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Annual Report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the humanitarian aid operations financed in 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the European Union's main activities and policy outcomes in the field of humanitarian aid in 2024, as carried out through the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission. It has been prepared under Article 19 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid, which requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the European Parliament and to the Council, including a summary of the operations financed in the course of the preceding year.

DG ECHO's mandate is to help **save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural hazards or human-induced disasters** occurring inside or outside the EU. Under this overarching objective, DG ECHO acts as both the EU humanitarian aid donor and emergency responder. It also acts as a coordinator and facilitator of civil protection operations at EU level through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), The UCPM operates to a substantial degree outside of the EU to deliver emergency assistance and humanitarian aid. As such, it complements DG ECHO's humanitarian aid activities as described in this document. DG ECHO's activities contribute to the realisation of the Commission's political priorities i) a stronger Europe in the world; ii) a European Green Deal; and iii) promoting our European way of life; and, going forward: i) a new era for European defence and security; ii) sustaining our quality of life: food security, water and nature and; iii) a global Europe - leveraging our power and partnerships.

Through DG ECHO, the EU provides humanitarian aid to people in need around the globe, guided by the humanitarian principles of **humanity, impartiality, independence, neutrality** and non-discrimination – enshrined in Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – and in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid ([1]). EU humanitarian aid is distributed to those in the greatest need, irrespective of their nationality, religion, gender, ethnic origin or political affiliation. It also specifically address the needs of women, children, older people, the sick and people living with disabilities ([2]).

2. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH ASSISTANCE IS DELIVERED

2024 was yet another year marked by high levels of humanitarian needs globally. According to the UN Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 ([3]), nearly **300 million people worldwide** were estimated to be in need of relief assistance and protection. An estimated 122.6 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced, as a result of violent conflict, human-made disaster, natural hazards and the impacts of climate change. Around 295.3 million people experience high levels of acute food insecurity across 53 countries or territories ([4]). Children remain among the most vulnerable groups and the increasing trends of **grave violations against children** in situations of armed conflicts is particularly worrying.

([1]) 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 (2008/C 25/01).
([2]) In line with the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which the EU is party.
([3]) Global Humanitarian Overview 2024 [EN/AR/FR/ES] | OCHA
([4]) 2025 Global Report on Food Crises | FSIN and GNAFC. 2025. GRFC 2025. Rome.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continued to have a devastating impact on the civilian population. More than 14.6 million Ukrainians needed humanitarian assistance. In the Gaza Strip the humanitarian needs are huge in all sectors. The entire population of Gaza (2.1 million) is exposed to security and protection risks and is at risk of famine. Across Sudan, 24.6 million people – over half the population – are facing acute food insecurity, with famine in at least five areas. The complex crises in Myanmar, Afghanistan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in the Horn of Africa, and protracted crisis in the Sahel region, Yemen, Colombia, and Venezuela further underscore the dire challenges faced by vulnerable populations globally. These conflicts and crises are further fuelled by fragility, failed governance, structural poverty, and continued widespread **violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).**

Delivering humanitarian aid remains challenging due to a widening funding gap and concerns for the security of aid workers. The funding gap between humanitarian needs and available resources rose from a USD 36.8 billion shortfall in 2023 to a USD 38.5 billion deficit by the end of 2024 ([5]). Humanitarian personnel also face **unpredictability, volatility, insecurity and disregard for IHL**. 2024 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian aid workers, with 281 aid workers killed globally ([6]). **Restricted or denied access** hamper the delivery of humanitarian aid to people in need and complicates the implementation of necessary control measures, such as on-site monitoring and need assessments.

Despite these **challenges**, the Commission **managed to achieve its objectives**, under the priorities and key actions outlined in the Commission Communication on the EU's humanitarian action adopted in March 2021 ([7]). In 2024, EU humanitarian aid provided needs-based, principled emergency assistance and disaster preparedness support to people in 116 countries worldwide, targeting the most vulnerable ([8]).

