



# Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Directorate-General European Civil Protection  
and Humanitarian Aid Operations – DG ECHO

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## INTRODUCTION

The strategic planning and programming cycle is the Commission's performance management framework. Its purpose is to help ensure that the Commission achieves its objectives in an efficient and effective manner. The cycle encompasses the setting of objectives, the allocation of resources according to these objectives, risk management, as well as regular monitoring and reporting on progress towards the objectives set.

The main building blocks of the strategic planning and programming cycle are the Commission's strategy for delivering on the political priorities (Part 1), but also modernising the way the Commission administration functions and improving efficiency (Part 2).

### Political context

The starting point for the 2020-2024 cycle is the political agenda of President von der Leyen, as set out in her political guidelines and further developed in the mission letters sent to Members of the Commission. All Commission services are to translate these priorities into concrete and operational strategies that will shape their work for the duration of the mandate of this Commission.

During this strategic cycle, under the political steer of Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management, the EU will have to respond to an unprecedented range of crises, within and outside the EU, showing solidarity by supporting those in need.

The massive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unquestionable not only in Europe but worldwide, and its effect will be felt over the entire duration of this Commission's mandate. It will require strong and efficient response both within the EU and beyond in order to address its consequences. We need to also learn from it to stand better prepared to respond to future challenges.

Responding to the effects of this crisis and preparing for tomorrow will require determination as the COVID-19 outbreak happened in an already very difficult context of rising international tensions. Existing regional conflicts and protracted crises are often exacerbated by a contested multilateral order as well as the immediate and structural challenges caused by climate change. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, 168 million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance. By 2022, the number was expected to rise to 212 million – a 55% increase since 2018, not taking into account the great impact the outbreak will have on the most vulnerable<sup>1</sup>.

At the same time, as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that 265 million people would be under severe hunger threat by end of 2020, doubling the current numbers<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 2020 Global Humanitarian Overview – UN-OCHA

<sup>2</sup> Executive Director of WFP in his address to the UN Security Council on 21 April 2020

Delivering assistance is also increasingly challenging as International Humanitarian Law is not sufficiently respected. In 2019, 125 humanitarian workers were killed, with 234 injured and 124 kidnapped<sup>3</sup>.

The EU, as well as the overall donor community, has raised the funding dedicated to humanitarian assistance, however, the needs across the globe have continued increasing at an even higher pace. The EU, together with its Member States, is the most generous humanitarian aid donor in the world<sup>4</sup>, and is seen by many as the world's first responder. As funding is limited, there is a necessity to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid actions. EU humanitarian aid must continue playing its part in responding to the challenges of today's world, closely coordinated with other external instruments, respecting its specificities and in a principled approach in line with the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid<sup>5</sup>. Europe's response must include, now more than ever, an approach integrating humanitarian, development and –where relevant- security in a 'nexus' approach to better link urgent relief and longer-term solutions. In addition to humanitarian financing, the EU will continue and enhance its humanitarian advocacy, in particular in support of international humanitarian law, and will continue playing an active and leading role in global dialogues on humanitarian issues, notably in the United Nations.

Similarly, even before the COVID-19 outbreak, the EU civil protection capacities have been repetitively stretched by increasingly severe catastrophes in recent years. Forest fires, flooding or hurricanes have gained in frequency and severity in recent years notably as a result of climate change. Therefore, in complementarity to a reinforced humanitarian response and taking into account the increasing responsibility in helping to prevent and react swiftly to crises within the EU, there is a need for a more consistent and better integrated approach to crisis management. The potential of the recently enhanced Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)<sup>6</sup>, including its rescEU component<sup>7</sup>, needs to be fully exploited also to better prevent and prepare for emergencies in Europe.

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre's role as the single operational hub managing the EU's swift and effective response to a broad range of crises, ranging from natural disasters, pandemics and man-made disasters, both at home and around the world, need to be further enhanced and Commissioner Lenarčič, in his role as Emergency Response Coordinator, is expected to ensure that the EU has the tools and the capacity to

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<sup>3</sup> Latest data available at: <https://aidworkersecurity.org/>

<sup>4</sup> In 2018, the assistance provided by the EU and its Member States represented 41% of the global response to the UN appeals (The UN appeals are an international agreed reference for the humanitarian aid sector)

<sup>5</sup> The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid – 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 [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Decision (EU) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2019 amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism

<sup>7</sup> In 2019, the EU reinforced and strengthened components of its disaster risk management by upgrading the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The latest element introduced - rescEU - has the objective of enhancing both the protection of citizens from disasters and the management of emerging risks. In addition, rescEU establishes a new European reserve of resources (the 'rescEU reserve') which includes a fleet of firefighting planes and helicopters, medical evacuation planes, as well as a stockpile of medical equipment and field hospitals that can respond to health emergencies, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents.

respond swiftly and efficiently whenever called upon – whether here in Europe or elsewhere in the world.

## **PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities**

### **A. Mission statement**

The mission of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) is to help save and preserve life, prevent and alleviate human suffering and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises. This is a fundamental expression of the European value of solidarity, as endorsed by the legal bases for both humanitarian aid and civil protection enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Humanitarian assistance is based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and is implemented in partnership with international organisations and humanitarian NGOs. DG ECHO is committed to ensure the EU’s role as a world leading actor in humanitarian assistance, consistently being at the forefront of humanitarian crises and disaster response. In line with commitments enshrined in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid<sup>8</sup>, this will be done through the promotion of: 1) Respect of humanitarian principles and international law, including international humanitarian law, and safeguarding humanitarian space; 2) Ensuring quality, good humanitarian donorship practices and accountability in the delivery of humanitarian aid. This includes the timely allocation of funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of strong needs assessments; 3) Better dialogue with other actors in response to emergencies to ensure coordination; 4) Reinforcement of 'aid linkages': to enhance disaster risk reduction in order to reduce the vulnerability of people at risk from disasters; to link relief to long-term development aid to ensure a smooth transition between different support tools helping victims to recover from an emergency; and 5) Increased EU support for the global humanitarian system to develop good practices to ensure a better overall crisis response.

In the field of civil protection, DG ECHO will continue to facilitate the cooperation among the 27 EU Member States and with the non-EU participating States<sup>9</sup> that participate in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) in order to improve the systems for preventing and protecting against natural and man-made disasters in Europe. Based on the lessons learned and the current challenges, a new legislative proposal has been adopted in June 2020<sup>10</sup> to further enhance the UCPM, endowing it with greater strategic autonomy and financial flexibility. The proposal, currently being discussed by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, responds to the recent calls for actions to improve the EU crisis management system voiced by both institutions. It seeks to reinforce prevention actions, establishing EU-wide resilience goals, as well as granting the Commission more strategic

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<sup>8</sup> The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid – 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 [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> To date, Montenegro, Norway, Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, North Macedonia, and the UK until the end of the transition period.

<sup>10</sup> COM(2020) 220 final

autonomy for the development of rescEU capacities at EU level to better complement national capacities. It also includes a significant budget increase<sup>11</sup>, proposing hence a more comprehensive financial support to Member States for all phases of disaster management.

Furthermore, DG ECHO will continue to work closely with the Member States' civil protection authorities to strengthen the whole disaster risk management cycle (prevention, preparedness and response). With the frequency and complexity of disasters increasing both globally and inside the EU, DG ECHO strives to establish a robust coordination and planning of EU civil protection operations, making the maximum use of available expertise and resources, and ensuring full complementarity with EU Humanitarian Aid, and other EU relevant sectoral policies. At the same time, DG ECHO pursues effective prevention and preparedness policies with the Member States, thus ensuring a balance between Member States' responsibilities and European solidarity.

The implementation of both the humanitarian aid and the civil protection mission is supported by a proactive external communication strategy. The objective of this strategy is to maintain the high level of public support and political backing of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection, while targeting primarily European audiences. The communication actions support the Commission's overall principles of transparency, accountability and dialogue with the citizens. To achieve this, DG ECHO develops its own integrated mix of communication actions and contributes to the Commission's corporate communication. DG ECHO also has clear visibility and communication arrangements with its humanitarian partners in the field and with civil protection partners in the EU Member States and Participating States.

When it comes to the immediate and medium-term consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak, DG ECHO will continue to be at the forefront of the response to the crisis, as it has been doing since the beginning by using all the tools at its disposal. DG ECHO will continue to focus its response on financing the acquisition and coordinating the delivery of personal protective equipment and other medical material as well as coordinating repatriation flights, as needed, from outside Europe and co-financing the delivery of assistance and the transport of medical teams and patients between countries. Moreover, as part of Team Europe's global response<sup>12</sup> to the coronavirus, DG ECHO will keep tackling immediate humanitarian needs and strengthening the health, water and sanitation systems of its partner countries. In order to do so, the Commission aims to harness the full potential of the 2021-2027 EU budget.

Additionally, to allow Member States and humanitarian partners to transport humanitarian staff and supplies to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to maintain the flow of humanitarian assistance, hampered by the pandemic, DG ECHO has temporarily put in place

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<sup>11</sup> The UCPM financial envelope for the period 2021-27 is set at EUR 3 129 million, including EUR 2 056 million stemming from the 'Next Generation EU' funds.

<sup>12</sup> "Team Europe" package seeks to support partner countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences. The objective of the "Team Europe" approach is to combine resources from the EU, its Member States, and financial institutions, in particular the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development *Communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19 - JOIN(2020) 11 final*

the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge offering air transport to and from various destinations world-wide.

Given the scale of the pandemic, the Commission is using all instruments available to enlarge its capacity to respond. In this respect, the re-activation of the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) was proposed in April 2020<sup>13</sup>. This instrument provides support to help Member States in their efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic; it helps mitigating the immediate consequences of the pandemic and anticipating the needs related to the exit and recovery. The ESI focuses on measures that can be deployed strategically to deliver greater impact if taken at EU level. As the responsible service for the coordination of emergency response, DG ECHO will have a significant involvement in the different strands of the ESI. In particular, DG ECHO will support the ESI implementation through the facilitation of transport of goods and people (medical staff and patients), as well as providing the overall coordination of activities through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) as a 24/7 operational hub.

Until the end of 2020, DG ECHO will remain responsible for managing the EU Aid Volunteers initiative<sup>14</sup>, which brings together volunteers and organisations from different countries to contribute to humanitarian aid activities. As of 2021, the initiative will be integrated in the European Solidarity Corps<sup>15</sup>, and from then on managed by the Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

## B. Operating context

In order to adequately respond to crises, DG ECHO has around 500 staff working in Brussels headquarters, and about 450 humanitarian staff [+/- 150-160 Technical Assistants (expatriated under Belgian labour law contracts) and +/- 310 locally contracted staff] in over 50 field offices, located in the countries most severely affected by crises. Along with its human and financial resources, DG ECHO's framework for action has been constantly adapted to allow the EU to respond in the most effective way to ever-greater challenges.

### Legal framework

#### *Humanitarian Aid:*

DG ECHO acts in the context of the framework provided by Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which states that humanitarian operations shall provide *ad hoc* assistance, relief, and protection for people in third countries who are victims of natural or man-made disasters. In this area, the Union has a parallel and shared competence, carrying out activities and conducting a common policy. The main instrument

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<sup>13</sup> The Commission adopted the proposal to re-activate the ESI on 2 April 2020. COM(2020) 175 final, which was adopted by the European Council on 14 April 2020 and the European Parliament on 17 April 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps ('EU Aid Volunteers initiative') (OJ L 122, 24.4.2014, p. 1).

