



Management Plan 2018

Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)



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INTRODUCTION: OVERALL OBJECTIVES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The overall context

The primary role of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission is to manage and coordinate the European Union's emergency response to conflicts, natural and technological disasters. It does so both through the delivery of humanitarian aid and through the coordination and facilitation of in-kind assistance, specialist capacities, expertise and intervention teams using the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

As outlined in DG ECHO Strategic Plan 2016-2020, the fulfilment of Commissioner Stylianides' mandate to deliver quick and relevant humanitarian and civil protection assistance to alleviate humanitarian crises around the world, working closely with our Member States, United Nations (UN) partners, NGOs and civil society directly supports the achievement of three of the Commission's President Juncker ten political priorities: 1) A stronger global actor; 2) Towards a new policy on migration; 3) A new boost for jobs, growth and investment.

An underlying principle that ensures the efficient realisation of the three objectives is one of coordination with other Commission services. DG ECHO attaches great importance to the link between humanitarian aid, as a rapid response measure in crisis situations, and more medium and long-term development action. The humanitarian-development nexus is complex and requires increased coordination – leading to joint humanitarian-development approaches.

The need for effective European humanitarian aid and disaster response has continued to expand significantly in recent years. Humanitarian crises continue to increase in number, complexity and severity, driven by a combination of protracted conflicts in Europe's wider neighbourhood that show little signs of abating, the impacts of climate change and population growth and urbanisation. There were over 50 armed conflicts in 2017, with little or no improvement in the most severe large-scale crises such as those in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan or the Lake Chad region. Overall, more than 95 million people in 40 countries were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2017, and almost 65 million people (half of them children) were forcibly displaced – forced displacement on a massive scale in many parts of the world has thus emerged as a pre-eminent humanitarian (and development) challenge. In a number of countries and regions, the impact of conflict has fed into and been compounded by severe food crises (in 2017, four countries faced an alarming risk of famine: Yemen, north-east Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan, with about 20 million people considered as being at risk of starvation in these four countries). This will continue to be a major source of humanitarian needs in 2018.

Moreover, the need for an effective response to sudden-onset disasters has never been greater, as underlined in 2017 by the record number of activations of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism both inside and outside Europe. Extensive forest fires in Chile in February, massive flooding in Chile in March and April, earthquakes in Mexico in September and in Iran in November, as well as the devastating hurricane season in the Caribbean have put the Mechanism and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) under stress.

Furthermore, the forest fire season in Europe resulted in significant loss of human life and property; the Union Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated 17 times between May and October. However, despite efforts from the ERCC and the States participating in the Mechanism, all the needs could not be addressed and only nine out of these requests for assistance were fully or partially covered. This situation has also underscored the need to further enhance the EU's disaster response capacities through a significant reinforcement of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism – and this will be a major priority for DG ECHO throughout 2018.

The main tools and regulatory framework

As regards humanitarian aid, DG ECHO's objectives are to save and preserve life, to reduce or prevent suffering and to safeguard the integrity and dignity of people affected by humanitarian crises by providing relief and protection. DG ECHO attaches great importance to ensuring that aid is managed in the most effective and efficient way possible so that the help the EU delivers to people in need has the maximum effect, whilst respecting international law and the principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity, non-discrimination and independence in line with the Treaty (Article 214 TFEU) and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. DG ECHO's day-to-day work in the area of humanitarian aid is based primarily on the Humanitarian Aid Regulation¹, which continues to provide a flexible and effective legal framework for mobilising and delivering the EU's humanitarian assistance across a broad range of crisis situations. Against the background of humanitarian needs running at an unprecedented level, the EU's planned initial humanitarian aid budget for 2018 stands at EUR 1.076 million. As in previous years, the Commission will pay particular attention within its humanitarian aid policy to ensuring that adequate resources are mobilised for education in emergencies, in line with the commitments made by Commissioner Stylianides.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism², which is also managed by DG ECHO, facilitates and coordinates the deployment of Member States' and other European Participating States' assets and expert teams in response to disasters both inside the EU and in third countries, in particular in the European Neighbourhood. It contributes to the protection primarily of people, but also the environment and property, including cultural heritage, from all kinds of natural and man-made disasters. This may also include the consequences of acts of terrorism, technological, radiological or environmental disasters, marine pollution and acute health emergencies occurring inside or outside the Union. Based on the relevant provisions of the Treaty (Article 196 TFEU), the Mechanism also supports and complements the efforts of Member States in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness. The draft 2018 budget for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism is EUR 49.4 million.

In light of the scale and severity of recent disasters (as mentioned above), the Commission is proposing a significant strengthening of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, which would include reinforcing the capacities available at European level to

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

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

respond to major disasters in key gap areas. The proposal³ complements Member States' disaster response systems by establishing a dedicated reserve of operational capacities at Union level – **rescEU** – and by strengthening preparedness and prevention measures. Concretely, it focuses on two key areas: creating the rescEU system to increase overall disaster response capacities available in the EU and strengthening disaster prevention and reduction of risks notably by engaging Member States towards better assessing risk and planning for effective preparedness and embedding risk assessment and reduction in the use of EU funds. In addition, an EU Civil Protection Knowledge Network will be established to support all civil protection actors across Europe. This proposal seeks a total overall increase in the UCPM financial envelope of EUR 280 additional million for the remaining Multiannual Financial Framework period (2018-2020). The follow-up to the legislative proposal and rapid implementation thereof will be a top priority for DG ECHO throughout 2018.

DG ECHO is further responsible for the implementation of Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the Union⁴ adopted in 2016 to address the humanitarian impact of natural and manmade disasters in the EU. Emergency support can only be provided where the exceptional scale and impact of the disaster is such that it gives rise to severe wide-ranging humanitarian consequences in one or more Member States and only in exceptional circumstances where no other instrument available to Member States and to the Union is sufficient. The modalities for the provision of such support are broadly analogous to those of EU humanitarian aid. The Emergency Support Instrument's criteria have led to assistance being deployed in one Member State, in the context of the refugee and migration crisis.

Finally, DG ECHO is responsible for managing the EU Aid Volunteers initiative⁵, which brings together volunteers and organisations from different countries to provide practical support to humanitarian aid projects and contribute to strengthening the resilience and disaster risk management capacity of fragile or disaster-affected communities. In this context, DG ECHO also contributes to the roll-out of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) launched on 7 December 2016⁶.

In its work across the policy areas and priorities outlined above, DG ECHO attaches great importance to effective coordination with other humanitarian and disaster relief actors (both bilaterally and in a multilateral context, and with civilian as well as military actors). While the EU and its Member States are the world's largest humanitarian donors, coordination with strategic partners is more important than ever in a context where needs are growing dramatically while the resources available globally to address them are not. Striving for greater efficiency in aid delivery will again be an overriding theme for DG ECHO's cooperation with its main partners in 2018.

³ Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (COM(2017)772 final of 23.11.2017).

⁴ Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369 of 15 March 2016 on the provision of emergency support within the Union (OJ L 70, 16.3.2016, p. 1).

⁵ 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).

⁶ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-4165_en.htm/

PART 1. MAIN OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

Part 1 of the Management Plan highlights the key deliverables that DG ECHO will implement in 2018 to help achieve the general and specific objectives defined in the multi-annual Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

General Objective 1: A stronger global actor

Specific Objective 1.1: People and countries in need are provided with adequate and effective humanitarian and civil protection assistance

DG ECHO's work contributes significantly to the Union's role and presence as a Global Actor. In practical terms, in the area of humanitarian aid, the Union's comparative advantage lies in its ability to intervene rapidly and on a significant scale both in natural disasters and in politically sensitive conflict settings, based on its strong commitment to the fundamental principles of humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law. Moreover, in 2018, DG ECHO will continue to ensure effective follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) held in Istanbul in May 2016, where the EU made 100 individual commitments, covering a broad range of areas (including early warning, respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), forced displacement, gender). DG ECHO will notably continue to act as coordinator with respect to the EU's self-reporting⁷ on the commitments made at the Summit.