Together, the EU and its Member States are one of the world's major humanitarian aid donors, providing around 27.4% of global committed humanitarian aid contributions. The Commission provides 8% of global humanitarian funding ([9]). The initial budget was set at **EUR 1.89 billion** in 2024, enabling the EU to intervene in both large-scale humanitarian crises – including in Ukraine, Palestine ([10]), and Sudan – and to designate 22% of the initial budget to forgotten crises, those of a severe and protracted nature where the level of international aid to affected populations is insufficient, such as in the Philippines, Haiti, Mozambique, or the Sahrawi crisis. Following several budget reinforcements [(10)], the final annual budget for 2024 exceeded **EUR 2.5 billion**. The reinforcements received throughout the year, originated from the following sources:

- The Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR) for a total amount of EUR 573 million, representing 23% of the final EU humanitarian budget. These funds have been used to provide additional assistance in response to food crises in various African countries and Afghanistan, the violence in the Middle East, the complex crisis in

([5]) Défis Humanitaires <Summary : "Falling short ? Humanitarian funding and reform" - Défis Humanitaires>
([6]) 2024 deadliest year ever for aid workers, UN humanitarian office reports | UN News
([7]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles. COM(2021)/110 final
([8]) To support an evidence-based approach in mapping and contextual analysis of risks and needs, the Commission utilises INFORM.
([9]) OCHA Financial Tracking Service <Financial Tracking Service>
([10]) The designation of Palestine shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

Sudan and its spillover effects on neighbouring countries, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and the displacement crisis in Venezuela;

- Redeployments from Heading VI instruments to cater for the crises in Lebanon and South Sudan (EUR 10.37 million);
- VAH - *Virement d'Aide Humanitaire* (Art 30.2 FR), which are unused appropriations from Heading VI instruments to cater for new crises after 1 December 2024; EUR 3.3 million was allocated for use in Syria following the collapse of the Assad regime;
- Re-assigned revenue from recoveries (EUR 2.5 million).

The Commission works with **around 220 partners,** of which 127 were funded through contracts signed in 2024 (see list in Annex II). Of the 2024 funding, 42% was distributed to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 47% to UN agencies, 10% to international organisations and 0.5% to governmental organisations. Annex I presents the budget allocated to the main crises covered by the Commission's actions in 2024. The main actions in the different regions of the world can be summarised as follows:

2.1. Eastern Neighbourhood and Türkiye

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has had a devastating impact on millions of Ukrainian citizens, resulting in civilian deaths and suffering, massive displacement, and large-scale destruction of critical infrastructure. This has resulted in large humanitarian needs. The situation in areas closer to frontlines and those under Russia's military control remains extremely volatile, with more than 14.6 million people in need of humanitarian support in 2024. As for neighbouring Moldova, in 2024 the country hosted around 130 000 Ukrainian refugees. In 2024, Türkiye hosted some 3.1 million Syrians under temporary protection, along with 300 000 registered refugees and asylum seekers from other countries, mainly Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Somalia. In response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Commission made a total of EUR 165 million available, with an additional EUR 56.2 million for Moldova, Türkiye, the Eastern Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans and Central Asia.

2.2. Middle East and North Africa

The massive escalation of violence in the Middle East has led to large-scale destruction in the Gaza Strip and resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis of unprecedented scale and severity. Throughout 2024, the entire population of Gaza lack access to food, water, or basic services such as healthcare and shelter. The intensification of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel led to large-scale displacement. Furthermore, in 2024, the Commission continued to address the humanitarian needs of the Syrian population, as well as those of Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities in neighbouring countries (Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq). North Africa is also experiencing several hotspots of forced displacement. Gathered in five camps around Tindouf in the Algerian Sahara Desert, the Sahrawi refugees depend on external humanitarian assistance. Libya and Egypt continue to be affected by refugee flows following the escalation of violence in Sudan. Moreover, Libya remains a major departure point for mixed migrants flows to Europe. By the end of 2024, the Commission had allocated EUR 526.5 million in relief assistance to the Middle East and North Africa.