<sup>15</sup> COM(2018) 440 final

specifically governing humanitarian aid at EU level is the Humanitarian Aid Regulation<sup>16</sup>, which provides a flexible and effective legal framework for mobilising and delivering the EU's humanitarian assistance across a broad range of crises.

#### *Civil Protection:*

DG ECHO's civil protection actions are enshrined in Article 196 of the TFEU, which states that the Union shall encourage cooperation between Member States in order to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing and protecting against natural or man-made disasters as well as support and complement their actions. The specific instrument for DG ECHO's work in civil protection is the Decision on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism<sup>17</sup>. In this area, the Union has a supporting competence, carrying out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States (Article 6(f) of the TFEU).

#### *Emergency Support Instrument:*

The Council regulation<sup>18</sup> on the provision of emergency support within the Union rests on Article 122(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The emergency support within the Union is a shared competence. In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Commission reactivated the instrument in April 2020. For the implementation, the Commission may collaborate with non-governmental organisations, specialised services of the Member States, national authorities and other public bodies, international organisations and their agencies and other relevant organisations (i.e. private service providers, equipment manufacturers, scientists and research institutions).

#### *EU Aid Volunteers:*

Article 214(5) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union seeks to provide for contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union. Pending the adoption of the new European Solidarity Corps regulation (2021-2027) in 2020, this is done through the European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative<sup>19</sup> (EUAV).

### Key stakeholders

DG ECHO operations are implemented in complementarity with other External Relations DGs and Services, contributing to the formulation of an effective and coherent external relations policy for the European Union, so as to enable the EU to assert its identity on the international scene. The External Relations services include DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DG TRADE, FPI and EEAS. When it comes to the internal dimension, DG ECHO also collaborates closely with other Commission services, such as DG HOME, DG CLIMA, DG SANTE, DG REGIO, as well as with DG RTD, the JRC and DG COMM.

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<sup>16</sup> Council Regulation (EC) 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid (OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1).

<sup>17</sup> [Decision \(EU\) 2019/420 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 March 2019 amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#)

<sup>18</sup> Council Regulation (EU) 2020/521 of 14 April 2020 activating the emergency support under Regulation (EU) 2016/369, and amending its provisions taking into account the COVID-19 outbreak.

<sup>19</sup> Regulation (EU) No 375/2014

### *Humanitarian Aid:*

DG ECHO humanitarian operations consist mainly of financing projects implemented by its humanitarian partners. The funds are channelled through individual agreements with partner organisations. These are either Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), United Nations agencies covered by the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA), or International Organisations (ICRC, IFRC). The management mode applied with NGOs is direct management, and with the UN and International Organisations, it is indirect management. Through its strong presence in the field, and regular monitoring missions from headquarters, DG ECHO regularly monitors the actions it finances all over the world.

To ensure complementarity with Member States, DG ECHO promotes coordination between EU and national actions, through formal consultation in the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC), but also through regular exchanges in the Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), geographic working groups, in humanitarian hubs such as New York or Geneva, or in the field directly. DG ECHO, in collaboration with the Presidency of the Council, also organises informal meetings of Directors-General for Humanitarian Aid. These different fora are essential to ensure both strategic policy exchanges and operational coordination between respective humanitarian assistance of the EU Member States and the European Commission.

When it comes to the European Parliament, the main interlocutor for humanitarian aid is the Committee on Development (DEVE).

### *Civil Protection:*

The key stakeholders of DG ECHO civil protection activities are the countries participating in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)<sup>20</sup>. It should be noted that not only EU Member States, but also certain non-EU Member States can be full members of the UCPM. This includes (potential) candidate countries, EEA countries, and other European countries when agreements so provide. When civil protection assistance is requested by Member/Participating States or by third countries, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) coordinates the delivery of the states' resources, ensuring a coherent European response to disasters, including in case of invocation of the Solidarity Clause (Article 222 of the TFEU). Most importantly, the ERCC has direct links to the civil protection authorities in the countries participating in the UCPM in order to support and complement their disaster prevention and preparedness efforts.

In order to strengthen disaster prevention and management, optimise investments under the European Structural and Investment funds notably through the cohesion, agriculture and research policies, DG ECHO also closely coordinates its civil protection activities with other Commission services.

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<sup>20</sup> 27 EU Member States, 6 Participating States (Montenegro, Norway, Iceland, Serbia, Turkey and North Macedonia), as well as the UK during the transition period.

To ensure complementarity with Member States, DG ECHO promotes strategic and policy discussions between the EU and the Member States in the Council Working Party on Civil Protection (PROCIV). When it comes to supporting the Commission in the implementation of the UCPM legislation, the Civil Protection Committee (CPC) is the established framework. The main tasks of the Committee include the discussion of the UCPM Annual Work Programme, implementing acts of general scope and technical documents prepared by the Commission. Furthermore, DG ECHO in collaboration with the Presidency of the Council organises the biannual informal meetings of Directors-General for Civil Protection allowing for regular strategic policy discussions. These different fora are essential to ensure strategic policy exchanges and operational coordination between respective humanitarian assistance of the EU Member States and the European Commission. As for the relations with the European Parliament, the key interlocutor is the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).

### *EU Aid Volunteers:*

Until the end of 2020, DG ECHO will continue the implementation of the EUAV Initiative in partnership with the Commission's Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), which is in charge of the complete life-cycle management of the initiative.

## **C. Strategy**

### *The Commission priorities*

In her statements to the European Parliament in 2019, President von der Leyen outlined the six political priorities that would shape the work programme of the European Commission over the next five years, and pledged to lead a 'geopolitical Commission'. Such a Commission has a political agenda, of which a key priority is to reinforce the EU's role as a major international actor, and to shape a better global order through reinforcing multilateralism ('A stronger Europe in the world'). The other main political priorities of the Commission are brought together under five headings: 'A European Green Deal', 'A Europe fit for the digital age', 'An economy that works for people', 'A new push for European democracy', and 'Promoting the European way of life'.

In her Mission Letter to Commissioner Janez Lenarčič, President von der Leyen mandates the Commissioner with the responsibility for steering and coordinating the Commission's work in the area of Crisis Management.

The fulfilment of Commissioner Lenarčič's mandate directly contributes to the following three of the six political priorities:

- A stronger Europe in the world
- A European Green Deal
- Promoting our European way of life

While DG ECHO's work also contributes to other political priorities, this multi-annual Strategic Plan focuses on the above three Commission priorities to which DG ECHO interventions make the most significant contribution.

## *The COVID-19 pandemic and the Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation.*

In the context of Commissioner Lenarčič's mandate and Better Regulation, DG ECHO draws on the ongoing lessons learnt exercise for the COVID-19 outbreak – and on lessons from other crises before that – to ensure that the EU maintains and further strengthens its capacity to prevent and react swiftly to crises within and outside the EU, in order to protect citizens and our environment. Moreover, DG ECHO is committed to support Commissioner Lenarčič in establishing a more consistent and better-integrated EU approach to crisis management, by contributing to an enhanced cross-sectoral coordination in all phases of disaster management, and to an improved implementation of the humanitarian / development / peace 'nexus' in third countries.

At least initially, a significant challenge to face during this strategic planning and programming cycle will be to adequately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the experience of previous emergencies have led to improvements to the UCPM, such as for instance the establishment of rescEU capacities, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has further put national and EU crisis management structures to the test. At the same time, the pandemic has created a favourable political momentum to rethink existing tools – notably the UCPM/rescEU – and redesign them in a more ambitious way.

In order to do so, the Commission aims to harness the full potential of the EU budget to mobilise investment and frontload financial support in the crucial first years of recovery. The recovery plan **“Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation”**<sup>21</sup> consists of two main components. First, an emergency European Recovery Instrument (also referred as 'Next Generation EU') amounting to EUR 750 billion has been proposed, which will be channelled through EU programmes and instruments to underpin the immediate measures needed to protect livelihoods, get the economy back on its feet and foster sustainable and resilient growth. Second, the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 has been reinforced by the creation of new tools and strengthening of key programmes to support the recovery. The additional funding of Next Generation EU and the reinforced multiannual financial framework will give to the EU the necessary power of solidarity to support Member States and the economy.

### *Strategic activities*

In order to implement the Commission priorities and provide significant contribution to the recovery plan, DG ECHO would focus on the following strategic activities:

#### **Humanitarian Aid: standing alongside people in need at a time of crisis**

The European Commission has been providing humanitarian aid since 1992 in over 110 countries, reaching millions of people across the globe each year. Given the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide and the number of crises, DG ECHO aims to strengthen the EU's role as leading global humanitarian aid donor. This role

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<sup>21</sup> COM/2020/456 final

becomes increasingly important in current times, when global health threats – such as pandemics – occur with devastating effects and durably exacerbate already dire humanitarian situations in many contexts.

In order to sustain its commitment to solidarity and in view of the growing humanitarian needs, increased budgetary assistance will be made available to DG ECHO humanitarian partners. The proposed increase of the MFF humanitarian budget by more than 30%<sup>22</sup> is foreseen to address the current unprecedented crises. Funding will continue being allocated on the basis of needs as defined in the Humanitarian Aid regulation.

Beyond a financial commitment, DG ECHO will continue investing into ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid. Under the political leadership of Commissioner Lenarčič, DG ECHO will reinforce its advocacy work for the respect of International Humanitarian Law and in particular the necessity to preserve safe and unrestricted access to populations in need by humanitarian aid organisations and their staff. This advocacy work will be conducted in international fora and in coordination with like-minded donors and humanitarian actors. Together with other donors and humanitarian aid organisations, policy work will also be conducted towards improving the quality and the conditions of aid delivery notably by ensuring a greener humanitarian aid. These various strand of activities will all concur to improve the quantity and quality of the support that can be provided to the growing number of people in need around the world.

### Civil Protection: reinforcing the Union's civil protection mechanism response capacity

The UCPM/rescEU has so far relied on Member States' resources, but experience from the COVID-19 crisis and previous crises shows that an increased response capacity and preparedness is needed. In extreme circumstances and especially when all or most Member States are impacted by the same emergency, inter-state solidarity cannot be taken for granted. In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, it became evident that the amendments to the UCPM, as agreed by the co-legislators in 2019<sup>23</sup>, remained insufficient to address and manage an emergency of such volume. Thus, in line with the request of both legislators, the Commission proposed to reinforce the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, including rescEU, with the view to make the UCPM more flexible and increase the Union's capacity to act together at EU level<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, its financial allocation has been significantly increased<sup>25</sup>, financing investments in emergency response infrastructure, transport capacity and emergency support teams. The future UCPM is expected to give the Union strategic autonomy and financial flexibility, establishing the capacity and the logistical infrastructure needed to cater for different types of emergency, including those with a medical component, complementing the new EU4Health programme<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, the newly proposed UCPM will also streamline and increase the flexibility of operational capacities, as

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<sup>22</sup> EUR 9.76 billion for 2021-2027 compared to EUR 7.1 billion for the previous programming period.

