE, water, sanitation, hygiene and shelter) to the most vulnerable conflict-affected populations (refugees, IDPs and host/local communities), as required, in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger and in the four coastal countries affected by the spill-over of the Central Sahel conflict (e.g. through RRM). DG ECHO will also, as appropriate, boost preparedness and response capacity in high-risk areas (including through anticipatory actions), and early emergency response to epidemics and natural hazards and/or human-induced disasters.

2.3.2. Lake Chad basin crisis

In the **Lake Chad** region, fighting rages on between government forces – including members of the Multinational Joint Task Force – and NSAGs, especially in Northeast **Nigeria**, the far north of **Cameroon**, the lake province of **Chad** and the Diffa region of **Niger**. Inter-community conflicts, often fuelled by tensions over cattle and/or the use of natural resources, add to the intensity of the local violence and cause more displacements of civilians. 21.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the four countries.

The humanitarian situation in Northeast **Nigeria** (the Borno, Adamawa, Yobe – BAY – states) is dire and continues to deteriorate. More than 1 million people remain inaccessible and do not receive any kind of assistance.

In **Niger**, the regions bordering Nigeria (Diffa and Maradi) remain unstable due to the consequences of NSAG activity. The reopening of the border with Nigeria in March 2024 may increase cross-border trade and strengthen the resilience of the population.

Cameroon is classified as the 9th international conflict, but with the highest growth, by ACLED⁶³, exemplified by the scale of the forced displacements in the Far North, combined with intercommunity violence and the consequences of climate change.

In **Chad**, 6 million people needed assistance across the country⁶⁴. 3.7 million people are in food crisis (IPC3+), which is a doubling of the caseload reported last year. The Lake Province crisis remains volatile, due to the continuous conflict with NSAGs and to the extreme vulnerability of the local population, with

⁶³ [Conflict Index Results: July 2024 - ACLED \(acleddata.com\)](https://acleddata.com)

⁶⁴ Revised methodology also used in other countries of the region (see above).

more than 219 000 IDPs. Floods in 2024 have caused 145 deaths with more than 960 000 affected and 70 000 homes destroyed.

2.3.3. Humanitarian crises in Central Africa: The Central African Republic, Northwest Nigeria, the north-west and south-west regions in Cameroon, and Eastern Chad.

In the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, 2.8 million people needed humanitarian aid in 2024. The number of IDPs and refugees decreased in 2024 to about 500 000. Over 676 000 CAR refugees are hosted in 6 neighbouring countries. CAR was marginally affected by the Sudan crisis, hosting about 35 000 refugees or returnees. Many IDPs resettled, with no intent to return to their areas of origin. Humanitarian workers continue to operate in an environment made highly insecure by the predatory behaviour of NSAGs.

In **Northwest Nigeria**, the combination of criminal gang activity and intercommunal violence continues to cause forced displacements while amplifying the needs of an already highly vulnerable local population. More than 600 000 people are internally displaced across the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto and Kano. Humanitarian needs are widespread, with 2 million people whose basic needs are not met and who are deprived of services. According to the March 2024 *Cadre Harmonisé* (Harmonised Framework) analysis, in Kaduna, Katsina and Sokoto 6.65 million people are acutely food-insecure. In Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara, 532 100 children are projected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition. Despite the humanitarian community's advocacy efforts in Nigeria, including DG ECHO's efforts, the 2024 HRP does not cover the humanitarian crisis in Northwest Nigeria.

The crisis in the **NWSW (Northwest and Southwest) regions of Cameroon** has led to the displacement of about 900 000 people, in the two regions and the neighbouring West, Littoral, Adamawa and Centre regions. Widespread insecurity persists in this region. Women, men, girls and boys are acutely affected by distinct protection risks. Conflict hinders civilians in their everyday life, regarding their freedom of movement, their ability to make a living, and social services. Food and drinking water are the top priorities for the displaced population in these two regions, followed by health and education. Of 5 098 schools in the NWSW, 2 066 are non-functional (and closed due to insecurity), leaving 1 in 4 children out-of-school, with almost half a million children (488 656) out of school.

In **Eastern Chad** 910 000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees entered the country in the provinces of Wadi Fira, Ouaddai and Sila (the Sudan crisis). The Ouaddai province is the most affected; in the city of Adre alone there are more than 224 000 refugees. Most refugees and returnees are women and children who arrived in Chad with a high level of trauma from the violence and abuse they experienced during the conflict in Sudan. The displaced population is living under dire conditions, with acute protection and humanitarian needs in all sectors. As the conflict continues in Sudan, the relocation of refugees and returnees away from the border is a priority for their protection. The host population's coping mechanisms are under stress, with the risk that tensions may rise among refugees, returnees and host populations.

In 2025, DG ECHO's humanitarian assistance in **Central Africa** will address the most acute humanitarian needs in these crises, focusing on supporting the humanitarian response in unstable and hard-to-reach areas, and particularly on food assistance, nutrition, WASH, protection, and access to social services (health and education). Assistance will include disaster preparedness wherever possible, following the HDP nexus approach. Support will also be aimed at boosting preparedness and response capacities in high-risk areas,

including through anticipatory actions. DG ECHO will also advocate for a better strategy on humanitarian access and compliance with IHL.

2.3.4. Great Lakes region⁶⁵

The **DRC's** humanitarian situation has deteriorated drastically in the past 2 years. The renewed insurgency by the M23 rebel group (supported mainly by Rwanda) in eastern DRC has made matters worse still, because of large-scale fighting in the North Kivu province since the end of 2023 and spread into South Kivu since 2024. This latest round of fighting has displaced more than 940 000 people since the beginning of 2024 alone, bringing the total number of internally displaced people in the DRC to around 7.3 million. The war in North Kivu has also greatly increased insecurity in other provinces of the DRC because various NSAGs have been exploiting the resulting security vacuum. In the Ituri province, for example, fighting against and between NSAGs continues to increase and many of these armed groups explicitly target the civilian populations of other communities in their attacks.

Ongoing conflict and high insecurity are also partly responsible for the dramatic increase in food insecurity because they often prevent farmers from cultivating their land and accessing local markets. The DRC remains the most food-insecure country in the world, with 25.4 million people who have faced acute food insecurity so far in 2024. The protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas remains a major concern in the DRC. There are more than 7.2 million IDPs in the DRC, which has the second largest number of IDPs in Africa.

The regional crisis in the Great Lakes region, which already hosts over 1 million refugees from other countries in the region, is continuing and adding to the current Burundi refugee crisis. A new regional refugee crisis may be developing as an increasing number of Congolese are fleeing the violence in eastern DRC. Meanwhile, returns to Burundi from Tanzania and other refugee-hosting countries have decreased, mostly for socio-economic reasons and because there is a lack of opportunities to earn income. It is not expected that returns to Burundi and other countries of origin will accelerate in 2024, which will only lead to a degradation of the regional humanitarian crisis.

DG ECHO will, as a priority, provide immediate multisectoral assistance and protection to address the basic needs of refugees, while working with development actors on long-term solutions for more protracted situations (particularly in health and education). It will keep advocating for refugee returns to be voluntary. In Burundi, it will focus mainly on protection (including protecting returning refugees). All countries in the region are prone to natural hazards and human-induced disasters. DG ECHO already supports disaster preparedness actions in Burundi, Congo and the DRC and will reinforce its DP engagement in Burundi in 2025.

Under its new specific GBV response strategy for the DRC, included for the first time in the 2024 HIP, DG ECHO plans to further support and consolidate new operational approaches: increase, using a holistic approach, its support for prevention and remedial action, through activities related to SRH, access to justice and accountability, and emergency socio-economic alternatives.

⁶⁵ The HIP Great Lakes region includes Angola, Burundi, Congo, the DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia.

2.4. *Eastern and southern Africa*

2.4.1. The Upper Nile basin

South Sudan

South Sudan continues to be affected by political instability and high levels of insecurity, which, combined with a deep and worrying economic crisis, large floods and the impact of the conflict in Sudan, continue to generate an unprecedented humanitarian crisis since the country became independent in 2011. With 9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, South Sudan has one of the highest proportions of population in need worldwide (72%), with 7.1 million people (56%) set to be severely food-insecure (IPC3+) during the peak of the lean season between June and September 2024, including 79 000 people in famine (IPC5), double the previous year's figure. Almost 4 million people are displaced, including 1.68 million who are internally displaced and 2.3 million living as refugees in the neighbouring countries. As of August 2024, severe flooding, projected to be worse than the record flooding of 2022, has already affected an estimated 310 000 people across the country. It disrupted health and education services, destroyed crops, and hindered the delivery of critical humanitarian assistance. The conflict in Sudan that started in April 2023 also continues to heavily affect South Sudan. The conflict cut supply lines from Sudan, while severe disruptions to oil pipelines and revenues have considerably affected the economy of South Sudan (the South Sudanese pound exchange rate with USD decreased by 400% between January and August 2024). The conflict also generates considerable displacement. Since September 2024, the fighting has forced over 800 000 individuals to seek safety across the border, with an average of 1 500 new arrivals in South Sudan every day in 2024. The vast majority are South Sudanese refugee returnees, but the number of Sudanese refugees has kept increasing since the end of 2023. The influx of people has created hotspots of congestion, creating a risk of disease, triggering inter-ethnic tensions and highlighting the inability of the country's infrastructure to absorb shocks. Half of the people at risk of famine in South Sudan also come from Sudan.