In the area of civil protection, the Union's added value stems from its ability to pool and facilitate assistance from across the Union's Member States and other European Participating States while supporting better preparedness for and prevention of disasters.

These basic principles of intervention are complemented by a number of specific tools and frameworks for the implementation of the Union's humanitarian and civil protection assistance.

1. Funding allocations and aid efficiency

DG ECHO is committed to provide effective relief and protection to populations affected by natural or man-made disasters on the basis of need. To this end, DG ECHO adopts a yearly financing decision⁸. The methodology used for the allocation of funding is governed by the Index for Risk Management (INFORM), the Crisis Assessment, the Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) and the Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF). Strategic funding decisions are reflected in the Worldwide Decision for 2018 and serve also as the foundation for the Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) prepared by DG ECHO.

In DG ECHO's continuous effort to deliver aid which is effective and efficient, particular priority is given to making progress in the implementation of commitments taken under the "Grand Bargain", the package of reforms to humanitarian funding launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016⁹.

⁷ Through the UN PACT platform: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/annual-report/5545>.

⁸ Commission Implementing Decision financing humanitarian aid operational priorities from the general budget of the European Union, also known as 'Worldwide Decision' (WWD).

⁹ <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

The Grand Bargain consists of 51 commitments for donors and aid organisations grouped under 10 work streams: Greater Transparency of funding, Increasing support for Local and national responders (localisation), Increasing Cash-based programming, Reduce Duplication and Management costs, Improving joint and impartial Needs Assessments, "Participation Revolution" – improving beneficiary participation, Increasing multi-year planning and funding, Reduce earmarking, increase flexibility, Harmonize and simplify reporting requirements, Strengthening engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

Specifically, the intention of DG ECHO is to test the Grand Bargain (and the 'quid-pro-quo' it envisages between greater transparency and effectiveness by agencies and simplification by donors) through one or several pilot projects on the ground. DG ECHO will moreover continue to co-lead the Grand Bargain work stream on needs assessments together with UNOCHA, with the aim of improving needs assessments to enable swifter, better coordinated and more efficient aid delivery. Internally, DG ECHO will work on ensuring that its own procedures – in Headquarters and in the field – are fit for purpose to meet the commitments of the Bargain. It will also cooperate with partner organisations to agree on new ways of working.

2. The humanitarian-development nexus and resilience

DG ECHO constantly re-appraises humanitarian crises as they evolve. If the need for humanitarian assistance diminishes, often due to the start of rehabilitation and development activities, DG ECHO winds down its humanitarian work. A high priority is given to linking humanitarian aid and development activities. The 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. In this respect, the development of joint programming frameworks with DG NEAR and DG DEVCO will be further promoted to ensure proper LRRD strategies (Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development) aiming at optimising the efficiency, complementarity and comprehensiveness of the EU in response to major crises.

The joint High Representative-Commission Communication: A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action, of June 2017¹⁰, calls for stronger humanitarian-development coordination (nexus), with a strong emphasis on anticipation, prevention and preparedness. In 2018, the nexus approach will be tested in a series of pilot countries in which Joint Humanitarian-Development Frameworks or similar exercises will be pursued. Furthermore, work aiming to add an element of conflict prevention will be reinforced in the Union's overall external action.

¹⁰ JOIN(2017) 21, 7.6.2017
https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/join_2017_21_f1_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v7_p1_916039.pdf

3. Thematic policy priorities

Education in Emergencies

Education in Emergencies is a key priority for Commissioner Christos Stylianides in line with the commitments taken at the Oslo Summit in July 2015 and at the World Humanitarian Summit. In 2018, DG ECHO will dedicate 8% of the humanitarian budget to Education in Emergencies (EiE). The actions supported in this field help children affected by humanitarian crises to have access to and learn in safe, quality and accredited primary and secondary education, to learn life-saving and life-sustaining skills and gain increased personal resilience. They also ensure that children are protected, and support the strengthening of education services through preparedness, response and recovery interventions.

In 2018, DG ECHO will continue to develop the Education in Emergencies policy and strategic framework, deepen cooperation with other services that fund education measures in third countries (e.g. DG DEVCO and DG NEAR), and engage in international fora.

Cash as a delivery modality

DG ECHO pays particular attention to the modalities used to deliver adequate, effective and needs-based humanitarian assistance. In addition to the benefits for local economies, the cash modality gives affected populations the power to decide what their basic needs are and to choose the preferred way to satisfy them, thus empowering people and boosting their dignity.

The EU is committed to the use of cash in a way that takes into account the context and local conditions, and has been in the vanguard of donors advocating for a greater use of cash. It is often the most appropriate response in terms of speed, flexibility, choice and dignity of beneficiaries. A 'basic needs approach', which allows for differentiated but better coordinated and integrated responses across sectors, will continue to be developed.

The upward trend in the use of cash-based interventions in recent years will be sustained in 2018, corresponding to the EU's commitments under the Grand Bargain. In 2018, DG ECHO aims to deliver 35% of its assistance in the form of cash-based transfers. In January 2017, DG ECHO issued a Guidance Note on the delivery of medium to large-scale cash transfers. The Guidance has been updated and will be rolled out in 2018. As for other modalities of delivering humanitarian assistance, such as in-kind assistance, particular attention is given to risk mitigation.

Innovation

Innovation and the use of digital technologies to track and target humanitarian assistance can play an important role in making humanitarian response more effective and efficient. DG ECHO will continue to support the development of innovative approaches, including as regards digitalisation (for example in the context of identifying beneficiaries in mass displacement contexts), inter alia by exploiting opportunities offered by EU research and innovation programmes and the use of open-source data, and by harnessing the technical skills and expertise of the private sector and academia.

Synergies will be developed between technological developments and improved needs assessment, cash programming and identity management.

Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

In line with commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and in the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, DG ECHO is committed to preventing, and responding to, gender-based violence. In June 2017, DG ECHO took over the leadership of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, a global initiative of which it has been a member since its creation in 2013.

For its leadership (until end 2018), DG ECHO has identified four main priorities: advocacy, prevention, strong field-level engagement, and implementation of the Commission's commitments. In 2018, DG ECHO will continue to develop and implement these four priorities and deepen cooperation with other services active on gender and gender-based violence (DG DEVCO, DG NEAR and EEAS) and engage in international fora.

Urban settings

Urbanisation is changing the nature and scale of risks and crises at an unprecedented rate. An increasing number of people are seeking refuge in cities in the context of global forced displacement, with urban settings presenting their own set of unique challenges and opportunities. At the same time the growing severity and frequency of natural hazards expose urban settings, vulnerable communities and economies to increased risks of disasters (e.g. floods, landslides or cyclones).

In line with the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, DG ECHO will continue to promote a multi-sectoral approach to assessments and programming in urban settings, and advocate for greater attention to humanitarian needs in urban environments. The scale of humanitarian response to urban crises also requires multi-level understanding and intervention at household, neighbourhood and city scale, through strengthened cooperation with development actors and local authorities. An inventory of good practices developed in the context of DG ECHO funded operations will provide evidence of the challenges and opportunities faced in humanitarian crises in urban settings.

DG ECHO will also continue to promote urban resilience in line with the 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030'¹¹, to ensure follow-up on the implementation of the 'New Urban Agenda'¹², and linkages with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

¹¹ The Framework was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015 - <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>.

¹² The New Urban Agenda endorsed at the 68th Plenary Meeting of the 71st Session of the General Assembly held on December 2016 - <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>.

4. Disaster Risk Management

In 2018, DG ECHO will pursue proposals to enhance the EU's overall capacity under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism to respond to recurrent disasters and to emerging risks. It will also seek a much stronger coherence between EU-funded actions on prevention of disasters, as part of the disaster risk management cycle.