<sup>23</sup> Decision (EU) 2019/420

<sup>24</sup> COM(2020) 220 final.

<sup>25</sup> From EUR 574 million for the period 2014-2020, the new UCPM financial envelope for the period 2021-2027 is set at EUR 3 319 million. This includes EUR 1 263 million from the general Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and EUR 2 056 million from the 'Next Generation EU' funds.

<sup>26</sup> <https://eu4health.eu/>

well as improving risk management and planning capabilities. This will ensure a more timely and effective EU response in future to large-scale emergencies.

### *More flexible emergency tools*

Beyond the individual programmes, the crisis has underlined how important it is for the Union to be able to react fast and flexibly to put in place a coordinated European response. This in turn requires a more flexible EU budget. The proposed significantly enhanced Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve can reinforce EU action in response to all aspects of the health crisis, as well as to other emergencies. Funds can be channelled to provide emergency support as and when needed through EU instruments such as humanitarian aid and the Emergency Support Instrument.

### *External communication activities*

In order to clearly demonstrate the European added value of our activities, it is necessary to improve the visibility of EU actions in the field of EU humanitarian aid and civil protection. DG ECHO will therefore invest more in its communication to European audiences: in terms of media activities, integrated awareness-raising campaigns, digital and audio-visual communications, coherent EU branding tools, etc. The communication actions proposed support the Commission's overall principles of transparency, accountability and dialogue with the citizens, linking to the corporate communication actions and narratives, such as EU Solidarity, Stronger Together, A Europe that protects, and A Stronger Europe in the World. Aside from the communication actions at DG and at corporate level, DG ECHO will further strengthen and streamline the visibility arrangements with Member States and EU-funded organisations, for instance by organising joint media visits to the field, guaranteeing visual EU branding on the field operations (where possible), setting up strategic communication actions with a selected number of priority partners, and gaining third-party endorsement through the new programmatic partnerships.

### *Better Regulation*

To support the implementation of the Strategy, DG ECHO will continue a systematic and timely evaluation of all activities funded, to demonstrate results and promote lessons learning for improving policy and practice. The needs-based approach guiding the work of the DG will be informed by evidence-based tools and close monitoring to keep improving the quality of operations and support partners and stakeholders. Furthermore, following the Grand Bargain commitment to greater transparency, additional efforts will be made to participate in the global efforts to share high-quality data on humanitarian funding and results to ensure accountability to EU citizens and affected populations around the world.

### **DG ECHO objective 1: General objective 4: A Stronger Europe in the World**

For the duration of this strategic cycle, DG ECHO activities will aim to confirm the EU role as a main influential humanitarian actor promoting a principled response.

The European Union, together with its Member States, is collectively the world's largest relief donor, providing 41% of the global humanitarian assistance. At the same time, the EU as a main influential humanitarian actor responds to the crises in a global manner ensuring an extensive geographical coverage.

The EU humanitarian assistance is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty and supported by EU citizens as an expression of European solidarity with people and populations in need. The implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid reaffirms the Union's commitment to preserving life, preventing and alleviating suffering and helping to maintain human dignity in the face of natural and man-made disasters. Consequently, and in line with this commitment, DG ECHO will aim during this period at further improving the coherence, effectiveness and quality of the EU's humanitarian response.

Furthermore, recent years have seen important changes in the nature and dynamics of war and conflict, with an ensuing decrease in the respect of international humanitarian law and an increase in the number of aid workers being targeted in the line of duty. This makes it all the more important to ensure that the roles and links between humanitarian organisations and other actors such as civil protection and the military, are clearly defined and that humanitarian principles are well understood and applied. DG ECHO must be a strong advocate and promoter of a principled humanitarian aid; to that effect it will continue engaging in high-level policy work and advocacy for the respect of International Humanitarian Law.

DG ECHO will continue to support the central and overall coordinating role of the United Nations in promoting a coherent international response to humanitarian crises. In parallel it will make the EU voice heard in international fora on humanitarian aid. This international presence of the EU is supported by ECHO field offices, which allow DG ECHO to have first-hand information on humanitarian needs and close monitoring of the operations, allowing to further underpin the development of informed policies, strategies and programmes.

In parallel, DG ECHO will work on providing to the people in need also outside the EU adequate and effective civil protection response and preparedness. The UCPM, including its rescEU component, plays a critical role in improving aid effectiveness and timely assistance to any country facing a disaster and in the need of immediate support. In the Neighbourhood and Enlargement context, the UCPM also strengthens prevention and preparedness capacities, as national authorities are the first responders when a disaster strikes and as activations of the Mechanism are only necessary if national capacities are overwhelmed.

Throughout the next 5 years, DG ECHO will support the Commission in its global role by fulfilling four specific objectives:

1. The EU remains a lead humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance to populations affected by humanitarian crises;
2. Humanitarian space is preserved and respect for International Humanitarian Law is ensured;

3. The EU remains a global humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance in countries affected by humanitarian crises; and
4. Adequate and effective civil protection response and preparedness is provided to people in need.

#### General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world

##### Impact indicator 1: EU share of global humanitarian aid<sup>27</sup>

**Explanation:** This indicator measures the share of humanitarian needs in the world (according to UN appeals) covered by the EU (and its Member States). The UN appeals are an international agreed reference for the humanitarian aid sector. It thus gives the aggregated humanitarian aid budget (not including External Assigned Revenues) as a percentage of the funding received to the UN appeals for Humanitarian Response Plans, UN Regional Response Plans or Flash Appeals

**Source of the data:** UN FTS (Financial Tracking Service)

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
EU share: 12%	EU share: Increase	EU share: Increase
EU and Member States share: 41%	EU and Member States share: Increase	EU and Member States share: Increase

##### Impact indicator 2: Geographical coverage of EU humanitarian aid<sup>28</sup>

**Explanation:** This indicator shows the geographical coverage of EU humanitarian aid. It measures the number of countries with EU supported operations as a percentage of countries in need of humanitarian assistance according to UN Humanitarian Appeals. It aims to confirm the EU's role as a main, influential humanitarian actor, promoting a principled response. The UN appeals are an international agreed reference for the humanitarian aid sector.

**Source of the data:** UN FTS (Financial Tracking Service)

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
96%	100%	100%

<sup>27</sup> This indicator measures the funding the EU and its Member States dedicate to respond to the UN Appeals, however this does not represent the totality of the humanitarian funding disbursed as further funding is provided to projects and needs not identified in UN appeals.

<sup>28</sup> This indicator measures the countries where the EU provides assistance as a share of the UN Appeals, however this does not represent the totality of our presence as our coverage goes beyond that and assistance is provided in countries and regions where there is no UN appeal.

*Specific objective 1: The EU remains a lead humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance to populations affected by humanitarian crises*

The global humanitarian context of the coming years will, in all likelihood, remain challenging with the intensity and range of crises surpassing the levels encountered in previous years and amplified by the negative health, economic and social impact of COVID-19, thus resulting in an increase in the overall number of people affected and in need of international assistance.

Man-made humanitarian crises, resulting from wars or outbreaks of fighting are the main source of humanitarian needs in the world. In line with the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, it is important that the Union responds to humanitarian needs in a timely, adequate and effective manner. It has to do so in close partnership with numerous actors who contribute to humanitarian efforts worldwide.

The overall objective of humanitarian aid is to improve the chances of survival of people affected by or vulnerable to disasters or crises. To that end, DG ECHO must ensure that the aid reaches the most vulnerable people, while ensuring that the assistance delivered is adequate (i.e. reflecting the needs), efficient and timely.

Given that massive humanitarian needs will continue to be generated by an increasing number of populations caught in complex emergencies, and considering DG ECHO operating context of limited resources, the challenge for the next five years will be to maintain a stable number of beneficiaries. When resources permit, possibilities of increasing the reach of the aid provided will be envisaged.

In the next five years, DG ECHO will continue exploring ways and means to address the increasing gaps between humanitarian needs and available funding, in line with the Grand Bargain initiative, an outcome of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Increased efficiency and effectiveness were identified on that occasion as a way to raise the proportion of available funding reaching the final beneficiaries. DG ECHO will remain engaged in the *quid pro quo* spirit, whereby donors offer greater flexibility, and humanitarian agencies in exchange deliver better performance and efficiency, thus ensuring gains for people in need as the final beneficiaries.

As part of the possible avenues for pursuing Grand Bargain-related objectives, DG ECHO will explore new ways of working with its partners notably through Programmatic Partnerships; to that end, a series of pilots are being tested as of 2020 with several international non-governmental organisations. The overall objective is to provide more aid directly to beneficiaries by offering more predictable and flexible funding and reduced administrative burden while partners will deliver enhanced efficiency and transparency. Other initiatives related to DG ECHO's contributions to Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), flexible funding, joint needs assessments and simplification of reporting will also be considered.

## Thematic Policies

Aid effectiveness and efficiency will also be pursued through policy initiatives. Over the years, DG ECHO has invested significant efforts in Education in Emergencies. Education is vital for economic growth, peace and stability of countries. Children affected by conflict are a particularly vulnerable group, and education is also often identified as a primary priority by affected communities themselves. Investing in education is an investment for the future and the reconciliation of war-torn societies, preventing children, especially in protracted conflict-contexts, from becoming a lost generation. Therefore DG ECHO will continue to raise the profile and shape policy in the field of education in emergencies. The significant 10% budgetary commitment to EiE will remain a priority in our funding efforts during this period.

DG ECHO is also fully committed to ensure that its humanitarian aid takes into account the different needs and capacities of women and men of all ages. The Gender-Age Marker is a tool that assesses to what extent humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations, by using a set of criteria to assess how strongly humanitarian actions are adapted to those considerations. Additionally, during this cycle, DG ECHO will continue to ensure that EU-funded humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations, to meet the differentiated needs of women, girls, boys and men.

DG ECHO has been and will continue developing a number of other policy and guidance documents in areas such as protection, health, food, nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter, disability, cash transfers, etc. Furthermore, DG ECHO is aiming at developing policies in new areas such as humanitarian logistics.

Policy and guidance documents outline the Commission's position on key international frameworks and standards, and provide concrete recommendations to its implementing partners on programming. The overall objective is to ensure quality, coherence and accountability of EU-funded humanitarian operations. Given the protracted nature of the majority of humanitarian crises, work will continue to improve and strengthen the link between humanitarian and development aid, and – where relevant – to peace actions in a 'nexus' approach, with the overall objective of contributing to build resilience of the most vulnerable to external shocks including disasters. DG ECHO will continue to provide an effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian aid, and by doing so will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## COVID 19 – external response

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people in fragile states and ongoing humanitarian crises particularly hard. Beyond this, it is worth noting that 2 out of 5 people (or 3 billion people around the world) lack access to basic handwashing facilities, according to UNICEF. This calls for a substantial and targeted humanitarian response.

In addition, the longer-term impact of COVID-related restrictions of movement in crisis-affected countries will be profound, given the high number of people who earn their living in the informal economy and who are therefore currently deprived of means to survive. This will be compounded by a global economic recession predicted by the IMF, the World Bank

and the World Trade Organization. It is highly likely that vulnerable households will resort to negative coping strategies, including selling productive assets (such as livestock), reducing the number of meals, decreasing means to cover healthcare, a lowering of school attendance and increase in child marriage or transactional sex. All these factors will inevitably translate into higher humanitarian needs.