South Sudan remains one of the most challenging countries for humanitarian access, due to frequent operational interference and bureaucratic impediments, and an increase in reported attacks against humanitarian staff and assets. The cost of humanitarian operations keeps increasing because aircraft is the main means of transportation due to the very difficult road conditions during the rainy season (June-October).

DG ECHO's 2025 strategy for South Sudan focuses on life-saving interventions, notably to deal with new shocks, and to target the most vulnerable people in the most severely affected areas through emergency responses. DG ECHO will also support the provision of humanitarian protection assistance to communities affected by violence in South Sudan, focusing on critical SGBV cases and children affected by armed conflicts. Continued support will be provided for EiE that includes child protection. To increase the impact of the assistance, DG ECHO will support the humanitarian community's activities in coordination, logistics, safety and security, context analysis, data collection, monitoring and conflict sensitivity. Opportunities to connect HDP actions will be taken.

Sudan

The conflict that erupted in Sudan in 2023 is generating the largest displacement crisis in Africa. As of mid-2024, the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix reports over 10.7 million internally displaced people, including over 7.9 million newly displaced since the beginning of the conflict. Sudan continues to host about a million refugees, while over 2.3 million people have fled to neighbouring countries since the beginning of the conflict. The country is facing its worst ever recorded levels of acute food insecurity. On 1 August, the Famine Review Committee concluded that the conflict brought famine to the largest IDP camp in Sudan, Zamzam camp in North Darfur. It is the first time in over 7 years that the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has classified an area as a famine area. There are reasons for believing that similar famine conditions prevail in other conflict-affected areas. There is a risk of famine in 14 areas if the conflict escalates further. Over half the population, 25.6 million people, face severe food insecurity. In 10 states 755 000 people are facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), while another 8.5 million people (18% of the population) face Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The country also has the highest rate of child malnutrition on a global scale, with more than 729 000 children under five suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Under its 2025 strategy for Sudan, DG ECHO will focus on addressing critical humanitarian needs by delivering emergency life-saving basic services and protection assistance to populations forcibly displaced and affected by conflict, natural hazards, climate shocks or epidemics. It will provide an integrated response to health, nutrition and food security crises to prevent and/or reduce excess mortality and morbidity. It will continue to support EiE, focusing on giving children safe access to high-quality formal and non-formal primary education, integrating child protection, MHPSS into EiE programming. Given the current access constraints and increased bureaucratic impediments, enhanced support for coordination, logistics, safety and security, context analysis and conflict sensitivity will also be provided. DG ECHO will also support cross-border humanitarian operations with a needs-based approach.

Uganda

Uganda is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa and one of the five largest refugee-hosting countries in the world. It currently hosts more than 1.7 million refugees, mostly from South Sudan and the DRC, but since 2024 most new arrivals are Sudanese. The number of refugees has been steadily increasing. The structural underfunding of the refugee response, combined with significant cuts to life-saving basic services (including protection), puts increasing pressure on the progressive and inclusive Ugandan refugee protection and assistance model. The scale and severity of the refugee crisis continues to outstrip national and local capacities. Uganda is also prone to disasters, such as natural hazards and epidemics.

Uganda is a pilot country for the HDP nexus and the UN Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and was a co-convenor of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023. These processes are interlinked because the EU and its Member States are committed to addressing forced displacement in Uganda by establishing and supporting sustainable solutions for displaced and other vulnerable people.

DG ECHO's strategy for 2025 will build on the progress made in the last few years. There will be more of a focus on providing life-saving assistance for newly arrived refugees and their host communities, on the basis of vulnerabilities, localisation of the response and strengthened nexus efforts.

2.4.2. Horn of Africa ⁶⁶

Ethiopia

The humanitarian outlook remains dire. In 2024, more than 21 million were in need of humanitarian assistance, due to the compounded impact of armed conflicts, recurrent climate shocks, and disease outbreaks, with an additional layer of hardship imposed by sustained inflation. Areas in northern Ethiopia that saw active conflict from 2020 to 2022 continue to face multiple needs, made worse by the absence of sufficient recovery efforts; there are increasing concerns about the ongoing and planned returns of IDPs from Tigray to their place of origin. Conflicts in Amhara and Oromia are making access difficult, preventing vulnerable communities from getting the assistance they so badly need. IHL violations have been reported, including the direct targeting of civilians. Ethiopia hosts over 1 million refugees, with incoming refugees from Sudan facing the additional challenge of insecurity in Amhara. In 2025, DG ECHO's focus will be on life-saving assistance for the most vulnerable people in the priority areas affected by conflict, natural hazards and disease outbreaks. It will also support newly arrived refugees with emergency aid.

Somalia

Somalia remains a complex and long-standing humanitarian crisis arising out of both conflicts and natural disasters. The country has not yet fully recovered from a historical drought, followed by unprecedented El Niño-related flooding, in the first half of 2024, with La Niña and dry spells projected for later in the year. In 2024, 6.9 million people require humanitarian assistance and protection, including 3.4 million people who need immediate food assistance and 1.7 million children under the age of five expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. More than half of the population is water-insecure, and the country ranks last in terms of health security. Somalia has one of the largest internally displaced populations, with more than 3.8 million people living in refugee camps. New displacement in 2024 is mainly caused by floods, insecurity and conflict. The Somali government's operations against Al Shabab, ATMIS's withdrawal by December 2024, unclear post-ATMIS arrangements, and the non-renewal of UNSOM's mandate after it expires in October, will worsen the country's security situation, further exacerbate displacement and hamper access to severely vulnerable populations.

DG ECHO's strategy for 2025 will prioritise the most vulnerable populations and the populations most at risk: people newly displaced by conflict and extreme climate events (floods, drought); communities most affected by acute malnutrition, food insecurity and epidemic outbreaks; and vulnerable people living in areas that are hard to reach. To maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, and ensure that it really is people-centred, DG ECHO will continue to focus on integrated responses rooted in area-based coordination among the operating partners on the ground.

Kenya

The government policy continues to shift to transforming refugee camps into settlements where refugees can integrate into the local economy and access services alongside the host communities. Kenya is host to over 800 000 refugees, mainly from Somalia and South Sudan, and this number continues to rise. The impact of

⁶⁶ The Horn of Africa region includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

recurring climate events, such as drought and excessive rain-induced flooding, continues to erode people's resilience capacities. Millions of people are food-insecure, in particular in drought-affected areas. DG ECHO's support for Kenya in 2025 will focus on basic survival services (food, WASH, healthcare and nutrition, protection and EiE) for the most vulnerable people living in formal or informal camps. DG ECHO will also continue to link humanitarian interventions for refugees to sustainable solutions. Food security in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) will be closely monitored and addressed if more funding becomes available. EiE outreach for displaced out-of-school children and integrated actions, including protection, will also be supported.

In **Djibouti**, DG ECHO will prioritise the provision of protection services and other types of assistance to vulnerable migrants, in coordination with the EU delegation.

2.4.3. Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean⁶⁷

The **Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (SAIO)** region is prone to disasters caused by natural hazards – exacerbated by climate change, environmental degradation and poor management of natural resources – and human-induced hazards caused by armed conflict and violence. Rising food prices, cholera outbreaks and macroeconomic challenges further exacerbate the humanitarian situation.

In 2023/2024, the region experienced a severe climate and food security crisis as a result of the El Niño-induced drought. The worst mid-season dry spell in over 100 years, coupled with the lowest mid-season rainfall in 40 years, have negatively affected the lives and livelihoods of more than 30 million people and led to the declaration of national disasters in Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The drought has occurred concurrently with flash floods and landslides from heavy rains, as a result of tropical cyclones Gamane and Filipo, that ravaged Madagascar and Mozambique, and Belal, that passed close to Mauritius, bringing heavy rainfall and strong winds.

The conflict dynamics in **Cabo Delgado province, northern Mozambique**, changed again over the course of 2023/2024, with increased attacks in a wider area of the province as the withdrawal of SAMIM progressed. The security situation remains volatile, and civilians continue to bear the brunt of the armed violence: conflict-affected populations suffer from lack of food and water, inadequate sanitation and health services, insufficient shelter, and numerous protection risks. Currently an estimated population of 2.8 million people (18% in IPC4) are suffering acute food insecurity in Mozambique, with a projected increase to 3.3 million (24% IPC4) until March 2025.

The crisis remains severely underfunded. Mozambique has been ranked highest in DG ECHO's Forgotten Crises Assessment for 2024/2025.

Mozambique is the only country in the region where an EU integrated approach is being implemented encompassing security, peacebuilding, development and humanitarian actions.

⁶⁷ The SAIO region includes Botswana, the Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Madagascar has a mixture of acute and chronic needs, combining high levels of malnutrition, mortality and disease alongside high and chronic protracted poverty levels, food insecurity and economic stagnation. Some 2.29 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance as prolonged drought, recurrent floods, cyclones, and epidemics have affected the already vulnerable populations living in the country's Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est regions. The food security and nutrition situation has severely deteriorated. The degradation of livelihoods and means of support has also further exacerbated protection needs, with child abuse and GBV on the rise, as well as increased school dropout.