2.3. South-West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is dire, with 22.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and one third of the population experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity. The Taliban's repressive policies, which disproportionately affect women and girls, continue to hamper the activities of humanitarian organisations in the country. The Afghanistan crisis is also affecting neighbouring countries. Iran is hosting up to six million Afghans, and Pakistan is hosting an estimated 3.1 million Afghani people of various statuses. On the Arabian Peninsula, the conflict in Yemen has entered its eleventh year, with its population suffering from acute food insecurity and malnutrition, recurrent epidemic outbreaks, displacement and other severe protection concerns. To respond to the crises in the two regions, the Commission allocated EUR 306.9 million in 2024.

2.4. East and Southern Africa

East and Southern Africa host 28% of all people in need of humanitarian assistance. The region is marked by violent conflict, population displacements, cyclical extreme weather and recurrent epidemics. Sudan is facing the world's largest displacement crisis, with over 14.5 million people uprooted from their homes. More than half the population are suffering from acute food insecurity, and the conflict has triggered widespread violence, including sexual and ethnic violence, child soldier recruitment, and major violations of IHL. In the Greater Horn of Africa region – in South Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, close to 45 million people require humanitarian assistance. Conflicts and the impact of natural hazards, such as localised droughts, floods, and landslides, aggravated by climate change, are driving internal displacement, food insecurity and cross-border flows. In Southern Africa, a prolonged El Niño-induced drought left 30 million people across 14 countries facing acute food insecurity. The region has continued to face natural hazards such as tropical cyclone Chido and disease outbreaks. A budget of over EUR 542.8 million was allocated to address these and other pressing humanitarian needs in the region in 2024.

2.5. West and Central Africa and the Great Lakes

Several regional and interlinked conflicts affect West and Central Africa, and their effects are compounded by climate change. The Lake Chad Basin crisis impacting Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger, is an acute and protracted crisis, now in its 15th year. In Central Sahel, violence against civilians fuels forced displacement in that region and into the coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea. In total, 43.3 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2024 in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. The conflict in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo involving the Congolese army FARDC, various armed groups, and the M23 insurgency supported by Rwanda, has led to a dramatic increase in humanitarian needs, including the displacement of an estimated seven million people. Violations of human rights and IHL occur daily, as does widespread sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, in 2024 the Great Lakes Region was hit with epidemic outbreaks of both the Mpox and Marburg viruses. To respond to crises in West, Central Africa, and the Great Lakes the Commission allocated a budget of EUR 413.1 million in 2024, aimed at addressing food insecurity, malnutrition and multisectoral needs.

2.6. South-East Asia and the Pacific

In 2024, the armed conflict in Myanmar increased in intensity, causing some of the gravest IHL violations recorded globally. Over 20 million people in the country (almost 40% of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance. Since the Tatmadaw military coup in 2021, tens of thousands of people have fled Myanmar into neighbouring countries to

seek refuge. This includes the Rohingya, who undertake risky sea journeys in large numbers. Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, is home to the world's largest refugee camp, hosting almost a million aid-dependent stateless Rohingya refugees. In the Pacific region, the EU responded to a growing number of climate-related disasters. The budget amounted to EUR 95.6 million in 2024.

2.7. Americas and the Caribbean

Central and South America combine a high exposure to violence, natural hazards, poverty, and inequalities in the context of a transcontinental mixed migration crisis. Venezuela's humanitarian crisis escalated significantly as political and social unrest increased during 2024, with access to basic health, food and drinking water severely compromised. Displacement inside the country and across the wider region continued to be a primary survival strategy pushing 7.7 million Venezuelans to flee the country. The impact of the Venezuelan migration- and refugee crisis is felt in the whole region, from Colombia, through Panama Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico. People on the move are among the most vulnerable victims, and often survivors of violence, including of organised crime. In Haiti, gangs control 80 % of the capital Port au Prince and their influence reaches deep into many other parts of the country. In 2024, the crisis in Haiti saw the death of 5 000 people as a result of violence, and 5,5 million people are suffering food insecurity. The Commission allocated EUR 165.3 million in relief assistance to the Americas and the Caribbean in 2024.