Even before COVID-19, levels of food insecurity were increasing, linked to changing weather patterns and conflict. With COVID-19, this negative trajectory has been accentuated further. The COVID-19 pandemic may affect additional 130 million people<sup>29</sup> with acute hunger (on top of the 135 million already in the 'crisis' category) – meaning that up to 265 million people could be under severe threat by the end of 2020. There are serious concerns for food security particularly in Africa, which is highly dependent both on the import of cereals and on revenue from raw materials (the prices of which have been very negatively impacted by COVID-19), as well as in the Middle East.

The European Commission has swiftly mobilized support to respond in a coordinated manner to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, applying the Team Europe approach. The preparedness and response to humanitarian needs resulting from the pandemic is an important element of the external dimension of the EU support. It is expected that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemics will be most acutely felt by populations already affected by humanitarian crises: refugees, internally displaced populations (IDPs), people living in conflict zones and/or in areas devastated by climate change. Amongst these categories; women, children, elderly and disabled people are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of the virus.

In response to the World Health Organisation's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the European Commission will continue providing humanitarian funding to increase the emergency response and preparedness to the pandemic, in particular in countries where healthcare systems are weak and at risk of being rapidly overwhelmed in case of epidemic outbreak.

### External communication activities

DG ECHO's humanitarian assistance offers a wealth of stories to raise public awareness and maintain support among EU citizens by showing the added value of common European action. Through targeted media work (such as field visits with journalists, media partnerships), integrated topical campaigns and continuous social media coverage, DG ECHO will present the tangible impact of EU global support to the lives of millions. Communication actions will make particular use of the audio-visual potential of the humanitarian fieldwork. In parallel, ECHO's communication to local audiences outside the EU will support local engagement with stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries in the field.

The EU's recovery initiatives in the aftermath of COVID-19 will provide various communication opportunities, through highly visible initiatives such as the humanitarian air

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<sup>29</sup> World Food Programme (April 2020)

bridge or humanitarian health projects. These actions will clearly emphasise the parallels between the public concerns inside and outside Europe and the need for global solidarity.

<b>Specific objective 4.1: The EU remains a lead humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance to populations affected by humanitarian crises</b>		Related to spending programme: HUMA
<b>Result indicator: Percentage of humanitarian aid projects that integrate gender and age considerations</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> The Gender-Age Marker is a tool that assesses to what extent humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations, through a set of four criteria		
<b>Source of data:</b> DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker as presented in DG ECHO’s projects database (HOPE), based on the final mark provided by the desk officer at final report stage.		
<b>Baseline</b> (2020) → 2017 projects)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022 → 2019 projects)	<b>Target</b> (2024 → 2021 projects)
89%	90%	95%
<b>Result indicator: Percentage of Humanitarian Aid initial budget allocated to Education in Emergencies</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> Share of the EU humanitarian budget allocated to education in emergencies projects.		
<b>Source of data:</b> Initial allocations based on the draft humanitarian aid budget		
<b>Baseline</b> (2020)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
10%	10%	10%

*Specific objective 2: Humanitarian space is preserved and respect for International Humanitarian Law is ensured*

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is a set of rules that seek to limit the effects of armed conflict. It lays out the responsibilities of states and non-state armed groups during an armed conflict. This set of rules defines, among others, the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief in armed conflict, the freedom of movement of humanitarian relief personnel, the protection of civilians (including medical and humanitarian workers), and the protection of refugees, prisoners, the wounded and sick.

Over the last decade, violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) have become the rule rather than the exception. IHL compliance continues to be further challenged by new realities on the ground, such as the increasing prevalence of urban warfare, the multiplicity of non-state armed actors who are not aware of – or do not feel bound by – IHL, the reluctance of certain States to ensure accountability for IHL violations, and the adoption of

counter-terrorism and restrictive measures that are not in line with IHL and have adverse consequences on humanitarian space.

Violations of IHL constitute one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians, and heavily impact the EU's efforts to meet the humanitarian needs of affected populations. Commissioner Lenarčič and DG ECHO will carry out systematic public advocacy through inter alia public statements, interventions in multilateral fora, championing advocacy on specific issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, attacks against health care medical workers and facilities, and attacks against humanitarian workers and schools. Commissioner Lenarčič and DG ECHO will also pursue its advocacy work to ensure that counter-terrorism measures and sanctions regimes comply with International Humanitarian Law and do not adversely impact the delivery of humanitarian assistance. DG ECHO will also try to make sure that Council conclusions on specific crises include references as appropriate to IHL violations, and calls to parties of conflict to comply with obligations under IHL, as well as the need to safeguard humanitarian space. The EU is also committed to use not only its 'voice' on IHL, but also its status as a reference donor in position to provide financial support to IHL-related initiatives on IHL, both through operational funding and policy support. The ability of DG ECHO as a donor to actively monitor the implementation of EU-funded humanitarian aid projects is a reflection of the state of the humanitarian space, and it is expected that advocacy measures can improve the situation in this respect. In addition, the number of EU-funded humanitarian aid projects with an IHL component is a reflection of the commitment of the EU to being a reference donor on IHL.

**External communication activities**

In line with the Commissioner's mandate, advocating and promoting respect of IHL will remain a priority in DG ECHO's communication actions. Regular media and social media work will remind the public about IHL principles, humanitarian principles and challenges. DG ECHO campaigns, as well as joint communication initiatives with its humanitarian partners, for instance on the occasion of the annual World Humanitarian Day, will support the advocacy work to promote IHL.

<p><b>Specific objective 4.2: Humanitarian space is preserved and respect for International Humanitarian Law is ensured</b></p>	<p>Related to spending programme: HUMA</p>
<p><b>Result indicator: Percentage of projects that can be monitored on-site<sup>30</sup></b></p> <p><b>Explanation:</b> The ability of DG ECHO as a donor to monitor EU-funded humanitarian aid projects is a reflection, in part, of the state of the humanitarian space, and its commitment to work towards access of humanitarian aid to those most in need.</p>	

<sup>30</sup> This concerns monitoring in the field by DG ECHO staff. In cases where such monitoring cannot take place due to access/security problems, other available monitoring measures are applied to provide the best possible assurance that funded actions are implemented as planned.

<b>Source of data:</b> DG ECHO projects database (HOPE)		
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
90%	Increase	Increase
<b>Result indicator:</b> <b>Number of EU-funded humanitarian aid projects with an IHL component</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> The EU is committed to use not only its ‘voice’ on IHL, but also its status as a reference donor in position to provide financial support to IHL-related initiatives on IHL, both through operational funding and policy support.		
<b>Source of data:</b> DG ECHO projects database (HOPE) with an IHL-related objective, result or activity		
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
25	Increase	Increase

*Specific objective 3: The EU remains a global humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance in countries affected by humanitarian crises*

In 2018, DG ECHO provided assistance in 96% of the countries in need of humanitarian assistance according to UN Humanitarian Appeals, demonstrating the great geographical coverage of EU humanitarian aid. In close cooperation with about 200 partners worldwide, DG ECHO provided assistance in over 80 countries in 2019. DG ECHO aims to continue to ensure the availability of funding for as many crises as possible and that there is a swift, efficient, comprehensive response. In this strategic cycle, DG ECHO aims to confirm the EU’s role as a main, influential humanitarian actor, promoting a principled response.

DG ECHO stresses the importance for its assistance to be needs based and has for that purpose developed a framework for assessing and analysing the needs in specific countries and crises. Whilst funding allocations are based on needs assessments and coordination with other donors, certain factors that are outside DG ECHO’s control may reduce the volume and effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance. Three factors, in particular, should be mentioned. The extent to which implementing organisations are present and have the capacity to handle needs in a given crisis zone ("absorption capacity"), the linked problem of access restrictions caused either by insecurity or administrative impediments, and the extent to which extreme weather events render access very challenging, DG ECHO ability to respond to the foreseeable increase in needs for humanitarian assistance will also depend on the availability of financial resources in an environment marked by infinite needs and finite budgets.

Providing rapid and flexible assistance both in the major crises and in so-called "forgotten crises" has become a hallmark of the EU's profile as a donor. DG ECHO will continue to put particular emphasis on responding to "forgotten crises" by addressing needs in areas that

were of difficult access, and by providing a rapid response in areas or sectors underfunded by other donors.

To do so, DG ECHO will notably focus on the quality and coherence of humanitarian aid provided in countries affected by crises. Among other priorities, DG ECHO will continue to consider how humanitarian actors can in practice best address the basic needs of the most vulnerable in the following areas: food, nutrition, health, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), shelter (with cash as preferred delivery mode whenever feasible), forced displacement (refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons), as well as social protection safety nets.

### Nexus

In its commitment to deliver adequate and needs-based humanitarian assistance, DG ECHO constantly reappraises humanitarian crises as they evolve, including in light of the 'humanitarian-development-peace' nexus. Humanitarian assistance is often provided alongside on-going development and recovery / reconstruction programmes, and often in a context in which political and security actors also operate towards conflict resolution through mediation / peace-keeping etc. (the 'peace' dimension). The 'nexus' approach seeks to dovetail respective interventions and ensure a coherent overall approach of the EU and other actors, while respecting the mandate and modalities of the different instruments. In protracted situations, some humanitarian support can gradually be taken over by development or national programmes, e.g. social safety nets, with humanitarian assistance continuing to focus on the most vulnerable populations, and in some cases able to exit and hand over entirely to development instruments.

This transitioning and where possible exit strategy for all areas of humanitarian intervention is reviewed twice a year; first, when funds are initially allocated, secondly, during a mid-term review. The latter is an opportunity to review priorities for remaining funds in accordance with evolving needs. This transitioning and where possible exit strategy for all areas of humanitarian intervention is reviewed twice a year; first, when funds are initially allocated, secondly, during a mid-term review. The latter is an opportunity to review priorities for remaining funds in accordance with evolving needs.

### External communication activities

DG ECHO's humanitarian assistance makes it possible to present the tangible impact of the EU global support to crises worldwide through targeted communication activities. Communication actions will make particular use of the audio-visual potential of the humanitarian fieldwork. In parallel, ECHO's communication to local audiences outside the EU will support local engagement with stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries in the field.