DG ECHO's strategy for 2025 for the SAIO region follows on from the 2024 strategy, taking into consideration lessons learned and context developments. Humanitarian assistance will remain focused on Mozambique and Madagascar, the main humanitarian hotspots in the region requiring a dedicated emergency response, and include a regional perspective to respond to uncovered humanitarian needs from the 2024 El Niño-induced drought. EiE funding will target Malawi and Zimbabwe for preparation, anticipation and response through education and child protection services following disruptions caused by shocks. Finally, DG ECHO will build on past disaster preparedness investments with a focus on anticipatory action, epidemic preparedness, regional response capacities and shock-responsive safety nets.

2.5. North Africa

2.5.1. Algeria – Sahrawi crisis

In the absence of a political solution to the 49-year-old protracted Sahrawi crisis, with no prospect of durable solutions (return, local integration or resettlement), and extremely limited income-earning opportunities (minimal scope for agricultural production and no formal economic activities), the Sahrawi refugees hosted in five camps in south-west Algeria (near Tindouf) remain almost entirely dependent on external assistance. Without major development donors, the main support comes from humanitarian funding. After Spain, DG ECHO is the second largest donor to the Sahrawi refugee camp population.

In 2025, DG ECHO will keep assisting refugees with their basic needs through interventions in WASH (provision of essential medicines) and EiE. In the framework of its programmatic partnership with the WFP, vulnerability-based targeting, evidence-based nutritional support and alternatives to distribution-in-kind will be further developed, to ensure aid reaches the most vulnerable people. The provision of water through water networks, instead of water trucking, will be further expanded, and local water authorities will be supported to ensure the sustainability of the recently established water network and water treatment plant.

Potential to support livelihoods activities will also be identified. DG ECHO will also keep pushing for greater burden-sharing among all donors and with other EU instruments.

2.5.2. Egypt

Egypt hosts an estimated population of over 1 million refugees and asylum seekers, living in some of the most overcrowded and poorest neighbourhoods of the largest cities, where the host communities have similar levels of vulnerability. Between the start of the Sudan conflict in April 2023 and 5 August 2024, 700 000 refugees fleeing the conflict approached the UNHCR for registration, most of them having entered irregularly. Registration remains pending for some 48%. Sudanese people join an already large refugee

population: over 730 000 refugees and asylum seekers are registered with the UNHCR in Egypt, with 368 000 new registrations in 2024. The Sudanese refugee population is the largest (61%), followed by Syrians (21%) and South Sudanese (6%). The number of registered refugees is likely to surpass 1 million by the end of the year. More than half of them are women, with many female-run households. The number of unaccompanied and separated children is significantly increasing with this influx of refugees fleeing the violence in Sudan. Refugees in Egypt face many barriers when trying to access basic services and suffer from discrimination and stigmatisation, with 80% of refugees⁶⁸ and asylum-seeker households reporting that they cannot meet their basic needs and many resorting to negative coping strategies, such as reducing the number of daily meals.

In 2025, DG ECHO will further support refugees and asylum seekers by assisting the most vulnerable people using a ‘one refugee’ approach that focuses on meeting basic needs, including doing so through multipurpose cash support. It will also support access to quality education, and provide mainstreamed protection activities, in all its actions. The approach will also strengthen the HDP nexus framework, including coordination and advocacy initiatives.

2.5.3. Regional actions

North Africa and the Middle East are marred by IHL violations, a shrinking humanitarian space, restrictions on civil society organisations, the criminalisation of aid, and attacks on humanitarian workers and civilian infrastructures. These are often linked to armed groups and de facto authorities (AGDA). IDPs, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers face increased violence and targeted exploitation. They often lack legal status and civil documents and are denied access to basic services. They need humanitarian assistance and specialised protection services. The region is a destination and transit point for migrants and refugees and a hot spot for accelerated climate change and increased competition for resources. Conflict and tensions remain major causes of displacements.

In 2025, DG ECHO will continue to address these specific humanitarian challenges, which cut across national borders, through dedicated regional initiatives. It will keep supporting humanitarian workers at risk through a dedicated mechanism that provides legal, medical, psychological and material support, with the priority being national humanitarian workers. DG ECHO will also look into engaging with armed groups and de facto authorities, as well as with their regional networks and influential religious leaders, to improve their compliance with international humanitarian norms and to better protect civilians.

A dedicated allocation for Libya and Morocco is not initially envisaged in 2025. However, a significant increase in the number of refugees in southeast Libya (reaching 97 000 according to the UNHCR) was observed in mid-2024, with most refugees living in dire conditions. They also put severe strain on the region’s already overstretched services. In line with previous years’ practice, funding of life-saving activities will be considered, when necessary.

⁶⁸ UNHCR, Inter-Agency Working Group (May 2024).

2.6. *Eastern Neighbourhood, Western Balkans, Caucasus and Türkiye*⁶⁹

2.6.1. Ukraine

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Ukraine remains the largest humanitarian crisis on the continent of Europe since World War II and one of the world's largest refugee crises. Humanitarian needs are at catastrophic levels, with over 14.6 million people (40% of the population) in need of assistance⁷⁰ and more than 3.6 million people internally displaced⁷¹. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has ravaged front line communities, leaving over 3.3 million people, including vulnerable groups, with little to no capacity to provide for themselves⁷². Constant bombardments, landmines, and drone attacks continue to endanger civilian lives, cause forced displacement, and severely damage housing, schools, healthcare facilities, water, electricity, heating, and other vital infrastructure. During winter 2024/2025, the humanitarian situation is expected to further deteriorate, in particular for people who live near the front line⁷³. Despite the alarming level of needs, the UN HNRP of USD 3.1 billion (EUR 2.8 million) remains significantly underfunded⁷⁴.

In 2025, DG ECHO will further focus on supporting quality multisectoral emergency assistance⁷⁵ to address the primary needs of the most vulnerable people (such as IDPs, older people, people with disabilities, children, survivors of GBV) in a timely, adapted, and coordinated manner. DG ECHO continues to advocate for the respect of IHL, humanitarian principles and humanitarian access, including to territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by Russia, where needs assessment and the provision of life-saving assistance are severely impeded.

2.6.2. Türkiye

Türkiye remains one of the countries with the largest number of refugees in the world, with most of the 3.6 million refugees⁷⁶ there living in protracted displacement. Following the February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye, when over 50 000 people lost their lives and more than 850 000 buildings collapsed or were damaged, there are still humanitarian needs in the earthquake-affected regions hosting approximately 1.8 million Syrian refugees, in particular in the most affected provinces of Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adiyaman, Malatya, and parts of Gaziantep. In addition to the consequences of the earthquakes, the depreciation of the Turkish lira, skyrocketing inflation, the economic situation, and increased social tensions/anti-refugee sentiment, have made worse the already difficult living conditions of refugees, who continue facing difficulties in accessing social services and exercising their rights.

⁶⁹ For this document the Western Balkans and Caucasus includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

⁷⁰ [Humanitarian needs and Response Plan Ukraine - 2024](#).

⁷¹ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/> – update [12 Jul 2024](#)

⁷² <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2024-december-2023-enuk> HNRP Ukraine – 2024.

⁷³ Interagency Winter Response Plan for Ukraine – October 2024 to March 2025 (issued in July 2024).

⁷⁴ <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/234/summary/2024> – OCHA Financial Tracking Service.

⁷⁵ In line with the priorities of the Ukrainian government, DG ECHO will keep supporting immediate multisectoral emergency assistance, including basic needs (mainly through cash assistance); WASH; shelter (including winterisation); healthcare (including MHPSS, GBV and SRH); protection; EiE (including child protection); and actions against landmines.

⁷⁶ IOM World Migration report 2024 – <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2024>.

In 2025, where possible, the EU's humanitarian support in Türkiye would complement development support to refugees and focus on vulnerable refugees in the sectors of protection, WASH, health, and EiE, using cash as the preferred delivery modality, and building the capacity of local partners.

2.6.3. Moldova

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, more than 1.8 million Ukrainians have crossed into Moldova⁷⁷, mostly women and children. Most have transited through the country and into the EU or back to Ukraine, over 125 000 Ukrainian refugees and over 10 000 third-country nationals are currently living in Moldova, two thirds of them for over 6 months. The number of long-term displaced people in Moldova is expected to remain stable in 2025. However, further escalation of the conflict in southern Ukraine and the adverse impact of winter conditions may trigger a new influx of refugees into Moldova.

The vast majority of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova have no income and need assistance with basic needs, protection, healthcare, education and shelter. DG ECHO's priority will be to respond to the emergency needs of the most vulnerable refugees in these sectors, including people in rural areas and the Transnistrian region, while facilitating their integration into the national social protection system.

2.6.4. South Caucasus

Since September 2023, the government of Armenia has registered over 115 000 refugees from the Karabakh region. This is almost 4% of Armenia's total population. Approximately two thirds of these refugees are women and children. In October 2023, the government adopted Decree No. 1864-Ն to offer temporary protection (refugee status) to refugees from Karabakh and facilitate access to government services. This temporary protection status gives refugees the right to reside, work, access social welfare, healthcare and education.

While the refugees are partially integrated into national assistance schemes, the support they get remains largely insufficient for the most vulnerable among them, particularly single-parent households, older people, and people with disabilities. DG ECHO will keep addressing the humanitarian needs of these most vulnerable groups, in particular in protection, healthcare and basic needs, while they are being fully integrated into the national assistance schemes.

The South Caucasus region is also vulnerable to natural hazards and human-induced disasters. DG ECHO intends to strengthen the preparedness capabilities of national authorities and civil society.

2.6.5. Western Balkans

In the **Western Balkans**, DG ECHO will closely monitor the potential humanitarian consequences of mixed migration. Funding of life-saving activities will be considered, where needed and appropriate.