DG ECHO's coordinating role of the civil protection response to disasters and emergencies will continue to deliver rapid and efficient governmental aid in the immediate aftermath of disasters, based on the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) as an operational hub. This will take the form of in-kind assistance, deployment of specially-equipped teams and assets, or assessment and coordination by experts sent to the field. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) will also further support and complement the prevention and preparedness efforts of Participating States and seek to link this support to planning for disaster management. Prevention and preparedness actions include improving the quality of and accessibility to disaster information and data (including through mapping), encouraging research to promote disaster resilience, and reinforcing early warning tools. One of the priorities in 2018 will be to support Participating States and then to follow up on the risk management capability assessment that the latter will provide on the basis of guidelines¹³ prepared by the Commission. Another priority will be the implementation of the voluntary peer reviews, organised as an essential element to improve the systems of Participating States for managing risks.

Civil protection expenditure in 2018 will be managed through specific contracts (exchange of experts programme, peer reviews, evaluation studies, awareness-raising and dissemination of good practices, etc.) and grant agreements with Participating States (prevention and preparedness projects, exercises, workshops with the EU Presidency, etc.).

In 2018, a continued programme of registering and certifying Participating States' pre-committed response capacities will be pursued, including through modules exercises. Increasing the number of types of modules and other response capacities available through the ERCC and ensuring their quality and inter-operability through certification will increase the coverage, quality and rapidity of response.

As regards the system of financial support provided to Participating States for adapting and transporting their capacities in civil protection missions, the potential to increase financial support to assets committed in the European Emergency Response Capacity (also known as 'Voluntary Pool') is one aspect of the proposal to enhance the UCPM.

A key part of the Commission's proposal¹⁴ is the creation of **rescEU**, a reserve at European level of civil protection capabilities such as aerial forest fighting planes, special water pumps, urban search and rescue and field hospitals and emergency medical teams. These will aim to complement national assets and will be managed by the European Commission in order to support countries hit by disasters such as floods, forest fires, earthquakes and epidemics. The follow up to this proposal is a key focus for action in 2018.

¹³ Commission notice — Risk Management Capability Assessment Guidelines (OJ C 261, 8.8.2015).

¹⁴ Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (COM /2017/772 final of 23.11.2017).

In 2018, DG ECHO will moreover continue to facilitate deployments of expert teams on site to provide advice on prevention and preparedness measures ('advisory missions'), and will further develop the programme of Lessons Learnt from civil protection actions conducted within the framework of the UCPM including aspects from the entire disaster management cycle.

Specific Objective 1.2: People and communities at risk of disasters are resilient

DG ECHO's second specific objective – to make people and communities at risk of disasters resilient – is particularly relevant in the context of an increase in the frequency and intensity of disasters and conflicts in recent years, resulting from global trends including climate change, urbanisation, population growth and increased violence.

The number of lives lost and the economic damages incurred have increased dramatically. When a disaster strikes, preparedness and early action have shown to save lives and be cost effective. In addition to enabling better protection of people and assets, early warning allows for the assistance to be more organised and impactful.

Through early action and a focus on preparedness, DG ECHO seeks to preserve livelihoods and build resilience of affected populations. DG ECHO funded Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programmes aim at reducing the impact of natural disasters on populations and allowing early warning and early action. The resilience agenda has followed a similar approach, as it is more cost-efficient and overall effective to invest in preparedness instead of only responding once a situation has deteriorated to a degree that triggers a major humanitarian operation.

Preparedness for response and early action is therefore at the centre of DG ECHO's approach to Disaster Risk Management and Resilience with the aim to enhance synergies between humanitarian and development operations in turn leading to less suffering, less losses and a durable recovery. In 2018, the strategic approach on Disaster Risk Reductions, which calls for closer complementarity with local and regional systems as well as development co-operation actions, will continue to be rolled out. DG ECHO recognises the strong link between relief, recovery and development by working with DG DEVCO and EU delegations in the analysis, prioritisation and design of recovery strategies in the aftermath of crises and disasters. Collaboration based on joint analysis of risk and vulnerabilities will be further enhanced with particular emphasis in six pilot countries (e.g. Iraq, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Uganda, Myanmar).

DG ECHO will continue to advocate for the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) efforts into development programmes in order to ensure sustainable policies, particularly by protecting development efforts against sudden shocks in countries at high risk. Further enhancement of the link between humanitarian aid and development assistance also corresponds to a commitment under the Grand Bargain. It is also aligned with the implementation of other international agreements, such as the 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030'.

DG ECHO's DRR global efforts are fully integrated in the Humanitarian Aid Financing Decision. All DG ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plans incorporate an analysis of options and priorities for preparedness, early action and DRR. In 2018, DRR activities will be mainstreamed in 50% of all humanitarian operations and will focus on preparedness for response and early action, considering DG ECHO's added value gained over the years.

Follow-up to Sendai

In 2018, DG ECHO will continue to actively promote the implementation of the Action Plan on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹⁵, which was issued to further enhance and promote disaster risk management and its integration in EU policies in the four key areas related to the four Sendai priorities:

- (1) Building risk knowledge in EU policies;
- (2) An all-of-society approach in disaster risk management;
- (3) Promoting EU risk informed investments; and
- (4) Supporting the development of a holistic disaster risk management approach.

In 2017, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in Cancun, Mexico, was the first opportunity for the international community to review global progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework. The European Commission's engagement during the platform, coordinated by DG ECHO, has been instrumental to showcase the Sendai Action Plan and existing EU policy achievements in disaster risk reduction, both in developing countries and within the EU, receiving strong recognition in most of the panels and technical discussions.

DG ECHO will continue to use the Sendai Framework's positive momentum, working closely with all stakeholders, including EU Member States, civil society and private sector to achieve an even stronger international agenda and to mobilise all international instruments to enhance DRR and resilience, in particular the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the international climate change negotiations including through the follow up to the Conferences of the Parties (COP 23 and COP 24).

DG ECHO will maintain relations with the UN and other international organisations to promote global implementation of the Sendai Framework, and will contribute to and ensure strong representation and advocacy of disaster risk management policies and approaches at relevant regional and global platforms for DRR, such as the European Open forum on Disaster Risk Reduction (foreseen in August 2018, Italy). This includes support to the implementation of the key outcomes of the Global Platform for DRR in Cancun 2017 - making the economic case for disaster risk reduction, among others.

The EU will continue to strengthen its global leadership also in making finance work towards the goals set by the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework to ensure that disaster risk considerations are included in the development of financial market. The recent Communication adopted by the European Commission¹⁶ calls for disaster risk-proofed investments and more sustainable growth over next decades and to mobilise and reorient private capital resources to more sustainable investments.

¹⁵ SWD(2016) 205 final/2.

¹⁶ Communication from the Commission on Reinforcing integrated supervision to strengthen Capital Markets Union and financial integration in a changing environment COM (2017) 542 final.

In 2018, DG ECHO will continue to support EU Member States in establishing and implementing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by working with the Joint Research Centre and EU Member States, including through a workshop under the Bulgarian Presidency.

As part of the implementation of the Sendai Framework Action Plan, DG ECHO will further roll out the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) programmes, including on flood management and risk assessment. This will lead inter alia to the creation of multinational flood protection modules in the Balkans, which brings the cooperation to a new level of ambition and the introduction of an IPA programme on risk assessment for the enlargement countries.

The main international priority will be the roll-out of the first agreements with interested Neighbourhood countries to link them more closely to the activities of the UCPM. These actions will support neighbourhood countries in increasing risk and disaster prevention and preparedness, raising public awareness and, enhance the cooperation and exchange of good practices in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness between the Member States and Partner Countries.

In 2018, DG ECHO will continue supporting the implementation of EU legislation on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances ('the Seveso Directive') by the IPA II beneficiaries and European Neighbourhood Policy countries through a technical cooperation with the JRC addressing countries' needs over the long term in areas such as good practice exchange and risk assessment.