<b>Specific objective 4.3: The EU remains a global humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance in countries affected by humanitarian crises</b>		Related to spending programme: HUMA
<b>Result indicator: Percentage of humanitarian aid funding targeting actions in forgotten crises</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> Political commitment that >15% initial planned budget is allocated to forgotten crises		
<b>Source of data:</b> DG ECHO projects database (HOPE)		
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
37,6%	>15%	>15%

*Specific objective 4: Adequate and effective civil protection response and preparedness is provided to people in need*

Since its inception, the international dimension of the UCPM has grown in importance and today over two thirds of the UCPM requests for assistance come from third countries. The assistance provided is not only in the form of capacities, but also expertise, notably in the form of advisory missions. DG ECHO will continue to foster this type of cooperation not only to support third countries in the aftermath of a disaster, but also to contribute to building more resilient disaster management structures.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism – as well as civil protection actors at national and local level of EU Member States and partner countries inside and outside of Europe – are active in disaster preparedness (e.g. development of early warning and information systems scientific analysis and support, emergency planning, risk awareness, institutional and professional capacity building) and hence offer space for mutual reinforcement and synergies. The UCPM encompasses several tools that are of particular relevance in this regard: e.g. prevention and preparedness missions (advisory missions), UCPM certifications and re-certifications, UCPM exercises, Modex exercises, training programmes, prevention and preparedness projects, exchanges of experts or scientific analysis and support. Prevention and Preparedness missions can be an avenue to promote and further build capacity in disaster preparedness in developing countries by providing tailored expertise and recommendations. Advisory missions can be of particular benefit to enhance preparedness strategies as well as to promote a “building back better” approach in the recovery phase. Scientific support can be used in the context of emergency response as well as preparedness and operational preparedness activities.

External communication activities

Onset emergencies outside the EU offer opportunities to gain added media attention around the assistance provided by the EU. DG ECHO will continue to boost visibility and media coverage of EU response in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, including through the deployment of communication staff to emergency settings together and facilitation of media clearance for staff and experts in the field, as well as outreach to media inside the EU and in the countries concerned. In addition, the news will be covered systematically on DG ECHO’s social media and audio-visual channels.

Yet again, the COVID-19 global response has shown the added value of linking the European and global communication narratives.

<b>Specific objective 4.4: Adequate and effective civil protection response and preparedness is provided to people in need</b>		Related to spending programme: UCPM
<b>Result indicator: Percentage of activations outside the EU that resulted in coordination and support activities of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> This indicator measures the percentage of activations of the UCPM outside the EU that were followed up with coordination activities and support provided by the Union Civil Protection Mechanism in relation to the total number of activations in a given year.		
<b>Source of data:</b> Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) – DG ECHO		
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
80%	>80%	>80%

DG ECHO objective 2: General objective 1: A European Green Deal

A European Green Deal will require consolidated efforts from across Member States and the EU institutions, where the Commission’s contribution will be crucial. Climate change needs to be prevented but also mitigated at home and abroad. It is key to ensure that our societies are more resilient and better able to adapt in order to respond to the challenge of climate change. DG ECHO, having a coordinating role at EU level for the UN framework for disaster risk reduction (Sendai) and being responsible for the UCPM (rescEU) will play its part for complete and efficient delivery of the Green Deal.

The impact of climate change on civil protection and humanitarian aid activities makes urgent action an imperative. DG ECHO will contribute to both the internal and external dimension of the European Green Deal: 1) by tabling new initiatives that respond to the core principles and 2) by providing concrete contributions to the actions and measures already set out in the European Green Deal Communication.

In the coming years, DG ECHO – in line with the core principles of the European Green Deal – will contribute to the internal dimension in various aspects: 1) being support to the European Emergency Response Coordinator (EERC), including disaster preparedness in the Union (rescEU) which can make an essential contribution to the suppression of, for example, large scale forest fires; 2) Greening of civil protection; and 3) Enhancing the use of early warning and information systems in support of climate related activities and the impact of climate change..

In parallel, DG ECHO will contribute to the external dimension through: 1) Disaster Preparedness Strategy and funding; 2) Addressing disaster and/or climate induced displacement, 3) Greening of humanitarian assistance, 4) Fully applying the nexus approach, and 5) Tracking resilience and climate action.

**External communication activities**

DG ECHO will make the European Green Deal a key element in its communication narrative for the coming years. It will also contribute to the Commission’s corporate communication actions promoting the principles and deliverables of the European Green Deal to EU citizens.

<b>General objective 1: A European Green Deal</b>		
<b>Impact indicator 1: Climate-related economic losses</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> The indicator measures economic losses from weather and climate-related disasters expressed in economic losses per year (in current values) and as a percentage of GDP. Types of disasters considered are hydrological, meteorological and climatological events. Data is presented as smoothed time-series based on 30-year moving averages instead of annual figures		
<b>Baseline</b> (2017)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2025)
Total losses: €12 052 million <sup>31</sup>	Decrease	Decrease
Total losses as a percentage of GDP: Tbd <sup>32</sup>		

*Specific objective 1: People and communities at risk of disasters are resilient and prepared*

The disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness are an integral part of the EU approach to resilience. In line with this and in order to ensure resilience and preparedness of people and communities at risk, DG ECHO’s approach to disaster risks in third countries is

<sup>31</sup> EU28 data. EU27\_2020 not available  
<sup>32</sup> Data expressed as a percentage of GDP will be presented in DG CLIMA’s Annual Activity Report 2020

focused on disaster preparedness, within a resilience objective and as a contribution to disaster risk reduction. Disaster preparedness and early action are a necessary complement to humanitarian assistance programmes in order to pre-empt or reduce the magnitude of needs. DG ECHO is committed to act as early as possible and thus reduce the humanitarian impact.

Moreover, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are essential elements of climate risk management and sustainable development. Disaster risk reduction cuts across different aspects and sectors of sustainable development. Ten of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have targets related to disaster risk. Disaster risk reduction refers to the systematic development and application of policies, strategies, and practices to minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout society, to avoid (prevent) or limit (mitigate and prepare for) the impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development (resilience).

In the same vein, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction calls for ensuring coherence across sustainable development and growth, climate change and variability, environmental management and disaster risk reduction agendas. Complementarity between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation (two sides of the same coin) will considerably contribute to resilience and preparedness for population and assets against climate change thus helping to deliver the European Green Deal.

The dedicated funding for disaster preparedness under the humanitarian assistance allows to target preparedness action and sustainably strengthen in-country response capacity and preparedness systems starting from the community level to act as early and as locally as possible. Preparedness for an early action and response mainstreaming, which entails integrating a risk approach in all humanitarian operations, is equally essential. In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, it is all the more relevant to conduct/update detailed risk analyses addressing how existing or potential hazards (upcoming cyclone/rainy season for example) and threats are compounding increased COVID-related vulnerabilities and the consequences of containment measures.

Furthermore, the decision for an enhanced UCPM and the creation of “rescEU” capacities will clearly contribute to the European green deal by preserving the natural resources of the EU and most particularly by contributing to preserving it from forest fires. In recent years and in clear connection with the climate change, these events have become more violent and destructive.

### External communication activities

In addition to the contribution to the Commission’s corporate campaigns, such as the Green Deal, climate change will also remain a key theme in DG ECHO’s own communication action, to be covered in field visits with journalists, awareness campaigns, audio-visual and social media products, etc.

**Specific objective 1.1: People and communities at risk or disasters are resilient and prepared**

Related to spending programmes: HUMA and UCPM

**Result indicator: Percentage of humanitarian assistance grants including elements of disaster preparedness, resilience and disaster risk reduction.**

**Explanation:** These measures the consideration of risks in humanitarian assistance programming, including needs-based and risk based approach in humanitarian assistance.

**Source of data:** DG ECHO projects database (HOPE)

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
58%	65%	75%

**Result indicator: Number of countries participating in UCPM that have adopted and implemented national disaster risk reduction strategies**

**Explanation:** Only half of the countries participating in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism have disaster risk reduction strategies in place. It is also Indicator 13.1.2. for the Sustainable Development goal 13 Climate Action.

**Source of data:** UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>33</sup>

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
17	25	33

**Result indicator: Number of scientific and technical assessments and advice provided to the ERCC support of UCPM operations**

**Explanation:** Scientific and technical assessments and advice are needed for an evidence-based decision-making. The ERCC, while dealing with natural and man-made disasters, needs to make use of the latest scientific and technical knowledge and expertise to support emergency management activities under the UCPM.

**Source of data:** European Commission, Member States, Participating States, European scientific partnerships (e.g. the European Natural Hazard Scientific Partnership ENHSP)

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
100+ monitoring reports from ENHSP 2+ season reports from JRC 20+ scientific maps	> than baseline	> than baseline

<sup>33</sup> (<https://sendaimonitor.unisdr.org/>)

**Result indicator: Areas where there is a EU contribution to increase countries response capacity to given events**

**Explanation:** This indicator is based on the added capacity that the EU can provide in individual events. For instance, currently the Commission has established rescEU in two areas (forest firefighting and medical stockpiling), and is in the process of planning the development of additional rescEU capacities in other areas for which a legal basis has already been obtained (medical evacuation, emergency medical teams). In the future, additional areas for which legal acts are currently under discussions shall be added progressively (CBRN).

Source of data: Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) – DG ECHO

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
2	4	6

*Specific objective 2: The environmental impact of humanitarian aid operations is reduced*

As the climate and environmental crisis deepens, humanitarian actors, from donors to local volunteers, are faced with a collective responsibility to ensure that their work does not further contribute to deteriorating the environment. This calls for taking all necessary measures to reduce the climate and environmental footprint of humanitarian aid. The recent COVID-19 pandemic makes the need to protect and restore nature all the more urgent.

The 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid already called for the integration of environmental considerations in humanitarian aid sectoral policies and interventions, even short-term emergency ones, based on the ‘do no harm’ principle – a principle for taking into consideration the negative effects of aid.

Establishing an ambitious position on reducing the environmental impact of DG ECHO’s humanitarian aid operations is a key contribution to the European Green Deal. Climate neutrality, climate resilience, circular economy, zero pollution and the protection of biodiversity are key pillars of the European Green Deal. Integrating environmental considerations in DG ECHO’s humanitarian aid operations and those of its partners, among others by the “greening” of logistics and sectors like food assistance, shelter, water and health, can contribute to addressing all of those key pillars.

<b>Specific objective 1.2: The environmental impact of humanitarian aid operations is reduced</b>	<b>Related to spending programmes: HUMA</b>
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**Result indicator: Percentage of humanitarian aid projects that incorporate environmental considerations.**

**Explanation:** This measures how many humanitarian aid projects embedded consideration of potential environmental impacts of the project and included mitigation measures to this end.

**Source of data:** DG ECHO Resilience Marker and, DG ECHO projects database (HOPE)

<b>Baseline (2020)</b>	<b>Interim milestone (2022)</b>	<b>Target (2024)</b>
(new indicator)	50%	100%

**Result indicator: Percentage of humanitarian aid projects contributing indirectly to objectives of the Green Deal**

**Explanation:** The EU climate markers, as already used during the 2014-2020 MFF, were developed based on the qualitative Rio markers that the OECD Development Assistance Committee uses for identifying specific environmental objectives (desertification, climate mitigation, climate adaptation and biodiversity) for development aid projects. The EU climate markers are designed to quantify expenditure contributing to climate objectives and are assigned at the most appropriate level depending on the specific design of each EU budget programme – project, type of intervention, component of programme or whole programme.