⁷⁷ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784>

2.7. *Middle East*

2.7.1. Syria regional and Lebanon crises

Syria

The Syrian conflict continues to cause massive displacement, many casualties and much suffering for the civilian population. 16.7 million people (almost half of them children) currently need humanitarian assistance in Syria – an all-time high since 2011 – while funding of the donor community is at an all-time low, with only close to 40% of the 2023 HRP funded. The 2024 HRP funding requirement amounts to USD 4.07 billion. More than 13 million Syrians remain displaced, including 7.2 million inside Syria itself. 90% of the Syrian population now live below the poverty line. Throughout 2024, as part of its principled and needs-based humanitarian response throughout the country, DG ECHO has continued to provide life-saving and life-sustaining assistance to meet acute humanitarian needs (particularly the needs of displaced people) and protracted needs. The situation is particularly worrying in northwest Syria, where over 4.1 million civilians are in dire humanitarian need. DG ECHO continues to provide a swift needs-based, multisectoral and life-saving response. Its strategy will address the deteriorating humanitarian situation, characterised by a significant increase in basic needs, IHL and IHRL violations, and protection challenges, along with a reduction in aid resources. Flexibility will remain a central part of DG ECHO's response given the volatility of the security environment, continued access challenges (notably in relation to the time-bound, politicised, consent agreements for cross-border assistance to northwest Syria) and disasters induced by natural hazards such as flooding, droughts or adverse winter conditions that are particularly harsh in northern Syria. Areas of assistance include protection, healthcare, WASH, shelter, coordination, food security and income support, education, and emergency preparedness and response. Humanitarian access and the protection of civilians (including humanitarian workers) will remain difficult. Meanwhile, the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns to Syria have still not been met, according to EU and UNHCR assessments. DG ECHO also supports humanitarian early recovery activities wherever feasible and relevant, within its humanitarian mandate and EU red lines, to maximise the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the humanitarian aid provided and the resilience of its beneficiaries. In 2024, close to a quarter of the EU humanitarian budget for Syria was allocated to early recovery activities.

DG ECHO will prioritise assistance for the most vulnerable people, basing itself solely on their needs and regardless of their geographical location, using all available routes, and taking into account its partners' operational capacities, in line with a Whole of Syria⁷⁸ approach. Meanwhile, investments of development actors in long-term support continue to face significant constraints and challenges inside Syria.

Risk management will remain at the centre of the response strategy. DG ECHO will also continue its strong humanitarian advocacy for compliance with IHL, and improved access and protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The situation in Gaza and the risk of regional overspill remains serious and would have dramatic consequences inside Syria. Targeted strikes, including strikes against Iranian interests, as well as strikes against US bases, have been observed, together with repeated strikes on Damascus airport which seriously affected capacities to deliver assistance. It is premature to consider exit scenarios (due to the co-existence of protracted and acute large-scale humanitarian needs), but DG ECHO will keep seeking

⁷⁸ [Whole of Syria | ReliefWeb Response](#)

consistency and complementarity with other EU financial instruments, encouraging partners to consider referrals and resilience opportunities as part of their programming.

Lebanon

The deep political, socio-economic and financial crisis in Lebanon shows no sign of abating, with devastating effects on the population. The lack of a functioning government, rampant inflation and unstable exchange rates are exacerbating shortages of fuel and other vital supplies. The removal of subsidies is making essential products and health services unaffordable for many Lebanese nationals and refugees.

After nearly a year of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, linked to the Gaza crisis, the most recent escalation of hostilities in the country since September 2024 has caused widespread devastation, resulting in over 1 000 000 people now directly affected and/or displaced by the conflict. IOM reports over 600 000 internally displaced people since 8 October 2023, with more than 170 000 people residing in shelters. There are insufficient shelters for the displaced, increasing the risk of social tensions. The extensive use of schools as shelters – and damaged schools – not only disrupts the immediate educational process but also has long-term consequences on the academic success and prospects of Lebanon’s children. The health system is overwhelmed by the number of casualties, coupled with a shortage of essential medical supplies. Vulnerable households affected by the conflict struggle to meet basic food needs due to displacement and market disruptions.

Lebanon hosts one of the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide, with an estimated 1.5 million registered and non-registered Syrian refugees. 44% of the Lebanese population live in poverty, while 90% of Syrian refugees cannot cover their basic needs as defined by the survival minimum expenditure basket. Inter- and intra-community violence linked to competition over goods and services, fuelled by statements against the presence of Syrian refugees by Lebanese politicians and hate speech on social media, have reached critical levels. The protection space of refugees is shrinking alarmingly, with increased raids, mass evictions, arbitrary arrests and deportations. A string of sea crossings towards Cyprus was observed in the first half of 2024, leading to pushback and deportation back to Lebanon and then to Syria. This is in a context in which the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns to Syria are still not being met, according to EU and UNHCR assessments. In 2025, DG ECHO will continue to focus on providing life-saving assistance and protection for the most vulnerable populations to address existing and emerging humanitarian needs, including in relation to the conflict in the south. Protection and accountability remain key components of its strategy. DG ECHO focuses on Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese people, but other groups will also be considered in an integrated response. Close coordination between different EU services and instruments will remain of paramount importance to ensure the operational continuity of actions and assistance, and to address long-term needs.

Jordan

Jordan is host to over 698 000 refugees, including 628 000 Syrians, 82% of whom live in host communities⁷⁹. 67% of refugees live below the poverty line. The registration of non-Syrian asylum seekers remains suspended, limiting their access to basic services and restricting their protection space.

⁷⁹ UNHCR, June 2024.

The Syrian crisis has brought to the fore some of the challenges Jordan faces in areas such as employment, the business environment, climate change and the management of natural resources. The continued decreased levels of funding, with only 29.2% of the Jordan HRP funded in 2023, further exacerbated by the conflict in Gaza, have forced several UN agencies to significantly reduce the assistance they give refugees. As a result, the socio-economic situation of refugees has further deteriorated and negative coping mechanisms, such as resorting to debts, child labour and child marriage are on the rise. The reduced assistance is also jeopardising Jordan's positive attitude to refugees. Eight years after the closure of the northeastern border with Syria in 2016, around 7 500 people are still stranded at the 'berm' on the Syrian side of the border (Rukban). This number is not expected to fall significantly. In 2025, the assistance DG ECHO gives refugees in host communities and refugee camps, focusing mostly on access to protection, healthcare and education services, will remain considerable. It will also continue to coordinate with other EU instruments to ensure a smooth transition to long-term solutions for refugees and host communities.

2.7.2. Palestine⁸⁰

The full-scale military operation following Hamas' brutal terrorist attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023, along with the Israeli government's complete siege of Gaza, has brought the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza to a catastrophic level for its population of 2.2 million. The situation is the worst on record in terms of the number of Palestinian fatalities, injuries, the destruction of houses and properties, the disruption of basic services and mass displacement, and casualties among humanitarian workers. Gaza's entire population is exposed to security and protection risks, and have insufficient access to water, food, healthcare, and other basic services. Almost the entire population, displaced several times, has become entirely dependent on aid.

In the West Bank, demolitions, access restrictions, discriminatory planning policies, settlement expansion, settler violence and deadly military operations in refugee camps have increased since 7 October 2023, increasing the vulnerability of the population, who must live in a coercive environment with little or no access to essential services and income-earning opportunities.

In 2025, protection of and assistance for the most vulnerable people in Gaza will remain crucial, focusing on health, food, water and sanitation, and shelter/non-food items. In the West Bank, support for vulnerable communities who risk being displaced and don't have access to basic services remains crucial. Close coordination with other Commission DGs and departments and the EEAS in health, WASH, social protection, and area-based activities, will ensure programmes consist of both immediate relief and resilience-building activities.

2.8. *Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula*

2.8.1. Yemen

Yemen continues to be one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. More than 9 years of devastating conflict, economic deterioration and the collapse of public services have left 18.2 million people – half the

⁸⁰ This designation is not to be construed as a recognition of a State of Palestine and does not affect the individual positions of the EU Member States on this matter.

population – in need of humanitarian assistance and protection services⁸¹. The humanitarian situation is getting worse, but funding is decreasing, and the operating environment shrinking.

A truce of 2 years provided a historic opportunity to work towards a lasting settlement of the conflict. Some improvements were made but the humanitarian situation is deteriorating again. The regional spill-over of the conflict in Gaza, attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, and a military escalation are exacerbating the Yemeni population's difficulties. Insecurity is increasing across the country and there is political fragmentation in IRG areas. The financial warfare between the IRG and the de facto authorities has led to serious banking disruptions and negative repercussions on the economy and the Yemeni population.

Yemen is accumulating drastic needs in all sectors of humanitarian intervention. The country has one of the worst food crises in the world. In 2024, 17.6 million people are estimated to face severe food shortages, with the food security emergency being compounded by healthcare, nutrition and acute WASH needs, among others. In the face of highly limited income-earning opportunities, above-average food prices, and the pause in humanitarian food assistance in areas controlled by the de facto authorities, up to 18 million people (55% of the total population of the country) are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity by October 2024⁸². Yemen is also experiencing some of the highest malnutrition rates ever recorded. Approximately 5 million children under five and 2.7 million pregnant and lactating women need life-saving humanitarian integrated nutrition interventions. The malnutrition situation countrywide is likely to deteriorate throughout 2025. The latest IPC Acute Malnutrition Analysis shows that the number of children under the age of five suffering from acute malnutrition, or wasting, rose by 34% from the previous year across the IRG-controlled areas⁸³. Since the beginning of 2024, a severe cholera outbreak has been spreading across Yemen, with more than 76 000 suspected cases of acute watery diarrhoea/cholera, putting the most vulnerable people even more at risk. Systematic IHL, IHRL and refugee law violations (including GBV), child protection violations (such as child recruitment), deportations and episodes of *refoulement* continue to be a major concern for civilians in Yemen, with 16.4 million people estimated to need protection assistance⁸⁴. Landmines, improvised explosive devices and other explosive remnants of war are a daily threat to civilians.