EU Aid Volunteers

The EU Aid Volunteers initiative brings together volunteers and organisations from different countries, providing practical support to humanitarian aid projects and contributing to strengthening the local capacity, resilience and disaster risk management of fragile or disaster-affected communities. The objectives pursued by the 2018 EU Aid Volunteers Work Programme include, among other things, the selection, training and deployment of 250 volunteers to vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in third countries that will support the capacity building and technical assistance actions for hosting and sending organisations.

In 2018, emphasis will also be put on awareness-raising to potential beneficiaries concerning the programme and its opportunities, on the further development of the network and on effective communication about the initiative thereby contributing to the promotion of the Union's humanitarian aid principles. Certification of sending and hosting organisations will continue to be facilitated along with support measures such as the maintenance of the EU Aid Volunteers Platform for the publication of vacancies, management of the reserve list of EU Aid Volunteers, publication of online volunteering opportunities, learning and development, mentoring of volunteers and networking. Based on the operational experience and the findings of the interim evaluation, DG ECHO in partnership with the Education, Culture and Audio-visual Executive Agency (EACEA) will introduce measures to simplify and streamline process to increase the uptake of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative.

Relevant general objective: A stronger Global Actor

Specific objective: People and countries in need are provided with adequate and effective humanitarian and civil protection assistance

Related to spending programmes:
Humanitarian Aid and Union Civil Protection Mechanism

All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme

Main outputs in 2018

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
-	-	-

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
Actions funded cover most pressing humanitarian needs	Initial funding allocation on the basis of INFORM, Crisis assessment, FCA and IAF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North, West and Central Africa: € 169.72 m - Sudan & South Sudan, Horn of Africa, Great Lakes, Southern Africa, Indian Ocean € 173.25 m - Middle East: € 258.50 m - Eastern Neighbourhood € 17 m¹⁷ - South Asia & Pacific: € 64.375 m - Central & South America and Caribbean: €13.550 m - EU Trust Fund for Africa: € 10 m - Complementary operations: € 29.48 m 	100% of actions funded cover most pressing humanitarian needs
A portion of humanitarian aid funds is spent in forgotten crises	Percentage of initial planned budget spent in Humanitarian aid projects implemented in the following countries and regions with forgotten crises: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central America, Chad, Colombia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sudan, Ukraine	15% of initial planned budget is spent in forgotten crises
Budget is allocated to Education in Emergencies (EiE) as a priority area	Percentage of the 2018 operational budget spent on Education in Emergencies worldwide	8% of initial adopted budget allocated to EiE
Cash transfers are made to people in need as a form of efficient humanitarian aid	Percentage of aid to beneficiaries in the form of cash as modality	35% cash transfers as modality of humanitarian aid

¹⁷ This funding allocation does not include the amount for Turkey, which will depend on the availability of funding under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey beyond 2017.

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
Self-reporting on progress made in the follow up to the EU's commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit	2018 self-reporting is adequately coordinated and delivered according to schedule	EU self-reporting covers at least 85% of the EU commitments
Civil Protection prevention and preparedness projects are implemented within and outside the EU (under budget lines 23 03 01 01 and 23 03 01 02)	Grants are awarded Public contracts are awarded (either through calls for tenders or under existing framework contracts)	6 to 8 grant agreements (prevention and preparedness and exercises) Around 10 public contracts (training programme, modules exercises, and civil protection exercises)
Response capacities are registered in the European Emergency Response Capacity-Voluntary Pool	Number of types of modules, Technical Assistance and Support Team (TAST) and other response capacities registered	Around 30 additional modules/response capacities registered in EERC/VP
EU Transport co financing supports the deployment of assistance delivered via the UCPM	Most transport of the assistance delivered through the UCPM is co-financed	At least 80 % of eligible transport operations under the UCPM of more than 500 km are co-financed by the EU.

Specific objective: People and communities at risk of disasters are resilient		Related to spending programmes: Humanitarian Aid, Union Civil Protection Mechanism, EU Aid Volunteers
All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme		
Main outputs in 2018		
Output	Indicator	Target 2018
-	-	-
Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes		
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output	Indicator	Target 2018
DRR is mainstreamed in humanitarian aid operations	Percentage of humanitarian aid projects with preparedness for response and early action mainstreamed	50% humanitarian aid projects
Civil Protection projects and exercises are implemented in IPA II and EU Neighbourhood countries	Implementation of IPA II and Neighbourhood programme	6 Civil Protection projects 1 CP exercise
EU Aid Volunteers are trained and deployed	Number of EU Aid Volunteers trained and deployed	250 volunteers trained and deployed
Organisations participating in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative are provided with capacity building and technical assistance	Number of hosting and sending organisations benefiting from capacity building and technical assistance.	115 hosting and sending organisations selected in the 2018 call for proposals
Interim evaluation of the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 375/2014 establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (the EU Aid Volunteers initiative)	A report to the European Parliament and to the Council accompanied by a Staff Working Document on the interim evaluation of the EU Aid Volunteers initiative submitted	1st quarter 2018
	A Communication on the continued implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers Regulation	1 st semester 2018
Second review of Sendai Action Plan completed	Implementation of Sendai Action Plan Activities	At least 30% of Action Plan activities completed

General objective 2: Towards a new policy on migration

Specific Objective 2.1: The humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable people in refugee crises are met

The overall context and objectives

The last few years have been marked by forced displacement on a scale that is unprecedented since the Second World War, with over 65 million refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons) in 2017. The Commission is committed to providing support to these populations by meeting the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable people caught in refugee crises and ensuring that the conditions are in place to allow for more sustainable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. In 2018, DG ECHO will continue to provide humanitarian assistance in the countries most affected by forced displacement and ensure that the special needs of forcibly displaced persons and their hosts are recognised. There will also be a focus on ensuring that the forcibly displaced retain the right and possibility to receive protection and live in dignity in line with the Commission Communication "Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance"¹⁸.

In 2018, DG ECHO will continue to cooperate closely with DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, the EEAS and the EU Member States on the dissemination and the operationalization of this policy framework, including via joint work on focus countries and joint guidance on implementation in line with the European Agenda on Migration¹⁹ adopted by the Commission in May 2015 and in line with the General Assembly Declaration for Refugees and Migrants²⁰, which will pave the way for global compacts on refugees and migrants in 2018.

1. Syria Crisis

DG ECHO will continue addressing the needs inside Syria as well as the needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq). Inside Syria, where 13,5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, DG ECHO response will be implemented in line with the EU Strategy for Syria and operational recommendations agreed by the wider humanitarian community at the Brussels conference "Supporting the future of Syria and the region", held in April 2017. In Syria, DG ECHO will maintain its focus on multi-sectoral life-saving actions, with a focus on Protection and Emergency response and preparedness. In **Lebanon** and **Jordan**, accounting for the two world highest refugee populations per capita, DG ECHO will cover the timely delivery of appropriate emergency assistance for newly-displaced populations as well as continuing to support the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers severely impacted by the protracted crisis. In **Egypt**, where over 122 000 Syrian refugees account for approximately 60% of the registered refugee caseload in country, DG ECHO will continue to focus on protection and education.

¹⁸ COM(2016) 234 final.

¹⁹ COM(2015) 240 final.

²⁰ http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1; <http://www.unhcr.org/58e625aa7>.

The number of refugees in **Turkey** exceeds 3.4 million, making Turkey the largest refugee hosting country in the world. DG ECHO will continue implementing the humanitarian leg of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, which in addition to funding from the EU budget also includes assigned revenue provided by the Member States.

DG ECHO will continue rolling out the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), a single-card social assistance scheme that will allow at least 1.3 million refugees to cover their basic daily needs in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), the Turkish Red Crescent and the Turkish authorities. The implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education project will also continue and allow at least 230 000 children to benefit from this largest-ever education in emergencies programme. DG ECHO will also fund humanitarian projects in the areas of primary health care, including physical rehabilitation and mental health, non-formal education and protection.