**Source of data:** ABAC

<b>Baseline (2020)</b>	<b>Interim milestone (2022)</b>	<b>Target (2024)</b>
40%	Increase	Increase

### DG ECHO objective 3: General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life

In line with the vision of President von der Leyen for the European Commission 2020-2024, according to which the European Union has to uphold its core values of “equality, tolerance and social fairness”, the continued offer of assistance by EU Member States and Participating Countries through UCPM is a remarkable proof of EU solidarity in action. Through the civil protection response, we protect citizens in times of need and can provide civil protection assistance to affected populations worldwide. In the context of the COVID-19 response, the Emergency Support Instrument was re-activated to offer further support to those EU Member States in need. From DG ECHO’s perspective this support was materialised through the so-called ‘Mobility Package’, whereby the Union offered Member States assistance in facilitating the transport of cargo, medical staff and medical patients.

Whenever a natural or man-made disaster strikes, inside or outside the EU, any affected country can request such assistance from the UCPM through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which plays a key role coordinating and managing the European Union’s emergency assistance response inside and outside the European Union to a broad range of crises. DG ECHO will support Commissioner Lenarčič in his task to strengthen the role of the ERCC as the single operational hub managing the EU’s swift and effective response to a broad range of crises, ranging from natural disasters, pandemics and man-made disasters at home and around the world. In addition to the massive response to the Covid-19 pandemic, other recent examples include the deployment of experts and in-kind assistance following the blast in the port of Beirut in July 2020, the activation following the Earthquake in Albania in November 2019, the activation following the Tropical Cyclone Idai in Mozambique in April 2019.

As of 2019, with the creation of the rescEU reserve as part of the enhanced Union Civil Protection Mechanism legislation, DG ECHO works on the creation of such a dedicated reserve of civil protection capacities that support Member State when national response capacity is overwhelmed. DG ECHO will continue, in close cooperation of Member State's experts, to define specific rescEU capacities. At the moment, six type of capacities are defined: a) aerial firefighting capacities using airplanes, b) aerial firefighting capacities using helicopters, c) medical evacuation for highly infectious diseases, d) medical evacuation for disaster victims, e) Emergency Medical Team type 3, and f) medical stockpiling capacities. DG ECHO will further advance the work around the Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) area with the view to include specific capacities under the rescEU framework. In addition to these, another area emerging as potential rescEU capacity is the development of multi-purpose aircraft for transport of cargo of consular evacuations. Moreover, the legislation also foresees the establishment of a framework defining capacities responding to low probability risks with a high impact. In such cases, the Union financing for the development and deployment of such capacities would be 100%. So far, all rescEU capacities except for the ones in the area of aerial firefighting are defined as responding to low probability risks with a high impact.

In parallel, and specific for the aerial forest firefighting category, the new legislation also lays out a rescEU transition phase. The purpose of the rescEU transition phase is to ensure that the maximum number of existing firefighting capacities are operational during the forest fire season. Launched in 2019, in which six Member States (France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Croatia and Sweden) took part by creating a fleet of 15 aircraft, the rescEU transition phase is expected to continue until a proper rescEU fleet of additional capacities will be established, and no longer than 1 January 2025 (end date established by the current legislation).

DG ECHO will also continue to strengthen the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP), which remains the central pillar for deploying capacities under the UCPM. The overall objective is to ensure predictability and high quality standards, which are required for international deployments. DG ECHO will encourage Member States and Participating States to commit more capacities where gaps exist, and to renew and extend the commitment of their capacities to the ECPP. DG ECHO will also continue the certification (and re-certification) process, to strengthen the overall quality of the response capacities committed by Member States into the ECPP. Mostly, DG ECHO will coordinate and manage specific training and exercise activities for disaster and emergency management experts. Moreover, as one of the main innovations of the enhanced UCPM legislation, DG ECHO will also work towards the development of a European Civil Protection Knowledge Network to reinforce the preparedness component of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) in close cooperation with the relevant national structures and to help build common Union disaster preparedness culture. In this respect, cooperation will be prioritised mainly with centres of excellence, academies, universities, researchers, knowledge centres, third countries and international organisations.

Finally, in the field of security the UCPM will develop synergies, complementarity and coordination with other Union instruments, to deliver on the new Security Union Strategy that should be adopted in 2020. This means to enable the Union Civil Protection Mechanism

to cover also “consequences of acts of terrorism”, and possibly consequences of man-made malicious threats.

Furthermore, Commissioner Lenarčič will chair a permanent Emergency Response Coordination Group bringing together “all relevant Commission services covering crisis prevention and preparedness in order to enhance resilience to crises”<sup>34</sup>.

### COVID 19 – internal response

During the COVID-19 emergency, the UCPM demonstrated its added value and overall potential, but also its limitations. At the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, it became tangible that the amendments to the crisis management set-up, agreed in 2019, were insufficient to address and manage an emergency of such volume. This crisis revealed that the Commission has limited ability to act at EU level, as the system is based on inter-state solidarity and the Commission has no capacity to stockpile strategic assets.

The UCPM/rescEU currently relies on Member States’ resources. This system of mutual European solidarity is intrinsic to European values; however, inter-state solidarity cannot be taken for granted. In particular, when: a) all or most Member States are impacted by the same emergency; b) the emergency requires a strong cross-sectoral coordination and is not limited in time; and c) the emergency has a highly political aspect at the same time as it requires frontline operational action.

To complement the response of the UCPM to the COVID-19 outbreak, DG ECHO has also been involved in the re-activation of the Emergency Support Instrument<sup>35</sup>. Following the adoption of the Regulation by the Council, and the approval of the budgetary authorities of the draft-amending budget endowing ESI with the necessary financial resources, the instrument allows the procurement of additional medical equipment, the transportation of vital cargo, exchange of healthcare professionals and patients across borders and set up additional medical facilities, amongst other things. DG ECHO mainly supports Member States to facilitate transport of medical teams and cargo transport of medical equipment and relief items from third countries into the EU and within the EU, as well as the transfer of patients within Europe and to neighbouring countries. The management challenge is to ensure fast delivery to the ongoing crisis by adequately allocating human resources and properly setting up new structures. Complementarity between the UCPM, rescEU and ESI is also paramount.

Based on the experience with COVID-19 pandemic and in line with the joint statement of the members of the European Council on 26 March calling for a more “ambitious wide-ranging crisis management system”, DG ECHO will start working towards a European Emergency Management for the future.

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<sup>34</sup> This Emergency Response Coordination Group is part of the wider Union crisis management system currently under discussions for its enhancement.

<sup>35</sup> The Commission adopted the proposal to re-activate the ESI on 2 April 2020. COM(2020) 175 final, which was adopted by the European Council on 14 April 2020 and the European Parliament on 17 April 2020.

Already in June 2020, the Commission adopted a new proposal to further strengthen the UCPM. The new proposal seeks to further enhance the overall preparedness at EU level to respond to large-scale and cross-sectorial emergencies, by endowing the EU with adequate strategic autonomy and the necessary financial flexibility.

Within the scope of the existing competence on civil protection in the Treaty (i.e. support competence), there is still room to strengthen the Mechanism in a meaningful way, notably through aiming at:

- 1) Endowing the Mechanism with strategic capacities: The Mechanism will count with its own strategic European stockpile of capacities covering all hazards. Notably, the stockpile should include the areas already covered by the existing rescEU capacities and other areas where operational experience shows a need: forest fire fighting capacities (e.g. Canadair fleet and helicopters); medical evacuation capacities (both for highly infectious disasters, and intensive care); medical countermeasures stockpile and personal protective equipment; modules addressing CBRN incidents; Urban Search and Rescue (e.g. specialist equipment like robotics/unmanned aerial vehicles or other items typically missing in major earthquake response); as well as a stockpile of basic relief items (shelter, water, health and sanitation (WASH), first aid kits).
- 2) Creating strategic autonomy in transport and logistics: Complementing the previous point, obtaining the necessary transport and logistical capacity is essential to allow the EU to respond to any kind of emergency within the EU and in third countries. Therefore, in addition to the medical evacuation capacities already mentioned above, the strategic rescEU capacities should also include cargo aircraft to transport equipment and aid within the EU, but also to and from outside the EU (e.g. Humanitarian Air Bridge). This should also be complemented with strategic pre-positioning of rescEU capacities and equipment at EU/national/regional level, including where necessary in proximity to the overseas countries and territories (OCTs)
- 3) Better planning and preparedness: Continue strongly advocating for investment in prevention of disasters across sectors, and for the comprehensive risk management approaches that underpin prevention and preparedness in close cooperation with the relevant scientific communities and key economic operators. Cross-sectoral and all-hazard approaches should be put at the forefront of a joint discussion to be based on Europe-wide resilience goals feeding into a baseline definition of capacities and preparedness.
- 4) Enhanced international cooperation: As disasters do not stop at borders, improving the operational capacity of EU Neighbourhood and high-risk countries linked to the UCPM to manage disasters also requires investment in capacity, also to support and maintain stability within the EU.
- 5) Providing an adequate and flexible budget: To successfully perform all of the above, a generous budget allocation should be foreseen under the next MFF, but more importantly, a more flexible implementation system with an operational reserve to draw upon when needed. Emergencies are unpredictable and not evenly spread over a programming period, so their management cannot be hampered by specific targets for the different phases of the disaster cycle.

- 6) Inter-sectoral information management and delivery platform: As 24/7 operational centre at EU level with capacity to follow and support operations in various types of crisis, inside and outside the EU, in real-time, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) should be further enhanced to be at the heart of the European coordination system. It should serve all Member States and link with their national crisis systems, as well as all EU Institutions (and coordinate with the IPCR and SITCEN).

### External communication activities

As regards the DG ECHO's external communication strategy, the roll-out of rescEU and the Emergency Support Instrument will be one of the principle strands of work. General communication actions (press and media work, social media and online communication) will show progress made on these initiatives and the real deliverables to a wider public, while targeted information campaigns will reach those most directly affected (such as populations in forest-fire prone regions). In addition, specific communication actions will address the community of Civil Protection professionals at national and regional level to inform and involve them in the policy and operations. Clear visibility, EU visibility and communication arrangements with the national authorities involved will be an important cornerstone of the communication strategy.

#### *Specific objective 1: The needs of the most vulnerable people in times of crises are met*

The delivery of civil protection assistance coordinated by the UCPM consists of governmental aid delivered in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. It can take the form of in-kind assistance, deployment of specially equipped teams, or assessment and coordination by experts sent to the field. As disasters know no borders, the mechanism ensures a well-coordinated response at a European level to victims of natural and man-made disasters in Europe and elsewhere, by fostering cooperation among national civil protection authorities across Europe. This coordination is crucial to avoid duplication of relief efforts and ensure that assistance meets the real needs of the affected region. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism will continue to be an instrument projecting EU solidarity beyond the Union borders.

The speed of intervention is an important criterion to assess the efficiency of the assistance provided in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. When a disaster strikes, every minute counts for saving lives; DG ECHO will continue efforts towards reducing the delay for interventions under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). The European Civil Protection Pool (ECP) consists of a voluntary pool of resources to be used to respond to emergencies, which are pre-committed by the countries participating in the UCPM. Constituting the backbone of the UCPM, the ECP allows for a more predictable, faster and reliable EU response to disasters. It is also intended to facilitate better planning and coordination at European and national levels. Since the legislative reform of the UCPM in 2019, DG ECHO is establishing a European reserve of resources (the 'rescEU reserve') which includes a fleet of aerial firefighting assets, medical evacuation planes, a stockpile of medical equipment and field hospitals. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, preparations for the establishment of the medical stockpile have been upscaled. Two calls of expression of

interests have been launched, and direct grants are expected to be signed with several Member States wishing to host part of the rescEU medical stockpile. In times of crises when Member States national capacities and the capacities of the ECPP are exhausted, the rescEU reserve will be mobilised in a matter of only a few hours. Whereas the initial 2015 baseline average speed of intervention is under 24 hours, DG ECHO aimed to reduce it to less than 18 hours from 2017 onwards and less than 10 hours from 2020 onwards, taking into account the difference in intervention speed for operations inside Europe and outside Europe. However, it should be stressed that these results are partly influenced by the number, severity, nature and the specific context of the emergencies for which the UCPM is activated in a given year.