As of mid-August 2024, the Yemen HRP is funded at 27.7%, falling short of nearly USD 2 billion of the requested USD 2.7 billion. The operating environment is highly challenging for humanitarian actors across the country, due to aid interference, including the restriction of the movements of female aid workers. The security situation has deteriorated, with recurrent threats, attacks, arbitrary detention, kidnapping and killings. In mid-2024 an unprecedented wave of detentions was launched in areas controlled by de facto authorities, affecting, among others, UN and NGO national staff⁸⁵.

In 2025, DG ECHO will prioritise multisectoral and integrated life-saving interventions to address the needs of vulnerable people who are directly exposed to conflict and disasters resulting in displacement and affected by food security, nutrition and health crises, and face severe protection risks. DG ECHO will focus on locations with the highest concentration of life-saving needs. Its response will boost coordination and critical logistical capacities, as well as the development of interoperable systems to enable better integration

⁸¹ Yemen HRP 2024.

⁸² Famine Early Warning Network System (FEWSNET).

⁸³ IPC Acute Malnutrition Analysis November 2023-October 2024, published in August 2024.

⁸⁴ Yemen 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

⁸⁵ An estimated 17 local aid workers from UN agencies and international NGOs have been detained since June 2024, with no news of their whereabouts and conditions to date.

of emergency and recovery assistance, thereby supporting the HDP nexus approach. DG ECHO will adapt and recalibrate its operation considering the evolution of the non-permissive operational environment, access and the ability to ensure it operates in a principled way.

2.8.2. Iraq

Since the Islamic State of Iraq was defeated, the country's humanitarian situation has improved. However, people in protracted displacement remain in need of humanitarian assistance.

There has been a decline in the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance (from 11 million people in 2017 to 2.5 million in 2022). In 2022, the international community initiated a transition process out of the humanitarian/emergency phase towards a long-term agenda for sustainable solutions, in which national authorities will have a leading role. The annual Humanitarian Needs Overview/HRP was replaced by a Humanitarian Transition Overview for Iraq in 2023.

Iraq's recovery process continues to face political, security and socio-economic challenges in an unstable context. 1.1 million people remain internally displaced, including around 140 000 people still living in camps. People in protracted displacement still have a range of acute needs and difficulties meeting their basic needs due to barriers to return and limited recovery, reintegration and reconciliation activities. Their protection risks are exacerbated by poor and insecure living conditions and by the lack of critical civil documentation, crucial for them to be able to access essential public services. Affected by the conflict in Syria and instability in the wider region, Iraq is also host to over 300 000 asylum seekers and refugees.

In 2025, DG ECHO intends to provide protection services for the most vulnerable displaced people living in camps and informal settlements, particularly people who lack key civil documentation. This will help them reintegrate into the national social protection system.

The humanitarian system alone cannot provide all the support needed. The needs of IDPs and refugees require a comprehensive response that goes beyond short-term humanitarian assistance. This makes the nexus approach crucial for addressing the challenges IDPs face, for including them in the Iraqi national social safety net system and for developing plans to facilitate the return of displaced populations or their sustainable integration into host communities.

2.9. *Asia*

2.9.1. South-West Asia and the Central Asia region

Afghanistan

Following the Taliban takeover in 2021, Afghanistan has one of the largest humanitarian crises. Its 2024 HNRP identifies 23.7 million people in need of humanitarian aid (including 12.3 million children), and targets 17.3 million people, the highest planned reach globally, requiring USD 3.06 billion. By August 2024, the response had only been funded at 25.3%, leaving many Afghans without aid.

The reasons for the current humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan are multidimensional, with over 85% of the population in poverty and dependent on aid, and protection threats particularly affecting women and girls. The reasons include persistent drought, recurrent climate hazards, earthquakes, the ongoing economic crisis and inflation, food insecurity and malnutrition, the national public health system's near-collapse and the lasting effects of decades of armed conflict (including high levels of unexploded ordnance). Compounding all this, Afghanistan is at high risk from climate change. There are major challenges regarding infrastructure maintenance and the provision of basic services by the Taliban, preventing community and economic recovery. The forced return of hundreds of thousands of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran is also increasing the number of people in need of humanitarian aid throughout the country. The overall severity of needs remains very high, and coping measures are exhausted, so both urban and rural areas are now equally affected. The Taliban's repressive policies further exacerbate humanitarian needs, affecting women and girls in particular. The restrictive humanitarian context has led many donors to reduce their humanitarian funding, even as needs have been increasing. This lack of funding has caused humanitarian partners to reduce the quality of aid and the number of beneficiaries. Despite the numerous Taliban edicts restricting the humanitarian environment, humanitarian organisations have managed to continue their principled work with the meaningful participation of women, although this requires additional time and expenditure.

In Afghanistan, DG ECHO will address the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations (prioritising remote communities that are hard to reach as much as possible) and advocate for an environment that makes the equitable and safe delivery of humanitarian assistance possible. Principled humanitarian engagement with the people of Afghanistan and needs-based interventions will be central to DG ECHO's response. Afghanistan is frequently affected by natural hazards, and DG ECHO intends to maintain multisectoral support capacity for saving and sustaining the lives of affected populations. The increasing restrictions on girls' education mean that EiE remains a priority. It is essential to give practical consideration to how best to target and include women to ensure equitable and wider access to assistance for the whole population. Particular attention will be paid to coordination between humanitarian and basic human needs actors and programmes in order to realistically promote mid- to long-term solutions.

Pakistan

In a context of high political and economic instability, Pakistan is host to an estimated 3.1 million Afghans (including 1.3 million refugees). Undocumented Afghans are the most vulnerable.

The humanitarian situation is worsening in Pakistan. It has been exacerbated by both an economic crisis and a deteriorating food and nutrition situation (due to crop loss).

Following the Pakistani government's decision to start deporting foreigners without valid documents as of 1 November 2023, over half a million Afghan nationals have returned to Afghanistan. Many of them have called Pakistan home for decades and have nothing to go back to. Providing protection and basic life-saving services for the most vulnerable Afghans in Pakistan, including Afghans without documentation, remains a key priority for EU humanitarian aid.

Pakistan also experiences frequent disasters such as earthquakes, floods and recurrent droughts. Malnutrition and limited access to water, sanitation and medical services have compromised the healthcare capacities of the most vulnerable communities. The 2022 floods also made the already pressing humanitarian needs even

more pressing. Nearly 2 years after the devastating floods, at least 20.6 million people still need humanitarian assistance. Over 1.2 million people remain displaced, with at least 356 000 households without assistance, especially in the most affected districts of Sindh and Balochistan. The population has been further affected by the 2023 floods, combined with an unprecedented economic crisis marked by high inflation.

Pakistan is also facing an imminent nutrition crisis, exacerbated by high rates of malnutrition in flood-affected regions. According to the latest IPC, 8.6 million people were highly food-insecure between March and June 2024. Approximately 2 million children suffering from acute malnutrition require urgent treatment, while an additional 2 million require nutrition services.

The 2025 DG ECHO strategy in Pakistan will also focus on the refugee crisis, to meet the protection and humanitarian needs of Afghans, regardless of their status; on addressing the impact of the devastating floods of 2022; and on people affected by human-made and natural hazards. In accordance with the ‘do no harm’ principle, DG ECHO will focus on sectors that benefit Afghans and host communities alike, in particular food security and nutrition. Its strategy will support the institutionalisation of multi-hazard approaches by strengthening the governance and ownership of DRM for risk-based preparedness. Natural hazard-induced disasters should also be addressed by incorporating a preparedness approach into all policies.

Iran

With over 3.8 million refugee and refugee-like populations, most of them from Afghanistan, Iran is the world’s largest refugee-hosting country. They live in cities, towns and villages among the Iranian host community, with only 1% living in refugee settlements. Many are very vulnerable and dependent on humanitarian aid (especially those who are undocumented). The dramatic increase in the cost of living due to inflation, coupled with limited income-earning opportunities, has severely affected the capacity of vulnerable Afghan nationals and refugees to afford even basic goods. They also face growing resentment and discrimination caused by economic pressure. Iran is also one of the world’s most disaster-prone countries. Frequent earthquakes, droughts, floods, landslides and major storms take a heavy toll on people and infrastructure, and affect the most vulnerable people among host communities, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

In 2025, DG ECHO will focus on the humanitarian needs of Afghan refugees and the most vulnerable Iranians. Particular attention will be given to newly arrived Afghans being hosted in temporary settlements and to people affected by natural hazards.

Central Asia

In 2025, DG ECHO will focus on disaster preparedness, strengthening local preparedness and response capacity.