2. Iraq

The Commission continues to be at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Iraq. DG ECHO will continue to provide lifesaving assistance in the country, where 11 million people currently require humanitarian aid including 3.2 million internally displaced civilians. The EU's humanitarian support will continue to provide aid and protection for all populations affected by the conflict, on the basis of needs, and will strengthen advocacy for their protection during and after the conduct of hostilities, in accordance with Iraqi national law, International Humanitarian Law and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. In coordination with mid-longer term assistance, humanitarian aid will be provided in 2018, inter alia, to help ensure direct aid services for survivors of physical injury and trauma, conflict-related gender and sexual based violence, as well as for families having lost relatives in conflict and detainees. Complementarities and transition to mid-longer term support will also be promoted to better assist those prevented from returning to their areas of origin or subject to secondary or protracted displacement.

The responses to the Syria and Iraq crises are complemented by the EU Regional Trust Fund set up to help millions of Syrian refugees and overstretched host communities in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq through the provision of basic goods and services. In Iraq, the EU Regional Trust Fund comprises also assistance to Iraqi IDPs and returnees. DG ECHO also contributes to the Emergency Trust Fund set up to tackle the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in Africa, with a particular focus on the crises in the Sahel and the Lake Chad area, the Horn of Africa and North Africa. DG ECHO's contribution will continue to focus on resilience related activities.

3. Inside EU

In parallel to the provision of assistance to persons of concern in relevant third countries, it is crucial to address the humanitarian needs of migrants and refugees within the Union. Regulation (EU) 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the European Union (ESI) was adopted by the Council on 15 March 2016 and immediately activated for a period of 3 years "for the current influx of refugees and migrants into the Union". In this context, EUR 650 million is available for the period 2016-2018 to provide emergency support in Member States affected by the migration and refugee crisis. Greece is the only country which meets the criteria for support as set out in ESI.

Emergency support provided in 2016 and 2017 has achieved concrete results in addressing the humanitarian needs of refugees and migrants in Greece. Over the course of 2018, the objective is to progressively hand over the humanitarian response to Greece. A phase-out plan is being elaborated in close cooperation and consultation with the national authorities. Activities will include the continued provision of shelter through a rental accommodation scheme and a limited number of permanent camps, a multi-purpose cash transfer system and the delivery of a number of services, including protection, education, health and WaSH (water, sanitation and hygiene), funded through emergency support.

Actions will continue to be carried out in synergy and complementarity with other instruments of the Union, such as the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF), the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF). To support the handling of the crisis, DG ECHO facilitates the production of Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) reports and the uploading of documents on the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR) web platform. ISAA reports are published on a regular basis to provide decision makers with a clear common picture of the latest developments in the refugee crisis.

Relevant general objective(s): Towards a New Policy on Migration

Specific objective: The humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable people in refugee crises are met

Related to spending programme: Humanitarian Aid

**All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme
Main outputs in 2018**

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
-	-	-

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
Budget is dedicated for project components targeting refugees/forced displacement situations	Budget for Syria-Iraq crises; Facility for Refugees in Turkey	€ 212.5m p.m. ²¹
	Support to refugees and migrants in Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	€ 2 m
	Response through Africa Trust Fund	€ 10 m
	Emergency Support Instrument	€ 199 m
Effective implementation of the Emergency Support Instrument is ensured through a coordinated approach involving the authorities of the affected Member State and services of the Commission	Number of coordination meetings to ensure close cooperation and consultation with the national authorities and with partner organisations.	10 coordination meetings organised with Greek authorities at Director Level
	Number of coordination meetings with other Commission services providing some form of emergency assistance to Greece.	40 coordination meetings organised with relevant Commission services
Evaluation of Regulation (EU) 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the Union	Report to the Council and the European Parliament with suggestions for the future of the Regulation	1 st semester 2018

²¹ The amount will depend on the availability of funding under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey beyond 2017.

Communication on forced displacement and development is disseminated and implemented	Operationalization of the new approach in the identified focus countries Strengthening of the approach in other countries	2 nd quarter 2018 4 th quarter 2018
ISAA reports in the context of the refugee crisis are produced by the Commission with HOME being the lead service. DG ECHO contributes to the production of the reports.	DG ECHO provides regular analysis and maps for the reports	>25 ECHO contributions to ISAA reports

General Objective 3: A new boost for jobs, growth and investment

Specific Objective 3.1: Populations and economic assets at risk of disasters in the EU are protected

Prevention / Preparedness / Response

The Union aims to promote the well-being of citizens, which means contributing to their security. It has played a key role in protecting citizens against natural disasters in the past year, and must continue to do so. The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism is evidence of European solidarity both inside and outside the Union borders.

The Commission has decided to propose to strengthen the Mechanism, through inter alia the establishment of a European Civil Protection Capacity– **rescEU**, in order to ensure that the Union can provide better crisis and emergency support to our citizens with maximum efficiency²². DG ECHO will ensure in 2018 that appropriate follow-up be given to the negotiations of the Commission's proposal²³ with the European Parliament and the Council. The current Mechanism has proved to be a good tool to mobilise and coordinate the assistance provided by the Participating States to respond to disasters inside and outside the Union. Building on these strengths, the above mentioned proposal aims to reinforce the provisions of the current framework to enhance the collective capacity of Member States to respond to disasters by creating a stronger European civil protection capacity, **rescEU**. The proposal expressly allows the Commission to acquire operational capacities, and to set up arrangements for ensuring rapid access to those capacities. This new reserve capacity, as well as higher co-financing rates for the European Civil Protection Pool (currently known as European Emergency Response Capacity, EERC) will address structural and emerging gaps in critical response gaps. This initiative will also

²² Item 17 of Annex I to Commission Work Programme 2018 (COM(2017) 650 of 24.10.2017, contributing to 'An Area of Justice and Fundamental Rights Based on Mutual Trust'.

²³ Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 1313/2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (COM(2017) 772 final of 23.11.2017).

help to reinforce the internal coherence of the Mechanism, as well as to gain in efficiency by pursuing administrative simplification and streamlining of procedures.

The proposal also enhances the links between prevention, preparedness and response by better connecting risk assessments to risk management planning and to include in addition to short-term prevention actions, also longer-term prevention efforts, looking at the overall adaptation to the increasing impacts of climate change. Future scenario-planning should be based on risk assessments and capacity deployments, creating a stronger real link between prevention, preparedness and response.

In addition, the creation of an EU Civil Protection Knowledge Network to support all civil protection actors across Europe is proposed.

Enhancing the EU's resilience to disasters, especially cross-border risks, is amongst the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy: competitiveness and sustainability depend upon effective disaster risk management which helps to avoid economic and human losses and strengthens resilience to increasing global shocks and threats. Investing in disaster risk prevention and management is a strong driver of innovation, growth and job creation, opening also new markets and business opportunities.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism legislation provides for an allocation of the 2014-2020 financial envelopes by percentages between prevention, preparedness, and response. For prevention actions, a 20% spending target is defined with a flexibility of +/- 8 percentage points. The legislator recognises that prevention actions are the best way to achieve the necessary protection of populations and economic assets at risk of disasters. DG ECHO implements these prevention actions in a variety of ways, financial and non-financial. The actions with budgetary relevance are in particular prevention and preparedness projects which contribute through their dissemination and replication capacity to an increased public awareness and preparedness for disasters. DG ECHO ensures the implementation of such high quality projects including small scale exercises and training by promoting the joint design, planning, development and implementation of innovative civil protection activities among UCPM Participating States, including procedures, techniques, tools, etc.

The 2018 UCPM Work Programme aims at improving cross border civil protection and marine pollution cooperation, including regional cooperation, regarding preparedness for, direct response to and reducing impacts of natural and man-made disasters. The 2018 target for the budget allocation to prevention will require the implementation of civil protection projects selected under the prevention and preparedness call for proposals.