Constantly increasing since its creation in 2014, the ECPP counts now with over 100 capacities offered by Member States and Participating States, out of which 63 have successfully completed the certification process. The higher financial incentives introduced with the enhanced UCPM legislation in force since March 2019, notably the coverage of 75% of the operational costs for operations inside the Union, are expected to contribute to increasing the number of commitments to the ECPP. At regular intervals, DG ECHO intends to revise the capacity goals setting out the minimum number of capacities needed in the different categories. This is an important and necessary exercise in the context of a moving and evolving risk landscape, and the creation of rescEU as additional layer of response capacities.

**External communication activities**

Onset emergencies inside Europe offer opportunities to raise media attention around the assistance provided by the EU. DG ECHO will continue to boost visibility and media coverage for the assistance provided by the EU in response to emergencies, including through the deployment of communication staff to emergency settings and the facilitation of media clearance for staff and experts in the field, as well as outreach to media inside the EU and in the countries concerned. In addition, the news will be covered systematically on DG ECHO’s social media and audio-visual channels.

<b>Specific objective 5.1: The needs of people in times of crises are met</b>		Related to spending programme: UCPM
<b>Result indicator: Response time of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism to a request of assistance</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> Measured as the duration between the moment a request for assistance has been received in the Emergency Response Coordination Centre and the first offer of assistance in CECIS.		
<b>Source of data:</b> Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) database.		
<b>Baseline</b> (2020)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
3 hours for inside Europe response	3 hours for inside Europe response	3 hours for inside Europe response
10 hours for outside Europe	10 hours for outside Europe	10 hours for outside Europe

response	response	response
<b>Result indicator: Adequacy of response of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism</b>		
<b>Explanation:</b> This indicator measures the percentage of the request for assistance that has been successfully met with offers for assistance.		
<b>Source of data:</b> Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) data base		
<b>Baseline</b> (2020)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2022)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
66% for inside Europe activations	75% for inside Europe activations	90% for inside Europe activations
86% for outside Europe activations	> 86% for outside Europe activations	> 86% for outside Europe activations

## D. Key performance indicators

In light of the activities described above, DG ECHO has selected the following four KPIs, which reflect the DG's main objectives. They cover the most important aspects of our policy performance and would provide insights into DG ECHO's most significant achievements:

1. Percentage of projects that can be monitored on-site - DG ECHO objective 1: General objective 4: A Stronger Europe in the World - Specific objective 2: Humanitarian space is preserved and respect for International Humanitarian Law is ensured
2. Percentage of humanitarian aid funding targeting actions in forgotten crisis - DG ECHO objective 1: General objective 4: A Stronger Europe in the World - Specific objective 3: The EU remains a global humanitarian donor by providing an adequate and effective humanitarian assistance in countries affected by humanitarian crises
3. Response time of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism to a request of assistance - DG ECHO objective 3: General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life - Specific objective 1: The needs of the most vulnerable people in times of crises are met
4. Adequacy of response of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism - DG ECHO objective 3: General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life - Specific objective 1: The needs of the most vulnerable people in times of crises are met

## **PART 2. Modernising the administration**

This section, covers how DG ECHO will deliver, as well as the steps that will be taken to modernise our way of working and to make the most efficient and effective use of resources.

As expected, DG ECHO aims to lead by example in areas such as gender equality, digitalisation, collaborative working and sustainability.

This section will cover five areas:

- Human resource management
- Sound financial management
- Fraud risk management
- Digital transition and information management
- Sound environmental management.

In each of these areas, DG ECHO will follow the Commission corporate strategies but will take action at local level. In this way, DG ECHO will also contribute to the general objective 'A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission'.

As a modern public administration, the Commission implements an internal control framework inspired by the highest international standards. The Commission's system covers all the principles of internal control identified in the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission 2013 Internal Control framework, including financial control, risk management, human resource management, communication and the safeguarding and protection of information. DG ECHO has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances and regularly assesses its implementation and overall functioning. This assessment is based on indicators, the most strategic of which are listed in this section.

### **A. Human resource management**

An effective human resources management hinges on a competent and engaged workforce, including an effective and gender-balanced management and on supportive and healthy working conditions. Sustaining staff's contribution to ECHO's performance requires concerted and consistent action across all of these people performance drivers. Therefore, DG ECHO will continue to engage and motivate its staff in order to effectively contribute to the common Commission objective and priorities.

To promote gender diversity in leadership, the Commission committed itself to achieve 50% of female representation in middle management by 2024. In the context of this corporate objective, ECHO is committed to achieving its 2022 target, adopted by the Commission on 1 April 2020 SEC(2020) 146, and will dedicate close attention to every opportunity to materialize this objective. DG ECHO is confident it will reach ECHO specific target by 2022 without difficulty. DG ECHO will also continue motivating and supporting the career development of women with a potential and interest for a management role, notably by

identifying talented and interested female staff members and guiding them to adequate training activities.

Staff engagement is a key driver of organisational performance. The Staff engagement index achieved in the 2018 Staff Survey was good (67%) which was slightly lower than the one in 2014 (67,4%). In the view of improving this result in the future, DG ECHO continues to encourage staff to share their views, ideas and actively engage staff in decision-making (DG ECHO Action Plan to the follow-up to the Staff Survey 2018).

Staff engagement lies at the heart of DG ECHO's internal communication. DG ECHO ensures that its staff is actively engaged through a variety of initiatives and platforms. As part of the internal communication, DG ECHO organises regular initiatives to keep staff informed about the latest developments in various policy/geographical areas and beyond and to encourage exchange of views. DG ECHO's internal communication complements and contributes to the Commission-wide communication strategy, coordinated by the domain leader DG HR.

DG ECHO takes the feedback of staff seriously and continuously works on improving well-being, work-life balance, learning and development opportunities and more. DG ECHO Staff and Management is continuously informed about the main achievements on DG ECHO Intranet page and other internal communication channels, both formal and informal.

A fulfilling working environment is the key to the successful motivation, engagement and well-being of staff. To achieve this, DG ECHO will continue to work towards a further increase of the quality of the work environment. DG ECHO has always put a special focus on staff well-being, which is particularly important as the humanitarian aid, and civil protection work exposes colleagues to extremely challenging and sometime dangerous circumstances, in particular when going on missions. Focussed security and psychological trainings will be continued in this context.

Moreover, the Management Charter signed by ECHO management early 2020 is a key document of reference for staff well-being whereby they commit to optimising staff well-being and ways of boosting staff engagement and respect of work-life balance.

Overall, staff well-being is inevitably impacted by the increasing number and intensity of crises ECHO is dealing with in an environment of resources restrictions. Hence, ECHO continuously seeks opportunities for efficiency gains in ways of working and enhancement of organisational performance.

In order to ensure the effective management of human resources and to optimise the capacity to deliver on priorities in this strategic plan, DG ECHO will develop a local HR strategy with a medium to long-term outlook (3–5 years) consistent with the overall corporate HR strategy.

Objective DG ECHO employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business

**Indicator 1: Number and percentage of first female appointments to middle management positions**

**Source of data:**

<b>Baseline (female representation in management)</b>	<b>Target</b>
(1 December 2019)	(2024)
9 – 53%	50%

**Indicator 2: DG ECHO staff engagement index**

**Source of data:** Commission staff survey [data to be provided by DG HR]

<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>
(Staff survey 2018 )	(2024)
67%	75%

## B. Sound financial management

As outlined in Article 66(1) of the Financial Regulation (FR), the Authorising Officers by Delegation (AODs) are responsible for implementing revenue and expenditure actions in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, and for ensuring compliance with the requirements of legality and regularity. This implies achieving the internal control objectives as defined in Art. 32(2) FR – including the effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the control systems.

The annual declaration of DG ECHO's AOD provides a reasonable assurance that the resources under his/her management have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principle of sound financial management, which is based on an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control systems. DG ECHO's internal control systems consist of several layers of checks and controls at the various stages of the project cycle. Separate control systems are in place for Humanitarian Aid actions, implemented under indirect and direct management, and for Civil Protection actions, managed under direct management. The different controls should not be seen in isolation, as each of them contribute to providing the overall reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of transactions.

The 2019 baseline shows that the internal control systems have proven efficient and effective in ensuring that the estimated risk at closure falls within 2% of the relevant expenditure and the residual error rate complies with the Court of Auditor's materiality criterion of 2%, on both an annual and a multiannual basis. DG ECHO's different internal control layers will continue to ensure that the control procedures put in place give the

necessary guarantees to the AOD concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions.

In order to reinforce these guarantees, an ex-ante assessment report on the management and control systems put in place to manage the spending of EU funds should be provided by all international non-governmental organisations who apply to become DG ECHO partners. This ex-ante assessment should be provided by independent auditors in conformity with International Standards of Audit.

An additional aspect of sound financial management is the cost-effectiveness of control systems, ensured by the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved. Every year, DG ECHO assesses the cost-effectiveness of its control systems by comparing their cost to their quantifiable and non-quantifiable benefits. DG ECHO will continue to ensure that the costs and benefits of controls are well balanced.

<b>Objective:</b> The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions	
<b>Indicator 1: Estimated risk at closure</b>	
<b>Source of data:</b> DG ECHO's calculation	
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
EUR 9.78 million [0.48 % of relevant expenditure]	< 2% of relevant expenditure

**C. Fraud risk management**

DG ECHO takes the risk of fraud very seriously and has an Anti-Fraud Strategy (AFS) in place since 2013, based on the methodology provided by OLAF. The latest update of the AFS took place in June 2016, taking on board recommendations from an IAS audit in 2015, and being validated by the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF). The AFS and its action plan address the objectives to prevent, detect and correct fraud. The measures taken so far comprise training to DG ECHO staff, inclusion of fraud risks as a criterion in the audit strategy, participation in fora on anti-fraud, streamlining of fraud management processes, adaptation of IT systems, and follow-up of OLAF investigations.

In 2019, the Commission updated its Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS 2019), and DG ECHO will revise its AFS accordingly in 2020 and integrate the anti-fraud measures of the CAFS 2019 as appropriate. A fraud risk assessment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 will provide a basis for the update of the Anti-Fraud Strategy and its Action Plan, which should be completed by the end of 2020. DG ECHO will continue focusing on prevention by raising awareness amongst DG ECHO staff and partners through training and participation in internal seminars and partner events. Moreover, DG ECHO's International NGO partners must

demonstrate, before being awarded grants from 2021 onwards, that they have appropriate systems in place to prevent, detect and correct fraud.