3. DELIVERY OF ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

To **champion multilateralism** and a rules-based global order through a more active role and a stronger voice for the EU in the world, the Commission maintained strong strategic and operational partnerships both bilaterally and multilaterally. It advocated for a substantially enhanced humanitarian financing effort and a better sharing of responsibility among donors. The Commission proceeded to utilise pooled funds ([11]) to further promote localisation and less earmarked funding, as well as to work through **programmatic partnerships** ([12]) – multi-year and multi-annual contracts to promote further flexible funding – with the aim of making the humanitarian system more efficient and impactful. The Commission continued to engage in the **Grand Bargain** ([13]) process, in particular on the implementation of quality funding and localisation commitments.

To complement EU humanitarian funding, the Commission deployed its in-house emergency humanitarian response tool the – **European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC)** ([14])**,** supporting partners and facilitating humanitarian assistance, delivering humanitarian goods and transporting humanitarian workers to hard-to-reach areas where assistance could not otherwise be put in place. In 2024 the EHRC responded

([11]) Sudan, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Venezuela, Colombia, Haiti.
([12]) Programmatic Partnerships.
([13]) The Grand Bargain
([14]) European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC) - European Commission

to 16 crises affecting 17 countries ([15]), deploying a range of transportation services, including chartered flights, and a variety of logistics services.

- A total of 5 319 metric tonnes of humanitarian aid materiel were shipped via 97 chartered flights, sea, and land transportation through the EHRC.
- A total of 16 683 humanitarian assistance personnel passengers, including 13 EHRC deployed experts, were carried by EU Humanitarian Aid Flights (EU HAB).
- A total of 851 metric tonnes from EHRC stockpiles, for a value of over EUR 4.66 million, were donated to partners.

The Commission also mobilised its emergency funding tool – the **Emergency Toolbox**. This is composed of the Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT), Epidemics tool, the Small-scale tool and support to the IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). It provides additional financial support to partners responding to sudden-onset disasters, including a growing number of climate- induced disasters. The Emergency Toolbox provided approximately **EUR 52.5 million** supporting **68 activations, (**a 70% increase compared to 2023), and 85 DREF operations.

- The Small-scale tool was activated 34 times including for the responses to floods in Afghanistan, Colombia, Kenya and Mexico; and to earthquakes affecting Vanuatu and Cuba.
- ALERT was triggered 20 times for the immediate response to floods in multiple countries, including Brazil, Myanmar, the Philippines, Nigeria and Vietnam; and to tropical cyclones in Bangladesh and Mozambique.
- The Epidemics tool was activated 14 times to: the Mpox outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, the Marburg outbreak in Rwanda, and to cholera outbreaks in South Sudan, Somalia and Zambia.
- The Commission replenished 85 DREF operations implemented in 62 countries by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), including in response to floods, droughts, epidemics and population movements.

Additionally, in 2024 the Commission ensured policy application and development, providing recommendations to partners for high-quality, coherent, and accountable EU-funded humanitarian operations.

Food security and nutrition have been at the centre of geopolitical and geo-economics agendas since the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. With 295.3 million people experiencing acute food insecurity across 53 countries or territories and **famine** being declared for the first time since 2017 (in five areas of Sudan), acute food insecurity is at a all-time high. The Commission allocated around EUR 720 million for **food assistance and nutrition and famine prevention** in 2024, 7% more than in 2023.