In 2018, DG ECHO will continue improving the knowledge base for disaster prevention, awareness raising and dissemination of good practices. It is expected to improve ability to manage risks and build resilience via national risk assessments and assessments of national risk management capabilities, promote cooperation between Member States on disaster prevention and science networking, as well as add value through the pooling and sharing of expertise from Member States, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders and further develop good risk management practices and tools, including risk communication practices.

Preparedness activities are an essential prerequisite for successful response operations. They ensure a state of readiness and capability of human and material means, structures, communities and organisations enabling them to ensure an effective rapid response to a disaster.

Preparedness activities include the whole spectrum of preparedness capabilities under the UCPM, such as training, modules and full scale exercises, lessons learnt, as well as operational planning, host nation support, establishment of the European Emergency Response Capacity and other measures. Integrated in a full cycle approach to risk management, preparedness actions build on preventive measures undertaken by the Commission and Member States, namely risk assessments, risk management capability assessments and the consolidation of a knowledge base on disasters and disaster risks.

In order to ensure operational effectiveness, quality criteria and a certification process are being defined and implemented for the modules, other response capacities and experts identified by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). In particular, modules should be capable of working self-sufficiently for a given period of time, be quick to deploy, and interoperable. In order to enhance the interoperability of modules, measures are needed at Union and Participating State levels. In 2018, DG ECHO will continue developing the European Medical Corps, which is an important political priority for Commissioner Stylianides. This involves significant policy work related to the quality requirements for different types of medical response capacities, alignment with World Health Organisation standards and processes, the roll-out of training and exercises for medical teams, and the liaison with health colleagues in Member States, other Commission departments and the European Centre for Disease Control.

In support and in addition to the ERCC, DG ECHO manages a training and exercises programme under the UCPM with a view to enhance the coordination of civil protection assistance interventions by ensuring improved compatibility and interoperability between the intervention teams and other intervention support as well as by developing the competence of the experts involved. DG ECHO will continue implementing these programmes as provided in the 2018 Work Programme. The training programme aims at training European civil protection experts on relevant civil protection topics (such as disaster management, civil protection legislation, international and national deployments, needs assessment, information management, safety and security, etc.). Around 55 training sessions will be organised in 2018. The modules exercises programme provides a good opportunity to test specific response capacities, as well as the self-sufficiency, interoperability, coordination and procedures for response teams and equipment. In 2018, DG ECHO expects three table-top exercises and six exercises in the field to be organised. The civil protection exercises are organised by civil protection authorities of countries testing their national emergency structures, including host nation support when receiving international assistance. DG ECHO expects to fund four to five exercises in 2018 either within or outside the EU.

EU Solidarity Corps

DG ECHO will continue to contribute to the policy, legislative and programme development of the European Solidarity Corps. The members of the European Solidarity Corps will be engaged in a broad range of activities, including the prevention of natural disasters (but excluding immediate response).

For civil protection authorities, the scope of human resources support for tasks related to prevention and (in some circumstances) recovery from disaster (e.g. forest, habitat and water management, beach clean-up etc.) will be further explored to frame the scope for the Corps to complement existing capacities and help to fill gaps. Relevant public authorities, NGOs, universities and private companies need to be encouraged to involve Corps participants in their projects. Possible tasks and role for young people to support these activities will be further identified.

In 2017, DG ECHO made an effective contribution to the drafting of the legislative proposal for a Regulation laying down the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps. The legal act proposed by Commission is currently under negotiation for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council²⁴. The proposal suggests a contribution of EUR 6 Mio from the UCPM budget for the period from 2018 to 2020.

DG ECHO will continue to contribute to the development of the implementing rules, especially on Quality Label, to ensure simplified procedures for public authorities. In the same vein, the EU-based organisations certified under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative will be exempted from the Quality Label procedure and will have access to the pool of members of the European Solidarity Corps.

²⁴ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/11/20/european-solidarity-corps-council-agrees-on-general-approach/#>

Relevant general objective: A new boost for jobs, growth and investment

Specific objective: Populations and economic assets at risk of disasters in the EU are protected

Related to spending programmes: Union Civil Protection Mechanism

All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
Establishment of rescEU (as follow-up to the negotiations and adoption of proposals to improve the response capacity of the European Civil Protection Mechanism)	Award of the first grants/contracts for the establishment of rescEU	within 3 months of the adoption of the decision and availability of appropriations

Important items from work programmes/financing decisions/operational programmes

Main outputs in 2018:

Budget is allocated for disaster prevention	Percentage of Civil Protection budget contributing to disaster prevention	20% of CP budget
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PART 2. MAIN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

A. Human resource management

In 2017, DG ECHO was fully committed to making the HR modernisation process a success. While both the ECHO HR Business Correspondent (HR BC) Team and the Account Management Centre 4 (AMC4) cooperated closely, the new HR delivery model that was implemented on 16/02/2017 posed a number of challenges on DG ECHO throughout 2017, which will probably continue until the new delivery model will be fully stabilised.

In 2018, DG ECHO will assess the achievement of the effective Human Resource management objective described in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020²⁵ against the following 3 deliverables: a) a gender-balanced Talent Management strategy, b) an attractive working environment and c) a close follow-up to the results of the 2016 staff survey.

In 2017, DG ECHO already met and surpassed the targets set in the Commission's Equal Opportunities Strategy for the end of 2019 (45%). DG ECHO paid special attention to women applicants to middle management positions, and encouraged proactively female potential candidates to apply for the six heads of unit posts that vacated in Q4 2016. In April 2017, DG ECHO exceeded its objective with the second best rate of female representation in Middle Management positions in the whole Commission (56%). DG ECHO also achieved 60% female representation in its Senior Management. The College's renewed approach to its commitment to reach at least 40% female managers by end 2019 that was adopted on 19 July 2017 set a new target for DG ECHO of 1 additional first female appointment in a middle management position by the end of 2019. 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 for the Female Talent Development Programme (FTDP) centrally organised by DG HR.

A fulfilling working environment is the key to the successful motivation, engagement and well-being of staff. DG ECHO's goal in this area for 2018 is to further increase the quality of the work environment. DG ECHO has always put a special focus on staff well-being considering its specific operating context. Given that in the field, staff can be in dangerous and extremely challenging circumstances, security trainings and psychological support will continue to be provided in 2018. The results of the 2016 staff survey shows a drop in the feeling of DG ECHO staff that the Commission cares about their well-being. DG ECHO plans to prepare a local fit@work programme that proposes well-being measures to meet staff concerns.

The second half of 2016 saw major structural changes: reorganisation of the DG and increase in staff due to new priorities and escalation in number and magnitude of crises, and significant turnover of directors and heads of unit. In order to address these, DG

²⁵ "The DG deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission's priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, which is driven by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions."

ECHO collected feedback from staff through a variety of channels: meetings facilitated by the local HR team in January 2017 on specific themes, one-on-one discussions between staff members and representatives from a dedicated task force, comments from heads of unit, and observations sent by staff members to dedicated mailboxes. A management retreat was organised in February 2017 with the objective of integrating the newly appointed management staff, and brainstorming on ways to accompany DG ECHO staff in adapting to the organisational changes, all in a goal to optimize working relationships and improve motivation levels. The second important objective of the retreat was to analyse the findings of the 2016 staff survey and establish an action plan to address the issues highlighted by the survey, with a view to improving the results in future surveys and more generally DG ECHO's staff satisfaction at work. To analyse the feedback collected, DG ECHO set up a task force composed of representatives from its 4 Directorates and the Director-General office, and the ECHO HR Business Correspondent. The group met on 9 occasions and prepared a plan made of 16 actions with 30 measurable benchmarks.

By November 2017, 23 of the 30 benchmarks (77%) have been completed²⁶. In 2018, the task force will continue to meet regularly to (1) check on the completion of the remaining 8 benchmarks, and (2) test staff satisfaction along the way.

The staff engagement index for 2016 (61%) has decreased compared to the score reached in 2014 (67%). DG ECHO is aware that some sources of concern from its staff go beyond the scope of its power to act²⁷. However, the measures put in place to improve staff satisfaction at work²⁸ are aimed at improving the staff engagement index in the 2018 staff survey.