2.9.2. South and South-East Asia

Bangladesh

The congested refugee camps in Cox's Bazar host almost 1 million Rohingya refugees who massively fled military exactions in the Rakhine State in 2017. Rohingya refugees are stateless and not allowed to get education or be formally employed, as per the policy of Bangladesh's authorities, making them entirely dependent on humanitarian aid. The 2021 military coup and the conflict in Myanmar have further reduced the prospects of the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees. The 2024 Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan (USD 852.4 million) is funded at 33.7%. The change of government in Bangladesh may open avenues for policy change.

DG ECHO's strategy for Rohingyas in Bangladesh in 2025 is twofold: i) to ensure comprehensive humanitarian multisectoral assistance, and to respond to suddenly arising and unexpected needs; ii) to advocate for policy changes to promote a more sustainable approach towards refugees.

Bangladesh is also one of the world's most disaster-prone countries, exposed to a whole host of natural hazards, including cyclones, floods and earthquakes. DG ECHO will help Bangladesh scale up measures to improve its preparedness for natural hazards.

Myanmar

There are 18.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Myanmar, up from 1 million before the military *coup d'état* in February 2021. Large numbers of civilians have since taken up arms, joining a kaleidoscope of ethnic armed groups who have been fighting the military for decades. The UNHCR estimates that there are about 3 million IDPs in Myanmar. Almost the entire country is affected by the conflict. The 2024 HRP (USD 993.5 million) is only funded at 22.7%.

In 2025, DG ECHO's strategy in Myanmar will address the acute humanitarian needs of IDPs and other conflict-affected people across the country, while maintaining essential assistance for long-term IDPs. DG ECHO's priority will be to provide emergency and life-saving assistance, while also supporting the nexus approach through appropriate operational synergies with other programmes. DG ECHO supports the capacity strengthening of local networks in collaboration with international partners to ensure timely and high-quality preparedness for a multisectoral response. DG ECHO will also support disaster preparedness in Myanmar, adapted to the prevailing situation.

Regional refugee crisis

Countries in South-East Asia are experiencing two regional crises rooted in Myanmar: i) Rohingya refugees (Indonesia, India, Malaysia and Thailand) and ii) post-2021-coup refugees from Myanmar (Thailand and India). More than 500 000 people are estimated to need protection and assistance (most of them women and children).

In 2025, DG ECHO's response is based on a non-discriminatory 'one refugee' approach to supporting humanitarian interventions that target the most severely affected populations in need of protection and assistance. Advocacy to ensure access and response could also be considered.

Philippines

The Philippines is prone to significant humanitarian crises caused by both natural hazards (tropical cyclones, floods, volcanic eruptions, etc.) and conflicts.

In 2025, DG ECHO will focus on the unmet forgotten humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable families affected by internal conflict in Mindanao. To complement humanitarian actions, the disaster preparedness capability of local government will be improved to include strategies specifically aimed at reducing the vulnerability of conflict-affected families.

Disaster preparedness in South and South-East Asia

In other countries of the region, DG ECHO will pursue its targeted disaster preparedness investment to boost local preparedness and response capacity, working at government level whenever possible. The systematic inclusion of the most vulnerable people in relevant DRM plans at all levels remains at the centre of DG ECHO's activity.

2.10. Latin America and the Caribbean

2.10.1. Central America

The Central American countries and Mexico are subject both to significant exposure to natural hazards and to high levels of inequality and poverty exacerbated by a dramatic rise in the number of displaced people, and endemic pervasive violence. The 2024 Inform Severity Index puts Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador in the high severity category as complex crises, with 9.3 million people, almost 25% of their total population, in need of humanitarian aid. For Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama there are no official data due to the lack of HRPs. However, Nicaragua has intensified repression and human rights violations and decreased humanitarian space, and reports on Mexico demonstrate the increasing level of violence by cartels and criminal groups who have extended their presence all over the country, targeting displaced populations for extortions, kidnappings, sexual violence and forced labour. Successive climate shocks in recent years (exacerbated by droughts caused by El Niño) and the decrease in purchasing power have seriously affected food security. About 8 million people are now food-insecure in the region (2024 HNO⁸⁶), mainly in the 'Dry Corridor' of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras).

In 2025, DG ECHO will continue to support protection and relief assistance for populations suffering from the effects of multiple crises, including the most vulnerable victims of organised violence, forcibly displaced people, and people requiring food assistance and short- to medium-term income support. DG ECHO will also support disaster preparedness activities alongside long-term development actions, and respond to epidemics. It will monitor population movements triggered by violence, poverty, food insecurity and social unrest, including mass mixed migration flows through Central America and Mexico.

⁸⁶ [Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 | Humanitarian Action](#)

2.10.2. South America

Forced displacement continues to be a critical humanitarian issue in the subregion, with people fleeing Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador due to violence and deepening political and socio-economic crises. The deterioration of the situation in different host countries of South America (increasingly restrictive migration and asylum policies and rising xenophobia) keeps fuelling secondary flows of people, between countries or towards the north of the continent, with people in transit presenting increasingly vulnerable profiles and facing growing protection risks and lack of access to basic services (healthcare, food, water and education). South America is also prone to various recurrent hazards (including floods, earthquakes and forest fires) and large indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to these multidimensional threats, further aggravated by climate change (and the weather-related events it gives rise to).

In 2025, DG ECHO intends to consolidate and extend its current response to human mobility, focusing on protection and life-saving operations for the most vulnerable groups in areas of transit and agglomeration. DG ECHO will also put particular emphasis on the needs of indigenous populations across the continent, who have been traditionally marginalised. It will also continue supporting disaster preparedness activities to strengthen local, national and regional responses and coordination capacities to better tackle the multiple humanitarian challenges and work with the UCPM.

Colombia

Humanitarian needs have been rising in Colombia over the past decade, despite significant development gains such as the 2016 peace agreement. Throughout 2024, at least 13.5 million people have been in need of humanitarian assistance. Wider territorial control by armed groups (particularly in rural areas) has escalated the conflict, leading to increased displacement, confinement and reduced humanitarian access. The situation has been further complicated by the human mobility crisis (mainly, but not only, Venezuelan refugees and migrants), Colombia's exposure to natural hazards, and the high level of socio-economic inequalities (25% of the population faces food insecurity). These overlapping factors further deepen humanitarian needs, with ethnic minorities – both indigenous and Afro-Colombian – and underserved rural communities disproportionately affected.

In 2025, DG ECHO intends to focus on the humanitarian consequences of i) the conflict, ii) the mixed migration flows and iii) disasters caused by natural hazards. Support will be given to the most affected and vulnerable populations (such as Afro-Colombians and indigenous people) in the areas of protection, healthcare, EiE, disaster preparedness and food security. Some cross-cutting policy aspects, such as IHL, the HDP nexus, and localisation, will remain a priority.

Venezuela

The humanitarian situation inside Venezuela remains acute. A decade of political deadlock, authoritarianism, economic crises and inflation rates (among the highest in the world) have plunged 20 million people into a humanitarian crisis. Basic goods are scarce and basic services have collapsed, with a government that denies humanitarian needs. Geographical conditions mean Venezuela is highly exposed to natural disasters, putting pressure on humanitarian resources. With 8.9 million people displaced, 6.6 million

of whom the region hosts, Venezuela ranks third on a global level in displacement terms. Presidential elections on 28 July 2024 were marred by controversy and unrest, with no negotiated solution in sight. Nationwide protests and government repression have resulted in over 2 400 detentions and 20 deaths since 21 August. Violence and repression will exponentially increase protection and emergency health needs, with a new exodus expected in the medium term.

In 2025, DG ECHO will keep giving Venezuela humanitarian assistance to meet needs identified inside the country and in the wider region. The continued aggravation of existing humanitarian needs and an additional humanitarian impact are expected in the short and medium term as a result of a new political crisis engulfing the country following the presidential elections. Multisectoral actions will focus on providing basic healthcare services, protection, education, food and nutrition assistance, WASH and shelter support for the most vulnerable people in the least accessible areas and people on the move. DG ECHO will continue to implement its disaster preparedness actions; nevertheless, the recent changes in context could make a revision necessary, to ensure emerging risks are integrated into programming and are prepared for.

2.10.3. The Caribbean

The **Caribbean** islands and territories are increasingly prone to climate-related risks. Disasters are changing patterns and intensity, increasing humanitarian needs and reducing capacities to cope with recurrent disasters. Geographic isolation, small size, limited natural resources and large exposed coastal zones are adding to the complexity of the subregion. The violence, heightened protection risks and food insecurity are also driving people away, resulting in high mobility and a lot of displacement, exacerbating the protection crisis. These compounding factors are causing a significant spike in poverty and food insecurity (more than 4.1 million people in the Caribbean are food-insecure).

DG ECHO will maintain its support for disaster preparedness at community and institutional level, to ensure identified needs are addressed. Compliance with the overall objectives of the recently signed EU LAC MoU will be pursued to promote integration of the objectives into DG ECHO's policies and legislative framework, as well as the sharing of best practices. DG ECHO will stand ready to provide rapid humanitarian assistance in response to sudden-onset disasters and will seek continued synergies with UCPM interventions. It will keep intervening in emerging or deteriorating contexts resulting from displacement and protection needs, helping displaced populations (particularly refugees from Venezuela and stateless people in the Dominican Republic) and other groups forcibly displaced by disasters.