In terms of detection, DG ECHO’s updated AFS will promote transparency, integrity and accountability among DG ECHO staff and partners, in particular regarding timely, complete and relevant reporting.

In terms of correction, besides the zero tolerance approach, DG ECHO will continue its close, transparent and fruitful cooperation with OLAF, and improve our working methods where necessary.

Due to the challenging and highly volatile conditions under which DG ECHO’s activities are implemented, a mid-term review of the action plan including an assessment of fraud risks and vulnerabilities for EU spending in emergency contexts should take place in 2023.

<b>Objective:</b> The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy <sup>36</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction <sup>37</sup> of fraud	
<b>Indicator:</b> Implementation of the actions included in DG ECHO anti-fraud strategy over the whole strategic plan lifecycle (2020-2024)	
<b>Source of data:</b> DG ECHO annual activity report, DG ECHO anti-fraud strategy, OLAF reporting	
<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
50% of action points implemented in time	100% of action points implemented in time

**D. Digital transformation and information management**

DG ECHO has developed over the years a wide-ranging portfolio of IT applications to support a varied and challenging set of business operations and to respond to the specific needs of the DG and its stakeholders. A broad range of activities is automated and covers end-to-end processing of operations. The digitised activities address the business requirements of more than 3.000 end-users spread all over the world: staff in the Headquarters, experts and national staff in the field, ECHO Partners, Member States, Participating States, citizens.

The overarching goal of DG ECHO's IT strategy 2020-2024 is to support the operational priorities of the DG ensuring the continuity of operations, to further streamline and automate processes, to connect the stakeholders favouring online collaboration, to improve efficiency – effectiveness – transparency advancing evidence-based decision making, and to preserve and exploit the institutional memory of the DG.

<sup>36</sup> Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

<sup>37</sup> Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

In line with the European Commission Digital Strategy and the DataStrategy@EC implementation, DG ECHO will seek to:

- Apply the “digital by default” principle, by delivering robust digital services to its various stakeholders.
- Apply the “once-only” principle, by implementing interfaces with the main corporate systems.
- Scope and address the security risks of the ECHOField infrastructure in particular, in close collaboration with CERT-EU on cyber security.
- Share data with Member States’ administrations through the EDRIS application and the IATI initiative, and publish its open data on the open data portal of the OP.
- Favour reusability and interoperability and avoid replicating developments, by using corporate building blocks like EU Login and corporate Information Systems like ABAC, ARES, BASIS etc.
- Ensure the user-centricity principle by involving users through user working groups at the early stage of the development, while respecting the IT Governance established processes.
- Digitise as much as possible the processes handling documents

More in particular concerning the Commission strategy on data, information and knowledge management, DG ECHO considers that data, information and knowledge are strategic assets, and is paying particular attention to improving the way these assets are managed and used. Reporting and analytics have become an increasingly important area in DG ECHO, with strong analytics capabilities being introduced in 2016-2017 and further enhanced ever since. The next major step is to maximise the use of data for better policy-making: combine data from various sources, ensure their availability and quality, enable their compilation / aggregation at different levels, and use them for evidence-based policy and implementation, fully in line with the (C(2016) 6626) Commission Communication.

In this context, DG ECHO will launch projects for optimising the information management process. It will entail the development of inclusive and comprehensive data repositories facilitating the extraction and analysis of data, independently of data’s origin. It will therefore not be a tool for the production of data as such, but rather to consolidate, making information scattered across Directorates easily available and more user-friendly. The data repositories would primarily target the needs of (a) Civil Protection and (b) evidence-based funding allocations, but should foresee other access layers for sharing information with other stakeholders in ECHO (operational units, financial units, policy units) and the Commission, while strictly managing and controlling data access and data privacy.

Collaboration within DG ECHO is already benefiting from the use of the local and corporate IT systems facilitating internal exchange of information and collaboration. It will be further deepened by the fast adoption of the new Office suite (O365) in HQ to harmonise as much as possible its ECHOField ICT architecture to the Commission ICT architecture and contribute to more effective collaboration with ECHO’s field network. Under the Internal Data Protection Regulation (IDPR), entered into force in December 2019, DG ECHO has the legal obligation to integrate the principles of data protection into all aspects of our procedures and business activities. In this context, DG ECHO is committed to implementing

the EC’s Data Protection Action Plan (C(2018)7432) and will continue in the period 2020-2024 to build up its requirements.

DG ECHO established and submitted an inventory of basic datasets covered by information systems handling personal data and updated their privacy notice in the light of the EC’s data protection decision and progressed on the necessary adaptations of data records and privacy statements. In practical terms, DG ECHO has completed the conversion of legacy notifications, removed/archived those no longer in use, created new ones and used the appropriate corporate records when available. B those achievements, DG ECHO will continue using the new corporate records for its data processing operations as soon as available as well as listing possible new records still needed.

The target of DG ECHO, for the period 2020-2024, is to deliver tailored trainings and awareness-raising activities among its staff on data protection issues, procedures and management. These activities will be particularly focused on how to comply with data protection obligations in the most common processing operations and how to handle data breaches.

Finally, the Commission’s digital transformation programme aims to create a more relevant, coherent and cost-effective online presence for the Commission. DG ECHO will work together with DG COMM and other DGs to continue the implementation of a uniform Commission web identity and task-based information architecture, which will make online communication better tailored to the users.

**Objective:** DG ECHO is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

**Indicator 1 : Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles** <sup>38</sup>

**Source of data:** Calculated based on internal knowledge and GOVIS

<b>Baseline</b> (2019)	<b>Interim milestone</b> (2021)	<b>Target</b> (2024)
11 principles as defined in the European Commission digital strategy	Comply to the extent possible to the 11 principles defined in the European Commission digital strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply the “digital by default” principle, by delivering robust digital services to the stakeholders.</li> <li>• Apply the “once-only” principle, by implementing interfaces with the main corporate systems.</li> <li>• Apply the “security”, “privacy” and “cross-border” principles, by scoping and addressing the risks of the ECHOField infrastructure in particular, in close collaboration</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> The European Commission Digital Strategy (C(2018)7118) calls on Commission services to digitally transform their business processes by developing new innovative digital solutions or make evolve the existing ones in line with the principles of the strategy. At the beginning of the year N+1, the Solution Owner and IT Investments Team will assess the progress made on the basis of the proposed modernisation plan. For each of the 3 solutions, a table will reflect – per principle – the progress achieved during the last year.

		<p>with CERT-EU on cyber security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply the “openness” and “transparency” principles by sharing data with Member States’ administrations through the EDRIS application and the IATI initiative, and publishing its open data on the open data portal of the OP.</li> <li>• Apply the “interoperability” principle by favouring reusability and avoiding replicating developments, by using corporate building blocks like EU Login and corporate Information Systems like ABAC, ARES, BASIS etc.</li> <li>• Ensure the “user-centricity” and “agile” principles by involving users through user working groups at the early stage of the development, while respecting the IT Governance established processes.</li> <li>• Ensure the “data driven” principle, also by digitising as much as possible the processes handling documents.</li> </ul>
Modernisation plan is drafted based on the needs expressed by the members of the IT Governance Structures and the corresponding agreed priorities	Proof of concept: Combine data from various sources, ensure their availability and quality, and enable their compilation / aggregation at different levels.	Availability and management of data from various sources (internal, external, coming from various systems) in a consolidated manner, targeting various audiences, and allowing for in-depth analysis and evidence-driven policy and implementation
HOPE/APPEL 59%	68%	91%
CECIS 45%	68%	91%
INFOR 36%	55%	77%
<p><b>Indicator 2: Percentage of DG ECHO key data assets<sup>39</sup> for which corporate principles for data governance<sup>40</sup> have been implemented</b></p>		

<sup>39</sup> A key data asset is defined as any entity that comprises a source of data based on projects or administrative processes, structured or semi-structured in an information system, a database or a repository of data or corpora of text. A data asset can include multiple

<b>Source of data:</b>		
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>
2019	(2022)	(2024)
25% (data owners and data steward are identified for the 4 key data assets identified)	50%	80%

  

<b>Indicator 3: Percentage of staff attending awareness raising activities on data protection compliance</b>		
<b>Source of data:</b>		
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Interim milestone</b>	<b>Target</b>
(2020)	(2022)	(2024)
5% (deliver tailored trainings and awareness raising activities among ECHO staff on data protection)	75% of staff	100% of staff

## E. Sound environmental management

The Communication on the Green Deal stipulates that the Commission, as an institution and employer, aims to be climate neutral by 2030. DG ECHO will actively contribute to the achievement towards this target during the period 2020 to 2024 by promoting EMAS corporate campaigns at local level and implementing dedicated local environmental actions.

Beyond that, DG ECHO is committed to reducing the environmental footprint of its humanitarian operations, and that of our partners. This directly responds to the ‘do no harm’ principle. The means to implement an actual and consistent shift to more environmentally friendly actions will be reviewed. Reflections are ongoing on policy options for reducing the environmental footprint of humanitarian assistance. The environment lies at the very heart of some of the most complex and pressing issues of our time. Environmental degradation, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion and pollution can also lead to significant and protracted humanitarian crises, and climate change

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datasets or files somehow linked, e.g. by common codes or metadata. Commission key data assets have been documented in the data inventory Ares(2019)2586155.

<sup>40</sup> This indicator follows up on the progress of services in implementing corporate data governance and data policies for their key data assets included in the EC data inventory. See [Ares\(2019\)4441343](#) in the context of the [DataStrategy@EC action plan](#). In summary, this means that for each key data asset, services should assess if the following principles have been respected:

- Identify and designate the data owner and the data steward(s).
- Instruct their data stewards to share the metadata of their data assets in the Commission's data catalogue and to keep them up to date.
- Design and document processes for data collection/creation, acquisition, access, sharing, use, processing preservation, deletion, quality, protection and security. Information concerning these processes should be made available to anyone interested, as long as any confidentiality restrictions are respected.
- Make any necessary changes and updates to the IT systems used for storing, managing and disseminating these data assets to implement the aforementioned requirements and processes.

A data governance hub will shortly offer a single point of access on the intranet for related guidance and information. It will be complemented by further practical guidance in the course of 2020.

and other socio-economic pressures will likely worsen the situation. However, proactively addressing environmental issues, starting from the early phases of emergency response through to the recovery phase, can reduce these risks and reduce vulnerability. In this exercise, DG ECHO assesses impacts at global/local, direct/indirect and short-/long-term level, and proposes different level of ambition.

Other environmentally friendly actions will include greening logistics (a future logistics policy). DG ECHO will equally consider what aspects of civil protection assistance going beyond the new logistics policy can have a reduced environmental footprint.

A broad climate tracking system at commitment-level will help DG ECHO better demonstrate its contribution to climate action. This can be further refined to track climate action across all projects with new and/or revised project indicators. This tracking system is valid for both civil protection and humanitarian assistance projects.

Benchmarks for ECHO partners in the Framework Partnership Agreement at various levels is the other major way to increase environmentally proofed humanitarian assistance and to measure it properly. "Greening of ECHO offices" initiative has also started as another key indicator in sound environmental management for DG ECHO.

Prevention and preparedness projects granted under the UCPM to national civil protection authorities and other partners are going to leverage investments for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.