A dedicated internal communications strategy is currently being developed. Communication activities target DG ECHO staff at all hierarchical levels in Brussels and field offices. Through tailored activities, internal communication will illustrate how work by DG ECHO staff directly supports the EU's overarching aims of promoting peace, the well-being of its people as well as its values which are respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights (Articles 2 and 3 TEU).

Internal communication in 2018 will underline DG ECHO's added value and show how it makes the Directorate-General a rapidly acting body in times of disasters and one of the most recognised humanitarian donors worldwide. In addition, the internal communication strategy aims at strengthening the dialogue between DG ECHO management and staff. The ongoing reworking of DG ECHO Intranet will be completed and result in improved information accessibility, supporting staff in exercising their daily tasks. Finally, internal communication will promote EU public service principles as defined by the European Ombudsman and clear writing.

²⁶ The remaining 8 benchmarks are related to the following topics: vision and mandate, resources management, and information/knowledge management.

²⁷ These concerns refer to Commission policies taken by the central services, such as the working conditions for contract agents or the quality of the working environment.

²⁸ The actions put in place include for instance strengthened information sharing mechanism, improved staff mobility between external relation Commission services, and a training offer that respond to the specific needs of DG ECHO's population.

Objective: The DG deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, which is driven by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions.

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
A dedicated Talent Management strategy that encourages female employees to apply for middle management positions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share of female candidates applying for middle-management positions 2. Percentage of female representation in middle management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. >30% 2. 50%
An assessment of the results of the 2016 staff survey and an action plan to address the issues identified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee Engagement Score on the 2018 staff survey 2. Achievement rate of the benchmarks on the Action Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee Engagement Score 2018 staff survey > 61% (i.e. improvement compared to 2016 staff survey results) 2. At least 25 out of the 30 benchmarks of the Action Plan are achieved (>83%)
Staff feel their well-being is cared for and feel engaged in their work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of staff who feel that the Commission cares about their well-being 2. Design of a local fit@work programme that proposes well-being measures such as burn-out prevention and mindfulness sessions. 3. Security trainings provided to staff going on mission to high-risk areas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. >21% (i.e. improvement compared to 2016 staff survey results) 2. One (1) fit@work strategy targeted to DG's needs is designed by the end of 2018 3. As of January 2018, 100% of DG ECHO HQ and field staff who go on mission to high-risk areas have previously undergone a security training courses (Hostile Environment Awareness Training/HEAT or equivalent).
A dedicated internal communication strategy that highlights core values of our organisation and messages that are well coordinated with top management. New communication activities to increase levels of transparency as well as higher accessibility of work relevant information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intranet clicks per month divided by DG population 2. Presence at DG ECHO away days 3. Number of nominations for the Award for Good Administration and for the Clear Writing Awards 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.30 2. At least 10% increase in participation in DG ECHO away days 3. Increase of 10% in nominations for the Clear Writing Awards

B. Financial Management: Internal control and Risk management

The proper implementation of DG ECHO-funded operations, applicable to both management modes (direct and indirect management), is ensured through several layers of checks and controls at the various stages of the project cycle of operations. DG ECHO has set up a control architecture aimed at ensuring the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the nature of the payments concerned. The control objective is to ensure that the residual error rate does not exceed the European Court of Auditors' materiality criteria of 2% on both an annual and a multiannual basis. The residual risk of error is estimated by the residual error rate obtained from the implementation of the audit and control strategy after any corrections made resulting from the other supervisory and control systems in place.

The different controls should not be seen in isolation, each of them contributing to providing the overall reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of transactions. Controls include regular and ad-hoc assessment of NGOs. The process starts with the assessment of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who apply to become FPA (Framework Partnership Agreement) partners. NGOs can apply for the signature of the 2014 FPA with DG ECHO until end of March 2018 if they comply with the eligibility and suitability criteria established on the basis of Article 7 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, the Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application. Once a partner, NGOs are assessed periodically in order to check that the conditions needed for the signature of the framework contract are still met. The methodology applied to the assessment of partners focuses on NGOs' financial robustness, the assessment of compliance of partners' procurement rules with the applicable general conditions, and a follow-up upon the audit recommendations that have been made to the partners in the framework of DG ECHO's audit strategy. In 2017, 35 non-governmental organisations applied for the signature of the FPA with DG ECHO. In the same year, 14 organisations were granted partnership following assessment of their applications while 20 applications were rejected (these figures include applications submitted in 2015-2016). In 2018, substantial work will be undertaken to prepare for the new 2020 FPA.

Monitoring of actions is one of the pillars of DG ECHO's control architecture and it is ensured by the geographical desks at headquarters and technical assistants in the field. Monitoring may, in some cases, mostly for projects under remote management mode, not be possible due to problems of access, security and other constraints. The target for 2018 is still to monitor over 95% of actions excluding projects under remote management.

The control architecture also includes ex-ante controls of all eligible expenditure claimed by the partners to ensure conformity with the applicable rules before performing the final payment. This control is done by both the operational and financial desks. In addition, ex-post controls are ensured through the implementation of the audit strategy and annual audit plans. The audit strategy ensures that every partner organisation is audited periodically, be it in the field or at headquarters. A sample of contracts with each chosen partner is selected for audit.

The contract sample is designed to be a cross section of high and low value contracts, covering different countries and decision types while at the same time including any contracts judged to be higher risk (based on previous audits, specific requests or other risk assessments). Audits are then carried out on all the costs incurred on these contracts using standard audit methodologies. If any systemic errors are found, auditors are asked to audit all transactions within the same budget heading on that contract (rather than extrapolate based on a sample). In 2018, some 300 projects will be audited covering humanitarian aid and civil protection budget expenditure.

The principle of efficiency concerns the best relationship between resources employed and results achieved. The main components of the estimated cost of the control strategy are the total costs of staff whose time is, partly or entirely, dedicated to quality assurance, control and monitoring activities and the financial resources allocated to services provided by external auditors. The ineligible items that are detected and corrected through ex-ante and ex-post audits make up the quantifiable benefits of the control strategy. There are, however, a number of non-quantifiable benefits resulting from the controls operated at different control stages. The benefits of control in non-financial terms cover: better value for money, quality assurance and compliance with professional quality standards, deterrent effects, efficiency gains, system improvements and compliance with regulatory provisions.

Other indicators used to ensure sound financial management are the average time to pay a partner and the number of payments that are executed within the legal time. In 2017, the average time to pay was 28.2 days and 81.5% of payments were executed within the legal time. To maintain and improve this performance where possible in 2018, DG ECHO will continue to promote and implement correlated actions e.g. raising awareness among staff, reallocating responsibilities and improving the workflow within the DG.

Following the revision by the Commission of its Internal Control Framework (ICF)²⁹, DG ECHO will start in 2018 the annual assessment of its operating procedures against the new ICF, which is based on the COSO 2013 Internal Control. The new ICF provides the possibility to adapt the Internal Control Principles to DG ECHO's specific circumstances and needs. Nevertheless, the new ICF confirms the pillars of DG ECHO's internal control as explained above, while establishing tools for ensuring a consistent and reliable monitoring throughout the Commission.

²⁹ C(2017)2373 of 19.4.2017.

Objective 1: Effective and reliable internal control system giving the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and the regularity of the underlying transactions

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
Expenditure budget is subject to ex-ante controls	Percentage annual budget covered by ex-ante controls	> 95%
Expenditure budget is subject to ex-post controls	Percentage annual budget covered by ex-post controls ³⁰	≥ 20%
Residual error rate is below the materiality criteria for both direct and indirect management	Percentage of residual error rate	< 2%

Objective 2: Effective and reliable internal control system in line with sound financial management

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
An audit plan for field and HQ audits and verifications is implemented	Yearly degree of implementation of the audit plan	> 80% of the audit plan is implemented
Average time to pay is improved from 2015	Average number of days to execute payment	≤ 25 days
Payments are made within legal time	Percentage of payments within legal time	≥ 85 %
Assessment of candidate FPA partners is completed within 6 months (based on a complete file)	Time lapsed from submission of application to initial decision by HoU	≤ 6 months
Actions are monitored	Percentage of projects monitored in the field, excluding projects under remote management	≥ 95 %
Implementation of the new Internal Control Framework (ICF)	Completion status of the implementation of the revised internal control framework	100%

³⁰ According to DG ECHO's Audit strategy 2016-2020.