The Commission's **humanitarian health assistance** accounted for EUR 357 million worldwide in 2024. Examples of life-saving care included fostering access to primary and, reproductive healthcare and medical responses to gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support, trauma care and rehabilitation. During 2024 the Commission

([15]) Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Laos, Lebanon, Mali, Niger, Palestine, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Somalia, Sudan and Syria.

responded to address the **Cholera, Mpox ([16]) and Marburg** outbreaks on the African continent.

The Commission's advocacy efforts to promote respect for **IHL** and the protection of aid and health workers continued through public statements and interventions in multilateral fora and at high-level events. The Commission also provided funding for **IHL-related projects**. This included support for the programme for the prevention of IHL violations of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and strengthening the monitoring of IHL violations. It launched an initiative to provide concrete aid to humanitarian workers (Protect Aid Workers). The mechanism offers support and protection to humanitarian workers at risk or who has suffered critical incidents.

Protection remains a priority across all humanitarian sectors, with the Commission allocating **14% of its overall financial envelope to sectoral protection activities**. Humanitarian crises impact women, girls, boys and men differently and individual vulnerabilities such as living with disabilities will affect the lived experience of a crisis. The Commission therefore continued mainstreaming disability inclusion and, gender and age concerns across all sectors of intervention.

More than **234 million children and young people** affected by crises worldwide urgently require access to learning ([17]). This includes 72 million who are out of school. In 2024 the Commission continued to place an emphasis on **education in emergencies**, maintaining investment in education at the ambitious level of 10% of the annual initial EU humanitarian aid budget, equivalent to over EUR 175 million.

One of the main multipliers of humanitarian needs today is climate change. The number and severity of natural hazards are increasing as a consequence of our world getting warmer. The Commission is dedicated not just to provide response, but also to preparedness for when disaster strikes. Thus, a third of all Commission-funded humanitarian projects include a preparedness component and the designated **Disaster Preparedness** budget line stood at **EUR 79 million** in 2024. In May 2024 the EU and the **LAC region** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** ([18]) to step up cooperation on integrated Disaster Risk Management, supporting the implementation through the IFRC Global Climate Resilience Platform.

To reduce the carbon footprint and the environmental damage of humanitarian aid, Minimum Environmental Requirements became mandatory in 2023 for all EU-funded humanitarian aid operations. In 2024, a series of workshops and courses for partners and DG ECHO staff was rolled out. The Commission continued to fund innovation projects on **greening humanitarian aid** and to act as Secretariat of the Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment.

In support of advocacy and to raise the profile of EU humanitarian aid, the Commission generated a variety of media products and engaged in a broad range of **communications activities**. Highlights included the **humanitarian aid campaign #FeedingHope** which reached over 70 million people in 10 Member States, more than doubling the figures from

([16]) The Mpox response is a good example of EU synergies. The operation included collaboration with the European Centre for Disease Control.
([17]) Global Estimates 2025 Update | Education Cannot Wait
([18]) Memorandum of Understanding

campaigns in previous years. The third edition of the European Humanitarian Forum brought together almost 1 500 participants from across the world.

4. REVIEW OF ANY OUTSIDE ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED ON SPECIFIC OPERATIONS

The Commission's evaluation services are responsible for steering, coordinating, monitoring and reporting on the evaluation function. They produce timely, high-quality evaluation results to provide evidence for informed decision-making and accountability. The evaluations can be geographic, thematic or focused on a specific partnership. Annex III provides a list of evaluations completed in 2024 and of ongoing evaluations.

5. RELEVANT LINKS

- General information on DG ECHO:

  http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en

- Financial information on the European Commission's humanitarian aid activities in 2024:

  Financing decisions (HIPs) 2024 - European Commission

- Operational information from previous years:

  European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations | European Commission (europa.eu)

- 2024 Annual Activity Report:

  Annual activity report 2024 - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) - European Commission

- 2024 Annual Management and Performance Report:

  Management plan 2024 – European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - European Commission

- DG ECHO evaluation reports:

  https://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations_en

- European Commission and Member States' humanitarian aid funding data:

  Home - European Commission (europa.eu)