Haiti

In 2024, 5.5 million Haitians (nearly half the population) needed humanitarian assistance. The dramatic increase in gang-related violence in metropolitan areas has aggravated the situation. Gangs control 80% of Port au Prince, with 1.5 million people living in the areas gangs control, exposed to extortion, killing, GBV, and forced recruitment, and with very limited access to basic services such as healthcare and education. Some 600 000 people are internally displaced, many of them living in spontaneous sites, such as schools, churches and other buildings, in Port au Prince. Acute malnutrition affects 277 000 children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women and 5 million people are in high acute food insecurity. The healthcare system in Haiti is on the verge of collapse. Only 20% of healthcare facilities in the capital are functional and

medical supplies are dwindling, with one of the three laboratories in the country closed and the other two functioning at low capacity.

In 2025, DG ECHO will further support the provision of food assistance for vulnerable populations facing a food emergency, and of nutritional inputs for children under five and children with severe acute malnutrition. It will also continue to address the protection and healthcare needs of victims of gang-related violence, as well as those of forced returnees/deportees. Support for disaster preparedness and for the building of local rapid response capacities will also be maintained.

2.11. Response to emergencies – Relief EU

The EU response will continue to address immediate humanitarian needs arising from sudden-onset natural disasters or human-induced crises (e.g. epidemic outbreaks, cyclones, floods, earthquakes, landslides, population movements, etc.). Interventions in this context fall within the ReliefEU HIP⁸⁷ which streamlines and simplifies the different response instruments (formerly the EHRC and Emergency Toolbox) and integrates them into a unique and more coherent emergency response tool.

ReliefEU will cover unexpected humanitarian needs, including the unforeseen deterioration of ongoing crises in 2025, complementing funding for such crises. To be able to respond quickly and flexibly to these needs, ReliefEU works in the following two ways.

*A) **ReliefEU funding** (formerly the Emergency Toolbox)*

All Emergencies Response Tool (ALERT): ALERT's purpose is to provide rapid first-line funding for an immediate response (including anticipatory action) to cover the pressing needs of the most vulnerable people in any type of emergency that has led, or is likely to lead to, loss of life, physical, psychological or social suffering and/or material damage.

Support for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) through the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeals: In most emergencies, assistance is first provided locally or nationally. National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, supported by the IFRC, are well placed to provide an immediate response because they are rooted in the local community and can mobilise local people as volunteers. By supporting the DREF and the IFRC's Emergency Appeals, DG ECHO also fulfils its localisation commitments and ensures a quick-reaction capacity with a minimal administrative burden for the parties concerned. DG ECHO's contribution to the DREF can also be used under the IFRC's anticipatory action pillar of the DREF, triggered once a threat has become a real or imminent event.

*B) **ReliefEU Capabilities** (formerly the EHRC)*

⁸⁷ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/funding-evaluations/funding-humanitarian-aid/financing-decisions-hips_en

ReliefEU Capabilities aim to support humanitarian partners through a set of operational tools designed to provide rapid but temporary support to fill operational gaps in the humanitarian response identified by the humanitarian community.

The objectives of ReliefEU Capabilities are to:

- support humanitarian partners in giving effective, efficient and timely assistance to people in need in the aftermath of a natural or human-induced disaster, and in situations of protracted crisis where operational gaps are identified;
- improve humanitarian access by providing safe and reliable transport, logistics and supply chain solutions;
- enable more rapid, targeted and direct EU interventions launched and run by DG ECHO to improve the humanitarian response and to fill operational gaps;
- show stronger EU leadership and ensure EU visibility in delivering humanitarian assistance and setting the humanitarian agenda to support the EU's overall role in a crisis;
- promote Team Europe initiatives.

To achieve these objectives, ReliefEU Capabilities cover temporary gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and provide humanitarian expertise. The different services provided by ReliefEU Capabilities include i) providing common logistics services for humanitarian partners in the form of international and in-country transport operations (using various modes of transport), ii) warehousing capacities, iii) pre-positioning and delivering emergency stockpiles and providing other supply chain/logistical support including support to coordination structures such as the global logistics cluster, and iv) deploying expertise and capacities.

ReliefEU Capabilities deployments are coordinated with humanitarian and civil protection stakeholders and respect the UN's overall coordinating role.

ReliefEU Capabilities will be used for sudden-onset disasters and protracted crises where a peak in the needs of the affected populations or humanitarian access constraints require specific support. ReliefEU Capabilities might be activated concomitantly with a request for UCPM assistance. In those circumstances, DG ECHO, in particular the ERCC, will ensure the complementarity of activities.

DG ECHO will make full use of its field network, its experience and reliable primary or secondary data to assess needs and operational gaps. When a full assessment of needs and operational gaps is not possible, DG ECHO will act on a 'no regret basis for the deployment of essential ReliefEU Capabilities' services.

Respect for humanitarian principles will be ensured throughout the use of ReliefEU Capabilities and will remain a pivotal part of decision-making.

2.12. Complementary and thematic activities

Supporting a paradigm shift in humanitarian logistics

In 2022, DG ECHO launched its humanitarian logistics policy, which recognises that logistics is cross-sectoral and the backbone of humanitarian action. Given the significant opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness gains, the policy called for a paradigm shift in this area towards a more strategic approach.

In 2025, DG ECHO will continue to provide specific financial support for initiatives that contribute to this paradigm shift by making greater use of common services, shared services and joint procurement regionally or globally. At the same time, DG ECHO will continue to raise awareness of the need for a more strategic approach to the humanitarian supply chain and logistics. It encourages taking the supply chain and logistics into account in all funding, in a bid to ultimately increase the impact of aid as a whole.

Policy support

Access to the right mix of policy support tools and making the best use of them are essential for having a systemic, long-lasting impact on the humanitarian system in priority areas that are important for DG ECHO and for the humanitarian system as a whole.

Quality funding is an important policy commitment, in line with the Grand Bargain. To achieve this objective, DG ECHO will develop a number of softly earmarked and/or multiyear programmes with some strategic, key mandated partners, including the ICRC, the IFRC and the OCHA. Such programmes will also contribute to the implementation of key DG ECHO policy priorities, such as the promotion of IHL, the localisation agenda and anticipatory action.

In a context of increasingly complex humanitarian challenges and scarce resources, the capacity of humanitarian actors to respond to ever-growing needs is often stretched to the limit. Addressing this issue is a question not only of increasing financial resources, but also of improving tools, knowledge, coordination and preparedness, as stated in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid⁸⁸.

The development and rollout of innovative and well informed policies also ensures that DG ECHO's operational activities meet the highest international standards in terms of quality and timeliness. Through the Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC), DG ECHO will still champion numerous international initiatives, support innovation and the strengthening of the humanitarian system, and help develop and build the capacity of its partners to deliver more efficient and effective humanitarian aid interventions.

The policy support contract will continue to support DG ECHO's internal policy development and dissemination, and help to assess (and, when relevant, further refine) its policy tools.

All these strands will be brought together in a **policy HIP** with the aim of building synergies between the different strands and ensuring flexibility to address emerging challenges and policy priorities.

Visibility, information and communication

⁸⁸ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42008X0130(01)), page 7.

Providing transparent and accountable information on the impact of EU humanitarian aid and disaster response and its underlying values is crucial for maintaining and mobilising continued support for relief assistance. In 2025, DG ECHO intends to sustain awareness and understanding of and support for humanitarian issues, focusing mostly on audiences in the EU and in non-EU countries where the EU is funding major humanitarian operations. Effective communication will also highlight the EU's cooperation with international, national and local partner organisations in delivering relief assistance to people affected by humanitarian crises. DG ECHO's communication approach reflects the special characteristics of humanitarian aid, aimed at preserving a distinct identity for principled, needs-based humanitarian action, in line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Communication on the EU's humanitarian action. DG ECHO's approach to communication in partnership provides regular visibility for content produced by a range of humanitarian partners. The monitoring of operational activities funded by DG ECHO aims to ensure their alignment with the visibility requirements of the Commission's corporate model grant agreement.

Communicating the EU's response to sudden-onset, ongoing and protracted crises remains at the core of communication planning, together with raising awareness of more strategic themes (including IHL, humanitarian principles and 'forgotten crises'). Methods of disseminating content on EU humanitarian aid will include integrated communication campaigns and use various channels such as print, web, audiovisual, social media and podcasts. Additional initiatives will include media trips for journalists and other forms of media engagement. The fourth annual European Humanitarian Forum, to be co-organised in Q2 2025 with the Polish EU Presidency, will create a platform for stakeholder engagement, and provide a wide range of materials for external communication.

Where appropriate, DG ECHO's communication actions will contribute to the Commission's corporate communication, led by DG COMM as domain leader, and in collaboration with the Commission's other external policy DGs and the EEAS.

3. Delivery, coordination and control of humanitarian aid

3.1 Ways and means of delivering aid

Field network

DG ECHO's field network of 50 field offices in 40 countries is considered a key and distinctive feature of its humanitarian aid policy. The network is composed of approximately 450 international and local staff. It contributes to improving coordination with stakeholders, including EU delegations, Member States and international aid organisations. The network is flexible and can be adapted to the evolving humanitarian situation. This way, it helps to enhance the EU's response capacity in crisis situations, drawing on available synergies with civil protection activities.