Objective 3: Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the prevention, detection and reparation of fraud

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
Participation to/organisation of events aimed to exchange on transparency and fraud-related issues with other donor agencies	Number of events	≥ 1
Organisation of trainings and workshops for staff to gain insight of staff on the control architecture and its functioning	Rate of staff attendance	> 50 %
Inclusion of fraud risk as a criteria for reinforcing monitoring efforts in partners and actions	Adaptation of ECHO's controls	Done

C. Better Regulation

The main planned outputs linked to the Better Regulation objective in the Strategic Plan are listed in Part 1 under the relevant specific objective in the tables.

They are presented in the tables under the headings "All new initiatives and REFIT initiatives from the Commission Work Programme" and "other important items".

D. Information management aspects

Data, information and knowledge are strategic assets, and DG ECHO 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 enhanced analytics capabilities being introduced in 2016-2017.

In 2018, DG ECHO will make its data warehouse and associated reporting tools more robust and further develop them, with a particular focus on data quality. The progressive enrichment of the reporting infrastructure will provide new reports and respond to additional emerging needs. In addition, DG ECHO will initiate a rationalisation process of its reporting portfolio, along with several awareness actions in order to ensure wide and correct usage of the tools.

Concerning the integration of local IT systems with HAN (Hermes, Ares, NomCom), DG ECHO is running a project that aims at integrating the IT applications used for the operational follow-up of humanitarian aid actions (HOPE/FichOp, APPEL) with the Commission's central document repository.

From a technical and functional point of view, workflows in HOPE/FichOp are updated to include reading documents from Ares (achieved in 2017) and creating, registering and filing documents in Ares (planned for 2018). The advantages of this integration are manifold, including a better alignment with Commission rules on document management, the use of a single repository for documents managed in the context of DG ECHO's business processes and the economies linked to the reuse of code.

Further on document management, DG ECHO promotes the on-line administration internally and externally. In 2017, several internal processes were automated, and paperless exchanges between DG ECHO and its partners were improved.

The paperless policy was reinforced in DG ECHO in 2016 with the full introduction of the ARES e-Signatory; this policy was improved in 2017 with the launch of paperless payments (paperless workflow of signatory files for both pre-financing and liquidation activities). The effort will continue in 2018-2019, by adding the electronic signatures and thus completing the automation of processes end-to-end.

Objective: Data, information and knowledge in your DG is available, retrievable and shared. Important documents are registered and filed.		
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output	Indicator	Target
Staff has easier access to information and statistical data.	Further development of the 'data warehouse' in order to include more reporting elements (back-end).	By Q4 2018
Staff has access to streamlined statistical data and reports.	Rationalisation of the reporting portfolio (front-end).	By Q4 2018
Staff has access to reliable reports.	The data dictionary is available and maintained up-to-date. Data correction actions are taken.	By Q4 2018
Staff is aware of the existing reporting capabilities.	Information sessions, support and trainings are provided.	By Q4 2018
Better use of electronic workflows, to reduce errors caused by the double circulation and to reduce paper storage in eligible cases.	Number of registered documents with a fully approved e-signatory (no paper circulation in parallel).	70% of registered documents approved in full electronic mode (without paper signatories' circulation).

E. External communication activities

DG ECHO's primary communication objective is effective communication in crisis and disaster situations. Communication in sudden onset and large-scale emergencies (such as the cholera outbreak in Yemen, the Four Famines, the deadly forest fires in Portugal, the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean and the Rohingya crisis (Myanmar/Bangladesh) in 2017) always takes priority over other communication activities.

The secondary communication objective is to promote a set of thematic messages, reflecting the political priorities of the Commission in the area of Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, such as the improvement of the Civil Protection Mechanism, Education in Emergencies and EU Emergency Response. The tertiary communication objective is to promote EU efforts to protect from gender-based violence in emergencies and to maintain awareness of protracted crisis that risk to be more and more ignored in the public discourse.

All of DG ECHO's communication outputs will be vetted whether they can support the Commission's corporate communication – with a special emphasis of the corporate communication cluster on "A Union that Protects".

ECHO communication budget in 2018 in Euros	
Budget heading	Amount
Humanitarian Aid Regulation	2.0 million
Civil Protection Mechanism	0.4 million
EU Aid Volunteers	0.1 million
Emergency Support Instrument	-
Administrative Budget (BA) line	1.3 million
Total	3.8 million

Annual communication spending:			
Baseline (2017)		Estimated commitments (2018)	
• Humanitarian Aid:	€3.690.000	• Humanitarian Aid:	€3.300.000
• Civil Protection:	€575.000	• Civil Protection:	€596.000
• EU Aid Volunteers:	€50.000	• EU Aid Volunteers:	€100.000

Awareness-raising activities and campaigns will place emphasis on showcasing the tangible results of the EU's actions in terms of civil protection, humanitarian aid, emergency response also with respect to the refugee situation in Greece and EU Aid Volunteers. These will be implemented, whenever possible, in close consultation and cooperation with other relevant services of the Commission.

Integrated communication campaigns

These actions will include one major campaign to increase awareness of education in emergencies. In addition, a roadshow exhibition on EU crisis response, including civil protection activities, will be launched. Smaller campaigns may also be linked to recognised 'international days' and may also be carried out jointly in close collaboration with partners linked directly to project activities, as described below.

Project visibility

DG ECHO will work with partner organisations on joint communication actions funded via the visibility lines in project contracts. Partnerships will be prioritised on the basis of proven communication capacity. DG ECHO will continue to encourage partners – especially those working in regions with a high media focus – to propose 'above standard' visibility plans, through which they can apply for a higher level of funding for a more significant communication outreach.

Media Activities

DG ECHO will maintain its engagement with mainstream media, principally through organised visits by European journalists to EU-funded projects and through a continuing engagement with Euronews (started in 2016) for a regular magazine programme.

Ongoing website, audio-visual and social media engagement

The "Civil Protection and Humanitarian aid" website will continue to host high-quality stories from the field – these take the form of headlines, blog posts, photo stories and videos – which offer unique angles on ongoing projects. These products will not only be hosted on the site, but also disseminated to 3rd party sites e.g. Thomson Reuters, ReliefWeb and IRIN. DG ECHO will also aim to grow its follower base on several social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr.

Main outputs in 2018

Output	Indicator	Target 2018
Campaign on Education in Emergencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Views of cinema ads 2. Video views on social media 3. Opportunities to see outdoor advertisement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 million • 5 million • 50 million
Roadshow on EU Emergency Response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exhibition visitors 2. Views on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 000 • 2 million
Facilitating media visits to the field	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 articles
Euronews AidZone magazine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contacts per episode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 million
ECHO website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unique page views on ECHO website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 million
Social Media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of Twitter followers 2. Number of Facebook page 'likes' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of 20% • Increase of 30%
EU Civil Protection Forum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 450

F. Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities of the DG

In 2018 a comprehensive evaluation of the Commission's humanitarian aid actions carried out between 2012 and 2016 will be finalised. The evaluation is expected to provide an overview of what works and what does not, focusing on what matters most, which is actual delivery in the field; the evaluation is also expected to include some input on how to take account of the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain in future EU humanitarian action. The outcome of this evaluation should inform, inter alia, the upcoming revision of the contractual relationship between DG ECHO and its humanitarian partners (including the related Framework Partnership Agreement) to be completed by the end of 2019; it may also result in short-term initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities of the General Directorate.