The field network's role is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU's humanitarian action by:

- helping to identify and evaluate humanitarian needs and trends in the country/region concerned;

- monitoring EU-funded humanitarian aid actions and providing technical advice on project proposals and their implementation;
- contributing to the coherent development of DG ECHO's operational strategies, policy guidelines and standards that guarantee a consistently high level of quality for EU-funded humanitarian aid projects;
- representing the Commission in relevant humanitarian aid clusters/forums, advocating with relevant local/regional/global stakeholders (within the framework established by HQ) and ensuring appropriate communication and visibility actions, while keeping office structures flexible, agile, adapted to needs and based on appropriate resource, logistics and security management arrangements separate from those of the EU Delegations.

Security sector

The security sector is the operational security arm of DG ECHO. It ensures the security of staff and the integrity of DG ECHO premises and assets in all countries where DG ECHO operates. DG ECHO's mandate is such that its supervisory missions are often in high-risk countries and areas. Without the assurance of adequate security provision, DG ECHO could not be one of the world's leading humanitarian donors.

The security sector's normal tasks are conducting, supervising and implementing DG ECHO's security policies, security briefings, standard operational procedures, country security plans and security training courses on humanitarian and civil protection activities. It is also responsible for managing and giving technical advice on security-related incidents, crisis response measures and evacuation procedures, under the supervision of the Director in charge of security.

At field level, the security sector is represented by the regional security coordinators (RSCs) who are currently based in Dakar, Goma, Nairobi, Panama, Amman, Bangkok and Kyiv. These RSCs are a fundamental part of DG ECHO's security work and are the main security points of contact in the field. They are tasked with establishing and maintaining a security network that links DG ECHO's staff and management in the region and promotes strong security awareness among DG ECHO's partners. The RSCs also conduct regular security risk assessments for the regions they are assigned to, working closely with EEAS and Member State security staff and with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and other agencies and organisations to improve the coordination and implementation of security management arrangements. They are ready to deploy in a region or globally at any time to cover security crises acting on instructions from HQ.

Relations with (international) partners

DG ECHO carries out its humanitarian aid mandate by funding projects proposed by partner organisations, which currently number around 200. The partner organisations are European humanitarian NGOs, international organisations (including UN agencies) and specialised agencies in the Member States⁸⁹. With some of these organisations (strategic partners, who jointly account for more than half of the annual humanitarian budget), DG ECHO organises annual high-level dialogues and strategic dialogues to discuss

⁸⁹ [Humanitarian partners](#)

major issues of shared interest. It will continue to coordinate the EU's preparation for meetings of the governing bodies of the strategic UN partners for which it has the lead. This coordination includes liaising with EU Member States. DG ECHO will also continue to actively participate in the donor groups established by several major partners.

Programmatic partnerships

Programmatic partnerships address multiannual strategic and geographic priorities of shared interest between DG ECHO and its partners and promote innovative policy approaches.

The programmatic partnerships enable the implementation of activities that benefit from a longer time frame such as capacity-building actions for local partners or a nexus programme. The expected benefits are:

- more and/or better outcomes at the end of a programme than if the partner had embarked on successive but distinct annual projects;
- efficiency gains and economies of scale that increase the number of direct beneficiaries;
- better dialogue at HQ/field level with the partners in question on specific topics of common interest;
- further testing and rolling out of more efficient and innovative approaches.

When properly designed, programmatic partnerships enable progress towards fulfilling key Grand Bargain commitments in a quid pro quo logic, by (i) reaching more people in need, (ii) having quicker and greater accountability to affected populations, (iii) supporting local and national actors, (iv) giving more flexible funding to aid organisations, (v) advancing the efficiency agenda and (vi) reporting transparently.

Since 2020, DG ECHO has launched pilot programmatic partnerships with NGO partners (ACTED, Concern, the IRC and Save the Children) and with UNICEF, the FAO, the OCHA, the IFRC and the ICRC. DG ECHO started mainstreaming the programmatic partnership model into geographic HIPs in 2023 and will continue to do so in 2025.

3.2 Coordination and information exchange

Various mechanisms are in place to ensure coordination and the exchange of information on crisis response and humanitarian aid activities in general, including:

- exchanging information on overall operational strategies for and responses to specific crisis situations (this regularly features on the agenda of the Council Working Group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) attended by EU Member States);
- crisis reports, which are shared with Member States and contribute to shared assessments and understanding of the situation on the ground, thereby helping with the overall coordination of the EU's and Member States' humanitarian response;
- regular exchanges with partners at HQ and on the ground;

- the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), which enables information exchange, situational awareness and coordination during emergencies with the UCPM member and participating states;
- the ERCC, a 24/7 coordination hub enabling coordinated and swift responses to disasters by supporting humanitarian aid and civil protection activities by:
 - facilitating a coherent EU response during emergencies and supporting other EU services and the Member States in crisis situations;
 - supporting the institutional crisis management process and other DGs through the Commission's duty system under phase 1 of the general rapid alert system (ARGUS), so that all incoming communications about an ongoing or potential crisis are directed to the ERCC;
 - acting as the 24/7 operational focal point as part of the integrated political crisis response arrangements and of a coherent information flow for the production and dissemination of integrated situational awareness and analysis reports;
- international forums and donor groups, in which DG ECHO continues to participate (e.g. the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, the ICRC Donor Support Group, the IFRC Donor Advisory Group and the OCHA Donor Support Group);
- regular exchanges of views in the European Parliament on the EU's response to crises (particularly in the Parliament's Committee on Development but also increasingly in its Committee on Foreign Affairs);
- ad hoc crisis coordination meetings of the Commission's DGs and departments (and, where appropriate, the EEAS) to exchange information (e.g. ARGUS meetings, the EEAS Crisis Platform and security-critical incident management);
- regular information exchange and upstream coordination with the relevant Commission departments (DG HOME, DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI for crisis-response interventions under the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation⁹⁰ and for the humanitarian-peace-development nexus to ensure optimal deployment of DG ECHO resources and the coherence of interventions involving different EU funding instruments);
- regular information exchange through an inter-service group on IHL;
- regular information for Member States' focal points about activating the EHRC tool in emergency situations;
- regular geographical evaluations (each with a suitable thematic/sectoral focus) covering all regions in which DG ECHO operates and all humanitarian themes and sectors every 5 years (with the results posted on DG ECHO's website⁹¹);
- thematic platforms, such as the Global Network against Food Crises.

3.3 *Monitoring the use of funds*

The Commission ensures the correct implementation of EU-funded operations with several layers of checks and monitoring, both internally and using external actors. This includes appropriate rules and procedures for giving non-EU parties financing (including review procedures where appropriate) and rules and procedures for ensuring compliance with EU restrictive measures⁹², taking account of the relevant IHL principles.

⁹⁰ Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009 (OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/947/oj>.

⁹¹ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/funding-evaluations/evaluations_en

⁹² www.sanctionsmap.eu. The sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying sanctions regimes. The sanctions are based on legal acts published in the Official Journal. In case of discrepancy between a published legal act and an update on the website, the Official Journal version prevails.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a key tool for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of EU initiatives. DG ECHO's five-year evaluation programme provides comprehensive evaluation coverage of its humanitarian aid and civil protection activities over the relevant period.

In 2024, the following evaluations will be completed, and the reports made available on DG ECHO's evaluation webpage⁹³:

- evaluation of DG ECHO's partnership with the IOM (2018-2022);
- interim evaluation of the UCPM (2017-2022);
- evaluation of the EU's humanitarian interventions in Central Africa and DG ECHO's partnership with UNICEF (2019-2023).

The following evaluations, ongoing or expected to start soon, will be completed in 2025:

- comprehensive evaluation of the European Commission's humanitarian aid (2017-2022);
- evaluation of DG ECHO's external communication policy and actions (2019-2023);
- evaluation of the EU's humanitarian interventions in Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean (SAIO) region, and of DG ECHO's WASH policy (2019-2023).

Controls carried out by DG ECHO

The main aspects of DG ECHO's environment as regards checks include the following supervision and monitoring procedures, and prior and subsequent checks:

- strict mechanisms for the selection and quality control of NGOs and international organisations as DG ECHO partners, with explicit requirements for their financial credentials;
- assessment of the needs of people affected by crises by a worldwide network of DG ECHO field experts;
- appraisal of project proposals and on-the-spot project monitoring by a worldwide network of DG ECHO field experts;
- regular field visits to project sites by geographical desk officers, technical experts, external auditors and DG ECHO managers;
- an obligation for partners to produce reports after the end of each operation to justify their expenditure, reports that DG ECHO's operational and financial desk officers thoroughly analyse to check the eligibility of expenditure;
- audits of the legality and regularity of expenses claimed by external auditors contracted by DG ECHO;
- checking the soundness of financial management and control systems, and compliance with the requirements set out in the certificate⁹⁴.

⁹³ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations_en

These procedures and checks should not be seen in isolation. Each one helps provide assurance on the legality and regularity of transactions and their compliance with relevant rules and obligations. Checks are also carried out in the Commission itself by its Internal Audit Service (IAS), whose mission is to issue recommendations, opinions and advice on Commission's departments' and EU agencies' internal control system.

Additional controls

DG ECHO's operations and financial management are also subject to external audits. The European Court of Auditors audits the EU's finances and, increasingly, the performance of its activities. Observations and recommendations are published in the Court's annual and special reports, forwarded to the European Parliament and the Council.

Specialised committees of the European Parliament and Council exercise control over the financial management of Commission DGs and departments. In this context, the European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control organises annual hearings with a number of Commissioners as part of the procedure for discharging the European Commission's annual accounts.

⁹⁴ <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/ngo/humanitarian-partnership-2021-2027/eu-humanitarian-partnership-certificate-2021-2027>